



### **Suggested Query String Formatting for Use with Google Analytics**

Below is a sample url with a query string using our suggested formatting. Note, this is our suggestion and users are free to create their own layout. The suggestion below is meant to make it easy to pull Google Analytics data into Excel and then parse the data in a consistent manner so that the resulting Excel reports maintain a consistent layout and can be easily aggregated, sorted and analyzed. More on this below.

The query string consists of everything to the right of the question mark below:

`www.site.com?utm_source=site_placementinformation&utm_medium=display&utm_content=creativeconceptname_adsize&utm_campaign=campaignname`

The syntax used here is straight from the Google URL builder, which can be found at

<https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1033867?hl=en>

Using the URL builder requires the user to complete a number of form fields as follows:

Campaign Source, Campaign Medium, Campaign Term, Campaign Content and Campaign Name. (Note that Campaign Term and Campaign Content are optional. Campaign Term is usually used for pay per click advertising but, in essence could be used to capture any information as long as it is consistently used. In this recommended formatting we are not using this field. We are, however, utilizing the Campaign Content field.)

The key to our recommendations is to consistently use the same formatting within each of the fields and, in particular always have the same number of sub-fields separated with the consistent use of a delimiter. Here is a breakdown to our specific recommendations:

**Campaign Source:** We suggest the name of the site and some information on the placement. For example, for a placement at the NYTimes that is run of site or content targeted we suggest NYTimes\_ROS or NYTimes\_content. You can be as descriptive as you want with the placement information. The key is to use just one underscore (delimiter) within this sub-field. You can, of course use more, but it is important that you

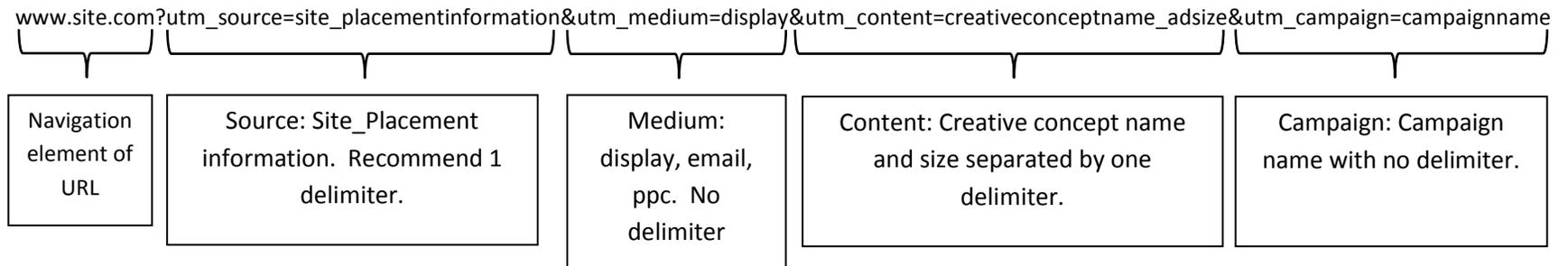
consistently use the same number of delimiters in this field throughout all of the query strings. Also, it is helpful if you are consistent in the naming of the site. For example, if you refer to the site as NYTimes you will not want to also refer to it as NY Times or, even worse, use the underscore delimiter as in NY\_Times. The more consistent the naming of the site, the easier it will be to sort and manipulate the data later. Note, also be consistent in the use of upper and lower case.

**Campaign Medium:** Here you will want some information on the advertising medium. For banner and other digital ads we use the term “display.” Other examples include PPC or email. All of data fields in Google Analytics are case sensitive and in this case it is very important to consistently use upper or lower case. If you mix in both cases in your medium you will see that Google will report on them separately which will require you to find both instances (Display an display) and then combine the data for the two. Properly using this field will allow for the sorting by medium and then the reporting and comparison of various ad efforts.

**Campaign Content:** Typically creative set has various concepts in various sizes. Our suggestion is to be consistent in the description of the naming of each creative set and to indicate the unit size, separating the name and size by the delimiter. Example: adunit1\_300x250 or adunit1\_300x600. Again, it is a good idea to be consistent in the use of upper and lower case.

**Campaign Name:** This field may or may not be important depending on the flight dates for different campaigns. We typically don’t need a delimiter in this field.

Here is our original URL with query string with comments about each field:



## **A Few Words about Excel and Google Analytics**

We've stressed the importance of the consistent use of the delimiters within each of the Google fields. We've even suggested the number of delimiters to use. In truth, the number isn't as important as the consistency. If you have a need for three delimiters where we suggest two then please use three. But, always use three. What's with our obsession on this point? It all has to do with Excel. Google Analytics allows for the exportation of their reports into Excel. For those that like to manipulate the data, this is a great thing. To assist in the analysis in Excel you'll likely want to sort and otherwise calculate various metrics. To effectively do this you'll want to use an Excel feature called Text to Columns. This feature will allow you to put all of the site information into one column and then all of the placement data into another column. Same thing for creative concepts and their sizes. If you want to see which creative set is working best you'll want to control by size and by site. To do this you'll need to isolate those elements. There is some flexibility in using Text to Columns and a delimiter isn't the only way. But, it may be the easiest and most consistent method. You may want to familiarize yourself with this feature before you settle on your query string syntax.