



## Basic Search Engine Marketing Terms

**Ad** - Advertisements a searcher sees after submitting a query in a search engine or web site search box. In PPC, these ads are usually text format, with a Title, Description and Display URL. In some cases, a keyword the searcher used in his or her query appears boldfaced in the displayed ad. Ads can be positioned anywhere on a search results page; commonly they appear at the top - above the natural or organic listings - and on the right side of the page, also known as “Right Rail.”

**Ad Copy** - The main text of a clickable search or context-served ad. It usually makes up the second and third lines of a displayed ad, between the Ad Title and the Display URL.

**Ad Title** - The first line of text displayed in a clickable search or context-served ad. Ad Titles serve as ad headlines.

**Affiliate Marketing** - Affiliate marketing is a process of revenue sharing that allows merchants to duplicate sales efforts by enlisting other web sites as a type of outside sales force. Successful affiliate marketing programs result in the merchant attracting additional buyers, and the affiliate earning the equivalent of a referral fee, based on click-through referrals to the merchant site.

**Algorithm** - A set of rules that a search engine uses to rank listings in response to a query. Search engines guard their algorithms closely, as they are the unique formulas used to determine relevancy. Algorithms are sometimes referred to as the “secret sauce.”

**ALT Text** - Also known as alternative text or alt attribute. An HTML tag (ALT tag) used to provide images with a text description in the event images are turned off in a web browser. The images text description is usually visible while “hovering” over the image. This tag is also important for the web access of the visually impaired.

**Anchor Text** - Words used to link to a page, known as anchor text are an important



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signal to search engines to determine a page's relevance.

**Arbitrage** - A practice through which web publishers - second tier search engines, directories and vertical search engines - engage in the buying and reselling of web traffic. Typically, arbitrage occurs when such publishers pool client budgets to engage in PPC campaigns on Tier I search engines (Google, Yahoo!, MSN). If the publishers pay \$0.10 per click for traffic, they typically resell those visitors to clients who bid \$0.20 or more for the same keywords. Successful arbitrage requires that the arbitrageur must pay less per click than what the traffic sells for. The variation called Affiliate Arbitrage involves a web site owner or blogger bidding on keywords from programs such as Yahoo! Search Marketing or Google AdWords, who then links the ads, either to their own web site, or directly to a merchant site displaying ads (from programs such as the Yahoo! Publisher Network or Google AdSense).

**Backlinks:** All the links pointing at a particular web page. Also called inbound links.

**Blogs** - A truncated form for "web log." A blog is a frequently updated journal that is intended for general public consumption. They usually represent the personality of the author or web site.

**CPC** - Acronym for Cost Per Click, or the amount search engines charge advertisers for every click that sends a searcher to the advertiser's web site. For an advertiser, CPC is the total cost for each click-through received when its ad is clicked on.

**Click Through** - When a user clicks on a hypertext link and is taken to the destination of that link

**Cascading Style Sheets or CSS** - An addition to your HTML, a web site's "cascading style sheet" contains information on paragraph layout, font sizes, colors, etc. A cascading style sheet has many uses as far as search engine optimization and web site design are concerned.

**Click Fraud** - Clicks on a Pay-Per-Click advertisement that are motivated by something



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other than a search for the advertised product or service. Click fraud may be the result of malicious or negative competitor/affiliate actions motivated by the desire to increase costs for a competing advertiser or to garner click-through costs for the collaborating affiliate. Also affects search engine results by diluting the quality of clicks.

**Click Through** - When a user clicks on a hypertext link and is taken to the destination of that link

**Click Through Rate** - The percentage of those clicking on a link out of the total number who see the link. For example, imagine 10 people do a web search. In response, they see links to a variety of web pages. Three of the 10 people all choose one particular link. That link then has a 30 percent click-through rate. Also called CTR. Source: *Webmaster World Forums*

**Client-side Tracking** - Client-side tracking entails the process of tagging every page that requires tracking on the Web site with a block of JavaScript code. This method is cookie based (available as first or third party cookies) and is readily available to companies who do not own or manage their own servers.

**Cloaking** - The process by which a web site can display different versions of a web page under different circumstances. It is primarily used to show an optimized or a content-rich page to the search engines and a different page to humans. Most major search engine representatives have publicly stated that they do not approve of this practice.

**Competitive Analysis** - As used in SEO, CA is the assessment and analysis of strengths and weaknesses of competing web sites, including identifying traffic patterns, major traffic sources, and keyword selection.

**Content Network** - Also called Contextual Networks, content networks include Google and Yahoo! Contextual Search networks that serve paid search ads triggered by keywords related to the page content a user is viewing.



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**Conversion Rate** - The number of visitors who convert (take a desired action at your site) after clicking through on your ad, divided by the total number of click-throughs to your site for that ad. (Expressed as: total click-throughs that convert / total click-throughs for that ad = conversion rate.) For example, if an ad brings in 150 click-throughs and 6 of the 150 clicks result in a desired conversion, then the conversion rate is 4% ( $6 / 150 = 0.04$ ). Higher conversion rates generally translate into more successful PPC campaigns with a better ROI.

**Doorway Page** - A web page specifically created in order to obtain rankings within the natural listings of a search engine. These pages generally are filled with keywords and are meant to funnel surfers into the main web site. This practice is generally considered an outdated spam tactic. This term is not to be confused with a “landing page.”

**Dynamic Landing Pages** - Dynamic landing pages are web pages to which click-through searchers are sent that generate changeable (not static) pages with content specifically relevant to the keyword search. For example, if a user is looking for trucks, then a dynamic landing page with information and pictures on multiple models and, possibly, geographically localized dealerships might be served. The term truck would trigger a data dump into a web site template for all possible vehicles, that serves all truck-related information.

**Ecommerce** - Conducting commercial transactions on the internet where goods, information or services are bought and sold.

**.htaccess file** - A file with one or more configuration directives placed in a web site document directory. The directives apply to that directory and all subdirectories.

**Hidden text** - (Also known as Invisible text.) Text that is visible to the search engines but hidden to a user. It is traditionally accomplished by coloring a block of HTML text the same color as the background color of the page. More creative methods have also



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been employed to create the same effect while making it more difficult for the search engines to detect or filter it. It is primarily used for the purpose of including extra keywords in the page without distorting the aesthetics of the page. Most search engines penalize or ignore URLs from web sites that use this practice.

**IPTV** - Acronym for Internet Protocol Television, which delivers digital television service using the Internet Protocol over a network. IPTV delivery may be through a high capacity, high speed broadband connection. Compared to traditional broadcast and cable television, IPTV may offer new venues for PPC search advertisers through program interfaces and stored individual preferences. Source: *Wikipedia*

**Impression** - One view or display of an ad. Ad reports list total impressions per ad, which tells you the number of times your ad was served by the search engine when searchers entered your keywords (or viewed a content page containing your keywords).

**Index** - A search engine's "index" refers to the amount of documents found by a search engines crawler on the web.

**Indexability** - Also known as crawlability and spiderability. Indexability refers to the potential of a web site or its contents to be crawled or "indexed" by a search engine. If a site is not "indexable," or if a site has reduced indexability, it has difficulties getting its URLs included.

**Keyword** - A single word that relates to a specific subject or topic. For example, "glossary" would be a keyword for this document. See also Keyword Phrase.

**Keyword / Keyword Phrase** - A specific word or combination of words that a searcher might type into a search field. Includes generic, category keywords; industry-specific terms; product brands; common misspellings and expanded variations (called Keyword Stemming), or multiple words (called Long Tail for their lower CTRs but sometimes better conversion rates). All might be entered as a search query. For example, some-



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one looking to buy coffee mugs might use the keyword phrase “ceramic coffee mugs.” Also, keywords - which trigger ad network and contextual network ad serves - are the auction components on which PPC advertisers bid for all Ad Groups/Orders and campaigns.

**Keyword Density** - The number of times a keyword or keyword phrase is used in the body of a page. This is a percentage value determined by the number of words on the page, as opposed to the number of times the specific keyword appears within it. In general, the higher the number of times a keyword appears in a page, the higher its density.

**Keyword Phrase** - Two or more keywords relating to a specific topic. For example, “Mind numbingly boring glossary” would be a keyword phrase to describe this document.

**Keyword Stemming** - To return to the root or stem of a word and build additional words by adding a prefix or suffix, or using pluralization. The word can expand in either direction and even add words, increasing the number of variable options.

**Keyword Stuffing** - Generally refers to the act of adding an inordinate number of keyword terms into the HTML or tags of a web page.

**Keyword Tag** - Refers to the META keywords tag within a web page. This tag is meant to hold approximately 8 - 10 keywords or keyword phrases, separated by commas. These phrases should be either misspellings of the main page topic, or terms that directly reflect the content on the page on which they appear. Keyword tags are sometimes used for internal search results as well as viewed by search engines.

**Keyword Targeting** - Displaying Pay Per Click search ads on publisher sites across the Web (see also Contextual Networks) that contain the keywords in a context advertiser’s Ad Group.

**KPI, Key Performance Indicators** - KPI are metrics used to quantify objectives that



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reflect the strategic performance of your online marketing campaigns. They provide business and marketing intelligence to assess a measurable objective and the direction in which that objective is headed. (See Module 5, Lesson 2, for key definitions for general and SEO-specific KPIs.)

**Landing Page / Destination Page** - The web page at which a searcher arrives after clicking on an ad. When creating a PPC ad, the advertiser displays a URL (and specifies the exact page URL in the code) on which the searcher will land after clicking on an ad in the SERP. Landing pages are also known as “where the deal is closed,” as it is landing page actions that determine an advertiser’s conversion rate success.

**Link Farming** - The attempt to substantially and artificially increase link popularity.

**Link Popularity** - Link popularity generally refers to the total number of links pointing to any particular URL. There are typically two types of link popularity: Internal and External. Internal link popularity typically refers to the number of links or pages within a web site that link to a specific URL. External link popularity refers to the number of inbound links from external web sites that are pointing to a specific URL. If you have more “links” than your competitors, you are typically known to have link cardinality or link superiority.

**Linkbait** - Also known as link bait, this is something on your site that people will notice and link to. By linking to your site, other sites are saying they value the content of your site and that they think other people will be interested in it, too.

**Linking Profile** - A profile is a representation of the extent to which something exhibits various characteristics. A linking profile is the results of an analysis of where of your links are coming from.

**Log File** - All server software stores information about web site incoming and outgoing activities. Web log files function like the “black box” that records everything during an



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airplane's flight. The log file is usually in the root directory but it may also be found in a secondary folder. If you do not have permission to access these files, then you will need the help of the server administrator.

**Log File Analysis** - The analysis of records stored in the log file. In its raw format, the data in the log files can be hard to read and overwhelming. There are numerous log file analyzers that convert log file data into user-friendly charts and graphs. A good analyzer is generally considered an essential tool in SEO because it can show search engine statistics such as the number of visitors received from each search engine, the keywords each visitors used to find the site, visits by search engine spiders etc. Source: [www.thewebdivision.com/glossary.html](http://www.thewebdivision.com/glossary.html)

**Long Tail** - Keyword phrases with at least three, sometimes four or five, words in them. These long tail keywords are usually highly specific and draw lower traffic than shorter, more competitive keyword phrases, which is why they are also cheaper. Oftentimes, long tail keywords, in aggregate, have good conversion ratios for the low number of click-throughs they generate.

**Long-tailed Keywords** - Keyword phrases with at least 2 or 3 words in them.

**Metrics** - A system of measures that helps to quantify particular characteristics. In SEO the following are some important metrics to measure: overall traffic, search engine traffic, conversions, top traffic-driving keywords, top conversion-driving keywords, keyword rankings, etc.

**Minimum Bid** - The least amount that an advertiser can bid for a keyword or keyword phrase and still be active on the search ad network. This amount can range from \$0.01 to \$0.50 (or more for highly competitive keywords), and are set by the search engine.

**Negative Keywords** - Filtered-out keywords to prevent ad serves on them in order to avoid irrelevant click-through charges on, for example, products that you do not sell,



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or to refine and narrow the targeting of your Ad Group's keywords. Microsoft adCenter calls them "excluded keywords." Formatting negative keywords varies by search engine; but they are usually designated with a minus sign.

**Organic Results** - Listings on SERPs that were not paid for; listings for which search engines do not sell space. Sites appear in organic (also called "natural") results because a search engine has applied formulas (algorithms) to its search crawler index, combined with editorial decisions and content weighting, that it deems important enough inclusion without payment. Paid Inclusion Content is also often considered "organic" even though it is paid advertising because paid inclusion content usually appears on SERPs mixed with unpaid, organic results.

**Organic Search Listings** - Listings that search engines do not sell (unlike paid listings). Instead, sites appear solely because a search engine has deemed it editorially important for them to be included, regardless of payment. Paid Inclusion Content is also often considered "organic" even though it is paid for. This is because paid inclusion content usually appears intermixed with unpaid organic results.

**Organic Search Rankings** - Search engine ranking of web pages found in SERPs.  
PPC - Acronym for Pay Per Click. See also PPC Advertising.

**PageRank (PR)** - PR is the Google technology developed at Stanford University for placing importance on pages and web sites. At one point, PageRank (PR) was a major factor in rankings. Today it is one of hundreds of factors in the algorithm that determines a page's rankings.

**Paid Inclusion** - Refers to the process of paying a fee to a search engine in order to be included in that search engine or directory. Also known as "guaranteed inclusion." Paid inclusion does not impact rankings of a web page; it merely guarantees that the web page itself will be included in the index. These programs were typically used by web sites that were not being fully crawled or were incapable of being crawled, due



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to dynamic URL structures, frames, etc.

**Position** - In PPC advertising, position is the placement on a search engine results page where your ad appears relative to other paid ads and to organic search results. Top ranking paid ads (high ranking 10 to 15 results, depending on the engine) usually appear at the top of the SERP and on the “right rail” (right-side column of the page). Ads appearing in the top three paid-ad or Sponsored Ad slots are known as Premium Positions. Paid search ad position is determined by confidential algorithms and Quality Score measures specific to each search engine. However, factors in the engines’ position placement under some advertiser control include bid price, the ad’s CTR, relevancy of your ad to searcher requests, relevance of your click-through landing page to the search request, and quality measures search engines calculate to ensure quality user experience.

**Position Preference** - A feature in Google AdWords and in Microsoft adCenter enabling advertisers to specify in which positions they would like their ads to appear on the SERP. Not a position guarantee.

**PPC Advertising** - Acronym for Pay-Per-Click Advertising, a model of online advertising in which advertisers pay only for each click on their ads that directs searchers to a specified landing page on the advertiser’s web site. PPC ads may get thousands of impressions (views or serves of the ad); but, unlike more traditional ad models billed on a CPM (Cost-Per-Thousand-Impressions) basis, PPC advertisers only pay when their ad is clicked on. Charges per ad click-through are based on advertiser bids in hybrid ad space auctions and are influenced by competitor bids, competition for keywords and search engines’ proprietary quality measures of advertiser ad and landing page content.

**PPC Management** - The monitoring and maintenance of a Pay-Per-Click campaign or campaigns. This includes changing bid prices, expanding and refining keyword lists, editing ad copy, testing campaign components for cost effectiveness and successful



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conversions, and reviewing performance reports for reports to management and clients, as well as results to feed into future PPC campaign operations.

**Rank** - How well positioned a particular web page or web site appears in search engine results. For example, if you rank at position #1, you're the first listed paid or sponsored ad. If you're in position #18, it is likely that your ad appears on the second or third page of search results, after 17 competitor paid ads and organic listings. Rank and position affect your click-through rates and, ultimately, conversion rates for your landing pages.

**Right Rail** - The common name for the right-side column of a web page. On a SERP, right rail is usually where sponsored listings appear.

**Robots.txt** - A text file present in the root directory of a website which is used to direct the activity of search engine crawlers. This file is typically used to tell a crawler which portions of the site should be crawled and which should not be crawled.

**SEO** - Acronym for "Search Engine Optimization." This is the process of editing a website's content and code in order to improve visibility within one or more search engines. When this term is used to describe an individual, it stands for "Search Engine Optimizer" or one who performs SEO.

**SEM** - Acronym for "Search Engine Marketing". Search engine marketing also includes submissions to search engines

**SERP** - Acronym for Search Engine Results Page, the page delivered to a searcher that displays the results of a search query entered into the search field. Displays both paid ad (sponsored) and organic listings in varying positions or rank.

**Search Directory** - Similar to a search engine, in that they both compile databases of web sites. A directory does not use crawlers in order to obtain entries in its search



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database. Instead, it relies on user interaction and submissions for the content it contains. Submissions are then categorized by topic and normally alphabetized, so that the results of any search will start with site descriptions that begin with some number or non-letter character, then moving from A-to-Z.

**Search Engines** - A search engine is a database of many web pages. Most engines display the number of web pages they hold in their database at any given time. A search engine generally “ranks” or orders the results according to a set of parameters. These parameters (called algorithms) vary among search engines; they are always improving in order to identify spam as well as improve relevance. See also SERP, Algorithm.

**Targeting** - Narrowly focusing ads and keywords to attract a specific, marketing-profiled searcher and potential customer. You can target to geographic locations (geo-targeting), by days of the week or time of day (dayparting), or by gender and age (demographic targeting). Targeting features vary by search engine. Newer ad techniques and software focus on behavioral targeting, based on web activity and behaviors that are predictive for potential customers who might be more receptive to particular ads.

**Tier I Search Engines** - The top echelon, or top three, search engines that serve the vast majority of searcher queries. Also referred to as Major Engines, Top Tier Engines or GYM, for Google, Yahoo! and Microsoft Live Search.

**Tier II Search Engines** - Smaller, vertical and specialized engines, including general engines, such as Ask.com and AOL; meta-engines that search and display results from other search engines, such as Dogpile; local engines, shopping and comparison engines, and business vertical engines. Tier II Search Engines don't offer the search query market share or features of the Tier I engines; however, Tier II engines can target specific, niche markets and are usually lower cost.

**Tier III Search Engines** - Contextual distribution networks, through which marketers' ads appear on pages within the PPC engine's content network, triggered by user web site page views at the moment that contain the advertiser's keyword in its content.



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Cost is usually through Cost-Per-Thousand-Impressions (CPM) charges, rather than Pay Per Click (PPC). As discussed in Fundamentals coursework, Google's contextual distribution program is called AdSense; Yahoo!'s is called Content Match.

**Title Tag** - An HTML tag appearing in the <head> tag of a web page that contains the page title. The page title should be determined by the relevant contents of that specific web page. The contents of a title tag for a web page is generally displayed in a search engine result as a bold blue underlined hyperlink.

**Unique Visitor** - Identifies an actual web surfer (as opposed to a crawler) and is tracked by a unique identifiable quality (typically IP address). If a visitor comes to a web site and clicks on 100 links, it is still only counted as one unique visit.

**Usability** - This term refers to how "user friendly" a web site and its functions are. A site with good usability is a site that makes it easy for visitors to find the information they are looking for or to perform the action they desire. Bad usability is anything that causes confusion or problems for the user. For example, large Flash animations served to a visitor with a dial up connection causes poor usability. Easy, intuitive navigation and clear, informative text enhance usability.

**Viral Marketing** - Also called viral advertising, viral marketing refers to marketing techniques that use pre-existing social networks to produce increases in brand awareness. The awareness increases are the result of self-replicating viral processes, analogous to the spread of pathological and computer viruses. It can often be word-of-mouth delivered and enhanced online; it can also harness the network effect of the internet and can be very useful in reaching a large number of people rapidly. Source: *Wikipedia*

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