THE ‘UNREAL’ DIGITAL OF REAL ESTATE

How Digital presence issues are tarnishing the image and reputation of the real estate players in India.

CASE STUDY
Brand Infringement and Misrepresentation

The real estate sector is resuming business after covid ‘silence’ and leveraging digital platforms to generate interest and leads from potential buyers. However, the digital bad is not shying away from grabbing the opportunity to cheat potential buyers / investors of the real estate and causing irreversible harm to the brand's equity and worth.

For a real estate sector, where reputation is the success mantra, this is a nightmare!

One of the most trusted and reputed real estate brand had 387 fake websites!

An on request analysis for one of the most reputed real estate builders of the country not only showed up mind boggling numbers, but also made some great revelations for the brand also.

A total of 387 fake / misrepresentation websites were reported during the analysis. The websites were not only using the brand's name unauthorisedly, but also had incorporated the names of the projects.

This resulted in many challenges for the brand operating in one of the strictly regulated sectors where fraudulent transactions, scamsters and project completion credibility is always at stake.

How is it Impacting?

- Unauthorised use of a brand's name / logo /identity.
- Opening for project bookings without Rera approvals.
- Bidding on the project/brand keywords increasing the search spends.
- Fake Social presence.
- Unauthorised 'Book Now' or 'Customer Care' numbers.
- Data breach and privacy concerns.
"It is not in real estate we are only challenged with fraudulent deals and wrong commitments. As our journey of Digital Transformation goes mainstream for the sector, we are simply astonished to see the finds of mFilterIt services educating us about unthinkable challenges that the digital value chain welcomes us with."

Chief Digital Officer,
A leading real estate company

The fake websites reported were classified into three broad categories basis the keyword bidding pattern.

- 297 fake websites bidding on 31 other 'brand' keywords.
- 63 fake websites bidding on 11 Project A keywords.
- 27 fake websites bidding on 14 Project B keywords.

The above analysis showed that the fake websites were not only driving traffic from queries looking for project specific searches, but also from a pool of keywords related to the brand.

This in essence was not confining its impact on two specific real estate projects of the real estate giant, but also impacting the business and reputation of other business interests of the conglomerate.

A fake website is created for several ulterior reasons that the scamsters play around. For this reason, fraudsters create a fake representation at each touchpoints to make the scams 'foolproof'.
Besides a fake and unauthorised website, which used the brand's name along with the project name in the domain created, the other issues reported included:-

- Fake / unauthorised social media handles promoting the properties of the real estate brand.
- Fake / unauthorised call centre numbers on social and other mediums for interested buyers to make an inquiry.

These fake websites were bidding on the project specific keywords as well as other brand related keywords to route search discovery to their websites.

Additionally, it was also resulting in higher bid cost for the keywords for the brand also affecting its spends on google search and others.

For the real estate sector, these are not the only challenges that the brand infringement and misrepresentation results in.

Being a strictly regulated sector, there were other issues faced by the real estate brand due to this 'unreal' digital presence.
The fake/unauthorised websites were going live with the 'sale' of the projects without any RERA approvals. This could land the brand in a regulatory issue.

**Challenges for the REAL ESTATE SECTOR**

1. The reputation of a real estate brand is all critical that includes the reputation around project completion, possession, etc. The false information and claims on these fake websites adds to the vulnerability of reliability.

2. RERA prescribes the set of information like super carpet area, built up area, etc. that is mandatorily to be given while promoting the real estate. These websites were not giving all the required info.

3. A prospect leaves very sensitive information including personal identifiers like mobile numbers to be approached. This data could be abused by scamsters.

4. The delivery of the asset is mostly in future while the buyer is asked to make incremental payments starting from the booking amount. The scamsters could use fake websites to extract money systematically over a period of time.
How mFilterIt helps build impeccable digital presence?

Using proprietary machine learning based solutions, mFilterIt deterministically validates the digital engagement fine tuning the return on digital spends within a brand safe environment.

Trusted by leading advertisers globally, mFilterIt's digital fraud prevention and brand protection services are helping marketers to create true engagements within a trustworthy brand environment.

Acting as the digital police on behalf of a brand, mFilterIt identifies and reports BOT driven frauds hampering the digital advertising performance along with issues adversely impacting the brand reputation and trust.

Walking an extra mile, mFilterIt makes the reporting actionable, through take-down and de-indexing support helping the brands not only with identification but also with conclusive resolution.

To learn more about Brand protection and safety services of mFilterIt, engage today to connect with our brand experts. Write to us on contact@mfilterit.com

To know more about mFilterIt, please visit www.mfilterit.com
mFilterIt is a new age company that caters to protecting digital integrity across platforms.

We believe in the power deep tech and data science to create transformational growth in our customers.

Today we work with more than 500 clients across 15 countries in the globe.

mFilterIt provides a variety of innovative and comprehensive IT solutions. We deliver quality services in the most efficient way, and our experts will work collaboratively with you to customize our offerings to your particular needs. Book a meeting with one of our consultants to hear more about how we can assist your operation.

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