

**KONTERA IN-TEXT
ADVERTISING SECRETS
UPDATED 3rd Edition!**

**HOW TO REALLY MAKE THE WORDS
ON YOUR WEBSITE PAY!**

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INTRODUCTION

When I first wrote about [Kontera](#), I thought it had a pretty promising service. The principle was good: it was a pay-per-click system with an incredibly unobtrusive way to embed ads into content. Instead of offering ad units so that they looked like additional information placed on the page — which is what Google does with AdSense — Kontera chose to turn keywords into links.

Place the cursor over the link and immediately the reader received a floating box containing an ad.

The links were interesting enough to create curiosity and the ads attractive enough to invite clicks. It was simple, it looked good, and the stats were tempting enough to make it a real contender.

Initially though, it was only a contender for publishers who couldn't use AdSense — usually because they'd been banned.

Google wouldn't allow a competing ad system on the same page as its AdSense units.

Then the people at Google changed their mind. As long as an ad system didn't look like AdSense, publishers could use as many different ways of making money on the same page as they liked.

Suddenly Kontera was available to everyone, and it became a very useful way for publishers to increase their chances of winning ad clicks.

Since then, Kontera has pretty much taken off. It's brought out a much wider range of different kinds of ad formats, and while for other ad systems that just means different unit sizes, for Kontera, it also means different kinds of content in the unit itself.

The company has also made a few changes to the way publishers can integrate the ads into the page and done some work on improving the contextualization.

Its goal, says Kontera, is to make ad implementation as hands-off as possible. Publishers should be able to just sign up, paste the code and focus on creating the content — and collecting the checks.

It sounds wonderful... but that's the kind of thing that always makes me nervous.

Call me a control freak if you like, but I find it hard to believe that you can't improve the earnings from any ad system without a little tweaking, experimentation and playing.

Websites and Web pages are so different that what brings in high revenues on one site might have a very different effect on another.

Whatever system you're using, whether it's Kontera, AdSense, Chitika, any other, or all of them together, it's vital to understand how the system works, what its strengths and weaknesses are, and how you can adapt that system to your site.

What Is Kontera?

Like other contextualized ad services, Kontera's In-Text Advertising relies on your content to deliver *relevant, targeted* ads that readers will click. Where it differs from just about every other form of contextual advertising though is that In-Text Advertising doesn't place advertisements all over your Web pages.

There are no banners, no ad units and no text links placed at the side of your page, in the middle of an article or anywhere else on your site for that matter.

Instead, Kontera uses a mixture of technology and algorithms to decide what your page is about, *then highlights some of the words you've already put on your page.*

Only when the user places the mouse over those words does an ad appear related to that word's meaning. The ad disappears when the user moves his mouse off the word — or clicks the ad.

So if you had a Web page about furniture for example, Kontera might highlight the words "sofa," "home furnishings" and "dining table" at certain points on your Web page. If the user wanted to know more about any of those topics, he'd simply place his mouse over the link and see an ad.

If the ad interested that user enough, he could then click on the link or the advert and be taken to the advertiser's site. And that's when you get your commission.

The ads delivered by In-Text Advertising then are:

- Unobtrusive — users don't see them unless they want to.

- Targeted — Kontera chooses words relevant to the subject of your site.
- Profitable — Kontera automatically chooses the highest paying ads for the most relevant keywords to display.

In theory, Kontera is completely automated. You can simply sign up, put the code on your pages and let the technology do the rest.

Kontera's contextualization system will pick the words to highlight, decide how to space them out on the page and choose the ads to display. *It will also keep track of your figures for you, calculate which keywords have the best combination of relevance and price, and ensure that you're getting the highest possible revenue for your page.*

I've taken a good look at the In-Text Advertising system, experimented with it and contacted some of the people behind it, and I've discovered some truly amazing things, not least the fact that Kontera grants its publishers *a great deal of freedom over the way ads are served on their site.*

It doesn't look that way. Because Kontera wants its units to work out of the box, it doesn't emphasize all of the optimization strategies you can use. But there are plenty of options available.

In this book, I'm going to talk about the three most important aspects of earning high revenues with In-Text Advertising: formatting, contextualization and stats.

I'll explain the best way to present your ads, how to lay out your page to persuade people to click and how to use Kontera's controls (yes, there are controls) to make sure the ad links appear where you want them to appear and *how* you want them to appear.

I'll also talk about using keywords, and controlling which terms get highlighted and turned into ads so that you can always be certain they're generating the most interest, the largest number of clicks and the highest revenue.

I'll discuss how to read and analyze your stats so that the changes you make are smart and effective.

And I'll explain some of the most important strategies you should consider when you're combining AdSense and Kontera.

In this short guide, I'm going to give you solid, effective tips for squeezing the maximum revenue out of your In-Text Advertising ads.

You may wish to get signed up as a Kontera publisher for free right away. [Click here to apply for a Kontera account.](#)

Now let's start with formatting....

1. Formatting — Building A Page That Brings Revenues

The most obvious change that Kontera has been making to its ad units is the way they look. When Kontera's In-Text Advertising first came out, the units came in slightly bland-looking rectangular boxes. These were replaced with smooth, floating pop-ups that look a bit like television screens.

At first, Kontera added occasional images to those boxes. Now, the company adds a whole bunch of different kinds of content.

I'm sure that new design alone made a big difference to publishers' clickthroughs. I'm sure too that all the extra content they've now thrown in is improving revenues even further. But that doesn't mean that you should just kick back and let the new look and the new content do all the work.

One of the most important principles of successful Internet publishing is that the ads should blend into the page. The less the ads on your page look like ads, the greater the chance that someone will click them.

With Kontera, your ads are *already* blended into the site. That's the beauty of In-Text Advertising: you can't ask for the ads to be better placed than to have them embedded in your text!

But there's still plenty you can — and should — be doing to optimize your ads and win more clicks.

When you sign up to Kontera, you should receive some advice from the company's customer support team advising you on ways to make the most of your units. If you have any questions, you can certainly shoot them a line. But if you're like me, you won't want to manage your ads by email. You'll want to have full and instant control over your ad units... and your revenues.

In this chapter, I'll review all the controls that Kontera puts at your fingertips and explain how to use them.

Let's start by looking at those formats.

1.1 Kontera's Ad Formats — 6 Ways To Pack A Box

The first In-Text Advertising did exactly what they said on the box: they put links in the content, which produced links above the content.

Today, In-Text Advertising units come in six different flavors, each of which contains a different type of content:

In-Text Advertising Flex



Fig. 1.1 In-Text Advertising Flex — Big and flashy.

In-Text Advertising Flex pulls up a large, animated Flash ad. It's eye-catching, moving and difficult to miss. It might look like an ad but it's attractive enough to draw attention to itself and invite clicks.

In-Text Advertising Video

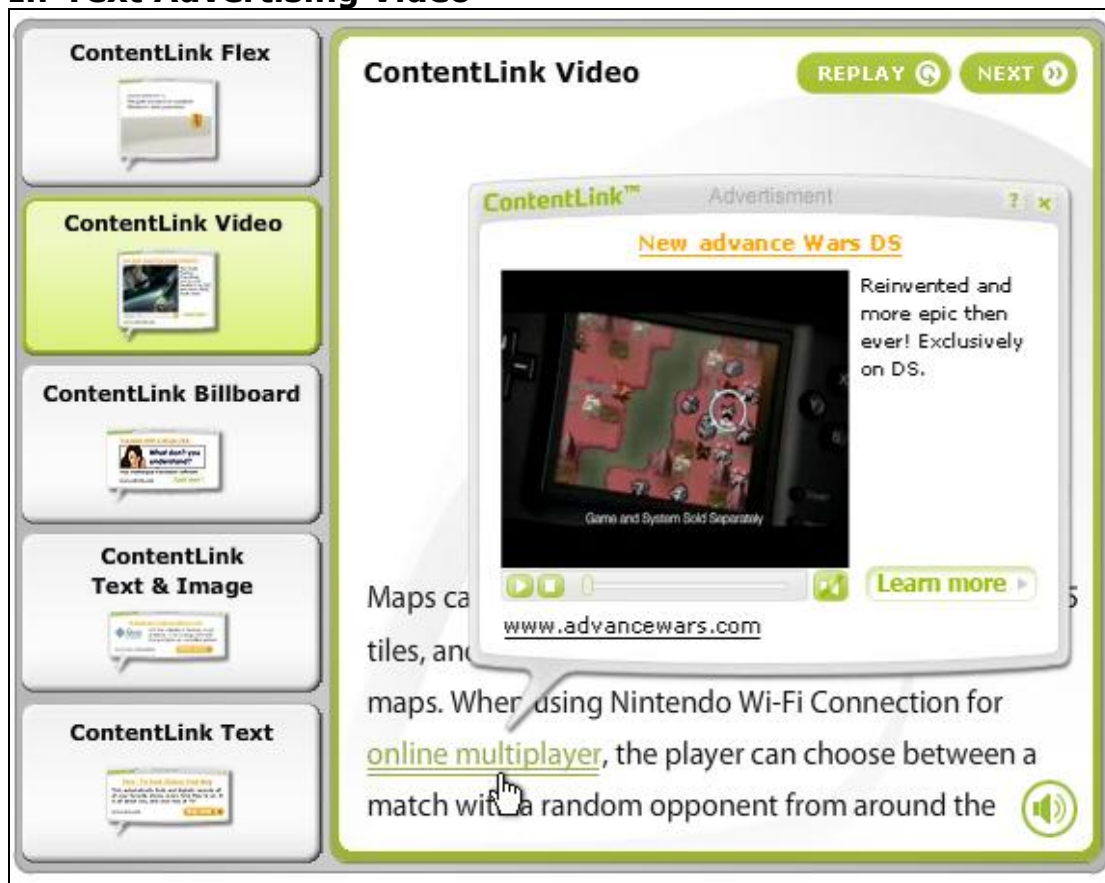


Fig. 1.2 In-Text Advertising Video — Movie ads!

In-Text Advertising Video ads are even harder to miss — especially if the user has sound turned on. These pull up small video clips of around 45 seconds, together with a small amount of text and an ever-present link.

It's the most obtrusive kind of ad that Kontera can offer so either users are going to sit back and watch, or they're going to pull away quickly. Many watch... then click.

In-Text Advertising Billboard

ContentLink Flex

ContentLink Video

ContentLink Billboard

ContentLink Text & Image

ContentLink Text

ContentLink Billboard REPLAY NEXT

ContentLink™ Advertisement ? x

Save on Friskies

Friskies Feed The Senses™

click here to Save \$2

Join our club for cat lovers and get a \$2 coupon now

www.Friskies.com Learn more ▶

dry cat f
will over the course of several days. Most store-bought cat food comes in either dry form, also known as kibble, or wet canned form. Some manufacturers sell frozen raw diets and premix products to cater to owners who feed raw.

Fig. 1.3 In-Text Advertising Billboard — Ads that say “look at me!”

In-Text Advertising Billboard units are much more traditional. These include what look like traditional banner ads — although small ones — with a small amount of text, a link and an inviting button that might just tempt users to click through.

In-Text Advertising Text & Image



Fig. 1.4 In-Text Advertising Text & Image — Add a logo to a small amount of text to create a mini-intro for a new article.

In-Text Advertising Text & Image units look simple too but they're actually very neatly designed. They contain a headline, a logo and a small amount of text.

That makes them sound little different to any piece of marketing copy, but the way they're formatted means that they look very similar to the intros and teasers you can find on blog home pages — the kind of things that people are used to clicking when they want to read more.

To users then, they look familiar and inviting. They suggest content rather than ad.

In-Text Advertising Text



Fig. 1.5 In-Text Advertising Text— One touch, one nugget of information.

And In-Text Advertising Text units are the simplest ad units of all. These bring up nothing more than a headline, a few lines of text, the advertiser's URL and an inviting button.

There's no image but if the keyword is right and the text itself is well-written, there doesn't have to be.

Kontera Hybrid



Fig. 1.6 Kontera Hybrid — A mixture of the best bits of a floating ad unit.

There is one more unit that a publisher might receive on his website. The Kontera Hybrid unit is Kontera's newest and most impressive. It combines interesting content, such as articles or a video (or even both), with an eye-catching ad.

The result is a floating box that couldn't look more like content and less like someone trying to sell something. It's intriguing, it invites clicks... and it's pretty exclusive.

At the moment, Kontera is only making the Hybrid available to a very small number of select publishers. That means it's probably paying a great deal. When Kontera rolled out its first rich media ads instead of paying the usual 20 cents or so per click, they paid \$2 per click. I don't know if Hybrid units pay that amount but it might be nice to find out.

You can ask to be considered for the Hybrid program by writing to Kontera at publishers@kontera.com but it's likely that they're going to make some pretty high page view demands before they'll let you in. They are hoping though to expand the network of Hybrid users throughout 2009 so if they don't let you in immediately, keep an eye out; they could be opening soon.

So the good news is that once you've signed up with Kontera, your users could be seeing a whole bunch of different kinds of ads. In

general, the text-only ads are the worst-performing but text & logo units do very well, and so do Flash and video units. A lot depends, of course, on how they're used.

The bad news though is that you get no control over which format you receive. Publishers don't get to choose the ad formats. The unit you receive depends on which type of ad is available for the keyword on the page. You can ask Kontera *not* to supply rich media ads if you want, but the people at Kontera say that's a bad idea. It reduces the cost-per-click you'll receive as well as the clickthroughs.

Of course, just because Kontera doesn't serve up a menu of unit choices doesn't mean you don't get to make any. It just means you have to be smart with your keywords. I'll come back to that a little later in this report.

1.2 Where To Put The Code

The first thing you should be doing is putting your code in the right place.

When I first spoke to the people at Kontera, they stressed the importance of making sure that the code goes in the right location at the bottom of the page before the `</body>` tag.

I'm guessing they stressed that because lots of people were putting it in the wrong place.

They also said that it's important that your HTML is up to scratch, with no illegal coding. I'm sure there are lots of sites with that problem!

Now, I don't know if putting your code in the wrong place is going to give you the wrong ads or no ads at all (although I suspect that any illegal HTML would throw the contextualizing system out of kilter). But if the people at Kontera think it's important to mention, it's probably important for publishers to pay attention to.

When you're adjusting your site to optimize it for Kontera, take a minute to review your HTML and make sure your code is legal and their code is in the right place. It will just take a minute and could make all the difference in your revenues.

And for some publishers, the implementation is easier than ever. If you're planning to put Kontera on a Wordpress blog, a Joomla site or a Drupal site then you can simply download a plugin. Install the

plugin on your site, and you'll find that you have Kontera on all your pages.

You'll also be able to do a little optimization. So users of Wordpress can choose to keep Kontera out of the comments if they want. (That can be a good idea if you tend to get lots of comments. An ad link that appears in the last comment of a long, long page is unlikely to pick up too many clicks.) Joomla users can choose to restrict the ads to non-registered users — a way to avoid bothering your most loyal readers, earn from those who haven't signed up, and give readers an incentive to do so. And Drupal users can also opt to remove ads from polls, search results and forums.

For users of Blogger, the process is even more straightforward. From the In-Text Advertising Setup tab, you should find a button marked "Kontera it!" Hit the button, follow the instructions and hey presto!, you'll have Kontera on your blog.

What all of these implementation methods also allow you to do though is change the color of the link. That's a crucial choice and one that needs to be thought through carefully.

1.3 The Color Of Your Link — When Blue Isn't Always Best

In general, I believe that when it comes to ad links, blue is best. It's the color that users expect to see and it's one that they're most likely to click.

In the experiments I've made with colors for text links, I've consistently found that blue brings the best results.

For Kontera though, that might not be the case.

That's because In-Text Advertising differ from regular links in two ways. The first is that In-Text Advertising links have a second underline beneath them. The people at Kontera are aware that making their links look like the other hyperlinks on a Web page would increase clickthroughs for publishers. But they're also aware that it wouldn't increase sales for their advertisers. Many readers too have complained that they can't tell the difference between an ad link and a straight information link. That might have been the point as far as publishers were concerned but the compromise has been to mark the links differently and only send advertisers users that know they're getting an ad and are genuinely interested in their products.

That means that even if you do make your links a standard blue color — and that's the default color that Kontera gives you — you still won't be able to hide the fact that they're ad links and different to the other links on your page.

Publishers have reported good results with blue links though, so I think the best strategy is start with blue, follow your stats for a week and the feedback from your readers, then switch colors for a week. It's the only way to be absolutely sure which color strategy best suits *your* Web pages.

That's actually the strategy that Kontera recommend too. They've also been following the metrics produced by different link colors and they chose blue as the default because they say it matches the aesthetic of the broadest range of different site formats.

The best strategy they say though, is to choose a link color that complements your site and color scheme, which ensures the links are highly visible and which does not clash with the background color — and test different colors.

You don't have to do this on all of your pages of course. Just choose about three different Web pages on your site and change them all to the same color. That should give you an idea of what would happen across your site without having to make lots of changes or surprise your users.

So which colors should you test, and how do you change the link color on a Kontera ad?

The actual color you choose for a link, if you're not using blue, will depend on the design of your Web page. It shouldn't be so outrageous that it puts people off, draws attention away from the surrounding text or screams "I'm an ad!" But it should be just different enough to make people notice and tempt them to mouse-over and bring up the tool tips. A tone or two up from one of the surrounding colors on your site often works very well.

So if your site uses borders or edges in this color:



then you might want to put your In-Text Advertising links in a color [like this](#).

To do that, you just need to choose a different color from the dropdown menu or change the line in the code that says:

```
var dc_ContentlinkColor = 'blue';
```

to whichever HTML-friendly color you need. Personally, I've been using orange.

That's it. It's very easy. Start with blue, switch to a color that's close to your color scheme, and within a couple of weeks, you'll know for sure which color strategy works best for you. That's always going to be much more accurate than me telling you which link color to use on your site.

One color you can't change though is the background color of the tool tips box itself. Kontera had been considering allowing publishers to change that themselves but too many publishers were using colors that made the ads hard to read. The ads, they found, almost always looked best on a white background so they fixed the background color. That sounds about right to me.

1.4 Recommend Your Links

Whichever link color you find works best for you, there's one strategy that works for everyone: recommending your ads.

For Kontera, there's nothing wrong with putting a message at the top of your Web page explaining what your In-Text Advertising links are and suggesting that people click them to learn more.

In fact, the people at Kontera positively *recommend* that you do this!

You can't tell your readers to click on all your In-Text Advertising links to ensure that you get revenue. Nor can you persuade them to click because you'll pay them or for any other reason. Kontera's advertisers won't like users who aren't genuinely interested in their offers any more than Google's advertisers or Yahoo's or anyone else's. When those advertisers complain to Kontera about their low conversion rates, you can be sure that Kontera will pass their complaints on to you.

But you can put a small line at the top of your website that says something like:

For more information and special deals related to any of the issues on this page, place your cursor over the double-underlined links. All information supplied by Kontera.com.

A line like that does three things: it tells people what the links are; it helps your users find more information about the topics you're discussing on your Web page; and it encourages people to place their cursor over the links.

And that's probably the biggest reason that you might find that links in colors other than regular link-blue work on Kontera when they don't work on other contextualized ads: the links themselves have a second difference beyond their appearance.

Put the cursor over a In-Text Advertising link, and you're going to get a result. You're going to get a box of tool tips that floats over the text and gives extra information related to the word.

It's fun to do! That's a big difference compared to passing your cursor over regular links or looking at regular ads.

Of course, you don't get paid when the user brings up the ad; you only get paid if they click on it. But now you've got people deliberately bringing up ads and looking at them, instead of doing everything they can to avoid them.

That's going to do wonders for your CTR.

And of course, after a user has spotted a In-Text Advertising link and brought up the tool tips once, there's a great chance he'll look around for other links to do it again. For users who have even the smallest amount of curiosity, it's going to be hard to resist the temptation to bring up more Kontera ads.

1.5 Designing The Page

One of the most important elements of any website — and especially for a site that aims to earn revenue through advertising — is how the page is laid out.

In traditional forms of contextualized advertising, publishers decide where they should place their ad units. Although the actual location can vary from site to site, there are some general rules: ads above the fold (on the screen and visible before users start to scroll) tend to do best; ad units on the right hand side of the page tend to do

well too, and it also helps if the ads are integrated into the site so that they look like part of the text.

Putting ad units at the bottom of the page is a pretty good way to make sure that they're ignored.

With In-Text Advertising, you don't get to make those choices.

At least not at first, anyway.

Kontera's system is built to identify the content of your site automatically, pick out the highest-paying keywords in real time and serve up ads that are relevant to the context. (So a site about new mothers and a site about nutrition might both have the word "milk" highlighted, but one would receive ads about breast-feeding while the other would be served ads about dairy products.)

But that means that where the ads appear on the page will depend on where those keywords happen to be located. In theory, it's possible for all of the highlighted terms to be the last words of the text, tucked away in the bottom right hand corner of the page.

In practice though, that rarely happens. Your keywords are more likely to be scattered fairly evenly around the page. A bigger problem is that very long pages can use up all their link quota at the very start. You'll have lots of ads at the beginning of the page and very few at the end.

If you find that's happening to you, you've got two options. The first is to contact Kontera and ask them to fix it. You can't ask for something as specific as a single link per paragraph but can ask for approximate spacings, such as 30 words between links. You can also specify how many links you'd like to receive for every 1,000 words. Between those two parameters, Kontera say, they can deliver the kind of link density you want.

But that's all a bit clumsy. It means that testing involves lots of emails backwards and forwards when you'd rather be making small changes yourself and controlling your ad placements directly.

That's why it's probably best to keep this option in reserve for if things get really desperate, and...

...keep your pages short.

That's always good advice for sites looking to make money from contextualized ads. I'll discuss contextualization strategies later in

this guide but for now, it's important to bear in mind that short pages on specific topics won't just make it easy for Kontera to serve relevant ads, they'll also help the ad spacing.

And there is a third way to control your ad placements: with Zone Tags.

1.6 Using Zone Tags To Target Your Ads

Although Kontera doesn't let publishers place their In-Text Advertising ads on exactly the words they want, it does let publishers mark areas of the page where they *don't* want ads.

To define certain text areas as off-limit simply add the line:

```
<span name=KonaFilter>
```

before the text, and the tag:

```
</span>
```

at the end.

If that sounds to you like AdSense's Section Targeting, you're on the right track. But Kontera's filters aren't exactly the same as Section Targeting. Placing these filter tags won't prevent Kontera's contextualization engine from checking that section for keywords. The contents of that section will still be used to assess the meaning of the Web page. Kontera just won't place ads on any keywords it finds there.

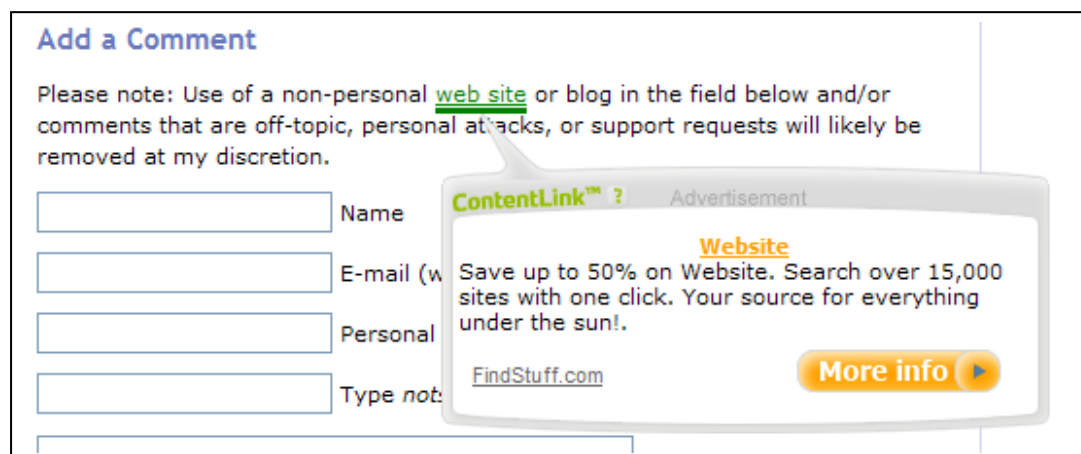


Fig. 1.2 A good spot for filtering at <http://alexking.org/blog>.

So which areas of your Web page might you want to mark off?

The first places to mark would be any that aren't in the main text area. Kontera's ads get the most clicks when they're placed in articles. Links in titles, copyright notices and small print tend to be ignored. So zone them off.

If you're using short Web pages, that wouldn't leave a great deal, and there's a good chance that you wouldn't need to do any more. But you also might want to mark off readers' comments, direct quotes that you've taken from books or other sites, or even the first paragraph of an article if you wanted to introduce a topic before offering a related ad.

Kontera supplies zone tags to let you keep ads away from certain areas of your Web pages, and they're very easy to use. If you want make sure that ads *do* appear in areas of your choice, you have to do a little more work.

1.7 Targeting Your Ad Locations

Controlling where your ads appear requires two pieces of information: you'll need to know which spots on your page get the best results; and which keywords your page contains.

Put the highest-paying keywords on the best parts of the site in attractive and eye-catching colors, and you'll maximize your revenues.

Unfortunately, neither of those pieces of information is easy to come by.

For publishers used to using channels to track which parts of the page give the highest number of clicks, In-Text Advertising can look a little restrictive. There doesn't seem to be any way to control where the ads appear or how to know which parts of the page are bringing the best results.

In fact, Kontera *can* collect this information but they don't make it easily available to publishers. The reason is that **location is not as important as context.**

Few users are going to look at traditional ad units deliberately so one of the keys to success is to place them where the largest number of users are going to be looking anyway and tempt as many of them as possible to glance over. Those areas are largely geographical: the top of the page, the right-hand column etc.

I agree, they are idiots. I'm from southwest Louisiana and I knew once the hurricane hit it was just a matter of time before this looting would begin. They are hoodlums with no regard for the [law](#) or other people.

Some people I know are upset that the media keeps showing and reporting on this but I think it's a good thing. I want the rest of the nation to see what we have to deal with on a regular basis. This is an extreme situation but I am not at all surprised by it.

Fig. 1.3 Which In-Text Advertising blog comment is most likely to receive a mouse-over and a click? This...

For Kontera's In-Text Advertising, that same principle applies: you still want your links to appear in the most popular areas of the page but the words that surround the linked keyword are even more important.

The quality and type of content in which the In-Text Advertising appears is crucial to your revenues.

Tool tips are a little like footnotes in a book. Footnotes can contain interesting information but they're also a bit of a distraction. If you're captivated by what you're reading or want to get to the end of the chapter, then it's more likely that you're going to skip right past them, telling yourself that you'll come back and read them later. Of course, you never do.

That means that if you've got a big block of text on a page — something like a long article or a giant blog rant — your readers are going to be less likely to call up any tool tips they'll come across. If they start doing that, they'll never finish what they're reading.

On the other hand, if you have a small piece of text — something like a sidebar or a quick blog entry — then readers are going to be more likely to mouse-over to pick up some more information.

Hey, Joel - long time no talk. Just a quick comment here. My heart goes out to those affected by this terrible tragedy and my admiration for those who are helping in any way they can is great. However, I must say that there is one thing that is bothering me greatly. The fact that people in many different ways are taking advantage of the situation to benefit themselves is disgusting. The people looting for profit and not need are truly making the situation worse. But the media and some in the government, both liberals and conservatives, are making it worse by disgustingly trying to politicize the situation for their own benefit. Also, I am tremendously bothered by the many cries I hear (a lot from conservatives) about laying down martial law and "shooting looters on sight." How humane! (insert great sarcasm here) Yes, the looting is a problem, but these people are DESPERATE, scared, and feel that their lives are ruined. Does that give them a right to steal for profit? ABSOLUTELY NOT! But they have just experienced the worst trauma of their lives probably. Yet Conservatives like Bill O'Reilly and some bloggers demand that looters be "shot on sight." What about the people who ARE stealing for need? Should we just circumvent the entire American [legal](#) system and the entire principles this country was founded on to impose a Communist or military state in the area and murder anyone who causes problems? In the blink of an eye make the punishment for stealing death? Ridiculous and absolutely revolting! We need to find the best way to restore order without adding to the already devastating death toll. Why is that such an impossibility with such an outpouring of aid to save people's lives? We are trying to SAVE LIVES there, not DESTROY more, even if people are being truly wrong and unmanageable. Just remember, these people are DESPERATE. They know that everything that they had is gone and many of them are so poor that it might be years and years and years to ever reclaim anything like the life they once had. People like Bill O'Reilly, sitting in his nice house in Washington or wherever, need to think of that before they start sentencing people to death.

Fig. 1.4 Or this?

Your site's In-Text Advertising hotspots then might be those areas with the least text rather than the spots on the page that attract the most eyeballs.

Again, you can use a zone tag to direct the In-Text Advertising links towards particular areas and away from others. You can also use *div* tags to direct ads *into* particular areas of your page. To do that simply place the line:

```
<div class=KonaBody>
```

before the section of text, and:

```
</div>
```

at the end. Ads will only appear on text between those tags.

Presumably, there's nothing to stop a publisher from slipping these tags around small sections of text on a Web page and taking complete control over where the ads appear. But I can't imagine that the results would be better than letting Kontera place the ads automatically. And if you did manage to win a few extra clicks, I doubt the added revenue would be worth the extra effort.

A better idea is to design your site that it has lots of small nuggets of information distributed across the site rather than as one long piece running down a page. (And dividing up long articles across several pages will give you the chance to show more ads about different topics, increasing further the chances of getting clicks.)

But you should also make sure that those areas of your site that do have small sections of text also have the highest-paying keywords and the ones most likely to become In-Text Advertising links.

That's the subject of the next chapter.

2. Keywords – Watch Your Language

One of the most enjoyable aspects of using In-Text Advertising (although not as enjoyable as the revenues, of course) is logging in to see which words the system has decided to highlight next.

Because Kontera is always trying to serve up ads for the highest paying keywords and because bidding prices can change all the time, so the In-Text Advertising on your site can change all the time too.

And Kontera is fast. If you're used to making a change to your website and waiting weeks for a robot to roll around before you can see the results, then you're going to be amazed at the speed with which Kontera works. As soon as a visitor downloads your site, the tag tells the system what's on the page and picks the best words to turn into a In-Text Advertising ad. Just like that.

2.1 How Kontera Works

Okay, it's not quite as simple as that. In fact, most of the work that has gone into improving Kontera's over the last few years has been put into contextualization — what Kontera calls its semantic analysis.

For the people at Kontera, the problem has always been to find the right balance between relevant ads and high-paying ads. Those two aren't contradictory of course, but there's little point in showing an ad that wins a buck or two per click if no one ever clicks on it. And publishers might not want ads that are completely relevant if they only pay a cent or two.

The first challenge for Kontera then is to figure out what the site is about. The system does that by looking for keywords in the URL, the meta tags, the titles, the header and the text.

It then compares what it finds to its giant taxonomy of keywords, delivers relevant ads, and tracks the performance of those ads to ensure that you get the best ads for your site.

Now, clearly the fact that the system is dependent to a large extent on the presence of keywords in particular places gives you some measure of control.

You should make sure that your URLs, titles, headers and tags contain keywords that you know to be relevant and valuable. And you should seed your text with keywords too.

But here's the thing: **those keywords should be specific keyword phrases.**

Kontera's ad inventory comes from Yahoo!, Ask.com and more than 1,000 direct advertisers. Those advertisers aren't paying for ads for "digital cameras." They're paying for ads for "Canon PowerShot SD600" and other unique items. You can certainly include general keywords in your meta tags so that search engines and others know what the page is about. But it's the specific keyword phrases (especially on short pages) that will bring you the highest-paying ads.

Pay attention to the keywords that are being highlighted and ask yourself how you can make them more specific.

2.2 Controlling Your Language

So you can choose the keywords you use on your site — and you can make them as specific as possible. You can't ask for specific ads — even if you know they're on the network — but you can restrict the keywords that get turned into ads.

You can do that on Kontera's In-Text Advertising by defining a list of restricted topics or by creating a list of restricted words.

Restricting Topics

Imagine this scenario: you've created a site that points out the dangers of gambling. You talk about the problems of online casinos, the risks of roulette and the hazards that gaming can pose for

people with a tendency to become addicted. You also point out where addicted gamblers can get help.

You fund the site, in part, from the revenues the website brings in from advertising.

But every time you mention “gambling,” “casinos” or “roulette,” you get a In-Text Advertising ad telling your users how great this online casino is and why they should lose their shirts at that one.

Not exactly what you’d want on your site, right?

That’s really the advantage that restricting topics brings to publishers.

Kontera divides its ads according to particular types of content. At last count there were about nineteen top level topics ranging from automotive to women, but this number changes over time as Kontera adapts to new products and services available on the Web.

I know there are some topics on that list that I wouldn’t want on any of my websites. There are also topics that aren’t suitable for some of my sites. I doubt if my users would find them in any way interesting if they were to turn up as ads on those particular pages.

Restricting topics then can be useful but I’m not sure how useful it is as a tool for increasing revenue. It’s best used, I think, to make sure that your website doesn’t serve ads about a topic that your users — or you — would find offensive rather than as a way to make more money.

Restricting Keywords

Removing entire topics as possible sources of ads is a little clumsy though. You might not want In-Text Advertising on your site promoting casinos, but how about ads from sellers of board games like Monopoly or chess?

If you know that some of the ads in a content category *are* suitable for your site, then you can simply ask that words like “casino” and “roulette” aren’t turned into ads. You could also try writing to Kontera and asking them to make sure you don’t receive ads from particular companies.

While restricting topics and keywords does have certain advantages (not least that it can keep competitors off your website), it is worth remembering that when Kontera’s system picks a keyword it’s

because it thinks that's the keyword that's going to give you the highest revenues.

Cutting keywords from your page then could simply mean that you're going to be missing out on the highest paying options, even if they're not in the highest-paying positions.

2.3 Six Of The Best

You also need to pay attention to how many keywords you want turned into ads on your page.

For publishers using any type of online advertising program picking the right number of ads is always a tricky balance. While you want as many opportunities as possible to earn revenue, you don't want to turn your website into a giant billboard with little more than ads from start to finish.

But the most important factor for any website using any revenue program is not the number of ads; it's always going to be the quality of the content.

Good content gets clicks; pages packed with ads put people off. They also make it hard for contextualized programs like Kontera's In-Text Advertising, which rely on your text to figure out the subject of your site, to serve the right ads. While Kontera can identify and react to multiple topics that appear on a page, the more ads — and graphics — you have on a page, the greater the chance that the system will make a mistake and serve you up ads that just aren't relevant.

But remember: with In-Text Advertising, users won't see the ads unless they choose to mouse-over. All they'll see is a few words highlighted on the page by an unusual linking color or a double underline.

What's more, because bringing up the tool tips box can actually be fun, your users could even come to think of In-Text Advertising as an additional service: a little more information about the main terms related to the subject of your website.

In fact, when you only have one or two In-Text Advertising links on a page, not only are you giving yourself fewer opportunities to earn revenue, you're also making your In-Text Advertising links look more like ads than they need to: plenty of In-Text Advertising links looks like lots of extra information about your content; one or two

In-Text Advertising links looks like carefully chosen links to advertisements.

The bottom line is that you can place up to six In-Text Advertising links on your page and the people at Kontera recommend that you take all six.

On the whole, I think they're right: the more In-Text Advertising links you have on your page the better.

That doesn't mean that you should worry if your page only serves up one or two ads (I have plenty of pages that do that). As long as the pages are short and contain only a few text areas then that's fine. The problem comes when you have a big page with lots of text and very few In-Text Advertising links.

If that happens — even though you've asked for as many In-Text Advertising links as possible — try dropping Kontera a line asking for more ads, or putting in more text using keywords that you know are popular at the moment. That should increase the number of links that appear on your pages.

There is one caveat about putting as many In-Text Advertising links as possible on your site though. Some people claimed in the past that putting lots of In-Text Advertising on their Web pages slowed down loading time. Kontera say that any slowdown is nothing to do with them. They argue that they've put a lot of effort into ensuring fast performance and say that because the In-Text Advertising links appear on the page only at the end — after all the text, images and objects have downloaded — the In-Text Advertising links do not delay anything. At most, they claim, if a page is new to the Kontera system and has a large amount of text, the In-Text Advertising links might appear in a delay of a few milliseconds, but it wouldn't delay page loading and users would be able to enjoy the Web page while the ads are loading.

Maybe they're right and maybe those delays were caused by something other than In-Text Advertising. I certainly haven't noticed any unusual delays since Kontera went into its improvement overdrive. If you're not sure though, you could try restricting the ads to particular parts of the page. Again, that might reduce the number of ads you receive or cut out the highest-paying keywords so it's only worth doing if you find you're losing impatient users.

On the whole, I haven't found any delay long enough to justify that. If I'm going to move ads to particular parts of the page, it's because

I think those are the areas that will get me the greatest number of clicks.

2.4 No Ads, No Money

A more common problem that can turn up with In-Text Advertising isn't having too many ads; it's not having any ads at all. You go to all the work of putting the code on your page, making sure that you have short chunks of text, figuring out the best places on your site and moving your keywords into your hot spots.

And when you surf to a page and find that there are no In-Text Advertising links there at all.

Or alternatively, instead of giving you ads directly related to the topic of your site, you get all sorts of strange words highlighted in all sorts of strange places.

This is the Kontera equivalent of AdSense's public service ads. In-Text Advertising decides that Kontera doesn't have any ads that would suit your users... so it either gives you nothing or it gives you random selection of ads from the ones it has available.

Neither does much for your revenues.

According to Kontera, there are two reasons that your Web page might not get the targeted ads you're hoping for. The first is that your website is about a "sensitive" topic for which it doesn't supply ads.

I think most publishers can rule that one out pretty quickly.

The second reason is a bit more problematic: if your site contains only a small amount of text then Kontera's system won't have enough material to decide what your pages are about.

On the other hand, if you have a large amount of text on a page then you could find yourself back in the position of showing targeted ads to readers who are too busy reading to click.

Again, the best strategy then is to design your pages so that there are plenty of small blocks of text. Forums and blogs are good for this and so are pages with readers' comments. If you find that you're still getting random ads or no ads at all, try expanding each section in turn, using plenty of the best keywords for that topic, until you start to see the ads become more targeted.

Because Kontera works so quickly, it's pretty easy to refine each text block to bring in targeted ads.

2.5 Changing Content To Suit Keywords

One of the biggest frustrations of using other forms of contextualized advertising is that you can only guess which keywords are triggering ads. There have certainly been times when I've looked at the ads Google has sent me and wondered what on earth made them think they my users would be interested in those.

There have also been plenty of times when I've tried to get particular keywords onto my site in the hope of landing ads with the highest possible CPMs.

On Kontera, you don't have to worry about any of that stuff. You can see for yourself exactly which words are triggering ads and paying you money.

So if I can see that the word "spam" is almost always linked on my page, even if when it's little more than mentioned in passing, then I can be pretty confident that that's a word that's paying money.

So what's to stop me from building an entire Web page dedicated to spam and cashing in on ads for that topic?

As far as I can tell... nothing.

Or rather, nothing except the amount of time that I have available to write about a topic I'm just not very familiar with.

In-Text Advertising has been designed to help you earn revenues using the content that's already on your site. As long as your content is interesting to your readers, those users will assume that the links that lead away from your site are going to be interesting too.

You have to build up trust if you want people to click, and you can only build up trust by giving your users the sort of content they're looking for. In-Text Advertising, like every sort of contextualized advertising, works best with high quality content. (It also works best with US-based users, but write in English about topics that Americans might find interesting and you should get plenty of those.)

But that doesn't mean you can't use the keywords that you see highlighted on your pages to experiment and create new opportunities for yourself.

Let's say that Fred has a site about digital cameras. He signs up to In-Text Advertising and notices that on a page about digital photography techniques, he gets one set of ads when he mentions "Nikon digital cameras" and another set when he writes about "Canon digital cameras." He also sees that he gets In-Text Advertising links when he mentions "online photo albums" and "printing."

All of those keywords are relevant to his topic and they receive clicks. But none of them is directly related to the lighting tricks that Fred was trying to teach on that Web page.

So Fred decides to create four more pages on his website, one about Nikon digital cameras, one about Canon digital cameras, one about online photo albums and one about printing.

Fred knows that there are targeted ads available from Kontera for each of these topics. In effect then, *instead of letting Kontera give him contextualized ads, he's created contextualized content for ads that are already available.*

A strategy like this though can only work when you're producing specialized pages targeted towards keywords you know. Trying to produce a website about home loans just to pick up the In-Text Advertising links for that topic might give you ads with high CPM's but if your CTR is in the basement because your content isn't interesting, you're just wasting your time.

It's also worth remembering that keyword rates change all the time. There's not much point in building an entire site to cash in on a keyword that isn't going to be worth a dime in a week's time.

2.6 Picking Your Ads Manually

This chapter has been all about making the most of Kontera's contextualization engine to get targeted ads. There is another way get targeted ads from Kontera on your site though.

You could ask for them.

You could tell the people at Kontera, for example, that you only want ads about Apple products or a particular brand of mountain

bike. In effect, you'd block every kind of ad except for those that fit that specific category.

If Kontera's semantic system though didn't think Apple or that mountain bike didn't fit your content, you'd end up with nothing. Kontera can't force an ad onto your pages.

The only time I could see myself using this option is if the ad that a keyword generated was particularly informative or eye-catching. If a specific ad became an important addition to my content then not only would I get a lot clicks, but I'd also want to make sure that ad always appeared. On the down-side though, I also might be in a spot of trouble if the advertiser stopped running it.

I doubt that many people are going to use this option and I don't recommend you try except in really special cases, especially as there's always the chance that Kontera will refuse to play ball... but it's nice to know it's an option.

One strategy that everyone should be using though is combining different types of ad systems. I discuss how you can do that in the next chapter.

3. Combining Kontera With Other Ad Systems

Perhaps the biggest change to affect Kontera has come from outside the company. When Google changed its Terms of Service to allow publishers to use other contextualized ad systems on the same page as AdSense ads — provided those ads don't look like Google's — other ad companies were able to breathe a huge sigh of relief.

And so were publishers.

It means you can combine AdSense with Kontera on the same page, increase your chances of earning income... and not worry about getting a rude email from Google.

Note that this rule only applies to Google. If you're using Yahoo's Publisher Network, you'll be stuck with Yahoo's ads only.

So what strategies can you use to make sure that the two ad systems work well together?

3.1 Ads That Complement, Not Clash

The first thing you need to think about is where your ads are going to be situated. You want to avoid a situation like the one in the image below. An AdSense rich media ad almost completely blocked a Kontera ad. That was a total waste of an ad link and it didn't create a good impression on the page.

This only happened with rich media ads. Kontera's ad floats above standard AdSense units. But if you're not opted in to receive AdSense video or graphic ads, I still think it's a good idea to stop your ads from clashing. It just creates too much interference and makes the page look confusing.

To prevent your ads blocking each other, first place your AdSense units in the most effective spots, then use the zone tags to make sure that there are no In-Text Advertising links to the left or immediately above or below the ad unit. (Remember, In-Text Advertising ads usually appear above and to the right of the linked keyword unless they won't fit on the page; in that case they'll appear below the link.)

It's going to take just a little bit of organization and you'll need to move the tags every time you move your ad units. But I think it's worth the effort.

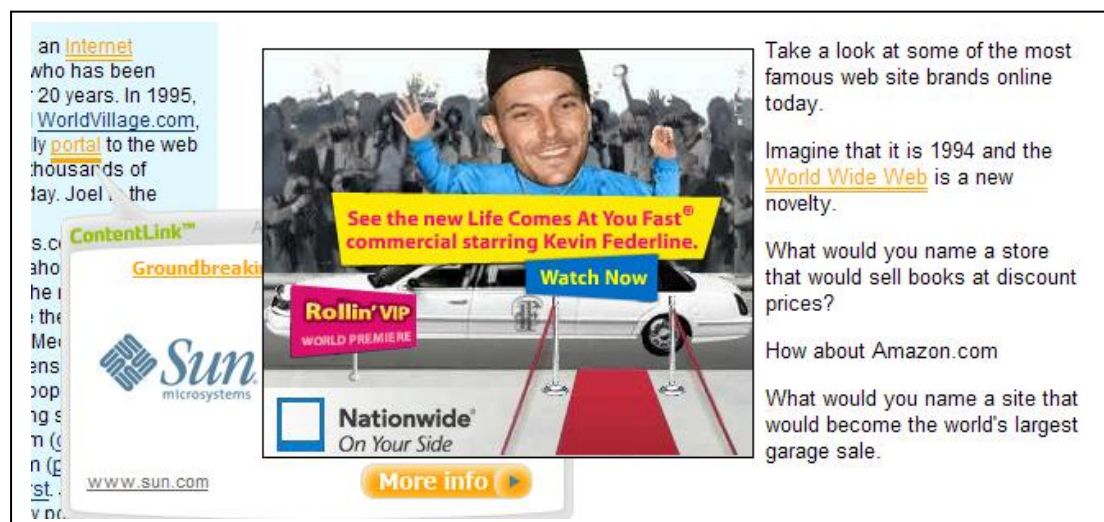


Fig. 3.1 K-Fed In Ad Block Shock!

3.2 AdSense Link Colors Or Kontera Link Colors?

I discussed link colors earlier in this guide. I suggested that you start with blue then try a different color to see which works best for your site.

When you're combining AdSense with Kontera, that link color conundrum becomes a whole lot clearer. Your AdSense links should be blue... and your Kontera links should be a different color.

Blue links always get the best results on AdSense. But if you make your Kontera links the same color, then you end up with blue links all over the page. That's way too much competition. Make the Kontera links a different color and you'll help them to stand out. You'll also be saying to the reader, "This link is very different to those links. Try me and see."

It's a much more effective strategy than offering 101 ways to leave your site.

3.3 AdSense Contextualization Versus Kontera Contextualization

The difference between Google's and Kontera's contextualization systems is really the big advantage of combining AdSense and Kontera ads on the same page. Look at the ad links in this screenshot from my blog JoelComm.com. The shot was taken some time ago — my blog has been redesigned since then — but the principle remains.

Joel Comm is an [Internet](#) entrepreneur who has been online for over 20 years. In 1995, Joel launched [WorldVillage.com](#), a family-friendly [portal](#) to the web which enjoys thousands of visitors each day. Joel is the co-creator of [ClassicGames.com](#), which was acquired by Yahoo! in 1997, and now goes by the name [Yahoo! Games](#). Since then, Joel's company, InfoMedia, Inc., has launched dozens of [web sites](#), including the popular bargain-hunting shopping site, [DealofDay.com](#) ([coupon codes](#)), [SafetySurf.com](#) ([parental control](#)) and [Family First](#). Joel is the author of many popular books, including the best selling book on [Google AdSense](#). He also regularly makes appearances at [Internet marketing conferences](#) and seminars.

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Search:

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The writer Anne Lamott likes to tell a story of how her brother had to create a school project describing a huge number of different birds. He didn't know how he was going to complete it. Lamott's father had some wise advice. He told his son to do it "bird by bird."

Lamott used that analogy to describe the process of writing a book. You can think of it as a way of creating a successful [online business](#).

Between where you are now and your goal of owning a series of

websites that generate large amounts of income, there are a large number of minor goals. Each one of those goals is an achievement.

If you were getting 100 impressions a day and now you're getting a thousand, that's an achievement.

If you had three links leading to your site and now you have thirty, that's an achievement.

If your site was generating a dollar a day and now it's earning ten dollars a day, that's an achievement.

But none of those achievements can come without effort.

That's why one useful strategy is to define your goals in advance and include them in your schedule. Tell yourself that by the end of the month, you'll have discovered which formats and placements work best on all your [Web pages](#).

Fig. 4.2 Ad variety makes for additional revenue.

Do you see how AdSense has given me some highly-targeted ads? That's a post about an online business on a site that mostly discusses AdSense. (I talk about other stuff sometimes too but there's a lot of AdSense content there.) Three of the four ads have the word "AdSense" in them and the fourth has "AdWords." Great. Those ads will get clicks.

But look at the keywords that Kontera is highlighting: "online business," "Web pages," "Internet," "portal" etc. They're all completely relevant but they're also different to the ads in the AdSense unit. And they look different too.

By combining the two, I'm getting a much better range of additional information and services to offer my readers.

To get this effect, I didn't have to do anything more than write the post that I wanted and put it up. I didn't play around with keywords to bring up different ads. I just kept it simple. That's very fortunate because it's hard enough trying to push a contextualized program to produce particular ads without having to worry about what those strategies will do to a second contextual system.

The best bet for the best ads is just to do what you'd normally do and enjoy the benefits.

And once you've got those benefits, you have to count them. That's the topic of the next chapter.

4. Stats — Counting Your Money

Earning revenues with Internet advertising is a business. And no business can succeed unless the manager keeps a close eye on the figures. If you don't keep a close eye on your stats, you'll have no idea whether your advertising strategies are working... let alone how much money you're earning.

Kontera's stats don't provide a huge amount of information. They tell you page impressions, total ad clicks, click-through rate, revenues and ECPM. All of that information is useful but it's not very detailed. Looking at your stats page won't tell which ads your users clicked on, nor will they tell you which ads are bringing you the most money.

That's a shame. When you have as many as six ads on a page, it might well be the case that only one or two of them are actually bringing in revenue. The rest could be little more than decoration. That's especially true if each of those ads is about a different subject.

If Fred looked at the stats for his page on digital photography techniques for example, he'd have no idea how many of his clicks had come from the ads for "Nikon cameras," how many came from "Canon cameras," how many from "online photo albums" and how many from "printing." He'd only know how many clicks that page received in total.

Unless he created those unique pages targeted to those particular keywords. That still wouldn't tell him how many clicks each keyword was receiving but when only one keyword on a page is highlighted, you won't have to do any more than divide the money you've earned by the number of clicks you've received to calculate the cost-per-click.

That's a lot of work, even if it is valuable information, so it's probably only worth using this strategy to gain a clear understanding of your most important keywords

4.1 How To Use Your Stats

Even though the basic stats that In-Text Advertising gives you are restricted, it doesn't mean that they're completely useless. There are two pieces of information that are always going to be useful.

The first of course, is revenue. You're in this to make money and ultimately it's the revenues that will define how successful your In-Text Advertising campaign has been. You might be getting very few clicks but if all of your In-Text Advertising links are based on high-paying keywords and your revenues are sound then there might not be any reason to take further action.

The other important figure is your click-through rate — and what's important about that figure is the rate at which it changes.

In this book, I've discussed a number of different general strategies for increasing your revenues. Those strategies include putting keywords in the most prominent places on the page and building Web pages based around particular keywords.

All of those changes should increase your CTR. (Other strategies should also increase your CPM).

Once you've got your In-Text Advertising links up and running, I recommend making one change at a time. That will let you see exactly what effect each change is having.

So if, like me, you find that the word "spam" is highlighted at the bottom of your page beneath the comment form, you could move that keyword into a more prominent position, *wait a week*, and see exactly how much that change was worth.

Sure, those sorts of changes can take time but the alternative is to make lots of changes and not have a clue which ones are responsible for the changes in your CTR and your revenues. Even though it can be slow-going, I still think the piece-by-piece approach is the best way to understand how your site works with In-Text Advertising links and how much revenue your strategies are bringing in.

4.2 Stat Reporting Speed

Some people have complained in the past that Kontera can be a bit slow when it comes to updating stats. Actually, I don't think they're

any slower than any of the other companies that serve ads bought through Yahoo! Search.

In any case, I don't care. It *is* fun to watch your revenues rise all the time but I think there's a danger there too.

Revenues and CTRs can change every day and they can change for reasons that you just can't fathom. One day your CTR can be through the roof and the next through the floor. That's why I always say you should wait a week between logging into your stats.

That will give you an overall picture of what's happening on your site and it also means that if Kontera *is* slower than you might like, you won't be acting on old information.

Conclusion

Kontera has the potential to bring publishers revenues at least as high as those currently being earned on just about any other form of contextualized advertising. The ads don't harm the user's experience (in fact, they even enhance it), they're well targeted and they're easy to implement.

They're also flexible, allowing you to adjust and re-format your In-Text Advertising to maximize the number of people who click on your ads and the commissions you receive when they do.

Those optimization strategies include picking the most attractive colors for links and tool tips; moving your ads into the best places on the page; finding the best keywords to put on your pages; making the most of the keywords that you know work; and putting the highest-paying ads on your page.

Best of all, you can now combine your Kontera ads with AdSense. The result is a much greater variety of ads — and when used together properly, much higher revenues.

If you haven't signed up as a Kontera publisher yet, [click here to get started](#).

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