

Searching online: bill pay impersonators

By

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Planning to pay a bill online? Before you start searching for a company's payment site, know that dishonest companies sometimes use paid search ads to trick you into paying them instead of the company or agency you're looking for. Here's how it happens.

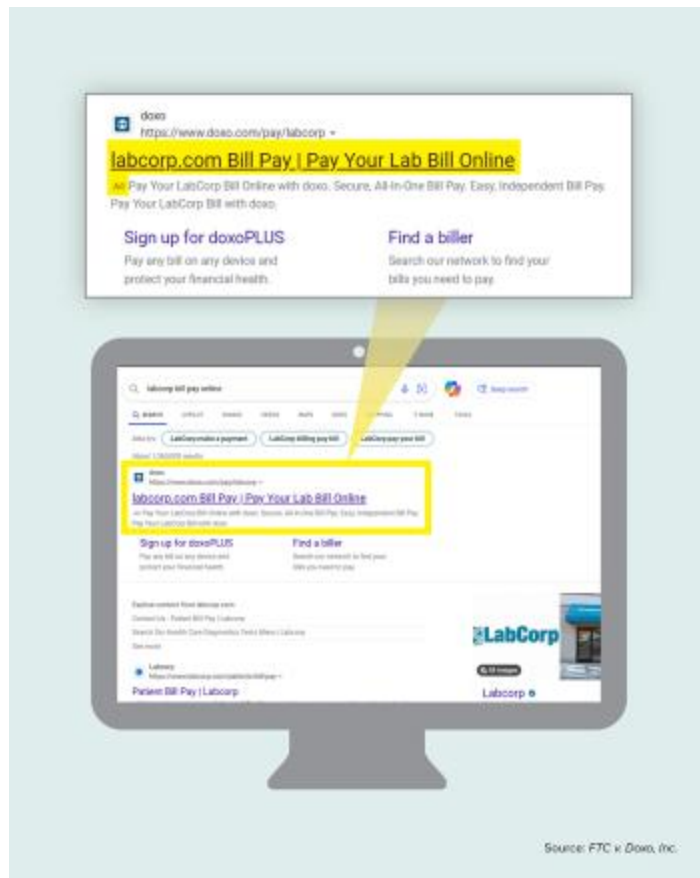
You need to pay a bill, so you search online using a search engine such as Google Search or Bing for the company's payment site.

Image



In this example from *FTC v. Doxo, Inc.*, the top result looked like it belonged to a well-known lab company. But it's a paid search text ad that will take you to another company's site.

Image



When you click on the link and go to the company's site, you don't realize it doesn't have a relationship with the lab company. And when you go to pay your bill, the company may add additional fees you didn't expect.

Image



According to the [FTC's complaint](#), Doxo — using search engines, such as Google Search or Bing — misrepresented that it was an official payment channel for companies and agencies including Labcorp, AT&T, and state toll authorities.

So how can you make sure you're going to the real payment site?

- Scroll past the paid search results to help make sure you have the right website or contact info.
- Type the company's website address (if you know it) directly into your browser to find the right payment site.

Spot a bad business practice? Tell the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/ReportFraud).

Image

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1

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Source: *FTC v. Doxo, Inc.*



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What To Do

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