

Luisa Via Roma Paves the Way for More Online Shoppers by Mitigating Bot Traffic with Akamai Bot Manager



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— **Fabio Testa**, Software Architect, Luisa Via Roma

The Situation

Being successful as a fashion retailer requires a careful balance of observing the classic styles and responding to the latest trends. Luisa Via Roma has done just that since its founding in the early 1930s in Florence, Italy. Since that time, this luxury retailer of women's, men's, and children's clothing, shoes and accessories expanded its business online. Its website – [luisaviaroma.com](https://www.luisaviaroma.com) – is available in eight languages to shoppers in more than 200 countries. Along the way, it has garnered a steady stream of site visitors – an average of 2 million unique visitors per month as of early 2017 – and generates now more than 95% of the company's revenues

The Challenge: Preventing Bots from Impacting Shoppers

As the retailer extended its online presence around the world, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish legitimate site traffic from unwanted bots. In 2016, when site traffic grew exponentially, so did bot traffic. Without a way of separating bot traffic from shopper traffic and mitigating unwanted bots, the company was worried about the impact on shoppers. According to Fabio Testa, software architect for Luisa Via Roma, “We understood that bots were impacting our website but could not do much about it.”

The Goals

Luisa Via Roma needed to meet two key requirements to support its goal of remaining a top online shopping destination:

- **Enable real shoppers to access the site.** The retailer did not want bot mitigation measures to prevent legitimate traffic from accessing the site.
- **Inspire confidence in online business.** Luisa Via Roma wanted to maintain and strengthen its reputation as a leading online retailer.

Why Akamai

Opting for a Comprehensive Solution

As an existing customer of Akamai services designed to improve web performance, it was natural for Luisa Via Roma to take advantage of Akamai Bot Manager. As Testa explains, it was not practical for the retailer to build a bot detection and mitigation service of its own. “Akamai Bot Manager is based on a solid and certified database of bot categories that Akamai continually updates. Plus, the product provides many means to dynamically categorize bots and weigh them against numerous factors. No other bot management product is as comprehensive when it comes to distinguishing real traffic from bot traffic,” says Testa.

Taking Advantage of Sophisticated Capabilities

Once Bot Manager was in place, Testa and his team found it to easy analyze the data and configure the product to serve the needs of Luisa Via Roma. Using Bot Manager, the team applies a unique management policy to each custom or predefined bot category. “Dealing with daily bot

LUISAVIAROMA

COMPANY

Luisa Via Roma
Florence, Italy
<https://www.luisaviaroma.com>

INDUSTRY

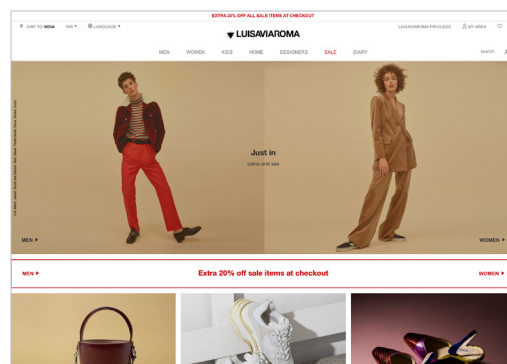
Retail & Consumer Goods

SOLUTIONS

- Bot Manager

KEY IMPACTS

- Decreased unknown bots from more than 75% to less than 25% of bot traffic
- Reduced total bot traffic from 45% to 25% in six months
- Improved shopping experience
- Helped realize full value of site re-architecture
- Gained confidence in driving more traffic to site



LUISA VIA ROMA

behavior changes is hard. But Bot Manager not only provides effective default categorization and mitigation policy configurations, it allows us to define new criteria and unique categories specific to our situation,” explains Testa.

The Bot Activity report within Bot Manager is the first place Testa’s team looks for bot bandwidth usage variations. If they notice trend changes, the team moves to the Bot Analysis dashboard to pinpoint the bot responsible for the change and drills down to the HTTP request characteristics to configure new rules for mitigation.

Caching in On Google

As Testa explains, not all bots are bad bots so you can’t blanket block them all. Google is the most valuable bot from a business perspective. It’s imperative for an online retailer to satisfy Google Shopping requirements and stand up to the crawler’s frequent site verifications in order to avoid being banned by the service. With Bot Manager, Luisa Via Roma was able to fine-tune its caching policies to satisfy this requirement. At the same time, this helped reduce the impact on its origin infrastructure.

Controlling Price Scrapers

Another challenge for Luisa Via Roma is price scrapers, which are extremely difficult to mitigate because of their smart behavior and ability to reproduce a user browser footprint. In fact, attempts to mitigate them usually lead to a high number of false positives, which affects the experience of legitimate shoppers.

To address this, Testa’s team integrates Bot Manager with Akamai Luna Property Manager and Google Invisible reCAPTCHA to certify traffic. Once a browsing session is certified as being legitimate, the site visitor will not be challenged against a new captcha for a predetermined amount of time.

“The advantage of our captcha solution is that it reduced the iterative work to define new custom categories on a daily basis. Simply put, Bot Manager made it much easier for us to eliminate automated shopping,” says Testa.

Better Responding to the Bot Landscape

As far as Testa is concerned, the key to effective bot management is not mitigating legitimate site traffic, as that can be bad for business and a company’s online reputation. “Bot Manager has provided us with nearly 100% non-false-positive bot detection,” he says. In fact, with Bot Manager, Luisa Via Roma decreased unknown bots from more than 75% to less than 25% of overall bot traffic.

At the same time, Bot Manager helped reduce total bot traffic from 45% to 25% within just six months. “Bot Manager has allowed us to realize the full value of the redesigned site architecture we put in place to support our growing business. The bot mitigations have freed us to confidently drive more traffic to our site and further grow our business,” he concludes.

About Luisa Via Roma

Luisa Via Roma was founded in Florence in the early 1930s, with the opening of the company’s eponymous concept store and launched online in 1999. LUISAVIAROMA.COM is a 100% privately owned top online luxury fashion destination featuring a curated selection of clothes, shoes and accessories for men, women and kids – as well as as well as home and design products – from established designers side by side with the best emerging talent. Visit <https://www.luisaviaroma.com>.



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