

reinkmedia
group

IMPACT REPORT

2021



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INTRODUCTION

At Reink Media Group (RMG), our mission is to make the world a safer place for investing, while sustaining an ethical, environmentally-conscious approach. We believe that investing is a core part of the fabric that binds our global society together, and that participants – in the U.S. and abroad – should be protected from predatory practices.

In the United States, the regulatory environment created and maintained by the SEC and FINRA is well-established for self-directed investing. These regulatory bodies aim to protect investors from scams and fraud. However, investors who seek the help of a financial advisor are at risk from widespread, well-documented conflicts of interest. Thanks to our proprietary **Trust Algorithm**, we are able to serve Americans as a trusted resource – by way of our site investor.com – for researching, comparing, and ultimately evaluating financial advisors.

Outside of the United States, the regulatory environment for self-directed investing varies widely from region to region. For example, while the European Economic Area offers investors the protection of well-established regulations such as **MiFID2**, the vast majority of African countries offer no such protection. To help global investors find an online broker they can trust, we developed our proprietary **Trust Score** rating. With this tool, international investors who visit ForexBrokers.com can easily and intuitively compare the regulatory standing of major investment brokers.

RMG measures the social impact of these initiatives (Trust Algorithm and Trust Score) by

tracking and reporting the total visitors to the pages that provide this impact content to consumers. Unlike your local cookie shop, which operates during normal business hours and can only track its net sales, we operate 24-7 and know the location, language, and device (among other data points) of every user that visits our sites. RMG leases servers in the United States, Europe, and Asia, and in 2021 we once again delivered 99.99% uptime.

Both of these initiatives – as well as our organization's goals for 2022 – are expanded upon in more detail below.

It is important to emphasize that – while we serve millions of people each year – we strive to be environmentally conscious. As an organization, RMG made great strides in 2021 towards accurately measuring and reporting our own emissions. These insights enabled us to make bolder commitments to a sustainable future.



INVESTOR.COM TRUST ALGORITHM

In 2015, the [White House Council of Economic Advisers](#) calculated the annual cost of conflicted investment advice to be about \$17 billion. Conflicted advice occurs when financial advisors and their clients have competing interests. For example, instead of recommending a no-load mutual fund (a fund that charges the customer no sales fees), the financial advisor selects a mutual fund with a load that pays the broker or the broker's firm a sales commission.

Conflicted financial advice is rampant in the industry due to the confusing regulatory system, and we set out to tackle this problem in 2018 with the launch of investor.com. Set up as a consumer advocacy project that covers financial advisor firms, our mission is to help everyday Americans by providing an answer to the question, "Can I trust you with my finances?"

Financial advisors can have one of three classifications: Investment Advisor, Broker, and Hybrid. Of those three, only Investment Advisors operate as true fiduciaries. They are required by law (like doctors and lawyers) to offer unbiased advice and to put the financial interests of their clients above all else.

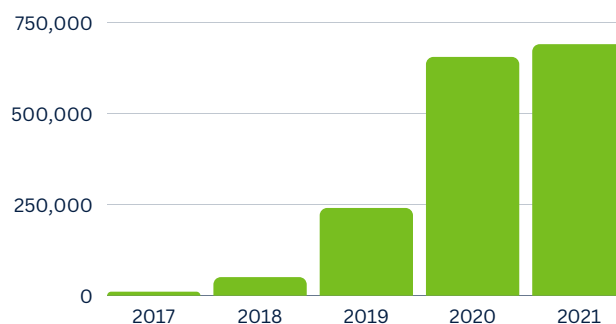
In a [June 2020 study](#) conducted by investor.com, we found that a staggering 99.2% of all financial advisors that had been barred from the industry were classified as either a Broker or dually registered (Hybrid) advisor. To find out if there is the potential for conflicted advice from an advisor or their firm requires a consumer to comb through multiple regulatory and industry databases and devise a

list of specific questions to suss out potential issues.

At investor.com, we help Americans answer the "trust" question. Our team (led by data analyst [Jessica Hoelscher](#)) tracks SEC regulatory filings across over 16,000 federal and state-registered Registered Investment Advisors (RIAs) and uses a proprietary algorithm to rate firms. Known as the investor.com [Trust Algorithm](#), firms that score at least 4.5 stars earn the Trusted badge, which can be licensed for a nominal annual fee in support of the project.

In 2021, over 688,000 visitors in the United States visited at least one of our financial advisor resource pages.

Looking ahead into 2022, one of our goals is to redesign the profile pages of the more than 16,000 firms we track to increase ADA accessibility, while simultaneously making it easier for Americans to understand crucial takeaways. Interpreting regulatory filings is difficult enough for our in-house data experts, so we believe that reinvesting in this area will further help Americans make important financial decisions.



Investor.com annual site visitors to financial advisor pages. 2021, Jan. 1 - Dec. 31.

FOREXBROKERS.COM TRUST SCORE

In the world of global investments, there is no shortage of fraudulent financial products. Among the most infamous of these scams in the past decade was the creation of [binary options](#). The industry boomed in the early 2010s, as documented in investigatory pieces like [The wolves of Tel Aviv](#), which exposed the practices of the industry.

While many countries have since banned binary options outright, this spurious financial instrument is still legal in many parts of the world. This is especially true for the 82 low-income and lower-income countries (as [designated by the World Bank](#)), where there is little – if any – education or regulatory protections for investors. The FCA (regulator in the U.K.) [estimated](#) that binary options scams led to an average of £87,410 in daily losses in 2017. Meanwhile, the FBI estimates that scammers steal \$10 billion [annually](#), worldwide

Unfortunately, binary options are just one of the many pitfalls awaiting inexperienced investors. The first step in avoiding such scams is registering with a trusted, well-regulated brokerage firm. To help global investors find an online broker they can trust, our team at ForexBrokers.com – led by [Steven Hatzakis](#), an industry veteran with more than 20 years of experience – tracks the regulatory status of brokers across 23 international regulatory jurisdictions.

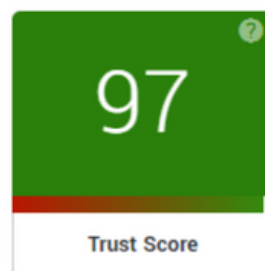
Alongside the collected regulatory data, brokers are assessed independently. An expert evaluation of each firm's regulatory and financial health is conducted and, based on all of the data, each firm is given a Trust Score on

a 1 to 99 scale. The lower the score, the higher the risk. This provides a simple, quick eye test for prospective investors looking to protect themselves from scams.

To ensure our data is accurate, we audit broker regulatory licenses each year. This process includes industry participation, with 32 of 39 brokers in 2021 communicating directly with ForexBrokers.com, providing a direct insight into ongoing regulatory changes across the globe.

In 2021, more than 3.6 million visitors across the globe visited ForexBrokers.com. Among the 82 low-income and lower-income countries [designated by the World Bank](#), ForexBrokers.com served nearly 450,000 visitors.

For 2022, we have bold plans for continued investment in our stated initiatives, broken down here into three main goals. First, we've undertaken a complete visual redesign of our Trust Score that will make it fully ADA-accessible. Second, we aim to launch Trust Score on ForexBrokers.com's sister site, BrokerNotes.co. Third, we intend to expand our coverage from our current count of 46 brokers to more than 60.



ForexBrokers.com Trust Score, original design.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

At RMG, our goal has always been to have a social impact while remaining environmentally conscious. Since our founding in 2009, RMG has been a remote-friendly work environment. As of year-end 2021, just six of our 17 W-2 staff members reside in our home state of Michigan.

In 2021, RMG achieved three key milestones in its continued focus on the environment:

- **Committed to Net Zero by 2030.** RMG officially pledged to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 with the [B Corp Climate Collective](#). This goal applies to Scope 1, Scope 2, and Scope 3 emissions, with a combination of both actualized efforts and verified carbon removal offsets. It is an honor to join over 1,600 companies that have committed to net zero by 2030.
- **Switched to 100% renewable energy at our Michigan headquarters.** Through enrollment in [DTE's MIGreenPower program](#), approximately 85% of our energy is sourced from wind and solar power, with the remainder from DTE's other renewable sources. This pivot represents the equivalent of planting 1,167 trees per year, or taking 9.6 cars off the road.
- **Purchased 42 Carbon Offset Credits.** In the pursuit of our goal to achieve net zero emissions, we utilized industry-standard emissions calculations to determine how we could implement a long-term carbon credit strategy. After working through our due diligence, we opted to work with the [Bonneville Environmental Foundation](#).

Through the foundation, RMG acquired 26 Carbon Offsets that support the Crow Lake Wind Project, and 16 Regenerative Agriculture Credits supporting the Prairie Pothole Avoided Grassland Conversion.

In addition to the milestones above, we have introduced new environmentally-friendly workplace policies, such as our Virtual Office Stewardship and Non-Toxic Office programs. These policies encourage recycling and green-living best practices, and empower all RMG team members to contribute to a positive impact on the environment.

Our goal for 2022 is to carry over the momentum from 2021. By expanding our efforts to achieve operational efficiencies, we can and will continue to reduce our net environmental footprint.



CLOSING THOUGHTS

We are extremely proud of the work that was done this year to continue driving our mission forward. While our efforts had a measurable impact in 2021, we know that more opportunities to stretch our wings await us in 2022 and beyond.

We have our own corporate mantra here at RMG: “Have fun, while growing scalably and sustainably.” As we continue to grow as a proudly privately held, 100% bootstrapped organization, we believe we have a responsibility to use our collective expertise to give back. Doing business for good has been – and will continue to be – a part of our DNA.

In closing, we’d like to give a big shout-out to all the RMGers who contributed to our impact efforts in 2021. Thank you all for your time, passion, and energy. This includes our incredible partners across the web who also support our efforts.

Onwards!

Blain & Brandon Reinkensmeyer
Founders
Reink Media Group