CPC Live Cost Analysis Feature Guide

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CPC Live Cost Analysis provides you real-time insight into the effectiveness of your paid search (PPC) campaigns. This feature pulls together dynamic price information from the leading PPC search engines (Google, Overture, FindWhat, Espotting, etc) with the revenue earned on your website, to measure the profitability of each PPC keyword.

Package & pricing

CPC Live Cost Analysis is an add-on to the E-Business edition:

CPC Live Cost Analysis price: $29.95 per month
Price includes: 10,000 campaign clickthroughs

Additional clicks: $0.005 per click

E-Business edition price: $49.95 per month
Price includes: 50,000 page views per month

Additional page views: $0.60 per thousand

Typical client

Online merchants, marketers

Solves the following

Marketers often wish to measure the profitability of their online advertising campaigns. This task becomes complicated with PPC campaigns, where prices are set dynamically. CPC Live Cost Analysis solves this problem by gathering and consolidating pricing data from the major PPC search engines, in real time.

This means CPC Live Cost Analysis can offer you a detailed breakdown of your PPC advertising campaigns, including cost, revenue earned, cost per action and, most critically, the return on ad spend.

What's more, CPC Live Cost Analysis can help you optimize your PPC advertising budget, because it details your campaign performance according to each PPC keyword—and keyword derivative.

Finally, while each of the PPC search engines provides you at least some of the reporting puzzle, Live Cost Analysis consolidates data from all sources, for up to thousands of keywords and keyword derivatives, into a single, concise report, as in the extract below.

Implementation

For the purposes of this Feature Guide, we assume you (or your agency) are able to configure an advertising campaign in Google, Overture, or the PPC search engine of your choice.

Note that Live Cost Analysis setup is essentially the same as Conversion Analysis setup, with the difference that configuring a PPC campaign means taking additional steps to track and record the cost associated with each PPC keyword.

Setting up sales tracking

In order to define an action for the purpose of tracking sales for Live Cost Analysis, you need to edit the tracking code, on a specific page, to activate the 'action' variable.

The selection of this page is critical, because every time that page is loaded a sales action will be recorded This means you need to choose a page that is only displayed when a sale has been completed. This is usually a 'thank you,' or 'sales confirmation' page.

Here is an example of how to edit the tracking code to activate the 'sales action' variable:

```
//var DOCUMENTGROUP='';
//var DOCUMENTNAME='';

var ACTION='01';
var AMOUNT='$salesprice';
```

Removing the double forward slash activates the 'action' variable. In order to identify the action as a sale, you must use the designation '01'.

Please note that when using the 'sales' action, you should also include the 'AMOUNT' variable, which associates the monetary value of a purchase with the 'sales' action, for display in the Campaign Summary report.

Also note that in the example above, '$salesprice' is the variable employed by our fictional shopping cart to display the price that is associated with a given sale. The actual name of this variable depends on the specific shopping cart software you use.

Setting up PPC campaign tracking

In order to track a PPC campaign, you must add tracking elements to the campaign URL. The following example shows a URL that might be used in a Google campaign. Other PPC search engines set up in a similar way. Overture is a special case (see next section).

The following example shows a URL that might be used in an Google campaign:

> http://yourwebsite.com/landingpage.html?campaign=google&kw=your+keyword

Note: the significance of the question mark is that it separates the web address, on the left, from the tracking elements that appear to the right.

Here are the components of our example PPC campaign URL:

The landing page address: http://yourwebsite.com/landingpage.html
Web visitors who click on the PPC advertisement will be directed to this page.

The campaign tracking string: campaign=google
This string identifies the PPC campaign in order that any revenue may be reported

The URL keyword flag: kw
This flag identifies the keyword in order that a cost may be reported

The keyword variable: your+keyword
This variable is the PPC keyword itself

Once you've configured a campaign at a PPC search engine, you need to identify that campaign in the Dynamic SiteStats settings. Using the example campaign above, you would go to 'Campaigns and PPC Tracking,' create a new campaign of the type 'CPC Search Engines' and enter the string 'campaign=google.'

The 'Cost Type' option should be set as 'real time cost retrieval.' When you make this change, you'll see a set of options labeled 'Real Time Cost Analysis Settings.'

The Search Listing keyword flag is specific to each PPC search engine. With Google, the variable is usually 'kw,' but this is not set in stone (unlike Overture, which requires a specific keyword flag). Whichever flag you choose, be sure to use the same flag in your Dynamic SiteStats settings and in your PPC search engine campaign settings.

Select your PPC search engine and enter the login and password so that our system can retrieve your cost information. The 'Autobid Enabled' feature is only an option with Overture campaigns.

Setting up Overture campaign tracking

Overture set up differs from the other major PPC search engines in three ways:

Overture will only accept 'OVKEY' as a keyword flag;

'Autobid Enabled' must be checked in the Dynamic SiteStats campaign settings;

'Overture URL Tracking' must be turned on in the Overture campaign settings.

The following example shows a URL that might be generated in an Overture campaign. When 'Overture URL Tracking' is enabled, Overture adds certain elements to the campaign URL for the purposes of tracking:

http://yourwebsite.com/landingpage.html?OVKEY=keyword&OVRAW=searchterm&OVMTC=standard

Note: the significance of the question mark is that it separates the web address, on the left, from the tracking elements that appear to the right.

Here are the components of our example Overture campaign URL:

The landing page address: http://yourwebsite.com/landingpage.html
Web visitors who click on the PPC advertisement will be directed to this page.

The campaign tracking string: OVKEY
This string identifies the PPC campaign in order that any revenue may be reported

The URL keyword flag: OVKEY
This flag identifies the keyword in order that a cost may be reported. In the case of Overture, this is the same as the campaign tracking string.

The search string: OVRAW=searchterm
This is the search string a user typed into a search engine to find your advertisement

The Overture Traffic Type: OVMTC=standard
This string shows the Traffic Type used to match your keyword with the user's search term - Content, Standard, Phrase, and Broad

Once you've configured a campaign at Overture, you need to identify that campaign in the IndexTool Settings. Using the example campaign above, you would go to 'Campaigns and PPC Tracking,' create a new campaign of the type 'CPC Search Engines' and enter the string 'OVKEY'.

The Cost Type option should be set as 'real time cost retrieval.' When you make this change, you'll see a set of options labeled 'Real Time Cost Analysis Settings'

The Search Listing URL Variable is specific to each PPC search engine. With Overture, the variable must always be 'OVKEY.' (Note: this variable is case sensitive.)

Select Overture as your PPC search engine and enter your Overture login and password so that our system can retrieve your cost information. Select the 'Autobid Enabled' feature.

Common misconceptions or issues

Yahoo! Store and Miva (and some other shopping cart softwares) require a custom installation, which is described in detail in the Yahoo! Store and Miva installation guides.

In some cases you may need to employ ORDERID tracking to avoid duplicate tracking of sales. The ORDERID variable operates in a manner similar to the AMOUNT variable and inflates a variable defined by your shopping card software.

Troubleshooting discrepancies

The most common issues with Live Cost Analysis have to do with discrepancies in reporting PPC clicks and costs. As with Conversion Analysis, you may also experience discrepancies counting sales, and associating revenue with these sales. Here are the steps you can take to troubleshoot your problem.

Problem: PPC clicks are not reporting properly

You may see a discrepancy between the clicks reported by the PPC search engine and the visits recorded by our system. This has to do with a) differences in how our system and the search engine record a click or visit, and; b) where you have placed the javascript tracking code on your web pages.

Note: We recommend you place the tracking code at the top of the 'body' section of your HTML. If your tracking code is at the bottom of your web pages, our system may underreport the number of visits when those pages do not load completely.

When there is a click discrepancy, in most cases the figure we report will be lower than the PPC search engine. When a click discrepancy is unusually large, the most likely cause is a problem with your campaign tracking string.

Check your setup at the PPC search engine to ensure that each keyword in your campaign is configured with a campaign URL that includes your campaign tracking string.

Problem: PPC costs are not reporting accurately

Check your setup at the PPC search engine to ensure that each keyword is configured with the correct keyword variable and keyword. In the case of Overture, you only need to active the 'Overture Tracking URL' feature to automatically add your keyword variable and keyword to the campaign URL. At Google, and other search engines, this needs to be done manually.

Check for price volatility. In a small number of cases, the price of a keyword may fluctuate so quickly that a discrepancy arises between the numbers reported in our system and those displayed at the   PPC search engine. Such discrepancies are temporary, and as the price stabilizes the difference will even out.

Problem: The sales action is not tracking correctly

Identify which page has been tagged for the purposes of action tracking. This should be a page that is only loaded when the action has been completed. If the action is tagged on multiple pages, then the action will (erroneously) be tracked as many times as those pages are loaded.

Check that the action variable and tracking code are set up correctly on the tagged page. The javascript syntax is important, so please refer to the Implementation section of this guide for the correct syntax. The position on the page is also important. Ideally, the tracking code should appear   at the top of the HTML body section of the page. If the code appears in the header section it may   not track properly. If the code appears at the bottom of the page, you may experience discrepancies when pages do not load completely.

Problem: Revenue is not tracking correctly

Make sure you are using the sales (01) action code. This significance of the sales (01) code is that it can be associated with variables from your shopping cart (AMOUNT, ORDERID) in order to track revenue.

Check that your AMOUNT variable is inflating properly. AMOUNT must associate with the correct variable from your shopping cart software in order to display the correct data. Conduct a test purchase to determine whether your page is properly configured and view source to verify the result.

Consider using the ORDERID variable. ORDERID should be set up on the same page as the AMOUNT variable, and in the same manner, it should be associated with a variable from your shopping cart software. The value of using ORDERID is that it tags each sale with unique ID, so that even if a   visitor triggers the sales action repeatedly, only one sale will be tracked for each purchase processed by your shopping cart.

What to do if CPC Live Cost Analysis still doesn't work

If you've followed these troubleshooting steps and still have problems, please send us a dummy credit card number so that we can conduct a test purchase and troubleshoot your Live Cost Analysis setup. If that option isn't available, then send us the HTML source of the 'thank you' or 'sales confirmation' page. In cases of cost discrepancies, we also need your PPC search engine login information in order to verify those settings are correct.