

Creating Syndication Content



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Introduction

This document will show you how to create content for syndication with JavaScript and with PHP.

You will learn how to prepare the original content file for syndication.

And you will find out how to create JavaScript and PHP code for remote web sites to paste into their pages for syndicating your content.



There is no need to buy specialized syndication software. However, software can make your job easier and faster, with more free time for other things.

With the right software, you have options you otherwise wouldn't have. The reliable [Master Syndicator V5](#) and [Master Syndication Gateway V2](#) are two such titles.

Syndicating content in the methods described in this document can give you control over your content (it can't be edited by remote syndication sites) and control over which web sites and web pages publish your content (software can ban certain web sites or deliver content only to previously authorized sites).



How It Works

A file is on your server with content available for syndication. Let's refer to it as the source file.

A web page on someone else's web site contains JavaScript or PHP syndication code. Whenever the web page is loaded into a browser, the syndication code grabs your source file and inserts it into the web page.

That is essentially it.

Now, if the source file has a `.php` file name extension, PHP code can be executed before the file is sent to the remote web site (provided the source server is PHP enabled). This works with either JavaScript or PHP syndication code being used on the remote web page.

If the remote web page is using special PHP syndication code, then PHP code in the syndicated content itself can be executed on the remote web server before the content is sent to the visitor's browser. But this requires a source file with a non-PHP file name extension, like `.txt` or `.js` – otherwise, the PHP code would execute on the source server instead of on the remote server.

Testing If Remote Server Is PHP Enabled

In order to successfully use PHP syndication code on its web pages, the remote web site must be PHP enabled. Site owners can test whether or not their's is PHP enabled by:

1. Making a file named test.php
2. Putting these five lines into file `test.php`

```
<html><body>
<?php
echo 'YES' ;
?>
</body></html>
```

3. Uploading `test.php` to their server and typing the URL of `test.php` into their browser.

If the word “YES” appears on the web page, the web site is PHP enabled. If the web page is blank, it is not.

Additional Functionality With Specialized Syndication Software

Additional functionality can be available with specialized software like those mentioned in the “Introduction” section:

1. Content can be restricted to preauthorized domains.
2. Certain domains can be banned from receiving content.
3. Affiliate links can be customized for the web site displaying the content.
4. Content can be preloaded for syndication beginning on specified dates in the future.

Why Syndicate This Way?

There are a number of reasons to syndicate with JavaScript or PHP instead of relinquishing control to other organizations or technology.

1. You control who can or can't syndicate your content.

To publish your content, certain JavaScript or PHP code needs to be in place on the web page where the content is inserted. This gives you control over what is published.

If domains publish your content without permission, JavaScript can be included with the content to present a message in the viewer's browser and/or redirect the browser to a different web page.

[Master Syndication Gateway V2](#) can be used to restrict content delivery to domains you have previously authorized.

- ### 2. You control the source file, which means your syndicated content can not be edited by remote syndication web sites. When you edit or replace the content in the source file with updated information or new installments, the content on all remote syndication web sites also change, automatically and immediately.
- ### 3. Using [Master Syndication Gateway V2](#), you can insert affiliate links customized for the remote web site receiving the content.

Creating Content for Syndication

Pretty much any HTML and JavaScript can be used when creating content for syndication. Sections later in this document have more information about what can, should not, and may not be included when syndicating content. The “should not” and “may not” lists are short, very short.

If the content is straight text, it can be pasted directly into the [Master Syndicator V5](#) or [Master Syndication Gateway V2](#) control panel's syndication content box. Check the checkboxes to automatically insert paragraph tags and convert URLs into clickable links.

However, if your content contains tables, images, or other formatting beyond paragraph tags and links, then the content will need to contain HTML markup.

If you prefer not to do the HTML markup yourself, you might utilize software that can convert documents into web pages. See Appendix A, Web Page Generation Software for a short list.

When the content is ready, copy only the portion to be syndicated, not the whole page. Then paste it into the control panel's syndication content box.

If you are not using syndication software to prepare original content files for syndication, “Manually Preparing Content for Syndication” has instructions.

If your content must look the same on all syndication sites —

To control the syndicated content's formatting, format your content in a way unlikely to be changed by the remote syndication web site's local CSS styles.

Although the tag can be used to format the content, CSS would be preferred in most situations. The tag in HTML is deprecated and is to be removed from accepted HTML standards.

When specifying CSS classes for your content (as opposed to inline CSS), be considerate. Instead of applying CSS to standard HTML tags, create your own class names, names unlikely to be used at any of the remote sites that will be syndicating your content. CSS class names containing your domain name (without periods) would probably be sufficiently unique. Example:

```
<div>
<style type="text/css">
.exampledotcomparagraph { margin-top: 25px; }
</style>
<p class="exampledotcomparagraph">
Syndicated content here.
</p>
</div>
```

If syndication sites may control how your content looks —

To allow remote syndication web sites to control your content's formatting, omit any tags and use no CSS tags.

When using only standard HTML tags other than the tag, and no CSS, web masters have better control over the look and feel of your content as published on their web sites. This allows web sites to conform your content to their design. (They can not change the text of your content, only the way it is presented.)

Unless there is compelling reason to force a certain format for your content, web masters may appreciate your consideration in omitting formatting tags.

Another consideration —

Popups and interruptive content layers should be omitted from your content unless its use is first disclosed to syndicating web sites.

Some web masters are sensitive to their site user's sensibilities and would not appreciate popups or other potentially objectionable techniques being used.

What Content Can Be Syndicated

When syndicating content, you're probably supplying only part of a remote site's web page. Therefore, the content to be syndicated should not contain tags such as `<html>`, `<head>`, `<base>`, `<title>`, `<meta>`, or `<body>`. (If your content **is** the entire page, then you would of course use those tags as required.)

You can include pretty much anything that can be put into a normal web page, such as:

- Sounds
- Images
- Forms
- Tables
- Plain text
- Links
- JavaScript
- CSS
- Hit counters

All URLs in the syndicated content (including `href=...`, `src=...`, and `action=...` URLs) must be absolute `http://...` URLs. This is because the content will be on remote servers, and those servers would be unable to correctly resolve URLs relative to your server.

If you use forms or other links to CGI programs, those programs need to allow input from domains other than your own.

What Content Should Not Be Syndicated

Here are two classes of items that should not be in syndicated content:

1. Flash, ASP, MP3, and other technology that requires the syndicating site's server to run specific software or to be configured in a certain way. If you know all your syndicating sites are on compatible servers, then go ahead and include the technology. But if you don't know, it is best not to include it.
2. Cookie code in the syndicated content can set cookies for the syndicating site's domain name, the domain where the content is being viewed, but not for your domain name.

Cookies can only be read by the domain that sets them.

What Content Can Not Be Syndicated

Do not syndicate content with Server Side Includes. SSI can only include files and launch programs that are on the same server as the web page. SSI tags on syndicating sites' servers can't reach your server.

Including SSI tags would result in an embarrassing error message if any syndicating site's server scans the web page for SSI tags.

Manually Preparing Content for Syndication

Syndicated content comes from a file on the source web site. This section is about how to create that source file.

The source file is a plain text file containing the content to be syndicated.

If the file is to be syndicated with PHP syndication code, the content in the source file does not need to be modified.

If syndication is with JavaScript code, on the other hand, much needs to be done with the content to prepare it for syndication.

First, make a copy of the source file for backup purposes.

Then, do these steps:

1. Precede each backslash (\) with another backslash:

\\

2. Precede each apostrophe (') with a backslash:

\'

3. End each line with:

```
' );
```

4. Begin each line with:

```
document.writeln('
```

5. Replace the word

```
script
```

with

```
scri' + 'pt
```

wherever it occurs. (This is to prevent the browser from misinterpreting the word “script” as JavaScript that must be executed independently.)

Save the source file.

Naming the Source File

To syndicate with JavaScript, the usual name for the source file is with a `.js` file name extension, such as `content.js`

To syndicated with PHP, the name for the source file can have any file name extension that will cause the server to deliver the content as plain text, such as `.txt` or `.html` – even `.js` can be used. To syndicated with PHP, the remote web site server must be

PHP enabled and the PHP syndication code must be pasted into a web page with a `.php` file name extension.

If the source file contains PHP code that must execute on your server before it's sent to the remote web site, whether syndicated with JavaScript or with PHP, then name the source file with a `.php` file name extension, such as `content.php`

If the source file contains PHP code that **must not** execute on your server before it's sent to the remote web site, then name the source file with a non-PHP file name extension, such as `.txt` or `.js`

The table in the “Some Differences Between Syndicating with PHP and Syndicating with JavaScript” section provides information about which types of files can have which effects depending on whether JavaScript or PHP syndication code is used.

Example JavaScript and PHP Syndication Code

Three different methods can be used to syndicate content on remote web pages. One of those methods is JavaScript and two are PHP.

The JavaScript method does not require any special configuration at the remote web site server. The PHP methods require that the remote web site server is PHP enabled.

Here is example syndication code for the JavaScript method:

```
<script
  type="text/javascript"
  language="JavaScript"
  src="http://example.com/content/content.js">
</script>
```

Replace URL `http://example.com/content/content.js` with the URL to your content source file.

Here is example syndication code for one PHP method:

```
<?php
$fp = fsockopen("example.com",80,$errno,$errstr,30);
if (!$fp) { echo "$errstr ($errno)\r\n"; }
else {
    $out = "GET /content/content.txt HTTP/1.1\r\n";
    $out .= "Host: example.com\r\n";
    $out .= "Connection: Close\r\n\r\n";
    fwrite($fp,$out);
    $body = false;
    while(!feof($fp)) {
        $s = fgets($fp);
        if($body) { echo $s; }
        else {
            if($s == "\r\n") { $body = true; }
        }
    }
    fclose($fp);
}
?>
```

Replace **example.com** with the domain name where your content source file is at. This must be done in two places, at line 2 and at line 6 of the above syndication code.

At line 5, replace **/content/content.txt** with the URI of your content source file. (The URI is the URL minus the http and domain name part.)

The second PHP method causes any PHP code in the syndicated content to be executed on the remote web site server before the content is sent to the browser.

Here is example syndication code for that PHP method:

```
<?php  
include_once 'http://example.com/content/content.txt';  
?>
```

Replace URL `http://example.com/content/content.js` with the URL to your content source file.

This last method might not work on every PHP enabled server. The default `include_once` command configuration is enabled for retrieving HTTP web pages. But some hosting companies might have the HTTP retrieval disabled.

Which of the three methods you use depends on your content and how you want to deliver it. It also depends on whether or not your remote syndication web sites are PHP enabled.

Maybe you'll decide to give remote web site owners a choice.

PHP retrieval can be faster than JavaScript. Depending on the site visitor's Internet connection speed, that difference might not be noticeable.

Some Differences Between Syndicating with PHP and Syndicating with JavaScript

There are some differences between syndication via PHP and syndication via JavaScript:

1. Inserting syndicated content into web pages.

With PHP syndication, the remote web site's server retrieves the content from the source web site and inserts it into the web page before the web page is sent to the browser. The remote web site must have PHP enabled.

With JavaScript syndication, the browser retrieves the content from the source web site after it receives the web page from the remote web site's server.

Server to server content retrieval is usually faster than browser to server. Therefore, PHP might be somewhat faster, depending on the web page visitor's Internet connection speed.

2. Search engine spiders.

With PHP syndication, search engine spiders can index the syndicated content. Spiders can gulp syndicated content just like normal static content.

With JavaScript syndication, search engine spiders probably will not index the content. To index the content, spiders would

need to retrieve a file from the source web site and parse the JavaScript to extract the content.

3. PHP and JavaScript code within the syndicated content itself.

With PHP syndication, if the syndicated content is retrieved from the source web site with the `include` or `include_once` PHP command, then any PHP code in the syndicated content can be executed on the remote web site's server before it is sent to the browser – the remote web site must have PHP enabled. The content should be stored on the source web site with a non-PHP file name extension so the PHP code does not execute before it is sent to the remote web site.

With PHP syndication and with JavaScript syndication, PHP code in the syndicated content can be executed by the source web site before it is sent to the remote web site's server, provided the source web site is PHP enabled and the content on the source web site has a file name with the appropriate extension. Example: `content.php`

With PHP syndication and with JavaScript syndication, JavaScript code in the content can be run by the browser.

The table below tries to present the information in a more understandable fashion.

In the table: **(A)** means [Master Syndicator V5](#) can provide the functionality and **(B)** means [Master Syndication Gateway V2](#) can provide the functionality.

<i>The source file with the content being syndicated</i>	<i>JavaScript can execute in browser</i>	<i>PHP can execute on source server</i>	<i>PHP can execute on remote server</i>
(A)(B) Non-PHP file name syndicated with JavaScript.	Yes	No	No
(A)(B) Non-PHP file name syndicated with PHP <code>include</code> or <code>include_once</code> command.	Yes	No	Yes
(A)(B) Non-PHP file name syndicated with PHP using HTTP URL.	Yes	No	No
(A) PHP file name syndicated with JavaScript.	Yes	Yes	No
(A) PHP file name syndicated with PHP <code>include</code> or <code>include_once</code> command.	Yes	Yes	No (already executed on your server)
(A) PHP file name syndicated with PHP using HTTP URL.	Yes	Yes	N

Examples of non-PHP file names are those with `.txt` or `.js` file name extensions. Also, the file names of CGI programs that deliver content are non-PHP file names, with `.cgi` and `.pl` file name extensions.

PHP file names almost always require a `.php` file name extension.

Thank You

Thank you for reading this document.

Be sure to visit <http://BontragerConnection.com/> for links to our web sites.

Will Bontrager

P.S. With the right software, you can rest easy, knowing that a reliable and robust program is monitoring and recording where your content is being published.

Appendix A

Web Page Generation Software

Here is a short list of web page creation software for your convenience. Both free and commercial are represented.

The list is provided for your convenience. We can not endorse any web page generation software because we don't have experience with any of them.

1. Nvu (pronounced N-view, for a "new view") from <http://www.nvu.com/> is available for Macintosh, Windows, and Linux.

2. OpenOffice.org from <http://OpenOffice.org/> can convert its word processing documents into HTML web pages. Versions are available for all major operating systems.

3. Dreamweaver from <http://www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver/download/> is available for both Windows and Macintosh.

4. FrontPage from <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/FX010858021033.aspx> is available for Windows.

A query for "web page editors" at search engines can reveal many more software titles.