Flash Tracking with Variables

Instructions for creating the FLASH file

Introduction

Macromedia and DoubleClick have worked together on a new way to track clicks on FLASH banner ads. The click tracking string allows advertisers to know how many times a user has clicked on their FLASH banner and to direct them to the destination URL.

Previously, the click tracking string had to be embedded into the Flash movie (swf file) as a click command.

The problem with this old method is that each time the destination URL has to be modified (for whatever reason), the FLASH File has to be sent back to the design agency to be modified.

The new method, only available for **FLASH 4 or above**, shown uses variables to pass the click tracking string into Flash movies. As a result, instead of modifying the FLASH File itself, we will only change the variable in the Rich Media Field of the DoubleClick DART system, not in the swf movie.

Advantages:

- There will be no need to return the Flash file to the designer if any modification need to be done to the click through URL

- This method works for both **DFA** and **DFP** clients

- Changes to the destination URL will be immediate at the next reload of the DoubleClick ad servers

- The destination URL of the FLASH file can be easily checked

- There's no need of a click command to implement in the FLASH file (easier for the designer)

This document describes to the FLASH designer how to make the FLASH file compliant to the new tracking method

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SWF Movie Requirements

For the most part, the movie is made just like any other movie. Any swf file specifications provided by the advertiser still apply. Any animation or ActionScript that you would normally use can be used with this method. The only difference is the settings for click through actions. Make sure the following parameters are set when the ad clicks over to a site:

- clickTag is used in the URL
- the URL box is set for an expression
- the target window is set appropriately (generally _blank is the best choice)

The accompanying figures show examples what the Flash 4 or Flash 5 interface should look like when all the parameters are set appropriately.

N.B. This method will only work with Flash 4 or higher creatives. Flash 3 creatives do not have the necessary features.

Also, make sure that the movie filename is **all lower case without any spaces**. Since the movie will be played on the Internet, not having spaces in the filename and keeping the filename lower case will help prevent problems in locating the file on different servers.

For DART, the maximum swf file size is 39k. However sites may have different file size restrictions.

clickTag is used in the URL
DoubleClick recommends that clickTag is used to only pass the click tracking information. ActionScript is used to combine the clickTag together with the movie. DoubleClick recommends that clickTAG be setup in this manner to allow for additional safety and flexibility.
For Flash 4, the URL should look something like Fig. 1. The end result would follow the pattern:
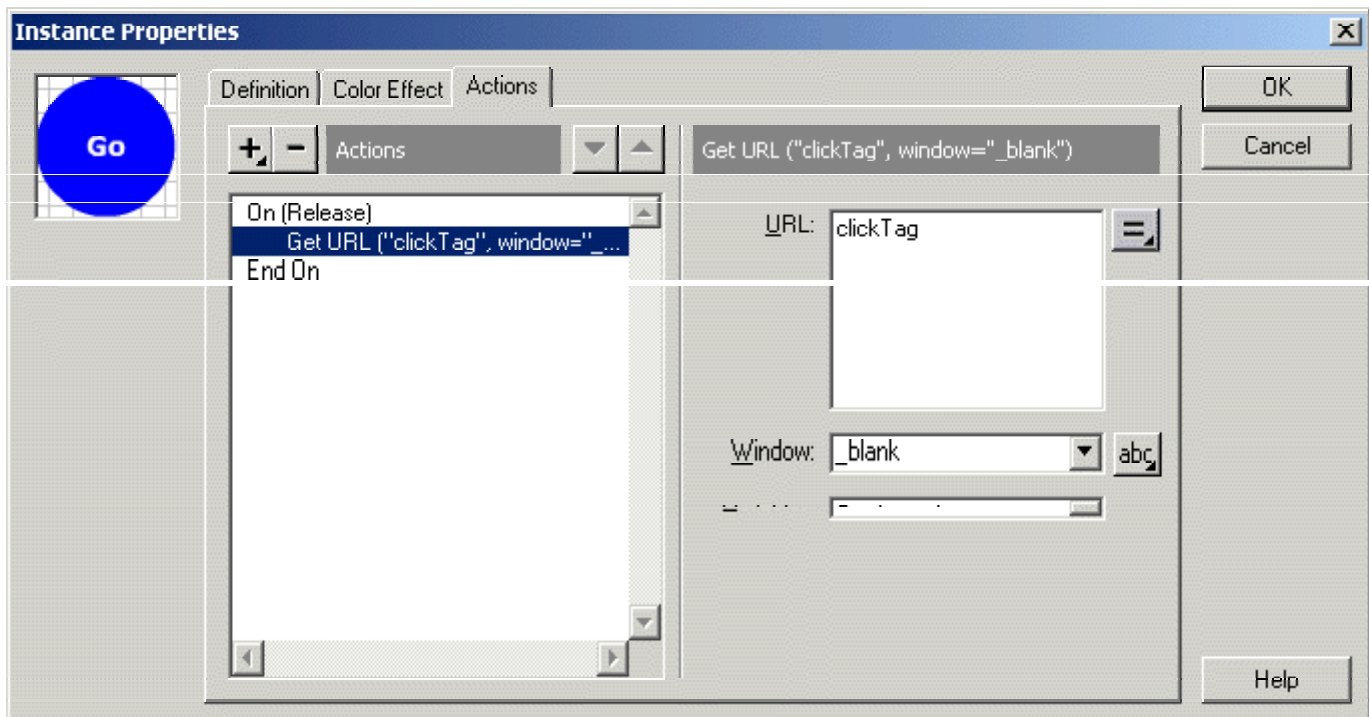
   "clickTag "

Figure 1. Flash 4 with DoubleClick recommended URL

For Flash 5, the URL should look something like Fig. 2. The result should follow the same pattern:
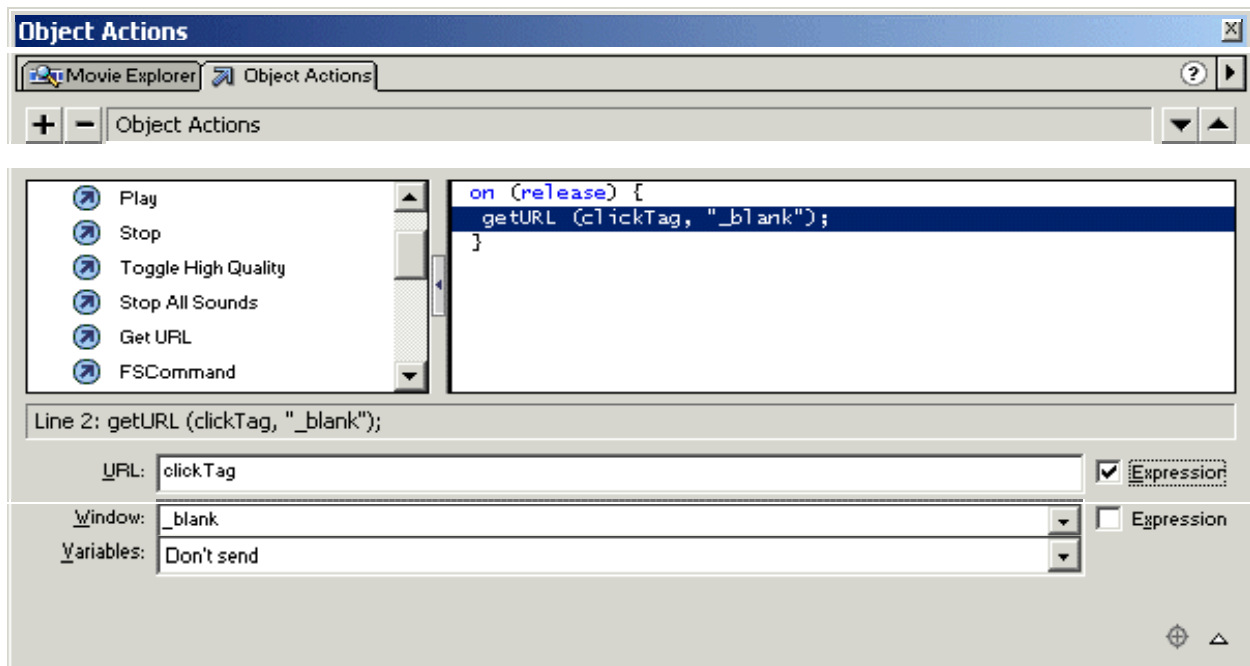
"clickTag "

Figure 2. Flash 5 with DoubleClick recommended URL

The URL box is set for an expression

The text that is entered into the URL box is an expression. When the movie plays, the expression will be evaluated and replaced with the click tracking string and the destination URL from the the HTML sniffer code, in the DART system. In order for this method to function correctly, you must indicate that the text is an expression. In Flash 4, the button to the right of the URL should have an equal sign. It should not have the letters abc. (See Fig. 1.) In Flash 5, the expression check box should be checked. (See Fig.2). Note that there are two buttons or check boxes. One is for the URL and one is for the target window. Make sure that the button or check box for the URL is set correctly.

The target window is set appropriately
Most richmedia advertising is served through a different frame or through javascript. Frames or javascript allow a site to rotate ads. Because frames are sometimes used, the target window for the click through URL must be set appropriately. If the target window is set incorrectly, the advertiser's site will not appear in the right location**. We usually recommend to set the target to _blank.**

Passing variables is set appropriately
When the click through occurs, the browser will first contact the ad server to count the click and then go to the advertiser's site. If you are not passing variables to the advertiser's site, set the Variables drop down box to "Don't send". To pass variables with DoubleClick ad servers, choose "Send using GET". If the advertiser's servers can not use the GET method for variables, please contact DoubleClick support for assistance.

Multiple Click-Through Areas
IF he FLASH Files contain multiple clickable zones with different destination url, follow the same procedure with different clickTag names: clickTag1, clickTag2…etc