



Online Compliance Issues Facing Small Dollar Lenders

2022 Case Study

Internet Compliance is an essential part of protecting your brand across the web. Businesses invest time and money developing brands and marketing digitally to reach consumers and build trust with their customers. Unfortunately, the Internet creates opportunities for anyone to abuse and exploit companies, misrepresent brands, and take advantage of consumers. You may not even realize your business has been targeted. Today Integrishield works with almost one hundred small dollar lenders and lead generation brands. We would like to share with you a case study which highlights some of the top issues facing brands on the web today.

A Case Study

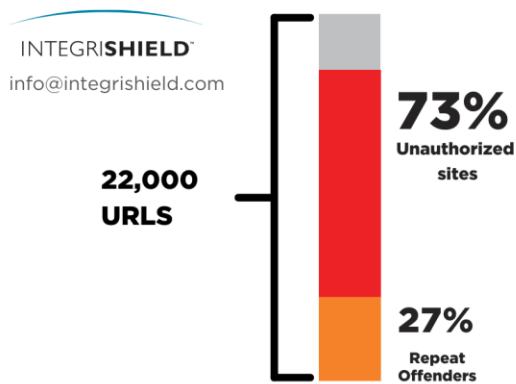
False affiliations and online ad fraud are still the leading violations impacting Integrishield's online lenders. From January, 2018 - December 31, 2022, 73% of our findings were unauthorized use of our client's brands on the internet. After a huge increase of unauthorized sites in 2021, compliance efforts have led to a decrease of 11% year over year.

There were 4,842 URLs found to be pages using legitimate lending brand names that were owned and operated by individuals not affiliated or authorized to collect consumer information on behalf of those brands. Taking the 2018 to 2022 total to 16,426 unauthorized sites. While the total number of unauthorized sites came down this year, the number of repeat violators was steady at 27%.

In 2021, 28% of the violations were from repeat offenders. These site owners, who already had their violations identified and taken down over the 4 previous years, put them back up again after the fact. Often the sites hop from hosting company to

hosting company until it's in their best interest to stop putting the websites back up.

A 2018-2022 Study Across 59 Brands



73% of the **URLS** found were phony sites using a company's marketing assets.

27% of the violations identified were from repeat offenders.

Almost 22,000 URLs and 59 brands were part of the study

Upon discovery, IntegriShield's remediation team quickly identifies the site owner and sends a series of notices to take down the page content. As part of the process, IntegriShield works with hosting providers to identify those sites who are committing fraud and, in most of the cases, the hosting provider will take the sites down.

We recommend companies consider obtaining trademarks as a means of protecting their brands from bad actors. In all cases, we recommend attempting remediation as a means of documenting the process and outcomes with each site owner. As of December 31, 2022, 79% of the unauthorized use violations have been remediated nationally and internationally with some of the violations still in the remediation process.

While bad actors will continue to infringe on brands, those companies taking a proactive approach will start to see a decline in the number of unauthorized sites, and with it, a decline in the risk of being a target. Being proactive about compliance doesn't have to be costly or time consuming. Whether you outsource or run it internally, having a written process is the first step.

A compliance monitoring process typically begins with scheduling a monthly review of your brand presence on the web. Once violations of your brand are found, it is very important to have templated communication to quickly send to site owners requesting your brand be removed or the information about it be fixed. Companies should try to work with legitimate sites as much as possible to keep traffic and maintain brand awareness. For those fraudulent sites, it is best to ask for removal. It is important to keep a log of the websites and actions in case you ever need documentation in the future. It also helps to keep screenshots of the violations because the web is always changing.

Compliance, legal, and marketing professionals will always have challenges and risks associated with running a business. Reduce your risk and take control of your brand by regularly monitoring and remediating. Internet fraud has become a top issue over the last few years, but it can be managed. IntegriShield can help.