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Google AdWords Platform Usage In Educational Program Erasmus Intensive Programme

INTRODUCTION

Author of this elaboration is going to share experiences of teams of students who took part in Erasmus Intensive Programme that was held at the University of Economics in Katowice, as well as he is going to show how use of Google AdWords platform helps in running experimental NGO (Non Governmental Organization) programs. While working with real organization, groups of students planned, led and rated two week Internet marketing campaign using Google AdWords platform. Whole project was sponsored by Google. Project participants' opinions show that it moved their attention to both new technologies and marketing, and gave them experience in creating effective advertising campaigns in Internet marketing, when using Google AdWords platform.

This article is shedding light on what sponsored search is, giving short explanation of basic Internet search marketing terms, and trying to prove usefulness of this kind of exercise as a typical educational class project. Basing on gained experience author will point out elements that were used, explain where some problems arose, as well as offer good solutions for the future. The article should mostly interest academic teachers who might partake in Erasmus Intensive Programme in the future, and those who debate over including Google AdWords platform into educational program.

Sponsored search is an innovative information searching paradigm that has constantly growing influence on the economy.

Contrary to numerous student competitions only simulating economic conditions or predicting hypothetical marketing moves, students participating in Erasmus Intensive Programme develop and inculcate Internet marketing campaigns for real organizations and spend real funds. Each group of students is given 250 PLN for expenses in AdWords, Google's flagship product, to cause Web site traffic in NGO organization's website. During two weeks when Intensive Programme is being held, students write individual reports on

various aspects of running campaign and make corrections accordingly. By running marketing campaign directly and playing a part in it as consultants, students can gain a lot of experience.

Moreover, unlike many students' competitions, Intensive Programme makes educational value of an exercise the key point. To enhance quality of earned experience and be able to measure accomplished results, students are obliged to write a report that focuses on four didactic areas (Rosso, 2009):

- teaching goals and results,
- team work and cooperating with an organization,
- running campaign strategy development,
- future recommendations for an organization.

Comparing IP with other educational courses, it is sometimes hard to find two alike using the same books, doing the same exercise and employing the same grades criteria during another educational course. IP is a real, focused on solving problems task, which, when taken, enables varying classical academic classes. Taking part in a competition helps students develop their marketing and business skills, so useful in their professional career after school graduation.

BASIC TERMS AND DISCIPLINE REVIEW

Internet marketing in Web search engine is by some called SEM *(search engine marketing).* This term is defined as totality of marketing forms connected with network advertisements through search engines, put together.

A. Gąsiorkiewicz defines forms of search engine's Web site advertising, as follows (Gąsiorkiewicz, 2008):

- *search engine optimization,*
- *search engine advertising,*
- *search network advertising,*
- *content network advertising.*

First two are basic element of network advertising through Web search engines. Two next, connected with it though, belong to another area of Internet marketing forms.

Search engine optimization is a Web site optimization helping in placing it as higher ranked on the search results page. Wide variety of this term's definition can be found in the literature. Actions within *search engine advertising* are based on direct and commercial search engines offer that cause financial engagements towards them. We differ two basic

types of these actions: payed incorporation of Web site into search engine system *(paid inclusion)* and payed positioning of Web site links on search results pages *(paid placement).*

Within conditions of Polish e-economy most search engines are based solely on *paid placement* model (such as Google, Onet.pl, Wp.pl, Bing.com). Yahoo is an example of search engine using *paid inclusion* model. In case of paid Web site links advertising two main types of financial settlement are used. Currently, most commonly used model is PPC *(pay per click* also called CPC - *cost per click),* according to which the fee is charged for the actual number of clicks on a link. Second, less commonly, but still used type is CPM *(cost per mille),* a model where advertisers pay fixed price for every time their ad is displayed.

Search network advertising works in a similar manner to paid Web site links' display, with the difference that sponsored links appear on partnership sites' search results pages, associated with search engines. *Content network advertising* depicts contextual advertising system. That form has been mentioned above due to the fact that it is usually being offered by search engines owners.

According to research conducted by the Internet Advertising Bureau Poland (IAB, 2008) there are two main goals of the use of search engines – research and shopping. When searching for general information Internet users typically use natural search results. However, when seeking information about a particular product, most of them browse sponsored search results, and 44 percent clicks on them and gets acquainted with advertiser's offer. According to the Kelsey Group and comScore companies' research, very popular are local queries (e.g. "real estate Warsaw", "dentist Katowice"), which make up to 20 percent of all queries. Seven out of ten consumers declare using the Internet when buying products or services in their local markets, and over a half when finding services interesting for them uses the network instead of a traditional phone book. Moreover, 33 percent of locally looking people wants to make a purchase right away and declares to contact the company via phone most willingly. That is why more and more small and medium-sized companies operating in local markets use search engines promotion.

The effect of increase in the number of Internet users and search engines' queries is bigger advertiser clients' interest in forms of promotion on these sites, which in turn translates into increased spending on search engines' promotion. Estimations made by IAB Poland, based on the AdEx 2007 IAB Poland and PricewaterhouseCoopers Poland study data, show that search engine advertising expenditure in year 2007 in Poland amounted to PLN 146.3 million.

In a typical scenario of using Internet search engine, an Internet user looks for information on topic that interests him. After submitting a text query, it means query consisting of one up to several words describing the information that is needed, search engine comes up with a list of results as a search results. The list is a brief summary of Web sites that match the user's intentions. Each result in the list usually consists of a domain title, one or two lines of text with a description and its URL bar.

Sponsored links most commonly appear as a specially marked area on the Web site with search results, usually on the right, or as a 1 to 3 search results in the main search area, together with the "natural" search results. Sponsored links appear in response to words entered by an user. Clicking an advertisement moves user to an advertiser's website.

Advertisers go through a process similar to an auction stating which advertisements, on which positions, on which Web sites and at what pay rate will be displayed. Advertiser submits an offer how much he is willing to pay per click on an advertisement displayed in response to specific words in a query addressed to search engine. Because of the fact that search results page has limited space for displaying advertisements, advertisers bid to display words or compound keywords determining when and where an offered ad will be displayed. High position of an ad is highly desirable because it strongly influences the likelihood of being noticed.

Research on sponsored search are very few in the world and in Poland have not appeared at all. It is probably due to the necessity of paying costs and ensuring value-neutral research funding. IP is an opportunity of launching such research, being simultaneously conducted in cooperation with relevant NGOs, at the same time, in the same economic conditions and using the same advertising budget funded by Google.

WORK RULES WITHIN NETAWARE ERASMUS INTENSIVE PROGRAMME

Before process of conducting the IP exercise is going to be described, we must explain what has been introduced as the principles of the cooperation. Academic teacher as a coordinator of groups of students is to lead the group and work with the students to ensure that they possess the appropriate knowledge on online marketing and using Google AdWords. Leading teacher is responsible for providing the instruction sets, electronic materials and guides, as well as supervising writing reports about strategies and effects achieved during running the campaign. Google helps too, providing video guides illustrating how to create an effective promotional campaign using AdWords.

The results achieved in the competition consist of two components. First is the assessment of reports made by academic panel. Second element is the presentation of results during the last IP day. Academic panel, consisting of a dozen or so scientists from countries participating in IP, basing on previously prepared reports and final presentation selects winners.

At the end of participation in Intensive Programme students should demonstrate the following practical skills:

- discussing and planning form of online marketing,
- learning how to work within a group and cooperate with a non-governmental organization (NGO),
- understanding and ability of explaining the following terms: banner advertising, CTR, conversion, landing page, optimization techniques, return on invest and text advertising,
- comparison of mass consumer advertising to the one tailored to his needs and intentions,
- comparison of advantages and disadvantages of three displayed advertisement payment models: PPC – "pay per click", CPM – "cost per mille" and affiliate marketing,
- illustrating technical and cultural factors affecting success of online marketing campaign,
- indicating difficulties in developing marketing campaign based on a Web site located among among millions of other sites.

Schedule and executing following activities took two weeks. Teams made up of 5 to 6 students are to find a non-governmental organization that already has a Web site, but does not currently use AdWords or has not been using it for at least 6 months. Students consult with the selected organization what goals it would like to achieve during running advertising campaign. Teams create a document in which the main operation strategy is prepared and, on its basis, prepare advertising and action plan. For the actions mentioned above they are given 250 PLN, they launch campaign and run it continuously for 10 days. Throughout this period students examine achieved results, draw some conclusions in a form of individual written reports and increase the quality and effectiveness of their campaign. After its completion students compile a summary of actions that were carried out and point out which goals and

with what result were achieved, as well as recommend further Internet marketing in search engine development steps.

Main objective of the competition is to enable students to gain practical experience during studies. With this in mind, students while cooperating with a non-governmental organization take a role of consultants and selected subject becomes their client. Thanks to this they try to achieve the same professional level of activity as they would have been required while cooperating during real consultant work.

The campaign's key aim is to fit best the needs and expectations of the NGO. Elements that are taken into account in assessing carried out activities are within 5 areas of running the campaign:

- account's structure,
- optimization techniques,
- activity and indirect reports,
- effective use of the budget,
- matching of advertisements.

It should be noted that there is no perfect account's structure. Each one is individually tailored to the needs of NGO. Organizations have individual goals and offer different services. Hence, account settings should reflect the nature of the organization. The best structure is a mirror of a Web site structure. Campaigns are grouped according to types of products and services they offer, or according to their geographical location, and contain multiple advertisements groups with content and keywords customized (Table 1).

Account
Unique email address
Password
Billing information

Campaign	**Campaign**
Daily budget	Daily budget
Location targeting	Location targeting
Language targeting	Language targeting
Distribution preference	Distribution preference
End dates	End dates

Ad group	**Ad group**	**Ad group**	**Ad group**

One set of keywords and placements One or more ads PPC pay rate	One set of keywords and placements One or more ads PPC pay rate	One set of keywords and placements One or more ads PPC pay rate	One set of keywords and placements One or more ads PPC pay rate

Table 1. *Google AdWords Learning Center*

Optimization's meaning is, among other things, proper selection of keywords and determination exactly how keywords will trigger with advertisements (broad match, phrase match and exact match), and choice of advertisements' target areas in partnership network. Being active and reporting means constant campaign monitoring and making changes up to speed, as well as using the reporting center. Effective use of the budget requires establishing specific pay rates per click and adjustment of these rates to each keyword. Good matching up of advertisements and users intentions increases the value of CTR, which is a key element defining the quality of the campaign.

GOMC INCLUSION INTO EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Erasmus Intensive Programme, organized at the University of Economics in Katowice in 2012, involved 60 students from 10 different Universities from 9 European countries. During first classes they formed 10 teams. Students were organized into groups according to the promoter's arrangements. Their first task after formation of teams was to analyze the non-governmental organization that dealt with social exclusion. The organizations were of two different kinds – five of them took care of homeless people, another five helped immigrants.

All the Web sites of selected organizations were designed in text technology, hence have already been indexed in search engine, what allowed for better campaign adjustment (sites built in Flash technology are not search engine friendly, because it is difficult to index the contents of media file and there are no destination location for the URL, which can be connected directly with keywords that make up the run campaign.

Student teams participated in lectures discussing work of Google AdWords platform and became familiar with materials widening discussed subjected that were authorized by Google. After passing all vital information, on the second day of IP students started the campaigns. The advantage of launching campaigns simultaneously was the ability of comparing achieved effects and the cooperation and exchange of experience between the teams. Another proposal was that each team creates Facebook account, through with all

participants could share experiences and work effects up to speed. This was also taken into account during giving final marks.

Students noticed that monitoring of the campaign was a real challenge for them. Basically every day they had to take actions correcting or improving something. The most often adjusted parameter at the beginning of the campaign was location targeting, that is identification of areas where, based on the IP address, advertisements were supposed to be displayed. Adjustments were made at the countries level. At the beginning number of ads and keywords connected to them were increased, too.

For all teams suggested daily budget was 25 PLN, which, at the maximum financial load, allowed leading the exercise for at least 10 days. The campaign was aimed to different virtual areas, among which the most effective proved to be Google search results page, then the contextual network, what can be justified by increasing resistance of users for ads displayed on Internet Web sites. Students had plenty of practice with the target marketing concept and got to know how to effectively use Internet search engine in creating an effective advertising campaign.

Academic teacher has provided, in accordance with his previous experience when taking part in Google Online Marketing Challenge, the exact specification of requirements regarding preparing written reports and their grade points scale. On the grounds of reports teachers have graded work of the teams. The formation of each report was coordinated by the leading teacher, and finally, graded by the academic panel. IP reports grade was 50 percent of the final grade of the whole program. Other elements are oral presentation (30 percent) and running the Facebook page (20 percent).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE EXERCISE IN ACADEMIC CLASS

Taking under consideration the experience gained during the IP, it is worth suggesting some tips for those who would like to participate in this project in the future:

- before the beginning of a program, the recruitment of potential project organizations should already be started; organizations that are willing to make quick changes on their Web sites are most wanted customers,
- it is worth to diversify classes with video presentations as well as other books widening the scope of subject,
- if possible, all teams should start running the campaign at the same time; it is much easier then to assist in the exercise, which in turn creates ground for experience exchange,

- if the IP competition is hard to be implemented in class, e.g. it is offered during summer semester only, it can still be built into the subject; all is needed is financial means in the amount of 250 PLN, multiplied by the number of volunteers' teams.

SUMMARY

The program was an exercise held within Erasmus Intensive Programme at the University that allowed students to gain experience needed in online advertising. Student teams were given the equivalent of 250 PLN, which they appropriated on Google AdWords advertising, while cooperating with selected overseas organization dedicated to social exclusion, in order to come up with an effective online marketing campaign for the organization. Teams described their strategies, ran the campaign, evaluated its results and formulated a recommendation for further company's Internet marketing activities' development.

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