

Golden Rule #2 of 20

Stop Using a CAPTCHA; Use a Honeypot Instead



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CAPTCHAs create unfriendly user experiences for your web visitors, but, in most cases, common web designers will use them thinking it's an unavoidable technique in the battle against bots and spam.

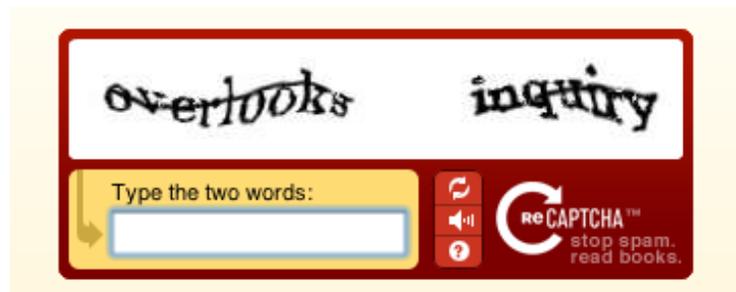
Our Golden Rule #2 will make a case to stop using CAPTCHAs and use a different technique (e.g. Honeypot) instead.



First, let's start by defining what CAPTCHA stands for, and what its purpose is.

CAPTCHA stands for "Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart". This is a technique that protects websites against spam robots by generating and grading tests that humans can pass, but spam robots cannot.

For example, humans can read distorted text as the one shown below, but spam robots cannot:



I know what you're probably thinking right now, "Man, I hate those things. They are so annoying."

Yes, they are. CAPTCHA codes not only damage the usability of your website, but also significantly decreases conversation rates (e.g. leads, sales, or other important metrics you need to make money).

Simply put, when you use CAPTCHAs, chances are you're losing money.

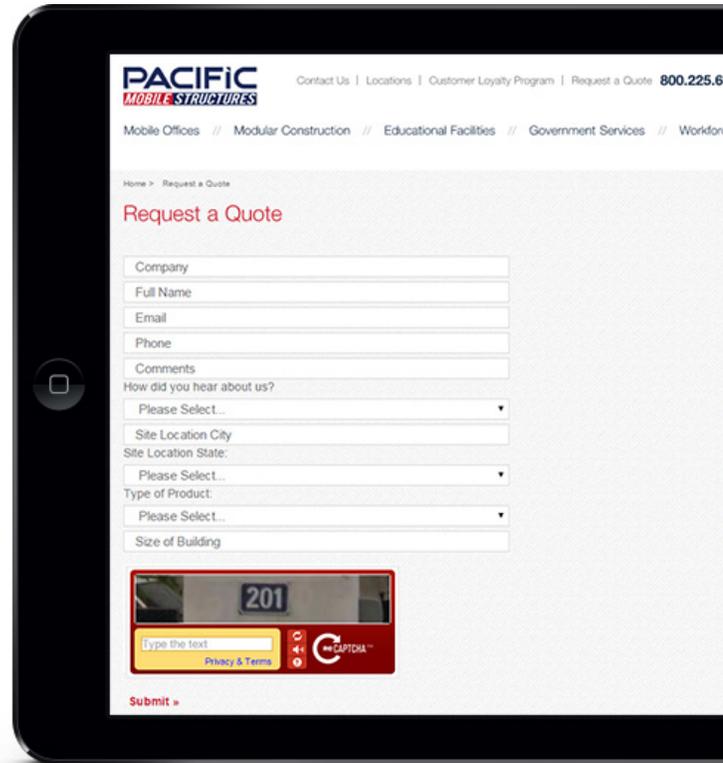
OK – spam is bad and you don't want it. So how can you defend your website against spam, but not give your users the miserable experience of a CAPTCHA?

Enter the Honeypot.

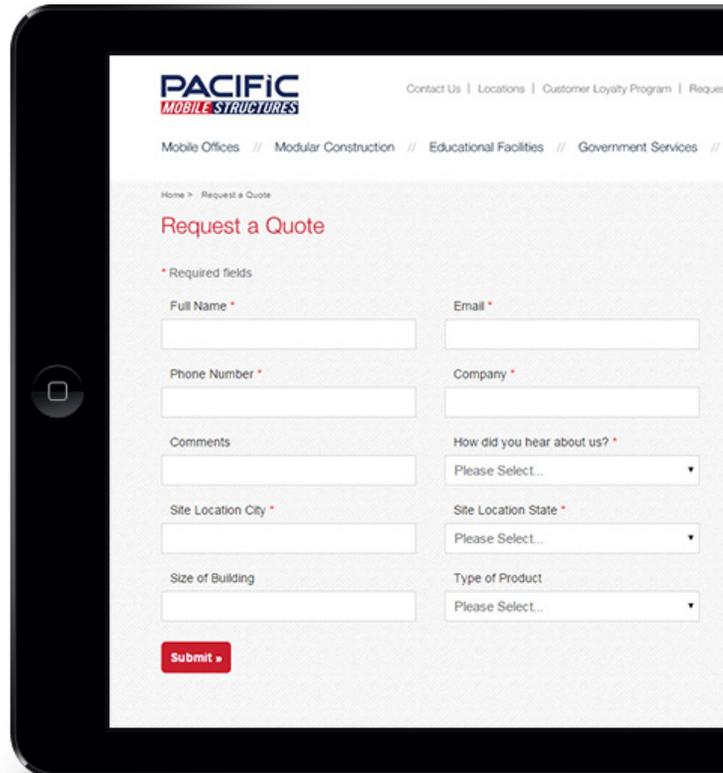
The concept of a Honeypot is pretty simple. Using basic HTML and CSS you can simply add fields to your contact and sign up form that are invisible to human users, but visible to spam robots. You see, spam robots are stupid. For example, they are not smart enough to do the CAPTCHA, and they can't tell humans aren't able to see the Honeypot field. If the robot blindly fills in all the fields – especially when it doesn't require data and has data in it – then it's a robot and not a human, meaning it can be discarded as spam.

Here's a simple case study.

We took this simple "request a quote" form from one of our clients that used to look like this:



And with some simple re-formatting and replacing that annoying CAPTCHA with a Honeypot, it now looks like this:



The results...

We doubled the conversation rates - from 2% - 4% - of visitors to this page.

Sure, we cleaned up the fields a little bit, but that's not the real reason the conversations took off so much – the real reason is that there was no annoying CAPTCHA. And we're still spam-free because of the Honeypot running, invisible to humans, in the background.

Finally, a lot of people ask us, "Will a Honeypot ensure I won't get any spam from my online forms?"

The answer is "of course not." Spam still can come from humans and the Honeypot is actually easier than a CAPTCHA for those human spammers, but from a wide-scope way to avoid robot spamming, this technique will do the trick.

All of our **Golden Rules of Harder Working Websites** are only a sampling of what's possible.

The case studies are real, but your results will vary, depending on your business and how well you execute.

However, whether your company is in B-2-B or B-2-C our experience consistently shows why you should stop using a CAPTCHA and start using a Honeypot instead.

Be sure to let us know if you have any questions, or if you try this Golden Rule, let us know how it worked!

**WE'D LOVE TO
HEAR FROM YOU**

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