

High-volume traffic at your Web site is
just a click away!

Pay Per Click Search Engine Marketing FOR **DUMMIES**[®]

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for the
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Peter Kent

Author of Search Engine
Optimization For Dummies

*Get your site ranked
at the top of
search engines*



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Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Pay Per Click Search Engine Marketing For Dummies®

Published by
Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

www.wiley.com

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Indianapolis, Indiana

Published by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2005935147

ISBN-13: 978-0-471-75494-7

ISBN-10: 0-471-75494-3

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

1B/RY/QR/QW/IN



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

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Dedication

For Cheryl

Author's Acknowledgments

Thanks again to Wiley's staff, in particular Acquisitions Editors Terri Varveris and Tiffany Franklin and Project Editor Blair Pottenger, for putting up with my idiosyncrasies and believing that indeed they *would* finally end up with a book, more or less on time. And, of course, the many Wiley staff members editing, proofreading, and laying out the book.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

Acquisitions, Editorial, and Media Development

Project Editor: Blair J. Pottenger

Acquisitions Editors: Terri Varveris, Tiffany Franklin

Copy Editor: Andy Hollandbeck

Technical Editor: Paul Chaney

Editorial Manager: Kevin Kirschner

Media Development Manager: Laura VanWinkle

Media Development Supervisor: Richard Graves

Editorial Assistant: Amanda Foxworth

Cartoons: Rich Tennant (www.the5thwave.com)

Composition Services

Project Coordinator: Jennifer Theriot

Layout and Graphics: Carl Byers, Andrea Dahl, Stephanie D. Jumper, Barry Offringa

Proofreaders: Leeann Harney, TECHBOOKS Production Services

Indexer: TECHBOOKS Production Services

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Contents

Title

[Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[How This Book Is Organized](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

Part I : Preparing for Your Campaign

[Chapter 1: Introducing Pay Per Click Advertising](#)

[The Days before PPC](#)

[Understanding PPC: What It Is and Why You Should Care](#)

[Is Everyone Making Money with PPC?](#)

[Why Bother Using PPC?](#)

[Placing Eggs in Several Baskets](#)

[Chapter 2: The Different Forms of PPC](#)

[The Big Two PPC Search Engines](#)

[Who Feeds Whom?](#)

[Second-Tier PPC Systems](#)

[Third-Tier Search Engines](#)

[Geo-targeting](#)

[Content-Match or Contextual PPC](#)

[Underlined Words](#)

[Paid Inclusion](#)

[Trusted Feeds](#)

[Shopping Directories](#)

[eBay Keywords](#)

[Pay Per Call](#)

[PPA — The Next Wave?](#)

[It's Not Just Google and Yahoo!](#)

[Chapter 3: Calculating ROI \(Return on Investment\)](#)

[Conversion Ratio, Click Value, ROI, and More](#)

[Calculating Gross Profit and Breakeven Cost Per Sale](#)

[Breakeven Cost Per Click](#)

[Figuring Out Return on Investment \(ROI\)](#)

[Deferred Actions](#)

[Offline Sales](#)

[Including Lifetime Value](#)

[Forget the Value of Branding](#)

[Pulling It All Together](#)

[Modifying the Essential Factors](#)

[Chapter 4: Selecting Keywords](#)

[Understanding the Importance of Keywords](#)

[Thinking Like Your Prey](#)

[Starting Your Keyword Analysis](#)

[Using a Keyword Tool](#)

[Using Wordtracker](#)

[Narrowing Your Keyword Choices](#)

[Avoiding Trademark Problems](#)

[Chapter 5: Creating Landing Pages](#)

[Landing Pages That Work](#)

[Landing Pages That Could Be Better](#)

[Picking a Landing Page](#)

[It's Not Just about Pricing](#)

[Landing Page Tips](#)

[Your Site's Part of the PPC Campaign](#)

[Making Your Web Site Sell](#)

[Tips for an Effective Web Site](#)

[Pure E-commerce Sites](#)

[PPC Rules of Landing Pages](#)

[Chapter 6: Finding the Right Words for Your Ad](#)

[Small Changes = Huge Benefits](#)

[Different Systems, Different Ads](#)

[Viewing the Editorial Guidelines](#)

[Encouraging Clicks](#)

[Discouraging People from Clicking](#)

[Avoiding Rejection](#)

[Testing your ads](#)

[Chapter 7: Bidding on Keywords](#)

[Understanding Basic Bidding](#)

[Using Bidding Strategies](#)

[Use Auto-Bidding Software](#)

[Finding Cheaper Clicks](#)

[Keyword Matching Methods](#)

[Part II : Using the PPC Systems](#)

Chapter 8: Working with Yahoo! Sponsored Search

Picking a Membership Level

Creating Your Yahoo! Account

Serving Yourself

Adjusting Account Settings

Checking Editorial Status

Creating More Ads

Managing Your Yahoo! Campaign

Editing Listings

Chapter 9: Buying Traffic from Google AdWords

Creating Your Google Account

Removing Content Placement

Using the All Campaigns Page

Creating More Campaigns, Ad Groups, and Ads

Managing a Campaign

Managing Your Ad Groups

The Vagaries of Google Bidding

Getting Help Placing Bids

Changing Matching Options

Reviewing Rejected Ads

Chapter 10: Harnessing MSN Keywords

Creating Your MSN AdCenter Account

Managing Your Campaigns

Chapter 11: Using the Second- and Third-Tier PPC Systems

Three Reasons to Use Tier II Systems

Will Tier II Systems Work for You?

[Finding Tier II Systems](#)

[Tier II Features](#)

[Working with Tier III Systems](#)

[Chapter 12: Using Geo-Targeting](#)

[Why Is Geo-Targeting So Important?](#)

[How Does Local Search Work?](#)

[Creating Your Ads](#)

[Using Google Local Targeting](#)

[Using Yahoo! Local Advertising](#)

[Working with MSN Location Targeting](#)

[Don't Forget the Yellow Pages](#)

[Other PPC Services](#)

[Chapter 13: Working with Content or Contextual Placement](#)

[What Is Content Placement?](#)

[The Problems with Content Placement](#)

[Using Content Placement Despite the Problems](#)

[Working with Google's Content Network](#)

[Using Yahoo!'s Content Match](#)

[Using Other Content Placement Systems](#)

[Chapter 14: Other PPC Services — Shopping Directories, Yellow Pages, and More](#)

[Using Vertical Targeting](#)

[Using the Shopping Directories](#)

[PPA or CPA Services](#)

[Working with the Yellow Pages](#)

[Using Paid Inclusion and Trusted Feeds](#)

[Using Pay Per Call](#)

Part III : Managing Your Campaign

Chapter 15: Using Click Tracking and Conversion Tracking Tools

Tracking the Sales Funnel from A to Z

Using the Reports

Working with Basic Tracking Techniques

Working with Google

Using Advanced Third-Party Systems

Chapter 16: Working with Bid-Management Tools

Why Bid Management?

Designing the Ideal PPC Manager

Using Proprietary Bid Managers

Using Atlas OnePoint BidManager

Finding Other Bid-Management Tools

Build Your Own Bid-Management Tool

Using a Bid-Management Firm

Chapter 17: Avoiding Click Fraud

Understanding Click Fraud

Different Fraud Tactics

Watching for Impression Fraud

What Are the PPC Companies Doing about Click Fraud?

Protecting Yourself

Identifying Click Fraud

Using a Click Fraud Detection Service

Complaining to the PPC Service

Part IV : The Part of Tens

Chapter 18: Ten Ways to Make Money Selling Clicks

Generating a Lot of Traffic

Picking High-Value Keywords

Buying Clicks to Sell Clicks

Combining and Experimenting with Ad Systems

Signing Up with Google AdSense

Experimenting with Different Features

Working with the Yahoo! Publisher Network

Finding Other PPC Systems

Creating Your Own PPC System

Thinking about Affiliates

Chapter 19: Ten Ways to Stay Up-to-Date and Track Down the Details

Let Me Help Some More

The PPC Systems Themselves

The Google Learning Center

Yahoo!'s Training Manual

SearchEngineWatch

WebMasterWorld

PayPerClickSearchEngines.com

Pandia

Open Directory Project's PPC Category

Yahoo! Directory

Other PPC Sites

Search Engine Optimization For Dummies

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.