App-ads.txt Publisher Advisory

March 13, 2019
Published with the App-ads.txt final spec release

Dear App Publisher,

We are pleased to announce that following the release of Authorized Digital Sellers specification (Ads.txt) for desktop and mobile web inventory in September 2017, IAB Tech Lab has now further extended this specification to the app ecosystem, in order to fight fraud and positively impact your monetization. Read more about the final app-ads.txt specification in this blog post.

What does this mean for app publishers?

On March 13, 2019 IAB Tech Lab released a final version of Authorized Sellers for Apps (app-ads.txt). This means that app publishers who adopt can now better control their inventory in the market, making it harder for bad actors to profit from selling counterfeit inventory across the app ecosystem.

To note:
The spec aims at defining a standard protocol for obtaining the app developer's website URL from an app listing page within an app store, imposing minimal implementation burden for stores.

It is important to note that IAB cannot enforce any standard, hence the specification includes a recommended guidance for stores to help facilitate the execution of a transparent and safer transaction within the app ecosystem.

Each store is highly recommended to comply with this spec. However, in the absence of such support, the advertising system should retrieve the app developer's website URL through each store's specific methodology.

How to get started with app-ads.txt?

Step 1: If not done already, app publisher should make sure that the "developer website" field is up to date in the stores hosting the apps. Such websites will be used by the advertising systems to retrieve the app-ads.txt file.

Step 2: The app publisher should upload a file named "app-ads.txt" into such website (please see the spec for full detail re location of the app-ads.txt file), with the list of authorized sellers of their app's ad inventory per the official guidance. The content of the app-ads.txt file follows the same rules as ads.txt for web with the only exception of subdomain directive - see the spec for details.

We urge app publishers start engaging with the above steps as soon as possible, and we encourage rapid adoption in early 2019.

The higher the app-ads.txt adoption, the quicker the app ecosystem can move towards greater transparency and efficiency.

To learn more about Ads.txt project, visit https://iabtechlab.com/ads-txt/ .

For any questions, feel free to email us at OpenRTB@iabtechlab.com

Best regards,

OpenRTB Working Group Members