

Rotating Banner System

Introduction

The vBulletin product Rotating Banner System is an evolution of the commercial vBulletin Banners product. We decided to publish it as freeware. The vBulletin Banners and Rotating Banner System products may coexist side by side, although we recommend to use only one at a single time.

With the Rotating Banner System software, you may publish literally anywhere standard banners and advertising, with no restriction but your imagination. Unlike many other products, it allows to show an unlimited amount of banners and advertising, which are randomly shown at the places you choose, and you may refer generically to an Ad by using specific placeholders. The placeholders can be defined in the product's options, and default to:

<!--@vbbanners:%d@-->

Also the management is straight-forward and simple to use. Forum administrators with maintenance rights may add, edit and delete records from the Administration Control Panel (ACP), one of each represents a banner. After saving the new banner settings, they are immediately visible at your board.

As for version 2.0.3, automatic saving has been added in order to simplify editing banners. Also, an additional navigation bar was added on top, allowing to browse the records more easily on smaller screens.

As for version 2.2.0, the horizontal and vertical banner placeholders have been changed and require you to replace the old placeholders with the new ones. This is a major change!

From version 2.2.4 onwards, Flash Banners are fully supported.

Installation

Installing the Rotating Banner System software is simple. First, upload all files and folders you find in the upload folder to your forum home (where you find the index.php file of your forum).

Then login to your vBulletin board, and install a new product. Browse for the product's XML file (product-rbs.xml), and select the *overwrite* radio button, if you make an upgrade or want to replace an existing installation.

After clicking on the *Import* button one new table is created: [prefix]rbs_banners. Also a few default banners will be inserted. These records can be deleted or overwritten. If you leave them inserted and enabled, our advertising will be shown to your forum users, and we receive a little fee for each click your users make. It is a simple way to passively contribute to keep this software constantly updated.

Please note that the lang-it-rbs.xml file is intended to be used only on boards where the Italian language is installed and used as default.

Release Notes

| Version | Date | Tag | Description |
|---------|--------------|--------|---|
| 1.0.0 | | | Initial release |
| 1.1.0 | 2008-02-07 | CHANGE | Impressions field moved underneath the ID field. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| | | ADD | Vertical banners may now be shown with @vbbanners_vertical@. |
| | | ADD | The number of max impressions allows to limit a banner. |
| | | ADD | A list of forum ID's may be added to show a banner only in a certain area. |
| 1.2.0 | 2008-03-26 | FIX | Alignment checkbox has become a combo-box due to browser issues. |
| | | CHANGE | Language selector in index.php (from now on the help files and the forms text is managed by language files). |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 1.2.1 | 2008-06-14 | ADD | The forum ID list may contain now 0, which indicates to show a banner only in the forum home or other pages where the forum ID is zero (e.g. private messages, user control panel). A blank list means, as before, to show a banner at any place. With this new feature, all banner types may now be addressed to specific pages. |
| | | CHANGE | The banner impression counters are updated all at once; this leads to a performance gain where more banners are shown on the same page. |
| 2.0.0 | 2008-08-16 | | Complete revamp. The user interface is integrated into the Administration Control Panel, and a few options were added, in order to make the product more intuitive. The banner placeholders can now be changed from the vbulletin options. Since all descriptions are fully phrased, it is possible to translate the product in any language. For customers a conversion tool is available. |
| 2.0.1 | 2008-08-17 | ADD | Click tracking for standard image banners. |
| | | ADD | rel="nofollow" to standard image links. |
| | | CHANGE | Direct reference to standard image URL's with no click tracking. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.0.2 | not released | FIX | Various small code fixes. |
| 2.0.3 | 2008-09-13 | ADD | Navigation bar on top. |
| | | ADD | Automatic save on scroll setting. |
| | | ADD | E-Mail field for banner event notifications. |
| | | ADD | Option for banner event notifications. |
| | | ADD | Banner list page. |
| | | FIX | Absolute URL to rbs_banner.php in order to allow click tracking on non-standard pages, such as vbulletin plugins. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.0.4 | 2008-09-13 | ADD | Automatic absolute URL's. |
| 2.0.5 | 2008-09-26 | ADD | Impressions and Clicks in banner list. |
| | | FIX | Last button did not work. |
| | | ADD | Daily cron-job for expired banner email notification. |
| | 2008-10-02 | ADD | Target option. |
| | 2008-10-03 | CHANGE | Help files. |
| | | ADD | Bug Tracker & Extended Support (for registered users and customers only). |
| 2.0.6 | 2008-10-12 | FIX | vbCMS Compatibility Name Fix: rbs_url_sanity => rbs_url_sanity2. |

| | | | |
|-------|------------|--------|---|
| | | ADD | Horizontal banner list. |
| | | ADD | Vertical banner list. |
| | | ADD | Disabled banner list. |
| | | ADD | Expired banner list. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.0.7 | 2008-12-03 | ADD | User-group ID's. Now it is possible to define a comma separated list of user-group ID's to which a specific banner is shown. Both primary and secondary user-groups are considered. |
| | | CHANGE | vbCMS Compatibility Name Fix: Once again the function is called rbs_url_sanity, and it is surrounded by an explicit check to avoid double loading, just in case. This problem is really not our problem, but we have implemented this workaround to make the product even work, when other developers have failed to run vBulletin in the way it should. vbCMS appears to load the final vBulletin hook once again. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.0.8 | 2008-12-05 | FIX | Erratic link to cronadmin.php. |
| | | FIX | Menu file cnav_rbs.xml. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.0.9 | 2008-12-14 | FIX | Extra comma in new record query. |
| 2.1.0 | 2009-01-04 | FIX | Banner type selection bug when the default banners have been deleted or disabled. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.2.0 | 2009-05-23 | CHANGE | <p>Banner positions. Now we have up to 10 banner positions. This required also to replace the @vbbanners@ and @vbbanners_vertical@ placeholders with their new equivalents: <!--@vbbanners:0@--> and <!--@vbbanners:1@-->. The other placeholders go from <!--@vbbanners:2@--> through <!--@vbbanners:9@-->.</p> <p>In order to use this release, you must replace the old placeholders with the new ones in your templates!</p> <p>Please note that potentially it would be possible to define any number of placeholders now, but for program performance and for monitoring the new behaviour, we have limited the number to 10.</p> |
| | | REMOVE | Options for horizontal and vertical placeholders (@vbbanners@ and @vbbanners_vertical@). |
| | | CHANGE | Scripts: rbs_banner.php, admin_rbs.php |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.2.1 | 2009-05-24 | FIX | vertical field reference in admin_rbs_h_banner_list.php and admin_rbs_v_banner_list.php |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.2.2 | 2010-01-24 | REMOVE | Menu entry Options, since this seemed not to work on some systems due to & and & translation problems. |
| | | ADD | Duplicate button for replicating an entry. |
| | | REMOVE | Menu entry for horizontal banner listing. |
| | | REMOVE | Menu entry for vertical banner listing. |
| | | ADD | Menu entries for listings of positions 0...10. |
| | | REMOVE | admin_rbs_d_banner_list.php |
| | | REMOVE | admin_rbs_x_banner_list.php |
| | | REMOVE | admin_rbs_h_banner_list.php |
| | | REMOVE | admin_rbs_v_banner_list.php |
| | | REMOVE | HTML Help files. |
| | | REMOVE | CHM Help file. |
| | | ADD | PDF Help file. |

| | | | |
|-------|------------|--------|---|
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.2.3 | 2010-02-03 | FIX | Issue with remaining placeholders in rare cases. |
| | | CHANGE | Function insertion moved to hook global_start. |
| | | CHANGE | Product URL. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.2.4 | 2010-02-08 | ADD | Flash Banners. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.2.5 | 2010-02-10 | HOTFIX | Function insertion moved to hook global_complete, due to broken hook handling in vBulletin 4.0.2. |
| 2.2.6 | 2010-03-13 | FIX | Checking for installed Flash Wrapper rbs_wrapper.swf |
| | | ADD | A few English FAQ. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.3.0 | 2010-11-08 | ADD | rbs_hits table for additional click tracking information. |
| | | CHANGE | Code for passing the user id to the click tracker. |
| | 2010-11-18 | ADD | Delete expired banners module. |
| | | ADD | Disable expired banners module. |
| | | ADD | Public accessible Banner Statistics. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.3.1 | 2010-11-23 | FIX | Missing field (servername) in rbs_hits. |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |
| 2.3.2 | 2011-06-21 | ADD | Unsupported option for setting any number of available positions between 1 and big bang 🐛 |
| | | FIX | Small bug and speed issues. |
| | | REMOVE | Italian translation. Italians may now request support at vBulletin.it . |
| | | CHANGE | Help files. |

Copyright

This is copyrighted software. You may use it freely on one or more instances of forums, and change the code to your wishes (guarantee void if seal is broken 😊).

However, you may not (re)publish, share, lend, resell, or otherwise tamper with, without explicit and written permission from Y2K Software.

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Settings

| Setting | Description | Default value |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Nth Placeholder | <p>Allows to specify up to 10 banner locations. The %d parameter replaces the numeric location in your template, e.g.: <!--@vbbanners:0@--> will insert the standard horizontal banner from the previous versions. Currently, only placeholders from 0 to 9 are allowed, where 0 and 1 cover the previous horizontal and vertical banner locations.</p> <p>Please note: The current placeholder (HTML comment) makes also sure the banner placeholders will not show up when the product or plugin is not active.</p> | <!--@vbbanners:%d@--> |
| Save on Scroll | If this option is on, eventual changes are saved when moving to a different record using the navigation buttons (except for the buttons Reset, Save and Delete). | off |
| Email Notifications | If this option is on, the specified email addresses in each banner record are notified about banner events. The time intervals and notification types depend upon individual Scheduled Task settings. | off |
| Target | Define here the target window. This works for image banners only. | _blank |
| Maximum Position Count | <p>This option defines the number of positions you would like to offer. Please note that decreasing this value in a second moment may have unexpected results, such as vanishing banners or partly shown placeholders.</p> <p>All problems having to do with settings different than 10 are <i>not</i> subject of any kind of support!</p> | 10 |

Scheduled Tasks

This page is intentionally empty.

Expired Banner Notifications

Sends email notifications to a list of recipients about expired banners.

Shortcut Keys

| Key | Function |
|-----|--|
| p | Previous record (create new record on underflow) |
| n | Next record (create new record on overflow) |
| s | Save current record |
| r | Reset fields (undo changes on current record) |

Fields

- ID: This field is filled automatically and identifies each banner uniquely.
- Impressions: This field is filled automatically and represents the number of impressions on your board. Please note that Ads are impressed when they are created inside your pages. There is generally no way to tell when Ads were clicked on.
- Clicks: This field is filled automatically if click tracking is enabled and represents the number of clicks a standard image banner has received. This value has no effect on scripts and remains at 0.
- Enabled: If this field is checked, the banner is enabled to view on your forum. You may use this switch to globally enable or disable a single banner.
- Name: This field is only significant to image banners, and would appear as the tool-tip. *250 Characters wide.*
- Position: Please select the banner position.
- URL: This field is only significant to image banners, and represents the link to the banner image. *250 Characters wide.*
- Image / Flash: If you define here a picture, it is shown together with the Name as a tooltip, and the URL as destination. For Flash banners, please insert here the swf file. *250 Characters wide.*
- Click Tracking: If this option is enabled, a script counts the number of clicks on standard images. This option has no effect on scripts.
- Max. Clicks: This field accepts a number, indicating the maximum number of clicks on a standard image banner. Since some spiders may not respect the "nofollow" directive, this number should be a little larger than the effectively maximum amount of clicks a banner may receive. If set to 0 (zero), this parameter is ignored.
- Flash Banner: Please enable this option, if this banner is a flash (SWF) banner and you desire to use the inbuilt banner wrapper. Together with the wrapper you may also enable click tracking and other related features.
- Flash Banner: object Tag: Please enable this option, if this banner is a flash (SWF) banner and you wish to use the object tag. It may be used alone or together with the embed tag. Please note that some browsers may require this tag in order to show a flash banner.
- Flash Banner: embed Tag: Please enable this option, if this banner is a flash (SWF) banner and you wish to use the embed tag. It may be used alone or together with the object tag. Please note that some browsers may require this tag in order to show a flash banner.
- Flash Banner Width: Insert here the flash banner width in pixels. Please note that an invalid value may have strange side effects, such as clipping or stretching all or part of the contents. If this value is 0, it will not be used.
- Flash Banner Height: Insert here the flash banner height in pixels. Please note that an invalid value may have strange side effects, such as clipping or stretching all or part of the contents. If this value is 0, it will not be used.
- Text: This field may hold the Google (or other provider) AdSense HTML / Java Script. Just paste here what you have created at the provider's site, or anything else. *Unlimited size.*
- Start Date: This field accepts a starting date. Ads are not selected if the current server date is less than this date. The date selection can be made by the new vBulletin date selector, the time must be changed manually. The default value for new records is the current server date and time.
- End Date: This field accepts an end date. Ads are not selected if the current server date is greater than this date. The date selection can be made by the new vBulletin date selector, the time must be changed manually. The default value for new records is the current server date and time, plus 365 days.
- Max Impressions: This field accepts a number, indicating the maximum number of impressions. Since spiders may visit your site, this number should not reflect the number of impressions a visitor may see, but quite some more. If set to 0 (zero), this parameter is ignored.
- Forum Home: If this field is checked, the banner is enabled to view on any page which has no forum ID, such as the Forum Home, User Control Panel, Private Messages. This setting overrides eventually specified forum ID's.
- Forums: This field allows to select no, one or more forums where to show the banner. If no selection was made, the banner shows on all pages.
- Usergroups: List of usergroup ID's which may see this banner. If this list is empty, it is shown to all usergroups. Please separate each usergroup ID by a comma, e.g.: 1,2,3.
- Mail Addresses: This field accepts one or more email addresses, separated by spaces, to notify about banner events. Which events are sent at which time depend upon individual Scheduled Tasks

settings.

- Notes: Anything you wish here. *Unlimited size*.
- Reset Notifications: If this option is checked, email notifications are enabled once again.

HTML and Scripts

The power of this software lays in the fact, it can accept HTML and Java Script to show advertising from other sites, such as Google's AdSense.

Of course, the source code looks simple, but it has been result of many trials and failures.

Before inserting your scripts, please make sure they work on a simple HTML page without any error, e.g.:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN">
<html>
  <head>
    <title>
      Untitled
    </title>
  </head>
  <body>
    Your script here!
  </body>
</html>
```

Normally, the advertising companies offer a simple way to generate the adequate HTML code, and they are tested in a wide range of browsers and environments. However, when you make changes to these scripts, they may not work as intended, and thus mess up the page contents of your forum.

Please make sure, all tags are properly closed, and that the scripts don't contain tags which may affect your page style. You may apply any local style, though.

Plain Images

You also can add plain images, such as JPEG, GIF and PNG formatted images. Please make sure these images are supported from any browser.

The images are shown as-is, thus be careful showing images which fit your pages.

Impression period

One of the most important features of this software is the automatic enabling and disabling of banners and advertising. If you have customers paying for an advertising space, they usually pay for a period of time.

You may also define a maximum number of impressions.

To view and hide certain banners for a period, you need to set the start and end date accordingly. Please see the [fields description](#) page for details.

Additional Click Tracking Information

This is a new feature and adds more information about a click tracked banner. This information can be retrieved by administrators and database operators only:

1. bannerid: This is the id parameter passed to the rbs_banner.php script.
2. userid: If passed as parameter to the rbs_banner.php script, this number is stored to the same field in the rbs_hits table. If no parameter is given, this value is 0, because the rbs_banner.php script does not evaluate cookies.
3. dateline: This is the Unix Timestamp at the moment the rbs_banner.php script was called.
4. ip: This is the remote IP of the user.
5. servername: The banner's server name.
6. referer: Originating page of the banner.

Delete expired banners module

This function deletes all expired banners from the database. You may wish to run this if you have a lot of expired banners and want to clean up. The deleted records are permanently lost.

Disable expired banners module

This function disables all expired banners in the database. You may wish to run this if you have a lot of expired banners and want to speed up a little. The disabled records may be late re-enabled.

Banner Statistics

This page is a template for your own detailed banner statistics. Though you may use it well as-is, it opens you a door to show single banner statistics to you and/or your customers. Each banner has an unique key, which makes it pretty proof against external investigation.

Unlike other vBulletin pages, the statistics page is not bound to s vBulletin template, thus it remains compatible with older and newer software.

Typical reports looks like:

Banner Statistics

Options

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| ID: | 2 |
| Enabled: | Yes |
| Name / Popup: | Google Image 468 x 60 |
| Image / Flash: | N/A |
| Landing Page: | N/A |
| Start Date: | Tue, 20-May-2008 22:00:00 GMT |
| End Date: | Sun, 20-May-2018 22:00:00 GMT |
| Max. Impressions: | N/A |
| Max. Clicks: | N/A |
| Click Tracking: | No |

Results

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Impressions: | 0 |
| Clicks: | 0 |
| CTR: | 0% |

Unwanted Results

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Direct Access: | 0 |
|----------------|---|

Banner Statistics

Options

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| ID: | 10 |
| Enabled: | Yes |
| Name / Popup: | Spacial Audio Solutions - SimpleCast |
| Image / Flash: | http://www.spacialaudio.com/affiliates/images/buttons/simplecast.gif |
| Landing Page: | http://www.spacialaudio.com/?page=simplecast&ref=A2254&redirect=SimpleCast |
| Start Date: | Tue, 09-Jun-2009 23:48:00 GMT |
| End Date: | Tue, 09-Jun-2020 23:48:00 GMT |
| Max. Impressions: | N/A |
| Max. Clicks: | N/A |
| Click Tracking: | Yes |

Results

| | |
|--------------|---------|
| Impressions: | 204,924 |
| Clicks: | 30 |
| CTR: | 0.01% |

Extended Results

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Records: | 5 |
| Unique IP's: | 5 |
| Unique Referers: | 1 |
| Unique Servers: | 2 |
| Unique Users: | 1 |
| Anonymous: | 5 |
| First Click: | Wed, 10-Nov-2010 03:20:18 GMT |
| Last Click: | Thu, 18-Nov-2010 11:19:52 GMT |

Unwanted Results

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Direct Access: | 5 |
|----------------|---|

FAQ

This page is intentionally empty.

I cannot work out how to use a flash (.swf) file

I have this working very nicely but cannot work out how to use a flash (.swf) file.

I don't understand what this means:

Image / Flash: If you define here a picture, it is shown together with the Name as a tooltip, and the URL as destination. For Flash banners, please insert here the swf file.

I tried entering the URL of the file, but that doesn't work.

It would be a valid URL to a SWF file, like

`http://www.domain.tld/myflash.swf`

If this file is publically accessible and the name is conforming to HTML name standards (no spaces, special characters ecc, and if it isn't a script, it will be loaded by the Flash wrapper. Please note, that flash banners also need to specify their dimensions (width, height) in order to show up correctly.

If your flash banner can be shown normally on a HTML page, it really should work in the wrapper, too. However, if the file of the flash banner isn't a true banner, but a camouflaged Java Script or anything else, it won't. The wrapper will not interpret flash banners which aren't conforming to Flash.

PhotoPost (Gallery)

Using this with success on 3.8.4 and working fine on normal forum pages. But when integrating PhotoPost (Gallery), the banners I have put in the left column do not show. I see <!--@vbbanners:1@--> in the source, so it definitely calls for the code (which shows correctly on other forum pages). Any idea why it does not work?

There is not much I can add

There have been issues with PhotoPost, which is replacing partially the source code of vBulletin, and forgets sometimes about calling the terminating hook: `global_complete`.

If you see the placeholders in the HTML code, the RBS code in `global_complete` has not been executed.

I have no solution for fixing this problem.

Adding right-hand side columns

I would like to be able to place an add in the right hand column, but can't seem to find the template to do it.

I also need a side column, how do I add this and where to?

In order to add a column to the standard layout of your pages, you would have to add a table right below the `<body>` tag and add one or more columns, and close the table right at the bottom of the page, before the `</body>` tag.

Your layout would roughly look like:

`<body>`

```

<table>
  <tr>
    <td style="width: 100%;">
      Original template contents (header, navbar, contents, footer)
    </td>
    <td style="width: 160px;">
      Additional right column, 160 pixels wide.
    </td>
  </tr>
</table>

</body>

```

You may have a look at the templates FORUMHOME and FORUMDISPLAY in order to get an idea where to start with, but eventually you will end up to add a second column to many other templates, each of which has its own characteristics.

I can't get rid of a Google banner

I have a google image ad that shows up just below the navigation of my site and I cant seem to get rid of it. My Google Adsense is disabled on the forum and I have disabled all of the ads in the Rotating Banner System. I have also deleted all the google image ads in the module and it still shows up. Any suggestions?

Probably it is hard-coded into your style. A few of the free styles for vBulletin have this *feature* enabled.

vbSEO issues

I have a clean installation and for me it works at any place for any placeholder, ranging from <!--@vbbanners:0@--> to <!--@vbbanners:9@-->. I do have also several production sites where it works perfectly well with any combination of rules, some of which are very complex.

Together, we have found that vbSEO may clean HTML comments, thus the standard placeholders won't work at all, and would have to be replaced by a different one.

(1)

In order to catch all possible errors, please make sure, your placeholder in the options looks like <!--@vbbanners:%d@--> or like @vbbanners:%d@ (if you have vbSEO or other software which cleans HTML). It may have any other combination of characters, as long as a %d appears inside. %d is replaced with numbers between 0 and 9 at runtime.

vbSEO or HTML cleaning software users:

vBulletin Options - Rotating Banner System Options - Nth Placeholder: @vbbanners:%d@

All other users:

vBulletin Options - Rotating Banner System Options - Nth Placeholder: <!--@vbbanners:%d@-->

(2)

Now put a:

vbSEO or HTML cleaning software users:

<div align="center">@vbbanners:0@</div>

<div align="center">@vbbanners:1@</div>

All other users:

<div align="center"><!--@vbbanners:0@--></div>

<div align="center"><!--@vbbanners:1@--></div>

in the template: ad_navbar_below

(3)

and enable the default banners, moving the second banner to position 1. Both banners should appear, one below the other.

On a standard installation, this combination of settings works 100% guaranteed on 4.x. I have set it up once again from scratch just to be sure. If it doesn't work for you, I'll install a test board with these settings on, in order to demonstrate the facts.

Possible issues:

- You are using a style which does not implement ad_navbar_below, or which comments out that template. In this case, no banner appears.
- Your system caches pages (e.g. Apache mod_cache). Unless you refresh the page explicitly, the banners don't seem to rotate or won't even appear.
- Your vBulletin Options - Rotating Banner System Options - Nth Placeholder is setup like: <!--@vbbanners:0@--> or @vbbanners:0@. In this case, only banners at location 0 appear. You should have set: <!--@vbbanners:%d@--> or @vbbanners:%d@ instead.

Place two rotating 468x60 banners side by side

I can't figure out how to place two rotating 468x60 banners side by side in the ad_navbar_below template.

Just put two placeholders side by side and make sure you have at least 2 banners in your database, e.g.:

<!--@vbbanners:0@--> <!--@vbbanners:0@-->

Supporto Italiano

Per mancanza di tempo fisico per aggiornare a ogni rilascio tutti i file correlati, abbiamo deciso di spostare il supporto tecnico sul nostro forum vBulletin.it.

Nella sezione [Richiesta articoli How-To](#) si può chiedere di approfondire un argomento particolare in "formato manuale". In questo modo risolviamo due problemi: 1) la distribuzione su vBulletin.org, che parla quasi esclusivamente Inglese, 2) il problema della documentazione a più lingue, che richiede parecchio tempo. Preferiamo di aggiornare più spesso con funzioni nuove che attendere che sia pronta anche la documentazione tradotta.