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Search Engine Marketing

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Peter Kent

Author of Search Engine Optimization For Dummies

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About the Author

Peter Kent is the author of numerous books about the Internet, including *Search Engine Optimization For Dummies,* the *Complete Idiot's Guide to the Internet,* and the widely reviewed title, *Poor Richard's Web Site: Geek-Free, Commonsense Advice On Building a Low-Cost Web Site.* His work has been praised by *USA Today, BYTE, CNN.com, Windows Magazine, The Philadelphia Inquirer,* and many others.

Peter has been online since 1984, doing business in cyberspace since 1991, and writing about the Internet since 1993. Peter's experience spans virtually all areas of doing business online, from editing and publishing an e-mail newsletter to creating e-commerce Web sites, from online marketing and PR campaigns to running a Web-design and hosting department for a large ISP.

Peter was the founder of an e-Business Service Provider funded by one of the world's largest VC firms, Softbank/Mobius. He was the VP of Web Solutions for a national ISP and VP of Marketing for a Web applications firm. He was also the founder of a computer-book publishing company launched through a concerted online marketing campaign.

Peter now consults with businesses about their Internet strategies, helping them to avoid the pitfalls and to leap the hurdles they'll encounter online. He also gives seminars and presentations on subjects related to online

marketing in general and search engine marketing in particular. He can be contacted at Dummies@PeterKentConsulting.com, and more information about his background and experience is available at www.PeterKentConsulting.com.

Dedication

For Cheryl

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Introduction

Welcome to *Pay Per Click Search Engine Marketing For Dummies.* If you're reading this book, you've undoubtedly heard all the talk about *Pay Per Click,* advertising for the masses. Anyone with a credit card and a Web site . . . wait, no, you don't even need a Web site anymore. . . . Anyone with *just a credit card* can place ads on major search engines and major content Web sites with just a few minutes' work.

You've probably heard how simple Pay Per Click (or *PPC,* as we insiders know it) really is. But if that's the case, how have I managed to fill an entire book on the subject?

Well, as is almost always the case, things aren't as simple as they appear. Getting started with PPC is very easy; what takes a bit more time and understanding is getting started and making it work. I know companies that are doing very well with PPC advertising — one company that even spends $2 million on PPC ads *every month.* I also know companies that are losing money with their PPC ads.

Making a PPC campaign work takes some brains, and although this is the *For Dummies* book series, the publishers of this series have always believed they were publishing for *smart people;* it's just that, at the point of picking up the book for the first time, those people don't feel so smart about the subject. In fact, they feel a little

lost. They want the straight dope, and they want it fast, in an easy-to-digest format. That's just what you get with this book. By the time you finish this book, you'll be no dummy in the PPC world. You'll have a good idea of where to begin and where to go.

About This Book

This book simplifies the whole Pay Per Click advertising business for you. You find out how to make PPC ads work *for* you, not *against* you. In this book I show you how to

- Figure out where to place your PPC ads. You have *many* choices.

- Make sure that you're using the right keywords to trigger your PPC ads.

- Calculate your breakeven and gross profit numbers.

- Calculate your return on investment (ROI).

- Pick the keywords that will connect you with your customers.

- Write ads that encourage the right people to click your ads . . . and discourage the wrong people.

- Bid on your ads in a way that makes sense (and cents).

- Work with the major PPC systems — Yahoo!, Google, and MSN.

✔ Use geo-targeting to put your ads in front of people close to your business.

✔ Work with content-placement systems to place your ads on non-search Web sites.

✔ Track the effects of your ads, in terms of sales and other conversion types.

✔ And plenty more!

Foolish Assumptions

You and I have a lot to cover in this book, so we don't have time for the basics. So I assume that, if you're reading this book, you already know a few things about the Internet and search engines, such as

✔ You have access to a computer that has access to the Internet, and you know how to connect.

✔ You know how to use a Web browser to get around the Internet.

✔ You know how to carry out searches at the major search engines, such as Google and Yahoo!.

✔ You know how to use Web-based form systems. You'll be using a variety of online systems to create your ads.

✔ You, or someone working with or for you, know how to create Web pages. You'll probably be pointing PPC ads to those pages (although it is possible to run PPC ads, in some cases, without having a Web site).

✔ You have some basic writing skills. You'll be writing simple little text ads, so you need to be able to string a sentence or two together.

✔ You can do a little in the way of math. You'll need to carry out the simple calculations required for figuring out whether you're making or losing money on your PPC campaign.

There's actually very little in the way of nasty technical stuff in this book. I do discuss IP numbers, but don't worry; it's only in passing, and I explain what they are. Perhaps the most complicated technical stuff in the book is in the chapter on tracking conversions and sales (Chapter 15), but it's really quite straightforward. Anyone who creates Web pages should be able to understand how to enter tracking codes into those pages.

How This Book Is Organized

Like all good reference tools, this book is set up to be read "as needed." It's divided into several parts, which I discuss shortly. So if you want to jump right in and learn about working with Yahoo!'s Sponsored Search PPC system, just skip to Chapter 8. If you need to understand how to write good PPC ads that the PPC services won't reject and that will encourage the right sort of people to click through to your site, then read Chapter 6. If you need to understand the different options open to you for tracking traffic as it comes to your site and figuring out what those visitors actually do on your site, then flip to Chapter 15.

However, I really recommend that you read everything in the book because it will make a big difference to your chances of success. When I wrote the book, I put the basic foundation knowledge at the beginning, the information on how to get started in the middle, and the more-advanced details at the end. You really should understand how to write ads (Chapter 6) before you start working with the PPC systems (Chapters 8 through 14), and you need to know how different bidding strategies can hurt and hinder you (Chapter 7) before you actually invest a lot of money in your PPC campaigns.

This book contains a lot of information, and you never know what you might need. Are the clicks on the major

systems too expensive? Then you might try a few lesser-known systems (see Chapter 11); have you seen a sudden surge in clicks to your site, but without an increase in sales? Maybe you should read Chapter 5. PPC can be very profitable for companies that understand how to use it, so make the most of the book you are holding in your hands.

Don't forget to visit the Web site associated with this book. At www.dummies.com/go/payperclick, you can find all the links in this book. And don't forget to visit my Web site at www.PCBulletin.com, where you can find links to special discounts on a variety of PPC services.

Part I: Preparing for Your Campaign

I start at the beginning, getting you ready for your PPC campaign. In this part, you find out just exactly what PPC *is* and where it came from. You discover the different places you can place ads, from search engines to content sites, from the monsters of the PPC world — Yahoo!, Google, and MSN — to the second- and third-tier systems — Kanoodle, Miva, Searchfeed, myGeek, Quigo, and many more. You find out how to calculate your "return on investment," how to pick keywords for your campaign, and how to write ads that work well. You also get the lowdown about how advertisers bid for the position of their ads on the search-results page and about a number of bidding strategies. Bidding for position is not like bidding at an auction, so I show you a number of strategies that can make or save you money.

Part II: Using the PPC Systems

In this part, I explain how to work with the major PPC systems. Each one works a little differently and has its own advantages and idiosyncrasies. Yahoo!, Google, and MSN are responsible for the majority of the world's PPC ads. But what if their ads are too expensive? Or what if they work really well, but you want more clicks? I also show you other places where you can buy PPC ads — the second- and third-tier PPC systems.

But there's more! How about using the PPC systems of content-placement services such as Quigo? Or the PPC-based shopping directories, like Yahoo! Shopping, or perhaps the Yellow Pages PPC systems? You need to understand geo-targeting, too, with which you can present your ads to Internet users in particular locations, even down to circles with a half-mile radius in American cities (in theory, anyway; I explain why practice is different).

Part III: Managing Your Campaign

Your advertising campaign may be up and running, but don't think that means you can sit back and rest on your laurels as the sales pour in. There are a number of things you need to know about to make sure everything stays on track.

Running a PPC campaign without any kind of tracking is a recipe for disaster. You'll miss opportunities, as well as problems. How do you really know whether you're making money from PPC if you aren't measuring how many people come to your site and what they do when they get there? How do you know which keywords and ads work well, and which are losing you money, if you don't track? You don't. So in this part of the book, I show you how to keep track of how many visitors come to your site from the PPC services and what actions they carry out on your site.

I also point out the various bid-management tools available to you; that is, tools that are more advanced than the basic systems provided to you by the PPC services — tools designed to make life easier for people tracking hundreds, or thousands, of keywords and thousands of PPC ad impressions every day.

Oh, and before leaving this part of the book, I examine a controversial subject: *click fraud.* Perhaps 20 percent of all clicks on PPC ads are fraudulent, according to some

experts. Fraud rates have even hit as high as 80 percent for some advertising campaigns. Why would people click PPC ads *fraudulently?* For two good reasons . . . which I explain in this part.