

Pay per click tracking

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By Joel Strellner

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Like many businesses that advertise online you are probably spending a portion, if not your entire advertising budget on PPC (pay per click) advertising. The problem many businesses have is being able to determine the most profitable avenue to continue pursuing in their advertising methods.

How to determine the best avenue

Typically, businesses rely on the stats provided by the PPC companies, but usually this isn't good enough. Sure, if you only advertise in Google AdWords or Overture this method may be sufficient, but what if you advertise with more than one PPC company or you advertise on banners, email and pop-ups/pop-unders also?

The solution is tracking. The only way to know if one of your avenues is performing better than another is to track the users and determine where all the buyers/leads are coming from.

For example, say your candle company advertises in Google AdWords and on Overture for the key phrase "scented candle" and you receive, according to Google and Overture combined, 300 visitors, and from your own records 20 orders per day.

Without tracking the users at most you know that google gave you 120 visitors and Overture gave you 180 visitors (remember this is an example), the times that the users visited your website and of course that you received 20 orders for that day.

With tracking you would still know all of the above information, however you would also know even more vital information like that out of the 180 visitors that overture gave you, 18 of your 20 orders came from them. You would also know (depending on how detailed the tracking was) what pages they looked at and if they have previously visited your site, among many other things.

How to implement PPC tracking

Pay per click tracking

The most common method of pay per click tracking is using a special URL in your ads.

For example: <http://www.yourwebsiteaddress.com/track.php?src=google&term=scented%20candle>

The special URL will allow you to determine the source of the click (in the example above, Google) and more importantly the term (in the example above, "Scented candle").

The software is most typically implemented in either PHP or Perl and stores the information about the user in MySQL or any of the other major databases. The most common information logged is date, time, IP address, session id, referrer, current page and their user agent.

Benefits of PPC tracking

Based on the above example of the candle business we were able to determine that the business was only generating 2 sales per day from Google, however it was generating 18 sales per day via Overture. Because we only generated two sales on Google we are able to determine if it is cost effective to continue advertising with google (e.g. generating a profit or losing money through advertising) or to take our advertising dollars elsewhere.

The primary benefits are:

- * Save advertising money by advertising wiser.
- * The ability to test the effectiveness of changes in your ad copy.
- * Assist in your website layout (e.g. make it easier to navigate and purchase).

Conclusion

Tracking your advertising is beneficial to any business that advertises online, businesses that are big (Bank of America, Monster.com, Capital One, Progressive Auto Insurance) all do it and so do your competitors. Don't let your competition gain an advantage; start tracking your users today! If used right, you will be glad that you did!

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. This article and many more are available there too.

Tips For Combating Click Fraud

By Gabriel Adams

Click fraud is one of the biggest issues in the pay per click industry right now. It's easy to understand why, too - click fraud costs advertisers money, but gives no return. It cuts deep into profit margins, and in some cases, may be the difference between making money and losing money.

Click fraud is, at its simplest, clicks on ads that are not generated by a real person interested in making a purchase. Click fraud can come from many different sources:

Click bots, which are robots designed to click on ads, are one source. Click bots are often run by an affiliate of the PPC search engine.

Competitors may click on your ads to try to drive your cost up.

Click schemes are programs people join to click on ads for each other. Usually these people are affiliates of the PPC search engines.

Combating click fraud can be tough. One of the easiest ways to combat click fraud is to not advertise on search engines who deliver lower quality traffic. This factor is easily determined with conversion rates. If one search engine's traffic converts at 2 percent, and traffic from the second search engine converts at 1 percent, you know the traffic from the second search engine is half the quality. Click fraud is likely one of the factors involved.

In addition to such basic tracking mechanisms, you can use more advanced tracking mechanisms to try to catch click fraud. For example, you could use a script that you would gather data on visitors from PPC search engines (data might include IP address, number of times they clicked on the ad, and time they spent on the site) and use that data to pick out suspicious visitors. You can then submit the data to the search engine and request a refund on the traffic.

Click fraud is probably the biggest problem in the PPC industry, and you can work to save yourself some money by combating click fraud.

Bespoke click fraud detection and protection software from Evolution Internet Ltd:



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