Impressions are Too Low

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Impressions are "Too Low".

A troubleshooting guide to help when the number of impressions recorded in the Revive Adserver statistics don't align with the number of impressions expected.

You may also want to review the Contract Campaigns Under-Delivering troubleshooting guide.

Symptoms

The number of impressions recorded in Revive Adserver are (much) lower than the number of page views for the website you're running ads on.

Troubleshooting Process

Step 1: Upgrade Revive Adserver

Prior to Revive Adserver 3.1.0, if no banner was shown, then no impression was logged. However, with the release of Revive Adserver 3.1.0, "blank" impressions are now recorded, so, you may find that upgrading to this version or later resolves the issue. If it does, though, you may want to consider adding Remnant Campaigns with unrestricted banners to ensure that users always see a banner, or setting default house banners.

Step 2: Check Expectations

Before you start to dig into the issue, it's worth double checking that your expectation on the number of impressions you're expecting to see recorded in Revive Adserver are correct.

- Are you certain that the number of page views you're basing your expectations on are correct? Are you using a historical average number of page views per day, week or month, or are you basing your expectations on a the actual number of page views that correspond with the same time range you're looking at in Revive Adserver?
- Are you certain that you've always got a consistent number of banners per page across your whole site?
    - If so, have you made a reasonable effort to check for possible sections of the site where banners are not showing up - possibly due to something simple like a cut and paste error putting zone tags in place? Or even a sub-site section that uses different code, and there's no zone tags there at all?
    - If not (that is, on some pages you have one banner, some pages you have two banners, some you have three banners, and so on), it may be worth using different zones in Revive Adserver for the different parts of your site, and then splitting the measurement of your page views in your site's analytics tool, if you can, to make sure that you're comparing equivalent measurements of page views to impressions by site section.
- If you're using a tool that analyses your web server log file to calculate the number of page views for your site, have you correctly excluded log file entries for things that are not pages, such as images, CSS files, JavaScript files, and indeed, all calls to Revive Adserver itself?

Once you've double checked that the number of impressions you're expecting to see recorded in Revive Adserver is correct, then move on to the next step.

Step 3: Check for "Faulty" Zone(s)

Even if you're checked on your site for pages or site sections where banners may be obviously missing, check through the statistics in Revive Adserver by zone. Are there any zones that appear to be obviously low on impressions compared with what you'd expect?

If so, it would be worth investigating where those zones are supposed to be displayed on your site, and double check that they are where they should be, and that they are working.

Step 4: Check Requests vs. Impressions

If you are not logging requests as well as impressions, then turn on request logging, and compare the number of requests to the number of impressions.

When requests are higher than impressions, this may indicate there is a performance issue with your site (or with the site which is providing the banner content).

You may need to consider upgrading your servers or hosting, or look to speak to your ad network provider about their load times.

Step 5: Consider Page Load Time from Analytics

Review the page load time recorded by your site's analytics tool. Taking more than a couple of seconds on average? Got any banners near the bottom of the page?

If so, there's a good chance that a significant number of your site's visitors are not waiting for pages to fully load before they click away (either to another page on your site, or they go somewhere else). Your site's analytics tool might have recorded this as a page view, but if the zone at the bottom of the page hasn't loaded up, and then gone and fully loaded it's content, and then called for the impression to be logged, then this may result in a difference in page views vs. impressions.

You may need to consider upgrading your servers or hosting.

Step 6: Review Top vs. Bottom Zone Impressions

If you're page analytics tool doesn't have page load times, then you could possibly review the number of impressions for zones that are located near the top of your pages vs. the impressions for zones that are located near the bottom of your pages.

Seeing more impressions for zones at the top of a page vs. those at the bottom provides further evidence for site visitors clicking away from pages before they have completed loading, and may result in a difference in page views vs. impressions.

You may need to consider upgrading your servers or hosting.

Step 7: Check the Block Banner Logging Settings

Revive Adserver has a number of options to prevent the logging of banner statistics (including the logging of impressions), based on IP address and/or user-agent string.

Check to see if these have been enabled - if so, then they will naturally result in a lower number of impressions being recorded vs. page views.

Step 8: Check for Adblockers

Finally, Adblockers, depending on settings, may allow banners to be displayed, but block the logging of impressions.

There's really nothing Revive Adserver can do about this - if this is a major issue for you, though, you could consider completely preventing access to your site for users running Adblockers.