InLinkz.com

Monetize your craft blog

With the InLinkz Project Manager

inlinkz

How to monetize your crafting/diy blog using the InLinkz Project Manager

While each crafty blogger is unique, some have considered creating an income out of their art form.

Regarding monetization, crafters are divided into three categories.

1. There are people that not only create but also monetize their art form.
2. Then, there are the people that would like to monetize on their craft but have not the time or patience to do that.
3. Also there are the people that have never thought they could monetizing their craft, either because they think it's too difficult or because they think it is a waste of time.

Of course there are people that would not even consider monetizing their craft, not a bit, not even to the point to break even for the supplies they purchase.

Let's see the two major monetization types:

Types of advertisement monetization
The generic advertisement (e.g. google AdWords)
The generic advertisement is what is usually called "banner advertisement" (you can see more about the various internet marketing methods here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_advertising)

In this case, you allow a third party (e.g. Google) to add advertisements inside selected spots in your blog. What goes in these spots, is decided by the ad network and it is based on each reader's browsing history and cookies in their browsers.

For example, a reader coming to your art blog, may continuously see ads about baby products if she has a newborn and part of her web browsing and searches are about the child. As you may realize, this is not the best way to monetize your art as this kind of advertisement has the effect of distracting the reader from your blog post by presenting her with stuff that she may consider interesting.

While it is easy to set up, performance is not optimal. Moreover, since you do not have a say on what goes in the ad spots, it is possible that ads will not fit your blog color scheme and design. The worst part is that they take the reader off your blog when she clicks.

The "review" way

Have you ever asked your friend their opinion before deciding to buy something? Ever searched for reviews about a particular product online? Every day, people are doing research before they make purchases so that they can feel satisfied they're spending their money right.

This is called **product review marketing** and it is most probably, the best way to enable people to buy the product that you have just used in your project.

Your project acts as a review of each of the products you've used. You show to the user how each product is used and what effect it has on your project. So not only you use them and show them but the prospect buyer can actually get your opinion about the products you use, the techniques you use them for and see with her own eyes the output of each product within your project.

How it works

The simplified flow is something like this: You create a list to the online shop you want, pointing to the products you used, and when someone goes to buy something, you get a percentage of the sale.
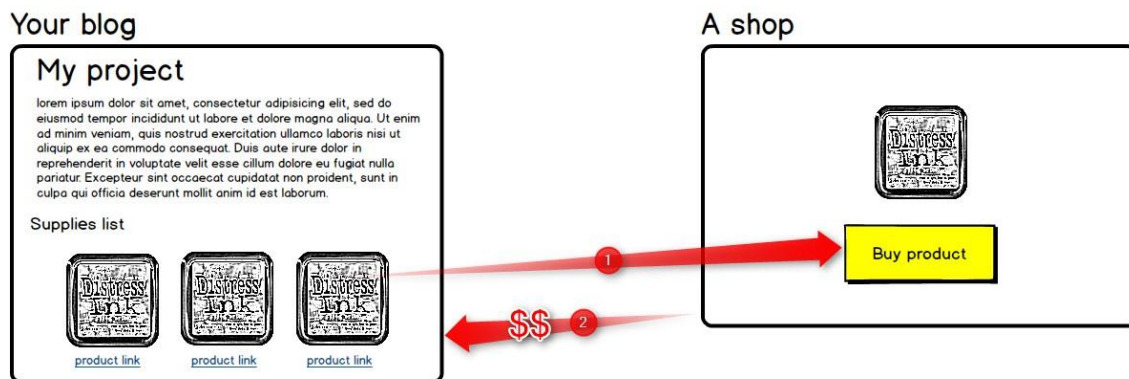
The above image explains the (simplified) process. You can get a share of the sales you send to the shop.

Please note: The reader gets the product in the exact same price as if she went directly to the shop to buy the same product. Your payment comes out of the shop's income. And the shop wins out of this, in spite of its reduced income as it gets sales (from you) that it would not get otherwise.

So, how do I do it?

This method is indeed very efficient but in order to make it work you need to go through some steps for whatever you add to your product list.

Listing the products underneath your project is just not enough. You want to make sure that the links you have, lead to a specific shop, and that this shop is somehow able to tell that the reader purchased something coming from your link and not someone else's or through a google search.

This is where the **affiliate networks** come into play.

Affiliate networks are companies that do exactly this. They connect your clicks to the shop's products so you get credit for the sales you generate.

So it is safer to assume that the process is more like that:

Using an affiliate network
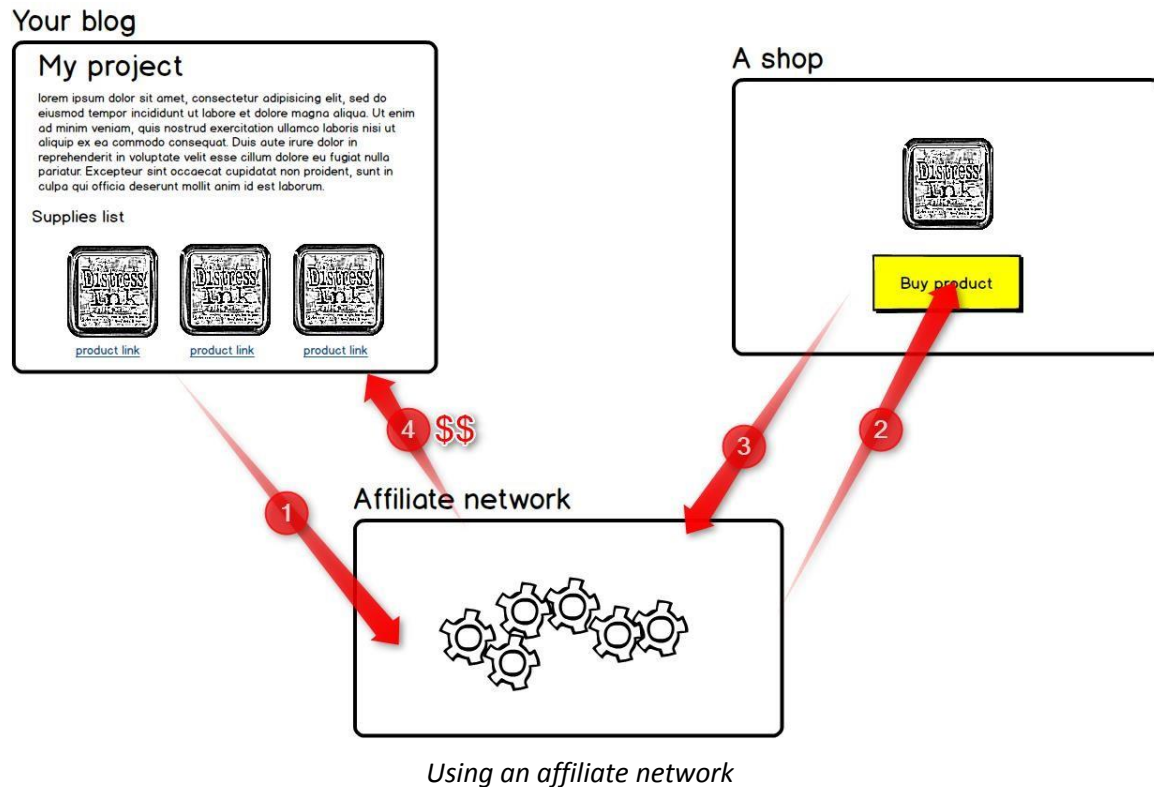
The process of going to stores, selecting products, getting links back to the affiliate website, then getting links from the affiliate network and putting them in code inside your blog is somewhat like this:

In the above figure, the affiliate link capturing cycle is explained:

1. First you need to go to the shop you will link to , and search for the specific product
2. As soon as you find it, you need to get its unique URL
3. Copy the unique URL from the browser address bar and then…
4. Go to the affiliate network website, log in and go to the page where they create affiliate links, pasting the copied url.
5. This will produce a different URL (possibly with the option of extra HTML to create a text link) which you copy from there
6. … and paste it in your blog (as HTML) in order to link to one product in one shop.

This cycle is only valid for one product and if you need to list more than one, you still need to go through all of the steps.

Moreover those links you get after going through the above process, are in most cases only text links that display nothing but a plain-old text describing the product.

What about images

It is actually a fact (after years of looking at InLinkz numbers) that **using images instead of just text to promote the products almost triples the number of clicks** that these products get. And when the person clicks on a product you just used in your project and seen how it works with her own eyes, she is more inclined to buy, generating a commission for you.

Supplies:

- Flourish Cling Stamp By Hero Arts
- Fired Brick Tim Holtz Distress Ink
- BasicGrey Wassail Collection 6×6 pad

Supplies:

Enchanted   *Echo Park SPLASH   *ZIG Wink of Stella
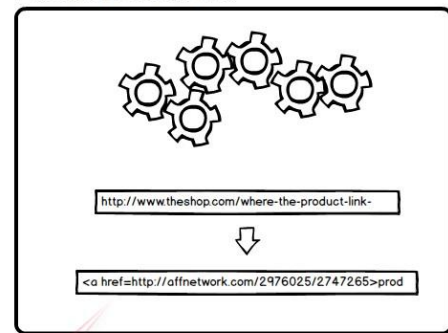6 x 6 Paper Pad   GLITTER CLEAR
SP15023   Brush Tip Marker

Which one would you click on?

The thing is that adding images on your product links is something that needs a good HTML understanding and the usage of various tools to manipulate the images and create the thumbnails. The outline of the process is displayed in the image below
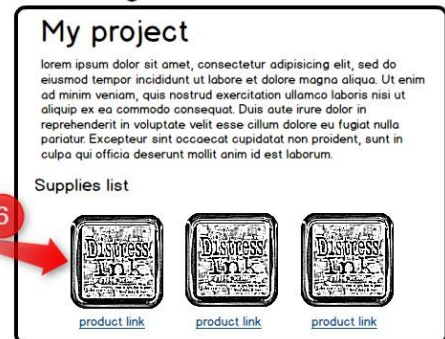
Adding images to your products

Oh, the pain, the unbearable pain!

The main pain that the Project Manager addresses is that while **product review marketing** is a **very efficient method to promote products (and getting paid for doing so), it is overly complex and difficult** for the average crafting blogger that may not have a technical background and is not necessarily interested in acquiring one. Moreover, the images are difficult to create one by one.

This is what the project manager does.

The InLinkz Project Manager takes care of the tech stuff and makes it easy and quick to list all your products inside your blog post. You save the frustration, make more and create more crafting time for yourself!!!

It allows you to **easily create products lists for your blog, using images instead of text and connect them to your favorite shops and affiliates** without needing to have any coding background or technical knowledge. It does so, through an easy-to-use interface with just drag and drop.

It helps you increase your income from your blog as it immensely increases the percentage of click rate on your products (more products, images, easy to use interface)

It helps you save time. The interface is simple and gets the job done quickly, so you can craft more instead of wasting your time to produce text only affiliate links from just one or two shops.

It increases your project traffic. A new feature of the InLinkz project manager is that it also allows you to connect products you have used with project you have created so your readers are able to navigate through all your projects within your blog that use a specific product you list in your supplies list. This makes the connection between the products and to say much stronger as they have seen numerous examples of how it is used around your blog and also recycles the traffic you get to your projects.

Moreover, the links in your library are **completely reusable**. So you can insert them to as many product lists you want. For crafting people this is a plus. Some things you use continuously! Papers, glues, favorite scissors and Vagabonds/Cuttlebugs are used all the time and it would be a pity to have to create links for those loved supplies all the time! (Or even copy-paste the HTML code you painstakingly created for them last time)
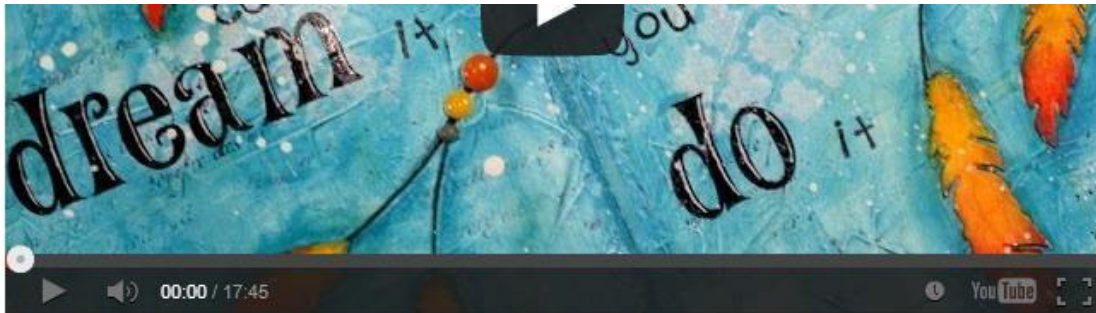
Supplies:

Simply Sweet Alphabet	Detail Painting Knife	Tim Holtz - Distress Stains - Picket Fence	*Ranger Archival Ink Pad COBALT AIP31444	*Ranger Archival Ink Pad JET BLACK AIP31468
*Claudine Hellmuth GESSO Studio Primer Paint Ranger	*Claudine Hellmuth MULTI MEDIUM MATTE Paint Glue Ranger	*Wendy Vecchi WHITE EMBOSSING PASTE Studio 490	*Aleene's TACKY GLUE PEN Fast Drying Adhesive	*My Mind's Eye BOY CRAZY Enamel Dots GB1022

An example product list by the InLinkz Project Manager

Let's see how simple it is:

First of all we need to know what is on our project manager screen.

When you hop on your project manager dashboard, on the left side you will see your link library. This is where you add links from wherever you want that you may use when creating a product list

InLinkz Project Manager Dashboard.

You will notice that the tab at the top has two selections:

"**My links**" contains only your links you may have created manually which as we will see in a while it is very easy to do so.
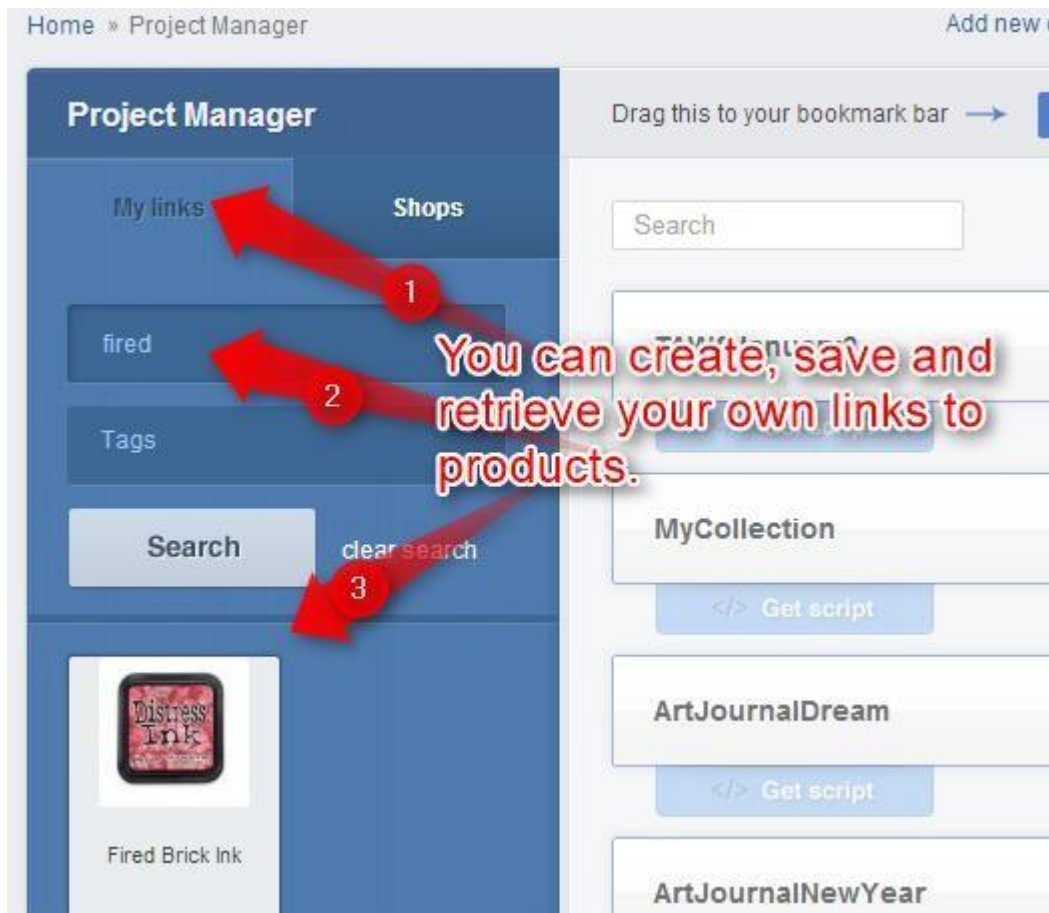
The shops tab enables you to search for products that are already in the InLinkz database so you can drag and drop them immediately to your list.

(We are continuously adding new shops and manufacturers to this shop list and we'll soon add capability to search for products based on the affiliate networks you are subscribed.)
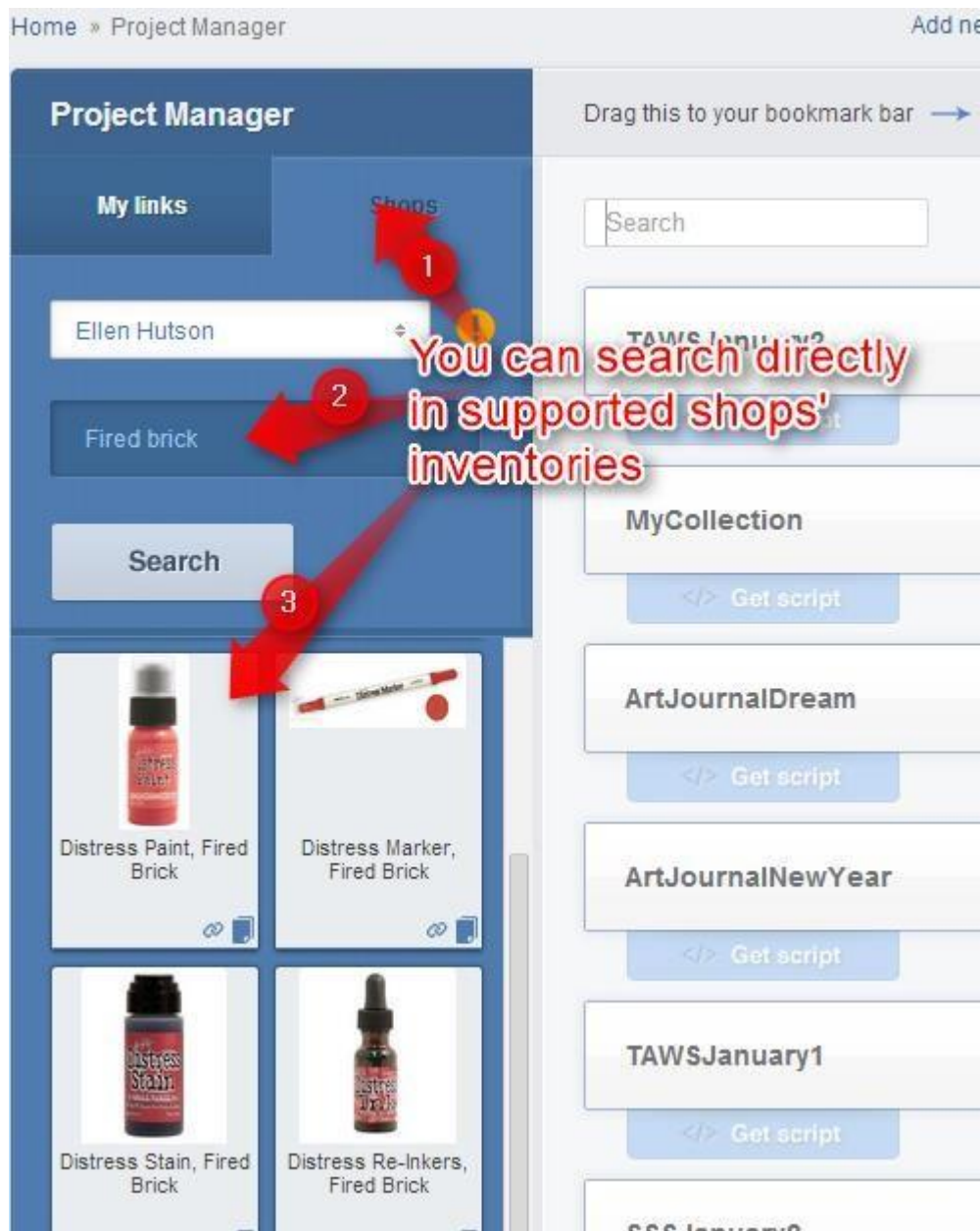
On the right hand of the dashboard is where your lists are created.

You are able to add new links and lists edited the ones you can't will see how they are doing by taking the statistics.

So when you create a list you can either search in the left are under the shops tab if the products you want are already in the InLinkz database or create your own.

The main task you must complete before using the InLinkz Project Manager to generate an income, is to be registered as a user for an affiliate network (for example ShareASale or

AvantLink). There, you will get an affiliate number. You may want to keep it somewhere handy as it will be required to be entered (once) where we set our affiliates in the Project manager.

You can see examples of where those numbers are located here:

- For AvantLink: http://new.inlinkz.com/affiliateHelp/AvantLink%20(affiliate)/1.html
- For Shareasale: http://new.inlinkz.com/affiliateHelp/ShareASale%20(affiliate)/1.html

Then, you can apply to a shop of your choice to accept this connection between their products in the affiliate network.

What do I do with those numbers?

You can set up the affiliate-connecting part of InLinkz. When you have your affiliate numbers and have been approved by a shop (not always necessary), you can then go to your InLinkz dashboard to set it up once and for all and then forget about it:
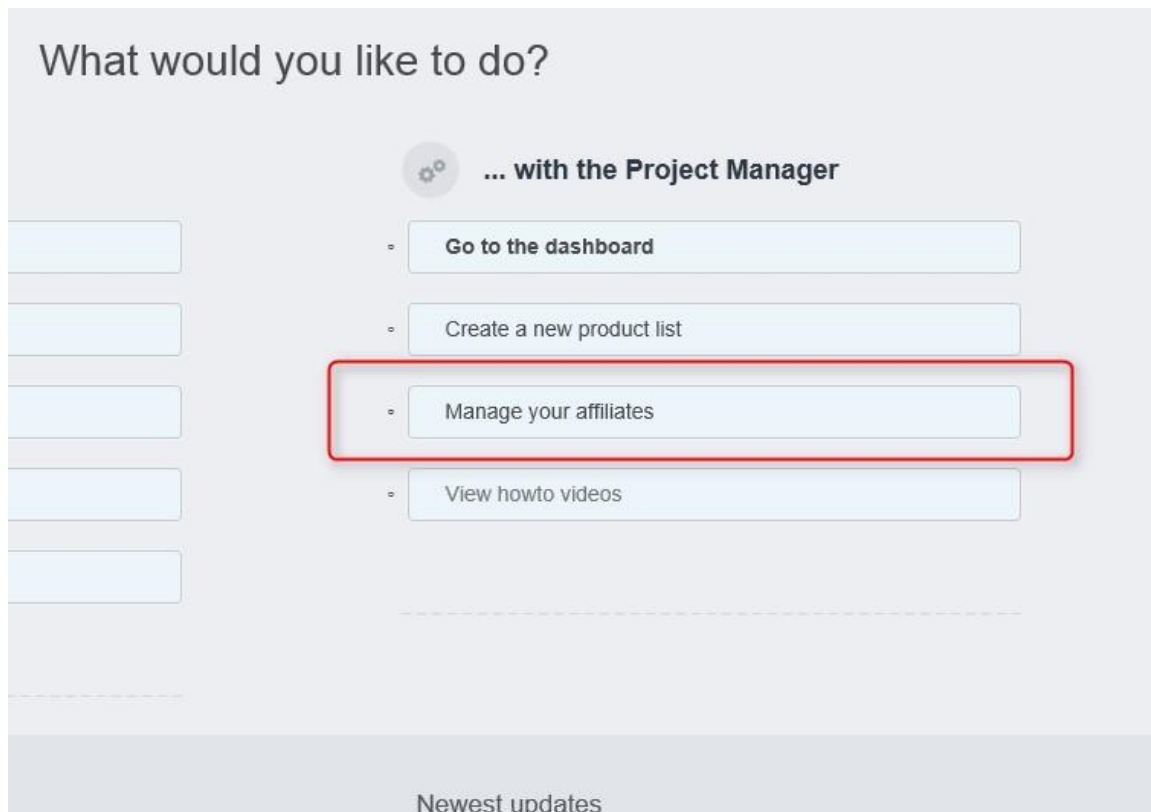
Here, you can add a new affiliate connection.

Setting 2, 3 and 4 is easy. Just click on the small life vests at the far right of the screen to see where you can retrieve the number from (these are the numbers we mentioned earlier.)

In case of shops, all the information regarding shops, is already entered and you only need to add your own affiliate id.

That's all!!

Let's create a product list

Let's try creating a product list and test the functionality with the shops that can be found inside InLinkz.

After clicking on add new list you will be presented with an empty space on the right side of the dashboard, where you can drop products from the library on the left:
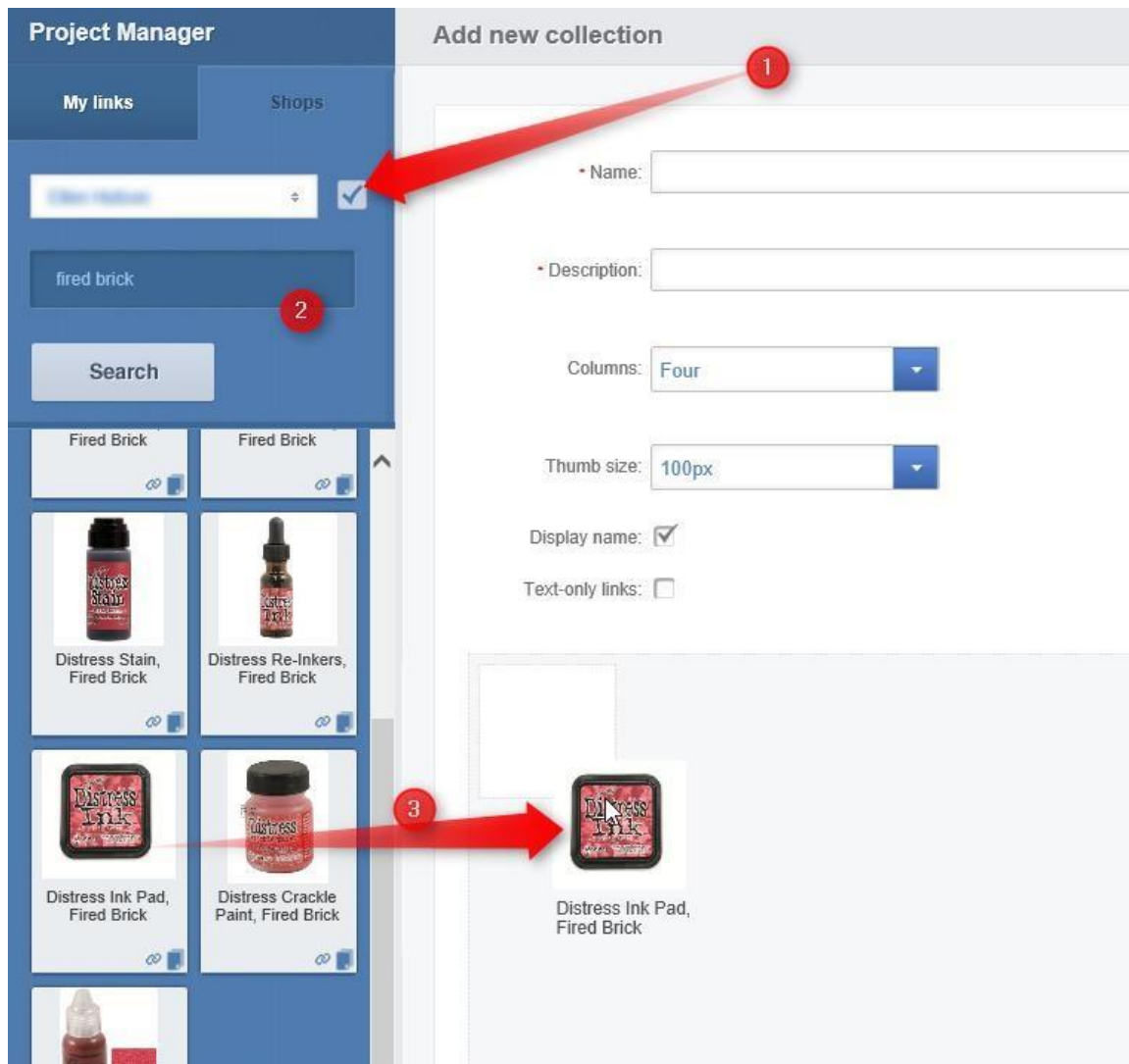
The blue tick icon at (1) is just a check that you have correctly setup an affiliate connection with the current shop you are searching for (selectable from the drop down list just left of this mark)

So, just put a search term in box (2) and click on search. Immediately, results will be displayed underneath from where you can just drag and drop them in the empty space on the right.

The links in the list, will be automatically constructed to contain your affiliate ID and everything that is needed so you can register your clicks to the affiliate network, without needing to go through the process of making those links by yourself.

This will allow you to create a list with whatever you need. You are not bound to a shop. You can use all shops if you like and you can even add your own links.

So, let's add a link of our own to a shop that is not available in the shops list. You can still connect it to affiliates*

We'll see the ultra-quick and easy way to add the link here. For more information about adding links, you can check the blog at http://blog.inlinkz.com
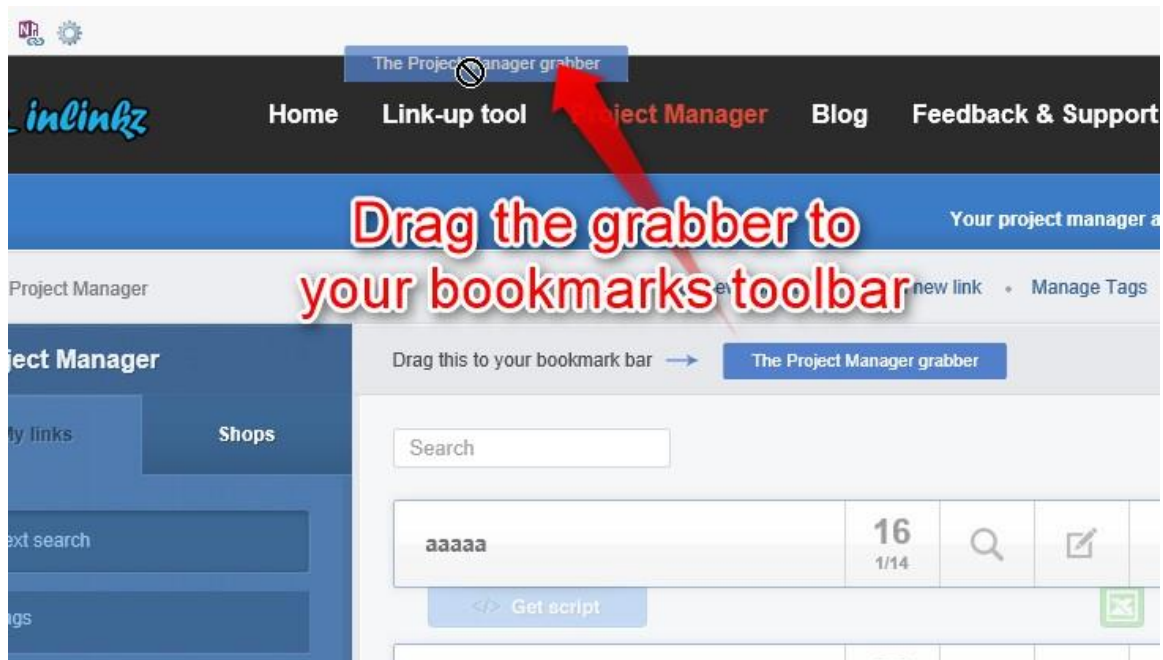
Drag the bookmarklet to your bookmarks toolbar

Now, when you are in the shop where the product you want to add, is available, you can just click on the bookmark you just dragged to your bar.

What this does, is that it pops up a window inside the shop website to allow you to pick images and text for the URL that the page currently points:

E.g. when you go to the page of the following product, you can click on the bookmarklet and then:
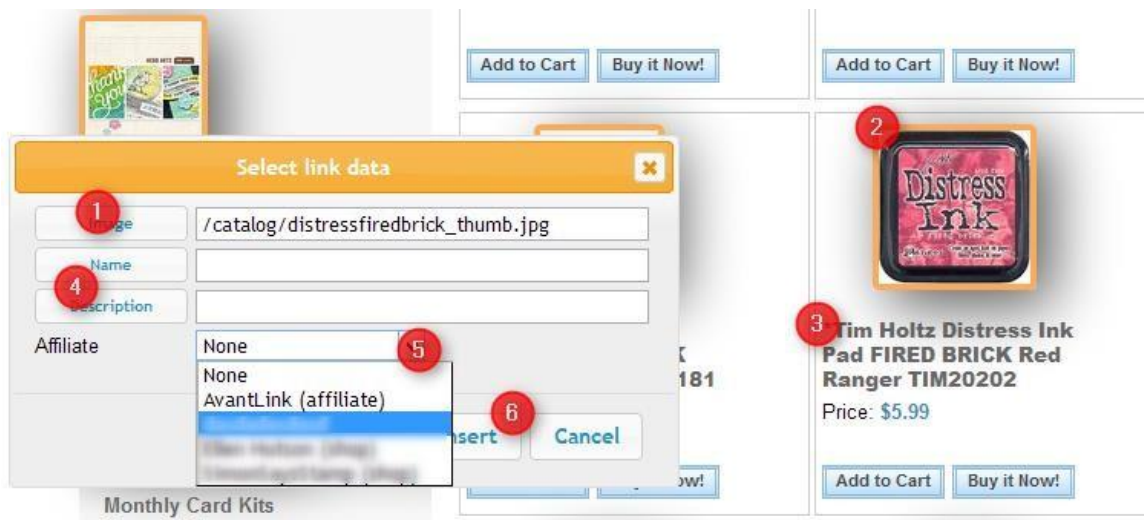
Clicking the bookmarklet in a product page

1. Click on "image" button. All available (and compatible) images will get an orange border.

2. Just click on the image you want and the field beside the "Image" button will be automatically completed.
3. In order to add a description, just highlight the text you want and...
4. Click on the Name and/or Description buttons. This will automatically fill their respective fields.
5. Then select one of the affiliates you have already set up back in the InLinkz Project Manager dashboard.
6. Click "Insert" and you're done! The link will appear at your link library in the project manager dashboard.

Now you can use this link to this product normally. Whenever it is inserted in a product list, will lead to this very page, through the affiliate you just selected from the drop down menu at (5).
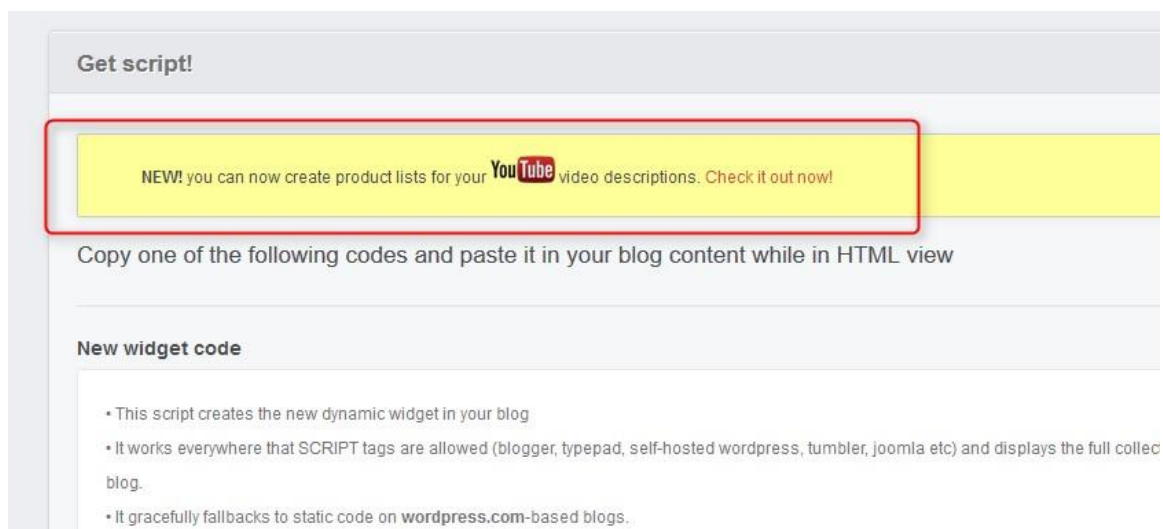
After creating the list

You have created the list. It will be automatically connected to your affiliates. So now what?

Just click on get script and copy the code you want to put in your blog.

It works exactly as the code insertion in the linkup tool. You can check that on the first part too!

There is another very cool feature here:

Insert your product list in your YouTube description field!

If you have a YouTube channel, you can add your product list there too. The links are still valid (but only text as YouTube does not have a way to insert images in the description field)

We will talk about this and other advanced features in our next article.

Assorted small print regarding affiliates

*remember that some shops may need to approve your application, before you are able to connect to them through an affiliate.

The Disclosure Disclaimer

The Federal Trade commission has weighed in how affiliate programs work. Affiliates need to disclose when they're using affiliate links in order to protect consumers.

What this means in plain words, is that it is best to mention somewhere in your site that you use affiliate links "where possible".

If you want to be perfectly clear, you can mention it in your post.

Small tip: It is wise to mention to your readers that while you will be making a dollar if they purchase things by clicking on your product list, this extra for you is not coming out of *their* pockets. Let them know that they will still pay the exact same amount that they would pay if they went directly to the shop itself. In most cases, even if they use a discount coupon, you still get your commission and they still get the discount.

Conclusion

Once the initial setup is in place, you only need to create lists, drag and drop products and put the script in your blog. With this, you have a fully manageable product list, which not only displays products and goes to shops. It also connects your products to the shop through your affiliate networks and keeps track of simple statistics like clicks and impressions.

This saves an immense amount of time, you could be spending crafting and generates more leads for you.