

Meta-Refresh and Meta-Redirect

If you ever take a look at your raw server logs there may be one statistical group that stands out, and that is the length of time that users actually spend on specific pages. PPC advertisers en masse watch the length of time users spend on their site to see if there is any evidence of automated click fraud. While the length of time spent on a site varies on the type of site and the content within it, reasons abound as to why someone would sit on a static page for any length of time longer than a few minutes.

Just for arguments sake, let's say that someone visited your website and then decided to take lunch. When they return forty-five minutes or an hour later your page is still on their screen and they can continue reading. If website owners want to give these "lazy users" a little something extra, they may want to consider using the meta-refresh with a meta-redirect to send them to a webpage which notes where they were on your site last (so they can return if they so choose) and offers up alternative options such as weblog feeds. WSM advises not using this strategy to simply refresh ads (which will boost your ad impressions) as it will most very likely annoy your users.

How do you use the meta refresh?

Just include the following code on any page within the header
<meta http-equiv="refresh" content="300">

How do you use the meta refresh and redirect?

Just include the following code on any page within the header:
<meta http-equiv="refresh"
content="300;url=http://Insert-URL-of-page-to-redirect-users.com/">

How to use effectively.

Employing the meta-refresh code will give your readers five minutes of time (that's 300 seconds - you can change it accordingly) before the page will be reloaded. It will not redirect your users to any other page. It is really best suited for pages using dynamic content such as weather maps, a collection of weblog feeds or even stock ticker symbols. For those lazy users, ten minutes may be an appropriate length of time and will give website owners the ability to secure greater focus of the user if they are aware that you are paying attention to how they are using the site.