

Google's 'Enhanced Campaigns' - a challenge for advertisers?

LONDON, UK: Leading London-based digital marketing agency, Greenlight, says Google's "Enhanced Campaigns", will prove a challenge to advertisers, the biggest being that of how third party tracking solutions can integrate into it. As it currently stands, advertisers could be forgiven for thinking Google is upping its game against third party tracking solutions and trying to create a system whereby any solution outside of Google's is rendered less useful, says Angela Knibb*, campaign manager at the agency.



Google has announced significant changes to its AdWords digital advertising platform adding functionality it calls "Enhanced Campaigns". Put simply, it centralises controls for mobile and desktop advertising campaigns in one place and offers advertisers more data to show the real value of their campaigns. Previously businesses have had to submit individual advertising campaigns for different devices, locations and times - a labour-intensive process which most times results in their running hundreds of similar campaigns simultaneously.

The positives

With "Enhanced Campaigns", smartphone-specific ad copy and site links can be created and a bid multiplier used to change bids on mobile, which says Greenlight's Knibb, is a positive. However, Knibb points out this will be out of the same campaign budget, presumably, and with the same cost per clicks (CPCs), giving significantly less optimisation control and granularity than the current structure.

Knibb also notes the bid multiplier can be set to increase bids on smartphones by location. Therefore, for a retailer, if a customer searches for a product sold within a certain distance of the respective store, it can bid up on that search. This gives a great opportunity to capture customers at the point of purchase.

The challenges

Google has always been at pains to stress it is best practice to separate campaigns by device. However, with "Enhanced Campaigns", this functionality is now being removed, and once it is fully rolled out, all devices will have to be targeted within the one campaign.

"Not only does this go against Google's own best practices regarding device targeting, it hampers advertisers when it

comes to their optimisation efforts", says Knibb.

Greenlight has observed different traffic and order levels by hour of day, peaking in the afternoon on desktop but the evening for tablet. Current strategies focus on increasing bids during the hour of day when these peaks occur, differing by device.

Knibb points out that this is now redundant in the new format. Furthermore, campaign budgets will be set at campaign level, and bids at keyword level, allowing no differentiation between devices.

"Presumably this means setting bids higher on mobile/tablet than we would otherwise, effectively increasing cost per clicks (CPCs) and therefore budgets. Will we see a better return for this, or will we likely see less effective targeting with an increase in CPCs and spend, therefore reducing return on investment (ROI)?"

Integration of third party tracking solutions presents a big challenge

Arguably, the biggest challenge is that of third party tracking solutions and how they can integrate into this.

"As an agency, we separate our campaigns by device and have the keyword URLs tracked differently so we can assess the value of each device as a best practice. With the new settings, to differentiate between 'mobile specific' ad and desktop/tablet, we would need to track at ad level, losing valuable insight to our keyword performance. Whilst we will still be able to pull device reports or segment by device in Google, with third party tracking tools at keyword level, we would have no visibility as to device performance.

Other areas of concerns Knibb raises include flash websites that do not render on tablet.

"As you cannot opt out of tablet targeting, this means paying for useless clicks. Furthermore, if you have a mobile website with a different domain to the desktop, are you going to be able to target different domains in the same account, something that cannot at the moment be done?"

Given that a large proportion of advertisers use the bigger tracking solutions (TagMan, Omniture, Coremetrics) how are tracking issues going to be resolved? How do we tailor effectively by device, something considered best practice to improve the customer journey?

No doubt, there will be solutions and work-arounds but for the moment, the questions remain.

**Angela Knibb is Campaign Manager at Greenlight. She manages a team of analysts and senior analysts working on a range of paid media accounts spanning fashion, retail, finance and travel. Angela is responsible for training and developing the Analyst team, contributes to the strategic and creative direction of accounts, and is responsible for the implementation of builds and optimisation in line with account strategy. Being on top of the latest trends and innovations, both vertical and within the search engines along with the latest Betas and Alphas is crucial to Angela's role, and she is a key party in implementing these across clients in the department.*

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