According to a report by Atlas, a 5% increase in CTR can lead to up to 1.5x uplift in revenue

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Demand Optimization with keyword Strategies

Pay Per Click Marketing

DigitalFrontier

Search engines continue to hold sway over consumers' buying journey as search engines continue to be the preferred mode for information enablement, product/service discovery, and comparison shopping, leading to eventual purchase. Given this, advertisers continue to build considerable exposure to and invest in pay per click marketing – Google AdWords and Bing being the market leaders in the space. In order to tap into consumer intent, advertisers will have to work towards matching keywords in their pay per click accounts with consumer search queries. Search engines accord a lot of importance to relevance as relevance impacts user experience on search. Therefore, the more relevant and closely matched your keywords are to your consumers' search queries, the more relevant your keyword will be thereby positively impacting your keyword's Quality Score (QS). Besides QS, there are other mechanisms to maximize keyword reach and performance.

Targeting by Intent

The path to purchase broadly involves the following four aspects: Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (AIDA). As an advertiser, your objective should be to focus on "Attention" and "Interest" oriented keywords if your advertising objective is brand building. If your objective is demand generation or direct response, then you should focus on "Desire" and "Action" oriented keywords. Action oriented keywords, also referred to as "lower funnel" keywords reflect transaction intent. For instance, "buy flowers," "subscribe to magazine," "Order pizza," etc. Keywords such as "compare products" suggest consumer evaluation of the product/service. From a demand generation perspective, these are valuable terms to be tapped into as well. On the other hand, keywords such as "How to," "What is," etc are higher funnel keywords that represent "Attention" and "Interest" in the AIDA framework referred to above. Therefore, depending on your advertising objective, it is important to choose keywords that fall into one of the four buckets illustrated.

Dynamic Keyword Insertion (DKI)

DKI lets you dynamically insert keywords into your ad copy if the keyword matches user's search query. Keyword Insertions can be used either as part of the headline, description

Challenge:

Given the dynamic nature of the auction system and the increasing competition for share of voice, keyword inflation has risen so much so that it has made search ad participation prohibitive for many advertisers. Given this context, account optimization to improve Quality Score to potentially bring down CPC is a viable workaround. This whitepaper provides solutions to identify keyword targeting by user intent coupled with your own advertising objectives. Further, the document puts down keyword match-type determination methodology and its application. Also, you will find innovative keyword discovery hacks to build your keyword list.

lines, display URL, or destination URL of your ad text. When using DKI you will have to be careful to ensure such insertion does not alter the meaning of the ad copy and that the grammar remains intact.

To use this feature in your ads, you will have to insert a special piece of code into your ad copy. For instance, let's say you sell flowers and you have set-up an ad group to sell "Red roses," you can use DKI in your ad copy headline with {KeyWord: Buy Red Roses}. "Buy Red Roses" will be your default ad copy in the headline. If user search query cannot be replaced with the default keyword, then the default keyword will display. Also, the code can be structured differently, to display your ad copy within DKI with/without inter-capitalization. The following DKI format will display ad copy in lower case {keyword: Buy Red Roses}. But {KeyWord: Buy Red Roses} will result in inter-capitalization. Note that "k" and "W" are in caps in the word "KeyWord."

Users rarely search with search terms exceeding four words. Therefore, Keywords containing more than four words need not be included in your ad groups. Also, with broad matching longer variants of search terms are taken care of.

The advantages of DKI are that it lets you leverage a single ad copy with altered keywords based on user searches. Further, matching users' search queries ensures search engines' "relevance" parameter is met.

Targeting by Keyword match types

Broadly, there are three keyword match types available to advertisers viz. "Broad match," "Phrase match," and "Exact match." Another match type that advertisers can take advantage of is "Negative match."

With broad matching, keywords trigger ads for search queries that broadly match keywords including misspellings, synonyms and variations. For example, if the keyword "buy flowers" is broad matched, then your ad could show if users' search query is "buy flowers online," "buy fresh flowers," or "fresh flower store." On the other hand, if you have assigned Phrase match to your keywords, then for the keyword "buy flowers," your ad could show for the search query "buy flowers online" or "buy flowers and chocolates"

Addendum note: Google announced that exact keyword match will now include "close variant" keywords as well. Starting in late September, exact match is going away and Google will always automatically include "close variants" when it tries to match an ad to a search query

but not for the search term "buy fresh flowers." With Phrase matched keywords, search queries should exactly match the keyword phrase. The third variant is Exact match. As the name suggests, exact matching will trigger your ads only when search terms exactly matches with your keywords. While this feature will sunset in its current form beginning late September, 2014, this is a powerful functionality for displaying product SKUs, etc.
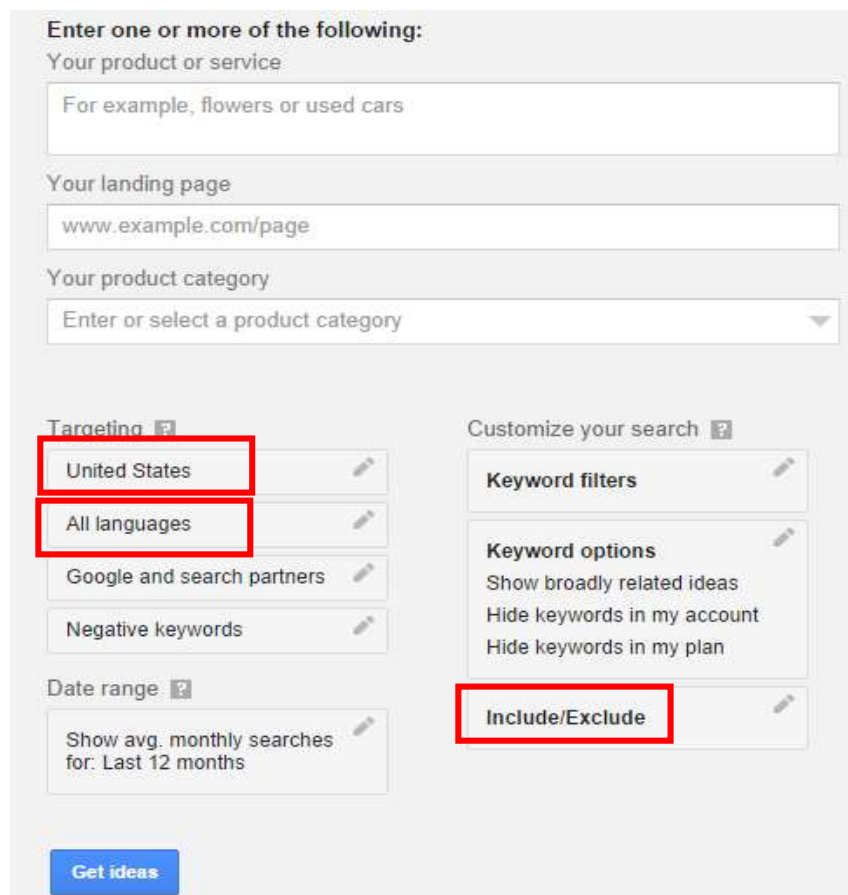
Following the September update, Google advertisers will no longer have to build long lists of misspelled, abbreviated, and other close variations of keywords to get the coverage they want. Therefore, this update can help Google advertisers better manage keyword complexity across large Search programs.

Keyword Discovery Techniques

Keyword Planner

There are several keyword generation tools available out there. The Google Keyword planner is widely used and can be leveraged not just to generate keywords for your search marketing campaigns but also to get a sense of the search volumes for your keyword set.

From a targeting perspective, you can zero-in on the country you are targeting, the language, search network – "Google" or "Google and search Partners," set date range for average monthly searches, and set include/exclude filters. The screenshot below gives you a sense of the targeting capabilities available in Google Keyword Planner.

The keyword suggestions display the average search volume for keywords suggested, estimated bids, extent of competition – high, medium or low, etc. As a generally accepted practice, low search volume keywords or "long-tail" keywords can be left out from your account.

Keyword (by relevance)		Avg. monthly searches ?	Competition ?	Suggested bid ?
flower delivery	⌐∿	135,000	High	Rs.378.24
send flowers	⌐∿	27,100	High	Rs.360.35
flowers online	⌐∿	27,100	High	Rs.418.37

Site-search keywords

Search terms that users type in your website's search box can be a valuable source of data for building your keyword list. If you have enabled site search tracking in Google Analytics, you will be able to track search terms, total unique searches, and the time users have spent on your page after search. To access this data, navigate to "Site Search" pull-down section under the "Behavior" module of your Google Analytics account. Here you will find the "Search Terms" section.

Google Trends

Google Trends is an useful tool to fish out additional relevant keywords for your PPC account. In the screenshot below, I have illustrated this with the example term "buy flowers." The search country is set to the US, the time range is set to the past 12 months. Also, have specified "Web Search" so Google Trends limits its search only to search terms via the web – if you choose to, you can also include image search, news search, etc using this filter.

United States ⌄	Past 12 months ⌄	All categories ⌄	Web Search ⌄		⚙ ▾

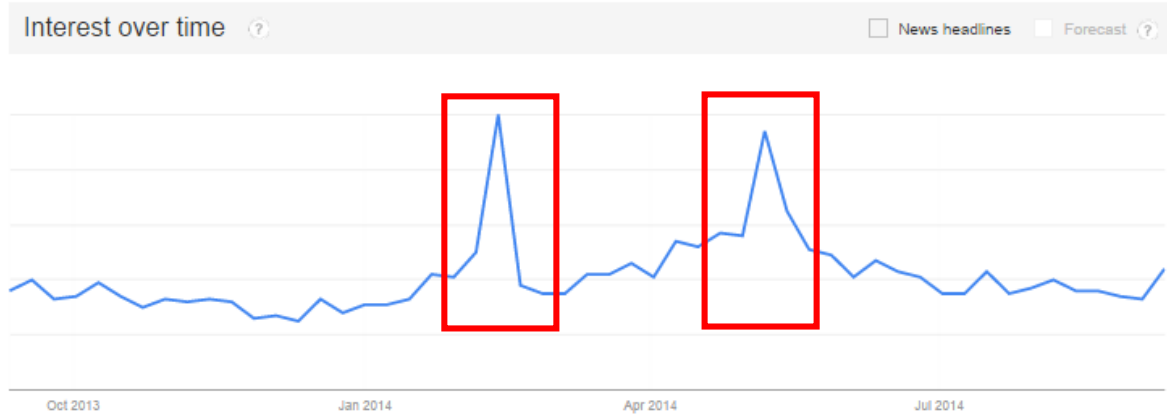Topics   Subscribe   ⤴

buy flowers
Search term   + Add term

The graph below depicts the interest over time for the term "Buy flowers." You will notice a steep spike during the months February & May – The spike in February can of course be attributed to Valentine's Day.

Another interesting insight available in Google Trends is the search by region – i.e. the search interest for a particular search term by region – you can view results by sub region, Metro, or City. In the screenshot below, you will notice that the highest number of search terms related to "buy flowers" were generated from Chicago, followed by Philadelphia and New York respectively for the specified time-range. If you are running an online business, you can set your geo-targeting in your PPC campaigns based off of this insight. Also, you can get insights for the top search queries related to "buy flowers" and "Rising" queries related to the specified search term. In the example below, you will see that "Dried flowers" has received an incremental +40% searches for the specified time period. This is a good indication that this search term should be included in your ad campaign provided you sell dried flowers and if this isn't already in your account – in the event this keyword is in your account but isn't structured as a separate ad group, there is merit in considering creation of a separate ad group for "dried flowers." Please note that the numbers indicated in the screenshot below is not the search volumes in absolute numbers but a representational value on a scale of 1 – 100 – with 100 representing the highest interest.
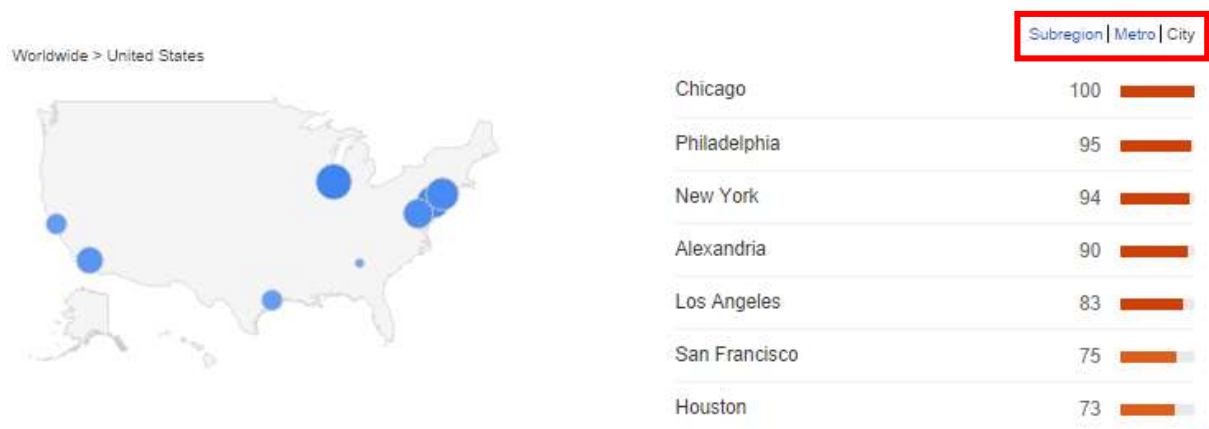
Queries	Top	Rising
dried flowers		+40%

Google Webmaster Tools

The dreaded "keyword not provided" now makes up anywhere from 50% - 90% of most websites' traffic. Therefore, data available within Google Analytics is not as impactful as it used to be as far as keyword discovery is concerned. However, you can look to another Google tool to come to your rescue here – the Google Webmaster Tool (GWT). With GWT, you can get some great information about keywords that are driving impressions and clicks to your account. If you have Google Webmaster Tools set up and integrated with Google Analytics, you can view the impression data from the Google Analytics interface itself. One thing to keep in mind when you look at this data in Google Webmaster Tools is that the view defaults to "web only" search queries. This means it excludes any search queries for video, mobile, or image searches. You can update the filter to include all search results or to look at any one of those types of searches independently. Also, you can get insights into the avg. position of your search result for individual queries in the "Avg. Position" column of this report.

Query	Impressions	Clicks ▲	CTR	Avg. position
types of headlines	219	35	16%	4.9
business needs assessment	71	11	15%	4.6
headline types	24	10	42%	1.9
restore google account	284	7	2%	7.1
no hat seo	122	7	6%	3.3
types of headline	44	7	16%	4.2
search experience optimization	79	6	8%	4.1
what is a training manual	49	6	12%	5.6
nohatseo	201	4	2%	4.4
restore google plus account	22	4	18%	4.0
how to recover deleted photos from google plus	53	3	6%	7.6
restore deleted google account	49	3	6%	7.6
type of headline	13	3	23%	3.7

(Download this table | Download chart data | Basic | With change — Show 25 rows — 1-25 of 981)

Related Searches

A simple but effective keyword discovery hack is to look for "Related searches" at the bottom of the search engine results page. When searched for "Buy flowers," the following searches related to the term were returned. You can sift through this list to identify and add any new relevant keywords to your account.

Searches related to **buy flowers**

buy **garden** flowers   **cheap** flowers

buy flowers **near me**   buy **wholesale** flowers

buy flowers **to plant**   buy flowers **by the stem**

buy flowers **in bulk**   **direct** buy flowers

Search Terms Reports

With the Search terms report, you can see the actual searches people entered on Google Search and other Search Network sites that triggered your ad and led to a click. Depending on your keyword match types, this list might include terms other than exact matches to your keywords. You can access this report by navigating to the "Keywords" tab within your Google AdWords account and then selecting the "Details" pull-down menu.
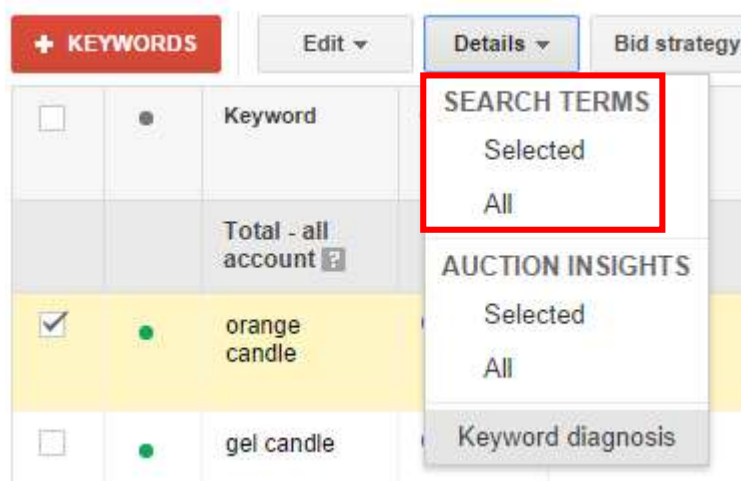
Search Tools

Another simple keyword discovery method is to access "Search Tools" on the right hand side of your Google Search Engine Results Page. Specify the time-range so that the search results are relevant to the data you are looking for – you can choose to plot a custom time-range. This will give you a sense of search terms in the related searches section that are recent and relevant to your area of operation.
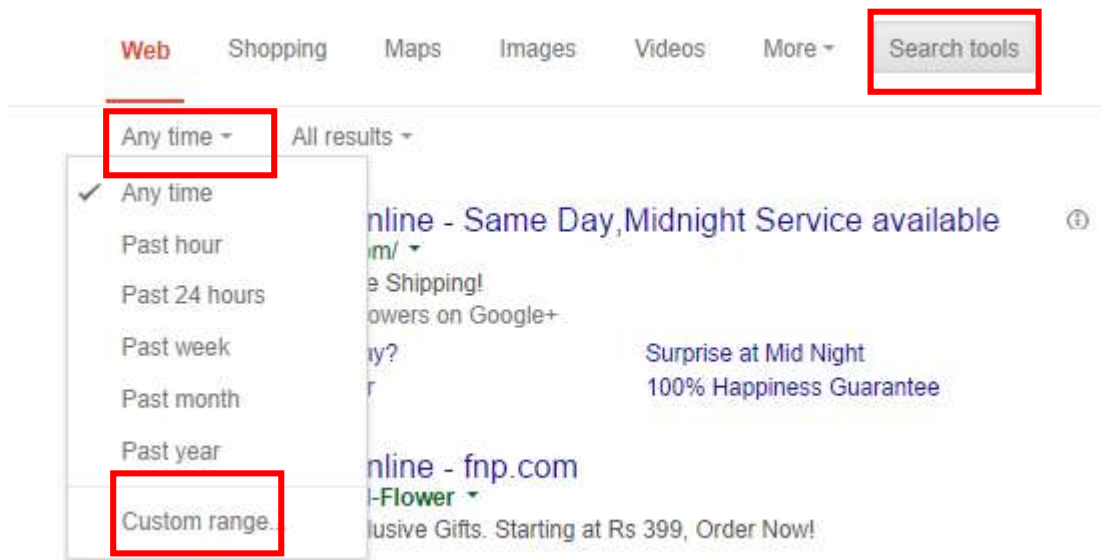
Identify your high volume keywords and keep a careful eye on their bids, Quality Score, Impression Share, Avg. Position, Conversion and Revenue metrics. If you notice that the first page bid requirement for a specific keyword is significantly lower than the avg. CPC for that keyword, you can lower the bid for that keyword. As a rule of thumb never reduce bids by more than 3 - 6%. Also, as an optimization best practice, do not make account wide changes if you are not sure about the impact such changes might have on your account. Instead, create a 'controlled group' for optimization experiments. Make changes within a specific ad group, monitor for performance lift/drop and then gradually roll out for other campaigns.

Negative Keywords

Your keyword discovery and demand generation strategy via keyword optimization will not be complete without building a strong list of negative keywords. Negative keywords are those keywords that prevent your ads from showing for search terms that are not relevant to your business. For example, for the broad matched keyword "red flowers," your ads could trigger for search terms such as "red flower wallpapers," "flower scented perfume," "red flower images," etc. Note that ad networks and their ad delivery mechanisms factor in semantic contexts before triggering your ads. However, accurate attribution to draw from the context

Search queries you discover in your Search Terms report that don't fit into your account structure and aren't relevant to your business but have yet triggered ads should be added as negative keywords.

of a particular phrase/keyword is yet to achieve cent percent accuracy. There could be multiple businesses offering services unrelated to your business and yet contextually share your keyword with their area of operation. Therefore, it is important to meticulously build a strong list of negative keywords over a period of time.

Key Takeaways

If your objective is demand generation or direct response, then you should focus on "Desire" and "Action" oriented keywords. On the other hand, if your focus is brand building, then you should choose keywords that help develop "Attention" and "Interest."

Broadly, advertisers can leverage from one of the following four keyword match types: Broad match, Phrase match, Exact match* and Negative keywords.

Identify your high volume keywords and keep a careful eye on their bids, Quality Score, Impression Share, Avg. Position, Conversion and Revenue metrics.

Also, as an optimization best practice, do not make account wide changes if you are not sure about the impact such changes might have on your account. Instead, create a 'controlled group' for optimization experiments. Make changes within a specific ad group, monitor for performance lift/drop and then gradually roll out for other campaigns.

*Beginning late September, Exact match keywords will not be available – as described in the paper

Concluding Notes

Pay Per Click marketing is a vast and complex subject. Keyword optimization is one aspect of driving your account towards PPC success. Besides the topics covered above, bid optimization, is a key optimization technique to improve your keyword performance – will save this topic for another post! Depending on the nature of your business, the consideration cycle involved for the product, user behavior, and other external factors, keywords can be chosen and built to drive users from online-to-store, mobile-to-fixed-web and so forth. A successful PPC account is a combination of great account structure, high performing keywords, relevant and high impact ad texts, enticing, intuitive and impactful landing pages, among others. Lastly, but most importantly, assiduous and persistent optimization will yield desirable results over a period of time.

Vikas Anand

Vikas brings twelve years of work experience in the areas of consulting, digital media strategy, e-loyalty, online advertising, branding, social media, mobile marketing and web analytics. Prior to Digital Frontier, he worked with leading organizations such as Google, Infosys and HDFC Life.

Vikas has held senior management positions prior to founding Digital Frontier. At HDFC Life, he worked in the capacity of Senior Manager, Digital Marketing, driving the brand's digital efforts pan-India. At Infosys, he worked as part of the Management Consulting Services unit as part of the Communications, Media and Entertainment (CME) practice. During his stint there, Vikas has led strategy for e-commerce transformation of clients in the UK and Hong Kong. Prior to that, he worked with Google for four plus years and worked with advertisers in the North American market in verticals ranging from Financial Services to Retail. With hands on expertise in various digital disciplines including, online advertising, mobile apps, e-commerce and social media, Vikas is passionate about the digital landscape. He builds key differentiation to client engagements with a deep understanding of both media and transaction based outreach mechanisms.
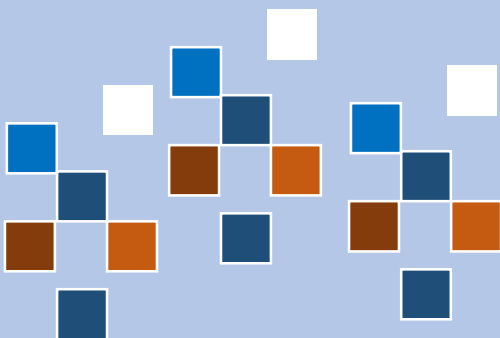
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About DigitalFrontier

Digital Frontier is a full service digital media and marketing agency offering best-in-class consulting and campaign management expertise in search marketing, social media, branding, mobile marketing, web analytics and other emerging digital disciplines including mobile apps, etc. We offer digital consulting in the areas of Online Reputation Management (ORM), SaaS deployment, content marketing, rich media and video marketing, digital commerce, content marketing, multi-channel deployment, digital asset management, etc.

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