

IAB Tech Lab

Ads.txt and App-ads.txt FAQ

Updated March 2019

OVERVIEW

The mission of the ads.txt project is simple: Increase transparency in the programmatic advertising ecosystem. Ads.txt will give publishers a means to publicly declare the companies authorized to sell their digital inventory. By creating a public record of Authorized Digital Sellers, ads.txt will give publishers control over their inventory in the market, making it harder for bad actors to profit from selling counterfeit inventory across the ecosystem. As publishers adopt ads.txt, buyers will be able to more easily identify the Authorized Digital Sellers for a participating publisher, allowing brands to have confidence they are buying authentic publisher inventory.

The ads.txt Specification was developed in the spring of 2017. The ads.txt specification focuses on protecting advertising inventory hosted by the website publishing the ads.txt file. To meet the requirements for software applications distributed through mobile app stores, connected television app stores, and other distribution channels of that nature, refer to the companion app-ads.txt specification. The ads.txt and app-ads.txt specifications are available at <https://iabtechlab.com/ads-txt>.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

These implementation guidelines were prepared by the [OpenRTB Working Group](#) and serve as a living resource, to be continually updated by the group as more frequently asked questions are gathered for ads.txt and app-ads.txt.

To submit questions, contribute to these guidelines, or get involved with the OpenRTB working group, please email openmedia@iabtechlab.com.

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FAQ

As an advertiser or buyer, how do I take advantage of ads.txt and app-ads.txt?

Buyers should follow media spend strategies as suggested in these blog posts;

- [What it Means for a DSP to Support ads.txt](#)
- [Mythbusting ads.txt](#)

How do I start using app-ads.txt to fight ad fraud?

The app-ads.txt specification indicates how to obtain an app developer's website URL from an app listing page in an app store, which will lead you to find the app-ads.txt file. With the app-ads.txt file contents, you can then choose to target authorized seller app inventory, and cut out any misrepresented app inventory.

How do I find app identifiers?

See page 9 of the [app-ads.txt v1.0 specification](#), to read about the steps you can take to verify authorized sellers. You should use the storeurl field in OpenRTB bid requests.

How can I access app store metadata?

See page 9 of the [app-ads.txt v1.0 specification](#), to read about the steps you can take to “Crawl app listing pages in app stores.”

What are some of the available services/resources that I could use to access or parse app store metadata?

To get you started, some available services/resources include but are not limited to the following;

- Various app metadata licensed resources are available to use
 - These proprietary sources can allow you to access app store metadata without having to crawl for it yourself.
- <https://github.com/InteractiveAdvertisingBureau/ads.txt-parser>
 - This is a reference implementation of app store HTML parsing and app-ads.txt developer URL canonicalization libraries.
- Tech Lab’s Aggregator tool will soon support app-ads.txt aggregated data
 - To learn more or ask for this functionality with the Aggregator tool, visit <https://iabtechlab.com/ads-txt/ads-txt-aggregator/> or email ads.txt@iabtechlab.com
- Placeholder for other solutions, more details to come

I’m an SSP/exchange, how do I support my app developers/app publishers?

Point them to, or adapt the [Publisher Advisory](#) for app-ads.txt.

For example, you could instruct your publishers to take the following steps;

1. Confirm their Developer Website URL matches with what they've uploaded to the App/Play Store. For example:

https://play.google.com/store/apps/dev?id=5950758182267281572&hl=en_US

2. Use that URL path, truncate it just the domain (i.e. "outfit7.com") and append "/app-ads.txt" at the end

3. In the txt file, define the seller relationships as defined in the [ads.txt specification](#).
4. Follow the ads.txt specification to list out required details in the txt file.

I'm an app publisher, what should I do to support app-ads.txt?

Follow guidance for publishers within this [app developer advisory](#).

Partner Interaction Guide

The following details can help guide conversations between partners as part of the ads.txt initiative. The goal is to ensure each partner shares a correct and complete set of information.

INTERACTIONS

- Publisher talking to an Exchange/SSP
- Publisher (Content Owner) talking to a Syndicator (Video)
- Publisher talking to a Network
- Networks talking to Exchanges
- Exchanges talking to Sellers/Publishers

Publisher talking to an Exchange/SSP

Domain owners who work with exchanges directly may reach out to all the exchanges where they are account owners (meaning they are paid directly by the exchange) and ask them a series of questions to make sure that they have the data required for their ads.txt file.

Background:

Domain owners may choose to use the ads.txt file to make public the Publisher ID associated with all of their Authorized Digital Sellers in order to ensure transparency of who is authorized to sell or resell their inventory. The publisher.id can be found in section 3.2.10 of the OpenRTB protocol, found here (in the publisher object).

Any of the following would qualify to be included in the Authorized Digital Sellers of a domain:

- the Domain Owner themselves;
- An Exchange authorized to sell inventory on behalf of the Domain Owner
- a Network authorized to sell inventory on an exchange on behalf of the Domain Owner;

- a Sales House or Representative firm authorized to sell inventory on an exchange on behalf of the Domain Owner;
- an Exchange who is authorized to sell inventory on another exchange on behalf of the Domain Owner; or
- a Content Syndicator who is authorized to sell inventory on behalf of the Domain Owner.

Many exchanges can have different Publisher ID's for the same account owner. Some exchanges have a Publisher ID for each integration method, such as when they have a call from a header tag vs. a call from an ad tag in the Publisher's ad server, or from a server to server connection. This means that for any Publisher account owner, they can have multiple Publisher ID's that map to their account. In order to make sure that buyers are aware of all of the domain owners Publisher ID's in any given exchange, and obtain the exchange's consent (if required) for the domain owner to publish this information in their domain's ads.txt file, a domain owner needs to make sure that they ask the exchange questions about their setup.

Questions for Exchanges:

- 1) What are the Publisher ID(s) for my domain that you (the exchange) put in the RTB call (specifically in the publisher.id field of the publisher object) sent to buyers?
- 2) Do you (the exchange) have different Publisher ID's for different ways that you work with me (domain owner)?
- 3) I work with you through a Header Tag, can you send me the Publisher ID that corresponds to that integration?
- 4) I work with you through a tag in my ad server, can you send me the Publisher ID that corresponds to that integration?
- 5) I work with you through a server to server integration, can you send me the Publisher ID that corresponds to that integration?
- 6) Are there any other Publisher ID's that are connected to the account that I own?
- 7) Do you (the exchange) offer my inventory on any other exchanges on my behalf?
 - a) (If you (the domain owner) consents to this, you will need to have the exchange get the Publisher ID that they are using when they sell inventory on other exchanges. For a script to facilitate this conversation, please look at the script for Networks talking to Exchanges)
- 8) Can I have consent to expose these IDs on my site via ads.txt?

Publisher (Content Owner) talking to a Syndicator (e.g., Video)

This is an open item we expect to resolve during the public open comments period

Producers who work with video hosting platforms that syndicate their content may reach out to the syndicators that are authorized to sell inventory on behalf of the Domain Owner, and ask them a series of questions to make sure that they have the data required for their ads.txt file. If

you do not authorize a syndicator to sell your inventory on an exchange on your behalf, do not post their information to your domain's ads.txt file.

Background:

Domain owners may choose to use the ads.txt file to make public the Publisher ID associated with all of their Authorized Digital Sellers. The publisher.id can be found in section 3.2.10 of the OpenRTB protocol, found here (in the publisher object).

Authorized Digital Sellers can be:

- the Domain Owner themselves;
- a Network authorized to sell inventory on an exchange on behalf of a Domain Owner;
- a Sales House or Representative firm authorized to sell inventory on an exchange on behalf of a Domain Owner;
- an Exchange who is authorized to sell inventory on another exchange on behalf of a Domain Owner; or
- a Content Syndicator who is authorized to sell inventory on behalf of a Domain Owner.

Many syndicators can have different Publisher ID's for the same account owner. Some syndicators have a Publisher ID for each integration method, such as when they have a call from a header tag vs. a call from an ad tag in the Publisher's ad server, or from a server to server connection. This means that for any Publisher account owner, they can have multiple Publisher ID's that map to their account. In order to make sure that buyers are aware of all of the domain owners Publisher ID's in any given exchange, and obtain the exchange's consent (if required) for the domain owner to publish this information in their domain's ads.txt file, a domain owner needs to make sure that they ask the exchange questions about their setup.

Publisher talking to a Network

Domain owners who work with Networks may reach out to all the Networks that are authorized to sell inventory on Exchanges on behalf the Domain Owner, and ask them a series of questions to make sure that they have the data required for their ads.txt file. If you do not authorize a Network to sell your inventory on an exchange on your behalf, do not post their information to your domain's ads.txt file.

Background:

Domain owners may choose to use the ads.txt file to make public the Publisher ID associated with all of their Authorized Digital Sellers. publisher.id can be found in section 3.2.10 of the OpenRTB protocol, found here (in the publisher object).

Authorized Digital Sellers can be:

- the Domain Owner themselves;
- a Network authorized to sell inventory on an exchange on behalf of a Domain Owner;

- a Sales House or Representative firm authorized to sell inventory on an exchange on behalf of a Domain Owner;
- an Exchange who is authorized to sell inventory on another exchange on behalf of a Domain Owner; or
- a Content Syndicator who is authorized to sell inventory on behalf of a Domain Owner.

Many exchanges can have different Publisher ID's for the same account owner. Some exchanges have a Publisher ID for each integration method, such as when they have a call from a header tag vs. a call from an ad tag in the Publisher's ad server, or from a server to server connection. This means that for any Publisher account owner, they can have multiple Publisher ID's that map to their account. In order to make sure that buyers are aware of all of the domain owners Publisher ID's in any given exchange, and obtain the exchange's consent (if required) for the domain owner to publish this information in their domain's ads.txt file, a domain owner needs to make sure that they ask the exchange questions about their setup.

Questions for Exchanges:

- 1) What are the Publisher ID(s) that you (the exchange) put in the RTB call (specifically in the publisher.id field of the publisher object) sent to buyers?
- 2) Do you (the exchange) have different Publisher ID's for different ways that you work with me (domain owner)?
- 3) I work with you through a Header Tag, can you send me the Publisher ID that corresponds to that integration?
- 4) I work with you through a tag in my ad server, can you send me the Publisher ID that corresponds to that integration?
- 5) I work with you through a server to server integration, can you send me the Publisher ID that corresponds to that integration?
- 6) Are there any other Publisher ID's that are connected to the account that I own?
- 7) Do you (the exchange) offer my inventory on any other exchanges on my behalf?
 - a) (If you (the domain owner) consents to this, you will need to have the exchange get the Publisher ID that they are using when they sell inventory on other exchanges. For a script to facilitate this conversation, please look at the script for Networks talking to Exchanges)

Networks talking to Exchanges

Networks who are authorized to work with exchanges on behalf of Domain Owners may reach out to all the exchanges where they are account owners (meaning they are paid directly by the exchange) and ask them a series of questions to make sure that they have the data required for the Domain Owner's ads.txt file so that the Domain Owner's inventory sold through their authorized Network partners can be identified by buyers.

Background:

Domain owners may choose to use the ads.txt file to make public the Publisher ID associated with all of their Authorized Digital Sellers. publisher.id can be found in section 3.2.10 of the OpenRTB protocol, found here (in the publisher object).

Authorized Digital Sellers can be:

- the Domain Owner themselves;
- a Network authorized to sell inventory on an exchange on behalf of a Domain Owner;
- a Sales House or Representative firm authorized to sell inventory on an exchange on behalf of a Domain Owner;
- an Exchange who is authorized to sell inventory on another exchange on behalf of a Domain Owner; or
- a Content Syndicator who is authorized to sell inventory on behalf of a Domain Owner.

Many exchanges can have different Publisher ID's for the same account owner. Some exchanges have a Publisher ID for each integration method, such as when they have a call from a header tag vs. a call from an ad tag in the Publisher's ad server, or from a server to server connection. This means that for any Publisher account owner, they can have multiple Publisher ID's that map to their account. In order to make sure that buyers are aware of all of the domain owners Publisher ID's in any given exchange, and obtain the exchange's consent (if required) for the domain owner to publish this information in their domain's ads.txt file, a domain owner needs to make sure that they ask the exchange questions about their setup.

Questions for Exchanges:

- 1) What is the Publisher ID that you (the exchange) puts in the RTB call for my account that you (exchange) send to buyers across the exchange?
- 2) Do you (the exchange) have different Publisher ID's for different ways that you work with me (domain owner)?
- 3) I work with you (the exchange) through a Header Tag, can you (the exchange) send me the Publisher ID that corresponds to that integration?
- 4) I work with you (the exchange) through a tag in my ad server, can you (the exchange) send me the Publisher ID that corresponds to that integration?
- 5) I work with you (the exchange) through a server to server integration, can you (the exchange) send me the Publisher ID that corresponds to that integration?
- 6) Are there any other Publisher ID's that are connected to the account that I own?
- 7) Do you (the exchange) offer my inventory on any other exchanges on my behalf?
 - a) (If you (the Domain Owner and the Network) consent to this, you will need to have the exchange get the Publisher ID that they are using when they sell inventory on other exchanges.)

