

Preventing bulk url submissions by robots in AltaVista

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I will describe a scheme developed in late 1997 to prevent the automatic submission of URLs to AltaVista via the add-url page. The scheme, based on character recognition, has been in use at

<http://addurl.altavista.com/sites/addurl/newurl>

for about a year and reduced the number of spam add-url by over 95%.

My mini-talk will go over some of the implementation details, purported attacks, and user statistics.

The conceptual work was done at Compaq SRC jointly with Martin Abadi (now at UC Santa Cruz) Krishna Bharat (now at Google), and Mark Lillibridge (Compaq). Compaq owns the IP rights for our method of denying service to robots: US patent 6,195,698, used in AltaVista by permission. The AltaVista implementation was done by Laurent Chavez.