

## WE DISCUSSED CLICKBAIT... AND YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHAT HAPPENED NEXT!

Do you use YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit, Twitter? If so, you have probably seen a headline like the one at the top of this page: "You Won't Believe What Happened Next!" Welcome to the world of "clickbait." Clickbait is simply a headline that is so intriguing, it makes you want to click

*Clickbait works like a fishing lure and once you have bitten on the bait (the headline), you are then reeled in.*

on it. When you do, you are taken to a different site that typically features ads to sell you something. You may get the content mentioned in the headline, or you may not. Either way, it's a tricky method of getting you to look at something some company wants you to buy. Clickbait works like a fishing lure and once you have bitten on the bait (the headline), you are then reeled in.

### Clickbait Isn't New

Creating hype with a flashy headline is not new. Newspapers and magazines have used headlines to attract readers' attention for years. Credible publishers try not to use headlines that are sensationalized or misleading. They have earned their reputation with their readers by being honest and re-

porting responsibly. If a publisher started using headlines that didn't deliver the content advertised, they would lose their readership and, consequently, money.

### Clickbait can be annoying

Even worse, it can also be very misleading. It can make you think you're about to watch an exciting video, only to find out it doesn't match the hype. When you expect to hear about how someone traded a paper clip for a car... you don't want to find out how the trade failed.

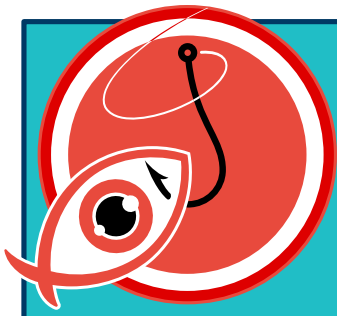
### Things to watch for

Online, there is money to be made by having a lot of followers or "traffic." Clickbait is very good at boosting traffic. The better the clickbait, the more traffic it gets. The more traffic it gets, the more money the clickbait creator makes. Yes. Good clickbait is worth money.

### What makes you want to click?

1. Vague/suspenseful headlines. (They make you want to click to learn more!)
2. Emotional language, possibly with an emoji. (Tapping into emotions is a powerful tool.)
3. A headline that exaggerates a fact. (Boring doesn't get clicks.)
4. A GIF that shows someone having fun, maybe being silly, doing something laughable. (It makes you think that if you click, you will have fun too.)
5. A headline in the form of a truth-bomb, explosive news. (Truth-bombs are much more exciting)
6. A list. People love lists. (They are easy to read!)





## MARKETING 101: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

What makes a product so attractive to individuals that they want to buy/click on it. An important part of marketing a product is knowing who may be interested in buying your product and then tailoring the advertisement to that audience. Clickbait is very good at doing that! Puppy lovers will click on puppy links, and music lovers will click on music links. What gets your attention?



### DID YOU KNOW?

Some websites hire companies to create clickbait for them to drive up their traffic, rather than doing it themselves. Clickbait companies, that are good at producing it, can make a lot of money.



### EDUCATION CONNECTION

#### *Discuss!*

Clickbait may be appealing, but is it ethical? Could it be dangerous? Should it be stopped or regulated? How could companies like Facebook and Twitter control the clickbait that appears on their sites? What policies should news agencies and/or government have to keep clickbait under control? Could it be used to do good?

#### *Check it Out!*

There are a lot of terms that may be new to you when put in the context of clickbait. Here is a list of terms often used in association with clickbait. Define them and explain how they are connected to clickbait: bait-and-switch, curiosity-gap, false advertising, hyperlink, misleading, rickrolling, sensationalized, teaser, thumbnail, viral marketing.

#### *Try It!*

Here are a few rather boring headlines. How would you jazz them up to make them more like clickbait? Discuss what technique you used to make them more appealing:

- Spring is coming.
- It is picture day tomorrow.
- They wrote a song.



### DIG DEEPER:

History titles as clickbait? Yup. Look at some of the events in history that have been turned into clickbait. Why not try to make your own clickbait from history?

**CHECK IT OUT**

BBC's story about clickbait merchants in Kosovo takes a look at the industry through a different lens. Read the article to learn why clickbait is referred to as a "cash crop".

**CHECK IT OUT**

This 2015 article by the Toronto Star is about two clickbait companies, Taboola and Outbrain. Find out why they're so good at what they do.

**CHECK IT OUT**