



Read *the* Docs

Advertising Guide

This guide tries to help you to create engaging ads for Read the Docs and make sure those ads perform well once people click on them.

Optimizing ads themselves

There are many factors to successful display advertising from compelling branding to optimized landing pages but it pays to not overlook the image and text copy.

The average click through rate (CTR) for display ads on Read the Docs is around 0.12%. The best ads perform more than **three times better** than that. Here are some features of high quality ads:

Excellent copy

This could be an entire book itself. However, great ads may include the benefits of the product, have keywords the reader understands, explain the product, feature a discount, and reassure the viewer.

Well targeted

Making sure your geographic targeting parameters match your desired customers is a start. Using other targeting parameters or running geographically different ads for different regions will help both the CTR as well as conversions.

Use multiple ad formats

Some documentation themes used on Read the Docs don't feature the sidebar as prominently as others. Likewise, while about **92% of Read the Docs users are on desktops and laptops**, mobile specific ads perform much better among that subset. You should have an ad in most or all of the formats Read the Docs supports: sidebar, footer, and mobile ads.

Keep ads fresh

We have noticed that new ads perform better. This is known as ad fatigue. Swapping ads once every quarter or so will keep them performing well.

Optimizing conversions

Having people click on your advertisement is only half the battle. Once they get to your landing page, you want the visitor to take the desired action. Some of our best advertisers have conversion rates better than 20%.

While there are many books and guides available to optimize landing pages, here are some key points to ensuring your ads with Read the Docs convert well:

Pair ad copy with landing page copy

Nothing is worse than when somebody clicks on the ad and is confused about what is being offered on the landing page. It's important to reassure the visitor once they click to a different site that they are getting what they clicked through for.



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Setting expectations with the ad copy

In addition to just pairing with the copy, the ad can prepare the visitor for what will be on the landing page. A classic example of this is an ad that features a large discount (eg. "get \$100 free credit"). This large discount has set the expectation that the product will be fairly expensive.

About the Read the Docs audience

The best ads and ad campaigns know exactly who their audience is and how to guide them toward the desired action. Advertising on Read the Docs is no different.

- While virtually all of Read the Docs' visitors are software developers, these developers have varying skill level and interests.
- Read the Docs' **peak usage is during business hours**. Many of our users are using the site during the regular course of their jobs.
- Read the Docs' audience is geographically distributed with about a third each coming from the Americas, Asia, and Europe. Our largest traffic source countries are the USA (~22%), China (~12%), and India (~6.5%).
- While many docs are localized, over **90% of pageviews are for English language docs**. Nonetheless, depending on your targeting, localizing your ad may increase CTR and conversions.
- Read the Docs' is particularly popular in the Python community (~60%) among data scientists, web developers and others. After Python, C++ (~6%), PHP (~6%), and JavaScript (~6%) are the most popular.

Examples of successful ads

These are not real ads that ran on Read the Docs but are based on very successful past ads.

SaaS product

Highlight branding →

Good use of color helps the ad stand out without being obtrusive →

Graphs and charts catch readers' eyes and generate interest in seeing more details of the product →

Solves a specific problem for a specific set of users →

Good call to action. A free trial reduces objections and risk. → **Try DashSaaS free!**

Generate sales reports from your Django ecommerce app.

This example is based on a successful ad run by an advertiser using Read the Docs to drive interest in their SaaS product.

The ad catches the reader's eye without being flashy, it is technology specific, and the ad **makes very clear what problem is being solved**. Additionally, the ad offers a free trial which helps to overcome any objections that somebody who needs sales reports from their Django app might have.

Hiring developers



This example is based on a successful ad run by an advertiser using Read the Docs exclusively to hire multiple developers for their team.

The ad did a number of things right including **focusing extremely narrowly** on their target audience. When the ad this example is based on first launched, the CTR was 4x better than our average.

One possible area for improvement would be to introduce the company's branding to reassure applicants that this is first party recruiting.