

Freeing Independent Publishers from Harm

How GeoEdge Blocked Malicious Ads at No Charge for Crist CDL

Overview

Pervasive and destructive issues like malvertising attacks and stagnating revenue are familiar to all publishers. When bad actors of the digital ecosystem look for points of entry, they don't care how many sites a publisher operates or how large the publisher's audience is. The largest publishers have more leeway to address those issues on their own or with the help of their tech partners, while smaller publishers have fewer resources to call upon in this struggle. Still, the smaller publishers are no less vulnerable than the world's largest.

In fact, smaller publishers are often more vulnerable than the big names in the business. When they experience ad quality or security issues, they often lack the staff to root out and stop the problems, not to mention the budget to onboard specialized vendors.



I questioned the free service. That's why I visited several times. But it's great. I would tell all of these small publishers to go with GeoEdge.

Taken all together, small publishers have a massive footprint on the internet. And these sites often serve niche, but especially loyal, audiences who have few other options for finding the information they provide.

Crist CDL is a prime example of one of those small publishers. It's a family-run site that serves a devoted audience of commercial drivers and drivers-in-training. When the site was plagued by disruptive ads, Crist CDL had limited resources to pinpoint where those ads were coming from and risked losing visitors and revenue. GeoEdge's free solution stopped the bad ads from appearing within just a few days of implementation.

Highlight

Crist CDL has seen **improvements in every metric that matters:**

- + Total users and sessions **increased by 65%**
- + Page views **increased by 45%**
- + Revenue **increased by more than 200%**



William Crist
Owner of CristCDL.com



Since the problem was solved, Crist CDL has seen improvements in every metric that matters to the company. Among other metrics, total users and sessions increased by 65% each, page views increased by 45%, and revenue increased by more than 200%.

The Crist CDL site grew out of a family-run commercial driver's license training company. William Crist personally designed and coded the website. The site offers tests that drivers can take for free, to prepare for the written commercial driving test offered by their home state.

Today, Crist CDL serves more than 40,000 users, and the site runs ads that cover its overhead and keeps the tests free for its users.

In early 2017, William Crist began adding more demand partners to the site to optimize revenue. Those new partners brought malicious takeover ads, which prevented users from taking the tests. Initially, Crist troubleshooted those issues by removing partners, then adding new partners that brought the same problems.

In an effort to root out the source of the takeovers, Crist switched from a waterfall setup to using a header stack partner that brought demand from major programmatic platforms. He saw malvertising problems decrease sporadically, always to return. Crist was spending 20 to 30 hours per week addressing these issues. These troubleshooting efforts took Crist away from his work and home life.

Meanwhile, Crist was seeing the overall time on site drop. This was a particularly concerning issue for him, as it suggested bad ads were preventing users from finishing tests and causing them to leave the site. This also put the site's revenue at risk.

William Crist found GeoEdge through his own research and, judging by their robust technology and prior successes in managing ad quality issues, he honed in on GeoEdge's free solution. This solution offers protection for any publishers operating a single site and serving up to 20 million monthly impressions.

The free version of GeoEdge's service detects security risks and blocks malicious ads in real time - features offered to publishers using GeoEdge's paid plans.



William Crist contacted GeoEdge in March of 2018 and received an immediate response from the GeoEdge support team. GeoEdge sent him a bit of code that he added to the Crist CDL site. Within two or three days, the number of reported malvertising instances dropped to one or two per day.

Crist was satisfied with this reduction in takeovers. However, GeoEdge support told him their real-time scanning, blocking, and reporting capabilities should have been even more effective. GeoEdge helped Crist discover he had made a slight error where he had placed the code. After moving the code accordingly - a week after initial implementation - the reports of bad ads stopped entirely.



Troubleshooting malvertising attacks was taking 20-30 hours per week. I was getting phone calls every day. That's not fun for me with a four-year-old! The reports of bad ads stopped entirely after integrating GeoEdge into my site.

Crist subsequently noticed that every metric he was watching improved after implementing GeoEdge's solution. Total users and total sessions each increased by 65%. Pageviews increased by 45%. Sessions per user increased by 12%. Session duration increased by 5%, and pages per session by 9%, while bounce rate dropped by 8%.

At the time Crist CDL partnered with GeoEdge, the site was also transitioning from the programmatic waterfall to header bidding. With those two factors in play, Crist CDL's overall revenue grew by over 200%.

Implementing GeoEdge's solution allowed Crist to take back the 20-30 hours he was spending each week rooting out the source of bad ads. He's used the time to redesign and modernize Crist CDL, making it appear more like what a driver would see taking the test at a DMV. He has added tests for cars, motorcycles and tow trucks, and manuals for state-by-state compliance. That process called for extensive research on Crist's part, which he didn't have time to conduct while chasing bad ads on his own.

Crist has also encouraged his header partner to implement a GeoEdge plan for all of its publisher clients.

