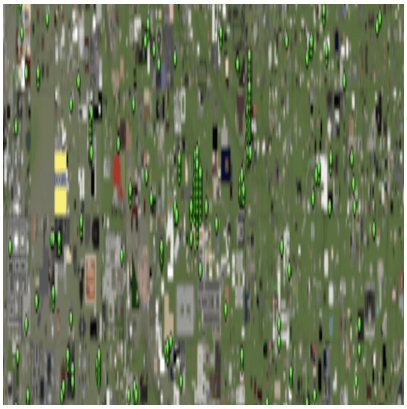


Fake followers

Description

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Singer Katy Perry has nearly 100 million followers on Twitter according to Friend or Follow. Close behind are Justin Bieber and Barack Obama, with Donald Trump ranked 34th in line with about 31 million followers. You donâ??t need to be a follower to find out what people are tweeting. You can just search on their handle (e.g. @BarackObama) in your Twitter browser.

But if you are in to the celebrity numbers game then you can buy fake followers at Â£4.99 for 500 from greediersocialmedia.co.uk. Fake followers then appear on your follower list and contribute to the numbers, though these phantoms may never post, like or retweet anything, and they may have no profile information.

Following fake felons

Then there are websites that pick up on these fake follower indicators, e.g. twitteraudit.com. Just type in the Twitter handle for the person of interest. It shows that only 37% of @katyperry followers are real; 65% of @BarackObama followers are real; and @realdonaldtrump is 53% real!

There are more humble operations that appear to trade in truthfulness, and canâ??t afford the PR anyway: @eca_edinburgh comes in at 98% real followers; and my own account @ecran99 at 97%.

As well as Twitter followers, you can buy Facebook likes, Instagram followers and likes, and views, likes and subscribers for your YouTube channel. When we used to play around with the 3D immersive VR environment known as SecondLife, colleagues and I knew that people were paid as â??sitters,â?• who would position their avatars to suggest a crowd, and thereby lure other, genuine, visitors to that particular patch of the virtual world.

Addicted to numbers

Much of the language and many of the tactics indicated here would have been alien to us 10 years ago (when Twitter was just starting up). In so far as we hapless users engage in social media worlds we become aware eventually of how embedded these systems are in numbers, rankings, and league

tables, and they lure us in the direction of quantification.

With some grandiosity, and with reference to the world of entertainment, I called one of my earliest posts on the subject The quantification of the intellect.

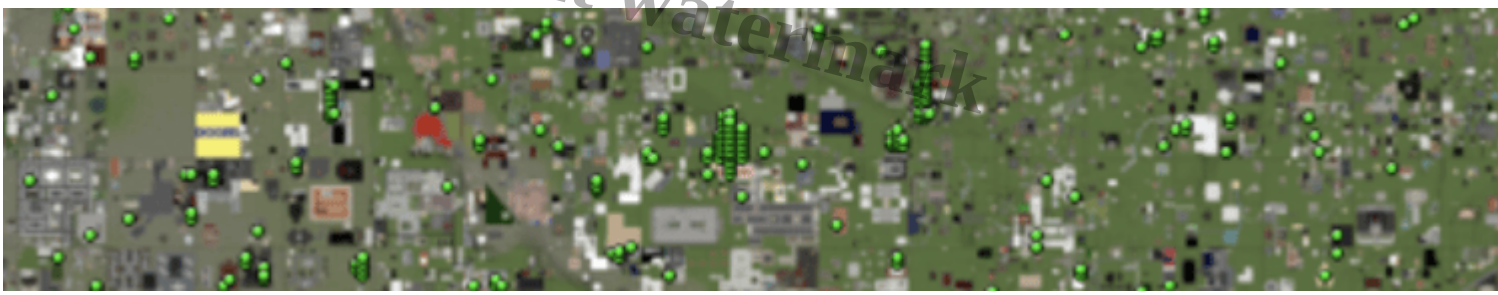
For a heads up on the fake follower scam see video by the amiable David Pakman (USA): About half of Trumpâ??s Twitter followers are fake.

â??Uge or tiny

â??Fake newsâ?• is the â??word of the year,â?• and applies to trivia such as numbers of Twitter followers and crowd size, to something as grave as Trumpâ??s narrative about the Paris Climate Accord. If implemented, he said the Paris agreement would â??only produce a two-tenths of one degree â?? think of that; this much â?? Celsius reduction in global temperature by the year 2100. Tiny, tiny amount.â?•

Huge or *tiny*, if the numbers donâ??t deliver what you want then just fake them! See Guardian fact check about the speech.

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Notes

- How does twitteraudit.com work? For a Twitter account you are testing, it samples around 5000 followers and gives them each a score. According to their website: â??This score is based on number of tweets, date of the last tweet, and ratio of followers to friends. We use these scores to determine whether any given user is real or fake. Of course, this scoring method is not perfect but it is a good way to tell if someone with lots of followers is likely to have increased their follower count by inorganic, fraudulent, or dishonest means.â?•
- Image is of an â??aerial viewâ?• over part of a SecondLife island. The green dots indicate the presence of an avatar. So a stack of them is something like a crowd.
- Who were those enthusiastic, sycophantic courtiers clapping and cheering in the WH Rose Garden over what was (at least) a controversial speech (to mark departure from the Paris agreement)? At worst the speech was a farrago of blatant untruths, laced with jingoistic claptrap. Why did nobody boo, or at least groan? Did anyone keep silent? Ivanka and Jared, lobbyists on behalf of the Paris accord, werenâ??t there (Politico). It was a crowd of invited guests â?? â??fake followersâ?• guaranteed to deliver the required responses on cue.

Category

1. Nature

Tags

1. followers
2. numbers
3. social media
4. trump
5. Twitter

Date Created
June 3, 2017
Author
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