

Ghosting on Craigslist

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There may be a number of reasons for ghosting.

First of all, you need to understand that there is no one single reason that causes ghosting problems.

Craigslist filters work in such a way that they account for multiple criteria and add up those. When the sum has reached certain threshold - they will ghost your ad(s).

Therefore, you will need to check for multiple things to determine the reason for ghosting.

First of all, please refine/change your content - that is the most probable cause of your ads getting ghosted.

In some sections on Craigslist, you will get ghosted when using image links or hyperlinks, sometimes Craigslist will ghost ads with certain keywords. Most oftenly, you will get ghosted because of overposting similar or identical content. CLAD Genius has lots of features to randomize your content (tokens, mutations, random words, hidden text, character substitution, image resizing etc.), please make use of those.Â

If you were able to post fine, with over 60% success rate, and at some point Craigslist suddenly started to ghost 100% of your ads and you did not change anything, then, most probably Craigslist has added some keywords from your contents to their black list. Most oftenly, this happens with domain names. For instance, if you have direct links to your website in your ads, Craigslist may add your domain name to the black list, which may cause ghosting. In this case, you need to use URL shorteners like tinyurl.com (the tinyurl.com service will not work on Craigslist, because it is banned too. We are citing tinyurl here as an example, so that you can search for similar services on the internet, there are plenty of them), or you can set up your own URL shortening script (search for \$spinurl in our FAQ)

If you use ready-made templates (especially when posting to real estate sections, but this also may be applicable to other sections), please read this paragraph very carefully. Craigslist filters are tuned to let the template-based ads through, but they are also tuned to ghost template-based ads that undergone template modification. So for instance, if you usually use template generator like vflyer.com or similar when posting your ads manually, your ads will go live and will stick. But if you try to edit the generated HTML in any of the HTML editors and then post the resulting ad - Craigslist will ghost it. Now the most important part: If you paste your template based ad in CLAD and then try to post that ad with CLAD, it will be ghosted with the probability of 90%. Why? Because CLAD will modify the underlying HTML of the template, unless you set it up to avoid HTML modifications. So, for template-based ads you need to check the following:

- » settings->posting->mutations: junk text insertion is OFF, letter substitution is set to "Do not use letter substitution"
- » settings->posting->craigslist->convert HTML tags to lower case must be OFF
- » settings->posting->craigslist->auto edit ads must be set to "Do not edit ads"
- » the most important: when you paste the HTML of your ad into the ad description box in CLAD,

make sure that you see the "Plain text or HTML source" button pressed right above the description box and the "HTML designer" button is depressed. Also, after you paste your ad into the box, NEVER press the "HTML designer" button (again, this is true only for template-based ads. If you use your own HTML to design your ads, you can use built-in HTML designer safely). Why so? Because CLAD's HTML designer will clean up and re-format your HTML codes in a way, that there are no visible changes in the generated ad view, BUT there will be a lot of changes to the HTML code, which Craigslist will pick on and ghost your ads. You can make an experiment to verify that. Paste a simple html code like

```
<a href='http://www.google.com'> Google Search </a>
```

into the Description field, then press "HTML designer" button and then press "Plain text or HTML source" button again. Now examine the HTML code. You will see:

```
<A href="http://www.google.com">Google Search </A>
```

The differences are: (1) uppercased "A" tag, (2) single quotes around the URL are replaced by double quotes (3) no space after the closing bracket of the <A> tag

These and some other differences cause ghosting to the template-based ads. So the rule here is: Never Click On The "HTML designer" Button After Pasting Your HTML-based Template Ad Into CLAD!

» You may want to use tokens/mutations, which you can do with template based ads, as long as you follow the simple rule, which is: Do Not Modify HTML Metadata With Tokens/Mutations. This means that you are not allowed to change anything inside the < and > signs. You are only allowed to change the text outside the < and > signs. For example:

```
<table style='color:red'><tr><td>{Area} 35sqft</td></tr></table>
```

 - this is valid, it shows how the token is used in the text of the ad

but never do things like this:

```
<table style='color:{color}'><tr><td>Area 35sqft</td></tr></table>
```

 - this is NOT valid, because you are modifying the template itself by changing the color of the font in the table, which may and will cause ghosting.

The next thing to check is geo-correspondence. Ideally, the following things must match:

- » Geographic location of IP address that you use for posting an ad
 - » Geographic area (state/city) that you post your ad to
 - » Geographic location of IP addresses that were ever used to access CL account or PVA that you post with
 - » Geographic location of IP address that was used to create CL account or PVA that you post with
 - » Geographic location of phone number that was used to phone-verify CL account (now PVA) that you post with
 - » Geographic location recent posts on the CL account or PVA that you use to post with
- If all of the above match, you may be sure that your ghosting issues are not related to Geo-IP filters.

Next thing is the quality of your IPs. If you use the same IP address to post 30+ ads every day, that can be the reason for ghosting. Even if you use your IP to post only one ad per month, you still cannot be sure that IP is not an issue, because someone else may share your IP and abuse it (that is possible under some network topologies). To check whether your IP is the issue, try use different IP pool from different provider

Next is account usage. Make sure you do not abuse your CL account/PVA by posting many ads frequently. The safest is to have 1 post per account per 48 hours. When you feel confident with that,

you can experiment with different settings, for instance 2 ads per 24 hours per account
Next is your browser. If you use Internet explorer in CLAD, try switching to Firefox plugin
downloadable from our site, if you use Firefox plugin already - try to switch to Internet explorer
The last thing is CLAD Genius settings. The safest is to use default settings in CLAD - they should
not cause any problems. However, if you have already changed your settings and not sure if that
affected ghosting, try this:

- » go to settings/posting/mutations in CLAD Genius and disable Invisible junk text insertion, Letter substitution (set to Do not use letter substitution)

- » go to settings/posting/craigslist/resources in CLAD Genius and set May re-use resources after no less than specified hours boxes (there are 3 of them) to 48, set the boxes underneath (Maximum posts per 1 instance of resource) to 1

- » go to settings/posting/craigslist/timing in CLAD Genius make sure that in Delays between pages you have numbers between 20-60 seconds. The largest delay should be for "After post form filled out" entry

Also there may be some exotic mis-configurations that we have encountered when examining customers' setups, such as:

- » When setting up mutations, make sure that you do not mutate HTML tags, because mutations are applied to HTML tags as well as to the ordinary words. For instance, you may have tags in your ad's HTML code, and may have mutated tag to something like "BOLD", "POWERFUL" etc. So when Craigslist encounters <POWERFUL>some text here</POWERFUL> instead of some text here, it may ghost your ads because they use invalid HTML markup

- » Do not reference local filenames in your tags. For instance, if you believe that will actually show the picture of your house in your ad, you are wrong. It will only alert Craigslist's filters, nothing more. In order to actually display your image in your ad, you need to either upload it to the image hosting service such as photobucket, and then your IMG tag will look like this: , which is perfectly OK, or you can take advantage of Pictures tab in ad edit window in CLAD and CLAD will upload your images directly to Craigslist

Also please understand that we do not provide services to determine what is the reason for ads getting ghosted in your particular case. We have tested the software many times and we are quite sure that there is nothing in the software itself that may cause ghosting. It is your posting technique that is most probable cause of ghosting. You can verify that by trying to post you ads manually.