

## An explanation of Local Cookies

Increasingly Merchants are signing up to more than one affiliate network to compare the services on offer. Local cookies have been the preferred method of eliminating multi-network tracking issues. They allow a Merchant to accurately know which network sent a sale/lead to them. When set-up correctly, the local cookie is a reliable way to ensure correct attributing of commission and avoidance of payment duplication. Here we address some of the common misconceptions and explain some of the benefits of local cookies to you as a Merchant.

Multi-network tracking issues include:-

- How do I know what network sent me a sale/lead if it's showing in both accounts at each network?
- I have been paying out £1 a click on PPC and I noticed that some of my PPC sales are being credited to Affiliates, how do I know what one resulted in the final sale?
- I had been told that Deep links wouldn't work if I use local cookies?

### Industry Standard

To address these issues the generally agreed 'best method', and one that's been used for years by big Merchants who are paying to be on multi-platforms, not just affiliate networks but PPC, CPM, Yahoo© and countless other places is to set a local cookie. The local cookie, which is just a normal cookie, stores the name or reference to the network/advert which last referred the customer to the site. Your order/checkout systems can then read this local cookie and show the tracking code for that network or advert campaign.

A local cookie (if set-up correctly) will be as reliable as the network cookie and will mean you will be able to spend money on other campaigns such as PPC, CPM and so on while only ever paying commission to the source responsible for the final sale/lead.

### A Little Respect

To succeed in affiliate marketing it is very important that you must always treat all sources of sales with the same respect and on a level playing field. For example just because you have paid for a search engine ad campaign doesn't mean you should ignore setting a local cookie to track when an Affiliate sends you a customer. The same is true if you paid for PPC but a visitor sent via this doesn't initially purchase but returns later via an Affiliate link. In this case the last Affiliate should be the one set in your local cookie.

You will have to write the script that sets and reads the cookie yourself, however we can assist you and perform full testing to ensure you have it set-up and are calling it correctly (and fairly). This will ensure Affiliates are paid correctly regardless of the network they are promoting you through. It will in turn build a relationship of trust and mutually benefit everyone as the Affiliate will be more inclined to promote you and to recommend you to other Affiliates.

This set-up is really rather simple to do, your only obstacle might be if a network refuses to work with you to accomplish it, then you might want to reconsider your business relationship with them.

### Deep Linking

The great thing is that deep links can continue to work even if you are directing all traffic to a script to set the local cookie before taking the visitor to the front page of your site. As long as the affiliate network can include the deep link onto the query string of the URL then your script can set the cookie and then redirect to the deep link given on the query string.

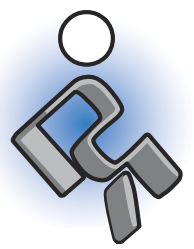
Or with Paid On Results, the Merchant can redirect the visitor back to us after setting the local cookie. We will then redirect the visitor again but this time to the deep link and not through any script which originally set the local cookie for the Merchant. NB (the URL used is a static URL meaning you the Merchant doesn't have to pass along any extra values to it for the feature to work).

### A Solution For All

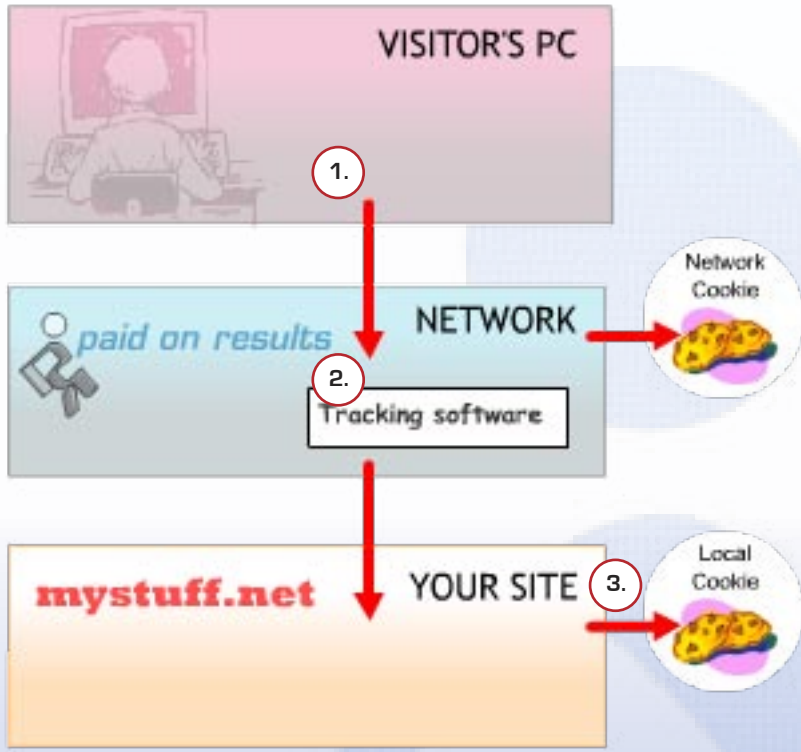
Using multiple networks needn't be the preserve of big Merchants, it can be a choice for all. Not having a local cookie in place and then reversing sales will make you look amateur in the eyes of the Affiliates. Additionally it is unfair for them to have to suffer reversals because you implemented this straightforward solution.

The alternative is to simply approve sales on all your networks even if they are duplicates, of course this is far from ideal for you as a Merchant and makes things easier for an Affiliate involved attempting fraud.

# paid on results



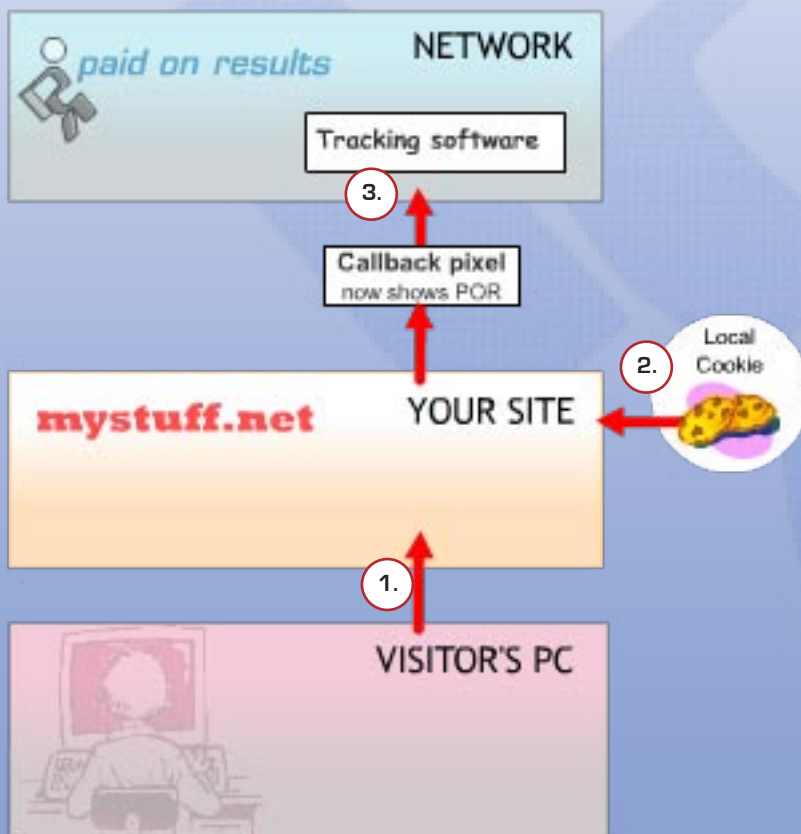
## Placing of the local cookie



1. Visitor clicks on an affiliate link from Paid On Results which takes the visitor to the Merchant site via Paid On Results

2. Paid On Results using our tracking software outputs a cookie which tracks the visitor and redirects them to the URL supplied by the merchant.

3. The visitor is now redirected to the merchant, and the merchants own site outputs its own cookie. This cookie acts as a reminder that the visitor came from a Paid On Results link, therefore the cookie can contain anything which helps the merchant to remember that information. Generally merchants store in the cookie something along the lines of "affiliatenetwork=PaidOnResults". The visitors use the merchants site in the normal way.



1. Visitor places an order on the merchants web site, or performs any action which requires the merchant to show affiliate tracking code.

2. The merchants site reads back the contents of the cookie first set when the visitor landed on the site. This cookie contains the name of the affiliate network which referred this visitor, for example the cookie may contain "affiliatenetwork=PaidOnResults". The merchant only shows the tracking code belonging to that network, in this case, the Paid On Results tracking would be shown and no others as the cookie says the visitor came through Paid On Results. In cases where the cookie is blank, the tracking code for all networks should be shown.

3. The tracking code connects to Paid On Results and allows us to work out what affiliate to credit for the sale.