

TARGETING ADS USING THE SOURCE PARAMETER IN OPENX 2.4

In short

Targeting is a great way to increase your ad space revenue. Giving advertisers the opportunity to target specific sections of your website could help you to make better use of your ad space and at the same time help you set higher advertising rates.

OpenX 2.4 is capable of targeting ads to specific sections of a website, using a feature called the 'source' parameter'. This white paper explains the mechanism, and gives illustrations and instructions.

More information about OpenX can be found at www.open.org. There is also a full set of documentation, see www.openx.org/support/documentation.

Introduction to OpenX

OpenX has a structure that works along two lines. On one side, there are advertisers, who run campaigns. Each campaign consists of one or more banners. On the other side,



there are publishers, the people who own or run a website. Each publisher's website has one or more zones. A zone represents a piece of a web page. By linking campaigns to zones, the advertising manager can determine with great detail which ads should appear where on the website. Using the Source parameter gives even more control over ad targeting.

About this paper

This paper describes a mechanism for linking banners to zones using the 'source' parameter. It starts with the assumption that the reader has a full understanding of the main concepts of ad serving using OpenX. If you find the terms used here unfamiliar you might like to review the OpenX 2.4 User Manual, which can be found here:

<http://www.openx.org/docs/2.4/userguide>

Case introduction

This paper uses the example of an imaginary website about transportation. The website has sections on aviation, driving and boating. Advertisers can buy advertising space for the site as a whole or for specific sections of the site. The advertising manager of the site wants to target ads to these specific sections.

What is the 'Source' parameter?

Source is a way of 'labeling' a zone. The word entered in the source field is used to determine which ads will be displayed. The first step in the process is to setup a zone. The source parameter can be entered when generating the invocation code for the zone, but it can also be inserted automatically into the web page's source code. That's where the name comes from.

Setting up a publisher and zone

For this paper, we've created a new publisher called "Transportation website", and a zone that will be appearing on all pages of that site, called "Top Leaderboard".

The screenshot shows the 'Zone properties' tab for a zone named 'Top Leaderboard'. The 'Basic information' section includes a 'Name' field with 'Top Leaderboard', a 'Description' field, and a 'Zone type' section with radio buttons for 'Banner, Button or Rectangle' (selected), 'Popup', 'Text ad', and 'Email/Newsletter zone'. The 'Size' section has a dropdown menu set to 'IAB Leader Board (728 x 90) *' and input fields for 'Width: 728' and 'Height: 90'. Other tabs visible are 'Advanced', 'Linked banners', 'Probability', and 'Invocation code'.

Every page of the Transportation website is driven by a single template, and we want to use the source parameter to determine which ads show up on each page or set of pages.

Assigning a source to a zone's invocation code

By default, there is no source specified when you generate the invocation code for a zone. The source parameter is added to the zone while generating the invocation code. Click the sub tab 'Invocation code' to access this screen:

The screenshot shows the 'Invocation code' tab for the 'Top Leaderboard' zone. The 'Please choose the type of banner invocation' dropdown is set to 'Javascript Tag'. Below this, the 'Bannercode' section displays a code editor with the following content:

```
<!-- Source demo Javascript Tag v2.4.0 -->
<!--
 * The backup image section of this tag has been generated for use on a
 * non-SSL page. If this tag is to be placed on an SSL page, change the
 * 'http://test.bannerservers.net/oa24/www/delivery/...'
 * to
 * 'https://test.bannerservers.net/oa24/www/delivery/...'
 *
 * This noscript section of this tag only shows image banners. There
 * is no width or height in these banners, so if you want these tags to
 * allocate space for the ad before it shows, you will need to add this
 * information to the <img> tag.
 *
 * If you do not want to deal with the intricacies of the noscript

```

Below the code editor is a 'Parameters' section with a checkbox labeled 'Don't show the banner assign...'.

The banner code for the zone is already showing. Here you see an example for the Javascript tag, but the source parameter is available in all types of banner invocation.

You can enter any source parameter you want in the "Source" field. As soon as you click the "Refresh" button at the bottom of the screen, the banner code will be updated to include this source parameter.

Bannercode

```
used) document.MAX_used = ;  
<script type="text/javascript" src="+m3_u);  
?zoneid=2&source=boat"); 3  
&cb=' m3_r);  
used != ' ') document.write ("&exclude=" + document.MAX_used);  
&loc=" + escape(window.location));  
rref) document.write ("&referrer=" + escape(document.referrer));  
ext) document.write ("&context=" + escape(document.context));  
fo) document.write ("&mm_fo=1");  
'></script>";  
</a></noscript>  
nerservers.net/oa24/www/delivery/ck.php?n=a587f4b8&cb=INSERT_RANDOM_NUMBER_HERE'  
nerservers.net/oa24/www/delivery/avw.php?zoneid=2&source=boat&n=a587f4b8' 3  
</a></noscript>
```

Parameters

Don't show the banner again on the same page Yes No

Target frame Default

Source 1 boat

Show text below banner Yes No

Don't show a banner from the same campaign again on the same page Yes No

Support 3rd Party Server Clicktracking No

Include comments Yes No

Refresh 2

Just select the invocation code in the box and copy/paste it into your webpage or website template, just like you always do.

Using 'source' dynamically

Since 'source' is a part of the invocation code of a zone, you can insert any source parameters into the invocation code, using techniques already available in your website. Your forum software, blog software, content management system or web site template system might be capable of producing certain codes, terms or numbers. If you know how, you can use the programming languages in your system to insert any source parameter in the invocation code.

Even though the invocation code appears to be static initially, you can turn it into a completely dynamic system. How that's done is beyond the scope of this paper. Consult the documentation of your site, blog, forum or CMS, or ask the programmer or supplier that made or sold the system.

Setting up advertisers and campaigns

Let's assume three advertisers have agreed to run campaigns on the Transportation website, as shown below:



All advertisers want their ads to show up on the website sections that their campaigns are designed for: Aviation, Boating or Driving.

The image below shows that the Driving campaign has been linked to the Transportation site's Top Leaderboard zone:



The same has been done for the Aviation and Boating campaigns.

Each campaign has a leaderboard size ad that promotes a product or service the advertiser wants to sell:

Name ▾	ID
▼ Aviation advertiser	4
▼ Aviation Campaign	2
Aviation banner	5
▼ Boating advertiser	2
▼ Boating Campaign	3
Boating banner	7
▼ Driving advertiser	3
▼ Driving Campaign	4
Driving banner	6

Targeting ads using the source parameter

In this setup, the banners in the campaigns will be delivered to any page that has the zone's invocation code on it. But the source parameter can be used to target the ads to the specific sections of the website.

1. Click the *delivery options* tab to switch to the screen where you can specify *Delivery Limitations*.
2. Then, using the drop down on the right, select the item 'Site - Source' from the drop down list and click the arrow in the small blue square.

[id4] Aviation advertiser > [id2] Aviation Campaign > [id5] Aviation banner

Aviation Ad

1

Banner properties | **Delivery options** | Linked zones | Advanced

Delivery Limitations

No limitations

Delivery Capping

Limit banner views to: in total

Limit banner views to: per session

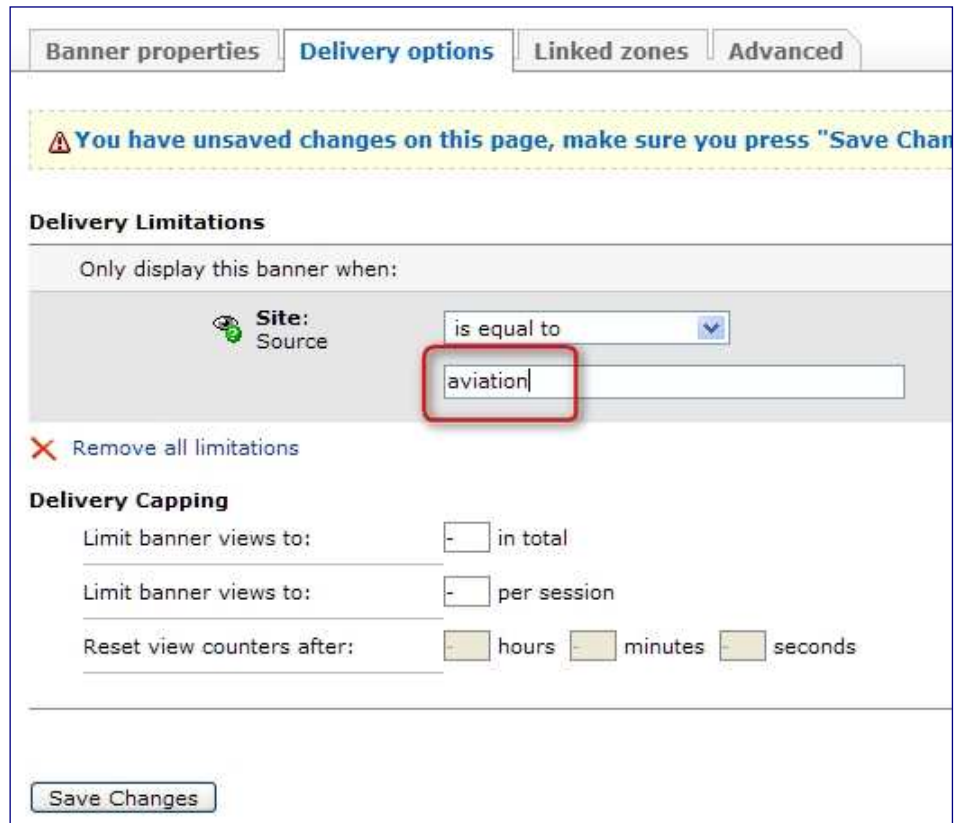
Reset view counters after: hours minutes seconds

2

Client - Domain
Client - Domain
Client - IP address
Client - Language
Client - Useragent
Geo - Continent
Geo - Country
Site - Channel
Site - Page URL
Site - Referring Page
Site - Source
Time - Date
Time - Day of week
Time - Hour of day

Save Changes

As soon as you've selected 'Site - Source', you can enter the source parameter. In the example scenario, we want the banner to only be displayed in a zone that has been labeled as aviation, so enter 'aviation' in the text box, like this:



The screenshot shows the 'Delivery options' tab of the banner configuration interface. At the top, there are four tabs: 'Banner properties', 'Delivery options', 'Linked zones', and 'Advanced'. A yellow warning banner at the top reads: 'You have unsaved changes on this page, make sure you press "Save Changes"'. Below this, the 'Delivery Limitations' section is active. It contains the text 'Only display this banner when:' followed by a configuration area. In this area, 'Site: Source' is selected, and the condition is set to 'is equal to'. A text input field contains the word 'aviation', which is highlighted with a red rectangular box. Below the configuration area, there is a red 'X' icon and the text 'Remove all limitations'. The 'Delivery Capping' section is also visible, with three rows of input fields for limiting banner views: 'Limit banner views to: [] in total', 'Limit banner views to: [] per session', and 'Reset view counters after: [] hours [] minutes [] seconds'. At the bottom of the form is a 'Save Changes' button.

Don't forget to click the 'Save Changes' button!

Remember, when you don't specify a delivery limitation by source, the banner will be delivered on all pages carrying the zone's invocation code (provided the dimensions of the banner and the zone match). As you can see, in addition to targeting a source using the qualifier 'is equal to', you can also use 'is different from' to target a banner to all zones except one with a specific source.

The advantage of the Source mechanism is that you can very quickly target a banner to a zone that has been labeled with a specific source. And you can very quickly change that targeting too.

The disadvantage is that you can also very easily make a typing mistake. Especially when multiple people are involved, you should coordinate which source parameters are being used.

Fortunately, OpenX 2.4 introduces a new feature called "Channels" that can be used to prevent this from happening. See the next page for more information on Channels.

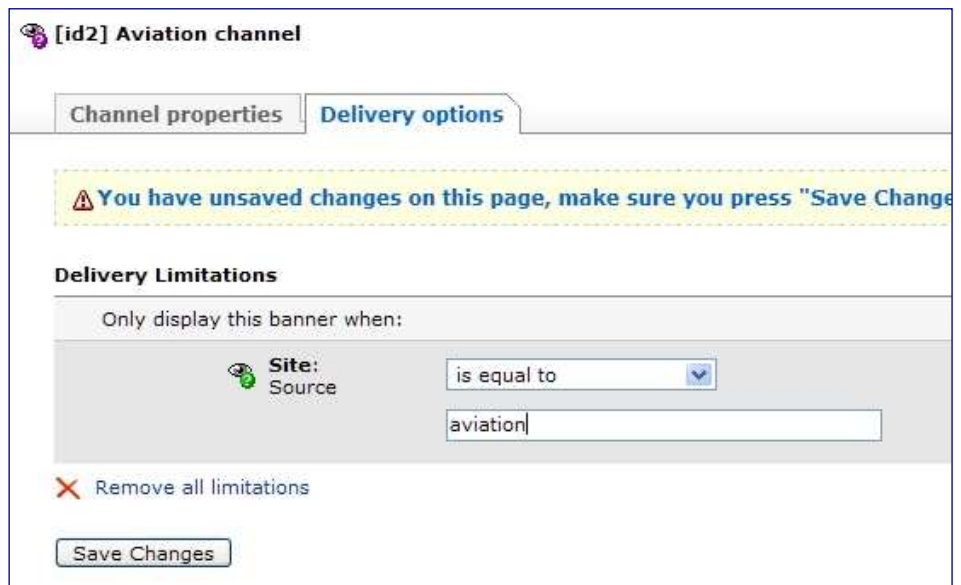
Using channels to create preset delivery limitations

OpenX 2.4 has a new feature called Channels. Think of a channel as a pre-defined set of delivery limitations that you can apply to any banner. When the channel has been used on multiple banners, a change in that channel will automatically be applied to all banners using that channel.

To define a channel, click the *Settings* tab at the top of the screen, and then the *Channel management* sub tab. In a new OpenX installation, there aren't any channels yet. Click the *Add new channel* link to create a new channel.

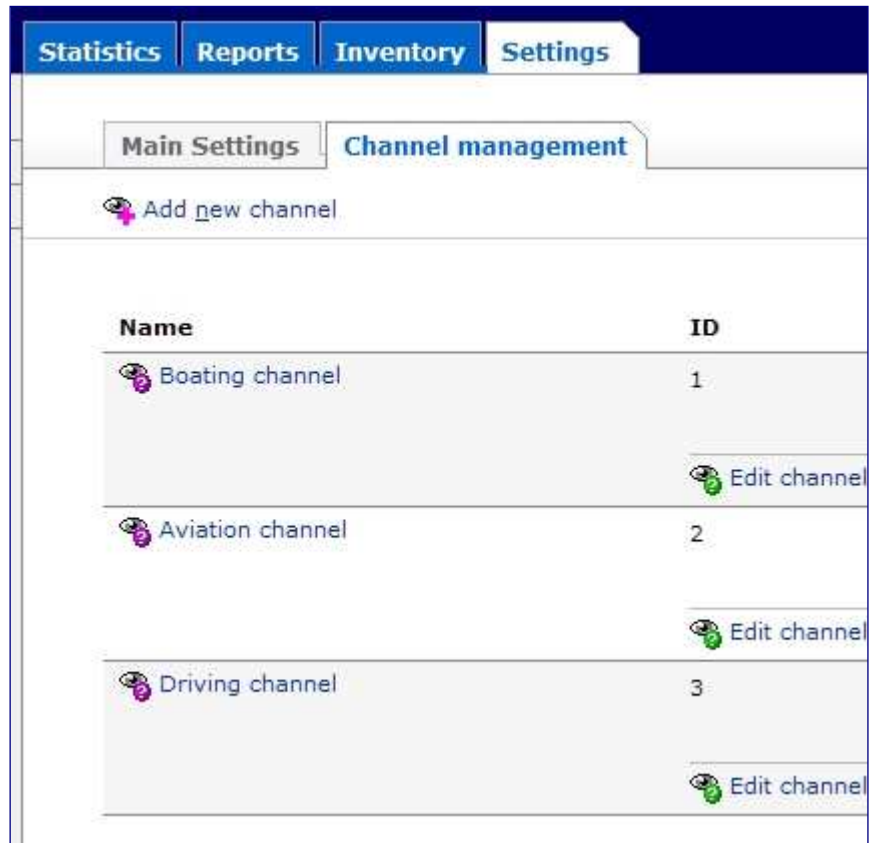


Enter a short but descriptive name for the channel, and optionally include a description and any comments you may need. Then click the "Save changes" button. You will see a screen where you can set delivery limitations just like you can when working on an individual banner:



For the example of the Transportation website, we also created channels called "Boating channel" and "Driving channel".

We now have three channels, pre-defined and ready to use



Applying a channel to a banner

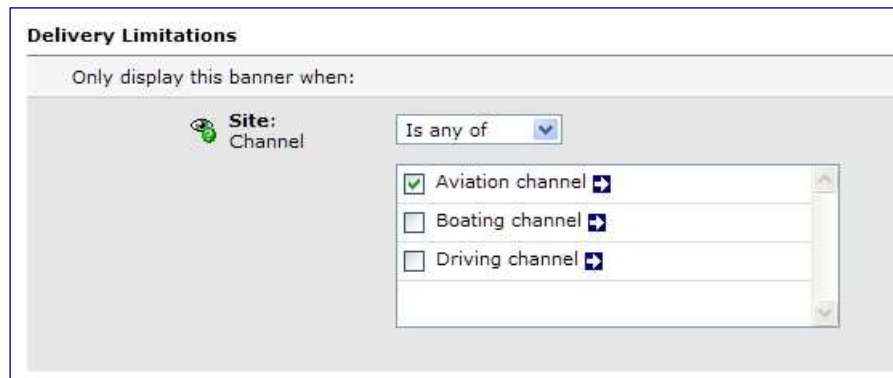
Navigate to the screen where you can specify delivery options for a banner.

Remove any existing limitations by clicking the 'Remove all limitations' link (clearly marked with a red cross symbol next to it).

Then select the "Site - Channel" item from the drop down list and click the arrow in the blue square:



The screen now shows all existing channels and allows you to select one or more channels for this banner:



If you want to see how a channel has been defined, or if you want to make changes to a channel, click the white/blue arrow next to it. The channel definition screen will be displayed in a new browser window.

Don't forget to save your changes by clicking the 'Save changes' button!

The clear advantage of using channels is that you just create them once and then use them any time you need them. And the risk of making typing mistakes is reduced to just the channel itself. As soon as you have a few dozen banners in your system (or more) you'll start to appreciate this!

About channels

Channels are new in OpenX 2.4 and are incredibly helpful and powerful when applying delivery limitations. There is much more to say about channels, and there are plans to dedicate a separate paper entirely to channels.

MORE INFORMATION:

More information about OpenX can be found at the official website:

www.openx.org

There, you can also find documentation, a support forum and the download

section where you can get your own (free!) copy of OpenX.



About the author

This paper was written by Erik Geurts, OpenX community consultant.

Please visit www.erikgeurts.com for more information.