Deep linking for Re-targeting campaigns

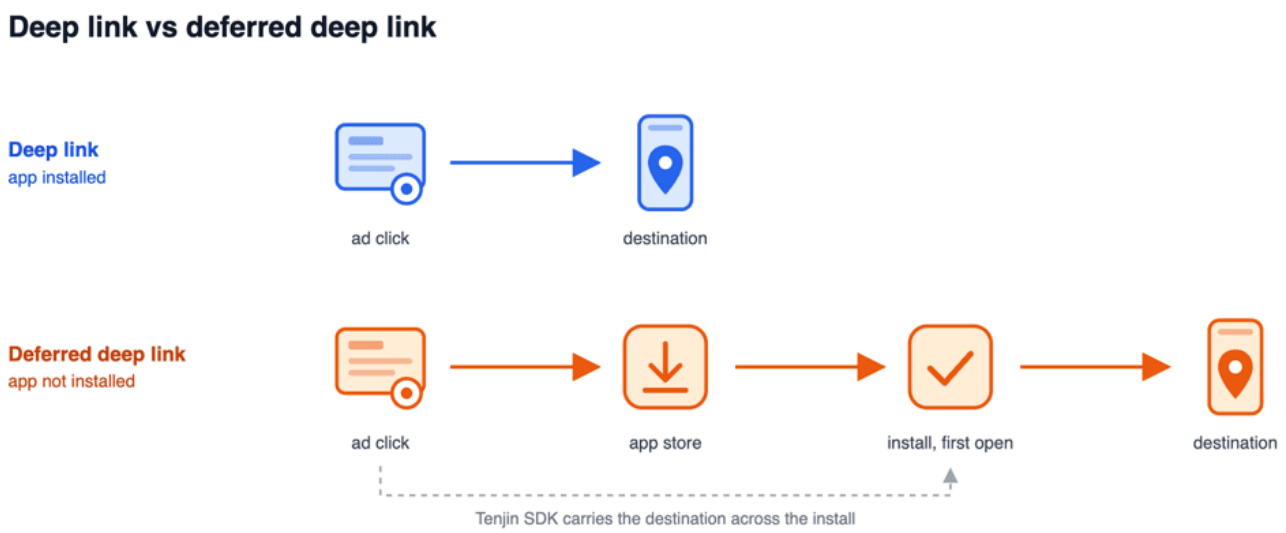
Re-engagement Attribution · https://tenjin.com/docs/deeplinking-for-re-targeting-campaigns/

View as Markdown

A retargeting ad reaches users who already have your app, or who had it before. To bring a user back into the app, the ad has to open the app directly, with a deep link.

Deep link vs deferred deep link

- Deep link: the user has the app. The link opens it straight at the destination.
- Deferred deep link: the user doesn't have the app, which for retargeting means a reinstall. The link goes to the app store, and the app reads the destination from the Tenjin SDK after it is opened. See If the user reinstalls, Deferred Deep Linking and LiveOps Campaigns.



Types of deep links

	Custom URL scheme	Universal Links (iOS) / App Links (Android)
Example	myapp://shop/item/1	https://yourdomain.com/shop/item/1

Redirect Behavior	Opens the app when it is installed. With a Tenjin tracking link, users who don't have the app go to the fallback.	Opens the app when installed, otherwise the web page. Fallback is built within the OS.
Setup	Works with every channel and is the simplest to set up: the scheme is registered in the app, nothing is needed on a domain.	The link's domain needs to be verified for your app: the verification file on your domain (apple-app-site-association, assetlinks.json) and the matching entry in the app (the Associated Domains entitlement on iOS, an autoVerify intent filter on Android).
Browser Compatibility	Supported by all browsers. Some browsers ask the user to confirm before opening the app.	Not every browser or in-app browser honors them; where it doesn't, the link opens as a web page even if the app is installed.
With Tenjin tracking links	Supported. Use this type.	Not supported for opening the app. The user goes to the normal destination instead.

Where to put your deep link

Many channels open the app themselves, from the deep link you set in the channel: the self-attributing networks (Google, Meta, TikTok) and OEM store channels such as OPPO and Xiaomi. The Tenjin tracking link is not part of that redirect.

Other channels rely on the Tenjin tracking link to open the app. Add these two parameters to the campaign's click URL. The setup is the same for each of these channels.

Parameter	Value	What it does
`deeplink_url`	Your custom URL scheme, URL-encoded. For example, `myapp://` becomes `myapp%3A%2F%2F`.	Sets where the user lands in the app.
`deeplink`	`1`	Turns on opening the app directly. Without it, the user goes to the normal destination, even if `deeplink_url` is set.

Example click URL:

```
https://track.tenjin.io/v0/<channel>/<campaign_id>?advertising_id={advertising_id}&click_id={click_id}&deeplink_url=myapp%3A%2F%2F&deeplink=1
```

Add `deeplink=1` to the click URL only. The impression URL doesn't redirect users, so it doesn't need it. There is no dashboard setting for this yet, so add the parameters to your tracking links by hand.

What happens when a user clicks

With `deeplink=1` and a custom URL scheme in `deeplink_url`:

User clicks on	What happens
Chrome on Android	Opens the app directly. If the app isn't installed, the user goes to the fallback.
Any browser on iOS	A Tenjin page tries to open the app, and the browser may ask the user to confirm. If the user is still on the page after 4 seconds, they go to the fallback.
In-app browsers and other Android browsers	Usually the same Tenjin page. Some browsers may open the app directly.
Desktop, or a device that doesn't match the app's platform	Goes to the normal destination.

The fallback is your app's store page by default. To send users somewhere else, add `redirect_url` to the click URL with a web link. `redirect_url` can't hold a custom URL scheme: a value like `myapp://` is ignored and the user goes to the store.

If the user reinstalls

If the user reinstalled after the inactivity threshold, Tenjin saves the deep link from their click and the SDK can return it as `deferred_deeplink_url`. It may not be ready the moment the app opens, so read it with `getAttributionInfo` and retry if it's empty. Only route the user on it once. See LiveOps Campaigns for sample code.

A reinstall before the inactivity threshold keeps its original attribution, so it doesn't get the new deep link. See Re-engagement Attribution.

Developer setup

Your developer needs to register a custom URL scheme in the app, on iOS and on Android.

- The bare scheme, `yourgame://` with nothing after it, must open the app. Opening a specific screen is optional.
- Pick a scheme no other app is likely to register, such as `yourstudio-yourgame`. If two apps register the same scheme, iOS doesn't define which one opens.
- Already using Universal Links or App Links? Keep them, but still set up a custom scheme for Tenjin tracking links.

iOS

- Xcode: target settings > Info tab > URL Types > add your scheme, without `://`. See Apple's guide, Defining a custom URL scheme for your app.
- Unity: Edit > Project Settings > Player > iOS > Other Settings > Configuration > Supported URL schemes, add your scheme without `://`. See Unity's guide, Deep linking on iOS.

Android

Add this intent filter to your launcher activity (the one with the MAIN / LAUNCHER filter), as a second filter next to that one:

```
<intent-filter>
    <action android:name="android.intent.action.VIEW" />
    <category android:name="android.intent.category.DEFAULT" />
    <category android:name="android.intent.category.BROWSABLE" />
    <data android:scheme="yourgame" />
</intent-filter>
```

- Leave out `android:host`. If you set a host (for example, `yourgame://open`), the bare scheme won't open the app, so use that full link as your `deeplink_url` instead.
- The activity needs `android:exported="true"`, otherwise a browser can't open it.
- Unity: Edit > Project Settings > Player > Android > Publishing Settings > Build > enable Custom Main Manifest. Then add the filter inside the UnityPlayerActivity (or UnityPlayerGameActivity) element in `Assets/Plugins/Android/AndroidManifest.xml`. See Unity's guide, Deep linking on Android.

Test it

On a device with the app installed:

1. Check the scheme. On iOS, type `yourgame://` into Safari's address bar and tap Open. On Android, run `adb shell am start -W -a android.intent.action.VIEW -d "yourgame://"`. The app should come to the front. Use adb rather than Chrome's address bar, because Chrome blocks app launches from typed URLs.
2. Check the tracking link. Open your click URL with `deeplink_url` and `deeplink=1` in the phone's browser (Safari or Chrome). The app should open. Don't open it from inside Slack or another app, because the link may not redirect there.