

# Are Your Internet Legal Advertising Dollars Competing Against Your Advertising Dollars?

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Lawyers spend a lot of money on advertising. The Internet has been drawing in a lot of those **legal advertising** dollars. For the most part these dollars are going to companies that design and/or promote law firm websites and to companies that develop and/or maintain their own websites. Unfortunately most lawyers do not choose one option over the other and their legal advertising dollars do compete directly against themselves.

Let's look at this a bit further. Most certainly Google, Yahoo and Microsoft's pay per click services draw a lot of legal advertising dollars. Lawyers and law firms use these services to promote the lawyers or firm's individual websites. This has increased the demand for and legal advertising dollars that flow to companies that design **law firm websites**. So far so good. A decent website and pay per click ad campaign can be a viable internet advertising plan.

But most lawyers and law firms do not stop there. Instead they also advertise on legal portals (such as FindLaw, law.com, or lawyers.com) and legal matching websites (such as Case Post). The problem with this is that these portals and legal matching websites conduct their own internet advertising. In essence these portals and legal matching websites are trying to draw the same visitors that would have otherwise visited the lawyer or law firm's website directly.

Let me give you a real life example. Say a criminal law attorney sets up a \$100 per month Google pay-per-click advertising campaign and the attorney pays \$300 per month to a portal like or to a legal matching web service. What will happen is the legal portal or legal matching website will turn around and allocate most (if not all) of the \$300 per month to set up a pay per click advertising campaign to target the kind of traffic the criminal lawyer would like.

This \$300 outlay will enable the portal or legal matching service to place its pay-per-click advertisements above the criminal law attorney's individual \$100 outlay for pay-per-click advertisements.

You would think that this double exposure would be great. And it would, if the portal or legal matching website were only advertising the individual criminal lawyer's services. Portals and **legal matching** websites do not operate like this. They advertise for hundreds and even thousands of other criminal lawyers. The criminal lawyer has paid to put a third party to put someone else's ads in front of his ads and to expose would-be-clients to other criminal lawyers.

If that is not bad enough, the legal portal or legal matching website will use part of the lawyers \$300 outlay to produce content for their own website. This content will then increase the portal's and legal matching websites rankings in the search engines in relation to the law firm's own website. This has the potential to seriously diminish the number of visitors that would have naturally been directed to the criminal lawyers own website via the search engines.

Part of the criminal lawyer's funds will also be directed towards promoting the **legal portal** or **legal matching** website offline. This helps legal portals and legal matching services to put out legal advertising that competes directly with the lawyer or law firms offline legal advertising efforts. This further increases the false perception in the legal profession and in the public that the legal portal or matching services actually provide a service that is worth paying for, and it helps to justify the legal portal or legal matching service charging the lawyers more to participate.

At the end of the day, the criminal lawyer has contributed to a system that makes lawyers dependent on expensive third party middlemen advertising portals and legal matching services. A better approach would be for the legal community to unchain itself from these middlemen services that are only out to profit from lawyers and consumers of legal services. LawRex.com is an innovative online lawyer-to-lawyer referral network that was created for lawyers, by lawyers. The company's goal is to provide an efficient and equitable automated network to help attorneys quickly and easily grow their practices. LawRex provides an alternative to expensive legal marketing and basic online lawyer directories.

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