

Incentive / Offer System

Within VS-TrEx 1.3.8 series of traffic exchange software

General: We have put a system of incentives in place to allow you to give out credits to users if they click on a certain link. Once you have created these entries, they are self-managing. This document discusses how to set them up.

Types of Incentive Offers

- A 'Standard' or 'Normal Offer' gives a user credits when they click on a link. This offer only works for each user 1 time, unless you reset the offer. Standard offers are used for login text area, and for incentives in your weekly emails. Users can see a list of all un-clicked offers from their "Your Info" section.
- A 'Login Award' gives a user credits when they log in. This offer works for each user no more than one time per day. [The drawup2.php routine resets these variables once per day.]
- A 'Surf Prize Page' gives a user credits IF they click on the prize page link when seeing it during surfing. This incentive works for each user no more than one time per day. This is also the most complicated incentive to create. If you use these, you must create separate pages and offer entries for auto and manual surfing.
- As we move to 1.3.9, this area will also allow the assignment of cash offers... it will just be a few extra fields (we believe it will take 4) added to this table. The general process will be the same.

A word to the wise

This system is designed to get your members to do something: log in daily, click on advertisers' links, or pay attention while surfing.

Just because credits don't cost you, the webmaster, anything, does not mean you should give them out willy-nilly. Remember that credits you give out are credits members don't have to surf for, or don't need to purchase.

To keep the awards useful, you should keep the amounts relatively low, with an occasional 'big award'.

In general, most offers should be under 500 credits, even if they are one-time-ever offers. Save 500 and above for a major opportunity.

If you have non-manual surfing (non-click or automatic surfing), your credits are generally worth less, because traffic flows so swiftly. A 100 credit award will be attractive, and 200-300 will be a bit on the high side.

If you run a manual-only site, the credits are much more valuable, because they are harder to 'earn'. Generally, 10-50 credits are appreciated by manual surfers, while 100-200 would be a bit on the high side. [200 credits would take most members over an hour to surf up, which is why we recommend < 200 on manual-only sites.]

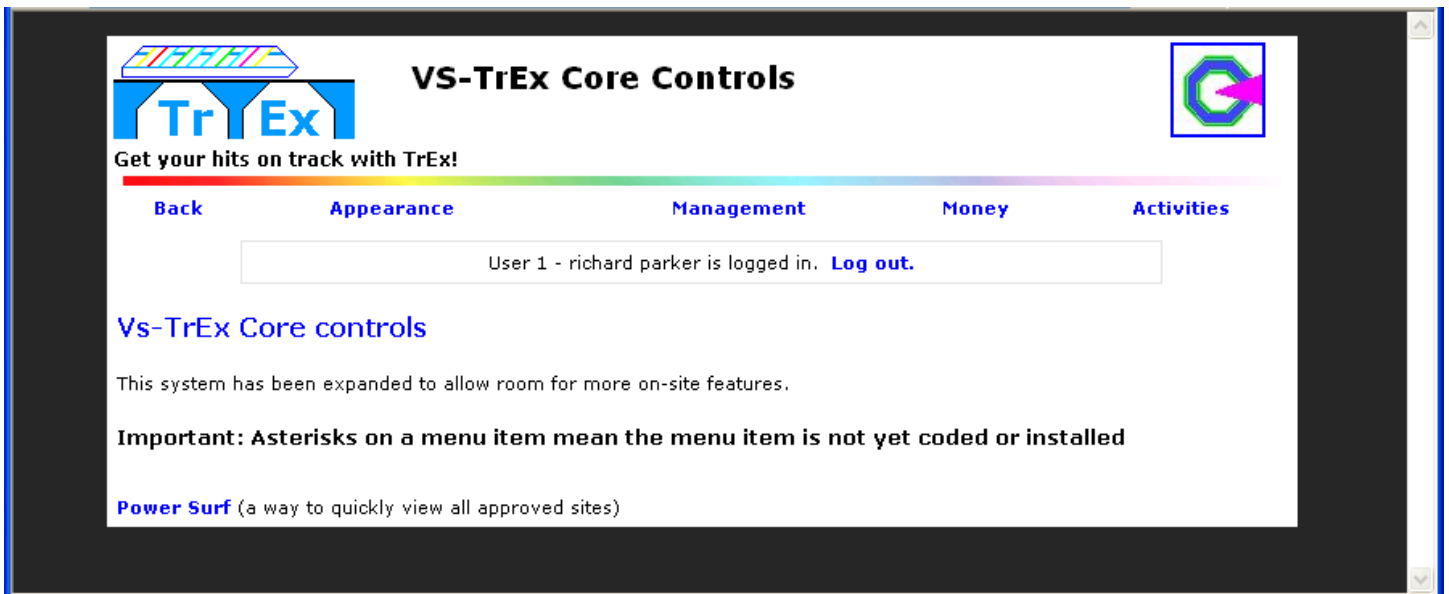
Getting into the Offers system

You must have an account with full access (this would be a ‘yard controller’ account, or whatever you have called the highest membership level (the one that can not be subscribed to). When you log in, an extra link will appear called “Core Controls Option”, below the ‘surf now’ buttons, as shown below.



The screenshot shows the 'Members-only Area' of the TrEx website. At the top left is the TrEx logo with the tagline 'Get your hits on track with TrEx!'. At the top right is the VariSearch.com logo. Below the logos is a navigation menu with the following items: Sign Up, Members' Area, Pricing Info, Information, VS-TEN Network, Top Members, News+, Your Info, Manage Sites, Token Shop, Traffic Statistics, Referrals+, and Close Account. A status bar indicates 'User 1 (richp) is logged in.... Log Out'. Below this, a message states: 'You are currently logged in, and may now navigate the membership submenu. You will remain logged in until you log out, or 2 hours have passed, whichever comes first.' There are two buttons: 'AutoSurf Now!' and 'Manual Surf now'. At the bottom left, there is a link for 'Core controls option'.

Click on the “Core controls option” link, and the top-level menu will change:

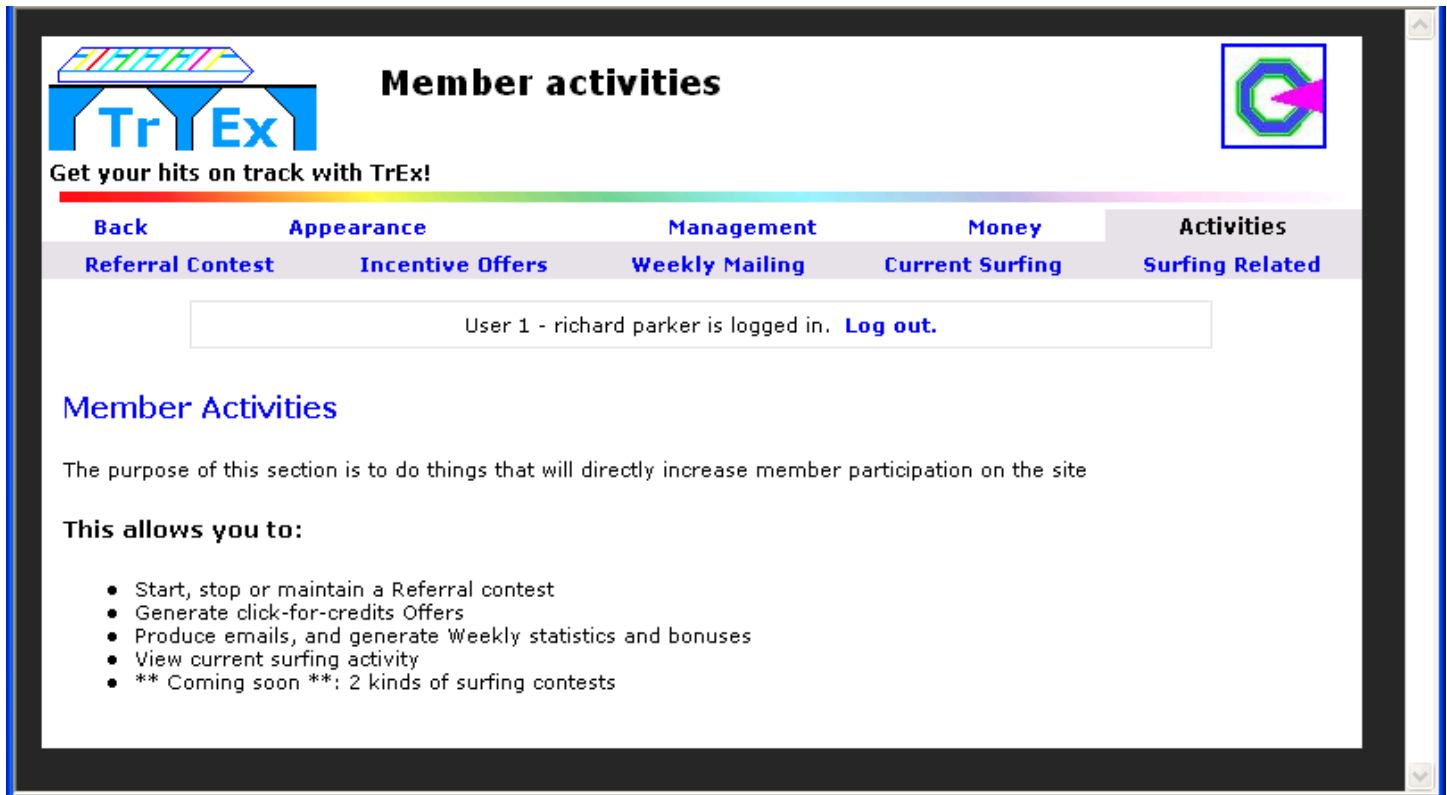


The screenshot shows the 'VS-TrEx Core Controls' interface. At the top left is the TrEx logo with the tagline 'Get your hits on track with TrEx!'. At the top right is a logo featuring a green 'C' with a pink arrow pointing to it. Below the logos is a navigation menu with the following items: Back, Appearance, Management, Money, and Activities. A status bar indicates 'User 1 - richard parker is logged in. Log out.'. Below this, the heading 'Vs-TrEx Core controls' is followed by the text: 'This system has been expanded to allow room for more on-site features.' An important note states: 'Important: Asterisks on a menu item mean the menu item is not yet coded or installed'. At the bottom left, there is a link for 'Power Surf (a way to quickly view all approved sites)'.

Briefly:

- **Back** – return to the members’ area login screen
- **Appearance** – change things related to site appearance
- **Management** – most day-to-day work is done here
- **Money** – work with payment processors and payouts (if enabled)
- **Activities** – Things related to getting members to take actions... click-for-credit offers, weekly mailouts, statistics and competitions are done here.
- **Power surf** – This allows you to roll through approved sites quickly, checking for violators.

To work on Incentive Offers, Pick **Activities**



Member activities

Get your hits on track with TrEx!

[Back](#) [Appearance](#) [Management](#) [Money](#) **Activities**

[Referral Contest](#) [Incentive Offers](#) [Weekly Mailing](#) [Current Surfing](#) [Surfing Related](#)

User 1 - richard parker is logged in. [Log out.](#)

Member Activities

The purpose of this section is to do things that will directly increase member participation on the site

This allows you to:

- Start, stop or maintain a Referral contest
- Generate click-for-credits Offers
- Produce emails, and generate Weekly statistics and bonuses
- View current surfing activity
- **** Coming soon ****: 2 kinds of surfing contests

Pick **Incentive Offers** on the second-level menu line.



Member activities Incentive Offers



Get your hits on track with TrEx!

Back	Appearance	Management	Money	Activities
Referral Contest	Incentive Offers	Weekly Mailing	Current Surfing	Surfing Related

User 1 - richard parker is logged in. [Log out.](#)

Click-Incentive offers

Hint: Click on the Offer # to edit an entry

- **Standard offer:** URL to access the offer is `http://trex.varisearch.com/Surf/offer.php?ofr=(offer id #)&id=(user id)`
- **Login offer:** How much to give for daily login
- **Prize Page:** How much to give on a prize page link.. see also surf/prize pages
 - URL for Prize Page is `http://trex.varisearch.com/Surf/PrizePage.php?OID=(offer id#)`
 - The surfbar will automatically add the UID component for a prize page

Offer #	Start Date	End Date	Value	Text (partial)	URL (partial)
1	2005-07-12	2005-08-01	50	*****	http://www.clickism.com
2	2005-08-10	2005-09-01	100	100 Free tokens at T	http://www.hitstream.com
3	2005-09-07	2005-10-07	100	Click to view Traffi	http://traffichive.com
4	2005-09-21	2005-10-21	100	Another TrEx sister	http://i-traffic.ws/
(login reward) 5	2005-09-27	2006-04-28	30-90	(add text of offer h	
9	2005-10-19	2005-11-19	100	We're wecoming SurfM	http://www.surfmill.com
(prize page) 7	2005-10-04	2006-08-08	50-120	This is our first au	3616
(prize page) 8	2005-10-04	2006-08-08	100-250	Manual surfing prize	3617

Some common things you can see about each offer shown here:

- Every offer has a start and end date. It will only provide credits during that date range on the server's clock.
- Every offer has a value, which is how many credits/tokens/whatever are given if the user performs this action. As you can see, there are both fixed and variable-values allowed.
- Every offer should have a little bit of text describing the offer. This is most important for standard offers, which are shown to a user in their "Your Info" area.

To modify an offer, click on the Offer # in the left column. The screen will be the same as if you add a new offer. Below, I will show offers #1, 5, and 7 from the list above.

Normal / Standard Offer

Member activities
Incentive Offers

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Back Appearance Management Money Activities
Referral Contest Incentive Offers Weekly Mailing Current Surfing Surfing Related

User 1 - richard parker is logged in. [Log out.](#)

View/modify an offer

Offer ID: 1 Mode of offer: Normal Offer

Start Date: 2005-07-12 End/Last Date: 2005-08-01

Min Value : 50

Note: This sub-section is only for 'advanced' offers (Login and Surf Rewards), where the earnings can be made variable. To make it variable:

- Select mode of login or surf reward
- Max Value must be > Value
- Increment indicates the smallest 'chunk' between value (like 'step')

Max Value: 0 Increment: 0

URL or SBID of prize page: <http://www.clickism.com/?ref=23>

Decriptive text:
Only for prize-page

```
*****  
50 free tokens... 50 free tokens... 50 free tokens...  
*****  
Free to join! Check out Clickism: An all-new Paid-to-Surf system! [1
```

[Record this offer](#)

Deletion: [Delete this offer](#)

Current takers of this offer

1, 6, 38, 72, 77, 78, 186, 234, 338, 364, 503, 513, 529, 602, 621, 662, 804, 859, 958, 994, 995, 1016, 1038, 1069, 1071, 1078, 1083, 1092, 1097, 1106, 1112

A normal offer means the user will click on the offer link, and will have a new window come up, showing the target URL (usually some advertiser).

This is also an example of a 'fixed amount' offer. The "Min Value" field, when used alone, is the exact amount of credits given to the user, if they click on the link..

At the bottom of this screen is a list of all the users that have taken this offer. That can be used to find the "sweet spot" for your surfers: This is how you find out ow many credits it takes to get them to click on a link.

Calling a standard/normal offer:

The link for this offer is <http://yoursite.com/Surf/offer.php?ofr=1&id=>
Followed by the appropriate user ID.

In Newsletters

When sending out a newsletter at VariSearch, I would include:

[http://trex.varisearch.com/Surf/offer.php?ofr=1&id=\[%I](http://trex.varisearch.com/Surf/offer.php?ofr=1&id=[%I)

The email system knows to replace [%I with the member id number of the user being sent to.

On login page

To show this same offer on the login page, I would add:

[http://trex.varisearch.com/Surf/offer.php?ofr=1&id=\[%U](http://trex.varisearch.com/Surf/offer.php?ofr=1&id=[%U)

This was an unfortunately confusing turn of events: Newsletters already used [%U for the user information block, so we had to use [%I there. This was forgotten about when coding the login page interpreter, which was done first.

In the next example, you will see both the login function, and the variable-award option being used.

Login Award (and variable rate)

TrEx Member activities
Incentive Offers

Get your hits on track with TrEx!

Back Appearance Management Money Activities
Referral Contest Incentive Offers Weekly Mailing Current Surfing Surfing Related

User 1 - richard parker is logged in. [Log out.](#)

View/modify an offer

Offer ID: 5 Mode of offer: Login Reward

Start Date: 2005-09-27 End/Last Date: 2006-04-28

Min Value : 30

Note: This sub-section is only for 'advanced' offers (Login and Surf Rewards), where the earnings can be made variable. To make it variable:

- Select mode of login or surf reward
- Max Value must be > Value
- Increment indicates the smallest 'chunk' between value (like 'step')

Max Value: 90 Increment: 10

URL or SBID of prize page:

Descriptive text:

Deletion: [Delete this offer](#)

Current takers of this offer

1, 23, 40, 45, 93, 142, 227, 234, 262, 310, 423, 489, 644, 819, 839, 1075, 1089, 1126, 1210, 1372, 1626, 1786, 1806, 1832, 1837, 1839, 1920, 2008, 2068, 2120, 2128, 2160, 2177, 2179, 2180, 2182, 2183

The key difference here is the 'mode of offer' has been changed to a 'Login Reward'.

Since this doesn't redirect the user, no URL is needed, and no descriptive text is needed.

We'll discuss how variable rates are used on the next page.

In a fixed-rate offer, you fill in only the "Min Value" field, and leave "Max Value" and "Increment" blank, or as zero.

To make a variable rate, use all three fields. The amount of credits given becomes random, and is calculated like this:

Minimum Value + (Something between 0 and Max Value which is divisible by Increment).+ Increment

So, the login award above is some value between 40 and 130 credits

40 = Min Value (30) + 0 + Increment (10)

130 = Min Value (30) + Max Value (90) + Increment (10)

The reason for the increment is to control the randomness. If you give an award of 100-200 credits, 107 seems a bit, um, “cheesy”. If you make increments of 10 or 20, then your bonuses are much more ‘round’.

Calling a login award:

These need no further coding to run... once saved, they take effect immediately. Login rewards reset their ‘current takers’ list each night, so a user can earn this exactly 1 time per day.

The surf prize page

This is the most complex form of offer page, because we wanted to make sure the system could not be cheated.

To create a prize page award, you will need to create or use an internal user (one that never runs out of credits). That user should be opted-out of VS-TEN (since non-members couldn’t win anything), and should promote the following URL:

<http://yoursite.com/Surf/PrizePage.php?OID=>

Followed by the offer number (we’ll get that in a minute)

Punctuation is CRITICAL: OID must be all caps. This link tells the browser system that this is a PrizePage offer, so that it can add the User’s ID number to the prize page call.

When you have created this site, you will need to write down the SBID, or Site ID number for this record, as you will need it to create the offer record.

When we created our prize page record, it turned out to be SBID #3616.

Here is a filled-out prize page offer:



Member activities Incentive Offers



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[Weekly Mailing](#)

[Current Surfing](#)

[Surfing Related](#)

User 1 - richard parker is logged in. [Log out.](#)

View/modify an offer

Offer ID: 7

Mode of offer:

Start Date:

End/Last Date:

Min Value :

Note: This sub-section is only for 'advanced' offers (Login and Surf Rewards), where the earnings can be made variable. To make it variable:

- Select mode of login or surf reward
- Max Value must be > Value
- Increment indicates the smallest 'chunk' between value (like 'step')

Max Value:

Increment:

URL or SBID of prize page:

Decriptive text:
Only for prize-page

Deletion: [Delete this offer](#)

Like any other offer, this has a range of working dates, and a min, max and increment.

The difference is in the URL: We put the site ID of the page showing this offer here... 3616 in this case.

After saving the record, we see that this is Offer ID #7. We have to go back to the site record and add the 7 to the end of the target URL. So, the site page looks like this:



Site Management

Site Info



Get your hits on track with TrEx!

Back	Appearance	Management	Money	Activities
User Info	Site Info	Way-Stations	Complaints	Pruning
		Blockades		Dog House

User 1 - richard parker is logged in. [Log out.](#)

Site Information for Record # 3616

User ID: <input type="text" value="1401"/>	Record Type: <input type="text" value="Site"/>	Banner Link: <input type="text" value="0"/>
Approval: <input type="text" value="Appr"/>	User Status: <input type="text" value="Act"/>	<input type="button" value="Approve"/> <input type="button" value="Reject"/>
Exclusive: <input type="checkbox"/>	On Exchange: <input type="checkbox"/>	Manual Only: <input type="checkbox"/>
Dog House: <input type="checkbox"/>		
User's Description: <input type="text" value="prize page"/>		
Target URL: <input type="text" value="http://trex.varisearch.com/Surf/PrizePage.php?OID=7"/>		Test URL
Graphic URL: <input type="text"/>		
<i>The Banner/Graphic URL field is also used as 'body text' in a Text-Ad</i>		
Tip Text: <input type="text"/>		Test Text Ad
<i>The Tip Text field (for banners) is also used as 'title text' field in a Text-Ad</i>		
View Balance: <input type="text" value="0.000"/>	Use Balance: <input type="checkbox"/>	Draw / hour: <input type="text" value="0"/>
	Use Draw: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Last Draw was: <input type="text" value="0000-00-00 00:00:00"/>	Way Station ID: <input type="text" value="0"/>	Way Station Seq: <input type="text" value="0"/>
Total Hits: <input type="text" value="199763"/>	Total Exg. Hits: <input type="text" value="0"/>	
Grand Total Hits: <input type="text" value="0"/>	G.T. Exg. Hits: <input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="button" value="Save"/>

close this window when done

How this works:

When surfing, the PrizePage.php?OID=7 tells VS-TrEx to add the User ID number to the URL before calling it. PrizePage.php checks the offer to make sure it's valid

If the offer is valid, it checks the SBID in the offer against the users last-page-viewed (in the visits table)

If the SBID matches the user's visit table, then the offer is allowed, and the link to collect the offer show.

IF the user clicks on the link on the PrizePage, they receive the award.

Reviewing the steps for a Prize Page offer:

With 1 exception, no VS-TrEx webmaster has gotten the prize page working the first time, so we'll go through the steps again.

1. Create or select an internal user specifically for the prize page
 - a. The user should be opted-out of VS-TEN
 - b. The user should be 'internal', so it won't run out of credits
2. Create a page entry, within this user, for the prize page
 - a. The URL should start off as <http://yoursite.com/Surf/PrizePage.php?OID=>
 - b. Note (write down) the SBID number of this record after saving it
3. Create the incentive offer
 - a. Mark it as a prize page
 - b. Put the SBID NUMBER (2.b) in the URL field for this offer
 - c. Note (write down) the Offer ID number of this record after saving it
4. Edit the page entry, and add the Offer ID number at the end of the URL
5. Approve the URL
6. Update the user flags

Then, you're in business.

Of course, you could put the offer info in first, then do the site record, then edit the offer with the SBID. That's completely up to you.

As long as:

- The Page contains OID=offernumber
- The offer contains the SBID of the Page
- The Page is approved
- The Page owner is active (and "Surfed Enough"), and has credits (or is Internal)

The system will work automatically in the date range you select.

Sorry for the complexity on this one, but this prevents users from cheating the system.

End of Incentive System documentation.