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By Robin Nobles

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The Chairman and CEO of FindWhat.com (<http://www.findwhat.com>), Craig Pizaris-Henderson, recently attended a chat session and visited with Academy students regarding the FindWhat.com performance-based advertising network.

This enlightening chat shed light on one of the leading pay-for-performance advertising providers (providing keyword-targeted text ads to search engines and other large portals) and offered tips for achieving better results when purchasing keywords.

Craig began by giving some background information on FindWhat.com.

“FindWhat.com.com is a leading performance-based marketing company that introduces buyers and sellers online. We allow advertisers to bid on keywords, and then we distribute those keywords to over 200 distribution partners. We serve approximately 1 billion searches per month and handle well over 700,000 transactions per day. We have 20,000 plus advertisers from all over the world.”

Craig is one of the founders of FindWhat.com, and as a result of his strong dedication to developing FindWhat.com, he was recently chosen as one of the nominees for the 2002 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Craig answered the following questions from Academy students.

Question:

One billion is a very large number. How much of that comes from the US?

Craig:

We concentrate on the US marketplace at this point, so to put a percentage on it, I would say 95+% comes from the US.

Question:

What is your vision for FindWhat.com? What are we going to experience in 2003?

Craig:

I've been hinting around on several earnings calls that we were looking at both international initiatives and diversifying our primary traffic (distribution partners). I would say both are strong possibilities for 2003.

Question:

Are there any major partners (in North America) that you could hint about?

Craig:

We recently announced a new relationship with Terra Lycos. We are providing a turnkey keyword advertising service to both Lycos and HotBot Web properties. They brand and sell the service, and we provide our complete private label product comprised of the keyword-targeted pay-for-performance ad service, account manager interface, and customer service.

Question:

My company just opened an account with you. Is there any way to automate our system for bidding purposes?

Craig:

We do offer several automated functions but have not focused on automating the bidding process for several reasons. For example, if you have multiple bidders with a high "cap" and the system automatically increases bids, then you would have artificial increases that give an unfair advantage to larger companies since they have larger budgets. This has recently been seen in other systems that have introduced such functions.

There are many other reasons, but the important thing to understand about FindWhat.com is that we are focused on keeping a "fair playing field" for all advertisers. We feel there are many different ways to market a product online. But to date, there has not been a "fair" way for thousands and thousands of advertisers to participate. Again, we are focused on helping advertisers of all sizes rather than the ones with the largest budgets.

We feel that in the long run, this will build a larger and stronger company.

Question:

What are your recommendations for a beginner pay-per-click client at FindWhat.com? For example, strategy, budget, etc.?

Craig:

Concentrate on your keywords and descriptions. Give our reps a call. As I mentioned earlier, we serve over 1 billion searches per month, so if you want to get traffic, you need to be identified by the user as a site that has the product they are looking for.

Question:

When bidding on your keywords, does FindWhat.com have an auto bid function to help reduce bid gaps between the #1 and #2 position?

Craig:

We implemented several functions that help eliminate the gaps you are mentioning. But if you really want to keep tabs on it, we suggest you log in frequently or contract a bid management company.

We do have a BidOptimizer feature, which will allow you to choose the position you wish your keywords to obtain (positions 1 through 5) within the FindWhat.com results. This feature also allows you to put in a maximum bid price. If, for example, the keyword you wished to have the number one position had a current bid price of \$1.00, the BidOptimizer would put your bid to \$1.01, unless you had a max bid price of less than a dollar. In that case, it would put your bid at one penny over the next possible bid position, within your cap limit.

Question:

In your opinion, what are the top three mistakes made by new users?

Craig:

The top three are:

- 1) They do not focus on the keywords that are actually delivering the ROI.
- 2) They do not focus on an accurate description.
- 3) They let their account run out of money over the weekend when we experience heavy usage.

Comment:

I just wanted to add that my company has been a FindWhat.com customer for a couple of years now and I really do love FindWhat.com and have placed many sites with FindWhat.com instead of other pay engines.

Craig:

But do not sell the others short. This is a dynamic sector and other companies do have benefits.

Question:

Does FindWhat.com have some kind of keyword tool to determine which are the popular keywords?

Craig:

Yes, in our keyword center. You can also call one of our reps and they will assist you in picking out the best keywords for your site. The keyword center is in our account manager section -- you need an account to access it.

Question:

I filled out an application for your affiliate program the other day and was told it would be reviewed. How long does that typically take?

Craig:

Anywhere between 1 to 5 days. We get a lot of apps but are very selective on who we partner with. If you have any questions, call 888-882-3178 and ask for the Business Development Division.

Question:

Craig, is your BusinessBuilder a new offering? What has the response been? Is the \$25 a cap (limit 2500 keywords or 500 URLs, whichever comes first), and one can increase the "pot" or if not, it stops the bids at \$25/month?

Craig:

We've had the BusinessBuilder product for quite some time. The response has been fairly good, but it is not something we push. We would rather assist as much as possible rather than push someone into a paid service if they do not need it. BusinessBuilder itself is a one-on-one consultation service for those who either don't have time to put together their own keyword ad campaign or are unfamiliar with keyword-targeted text ads.

\$25/month is the minimum amount we allow a person to open an account with. The entire \$25 is applied to click-throughs, so really there is no fee per se. As you can imagine, we do not have a max!

Question:

Let's say you're in top 10 for a particular keyword. Is it better to place a FindWhat.com bid on that term anyway, or to maximize for lesser keywords?

Craig:

You need to make the call. If the listing is getting the ROI you desire, then I would concentrate on other keywords. But if the listing is not getting the desired number of clicks and your ROI is high on that keyword, then I would focus my resources there. There is no blanket answer. It really depends on your results.

Question:

Are there resources for learning more about strategy?

Craig:

I think you are participating in the best one on the Web right now – the Academy of Web Specialists' online training programs (<http://www.onlinewebtraining.com/courses.html>).

Question:

Could you tell us more about FindWhat.com's relationship with Lycos?

Craig:

Our relationship with Lycos is the first of its kind. We have developed a new private label initiative that we are offering to the largest portals. Lycos is the first to launch. Basically it puts the largest portals in business for themselves, allowing advertisers to pick and choose who they want traffic from rather than all of the traffic getting lumped together.

As we all know, all traffic is not equal. We feel over the next few years, the largest portals will have their own service, and we intend on helping them do it.

Question:

Could you tell us a few of your 200+ partners?

Craig:

Sure... Lycos - HotBot - Webcrawler - Excite - Metacrawler - CNet -Dogpile. More information can be found at our site at [-http://www.findwhat.com/content/pressreleases.asp](http://www.findwhat.com/content/pressreleases.asp). And, since we are a NASDAQ company, you can find more info by looking under our symbol: FWHT.

Question:

Is it still important to focus on the top three results?

Craig:

It really depends on the results one is getting. Some people get the ROI they are looking for at lower levels. But since some distribution partners only show three listings, it helps to concentrate on the top three.

Question:

What is the best way to measure ROI?

Craig:

It depends on what you are looking for when a user clicks. If you want sales, then the best way to look at it is what are your "sales to click" conversion.

In Conclusion

FindWhat.com (<http://www.findwhat.com>) is one of the more popular keyword-targeted performance-based text advertising services, and you'll generally be able to pay less for keywords purchased there versus at some of the other pay engines and still see good results. With over 200 partners displaying FindWhat.com results, it's an excellent choice when considering where to purchase keywords.

FindWhat.com has partnered with the Academy to offer Academy students up to 3,500 qualified visitors to their sites for only \$25! For more information, visit:

[http://www.onlinewebtraining.com/findwhat\\_offer.html](http://www.onlinewebtraining.com/findwhat_offer.html)

Robin Nobles, Director of Training, Academy of Web Specialists, (<http://www.academywebspecialists.com>) has trained several thousand people in her online search engine marketing courses (<http://www.onlinewebtraining.com>). She also teaches 2-, 3-, and 5-day hands-on, search engine marketing workshops in locations across the globe with Search Engine Workshops (<http://www.searchengineworkshops.com>).

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