

Criminal probe into online mortgage scams widens

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(AP) -- A criminal investigation into mortgage swindlers who lured their victims with deceptive online ads is widening.

The probe is expanding beyond [ads placed alongside Google's search results](#) to include similar links sold by Microsoft and Yahoo. A U.S. government agency overseeing the investigation said Monday that 125 alleged scams have been shut down. That's up from 85 closures last week when the crackdown was announced.

Like [Google](#) Inc., Microsoft Corp.'s Bing search engine agreed to stop accepting ads from hundreds of Internet advertisers and agencies tied to scams that made bogus promises to homeowners hoping to avoid foreclosure by modifying their mortgages. The ban also applies to Yahoo Inc., because it depends on Microsoft to sell its [search advertising](#) in the U.S.

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