

4. URBAN LEGENDS

Variations on the TE scheme are less common, but they still exist and there has been a recent resurgence in spin-offs, particularly in the blogosphere.

At the end of this course we will look at some of the more worthwhile areas into which you may wish to expand. But before that, you need to be aware of some of the less obvious variations. Websites that appear to be a standard TE, but are subtly different in a way that can render them less effective or, in some extreme cases, completely useless.

Like all good urban legends, these websites will promote themselves with a measure of fact, but quickly descend into territory that is either fantastical or, quite simply, made up.



MANUAL SURF VS. AUTO SURF

The TE strategies described in this course are all centred around the “Manual” traffic exchange – so called, because it requires the user to manually surf at the traffic exchange. If the user leaves the PC to go and do something else, the surfing stops.

YOUR NOTES

Blog

Short for weblog. A website with information arranged in date order with the most recent at the top.

Blogosphere

A collective term for all blogs. May also include related websites and services.



4. URBAN LEGENDS

YOUR NOTES

Conversion Rate

The percentage of people that take a desired action. Most commonly used to describe the rate at which visitors to a website make a purchase or submit their contact details.

An “Autosurf” traffic exchange, however, requires infrequent or no interaction by the user. You could, for example, start the program surfing before you go to bed and leave it running all night. The drawback being that the other users can also leave the surfing to continue while they are away from the PC.

An Autosurf is the most obvious example of a TE variant and while debate on the respective merits still continues to some degree, most experienced users agree that Auto Surfs are not worthy of attention. There is yet to be a legitimate strategy developed that can make profit from showing a website to an empty room. All that is accomplished in this scenario is wasted bandwidth.

By contrast, a Manual TE is designed to make it virtually impossible to surf without a real person being present to look at and interact with the websites on display.

The best argument advocates of Autosurfs can muster is that some miniscule conversion rate is possible over a long period of time. But there comes a point when the amount of time and effort required to see results makes a strategy futile.

In truth, Autosurf TEs have only continued to exist because they can boast the movement of huge volumes of traffic. This may be true, but any suggestion that this traffic has worth is entirely fantasy.

Manual TEs have always been and always will be many, many times more effective than their Autosurf

counterpart and, for this reason, this course will only concentrate on the former.

RATIOS

The ratio offered by a TE refers to the trade between the number of pages you personally surf and the number of page views your website receives in return.

For example:

- A 2:1 ratio means that, for every TWO pages you view while surfing, you will receive ONE page view in return.
- A 3:1 ratio means you have to view THREE pages, to receive ONE page view in return.
- And so on...

On the surface, a low ratio may seem the most advantageous. Naturally, you want to maximise the number of page views you receive in exchange for the time you spend surfing. But if the TE is mismanaged by the owner, it's entirely possible for the page views that you are owed to be delivered so slowly, it would take months or years to receive your due.

The ratio set by the TE is the cornerstone of its stability and, although by itself a ratio cannot guarantee a productive exchange, it can be extremely informative.

4. URBAN LEGENDS

YOUR NOTES

Anything between a ratio of 2:1 and 5:1 is normal and you will usually have the option of purchasing the excess page views from the owner at a very reasonable rate.

The warning flag to look out for is traffic exchanges that offer ratios LOWER than 2:1.

- A 1:1 ratio, for example, offers an exact trade of one page view for every page you surf.
- A 1:2 ratio offers TWO page views for every ONE that you surf.
- A 1:3 ratio offers THREE page views for every ONE that you surf.
- And so on...

This is often promoted as something desirable, but usually leads to the afore-mentioned scenario of a back log of page views. This wastes your time and can result in a TE stagnating or, in extreme circumstances, closing altogether.

A ratio of 1:1 or better may be offered as a bonus for TE members that pay a monthly upgrade fee. This is standard practice and shouldn't be a cause for concern. The time to pay attention is when 1:1 or better is offered as a ratio to ALL members.

A TE owner has to balance the ratios so that the number of page views being promised in the long term

doesn't exceed the number of pages being surfed by users.

If all of this seems a little confusing, then don't worry about it. It's not necessary to understand TE mathematics in their entirety and all of this will be much clearer once you begin using TEs in earnest.

Just be wary of any TE that offers 1:1, 1:2, 1:3 ratios to ALL free members. A TE that offers anything between 2:1 and 5:1 is unlikely to experience the kind of problems described above and represents one less thing to worry about.

Just one addendum to this section, sometimes TEs will disguise their ratio by talking about credits instead of page views. As a general rule, TEs will reward your surfing activity with credits that can later be converted into page views – this is standard lingo.

It's not unusual for a TE to charge more than one credit for one page view. This doesn't mean that anything crooked is taking place; it just means you have to pay a bit more attention to understand the ratio that is taking place.

For example, if the ratio of pages surfed to CREDITS is 2:1, but page views cost two credits each, then the ACTUAL ratio is 4:1. Have a look at how this example works:

- You surf 20 pages.

4. URBAN LEGENDS

YOUR NOTES

- The 2:1 ratio means you earn 10 credits.
- 10 credits lets you purchase 5 page views.
- 5 pages views in exchange for 20 pages surfed equals an actual ratio of 4:1

Most respectable TEs are upfront about their ratios and you don't have to be overly concerned about this. Just be careful when considering ratios to see if the value advertised is talking about page views or credits.

Just because a TE boasts a generous ratio, this doesn't always mean that you are getting a superior deal.

TIMERS

Manual TEs require you to view each page that you surf for a minimum amount of time – usually somewhere between 20-30 seconds. You can view a page for longer, but you can't move on more quickly than the timer permits.

A TE may boast a very low timer - 10 seconds or less - allowing you to build up credits faster than usual. The drawback, of course, is that other users are viewing your web page for a very short amount of time making it harder to be effective.

TEs with low timers have their place but, as with any TE that seeks to explore mechanics outside of what are recognised to be effective, there is usually a negative

trade-off somewhere in the equation.

DOWNLINE CREDITS

TE owners will encourage you to promote their service as an affiliate. The usual benefit offered is for people you bring into the program to be placed into a downline system. Bonus credits, along with a percentage of the credits earned by these individuals, are your reward.

This area merits a chapter of its own (*Book 4: Hidden Depths*) but I'm mentioning it here just to encourage you to be cautious of TEs that allow their downline system to dominate their program. Unusually large credit bonuses for referrals can result in users focussing an unbalanced level of effort on affiliate promotion over surfing. The outcome would be an inactive TE with an ever growing backlog of credits.

PRO EXCHANGES

One of the core criticisms of TEs is that because they can primarily be used without charge, they attract a lot of freebie seekers. As we will see later on in the course, this doesn't have to be a detrimental attribute and this kind of attack on TEs is an oversimplification. Nevertheless, attempts have been made to filter out those reluctant to invest in their business by creating

YOUR NOTES

Affiliate

An affiliate will promote someone else's product or program in exchange for a commission on subsequent leads or sales.

Downline

A collective term for everyone who joined a program as a result of your recommendation, or the recommendation of one of your referrals. This may be recorded on one or more levels.

Freebie Seeker

Pejorative term for an individual who refuses to consider anything that requires payment, or who compulsively downloads anything available without cost, regardless of interest or relevance.



4. URBAN LEGENDS

YOUR NOTES

what became known as the “Pro Exchange”.

Identical in almost every respect to a regular TE, the key difference is that a Pro Exchange does not accept free members. Everyone who joins has to pay for the privilege with the cost of entry usually a token, one-off payment of \$5 - \$10.

The reasoning goes that if someone is willing to pay to join the traffic exchange, then they’ve already proved their willingness to spend money and, therefore, are a more profitable brand of visitor.

This seems logical enough but, regrettably, it’s yet to be established that Pro Exchanges are more effective than their regular, free to join, counterpart. In fact, many Pro Exchanges have struggled to remain viable with some even taking the step of downgrading the program into a regular TE that is free to join (much to the annoyance of members who previously had to pay for the privilege).

The problem seems to stem from the difficulty in finding enough users willing to pay to join the program when there are so many successful counter-parts that are free to use.

It may also be the case that many who are willing to pay to join are mainly from the same group of people that prefer buying TE credits over surfing for them. There’s nothing wrong with this approach and, in the long run, buying over surfing may be the right approach for you. But for a TE to survive, it needs a

significant proportion of the user base to surf.

Although they have diminished as of late, the Pro Exchange still exists and they can still be useful. Generally speaking, effective use of a Pro Exchange is identical to that of a regular TE. Don't dismiss them as an option, but don't be fooled into thinking that these are set to become the dominant force in the industry.

DISASTERS

The information in this chapter is designed to forewarn and forearm you for some of the challenges ahead, but don't be misled into thinking that this journey is going to be unusually difficult or arduous.



All of the above points will be covered again in more detail as we go through the course and by the end of this course, you will be an expert in spotting the opportunities AND the pitfalls that exist in the TE industry,

And, to be perfectly frank, even if you make a mistake connected to any of the above areas, the worst thing



4. URBAN LEGENDS

YOUR NOTES

that will happen is that you'll waste a little bit of time and learn a valuable lesson that will leave you smarter than when you began.

Disaster is when you don't bother to complete your returns and end up in prison for tax evasion.

Spending some time at an unproductive change is a minor annoyance that is simply a part of the learning curve.

Keep your wits about you, but don't become paranoid about making some mistakes along the way. With this course to prepare and equip you, these will be infrequent and minor.

INSTANT RESULTS

"I made over \$35,000 in sales in one week."

This statement is true but is misleading. The sales were made during a product launch promotion that lasted for seven days, but it took months of planning and, before that, months of training to learn how.

Being effective with a TE doesn't take months to learn or implement, but neither should you expect instant results.

If you knuckle down, study this course carefully and rapidly apply what you learn, the following time-table is not unreasonable:

Weeks 1-2

Study and practice.

Weeks 3-6

Apply training and track results.

Traffic arrives in fits and starts.

Breaking even, or a small profit is achievable.

Weeks 7-10

Tweak and improve conversions and results.

Traffic arrives in steady, predictable patterns.

Profits increase with the possibility of some small spikes.

Weeks 11-14

Apply success to greater range of TEs.

Traffic arrives in a constant stream with occasional surges.

Profits are modest, but reliable and measurable.

Weeks 15-16

Your TE strategy is complete and working effectively with only monitoring and occasional adjustments required.

Residual income is arriving on a regular basis, leaving you with the time to develop additional and/or high-end products to add to your business.

If you haven't already, how long do you think it will be before this strategy helps you attain the goal of quitting



4. URBAN LEGENDS

YOUR NOTES

your day job and working on your home business full time?

There's no definitive answer to this question and even the above is just a suggestion. Many people will be able to accomplish the above in half the time. For others, depending on how much time they're prepared to devote to this, it may take longer.

The most important thing to be aware of is that this approach is proven to work consistently over a long period of time and it's based on a sensible, logical approach that allows you to develop your business intelligently without the need to resort to guesswork.

You're almost ready to begin your training but first, there is one very important word that you need to burn into your brain...