

The Simple Submission URL

Overview & Guide



Simple Submission URL (ssURL)

What is a Simple Submission URL?

A Simple Submission URL allows you to provide a Write a Review link that takes a potential contributor exactly where they expect to go – the submission page for the specific product or service. Simple Submission URLs are commonly used in email campaigns, post-interaction emails, site banners, and splash pages to encourage review volume.

Why is the Simple Submission URL important?

Through Bazaarvoice's simple submission technology, you can pre-authenticate users so they aren't required to log in before submitting a review. Having an ssURL on an email you send customers contributes significantly in the overall effort to drive higher content volume. Our research has shown that post-interaction email campaigns are most successful when the login barrier is removed. If users must log in to write reviews after clicking an email link, only 25% will continue the process. Simple Submission URLs are also useful for implementing a Write a Review link in other areas outside our injected content, such as splash pages, category and search pages, and our Generic Review Submission feature.

How does the Simple Submission URL work?

Whenever a user enters the submission flow by clicking a submission link on your site, Bazaarvoice redirects them to the submission container page while passing URL parameters that are required for submission (organic traffic). Users can also enter into the submission flow by clicking a Write a Review link (the ssURL) embedded within an email campaign (non-organic traffic). The links embedded within the email can be pre-authenticated so a user is able to write a review without hitting a login barrier. If the user is pre-authenticated with Bazaarvoice and should not go through a login process, the query string parameter `bvauthenticateuser` will be equal to `false`. A pre-authenticated link does not log the user onto your site, and functions such as accessing a personal account page will still require login.

The following behaviors demonstrate incorrect login-redirection logic on the submission page:

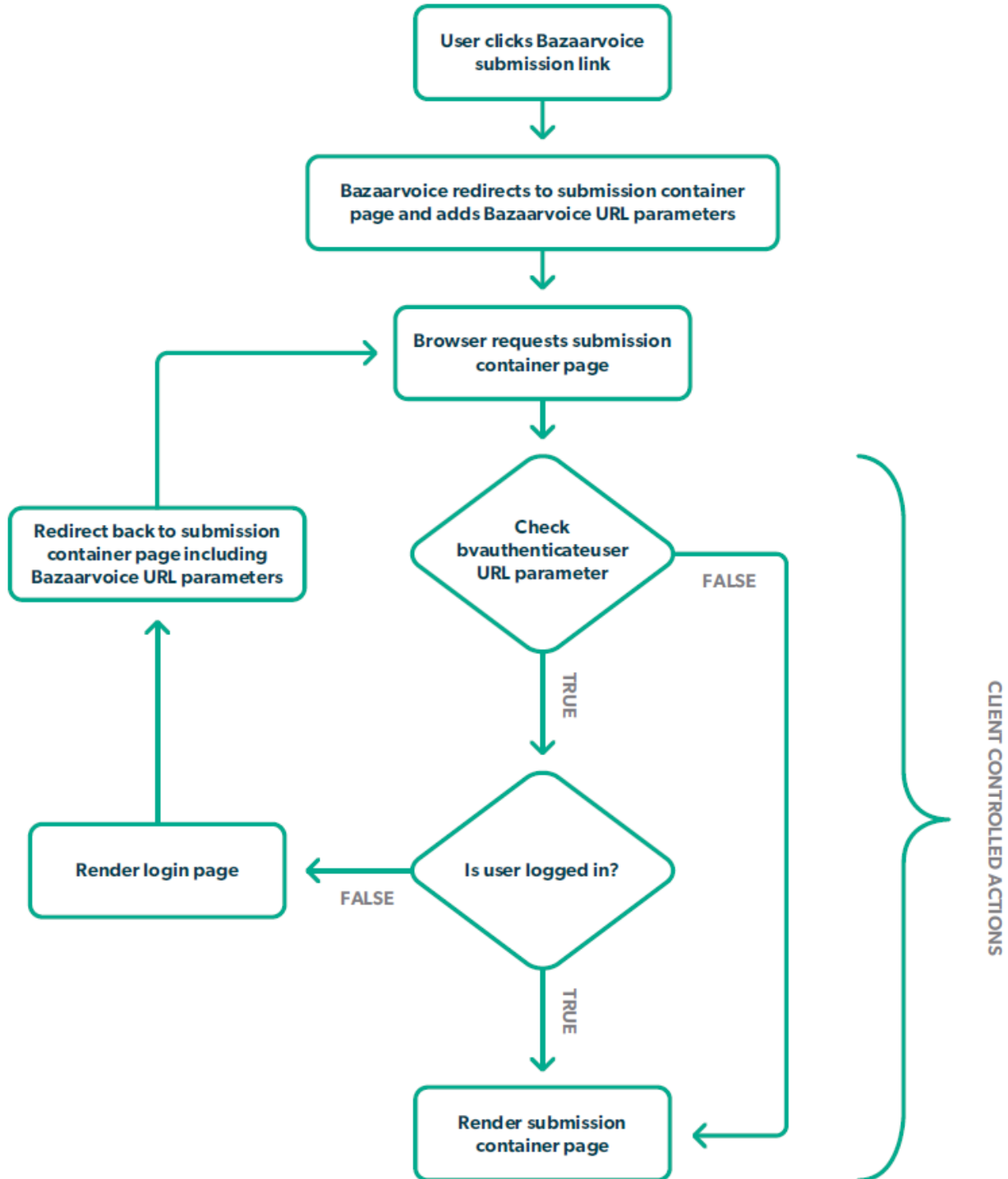
- Users are redirected to their profile page after clicking Write a Review and logging into the site
- Users clicking a pre-authenticated Write a Review link are prompted to log in to their account
- Users can successfully click Write a Review while logged in, but their submissions won't load

Checking for simple submission readiness

Your Ratings & Reviews implementation must be simple submission compatible. If you did not implement simple submission or are unsure whether your integration supports simple submission, the Bazaarvoice Support team can perform a quick test on your integration code. If your integration does not support simple submission, the following authentication process and login integration sections outline the client-side steps necessary to support simple submission.



Simple Submission URL authentication process



Simple Submission URL login integration

Sample code for handling bvpage parameters from the submission page:

```
if bvauthenticateuser==true {
  //the user must be logged in to perform the action
  if user is not logged in {
    • redirect them to a login page and then
    • redirect back to the submission page after
    successful login
  }
  else {
    the user is logged in, continue rendering the
    submission page.
  }
}
else (bvauthenticateuser is false) {
  // the user does not have to be logged in to perform the action,
  continue rendering the submission page.
  .
}
```

IMPORTANT: You must maintain the URL of the submission page complete with bvpage parameters when redirecting back after login.



Always check bvauthenticateuser!

http://www.domain.com/submit.html?bvdisplaycode=1234&bvproductid=123456&bvpage=http%3A%2F%2Fh30441.www.domain.com%2F8845%2F123456%2Faction.htm%3Fformat%3Dembedded%26action%3DAddReview%26user%3D__USERID__&bvcontenttype=REVIEW_SUBMISSION&bvauthenticateuser=true

Bazaarvoice will generate the actual submission form via an integration method similar to the product page, but you will be responsible for creating a page for this submission form to live on.

When someone clicks a Write a Review link, they are directed first to a Bazaarvoice URL. We append the "bvpage" parameters and redirect the user to your submission container page. For example, if a page's URL is <http://www.domain.com/submit.html>, when Bazaarvoice redirects to this page to load the submission form, query string parameters are added to make the final URL look something like the following but longer (this one is shortened for clarity):

http://www.domain.com/submit.html?bvdisplaycode=1234&bvproductid=123456&bvpage=http%3A%2F%2Fh30441.www.domain.com%2F8845%2F123456%2Faction.htm%3Fformat%3Dembedded%26action%3DAddReview%26user%3D__USERID__&bvcontenttype=REVIEW_SUBMISSION&bvauthenticateuser=true



Simple Submission URL Structure Pattern

For Ratings & Reviews: [reviews.client.com]

http://[TODO: DOMAIN Goes Here]/[TODO: DISPLAY_CODE Goes Here]/[TODO: PRODUCT_ID Goes Here]/submission.htm?user=[TODO: USER_AUTHENTICATION_STRING Goes Here]&return=[TODO: RETURN_URL Goes Here]&campaignid=[TODO: CAMPAIGN_ID Goes Here]

For Questions: [answers.client.com]

http://[TODO: DOMAIN Goes Here]/answers/[TODO: DISPLAY_CODE Goes Here]/[TODO: product | category]/[TODO: PRODUCT_ID/CATEGORY_ID Goes Here]/askquestion.htm?user=[TODO: USER_AUTHENTICATION_STRING Goes Here]&return=[TODO: RETURN_URL Goes Here]&return=[TODO: RETURN_URL Goes Here]&campaignid=[TODO: CAMPAIGN_ID Goes Here]

For Answers: [answers.client.com]

http://[TODO: DOMAIN Goes Here]/answers/[TODO: DISPLAY_CODE Goes Here]/[TODO: product | category]/question/[TODO: QUESTION ID Goes Here]/[TODO: PRODUCT ID Goes Here]/answerquestion.htm?user=[TODO: USER_AUTHENTICATION_STRING Goes Here]&return=[TODO: RETURN_URL Goes Here]&return=[TODO: RETURN_URL Goes Here]&campaignid=[TODO: CAMPAIGN_ID Goes Here]

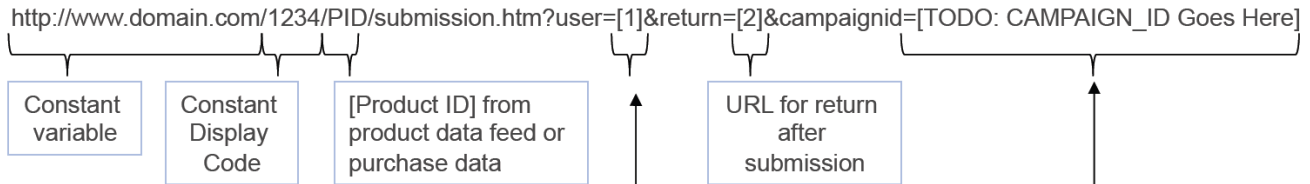
For Stories: [stories.client.com]

http://[TODO: DOMAIN Goes Here]/stories/[TODO: DISPLAY_CODE Goes Here]/[TODO: product | category]/[TODO: PRODUCT ID/CATEGORY_ID Goes Here]/writestory.htm?user=[TODO: USER_AUTHENTICATION_STRING Goes Here]&return=[TODO: RETURN_URL Goes Here]&return=[TODO: RETURN_URL Goes Here]&campaignid=[TODO: CAMPAIGN_ID Goes Here]

DOMAIN is the CNAME DNS entry created during implementation. Normally, this is product.currentdomain.com (product can be reviews | answers | stories). The **DOMAIN** token can also be verified by viewing the domain details in your implementation guide.

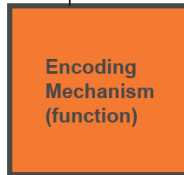


Simple Submission URL under the hood



User Authentication String components:

[UserID] from login or purchase data
[CurrentDate] variable
[maxage] constant in days



❖ CAMPAIGN_ID - The campaign ID accepts an alphanumeric string to serve as a unique identifier for the particular campaign the email belongs to. Commonly used to identify which users were sent the "B" email vs. the "A" email or a particular monthly/weekly campaign. The campaign ID will be displayed in reports generated using the Workbench. The campaign ID can also be checked to determine if a special header/footer should be rendered during on the submission container page.

❖ USER_AUTHENTICATION_STRING - This token uses the same format as the user id that is being passed through the submission process, but may need to be modified to include a simple submission URL specific parameter "maxage". The Maxage token takes an integer from 1 to 365. This will let us know how long we should pass bvauthenticateuser="false" to the submission container page. After the maxage, we will not allow a submission via that link. If omitted, maxage has a default value of 1. Sample user id string:
userid=testuser&date=YYYY-MM-DD&maxage=180

Maxage will nearly always have to be set for more than one day for an email campaign.

Recommended Parameters

- **campaignid:** string used to identify campaign source of content submission (e.g., 2013_Jan_SplashPage); useful in any ssURL situation for future tracking and reporting
- **return:** absolute URL to which Cancel and Return buttons will point on the Thank You page after successful submission (e.g., http%3A%2F%2Fwww.client.com%2F); if omitted from the subject-specific ssURL, no Cancel or Return buttons will appear; if omitted from the generic ssURL, Cancel and Return buttons will default to using the customerHomePageURL
- **user:** encoded user authentication string; strongly recommended for pre-authenticating users, especially for ssURLs in email campaigns

Simple Submission URL user authentication string

The user authentication string is a string of key/value pairs that is signed/encoded using a shared key. This allows Bazaarvoice to verify that the string comes from a trusted source and third parties can't make up and/or impersonate users. Pre-authentication is the act of adding the user authentication string to your ssURL. If you are not authenticating users, skip this section.

You can use the following key/values in the string delimited by ampersands (&): For additional optional parameters such as campaign id, refer to your implementation guide.



- **date (required)** - Today's date in the format YYYYMMDD or YYYY-MM-DD.
- **userid (required)** - The user's ID. Do not use email addresses.
- **maxage (optional)** - The number of days before the user authentication string expires. The default number of days is one – the maximum is 365 days. Changing this to a greater value is useful in preauthenticated URLs such as in email campaigns. An example of the user authentication string before it is encoded is:

(unencoded) date=2007-05-27&userid=ID12345&maxage=15

**This string should conform to UTF-8*

PHP sample encoding implementation: For samples of other languages and additional details, refer to your implementation guide. If you don't have an implementation guide, open a support case and our Support team can provide you with one.

```
<?php
function bvEncodeUser($userID, $sharedkey) {
    // maxage is in days and can be passed in our defined locally - it's your call.
    $userStr = 'date=' . date(Ymd) . '&userid=' . $userID . '&maxage=' . $maxage;
    Return md5($sharedkey . $userStr) . bin2hex($userStr); // returns md5 hash encode
}
$encUser = bvEncodeUser("123456", "SEdfjU73");
?>
```

In this example, the encoded user authentication string would be:

444ec9fd0afb49d3cc3b42b57593d949646174653d323030372d30352d3237267573657269643d49443132333435266d61786167653d3135

Sample URLs and explanation for decoding a user authentication string:

Case 1: User is logged in and login is required; user=<encoded auth string> AND bvauthenticateuser=true

Example user authentication string: http://reviews.client.com/1234/100018/ReviewSubmitFrame.htm?bvdisplaycode=1234&bvproductid=100018&bvpage=http%3A%2F%2Freviews.client.com%2F8867%2F100018%2Faction.htm%3Fformat%3DEmbedded%26action%3DAddPositiveFeedback%26user%3D115f38671b90ce7fd289eaf0ec1bed1646174653d3230303930353035267573657269643d67617279return%3Dhttp%253A%252F%252Freviews.client.com%252F8867%252F100018%252Fsampleproduct.htm%26review%3D3972387%26campaignid%3DBV_NONE&bvcontenttype=REVIEW_SUBMISSION&bvauthenticateuser=true

To decode: Strip off the first 32 characters from the user authentication string.

115f38671b90ce7fd289eaf0ec1bed1646174653d3230303930353035267573657269643d67617279

This HEX decodes to date=20090505&userid=gary. Maxage defaults to one if it was not included when the auth string was encoded and will not appear in the decode if it wasn't part of the encoding. HEX decode the remaining characters. You can visit <http://ostermiller.org/calc/encode.html> to decode or encode a string.



Common Troubleshooting for ssURLs

1. I've built my ssURL links, but they are not directing to the submission form. Instead, the link directs to the login page.

If the ssURL link is routing you to the login page, you should check the following:

- Can you verify your site is following the login integration logic and checking for "bvauthenticateuser" described on page 3?
- Have you included the user authentication string (UAS) in your ssURL?
- Is the user authentication string formatted correctly with the required parameters included?
- Have you set a maxage in your user authentication string? Remember, if a maxage is not specified in your encoded user authentication string, the default maxage is set to "1" – meaning 1 day that the pre-authentication will work in that ssURL.
- Have you checked for typos in your UAS? They can also cause this behavior.

2. My ssURL is taking me to an invalid page or a 404 page. Why isn't it taking me to the submission form?

If your ssURL is valid but is taking you to an invalid page on your site:

- Have you recently moved the submission container page on your site? The submission container page is a URL on your site where the Bazaarvoice submission form loads. If it has moved, please inform Bazaarvoice via a support case with the new URL, where we can update our configuration.

3. The ssURL took me to the submission page, but another nickname is prepopulated on the form, which isn't mine. What's going on?

- Unencode the UAS. Is the value in the userid parameter the same as your value? Remember, user ID's come from the client and must be unique. Make sure you are not using someone else's user ID by checking transaction data and resources on client-side.

