

# ULTIMATE GUIDE TO DEFERRED DEEP LINKS

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# Ultimate Guide to Deferred Deep Links

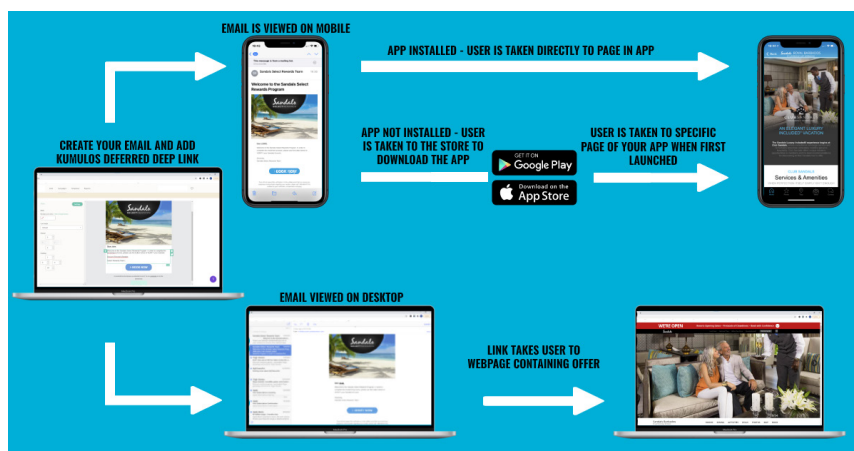
Deferred deep links allow you to create the perfect conversion paths to acquire new users and re-engage existing users of your app. Using external physical and digital channels such as SMS, email and social media, your marketing campaigns can now reach more potential users and guide them safely to content and promotions within your app.

In this guide, we'll look in detail at the difference between a deep link and a deferred deep link, how deferred deep links work, why you should consider utilizing them as an important part of your marketing strategy along with some best practices for when you do.

## What is a Deferred Deep Link?

In the context of mobile apps, a deep link is simply a link to a specific page or content within an app (rather than just opening the app with either the last opened screen or default home screen shown). Using deep links in push notifications and in-app messaging is common practice – they provide a seamless user-experience and can increase conversion.

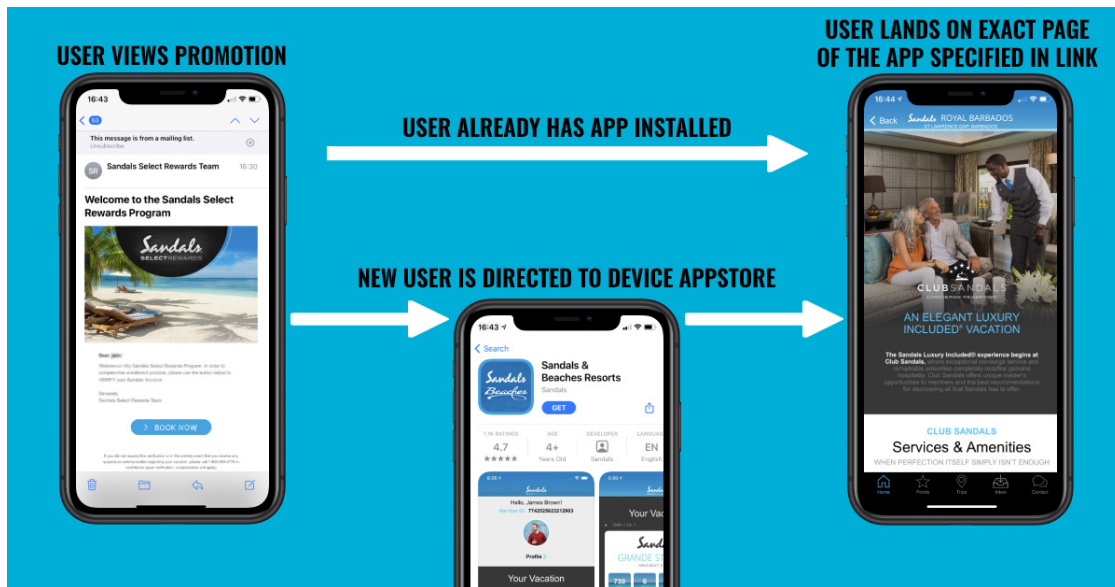
However, using a deep link to content within your app in other digital channels such as SMS or email is risky. What if the recipient does not have your app installed or opens the message on their desktop or laptop computer? They will have a very bad user experience.



That's where deferred deep links come in. Where an app user will be taken to the page or content in the app, a deferred deep link has the capability of taking a non-app user to the app store to download the app first. Then, when the app is launched for the first time they can also be taken directly to the page or content specified within the link, giving them a highly personalized onboarding experience.

A single deferred deep link is therefore everything you need to direct anyone who clicks the link on a smartphone to the exact page or content of your choice. Deferred deep links allow you to branch into other channels, promoting specific content within the app safely, where previously with deep links alone this was not possible. This allows engagement of both app users and those without the app installed. Mobile app marketers will use this for two main reasons – to utilize other digital channels to retarget and engage lapsed users and, more commonly, to use these channels to acquire new downloads.

What if the user opens the message on their desktop or laptop computer and then clicks the link? No problem, they can be redirected to an equivalent page on your website thus ensuring a seamless user experience for all with just one link!



## How do Deferred Deep Links work?

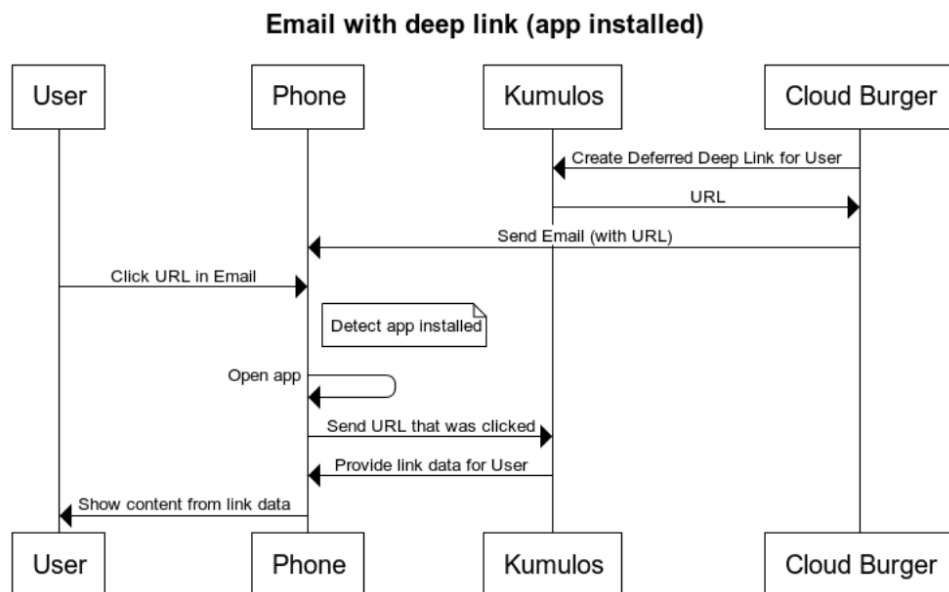
So, a single deferred deep link will:

- Direct an app user to specific page or content within the app
- Prompt a non-app user on a smartphone to download the app before directing to specific page or content within the app when the launch itImportant Information – Company updates and changes to your app, trending news and relevant stories
- Direct a user on a desktop or laptop computer to an appropriate page on your website

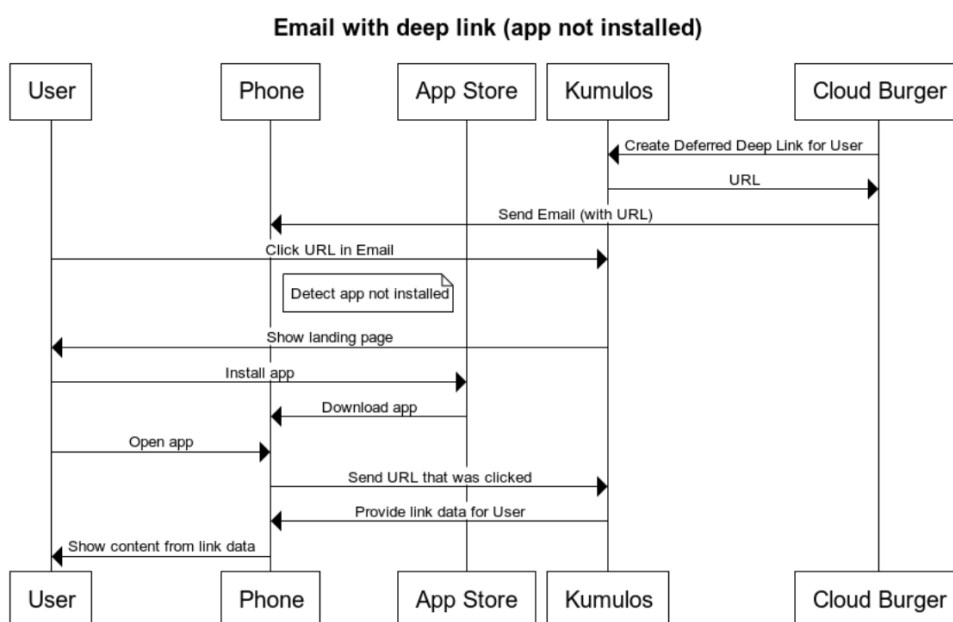
Quite a feat for one little, humble link – so how does this actually work? Well, that's where deep linking platforms like Kumulos come in. A deferred deep linking platform will typically consist of a web service and SDK (that you add to your app), which combine to perform a number of jobs

1. Provide a customizable domain your app can register with iOS and Android to open any links from that domain in your app
2. Let you create personalized links on this domain (either via UI or automatically via API) for each user and campaign or offer you want to promote.
3. Host customizable landing pages on that domain for each link you have created, that will automatically detect the device on which the link has been opened and:
  - a. Redirect to the App Store, Play Store or Huawei App Gallery as appropriate
  - b. Redirect to your website if opened on a desktop or laptop computer
4. Provide customizable link meta-data to your app when launched from link (or after download) to direct the user to the appropriate page or content.
5. Provide attribution data when each link has been clicked.

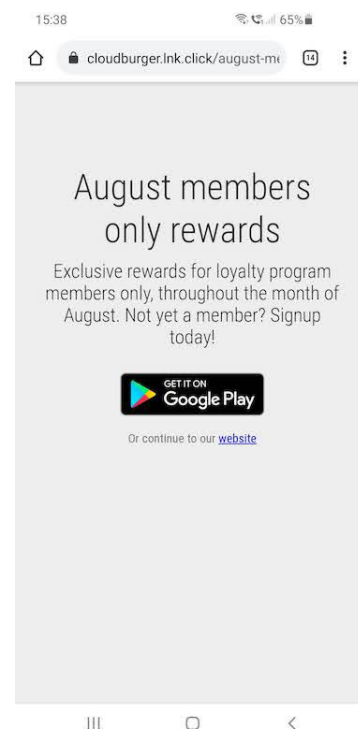
When the app is installed, it registers with iOS and Android that any links to the customizable domain provided by your deferred deep link provider should be opened within the app. When this happens, your provider's SDK will query a web service to get the app specific details of the page, content or offer to show the user (uploading attribution data at the same time).



If the app is not installed, then a customizable landing page should be shown, this will detect the type of device on which the link has been opened prompt the user to install the app from the App Store, Play Store or Huawei App Gallery as appropriate. When the app is then launched, your provider's SDK will again query a web service to get the app specific details of the page, content or offer to show the user (uploading attribution data at the same time). This can either be done immediately, or after the user has onboarded.



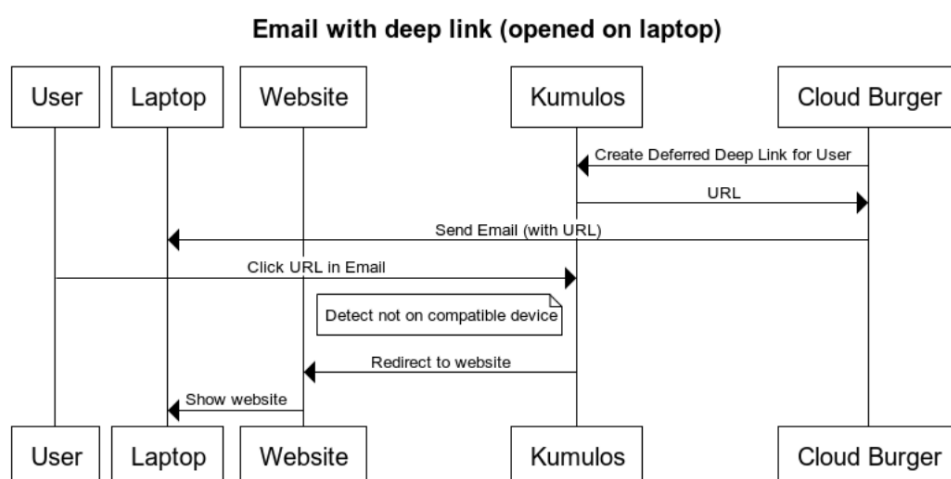
There are two types of deferred deep links – probabilistic and deterministic links. Probabilistic links use a technique called device finger-printing to try to automatically match the link that was clicked to the new install to display the right content to the user. For example: An iPhone 12 running iOS 14 in Manhattan clicked this link – we now have a new install on an iPhone 12 running iOS 14 in Manhattan – assume it is the same user and show them this content. With this approach, the user can be automatically redirected to the appropriate app store without first visiting the customizable landing page. However, with privacy changes such as those in iOS14 (90% worldwide adoption as of December 2020), this approach is becoming increasingly harder and unreliable.



Deterministic links on the other hand require the user to visit a customizable landing page before clicking on the link to the app in the App Store, Play Store or Huawei App Gallery.

Although an extra step in the process, this approach is much more reliable in showing the right link content to the right user. Your provider should also allow you to customize the landing page to reinforce your brand and promote the offer, which can in fact even boost conversion rates.

Finally, if the link is opened on a desktop or laptop computer, then your deferred deep link provider should detect this and automatically redirect the user to the fallback page on your website that you have provided, thus ensuring that any such users who do this receive a positive experience as well.



# Why use Deferred Deep Links:

There are several reasons why a business may want to direct as many customers as possible to their app as opposed to their website and deferred deep linking is the most effective and safest way to achieve this.

- The native app may have more comprehensive functionality and be easier to use than the mobile responsive website
- Users of the app may tend to spend more, engage more often and be easier to engage with (reducing your cost of contact)
- Fierce competition within search engines in the same industry can make it difficult to get exposure for the website and visibility of potential customers
- Large audience available through email, social media and other digital channels may be more readily persuaded to download a mobile app and complete goal conversions than mobile through a responsive website

Deferred deep links are therefore an extremely effective reengagement and acquisition tool. Whereas deep links have only been a useful marketing tactic for engaging existing app users, deferred deep links have a three-fold appeal:

- Seamlessly acquire and onboard new app users from other digital sources
- Re-engage existing users outside of your app
- Retarget and win back lapsed users who had uninstalled your app

## Acquire new, highly engaged users

As mentioned deferred deep linking allows the safe promotion of app-specific content through new channels, reaching a new and wider audience. This can be used as a method of user acquisition. When clicked the link is able to establish whether the mobile user has the app installed or not. When the app is not installed, the link will take the user to a promotional landing page with a link to the app store for the device they are using (which is automatically detected). Once downloaded and launched for the first time, the deferred deep link takes the user directly to the page that was specified in the link they clicked in the first instance. This seamless process guides from the first point of contact through to the completion of your desired conversion, creating a new highly engaged user in the process.

Users acquired through this method are far more likely to convert than other methods. This enables apps to drive more conversions from new users and by converting in the first instance the user is also far more likely to become a retained, highly engaged and active user than a user who downloads the app but fails to onboard or complete any in-app action.

## Re-engage existing users

without the app installed, would result in a broken link and the loss of a potential customer). You are now able to safely market to these users via other channels that were unavailable before.

Deep links are used in push notifications to bring existing app users to specific content in your app. Deferred deep links allow you to cast the net wider to find these users, which is especially useful when a user is disengaged or has disabled push notifications from your app.

If the user does not have push notifications enabled or has lapsed entirely, this gives new opportunity to re-establish contact with conversion driven marketing that will remind users why the app is installed in the first place. Where push notifications may have been used to engage these users before, this feature offers another option which is less invasive than sending multiple push notifications to a disengaged user (which could make them uninstall the app).

## Win-back lapsed users

In the case that a user has previously used your app but uninstalled it, you can reconnect with these users utilizing areas where you still have visibility. If you have the users' phone number or email address, establish contact with a defined offer via deferred deep link to encourage them to download your app again. If you have a strong social audience perhaps there are previous users you can grab the attention of and establish another download of your app.

By driving directly to a page in your app designed to convert, you can reacquire these users, latching onto this initial engagement. Ask them to enable push notifications and continue to engage with a defined push notification and in-app messaging strategy. Where mistakes may have been made previously, this is a second opportunity to win-back lapsed users and retain a long-term, highly engaged active user.

## Where to use Deferred Deep Links

Deferred deep links broaden the horizon of mobile app marketing and allows you to branch out into other physical and digital channels. This can typically include SMS, email and social media. Deferred deep linking is the only way to safely use external digital channels to bring users to your app on the exact conversion page you want to promote.

Platforms that can utilized with deferred deep linking include:

- SMS – Text messages, which typical have high open rates (as much as 98%)
- Email – 70% of all email is now opened on a mobile device
- Social Media – Drive your followers back to your app
- QR Codes – promote your app in your physical locations
- Desktop-to-app – Prompt users on desktop or laptop computers to provide their phone number and automatically send them an SMS containing a deferred deep link

This wide genre of channels allows the targeting of different audiences with each individual campaign.



# Best Practices

To get the most out of your marketing campaigns, follow these three simple best practices when including deferred deep links.

1. Get personal – create an individual, tailored link for each user
2. Utilize attribution data to measure the success of your campaigns
3. Always stay on brand

## Personalization

Deferred deep links can and should be user specific, to allow highly targeted marketing to be sent to each individual user. This can be used to target lapsed users in situations such as funnel drop-off. If trying to re-establish contact with a user that dropped-off after 'add-to-cart', push notifications can be the typical approach to take as the most effective point of contact. If this tactic fails (notifications turned off or user simply dismisses notification), time to use deferred deep. For example, offer a new discount on this item, only for users that dropped off after add-to-cart, send the link via email or SMS. The deferred deep linking will take the user back to your app with their item already in the cart with the discount applied. There is not a much greater chance of them completing the checkout process and getting that sale..

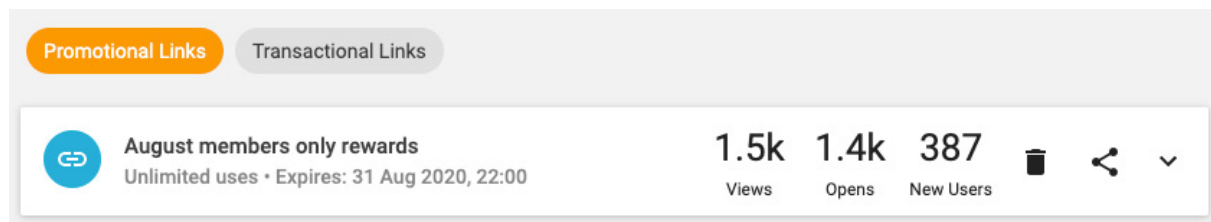
Deferred deep links can also be used to personalize the onboarding experience for a new download. For example, if a new app user already has an account and you know their email address, send a deferred deep link via email and once the app is launched, pre-populate the log-in field and apply a discount offer for the first purchase made in the app. Create a fast, seamless onboarding process with highly targeted, conversion-driven marketing and retain a new, highly-engaged active user.

However, this is not just applicable during onboarding. Creating more personal experiences for users at all stages of the lifecycle of the app is how apps can keep users engaged and retain them for the long term. Using deferred deep linking makes this easier to achieve

Remember, your deferred deep link provider should allow you to create such links automatically via an API as well as through their UI.

## Attribution

Deferred deep links allow you to attribute user and conversion data to the channel and specific campaign it originated from. Knowing where each user and conversion comes from makes your life designing future campaigns significantly easier.



With this data, you can attribute every download and in-app action to the source campaign it originated from to better understand the intricacies of your audience, which campaigns have been most successful and why! Use this data to understand for each audience segment, what channel is most effective to engage them with and what time is best to establish contact. One at a time, experiment and measure the impact making small changes to each of these elements can have when designing your campaigns. Build, measure, learn.

Then, simply do less of what isn't working and a lot more of what is!

## Branding

Issues can arise with campaigns underperforming when the platform providing the deferred deep link does not allow you to customize the URL. Today's users are understandably and rightly wary of clicking unrecognizable links in SMS or email. Links that do not contain brand names or look as though they are not related to the offer can look like spam at best, or phishing at worse and act as a deterrent to conversion.

Most platforms allow you to customize the links you create – do so! Make sure your brand is easily recognizable in the domain and that the link itself relates to the content or offer it is promoting.

### Create Deep Link

Title

August members only rewards

This will be used as the friendly name in the UI, the title of the landing page, and as the basis of the slug which you can override.

Url

https://cloudburger.lnk.click/

Slug (optional)

august-members-only-rewards

This is the url that will be used for the deep link, you can optionally leave it blank and Kumulos will auto generate one for you.

Remember, you are reaching out to the user through another channel, you need to give them confidence to trust and know it is you. However, if you do so, brand familiarity and a personalized, compelling offer should increase the likelihood of them clicking and heading into your app.

## How Kumulos can help

Kumulos is a mobile user engagement platform that includes both traditional deep linking and deferred deep linking features. Kumulos gives you one place to retain and engage your mobile audience and drive real business results from your mobile app. From one place, Kumulos makes it easy to manage all aspects of your mobile app marketing strategy including acquisition, engagement, retention and conversion.

Kumulos deferred deep linking lets you acquire new, highly engaged users for your app through other physical and digital channels, re-engage and retain existing users and win-back previous users who have uninstalled your app.

With Kumulos, you can automatically tailor each link, via our UI or API, to the individual user to create compelling, personalized experiences when onboarding and throughout the app lifecycle. Deferred deep links created with Kumulos can be customized to include your brand in the domain and offer details in the link itself. Kumulos also gives you attribution data for each new user to measure and improve the success of your campaigns.

The Kumulos user engagement platform also includes rich, interactive mobile push notifications and in-app messaging to allow continued engagement and retention of your mobile audience throughout the lifecycle of the app. Kumulos also comes complete with campaign analytics so you can continually evaluate and improve all of your messaging campaigns, resulting in an effective acquisition, engagement, retention and conversion marketing strategy for your app.

Contact us today for a no-obligation demo of the Kumulos mobile user engagement platform and learn how deferred deep linking can help deliver real business results from your mobile app.



## More Information

[Info@kumulos.com](mailto:Info@kumulos.com) | [www.kumulos.com](http://www.kumulos.com)