

AKAMAI MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY BRIEF

MANAGING BOTS FOR MANUFACTURERS





For many manufacturers, traffic from bots (scrapers, aggregators, and crawlers) can account for up to 40-60% of their overall website traffic—from good bots engaged in essential business tasks to bad bots performing harmful activities. Manufacturers might know how much of their traffic is from bots, but what they may not know is the impact those bots may be having on their business.

Bots are an essential part of our Internet ecosystem. However, bot traffic can reduce website performance for legitimate users and increase IT costs. To address this, manufacturers need a flexible framework to better manage their interaction with different categories of bots (aggregators, scrapers, and crawlers) and the impact bots have on their business and IT infrastructure.

The Current State of Bots in Manufacturing Today:

How Partners Use Bots:

Many manufacturer partners use bots to stay updated on inventory or prices on distributor or partner portals, and this puts a heavy load on the origin. These bots are good and an important business need, but manufacturers must ensure these bots get the information they need without negatively impacting other partners' digital experience.

How Customers Find a Manufacturer's Site:

Many manufacturers offer B2B commerce or rely on their websites for lead generation for their sales teams globally. Manufacturer's customers and prospects are searching for, performing research on, and often buying products through a digital channel. The first step is to conduct an online search (e.g., Google, Bing, Yahoo!). Bots play an important role here. Search engines create bots to crawl websites and return information on a site's content, and these bots help shape how those websites are prioritized in search results. Manufacturers must ensure high website performance for search-engine crawlers as well as users. Bots crawl a manufacturer's site to evaluate the effectiveness of their SEO efforts, and slow site performance can negatively affect search-engine rankings.



How Bots Affect the Digital Experience:

Users (both customers and partners) are influenced by their daily interactions on social media and other platforms and expect all digital experiences to be high performing and lightning fast. They have limited tolerance for slow page load times and will often abandon a site if it loads too slowly. As a manufacturer, if you're trying to shift your user base to digital ordering or digital service to improve efficiency and reduce costs, poor site performance can affect those plans. With up to 40-60% of traffic being bots, too many bots operating too freely—regardless of the type or intention—will result in a degradation of website performance, causing legitimate human traffic to have a negative experience.

Competition:

Bot scrapers are another type of bot that negatively affect site performance. Scrapers are responsible for undercutting pricing and freezing inventory on manufacturer's sites and represent millions in lost revenue annually. Competitors can use bots to regularly and automatically crawl the manufacturer's site to "scrape" this data for competitive advantage.

Is There a Solution?

An ideal solution would allow manufacturers to manage bot traffic to ensure the best possible outcome—maximizing the positive results and minimizing the negative—depending upon the type of bots they see. For example, while you want to allow good bots to do their job, there are circumstances where they may need to be ratcheted back to ensure human web traffic can access their accounts without issue. When a manufacturer encounters bad bots, blocking them is only a temporary solution, which can be ineffective in the long run. Blocked bots will simply return smarter and faster. By managing how those bots are allowed to interact with your site, you can minimize the negative impact of those bots without tipping off the operator that you are on to them. Two common solutions are simply slowing them down to reduce the value and timeliness of the information they are gathering or serving them alternative information, such as pushing them to a page with intentionally inaccurate content.

Akamai's Bot Manager:

In direct response to the current state of bot solutions, Akamai has created a unique alternative for manufacturers struggling to deal with the bot problem. The solution is designed to allow manufacturers to identify, categorize, and manage bots—both good and bad—to achieve the goals for their website. Akamai's Bot Manager provides a range of management actions beyond just blocking to help manufacturers maximize the positive and minimize the negative impacts of their bot traffic. They are then able to analyze and report the activity to improve visibility on the bot issue. In addition to visualization and reporting on bot traffic, Bot Manager can also help organizations with their own internal marketing data. Website and page-view statistics can be significantly skewed by bot traffic, making it difficult to understand the behavior of real users interacting with the site. Akamai's Bot Manager identifies bot-generated requests in order to filter out bot traffic from human traffic, which can help improve marketing's data and analysis and lead to better business decisions.



As the global leader in Content Delivery Network (**CDN**) services, Akamai makes the Internet fast, reliable, and secure for its customers. The company's advanced web performance, mobile performance, cloud security, and media delivery solutions are revolutionizing how businesses optimize consumer, enterprise, and entertainment experiences for any device, anywhere. To learn how Akamai solutions and its team of Internet experts are helping businesses move faster forward, please visit www.akamai.com or blogs.akamai.com, and follow [@Akamai](https://twitter.com/Akamai) on Twitter.

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