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- Rance Crain
- The Media Guy
- Teresa Iezzi
- Al Ries
- Lenore Skenazy
- Guest Columnists

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- Power 150
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Google Makes Grab for Hollywood Dollars

[Want to Watch a Trailer? Google Has a Search Ad for That](#)

by [Michael Learmonth](#)
Published: [August 31, 2009](#)



NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- It's not a surprise, perhaps, that "John Hughes" and "Inglourious Basterds" were breakout search terms on Google in the past month or so.

What is surprising: While searches related to movies, games, music, TV and celebrities account for a big percentage of traffic to Google, the entertainment industry itself does relatively little search advertising.



Miramax tried video search ads to promote the trailer for 'Extract,' its upcoming comedy with Jason Bateman.

Google is hoping to change that by sprucing up plain-text search ads with video. It has been offering what it calls a "video plus box" link below the standard keyword ad to a select group of entertainment advertisers including Miramax, Electronic Arts, Discovery and Travel Channel.

The intent is to give advertisers another way to get video sampled on the web, now considered by the studios to be a key predictor in the success of a film or TV show. EA bought video search to promote "Need for Speed," and Miramax tried video search ads to promote the trailer for its upcoming comedy with Jason Bateman, "Extract." Google registers a click (and gets paid) when a viewer watches at least 10 seconds of the video or clicks through to the site.

Google started listing videos in search results in 2007, so video

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ads in some categories would appear to be a natural extension of what Google users have come to expect. Additionally, the belief at Google is that video will help make search more appealing to entertainment, which has thus far not embraced it as a marketing channel, as other industries have.

Only 2.66% of traffic to entertainment-related sites in the past four weeks was the result of paid search links on Google, compared with 14.6% for gaming-related sites, according to analytics firm Hitwise.

"Generally the search-engine results page hasn't appealed much to the entertainment industry or any content producers, whether TV or film," said Kevin Lee, CEO of search-marketing firm Dedit.

Intent, strategy to blame

Part of that has to do with intent: Just what is a person looking for when they search, say, "Jennifer Aniston"? Part of it is strategy: Entertainment companies are looking to get their product sampled by new audiences, while searchers generally know what they're looking for.

Still, Google would like to convince entertainment advertisers that they are under-spending in search, and that video ads will let them surface movie and video-game trailers and TV promos. Entertainment search traffic is growing. Searches for TV terms on Google -- for instance, networks or show names, such as "Lost" -- were up 30% in the first half of 2009.

"We want to match these users with what advertisers are wishing to communicate, and there are cases where video does this best," said Adam Stewart, Google's industry director for media and entertainment.

The film industry spends a lot to disseminate movie trailers on the web, both through video ad networks and on their own websites. Adding those videos to search could get users to watch a video without getting them to click through to a promotional site. "Given the primary goal, much of the time, is to get people to watch their videos, then just getting them to do that one step earlier," said David Berkowitz, director-emerging media at 360i.

For "Extract," Miramax placed the movie trailer against the term "extract," to reach those who had heard of the film but also against terms such as "funny movie," for those who might not have.

Travel Channel has tried using video search ads and has been pretty pleased with the results so far. The network has used them to promote a number of shows, including "Man vs. Food." Pete Dorogoff, Travel Channel's head of digital marketing, said click-through rates on search ads for "Man vs. Food" went from 2.18% using just text ads in January to 6.34% in August using both text and video ads.

"We buy search terms around the talent, food, locales and major tourist attractions," he said. "With search we're casting a wide net and seeing what shakes out."

Google declined to say how long the program will remain in beta or what criteria it will use to decide whether to expand it. "We're using the beta test to gauge the effectiveness of the feature, and offered a select and super-relevant set of advertisers the chance to participate in the beta first," Mr. Stewart said. "We can't guarantee that we will be expanding to all advertisers."

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4 Comments



By dearadvertising | Toronto, ON [August 31, 2009 03:32:52 pm](#):

It was only a matter of time before something like this was introduced. I think I wrote about this on my Blog a little while ago wondering when google was going to use the same search technique on the Youtube side of their business.

<http://dearadvertisin.blogspot.com/>
Permalink

By Rodney33 | FRISCO, TX [September 1, 2009 01:43:54 am](#):

The magic of search for any product be it entertainment or male grooming is a sense of discovery from credible sources.

Paid search creates awareness, but it isn't special when used in conventional ways, unless a product already has so much hype around it that people are searching out access to a specified unique link.

Organic SEO, where content is found in links from reputable non-official social networks, blogs and sites, holds more credibility and the propensity to be shared with others.

That said, paid search, when approached with the right strategy, can become a very powerful engine for Organic SEO by driving a search to secondary locations where key content is located, but the product purveyor is not the primary source of the content.

This translates well beyond entertainment and grooming products. But for this discussion, here's how an entertainment platform and a men's grooming product could both work with Organic SEO driven with paid search.

Go to Google and type in "Iron Man 2." The first article that pops up might be something like "EW News" with the headline "Thor,' 'Iron Man 2' still coming despite Marvel sale."

Surmise in this case, the studio could give an "Iron Man 2" exclusive story to EW in exchange for the word "Thor" being placed in front of "Iron Man 2" in a headline to create awareness around the new "Thor" movie. Links to special video trailers to both could also be embedded in the article.

You could also surmise it would be in a studio's best interest to provide paid search for the term "Iron Man 2," not that they really need it. But assume they do with links to portals well beyond their own website, that carry stories and video links about the popular "Iron Man 2"but also cover newer, lesser known or hyped properties in the same article with links to view special exclusive peeks.

Now switch gears to Men's Grooming, (or food, beverages, cleaning products, automotive etc.)

You know that Fantasy Football fans (or mom's, or other audiences) like your products. You use key paid search terms like "Fantasy Football" to link to organic product mentions and links. Google search for Fantasy Football returns "Top 10 Ideas To Spice Up Your Fantasy Football Season."

Click on the link to find a countdown list from the "Gaming

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Guru" which could include nice mentions for your new close shave product. It might even include a video link from this weekend's fantasy football kickoff in Las Vegas with your product featured in it.

These are abbreviated examples of where your paid search can be driving to organic places where your product becomes part of a lifestyle moment endorsed by credible sources vs. a paid link to your web site begging for a view of a video trailer.

We have a new special marketing insight report being released this month entitled "XL Marketing Trends" which highlights the top 10 trends changing the marketing landscape now and into the next 10

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By Rodney33 | FRISCO, TX [September 1, 2009 01:44:56 am](#):

years.

Organic SEO is #4 and provides an in depth review of where it is now and where it's going. Paid search is a key component to organic search. It just requires strategy, coordination and reverse engineering to maximize results.

Rodney Mason, CMO
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By rjw2116 | New York, NY [September 1, 2009 10:18:28 am](#):

It makes sense that the entertainment industry would start advertising . I think the real question is whether or not google is the right vehicle for them to use. I'm not trying to imply that its not but no one should blindly jump into advertising without asking themselves "why".

I've been an avid reader of adage for a while now and I appreciate their insights into the advertising industry. I just started an advertising blog myself which you could check out at www.ad-vantage-us.blogspot.com I post my favorite ads and a few of my own, check it out.

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