

11.1: Introduction

Search advertising, also called pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, is a way to advertise your business or product directly on search engine results pages, where the advertiser pays only for each click on their advert.

Online advertising continues to evolve, and available formats range from simple text search adverts through to rich media banners and even video adverts. Search ads account for 48% of online ads. And more than 75% of those search ads are through Google. Google earned nearly US\$ 25 billion in search ad revenue alone for 2016. Their market share is expected to hit over 80% by 2019, with an expected revenue of over US\$ 35 billion (Townsend, 2017).

Adverts on search engines are easy to spot as they're clearly labelled as advertising and are separated from organic search results. They can appear on the top of the results page, usually in a box, or at the bottom of the results page.

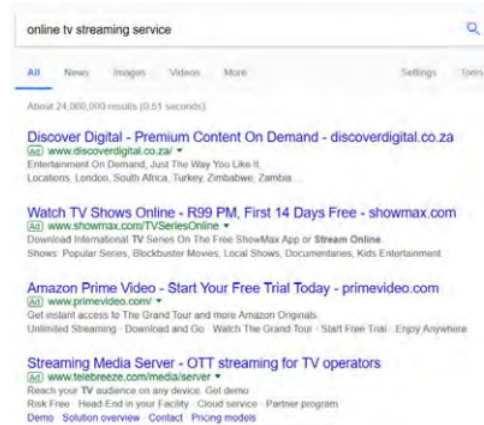


Figure 11.1.1: Search adverts appearing in a search for digital marketing *Adapted From Screenshot, Google, 2017*

Search advertising on search engines is keyword based. This means that it is triggered by the search term that a user enters into a search engine. Advertisers target the keywords for which they want their site to appear.

For the advertiser, the beauty of search advertising is that adverts are displayed when potential customers are already expressing intent meaning customers are searching for a product or service. It allows advertisers to present their offering to a potential customer who is already in the buying cycle.

Google is, by a wide margin, the leader in the search advertising field; because of this, the chapter is very Google-centric, though the same principle should apply to any other search advertising platforms. Other platforms to be aware of are Bing, Yahoo! and Baidu.

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