Ad Tracking SuperTips

by Harvey Segal
SuperTips.com
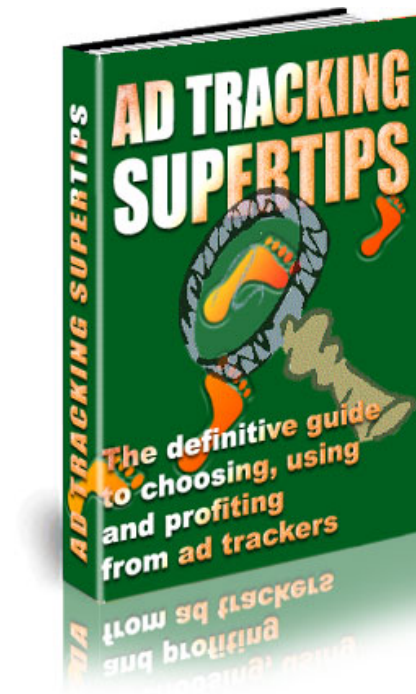
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Preface

This ebook was set up as a free resource to introduce Internet marketers to the many benefits of using ad tracking tools.

It can not be sold.

However you are welcome to customize the book and use it as free content at your web site: for instructions see Appendix 1.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Hi,

It's Harvey Segal of SuperTips here.

I'm a great fan of ad trackers.

I find them indispensable in my Internet marketing business and use tracking URLs in my ebooks, web sites, ezine, signature files and many other places – as you will discover in this book.

> In fact I like ad trackers so much that I have even built a web site about them – currently the only one on the Net.
>
> ## The Complete Guide to Ad Tracking Programs
>
> I'm continually adding new information there, so why not pay a visit: and don't forget to join the mailing list where I will keep you up to date with the latest news, plus updates to this ebook.
>
> ad–tracking.com

I hope that by the time you have finished this book you will also be convinced that an ad tracker is an indispensable tool and that you will discover profitable ways of using a tracker that you may never have thought of.

Chapter 2: Why You Need An Ad Tracker

1. What Is An Ad Tracker ?

Simple explanation: it's a program which tells you where visitors to your site have come from.

Simple example: you place a classified ad with a link to your site in an ezine. The basic ad tracker tells you the response to that ad i.e. the number of people who clicked through to your site from that ad.

The early ad trackers produced little more information than totals for each of your ad campaigns.

The latest versions now provide a host of features, they can even show you where your customer visited after leaving your site.

We will cover these later in Chapter 4.

2. Why Do You Need To Track Your Ads ?

Every business must advertise.

The more effective your ads – the greater your profits.

So how do you make your ads more effective?

There's two key factors

1. The content – the words you use in your headline and the body

2. The location where you place your ad

And, as the expert marketers will tell you, by constant experimenting, changing, tweaking and testing you'll eventually find the best combination.

So how do you carry out this testing ?

As visitors flock to your website how do you know which ad has brought them there ?

There's only one way to find out and to really know the effectiveness of every single ad, banner, link that you run.

You need to use an ad tracking program.

Then you can identify the success rates of all your ad campaigns, so that

- you can eliminate all advertising that is not working, and

- run more ads that are making you profits

3. But There's More . . .

So far we have only talked about using trackers to measure the response to ads.

If that was their only use then that alone would make them a mandatory product in the marketer's toolbox.

However there is a multitude of different ways that you can use a tracker and these are revealed in Chapter 5.

And the great thing about ad tracking programs is that they are so simple to use: as you will see next.

Chapter 3: How An Ad Tracker Works

It's very simple to use an ad tracking program. The two main operations are

> 1. Setting up an ad campaign

> 2. Viewing the campaign stats

The program runs either at your own site (tracking software) or at an external site (a tracking service). There are important differences between these two which are discussed in Chapter 4 but the essential operation is the same.

You run all operations from the program's Control Center.

1. Setting Up An Ad Campaign

Suppose you want to run this ad campaign in the Daily Star newsletter

> For cameras at lowest prices, visit
>
> http://www.yoursite.com
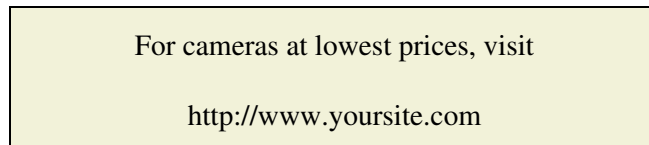
Obviously as it stands there is no way to tell which visitors to your site arrived as a result of seeing this ad.

Here's where an ad tracker comes in.

You first decide on a special code unique to this campaign. In this case a code **ds** (for Daily Star) would be suitable.

Or if you planned to run different campaigns over several monthly issues then you could include the month in the code, for example, **dsjan**. The choice of code is entirely up to you.

Now you feed in to the ad tracking program at the Control Center two items of information :

> 1. The URL: http://www.yoursite.com

> 2. The code: dsjan

The program then provides you with a new URL – a **tracking** URL – and this is the one that you place in the ad.

A typical tracking URL may look like this (different ad tracking programs use different formats)

http://www.ztrack.com/a.cgi?a123&dsjan

This example shows a tracking service (ztrack.com) where your account is 'a123'.

So your new ad reads

> For cameras at lowest prices, visit
>
> http://www.ztrack.com/a.cgi?a123&dsjan
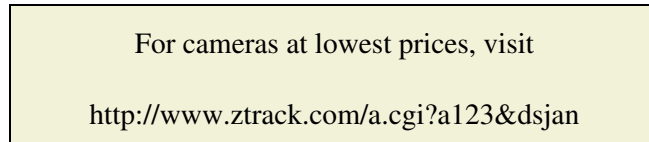
So now when someone reads that ad and clicks on the new URL they will be taken to http://www.yoursite.com and the ad tracking system will register that the click came from the campaign dsjan, in other words the Daily Star newsletter, January issue.

The great advantage of an ad tracker compared to other methods is

- You don't have to change anything at your web site (unless you require some advanced features)

- You don't have to examine your web site logs

- You don't have to make copies of your web pages

- You can see your results instantly

- You don't even have to install a program if you are using a tracking service

By the way, that new Url can be shortened if you wish: this is done by using a redirect file, explained in Chapter 4.2

2. Viewing The Campaign Stats

The ad tracking program records the date and time when your URL has been clicked. It can detect where your visitor came from (the referring URL), the browser and operating system.

This data is kept in the system so you can then pull off reports on any ad campaign over any period e.g. by month, day or even by hour.

You can visit the Control Center at any time and view your stats, which will be immediately up to date. If someone clicked on your ad just a second ago this information will already be available in the system.

Chapter 4: Which Ad Tracker For You ?

Since the first ad tracker was developed, doing nothing more than recording where a clickthrough came from, tracking technology has advanced. Now there are sophisticated systems which can tell you how many sales resulted from a keyword in a pay per click engine or even show you where your customer visited after leaving your site.

In this chapter you will see an explanation of ad tracking features, starting first with an important distinction between the two types of tracker.

You may wish to make a note of the features that you find most essential for your business to help you choose an ad tracker when we review products in Chapter 7

Chapter 4.1: Two Types Of Tracker

Although the operation of ad tracking programs is basically the same there is an important distinction between the two types of program: tracking software and tracking services.

You can read the details below or skip to the summary at the end which highlights the key differences.

1. The Two Types Of Tracker

1.1 Tracking Software

You purchase the program outright and it is installed on your site. There are certain software requirements – for example Perl, PHP or MySql – so it's unlikely that free sites will qualify.

If you have some technical knowledge you should be able to install it yourself otherwise the supplier will usually charge an installation fee.

Note: If you want to learn how to carry out your own installations, see the ebook *'The Absolute Beginners Guide to CGI'* in Appendix 2.

1.2 Tracking Service

You pay a rental (monthly or yearly) for a 3rd party service which runs independently of your site.

2. Comparison Chart

In the chart below the plus points are highlighted in red.

	Tracking Software	Tracking Service
Installation	Program needs to be installed at your site	No installation required – you can start immediately
Site Requirements	1. You must have your own site 2. There are certain software requirements, including access to the cgi–access bin. (Unlikely that free sites will qualify).	No requirements – you do not need your own site
Upgrades	If there are program upgrades the program will need to be re–installed	Program upgrades can be added transparently with no action required from you
Risk	You are not dependent on another company	You are dependent on the service company e.g. if their site goes down or the company folds
Operational Needs	Your site needs to provide the system resources (e.g. disk space for program and tracking files)	The program operates completely independently from your site – no use of your system resources required
Account Management	If you have a separate installation for each site you need to manage each one separately	All campaigns across all sites can be managed from one account
Tracking URL	Uses the domain name of your site	Uses the name of the service
Cost	1. One–time fee. 2. Installation generally extra. 3. May need to pay for installation on each separate site	1. Monthly or yearly subscription. 2. There may be additional charges for clicks or campaigns over a certain limit.

Notes

1. Risk: If you are concerned about a tracking service failing when you have some **critical** tracking URLs then you can always move them to redirect files on your own domain, explained in Chapter 4.2.

2. Account operation: If you are using tracking software it is not essential to have the software on each separate site. Your tracking URLs on one site can point to any domain. However it may look odd if, for example, your have a number of sport sites and your tracking

URLs to football.com include the name tennis.com.

3. Tracking URL: There are mixed benefits in having either your domain name or the service company name in your tracking URL, covered in later chapters. However you can always use a redirect file to convert a service company name to your own domain.

3. Summary Of Key Points

Tracking Software:

- need to install at your own site
- one−time fee
- no dependence on 3rd party

Tracking Service:

- no installation required, ready to go
- monthly fee
- dependence on 3rd party

Chapter 4.2: Feature List

Here is a comprehensive list with descriptions of the main features you can find in the ad trackers currently on the market.

1. Visitor Tracking Features

   1.1 Basic Visitor Stats

   1.2 Return Visitors

   1.3 Action Tracking

   1.4 Full Site Tracking

   1.5 Remote Site Tracking

2. Campaign Features

   2.1 Campaign Start/End Dates

   2.2 Sub Campaigns

   2.3 Link Checking

   2.4 Redirect Files

3. Report Presentation

   3.1 Basic reports

   3.2 Extra reporting features

4. Other Features

   4.1 Split Run Testing

   4.2 Sub Users

1. Visitor Tracking Features

1.1 Basic Visitor Stats

This is the basic information that every tracker has access to when it records a clickthrough

- Users IP address
- Browser Type
- Operating System
- Date and time of click
- Referring Url

Trackers vary as to how much of this information they provide in their reports.

1.2 Return Visitors

You don't want the figure for total clicks inflated by visitors who repeatedly click back to your page in a session.

So a tracker should distinguish between the 'unique' number of visitors as opposed to the 'total' number.

However returns at a later date can indicate that your ads are bringing in the right type of visitors not just surfers. Some trackers can calculate the average time between visits to help establish if this is happening.

1.3 Action Tracking

Why are you bringing visitors to your site ?

You want them to **do something.**

It could be

- To make a sale
- To download a book
- To join your mailing list
- To sign up for your affiliate program

One of the big advancements in ad tracking technology is the ability to record such 'actions'.

How can the tracker do this ?

It has to know the page at which these events take place. For example it can record that a sale is achieved when the thank−you page is visited. You obviously need to submit details of these

action events when you set up your campaigns and you may need to insert some lines of HTML code at your site.

Using this information the tracking reports can provide vital sales figures such as

- Total Sales
- Cost−per−click (CPC)
- Cost−per−sale (CPS)
- Click−to−sale ratio (CTS)
- Return on Investment (ROI)

1.4 Full Site Tracking

Do you know the exact point in your sales process where your prospects stop paying attention ?

Do you know which of your pages result in sales and which pages lose sales ?

Are you losing sales because your order page is confusing ?

These are just some of the questions that can be answered if your tracker can trace the complete path of a customer within your site.

1.5 Remote Site Tracking

Would you like to know what your visitor does when he visits the affiliate site that you promote ?

Maybe all your efforts in sending visitors are wasted because the affiliate program's website just doesn't sell or there are external links which distract the visitor from reaching the order page.

This vital information can be made available because, remarkably, a tracker can continue to monitor your visitor's behaviour after leaving your site.

2. Campaign Features

2.1 Campaign Start/End Dates

Are you planning to run many campaigns, maybe for many different products ?

Keeping tight control of such promotions can be time consuming so a handy feature in a tracker is to accept start and end dates which will allow it to

- Provide you with an overall summary of all of your current, expired, and scheduled ads.

- Notify you when an ad is due to start or end. Knowing when an ad is going to end can give you time to evaluate the results and renew it before the expiry date.

2.2 Sub Campaigns

How would you like to promote a product in multiple forums or ezines and **not** have to create a tracking campaign each time ?

You can do this with sub campaigns.

You just need to create the tracking URL **once**, for example

> http://www.yourdomain.com/cgi−bin/a/b.cgi?mynewproduct

Then for each campaign you simply invent a different suffix and attach that to the URL using the appropriate tracker format

So for example if you want to mention your product in ezine number 1 you might have an URL like this

> http://www.yourdomain.com/cgi−bin/a/b.cgi?mynewproduct_ezine1

Your tracking reports which show how many clicks have been made to that page from all the different sources will look something like this

Sub Campaign	Hits
ezine1	30
ezine2	50
forum1	20
forum2	15

So, as well as the ease of using an URL without having to set up another tracking campaign,

you can now see at a glance the effectiveness of all these campaigns. If you had instead set up lots of individual campaigns you would then have to collate figures from many different areas of the tracking reports for comparison purposes.

2.3 Link Checking

What happens if a tracking URL becomes invalid for whatever reason (such as an affiliate company changing their linking format) ?

You may lose a potential customer.

To avoid this your tracker should provide a default URL facility so that you can specify where you want the visitor to be transferred.

A more advanced option available is an automated check of all your links every few hours. If a dead link is found you will be emailed.

2.4 Redirect Files

Would you like to be able to

- Shorten your tracking URL ?
- Or even to hide it ?

Example: would you prefer

> http://www.yourdomain.com/magic.htm

instead of

> http://www.yourdomain.com/cgi−bin/a/b.cgi?mynewproduct

You can do this with a redirect file.

Here's how: for the above case you create a file with the name magic.htm containing this code:

```
<html>
<head>
<meta http-equiv="refresh"
content="0; url=http://www.yourdomain.com/cgi-bin
/a/b.cgi?mynewproduct">
</head>
</html>
```

You can now use the magic.htm URL as your tracking URL and visitors who click on it will be redirected to the mynewproduct page.

But you don't have to manually code this. Some ad trackers will create the code for you ready for it to be copied to a redirect file and uploaded to your site: or even run the upload for you.

NOTE:

You can also avoid naming an HTML file in the URL. You can use
http://www.yourdomain.com/magic
if you create a subdirectory named "magic" at your site and add a file named "index.html" (or "index.htm" or "default.htm").

When your webserver sees a file in the subdirectory with one of these standard names, it will show that file when just the subdirectory is given in the URL. In other words, these three URLs will each work:

www.domain.com/magic
www.domain.com/magic/
www.domain.com/magic/index.html

3. Report Presentation

3.1 Basic reports

At the minimum an ad tracker should report on the total number of clicks, and ideally unique clicks, across a variety of date ranges, for example

- Hits to date
- Hits for the hour
- Hits for the day
- Hits for the week
- Hits for the month
- Hits for the year

3.2 Extra reporting features

Other features to look out for

- Reports showing the campaigns which generate the most visitors and, in the case where action tracking is available, the most sales, subscribers, downloads, etc.

- An automatic mail out of reports on a periodic basis such as daily or weekly

- Reports produced in graphical output

- The option to export the report statistics e.g. to a spreadsheet file

4. Other Features

4.1 Split Run Testing

Suppose you have three versions of your sales page, one with long sales copy, one in a shortened form, one with multiple ordering options.

How can you determine which is the most effective ?

Split run testing is the ideal solution.

It allows you to alternate the pages that your visitors see so that you can establish which are achieving the best response. The tracker will present URL 1 to visitor 1, URL 2 to visitor 2, and so on.

You could then set it to monitor say 300 leads (100 leads evenly distributed to each of the 3 URLs) and analyze the results.

This is a preferred method to running 3 separate tests over a long period where the conditions (type of traffic, day of week, etc) may vary.

4.2 Sub Users

How would you like to provide ad tracking to others ?

You could provide free accounts as a bonus say to

- advertisers in your ezine
- your affiliates
- member site subscribers

Alternatively you could offer paid accounts to others.

You can do this with a tracker which has a sub−user facility.

Chapter 5: Super Ways To Use An Ad Tracker

The original purpose of ad trackers was, of course, to record all hits to your site from the ads that you place.

So we'll begin this section with a reminder of just how many places you can submit an ad – both online and offline.

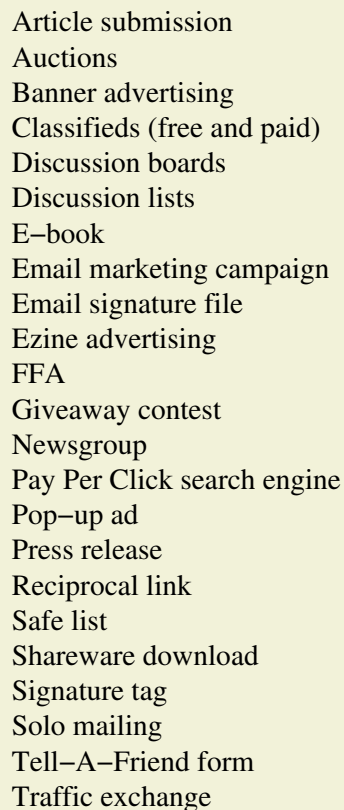The remaining chapters show a variety of ways you can use an ad tracker.

Chapter 5.1: Ads: Online and Offline

Here's a long list of places where you can advertise your site or just place your URL.

So which are the most effective ?

If you use tracking URLs then you will immediately know which ones are worth pursuing.

1. Online Promotion

Article submission
Auctions
Banner advertising
Classifieds (free and paid)
Discussion boards
Discussion lists
E–book
Email marketing campaign
Email signature file
Ezine advertising
FFA
Giveaway contest
Newsgroup
Pay Per Click search engine
Pop–up ad
Press release
Reciprocal link
Safe list
Shareware download
Signature tag
Solo mailing
Tell–A–Friend form
Traffic exchange

2. Offline Promotion

Have you ever wondered whether it was worth advertising offline because of the supposed impossibility of measuring the response ?

Then ad tracking URLs will give you the answer.

But there's a vital difference between online URLs and offline URLs.

An offline URL needs to be copied or memorized before it can be used. So you don't want to list a tracking URL looking like this.

> http://www.yourdomain.com/cgi–
> bin/a/b.cgi?offline–123

The solution ?

You could use a redirect file as explained in Chapter 4.2 with a short meaningful name tied in with the media involved.

For example the URL on your Christmas cards could be

> http://www.yourdomain.com/xmas

And here is a list of offline locations:

Address labels
Answering machine messages
Billboards
Books
Brochures
Business cards
Catalogs
CD ROM presentations
Checks
Christmas cards
Classifieds
Coupons
Envelopes
Fax cover sheets
Flyers
Freebies
Invoices
Leaflets
Letterheads
Magazine ads
Mouse pads
Newsletters
Newspaper ads
Packaging
Pens and Pencils
Phone book listings
Posters
Press releases
Products
Promotional material
Radio ads
Receipts
Sales letters
Shop notice boards
Stationery
Storefront
T−shirts
Television ads
Trade shows
Uniforms
Vehicles

Chapter 5.2: Affiliates

1. Affiliate URLs

1.1 The long URL problem

Have you ever seen an ad where you are asked to click on an affiliate URL so long that it stretches over 2 lines, like this

```
http://www/anysite.com/cgi-bin/dir1/dir2/
.cgi?code=123RT&type=10235&subid=89715
```

Do you think your reader will bother to do the necessary cut and paste to put it in a browser ?

Probably not.

And that could be one lost sale.

And even a one line affiliate link may exceed the permissible length for some ad posting requirements.

The solution: use a short tracking URL

1.2 Losing your affiliate code

As an affiliate you may have your affiliate code (123) visible in a link looking something like this

```
http://www.abc.com/123
```

It's a proven fact that many customers will not click on an affiliate URL.

Maybe they resent seeing commission paid to an affiliate, maybe they feel less security when buying from an affiliate.

So they will bypass the affiliate code and just type in the home page URL

http://www.abc.com

Or else they will join the affiliate program, replace your affiliate code with their own and claim commission on their own purchase if the program allows it.

The solution: use a tracking URL – so that your affiliate code is never seen.

2. Affiliate Stats

2.1 Better affiliate stats

Not all affiliate programs provide you with stats about visitors. And if they do are they adequate ?

Compare having just a single monthly figure say

– Jan: 39 hits

with a more detailed analysis such as

– Jan 12: 10 hits
– Jan 13: 2 hits
– Jan 30: 21 hits
– Jan 31: 6 hits

where you can relate those dates to particular ad campaigns.

Tracking URLs will give you these improved figures.

2.2 Checking affiliate stats

Even if you do receive good stat reports from your affiliate program it still makes sense to use tracking URLs so that you can compare your figures with theirs.

A large discrepancy could mean errors in their software or (hopefully not) fraudulent activity on their part.

An alternative reason is that their measurement takes place when their page is fully loaded rather than at the start, indicating that visitors are clicking away because it is taking too long to load.

3. Improving Affiliate Sales

3.1 Make your ad stand out

Have you ever run a search at a search engine and received a set of near identical listings for the same product, differing only in an affiliate code appended to the URL ?

Your listing here would be just one of many unless you make it stand out. So bypass the standard affiliate URL and use a tracking URL.

3.2 How effective are the links ?

Affiliate programs may provide you with a set of ready made banner or text links for use in your promotions.

They may suggest which ones are proving most successful.

If not you can compare the effectiveness of the different links yourself using tracking URLs.

3.3 What happens at the affiliate site ?

If you recall the list of ad tracking features in Chapter 4.2 it is actually possible to track a visitor **after** he has left your site.

The most useful application of this is to find out what your potential customers are doing at an affiliate site

– Maybe they are signing up as affiliates and depriving you of your commission

– Maybe they are just joining the program's mailing list or collecting a free report, and an unscrupulous merchant is then following up to make the sale via his own link

4. Affiliate Program Changes

4.1 Changing links

If an affiliate company changes their links then your existing ads, wherever they are posted, become worthless. But if you use a tracking URL you simply revise the affiliate URL at the tracking control center.

4.2 Affiliate program discontinued

Similarly if an affiliate program is discontinued you just change your tracking URL to point to a new page where you explain the circumstances and point your visitor to your other promotions.

5. More Tips For Affiliates

- Check out this ebook in Appendix 2

  'ClickBank Affiliate SuperTips'

- If you want to conceal the fact that a link at your site is for an affiliate program (or for a tracking program which incorporates the link) then use this Javascript code

```
<a href="http://......"
onmouseover=
  "window.status='ABC';return true;"
onmouseout=
  "window.status=' ';return true;">
```

Then 'ABC' will show in the browser status bar instead of the URL.

There are more Javascript tips in the ebook *'Javascript Magic'* in Appendix 2.

Chapter 5.3: Ezine Publishers

1. Offer Tracking Reports To Your Advertisers

Do you sell advertising space in your ezine ?

Then why not give potential advertisers a special incentive to deal with you, like this.

Dear Advertiser,

Here's a special offer.

When you place ads in my ezine I will report back to you with details on the number of clickthroughs they receive.

This will help you decide how to improve your ads for better performance.

This will remain a free service for you.

Now, once your advertisers have seen firsthand how useful an ad tracking program can be do you think they will be inclined to purchase one ?

I'm sure they will.

So your next step is to enroll as an affiliate for the program and promote it to them. For example,

Dear Advertiser,

Thank you for your recent ad campaign in my ezine.

I hope you found the reports on your ad statistics useful – I find them indispensable for my Internet marketing activities.

You may like to know that I produced them with a very simple program called an ad tracker. You could use an ad tracker to report on the success of your ad campaigns in any ezine – although of course I hope you will continue to use mine.

The particular ad tracker that I use and recommend can be found at –––––

P.S. Besides tracking your advertising campaigns there are lots of other great things you can do with an ad tracker. Let me know if you purchase one and I will send you a great book about using trackers.

Of course the book you send will be this one – customized with your own affiliate links.

By the way, those reports that you hand out to your advertisers contain useful information about your subscribers' interests in terms of ads which attract their interest. You can therefore use them to help select which potential advertisers to approach and to adjust your editorial content.

2. Measure Your Readership

You may know how many subscribers you have but how many actually open and read your ezine and which parts of it attract most attention ?

Here's how to find out:

- If you distribute your ezine in HTML format include an image on the page such as a banner, logo or a single pixel GIF. Then reference this image with a tracking URL.

    Now this will not tell you the exact number of people who actually read your ezine because some will open their email off–line (and thus no graphics are requested from the server or counted).

    But you can still use these figures as a base for testing out the influence of different

e−mail subject lines and the best days to publish.

• For an ezine distributed as plain text it is not possible to see if it is actually opened or read. But what you can do is insert tracking URLs at appropriate places, such as product offers or special articles, and get comparative figures for which items are being read.

Chapter 5.4: At Your Web Site

1. The Problem Of Permanent URLs

Web sites are continually evolving and changing.

You may want to rename a page to make it more consistent and logical but there's a huge problem. You have given out the URL in an E−book, or a directory submission, or an article or wherever. There's no way you can undo this.

The solution ?

Never provide the actual URL, just a tracking URL. You can then just edit the link at the tracking center whenever a page is moved or renamed.

The external links, in your E−book for example, stay the same but they will redirect to your new page.

2. What Are Your Visitors Doing ?

You have text links all over your site, links to your other pages and links to recommended sites.

Where are your visitors clicking ?

Where are they leaving your site, why, how can you stop them ?

Which graphic do they click on the most ?

Do they click on the text link more than the graphic link?

Your log files may tell you at best which are the most popular pages at your site but it is vital to know how your visitor moves through your site and what is tempting them.

Use tracking URLs to replace actual links wherever you need to monitor click activity.

3. Does Your Sales Page Sell ?

It's often been said how a simple change to a headline can make your sales rocket.

There's a way to scientifically test the impact of such changes and this is discussed in Chapter 6.

The key point is that you should change one component at a time and measure the results.

So here are the chief components that you could experiment with to increase your sales conversion

- headlines
- sub−headlines
- bullet points showing the main benefits
- page design and color
- header graphic or no header graphic
- book cover image or no book cover images
- the opener (first few paragraphs) of sales copy
- the first fold (the initial visible screen of your page)
- site navigation
- testimonials throughout or on their own page
- the ordering process (is it too complicated ?)
- pricing
- last numbers of prices (e.g $29.97 or $29.95)
- the addition of bonuses
- the guarantee and refund policy

Also, see Appendix 2 for these items on copy writing and web design improvements

'Confessions Of A Website Copywriter'

'The Golden Book of Proof'

'10% Conversion Secrets'

'Easy Site Magic'

4. Sell Website Advertising Space

You can offer tracking reports to your advertisers in the same way as for ezine publishers (in Chapter 5.3)

5. Do Pop−Ups Work ?

Despite the controversy surrounding pop−ups the general opinion is that they do work.

But how effective exactly are they ?

You can find out precisely by using tracking URLs.

Just replace two links with tracking URLs

- the link to your pop−up page
- the link at your pop−up page

The ratio of these two figures will give you the percentage of visitors who see your pop–up and proceed to take action on it.

You can then of course start experimenting with different styles of pop–up and also the timing of when they appear.

6. How Effective Are Guaranteed Hits ?

With a decline in advertising revenue many huge content sites are looking for other ways to make money. One idea is to get paid for sending their visitors to other sites.

You can pay for a guaranteed number of visitors who will have your site (or designated page) shown as a pop under when they leave these big sites.

If you sign up with a company for such a program use a tracking URL.

You can then check (if your tracker has the feature) whether these visitors are quickly leaving your site, indicating that the source of this traffic is not well–targeted for your business.

Also you can correlate the stats provided by the company with your own tracking stats to check that they really are sending the numbers they claim.

7. Stop Piracy

Suppose you have created a page or site containing a long list of links as a helpful resource for your visitors.

It's very easy for a pirate to simply copy your page and provide useful content for his own site.

However if you use tracking URLs for those links you can detect this copy – because the ad tracking program will record the referring URL.

Of course if some of your links are to affiliate programs then you may welcome the additional copy.

The other advantage is that you can measure the popularity of the links and ascertain what appeals to your site visitors.

Chapter 5.5: Pay Per Click Search Engines

1. Basics of Pay Per Click (PPC)

If you have not come across Pay Per Click search engines (PPC) here is a brief introduction:

PPC companies such as Google AdWords and Yahoo Search Marketing allow you to submit your site title and description, your site URL and a list of keywords (or bid terms) which you want your site to be listed under.

If a visitor to the PPC site does a search on your bid term and clicks through to your site you are charged a bid amount (for example 5 cents) that you have selected. The higher your bid amount the higher you will appear in the listing.

Here is an example of a submitted entry

Title: Cheap Cameras

Description: All cameras less than $200 with no quibble guarantee. Also camcorders and video cameras.

URL: http://www.yoursite.com

Keywords with bid amounts:

- camera (5 cents)
- video camera (8 cents)
- camcorder (10 cents)

The ability to get your site listed often immediately (compared to the free search engines) and to alter your ranking instantly online, makes PPC one of the most popular forms of site promotion.

2. Which Keywords Bring The Sales ?

A common question asked is how you know which keyword a customer used to reach your site and make the purchase.

Obviously with this information you could consider increasing your bids for successful keywords and reducing them for ones which are costing you money.

You can find the answer by using a tracker which can identify 'actions' – in this case a sale.

You need to submit to the PPC a different tracking URL for each keyword: for simplicity one which contains the actual keyword in it's name. If you plan to use several PPC companies you can include their name also.

Example:

> http://www.ztrack.com/a.cgi?a123&adwords–camera
>
> http://www.ztrack.com/a.cgi?a123&adwords–videocamera
>
> http://www.ztrack.com/a.cgi?a123&adwords–camcorder

Your tracking reports will now give you the required stats such as sales per keyword.

You can also analyse the figures to see which PPC engines are bringing in the most buyer oriented visitors.

3. Are The PPC Reports Reliable ?

The PPC company will provide you with reports showing click activity for each keyword.

The engines vary in the frequency and format of the reporting so you can use your tracking reports instead to obtain better and immediate information.

At the same time you can compare your figures with the engine's and should query any large discrepancy.

Also, if click activity is unusually high you may have a competitor clicking on just to incur costs against you. You may be able to detect this by comparing the figures for unique hits and actual hits (several hits per visitor).

4. PPC Tip

Here's how most people submit to the PPC engines

- 1) Write a compelling entry
- 2) Decide the size of the bid and submit
- 3) Wait for approval
- 4) Check out their entry, HOPING it stands out amongst the others

But there's no need to hope !

After step (1) do a search for your keyword and copy the page of results to a file. Modify that file inserting your entry so that you can simulate in advance exactly how it will appear amongst all the others.

Now you can experiment with all varieties of title, description, length, ranking position (bid value) until you are convinced that it is YOUR entry which will catch the eye.

Note: For more tips about using PPC engines see *'The Beginners Guide to Overnight Traffic'* in Appendix 2.

Chapter 5.6: Your Ebook

1. How Many Times Has Your Book Been Downloaded ?

If you are offering a free ebook you will certainly want to know how many times it is being downloaded.

And if it's a paid book you know already by the number of sales. Correct ?

Well maybe not.

Is it possible that there are security loopholes in your ordering system and hackers are finding their way to your download page and getting your book for free ?

Whether your book is free or not you can use a tracking URL for the download link to answer these questions.

2. How Successful Is Your Free Ebook ?

The whole point of a free ebook is to get your readers to click on an internal link and take them to your site, mailing list, affiliate program or whatever.

Tracking links in your book will monitor your reader's activity and help you decide whether any sections need be redesigned.

3. Disaster One – You Have An Invalid Link

There's an affiliate URL in your book providing you with steady profits as your readership grows.

One day the affiliate company changes their URL format or discontinues their program.

Heck !

You've got that URL embedded in an ebook with thousands of copies circulating around the Net.

You can't recall the book, you can't change the content once it's out of your hands.

Disaster ?

No.

You had the foresight to make each link a tracking link.

It's now a five second job to visit your ad tracking control center and point that link somewhere else.

4. Disaster Two – The Tracking Company Has Folded

How unlucky can you be ?

You've used tracking links throughout your book to safeguard against affiliate companies going bust.

Now the company who provide your tracking service has folded.

Well if you are going to use links which are so critical you have two options

- Don't risk a 3rd–party tracking service, install tracking software at your own site.

- Replace the links with redirect files at your site which contain your tracking service links (explained in Chapter 4.2).

Chapter 5.7: Ezine Advertising

One of the quickest and most profitable ways to drive qualified visitors to your web site is to use Ezine advertising.

There are three types of ad you can use: in increasing of order of cost they are

- Classified ad: typically 2 to 4 lines.

- Sponsored ad: around 10 lines with cost dependant on the position of the ad e.g. at the top, middle or at the end of an ezine.

- Solo ad: unlimited length, sent to all subscribers of the ezine in a one−off mailing.

By using an ad tracker you can determine

- Which of your ads has the most pulling power

- Which ezines and which type of ad are giving you the best value for money

1. Classified Ads: Getting It Right

Before committing to an expensive advertising campaign it makes sense to start with classified ads in a small way.

Look for free advertising sources where you can repeatedly submit variations of your ad.

How to write your ad ?

- You need to create an attention grabbing headline that compels the reader to read the ad listing.

- Then you need a description that compels the reader to click to your site.

So your main thrust should be to experiment with headlines, changing a word here or there, moving words around, using upper case as appropriate.

Of course you will be using tracking URLs and your reports will tell you which version of your ad achieved the best results.

2. Which Ezines To Choose ?

Now that you have settled on your most powerful ad you can start selecting the ezines which will provide the best return for your future advertising.

There are various guides and directories of ezines showing advertising information such as ad costs and circulation.

A large circulation is not necessarily the best solution, more important is that the ezine is well targeted with responsive readers. A long waiting time before ad submission may be a good sign of a popular advertising ezine.

You now use the **same** ad in each ezine and use tracking results to finalize on your preferred ezines.

3. More Expensive Ads

When you are happy with the results of your classified ads and with the professionalism of a particular ezine publisher you can now be confident of trying the higher cost ads, moving if necessary from low placed sponsored ads through to the top spot, and then to a solo mailing.

All the while of course monitoring the results with your ad tracker.

Chapter 5.8: Signature Files

One of the most popular methods of promoting your site is by the use of a signature file.

It is an accepted method of promotion where blatant advertising is not allowed.

So you can use it for example in

- discussion lists (moderated newsletters sent by Email)

- discussion forums (online postings)

- newsgroup postings

- as well as your Emails

But is it truly effective ?

There's only one way to find out – by measuring the response.

If you replace your signature URLs with tracking URLs you can measure

- the effectiveness of your signatures

- the interest of your audience (where you are posting)

1. Types Of Signature Files – And Some Tips

1.1 The one line signature

Many discussion forums allow you a 'Link URL' and a 'Link Title' at the end of your posting. The result is a clickable line of text – the URL is not shown (but may be viewed by moving the mouse over the link).

The Link URL is where you will now use your tracking URL.

What should your signature contain ?

Obviously, if your signature is related to the posting then it will have greater effect.

For example if I answer postings in a forum to do with any aspect of ClickBank I provide a signature URL such as

The Complete Guide to ClickBank

Another way is to make a reference to your product in your posting and give location details in the signature file. For example I will mention a particular tip in my ebook 101 SuperTips and then add the location details in my signature. What I find very effective is to take the reader first to a testimonial page prior to the product page itself, for example

Read what they're saying about 101 SuperTips !

There will be other times when it is not possible to provide a related URL so I will use a product which is of general interest to readers. The trick here is to make the text enticing, maybe by posing a question with an air of mystery. This one works well for me.

Have you seen my favourite marketing book ?

1.2 Full (multi–line) signature

You can usually use a complete signature with an Email posting in a discussion list although you should check the rules about the signature content. At a minimum you should be able to use your company/site name and URL but ideally you would have a couple of lines to describe your company (or site or product).

To be truly effective your signature file should be relevant to the post it is attached to. For example, a post about copywriting shouldn't end with a signature file about search engines.

You can be sure that if you provide a helpful reply then your readers are bound to check your signature file to learn something about you.

So try to include the key information about your company that will make customers want to contact you. Try to incorporate in one or two lines the unique selling point or benefit of your company.

In contrast to the one line forum posting your URL is now visible, which leads to an important point. It may not be appropriate in certain lists to be seen to be measuring the response with an obvious tracking URL.

The solution ? You can disguise your tracking URL by using a redirect file – explained in Chapter 4.2

2. How To Use Your Tracking Results

By continual experimentation with your signatures you will determine which are the most effective.

In places where you can have a signature of several lines you can test out a number of factors such as layout, underlining, capitalization.

If you are using a signature in your own Emails then of course you have no restriction. A useful tip here is to add a signature as a 'P.S.' at the end of your mail asking a question as if it is a natural end to a conversation, like this

> Regards
> Harvey Segal
>
> P.S.
> Have you seen my free ebooks ?
> http://www.supertips.com

The other statistic which your reports will provide are comparison figures between the different locations where you post. So if you are getting very little response from a particular forum you may decide that it is no longer worth posting there if your aim is to attract visitors.

Chapter 5.9: Other Ideas

1. Was Your Page Visited ?

Have you ever waited for an important Email reply from an individual ? It could be concerning

- a review of your book

- an evaluation of your product

- a proposal for a joint venture

You need to know if he has taken any action, whether he has visited your site, and when.

You can detect this by setting up a tracking URL specifically for that individual when you send your Email.

2. Privacy

You may wish to post an URL somewhere and – for reasons of your own – not let it reveal your website.

You can do this using a tracking service (as opposed to tracking software at your site) because their URLs contain the company domain name.

Chapter 6: Testing With An Ad Tracker

1. The Importance Of Testing

If you need convincing of the importance of testing your ads or your sales copy then listen to the words of some of the top marketing experts in the world.

> "Anyone can become a virtual marketing genius equivalent by doing one simple thing: testing and measuring responses".
> **Jay Abraham**
>
> "You can almost always tell the difference between an amateur and an expert marketer by the amount of testing they do. Testing ads and measuring your efforts with online trackers is the most important thing you can do for your website!"
> **Miguel Alvarez**
>
> "The key to success in advertising (maximum sales per dollar) lies in the perpetual testing of all the possible variables ... the most important word in the vocabulary of advertising is: TEST!"
> **David Ogilvy**
>
> "You can not succeed as a direct marketer unless you learn how to test and measure your results".
> **Ted Nicholas**

2. How To Run A Test

The secret to scientific testing is to * **change one component at a time** * and measure the results.

For example suppose you change the headline of your sales page and also include a bonus gift on the order page. You find that your sales increase but how do you know what caused this.

The headline or the bonus ?

Maybe your new headline actually weakened the copy but the bonus made up for it. You would only know this by testing the headline separately

Furthermore even if you are testing one component you need to ensure all other factors are equal. For example you try headline 1 for one week and it converts 1 in 100 visitors to a sale.

You then try headline 2 for a week and it then converts 1 in 25 to a sale.

Your conclusion: Headline 2 is four times as effective as headline 1.

But this may not be correct

Suppose during week 2 there happened to be a favourable review of your product that you were not aware of in a mass circulation ezine and the bulk of your visitors arrived in a ready to buy mood. This would obviously slant the figures in favour of headline 2.

In this case a more accurate method would be to continually alternate headlines so that the results can not be biased. You can do this with an ad tracker which features **split−run testing.**

3. How to Measure Results

There are three standard ways to measure the effectiveness of your online advertising spend:

- **Conversion Rate** − how many visits to your site convert to a sale or action.

- **Return on Ad Spend (ROAS)** − how much revenue you generate per dollar that you spend on an advertising campaign.

- **Return on Investment (ROI)** − how much profit you generate per dollar that you spend on an advertising campaign.

If you would like to understand how these figures are calculated a working example follows:

You need five figures to calculate your Conversion rate, ROAS and ROI:

1. Total number of visitors: say 10,000

2. Number of sales: say 500

3. Revenue: the price at which you sell an item, say $100

4. Profit: if your $100 item costs $80 to make (materials, labor, etc.), then the profit is $20

5. Cost of advertising: your total advertising spend for the campaign, say $1000

This produces

− Total revenue = $50,000 (500 x $100)

− Total profit = $10,000 (500 x $20)

So the results are:

Conversion Rate:

500 visitors who purchase / 10,000 total visitors

=> conversion rate = 5%

Return on Ad Spend (ROAS):

$50,000 revenue / $1,000 spent on advertising

=> ROAS= 5000% , or $50 in revenue for each dollar spent on advertising

Return on Investment (ROI):

$10,000 profit / $1,000 spent on advertising

=> ROI = 1000% , or $10 in profit for each dollar spent on advertising

Is there a way to automatically produce these figures ?

Yes !

And as you may guess it is an ad tracker which can do this − but one with a special feature, the ability to track **actions** , specifically sales.

So, if you plan to carry out thorough testing look for trackers which feature

- action tracking
- split run testing

Chapter 7: Ad Tracker Reviews

Are you convinced ?

Have you seen enough reasons in Chapter 5 to realize that an ad tracker is **vital** to your online business ?

Are you ready now to choose an ad tracker ?

You are ?

Well before you do there's a few extra tips in the next section.

Chapter 7.1: Before you purchase

1. Step 1

First you should decide between tracking software or a tracking service. The pros and cons of these were explained in Chapter 4.1, the key features being

Tracking Software:

- need to install at your own site
- one–time fee
- no dependence on 3rd party

Tracking Service:

- no installation required, ready to go
- monthly fee
- dependence on 3rd party

Recommendation

Beware of

- free software which may be poorly written with inadequate features
- software with an excessive installation cost
- free tracking services – there is no guarantee that they may not drop you in the middle of an expensive campaign

If you want to be certain just how trackers can transform your marketing efforts, most tracking services will offer a risk free trial or even a free version. The free version may have some restrictions but this will give you the opportunity to immediately set up an ad campaign with no installation or cost.

2. Step 2

Next decide which features you require. These were explained in Chapter 4.2

Recommendation

A key decision is whether you are happy just to record all hits to your site or whether you need to record 'actions'. Actions, if you recall, are events such as a sale, a download, a subscription to your mailing list, a sign–up to your affiliate program.

Recording a sale will provide you with the various ROI figures which give you the real proof of how successful a campaign is.

You could even opt for more advanced tracking:

- 'full site' tracking which shows the complete path of your visitor within your site
- 'remote site' tracking whereby your visitor continues to be tracked after leaving your site. So this would be ideal if you promote affiliate programs.

Chapter 7.2: The Products

In earlier versions of this book I provided reviews and comparisons of recommended ad tracking prodcts. As these need continual updating in terms of features and pricing I suggest you obtain the information from my site:

The Complete Guide to Ad Tracking Programs
www.ad−tracking.com

However here is a review of my top recommendation and the program I personally use:

Personal Recommendation: AdTrackZ

This is a software product (which you install at your site) as opposed to a tracking service.

I began using the early version (V2) of AdTrackZ to track several hundred links across all my sites.

The program is very simple to use, it takes seconds to create a tracking URL and (unlike many tracking programs) the reports are easy to understand.

The great feature is the ability to use sub−campaigns. When you want to track from different sources to the same destination (for example all ezine ads for one product) you don't need to create a new campaign. You simply add a suffix to the campaign URL. And when it comes to comparing the results of all these campaigns you don't need to collate figures from many different areas of the tracking reports. They all appear under the one campaign.

Another neat touch is the creation of redirect files (which can hide or shorten your tracking URLs). AdTrackZ will actually create and upload the files for you on your server (other trackers just create the code).

However AdTrackZ then took a quantum leap with the release of Version 3. This contains, among many other features

- action tracking (which can be used to track events such as a sale for example)
- ROI calculations
- split run testing
- simplified keyword tracking

A unique feature is the ability to tracks sales and actions on remote websites, for example at affiliate sites. The website owner needs to add just one line of code to his site to enable this.

Read about AdTrackZ here.

Appendix 1: How To Make Money With This Book

The majority of online businesses are unaware of the need to track their ad campaigns and the power of ad tracking tools. The audience for an ad tracking tips book – especially a free one – is **vast**.

You can customize this book and replace every link with your own affiliate link.

And here is where this is different from every book customization you may have seen.

* You don't have to run a rebranding program or upload the book to your site

* It's free !

Click HERE for details.

Appendix 2: Resources

Here is a list of the resources mentioned in this book together with other useful items which can be found at the SuperTips Products page

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- ClickBank Affiliate SuperTips

  There are thousands of affiliate programs you can join at ClickBank – and thousands of affiliates. Discover how to select and promote a successful program, and the unique tips to put you ahead of other affiliates.

- Confessions Of A Website Copywriter

  Discover one of the most important and profitable skills you can acquire – copywriting. Simple changes to your sales copy can dramatically multiply the sales conversion rate.

- The Golden Book of Proof

  How to quickly and easily create ads, sales letters and websites which make people line up and practically beg you to take their money.

- The Absolute Beginners Guide to CGI!

  CGI opens up countless possibilities for the website owner. The step–by–step instructions in this ebook are written in a style that guarantees understanding by any novice.

- JavaScript Magic

  Suitable for beginners to advanced. Learn how to instantly create amazing effects on your web pages: including splash screens, password protection, colored scroll bars, flashing and highlighted text, popup windows, mouse over effects and much more.

- 10% Conversion Secrets

  The author looks at the whole selling process and guides you through the factors that influence your conversions.

- The Beginners Guide to Overnight Traffic

  A unique way of using AdWords – to test out and tweak all your marketing campaigns.

- Easy Site Magic

  How to add dozens of moneymaking elements to your site quickly and easily... without a programmer!

Appendix 3: About this Book

Title: Ad Tracking SuperTips
Version: 2.2, December 2012
Publisher: SuperTips Marketing
Author: Harvey Segal
Web Site: www.supertips.com