

Facebook scams: Look before you “like”

If you're a regular Facebook user, you're pretty much guaranteed to run across lots of “like-farming” scammers – maybe without ever even realizing it. At best, these like-farming pages clutter your friends' feeds, crowding out content they actually want to see (and possibly making them annoyed with you, for drowning their feeds in such noise); at worst they put your personal information in the hands of unscrupulous marketers, or help spread dangerous computer viruses and other forms of malware.

But what is like-farming? Facebook policy forbids it, though of course scammers and con artists by definition tend not to follow the rules. Like-farmers start pages and fill them with content dedicated to collecting as many “likes” or “shares” as possible in the shortest amount of time.

Since Facebook's algorithms place a high value on popularity (as measured by likes and shares), these highly liked and shared pages therefore have a much higher chance of appearing in people's “Feeds” and being seen by other Facebook users.

Then, once the page has a sufficiently high popularity rating, the like-farmer either removes the page's original content and replaces it with something else (usually malware or scam advertising); leaves the page as is and uses it as a platform for continued like-farming in order to spread malware, collect people's marketing information or engage in other harmful activities; or outright sells the highly liked site to cybercriminals in a black market web forum.

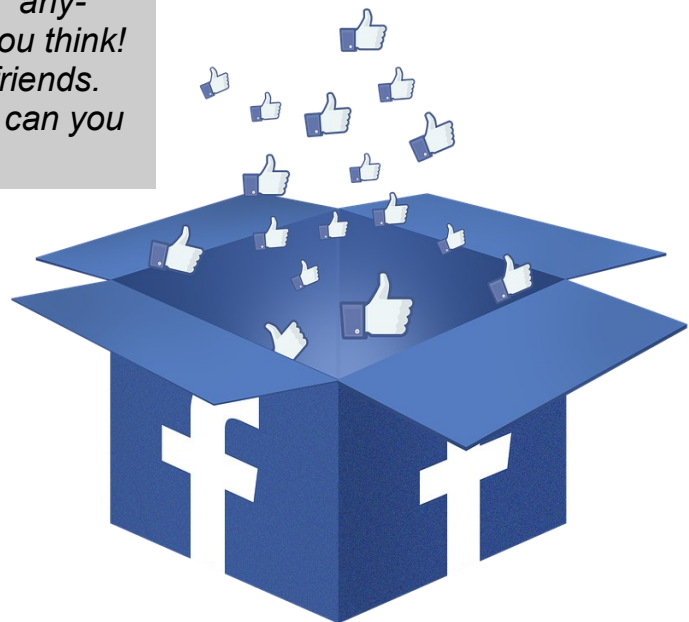
A close cousin of like-farming might better be called “response farming,” or just clickbait: posts designed solely to elicit a response. It differs from like-farming in that like-farming is done by actual scammers, whereas response-farming is usually promoted by actual companies to increase their Facebook popularity rankings. Look at the promotional Facebook page of a typical genre-music FM radio station, for example, and you're almost certain to see lots of response-farming memes.

One such meme that's been around since at least early 2013 involves asking a ridiculously easy question, usually followed by commentary suggesting the question is actually quite difficult:

Can you name a band that has no letter T” anywhere in their name? This is harder than you think! Post your answers below, and share with friends. Most people think they can do this but fail, can you do it?

Some of these non-challenging intelligence tests came from like-farmers, but most were local-radio or business click bait — still driving up like-counts and cluttering your friends' Facebook feeds, but at least they won't likely spread malware or put money in a scammer's pockets the way like-farming pages do.

If you're going through your own old Facebook archives and discover you've “liked” a scammy page you don't recognize, you can send Facebook a scam report for that page, and then click the “unlike” button to remove your own name from it. Check out our website at www.theenergycu.com for more tips on how you can stay safe online!



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Southlake Regional Health Centre Onsite! Up Next - September 7, 2016

You can find us near the main entrance by the elevators. Our August 9 2016 onsite was very successful. Many members dropped by to change their payroll deduction, ask questions about their account, get some help downloading our app and learn more about the products and services that are available to them. Have a quick question about your online banking? Want to know more about accessing your account with your ATM card? If you can't make it across the bridge to the Medical Arts Building, swing by and we can get you sorted.

**"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand.
Most people listen with the intent to reply." - Stephen R. Covey**

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