AusCycling Club Guide | Detecting and Preventing Facebook Scams

Background

Many cycling clubs use Facebook as a way of sharing news with their members. However, an unfortunate reality of social media is that scammers are increasingly targeting Facebook pages to lure unsuspecting followers into giving up their credit card or identity details, or worse.

This guide will attempt to address three types of scams commonly found on the platform, and what to do if they are discovered.

1. Fraudulent live stream links

- **What is it?** Fake or bot accounts will post a link to a purported 'live stream' of an event in the comments under a post. These links are a 'honeypot', directing users to fraudulent sites, where they are asked to create an account and enter their credit card details to access the non-existent live stream, thereby capturing users' credit card information.
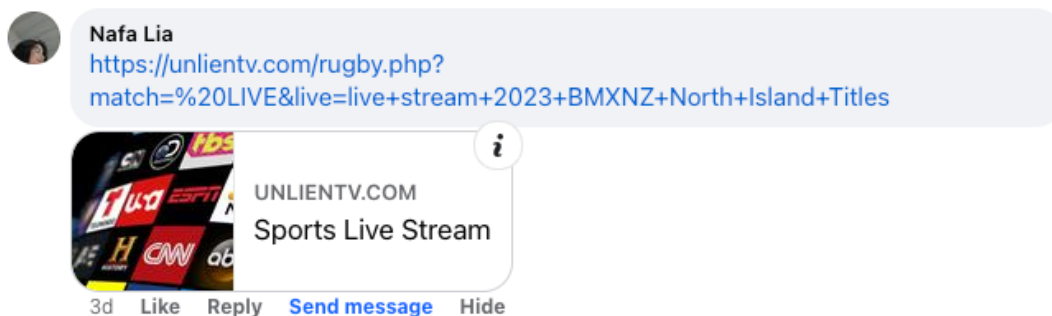
- **How to combat.** These accounts can be reported as spam, and the comments deleted one-by-one. However, as the fake accounts are auto-generated, there will often be an unending torrent of accounts to report, which can become labour-intensive.

  One strategy is to post a comment advising your legitimate followers that there is no live stream for this event, and warning users not to click on the links.

  An alternative is to limit who can post in the comments on your page: Go to:
 - **Professional Dashboard -> Moderation Assist**. Here you can add or edit the criteria to manage who can post comments.

o **Click on the Add button**, and select the criteria that will auto-hide comments. If an account is new or has no friends or followers, it is likely a spam account, so you can set that as the criteria on which to prevent posts being published to your page.

o **Warning:** Enabling some criteria may autohide legitimate users, so take care when selecting criteria, and continue to monitor hidden comments to ensure legitimate comments are not hidden.

o **Note:** Since Facebook keeps updating its user interface, this procedure might not apply to certain types of Facebook pages (eg ones that don't have a Meta Business account, or haven't been upgraded to the "New Pages Experience"). A search for "Moderating posts" in settings may help administrators find the relevant settings.

2. Fake Pages and Events

- **What is it?** Scam accounts will create a copy of an existing page or event on Facebook, even copying photos and posts from the legitimate event. The scammers then invite other pages or users to join them as a 'co-host' or follower of the event, thereby attracting users to the page who can be harvested for personal information/identify theft, etc.

- **How to combat.** Fake pages will have tell-tale signs to look out for, such as old logos, a very low follower count, a short history, and few photos and videos. The best option here is to report and block the page:

  o Logged in as your page, go to the fake page or event, and **click on the 'kebab menu'** (i.e., three buttons) under the search function on the page.
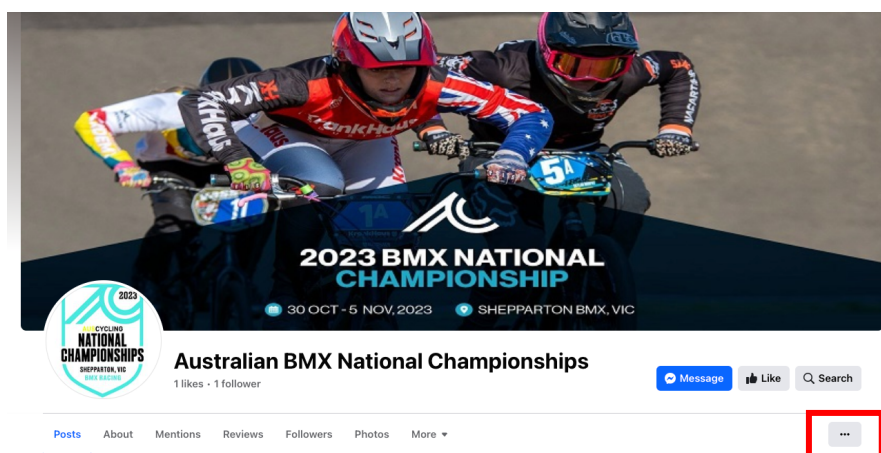
o From the pop-up menu, **select Find Support or Report**. Then select **Fake Page**. You can also select the **Block and Hide Posts** options, to further limit the pages visibility.

o **Warning:** It may take some time for Facebook to action your report, so you may also publish a post on your own page, advising your legitimate followers that a fake page exists.

3. Fake Messenger Inbox Warnings

- **What is it?** Scam accounts will send a message to your Facebook Messenger inbox, saying that your page has violated Facebook's user guidelines (or similar), and that you must take immediate action to prevent your page from being disabled. This is another attempt to get legitimate users to click on links that will defraud them or harvest personal information.
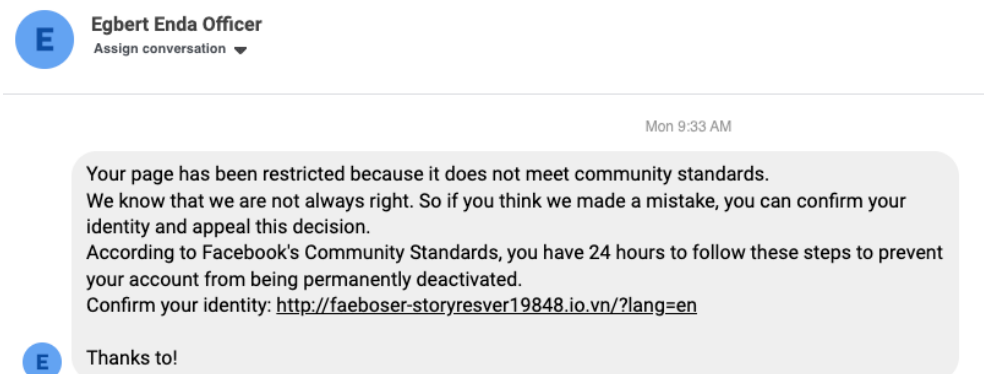
- **How to combat.** Again, these messages will have tell-tale signs to look out for, such as unusual language, poor grammar and spelling, and the user that posted the message has no profile information that can be viewed. The best course of action here is to mark the message as Spam, by clicking on the Spam or Delete icons above the message:
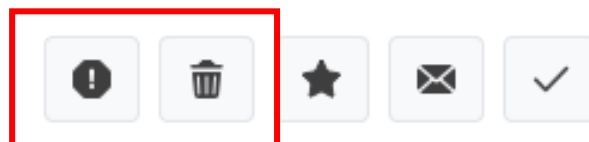
Finally, if you have any doubts about content and messages that appear on your page, please feel free to reach out to the AusCycling Media and Communications team who can help with your content moderation: media@auscycling.org.au