

NY Times expands limits on free search traffic

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(AP) -- The New York Times will try to make it more difficult to use Internet search engines to avoid paying for frequent visits to the newspaper's website.

The Times will limit Web surfers arriving through major search engines to five free articles per day, spokeswoman Kristin Mason confirmed Tuesday. That restriction was only supposed to apply to traffic sent by Google Inc.'s search engine, which processes about two out of every three online queries. Now, other search engines including Yahoo Inc. and Microsoft Corp.'s Bing will be limited to five free stories apiece as well. The Times' online fees take effect in the U.S. March 28.

The Times didn't explain why it decided to expand the restrictions to other search engines.

The Times' digital fees, announced late last week, will be charged to frequent readers on its website and applications for smartphones and Apple Inc.'s iPad tablet computer. The fees range from \$15 to \$35 every four weeks, or \$195 to \$455 annually.

There will still be ways to get around the fees that The New York Times Co. is introducing in an attempt to offset a steep drop in revenue from print advertising during the past four years. For instance, there are no limits on the amount of traffic coming from two of the Web's most popular tools for sharing information, Facebook and Twitter.

Ford Motor Co.'s Lincoln brand also is offering free unlimited access to the Times' website and mobile device applications for the remainder of this year as part of an advertising deal with the newspaper. The offers are being made to tens of thousands of Times readers in e-mails and in targeted Internet ads.

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