

Automated LinkGenerator Implementation Guidelines



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Overview

This document is an implementation guide for the Automated LinkGenerator Web Service. The Automated LinkGenerator is a Web Service that allows you to create LinkShare click links for any page on a merchant's site. It provides the same functionality as the LinkGenerator feature in the Individual Product Links interface, without having to login to the affiliate interface.

Technology

Web Services

What is a Web Service?

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) defines a Web Service as, "a software system designed to support interoperable machine-to-machine interaction over a network. It has an interface described in a machine-processable format (specifically WSDL). Other systems interact with the Web service in a manner prescribed by its description using SOAP-messages, typically conveyed using HTTP with an XML serialization in conjunction with other Web-related standards."

Why Web Services?

- Web Services are able to interact with each other irrespective of the language that they are developed in and hence gives real time Interoperability.
- Web Services use HTTP with XML for communication. These are ubiquitous technologies and any device capable of using these technologies is able to both host and consume Web Services.
- Web Services concepts are simple to understand and with the addition of various tool-kits provide a low barrier to entry and easy software development.
- Industry support by major content providers and vendors ensure that the Web Services model continues to be the standard file communication protocol.

How to use LinkShare Web Services?

The Automated LinkGenerator Web Service is accessible only using REST (Representational State Transfer). Any language supporting REST can be used to develop applications.

Why REST and not SOAP?

This web service is being released as a REST Web Service and not using SOAP since the primary use if this feature will be to obtain LinkShare Click Links one at a time. SOAP would add larger overheads in terms of the bandwidth used to obtain each link.

REST

What is REST?

Representational State Transfer (REST) is a software architectural style for distributed hypermedia systems like the world wide web.

SOAP

What is SOAP?

Simple Object Access Protocol can be defined as a set of conventions that govern the format and processing rules of a SOAP Message. The SOAP Message has the following elements: SOAP-Envelope, SOAP-Header and SOAP-Body.

Access

The Automated LinkGenerator Web Service is available to those affiliates that are enabled for this feature. Affiliates are required to use their FeedSynergy Token to access this service.

Implementation Details

Request Format

To create an Automated LinkGenerator link, an affiliate sends a URL from the merchant's site to LinkShare in the format specified below. The URL can be sent through a browser, a tool like wget or curl, or an automated script. For each URL provided, LinkShare returns a click link. There is a limit of 1,000 links per affiliate for an hour.

URLs are sent to LinkShare in this format (with the token, mid, and murl parameters in this order):

`http://feed.linksynergy.com/createcustomlink.shtml?token=<token-ID>&mid=<MID>&murl=<URL-from-merchant>`

- The token ID can be found in the affiliate interface on the RSS Resource Page.
- The MID is a unique identifier for the merchant. It can be obtained from the Web Services--Merchant Links Feed.
- The URL is the landing page on the merchant's site. Special characters do not need to be encoded.

A URL with these fields populated would look like:

```
https://feed.linksynergy.com/createcustomlink.shtml?token=813cc9fbb4ecc65eb3356d7637c015c38358d4c01a3f48876d62ff7409bed1&mid=560&murl=http://www.merchant.com/productpage?prodid=1224231&buylink=yes
```

Response Format

LinkShare will return a click link in the form:

```
http://click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/click?id=AAA111AAA11&subid=0&offerid=999999.1&type=10&tmpid=939&RD_PARM1=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.merchantname.com%2Fsearch%2Fdetail.cfm%3Fchunk%3D25%2526mtype%3D%2526wauth%3Da%2520name%2526qwork%3D2875272%2526S%3DR%2526bid%3D8713366401%2526pbest%3D2%252E95%2526pqtynew%3D0%2526page%3D1%2526matches%3D24%2526qsort
```

Error Responses

The system will give errors for the following situations:

- The link is provided in an invalid format that LinkShare cannot parse.
- The link does not include a token ID.
- The link includes an invalid token ID, for example if the affiliate no longer has Automated LinkGenerator enabled.
- The affiliate is not joined to the merchant MID included in the link.
- The merchant MID included in the link is invalid.
- The link does not include a merchant MID.
- The merchant does not have LinkGenerator enabled for affiliates.
- The link does not include a merchant URL.

- The affiliate has exceeded its hourly limit for using the Automated LinkGenerator tool.

Building LinkShare Links

Once LinkShare has returned a click link, it can easily be placed on your affiliate site.

Text Links

The format for a text link will be:

```
<a href="[CLICK_URL]" >[LINK_TEXT]</a><IMG border="0" width="1"
height="1" src="http://ad.linksynergy.com/fs-
bin/show?id=[AFFILIATE_ID]&bids=[OFFER_ID]&type=2&subid=0" >
```

- Paste the exact return value from the Automated LinkGenerator tool in place of [CLICK_URL].
- Provide link text for the user in place of [LINK_TEXT].
- The [AFFILIATE_ID] can be found in the returned URL from the Automated LinkGenerator tool. It will appear just after ?id= in the click link. In the example above, the [AFFILIATE_ID] value, AAA111AAA11, would be found as ?id=AAA111AAA11. Paste this value in place of [AFFILIATE_ID].
- The [OFFER_ID] can also be found in the returned URL from the Automated LinkGenerator tool. It will appear between &offerid= and .1. In the example above, the [OFFER_ID] value, 999999, would be found as &offerid=999999.1. Paste this value in place of [OFFER_ID].

Example:

```
<a href="http://click.linksynergy.com/fs-
bin/click?id=AAA111AAA11&subid=0&offerid=999999.1&type=10&tmpid=939&
RD_PARM1=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.merchantname.com%2Fsearch%2Fdetail.cf
m%3Fchunk%3D25%2526mtype%3D%2526wauth%3Da%2520name%2526q
work%3D2875272%2526S%3DR%2526bid%3D8713366401%2526pbest%3D2
%252E95%2526pqtynew%3D0%2526page%3D1%2526matches%3D24%2526
qsort">Exciting New Books</a><IMG border="0" width="1" height="1"
src="http://ad.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/show?id=
AAA111AAA11&bids=999999&type=2&subid=0" >
```

Banner Links

The format for a banner link will be:

```
<a href="[CLICK_URL]" ><IMG border="0" src="[IMAGE_URL]" ></a><IMG
border="0" width="1" height="1" src="http://ad.linksynergy.com/fs-
bin/show?id=[AFFILIATE_ID]&bids=[OFFER_ID]&type=2&subid=0" >
```

- Paste the exact return value from the Automated LinkGenerator tool in place of [CLICK_URL].
- Paste the URL of the image on the merchant's site in place of [IMAGE_URL].
- The [AFFILIATE_ID] can be found in the returned URL from the Automated LinkGenerator tool. It will appear just after ?id= in the click link. In the example above, the [AFFILIATE_ID] value, AAA111AAA11, would be found as ?id=AAA111AAA11. Paste this value in place of [AFFILIATE_ID].
- The [OFFER_ID] can also be found in the returned URL from the Automated LinkGenerator tool. It will appear between &offerid= and .1. In the example

above, the [OFFER_ID] value, 999999, would be found as &offerid=999999.1. Paste this value in place of [OFFER_ID].

Example:

```
<a href="http://click.linksynergy.com/fs-  
bin/click?id=AAA111AAA11&subid=0&offerid=999999.1&type=10&tmpid=939&  
RD_PARM1=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.merchantname.com%2Fsearch%2Fdetail.cf  
m%3Fchunk%3D25%2526mtype%3D%2526wauth%3Da%2520name%2526q  
work%3D2875272%2526S%3DR%2526bid%3D8713366401%2526pbest%3D2  
%252E95%2526pqtynew%3D0%2526page%3D1%2526matches%3D24%2526  
qsort"><IMG border="0"  
src="http://www.merchant.com/productpage/12342.jpeg"></a><IMG  
border="0" width="1" height="1" src="http://ad.linksynergy.com/fs-  
bin/show?id= AAA111AAA11&bids=999999&type=2&subid=0">
```