



PPC IN 2019 10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Our self-confessed PPC geeks have picked out the trends to watch in the upcoming months to help keep you primed for paid search success.



1. CSS AND GOOGLE SHOPPING

In 2019, all agencies are going to need to offer a CSS (Comparison Shopping sites) platform as standard to compete. However, a curveball will be if the EU decides that the way Google has gone about sidestepping the ruling will continue to be tolerated.

In essence it boils down to the EU saying they wanted to force Google to give up market share towards comparison sites, and Google has responded with “fine, but we'll make it so that our advertisers can all become comparison sites too, and flood the comparison market”.

Obviously, being that cheeky means that we probably haven't heard the last of it.



David Karellen
Head of Paid Search

The other question is whether Bing and other search platforms will also make the jump to a CSS based shopping system on their own, or whether they'll be forced to in the same way Google have been. It is likely that they'll all wait to see how Google's situation fares, but they'll definitely have plans to replicate the model should the axe suddenly fall.

Keith Docherty
Senior Paid Search Executive



2. NEW BID MODIFIERS

With in-market audiences making the jump from Display to Search in 2018, we're pretty confident that a number of other interest category sets will follow suit. Affinity interest categories must also surely be in the pipeline for becoming a search bid adjustment soon. But then also custom interest categories could also be a possibility for search bid adjusters, which opens up a lot of doors. This would tie in with audience remaining as one of Google's key focuses.

For an introduction to bid modifiers and other aspects of campaign optimisation, download our [Paid Search Optimisation eBook](#)

3. AD SPACE

Long gone are the days of dealing with very restrictive ad space. Expanded ads in 2016 put an end to this, but now this has been taken further with 2018's update to allow three headlines and two longer description lines. Now most advertisers are at a point of not knowing how to fill the space effectively.

Expect this to improve over time in the same way it did in 2016 when more sophisticated advertisers turned to functionality such as ad customisers to add personalisation to fill the space. Hopefully Google will be able to provide more functionality, perhaps with automation in the form of dynamically generated copy (similar to that used by [dynamic search ads campaigns](#)).

In terms of adding even more space, we wouldn't put that past Google either, but we feel they're more likely to increase character limits on ad extensions such as sitelinks and callouts. New extensions, or just the ability to show more extensions at once, are also very likely.

4. MACHINE LEARNING AND AUTOMATION

Machine learning and automation have been at the forefront of new features Google has been pushing forward. Tools like Responsive Search Ads, Smart Shopping, additional bidding strategies, to name just a few, have found their way into many strategies. These are much more advanced than previous attempts at automation such as Conversion Optimiser.

We'll see increased take-up of this in 2019 as marketers realise the benefits and continue to experiment and test.

However, there can still be a lack of visibility on combinations of ad copy for Responsive Search Ads or Smart Shopping; despite working well, their methodology is still completely black box and so offers no opportunity to add value or say which areas have worked well.

Expect more advertisers to argue the case for increasing automation, but doing so in a way that they still have full visibility on what has worked, and being able to add value at every stage.

Our advice is to let the machines take care of repetitive tasks, like bid tracking and reporting, and concentrate your focus on your customers. Rather than a battle between man and machines, it will be up to PPC marketers to leverage the opportunities offered by machine learning and incorporate them into their strategies. If you're a paid search professional, you'll need to develop and adapt your skills to make sure you're ahead of the game.

Carmen Jones
Senior Paid Search Executive



5. 'OUTCOME-DRIVEN MEDIA'

Yes, it sounds very buzzwordy – surely the point of all marketing (and all everything?) is to get an outcome?

However, a global survey of digital media marketers by Xaxis reveals that 80% plan to increase their investment in this emerging field to address growing media complexity and better understand the impact of their campaigns on business results.

It defines outcome-driven media as: **“Planning and optimising campaigns against KPIs – often tailor-made for an advertiser or campaign – that are much more closely aligned to the marketer’s ultimate marketing and business goals.”**

The research concluded that the large majority of digital marketers plan to test new campaign success metrics to deal with growing complexity as ‘efficiency’ and ‘proving the impact on digital media spend on business objectives’ takes centre stage for 2019.

There’ll be a greater emphasis on how advertising helps build a brand and generate revenue and the current approach often relies on simple proxy metrics, such as click-through rates (CTR).

In isolation, these metrics tell brands very little or can even be misleading. For instance, high-ticket items such as white goods; just because consumers choose to click on an ad promoting a washing machine, it doesn’t automatically lead to a purchase; a click does not equal a sale.

6. PAID SOCIAL

Paid social's importance in a paid media strategy has been increasingly steadily for a number of years; however, in 2018 there appears to have been a step change. Once, paid social campaigns were primarily the domain of advertisers who didn't have budgets large enough to make an impact with Google ads.

Now, almost every large advertiser is spending significant shares of their marketing budget towards paid social activity.

Expect big changes in all paid social platforms as larger advertisers move more budget towards these channels, as they will demand more opportunity for adding value and advanced feature usage.



Antony Valente
Senior Paid Search Executive

7. A CONTINUED MOVE TO DATA-DRIVEN ATTRIBUTION

Marketers are certainly waking up to the limitations of the previously default last-click model. It's been a bugbear of ours for several years and, and the ubiquitous but somewhat vague phrase 'data-driven' is finally becoming more meaningful in the form of attribution that delivers the most accurate value of each step in the conversion funnel.

Data-driven attribution (DDA), Google's machine learning technology to determine how much credit

to assign to each click in the user journey, was introduced in May 2016, and is potentially one of the most important recent additions to Google's paid search offering.

Google has made a big push to use Display across the industry and we've seen more budget across both display and video as they become more valued and trackable by DDA.

8. PERSONALISATION

PPC is now increasingly capable of precise targeting and personalised advertising. Demographic ad customisers and interest ad customisers can be created through bid modifiers in market interest categories – and we think it's only a matter of time before affinity is added to as a search bid modifiers to target those at the top of the funnel.

We'll also see a resurgence of 'permission marketing' and 'omni-channel' marketing, as well as paid search successfully innovating with personalisation in the augmented and virtual reality spheres.

Will Dixon
Paid Search Executive



Emily Yale
Paid Search Executive



9. KEYWORDS WON'T BE THE MAIN PRIORITY

Advertisers will shift focus away from match types and terms, and instead toward context and people. Keywords will remain important, but audience targeting will grow in importance as marketers are able to pinpoint relevance and personalisation. Marketers have seen success with in-market audience and we expect this to continue, as part of a comprehensive strategy using remarketing at the top of the purchase funnel.

10. CONTENT ADVERTISING

Producing and promoting content, including video, through paid distribution channels has so far experienced limited adoption, although some companies have extracted valuable leads and sales from this relatively new marketing channel advertisers and marketers are becoming increasingly familiar with the two largest independent native advertising platforms, Taboola and Outbrain.

And, while paid social are usually an in-stream format (ie, they appear in users' feeds alongside organic posts), brands are also beginning to experiment with 'out-stream' video advertising. This type of display ad takes the form of an auto-playing video that is inserted into a traditional display ad space, typically between paragraphs of text or images.

Andreea Gheorghe
Paid Search Executive



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Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named Search Agency of the Year and Digital Agency of the Year 2018, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

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