

11.5: Targeting options

Search adverts are targeted in a variety of ways, depending on how you want to reach your intended audience. Targeting your adverts means you know that the traffic you are getting is relevant to your product.

Keywords and match types

It's not enough to simply pick the right keywords; you need to know about the different ways in which the search engine interprets and matches the search term to your chosen keyword.

Most search engines require the advertiser to provide the search keywords for which their advert should appear. Considering the massive volume of searches conducted every day, it would be impossible to determine all the possible terms potential customers might use to find you. That is why there are different keyword match types for search advertising.

Google AdWords using the following match types:

- Broad match
- Broad match modifier
- Phrase match
- Exact match
- Negative match.

Broad match means that your advert will appear for the keywords you have entered, as well as search terms that contain your keywords and any other words in any order, as well as some variations of your keywords such as misspellings and synonyms.

The broad match modifier is an additional targeting option that gives you tighter control than broad match by excluding synonyms but including other versions of the word, such as plurals. It's implemented with a + before the keyword.

Phrase match, which is denoted with quotation marks around the keywords; 'phrase match' means that your advert will appear only for search terms that have your keywords in them, in the same order, though other words may also be in the search term.

Exact match, denoted by square brackets [exact match] means that the advert will appear for search terms only exactly the same as the keywords selected.

Negative match, denoted by using a dash in front of the keywords; -negative means that your advert will not appear in searches using that word, no matter what other words are used.

Advertisers can assign as many keywords as they want to an advert, but only one advert for each URL will be shown. If two advertisers are bidding to show adverts for the same domain, only one will be shown. Which advert will be shown is based on the bids being placed and on the quality of the adverts (more on that later).

Language and location targeting

Search engines have versions customised for specific regions and languages, based on the user's settings and where in the world they are searching from. As a search marketer, you can choose the language and the location of the search engine to target. This is known as geo-targeting.

For example, you may want your advert to show only to English searches in Asia, or to French searches in Johannesburg. Targeting your advert means that your ads won't be seen by users outside your target area, and you won't pay for traffic that you cannot convert into customers.

Behavioural and demographic targeting

Search advertising can also be targeted based on personal behaviour. Using AdWords, you can re-target visitors who came to your site via an AdWords advert based on actions that they took. This means that if users came to your site, but did not complete a purchase, you can target adverts to them in the SERPs or through other online advertising channels, such as the Google Display Network. This is called re-marketing or re-targeting, and can be very effective for remaining top of mind until the user is ready to convert. It is usually advisable to cap the number of times a re-marketing ad is shown to an individual to avoid annoying them.

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