Google Affliate Network Plugin User Manual

Robert Heller

May 16, 2011

Contents

Introduction

I wrote this plugin to display ads from the Google Affliate Network on Deepwoods Software's WordPress powered website. This plugin uses a database of ads to display. The ads are displayed in rotation, using the simple method of counting ad impressions and giving priority to the advertisers with the least impressions and display ads with the least impressions first that are expiring soonest. As ads and advertisers are displayed, their impression counts are incremented, which moves them down the list[1]. This means

---

[1]To the back of the list once the impression counts reach equilibrium, when the impression counts are all the same.

that all ads are displayed fairly, with preference given to new ads and to ads which are expiring soonest[2]. After using "in house" for a while, I have made this plugin available to other WordPress users who also using the Google Affliate Network as a source of advertising revenue.

Installation

Installation is just a matter of installing from the new plugin page. Once installed and activated, the plugin is ready to start displaying affilate ads.

Configuring

There is only one configuration option: Autoexpire. The option is true by default. It enables the automatic removal of ads that have expired. While it is possible to disable this option it is not recomended

If you have upgraded from an older version of the plugin, the configure page will display a button to upgrade the database to the new version.

Inserting Ads

In order to display ads, you need to have some ads in your database. There are two ways to insert ads: manually, one by one or in bulk from a TSV (Tab Separated Value) file. Manual insertion is done on the *Add new* admin page and bulk insertion is done on the *Add new bulk* admin page.

Add new admin page (manual insertion)

This page has a form for adding a single ad. The fields include:

Advertiser: This is the advertiser's name.

Link ID: This is the (unique) Link Id code.

Link Name: This is the name of the link. It is used as the anchor text for text ads.

Merchandising Text: This is some ad copy for the link and is displayed with the ad link.

Alt Text: This is the alterniitive text for image ads.

Start Date: The is the starting date, in the format yyyy-mm-dd.

End Date: This is the ending date, in the format yyyy-mm-dd.

Clickserver Link: This is the tracking URL for the ad.

---

[2]Expired ads are not displayed and a daily cron job deletes them.

ImageURL: This is the URL of the ad image for image ads.

ImageHeight: This is the height of the image (0 for text ads).

ImageWidth: This is the width of the image (0 for text ads).

LinkURL: This is the Link URL.

PromoType: This is the type of promotion.

MerchantID: This is the (unique) merchant id.

enabled? This indicates of the ad is enabled or not.

Add new bulk admin page (bulk insertion)

This page uploads a TSV file of ads previously downloaded from your Google Affiliate Network management page. You get this file by visiting your Google Affiliate Network management page and clicking the Links tab. On this page you can select the sorts of ads you would like by selecting one or more of your approved advertisers and selecting the type of ads (text and/or banner), and other criteria such as size, etc. It is then possible to export these ads as a TSV file, which can then be downloaded. This same file can in turn be uploaded to the GAN plugin and the ads in this file will be added to your ad database.

Showing Ads

There are two ways to show ads on your pages and/or posts. You can use one of the two widgets (GAN Image Widget or GAN Widget) or one of the two shortcodes (GAN_Text or GAN_Image). The widgets of course need to go into a 'sidebar' that supports widgets. The shortcodes can go into any post or page.

GAN Widget

The GAN Widget has five parameters:

Max ads: The maximum number of ads to display.

Orientation: The orientation of the ads. Horizontal means the ads are arranged side by side like one row of a table and vertical means the ads are arranged in a vertical list. Typically the horizontal orientation is suitable for a wide but short ad frame and the vertical orientation is suitable for skyscraper type ad unit.

Target: The link target to use. Can be either Same Window or New Window or Tab.

Ad frame width: The width of the ad frame. A value of zero will cause the frame to use all of the available space.

Ad frame height: The height of the ad frame.

GAN Image Widget

The GAN Image Widget has seven parameters:

Max ads: The maximum number of ads to display.

Width: The image width of the image ads.

Height: The image height of the image ads.

Orientation: The orientation of the ads. Horizontal means the ads are arranged side by side like one row of a table and vertical means the ads are arranged in a vertical list. Typically the horizontal orientation is suitable for a wide but short ad frame and the vertical orientation is suitable for skyscrapper type ad unit.

Target: The link target to use. Can be either Same Window or New Window or Tab.

Ad frame width: The width of the ad frame. A value of zero will cause the frame to use all of the available space.

Ad frame height: The height of the ad frame.

GAN_Text shortcode

The GAN_Text shortcode has same five parameters as the GAN Widget:

maxads An integer, with the default being 4. The maximum number of ads to display.

orientation The orientation of the ads, one of "vertical" (the default) or "horizontal". Horizontal means the ads are arranged side by side like one row of a table and vertical means the ads are arranged in a vertical list. Typically the horizontal orientation is suitable for a wide but short ad frame and the vertical orientation is suitable for skyscrapper type ad unit.

target The link target to use, one of "same" (the default) or "new".

ifwidth The width of the ad frame. A value of zero will cause the frame to use all of the available space.

ifheight The height of the ad frame.

Here is an example – 5 text ads arranged horizontally in a 798x70 frame:

```
[GAN_Text maxads=5 orientation='horizontal' ifwidth=798 ifheight=70]
```

GAN_Image shortcode

The GAN_Image shortcode has same seven parameters as the GAN Image Widget:

maxads An integer, with the default being 4. The maximum number of ads to display.

orientation The orientation of the ads, one of "vertical" (the default) or "horizontal". Horizontal means the ads are arranged side by side like one row of a table and vertical means the ads are arranged in a vertical list. Typically the horizontal orientation is suitable for a wide but short ad frame and the vertical orientation is suitable for skyscrapper type ad unit.

target The link target to use, one of "same" (the default) or "new".

width The image width of the image ads. The default is 120.

height The image height of the image ads. The default is 60.

ifwidth The width of the ad frame. A value of zero will cause the frame to use all of the available space.

ifheight The height of the ad frame.

Here is an example – 2 468x60 banners arranged vertically in a 473x65 frame:

```
[GAN_Image maxads=2 orientation='vertical' ifwidth=473 ifheight=65 width=468 height=60]
```

Editing Ads

When displaying the data on the main admin page, links are provided to edit, delete, or toggle the enabled flag for each ad. The ads are displayed ordered by expiration date, with the soonest to expire displayed first. It is possible to select only a single merchant's ads to be displayed and/or a single width of ad (a width of zero implies text ads).

Ad Subsriptions

A Tcl script is included to process E-Mailed Ad Subsriptions and insert them into the database. This requires the ability to receive E-Mail on the server running the database server and requires that Tcl and the MySQLTcl package be installed as well as the use of procmail as a mail delivery agent.

Statisics

Both ad and merchant statisics are available for display. The statisics are ordered from fewest impressions to most impressions. A summary of the statisics is also displayed on the dashboard.