

# Flex Links Implementation Guidelines

Third-Party Specifications

Version 2.0

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## Introduction

Flex Links are a new way of using embedded links with LinkShare's affiliate program. They allow you to create videos, widgets, banners, and many other kinds of clickable ad units for your products. LinkShare converts these ad units into tracking links so publishers can post your ads on their site. This document provides several examples for implementing Flex Links using third-party providers. Any embedded link you use to drive traffic to your site can be modified in a manner similar to the examples here and offered to your publisher-partners as a Flex Link.

**Please note:** All the components of Flex Links must be hosted by you.

## Creating Flex Links with Third-Party Flash

Let's say a third party uses Flash to create a widget that shows product links. Typically, the code for this will be very different from a widget you might create. This is because third parties create widgets that can be used by multiple advertisers. In addition, third parties can build applications that download their own product data to create the link or they can use a tool like LinkShare's Automated LinkGenerator to create one. There is no uniform method to integrate these widgets. Programmers can use a number of different approaches to build the application; for example, they might use LinkShare's product database via their Merchandiser account or create custom links using Automated LinkGenerator and their own FeedSynergy token. For these third parties, the best method is to build an additional system that allows them to replace their Publisher ID with that of the publisher displaying the ad unit.

Consider this example: A third party has a Flash widget that shows products which match a keyword a user has entered. The third party gets the products it shows by searching an advertiser's Web site and building the product links using the Automated LinkGenerator Web Service. For this widget to be distributed to publishers, the third party will have to build additional code to replace their Publisher ID with that of the publisher displaying the widget.

The existing code for the third-party widget might look like this:

```
<object classid="clsid:D27CDB6E-AE6D-11cf-96B8-444553540000"
codebase="http://download.macromedia.com/pub/shockwave/cabs/flash/swfl
ash.cab#version=9,0,28,0" width="320" height="270">
<param name="movie"
value="http://www.thirdparty.com/widgets/productswidget.swf" />
<param name="quality" value="high" />
<param name="flashvars"
value="fv_url=http://www.thirdparty.com/productsearch.php&fv_adv_name=
merchant&fadv_id=111" />
<embed src=" http://www.thirdparty.com/widgets/productswidget.swf "
width="320" height="270" quality="high"
pluginspage="http://www.macromedia.com/go/getflashplayer"
type="application/x-shockwave-flash" flashvars="
fv_url=http://www.thirdparty.com/productsearch.php&fv_adv_name=merchan
t&fadv_id=111">
```

```
</embed>  
</object>
```

If the third party builds a system that dynamically replaces their Publisher ID with the ID of the publisher displaying the ad unit, the code will look like this:

```
<object classid="clsid:D27CDB6E-AE6D-11cf-96B8-444553540000"  
codebase="http://download.macromedia.com/pub/shockwave/cabs/flash/swflas  
h.cab#version=9,0,28,0" width="320" height="270">  
<param name="movie"  
value="http://www.thirdparty.com/widgets/productswidget.swf" />  
<param name="quality" value="high" />  
<param name="flashvars"  
value="fv_url=http://www.thirdparty.com/productsearch.php&fv_adv_name=me  
rchant&fadv_id=111&pubid=[lsn_eid]&lstrack=[LSNTRACK=]" />  
<embed src=" http://www.thirdparty.com/widgets/productswidget.swf "  
width="320" height="270" quality="high"  
pluginspage="http://www.macromedia.com/go/getflashplayer"  
type="application/x-shockwave-flash" flashvars="  
fv_url=http://www.thirdparty.com/productsearch.php&fv_adv_name=merchan  
t&fadv_id=111&pubid=[lsn_eid]&lstrack=[LSNTRACK=]">  
</embed>  
</object>
```

**lsn\_eid** is the publisher's 11-character tracking code. **LSNTRACK** is the URL of the landing page where Flash will redirect upon click.

**NOTE:** Since the Flex Links system requires that you use the **LSNTRACK** token in all links that you upload, the token is being passed as a variable. The third party can ignore the value returned by this parameter.

When the code is published on the Publisher Interface, the **[lsn\_eid]** is translated to the publisher's 11-character code. The third party must be able to replace their own 11-character code with the code that is passed to the parameter.

### Creating Flex Links with Third-Party JavaScript

Third parties using a custom JavaScript widget to display an ad or those using keyword-dependent product ads can partner with advertisers to distribute these ad units to publishers. Typically, the code will be different from a widget you might create. This is because third parties build widgets that can be used by multiple advertisers. In addition, third parties can use a number of different approaches to build their application; for example, they can build them around other LinkShare tools like the Automated LinkGenerator Web Service or the LinkShare Merchandiser feeds. In doing this, the third party must build adequate systems to take the information that is passed to the JavaScript code and build links to credit the publisher for relevant activity.

Here is a sample of third-party JavaScript code:

```
<script type="text/javascript">
  server = "http://www.thirdparty.com";
  width  = 728;
  height = 90;
  keyword= 'Desktop Computers';
</script>
<script
src=" http://www.thirdparty.com/scripts/ads/MyProdAd.js"
type="text/javascript">
</script>
```

This code can be modified to pass additional parameters to the JavaScript to build a LinkShare tracking link. Here is an example of this:

```
<script type="text/javascript">
  server = "http://www.thirdparty.com";
  width  = 728;
  height = 90;
  keyword = 'Desktop Computers';
  affiliate_id = [lsn_eid];
  LSTrack = [LSNTRACK];
</script>
<script
src=" http://www.thirdparty.com/scripts/ads/MyProdAd.js"
type="text/javascript">
</script>
```

**lsn\_eid** is the publisher's 11-character tracking code. **LSNTRACK** is the URL of the landing page where your ad will redirect upon click.

**NOTE:** Simply adding these two parameters does not automatically track the correct publisher. A third party must update their JavaScript to accept the values of these parameters, and their code has to replace their publisher ID with the ID of the publisher displaying the ad.