

# **Rotating Banner System**

# Introduction

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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

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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	<a href="#">Automatic save on scroll setting.</a>
		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	<a href="#">Daily cron-job for expired banner email notification.</a>
	2008-10-02	ADD	<a href="#">Target option.</a>
	2008-10-03	CHANGE	Help files.
		ADD	<a href="#">Bug Tracker &amp; Extended Support</a> (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 <code>rbs_url_sanity</code> , 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 <code>cronadmin.php</code> .
		FIX	Menu file <code>cpnav_rbs.xml</code> .
		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	Banner positions. Now we have up to 10 banner positions. This required also to replace the <code>@vbbanners@</code> and <code>@vbbanners_vertical@</code> placeholders with their new equivalents: <code>&lt;!--@vbbanners:0@--&gt;</code> and <code>&lt;!--@vbbanners:1@--&gt;</code> . The other placeholders go from <code>&lt;!--@vbbanners:2@--&gt;</code> through <code>&lt;!--@vbbanners:9@--&gt;</code> . In order to use this release, <b>you must replace</b> the old placeholders with the new ones in your templates! Please note that <b>potentially</b> it would be possible to define <b>any</b> number of placeholders now, but for program performance and for monitoring the new behaviour, we have limited the number to 10.
		REMOVE	Options for horizontal and vertical placeholders ( <code>@vbbanners@</code> and <code>@vbbanners_vertical@</code> ).
		CHANGE	Scripts: <code>rbs_banner.php</code> , <code>admin_rbs.php</code>
		CHANGE	Help files.
2.2.1	2009-05-24	FIX	<b>vertical</b> field reference in <code>admin_rbs_h_banner_list.php</code> and <code>admin_rbs_v_banner_list.php</code>
		CHANGE	Help files.
2.2.2	2010-01-24	REMOVE	Menu entry <b>Options</b> , since this seemed not to work on some systems due to <code>&amp;</code> and <code>&amp;amp;</code> ; 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	<code>admin_rbs_d_banner_list.php</code>
		REMOVE	<code>admin_rbs_x_banner_list.php</code>
		REMOVE	<code>admin_rbs_h_banner_list.php</code>
		REMOVE	<code>admin_rbs_v_banner_list.php</code>
		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 <b>English</b> FAQ.
		CHANGE	Help files.

# Copyright

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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.: &lt;!--@vbbanners:0@--&gt; 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

## Scheduled Tasks

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This page is intentionally empty.

## Expired Banner Notifications

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

## Shortcut Keys

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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

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- **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

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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

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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

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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.

## FAQ

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This page is intentionally empty.

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

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*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.*

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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)

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*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?*

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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

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*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?*

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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

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*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?*

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

## vbSEO issues

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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.

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On a standard installation, this combination of settings works 100% guaranteed on 4.0.2 PL1. 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

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*I can't figure out how to place two rotating 468x60 banners side by side in the ad\_navbar\_below template.*

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

```
<!--@vbbanners:0@-->&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;<!--@vbbanners:0@-->
```