

Online Marketing: Pay-Per-Click Search Engines

By Aaron Turpen

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Aaron Turpen
aaron@aaronzwebworkz.com

Aaronz WebWorkz <http://www.AaronzWebWorkz.com>

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By Aaron Turpen of Aaronz WebWorkz

A Pay-Per-Click search engine (also called Pay-Per-Ranking engines) allows you to place your site at the top of their results almost immediately. This comes at a price, though.

The idea is pretty simple. You put in a "bid" for how much you're willing to pay per click-through on certain keywords - the higher your bid, the higher you appear in the results for that keyword. A click-through is when a searcher clicks on your link in the engine and comes to your site. Regardless of whether this searcher purchases anything or not, you pay for them to come to your site.

The advantages of this type of system are obvious: they drive users to your site starting almost immediately and the amount of traffic can be fairly high with those visiting being likely to be looking for what you offer (these are targeted users). Some PPCs even send results to Yahoo! and other big directories (GoTo/Overture is an example of this).

In the short run this is a good marketing tool and useful to those impatient to get their site noticed quickly. Usually, you log into a PPC engine, open an account and deposit money into it. Then you put in your site information along with your bid for certain keywords, which will drive people to your site. This bid is what you are willing to pay for EVERY click-through you receive. So even \$100 can go fairly quickly if you're in a high-traffic area of the 'Net.

Try to stick with the better-known names in PPCs and be wary of those that offer their surfers incentives to click on links - this is not conducive to "targeted" traffic.

Also watch the engine's use-ability and function. If it isn't easy to use, nobody is using it and you're wasting your time signing up there. You can rarely get your deposit back from the search engine once it's been made.

Below is a list of popular pay-per-click search engines in alphabetical order. Many are not listed here, obviously, but I thought I would list a few and touch on some of their finer points to show you how a PPC can be used effectively.

Brainfox (www.brainfox.com): This is a decent, though relatively new PPC that offers itself as a budget alternative. Minimum bids are .001 cents! Not sure of the results of advertising here, but it may be worth a try since you only need to invest \$5 to get started.

CleanSearch (www.cleansearch.com): Although not widely known, this is one of the few PPCs that focus on "family" results (no porn). You even have the option of "reporting" on results that appear to have them reviewed for content.

eFind (www.efind.com): This is a good example of a PPC you should NOT advertise with. Built like a slot machine, this one is set up to send users to paid listings in order to be entered to win prizes. Avoid these guys.

FindWhat (www.findwhat.com): I originally was not going to include this engine as they used to pay their searchers to go to advertiser's sites, but that seems to have changed. This may become a good engine in the future!

GoClick (www.goclick.com): This is a good engine and has a great explanation "help" FAQ to get new users going. It's reasonably priced and has some nice tools integrated to keep your bidding competitive.

GoTo/Overture (www.overture.com): This is the premier PPC engine. They offer shopping and auction sites (as per Yahoo!), but you'll need money to be competitive here. If you can afford it, this one is well worth the money.

Metamission (www.metamission.com): This allows you to advertise on their "metasearch" engine. I'm dubious about their results, especially when seeing the "too good to be true" 1000% bonus to your first credit deposit with them.

NetFlip (www.netflip.com): This is another bad example of a search engine gone awry. They pay users to click through and have become quite popular despite the lack of focused users they send to their advertisers.

Onesearch (www.onesearch.com): This is a good engine,

though fairly boring to look at. They have a low minimum account requirement (\$25 as of this writing) and offer pretty good results.

Searchhound (www.searchhound.com): This is one of the premier PPCs and their price and minimum account sizes reflect this. If you have the money to spend, though, you will probably get more traffic here than on any of the other engines.

Sprinks (www.sprinks.com): This is an easy-to-use engine that offers to get you listed in About.com as well. You may have good results here.

Turbo10 (www.turbo10.com): This is a great search engine with lots of neat bonuses for the users. Searching for exactly what you want is easy and you can jump around the search results as you wish-giving the user total power. I suspect that this will get more and more popular as time goes on and this use-ability will only enhance your listing here.

Overall, especially in the short run, Pay-Per-Click engines are a useful tool for marketing online. They require a little money to be used effectively and many require daily or weekly policing to ensure that you are not outbid and therefore ranked too low. The trouble can be worth it, though, as you drive more and more visitors (usually targeted!) to your site. As an alternative to getting listed in regular engines and directories, PPCs are very viable.

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Aaron Turpen is the proprietor of Aaronz WebWorkz, a full-service provider of Web needs to small businesses.

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