



**DART WHITE PAPER**  
**COUNTING**  
**METHODOLOGIES**

JULY 12, 2001

**DoubleClick**

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# PREFACE TO DART COUNTING METHODOLOGIES

## About this white paper

Because of a lack of standards within the Internet advertising industry, there is little uniformity in the way websites and ad-serving technologies count impressions and clicks. As a result, advertisers have difficulty making accurate comparisons among the many websites with which they do business.

While third-party ad serving through DoubleClick presents advertisers with an accurate, uniform methodology for counting and reporting impressions and clicks across multiple websites, there are often discrepancies between the numbers reported by DoubleClick and those reported by the internal or third-party counting systems used by the individual websites. Furthermore, because there are many factors that can cause these discrepancies, and because these factors vary by website, the discrepancies are typically not consistent from website to website.

The purpose of this white paper is to explain the discrepancies between the way DART and other organizations count impressions and clicks, and to provide ways to minimize the impact of these discrepancies.

## How this white paper is organized

This white paper is divided into the following sections:

- [Counting Impressions](#) on page 1 explains the ad serving process and discusses why websites might count impressions differently from DART.
- [Counting Clicks](#) on page 6 explains the process by which DART counts clicks, discusses invalid clicks, explains why websites might count clicks differently from DART, and discusses the issue of using referrers to count clicks.
- [Counting Unique Users](#) on page 18 explains how DART counts unique users who visit DART-enabled websites.
- [Industry Standards](#) on page 20 explains DoubleClick's approach to industry standards for counting impressions and clicks.
- [Appendix I: DoubleClick Privacy Policy](#) on page 21 explains counting discrepancies between WebTrends *Log Analyzer*® and DART, and provides techniques to minimize those discrepancies.
- [Appendix II: Counting and WebTrends Log Analyzer](#) on page 24 explains DoubleClick's privacy policy and provides sample text for you to use in your websites.

# COUNTING IMPRESSIONS

In online advertising, it is imperative to know how many impressions a given ad has served. This chapter explains how DART counts impressions as part of the ad serving process, and why DART's impression counts are sometimes different from the numbers that are produced by other, non-DoubleClick counting methodologies.

This chapter discusses the following topics:

- [The Ad Serving Process](#) on page 2
- [Why Impressions May Be Counted Differently](#) on page 3.

## The Ad Serving Process

The following figure shows the process by which DART serves ads.

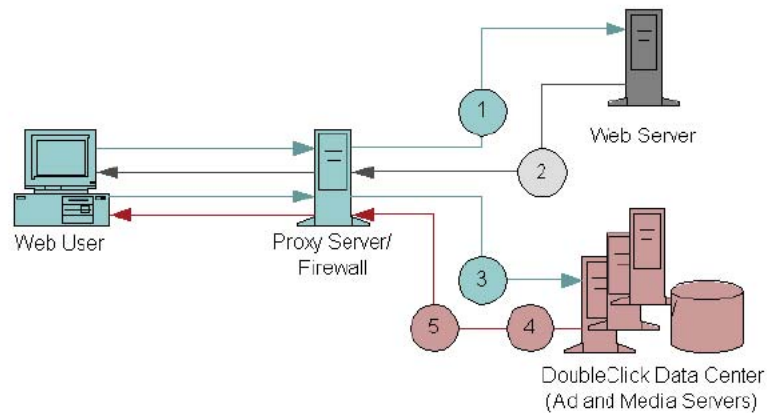


FIGURE: How DART serves ads

Stage	Description
1	The user requests an HTML page.
2	The Web server sends the user an HTML document.
3	The user's browser reads the HTML code and sends a request to <code>http://ad.doubleclick.net</code> for an ad.
4	The DoubleClick ad server chooses an ad and counts an impression.
5	The ad server, a media server, or a third-party redirect server serves the ad.

DART counts an impression when the ad server determines which ad to send (Stage 4) after receiving a request for an ad from the user's browser (Stage 3).

Many websites and ad-serving systems count an impression when the HTML page that contains the tags for the ad is sent to the user (Stage 2). This counting method incorrectly equates a page view with an ad impression. For a variety of reasons, browsers often send requests for HTML pages, but do not send requests for the ads in those pages. When counting impressions, DART counts only requests for ads themselves, not requests for the HTML pages that contain the ads.

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