



New Report Reveals the Value of Assists for Natural and Paid Search Conversions

Research from 360i and SearchIgnite examines a searcher's full click path to conversions, highlighting the need for crediting the assist clicks

NEW YORK – August 2, 2006 – New research from 360i and SearchIgnite examines how users interact with both natural and paid search listings by studying the complete click path to conversions across both paid and natural searches.

360i, a search-focused agency, teamed up with SearchIgnite, a search management technology provider, to track the click path from initial click to conversion. The companies jointly published a white paper today entitled "Giving Clicks Credit Where They're Due, Part Two: The Value of Assists for Natural and Paid Search Conversions," revealing some key findings:

- 37.3% of conversions come from consumers clicking on more than one of a marketer's natural or paid listings; it's in these multiple-click scenarios where the clicks' credit can often be misapplied
- Over two-thirds (66%) of clicks are from consumers clicking a marketer's listing multiple times
- 12.6% of conversions credited to natural search results were preceded by clicks on a marketer's paid listings, nearly twice as many as occur in the converse scenario

The "Assist" Value

Research from 360i and SearchIgnite concluded that most marketers do not give credit to the "assist" clicks that lead up to conversions. Typically, the only click measured has been the last click before consumers complete a transaction or convert in some other way. Any other clicks on a marketer's paid listings, or on the listings in the natural results that led up to that conversion, receive no credit for accomplishing the goal.

"Properly valuing the impact of assists across paid and natural search can materially improve the return on investment of your paid search campaign," said Roger Barnette, President of SearchIgnite, who provides robust search management software for the country's largest advertising agencies to manage and optimize campaigns across millions of keywords in aggregate. "Understanding this process is a critical element in most efficiently planning search marketing budgets."

While the white paper lists many permutations of assist clicks, the most valuable assist comes from a searcher beginning a search on a non-branded, or generic, terms (such as "DVD player"), and clicking a paid listing, which then subsequently results in a conversion from a natural listing through a search on a brand term (such as "Joe's Electronics Store"). The searcher in this case finds the marketer through a generic, non-brand term, sees the paid listing, and the experience is potent enough for that searcher to later search for that very brand and find the marketer in the natural listings. In this case, the searcher is using that follow-up brand term largely as a navigational tool, rather than performing an actual search query.

By contrast, consider a searcher using a non-brand term and clicking a paid listing leading to a conversion from a natural listing through a search on a non-brand term. The conversion

with that same marketer may have been aided from the initial click, but then again, the initial click required another search with a generic, non-brand term to convince the consumer to make a purchase from that marketer. Here, the assist should be given relatively less credit as the ranking in natural search was instrumental in closing the transaction.

“Customizing a plan for economic allocation across contributing keywords is critical in each marketer’s campaign analysis,” recommends Dave Williams, Chief Strategist and Co-Founder of 360i. “Marketers should regularly meet with their search marketing specialists, whether in-house or at an agency, to assess how prevalent assists are in their own campaigns and decide how to best determine their economic value.”

For a free copy of the report, visit <http://360i.com/brandwhitepaper/register-to-download.php>

About 360i

Using Search Informed Marketingsm, 360i delivers customers online, leveraging insights on how users search online to produce comprehensive integrated digital marketing campaigns spanning both Search Engine Marketing and Search Informed MediaSM. Understanding and analyzing search behavior provides the insights to engage and attract 360i’s clients’ target audience, and then create and implement the most effective campaigns across paid search and natural search optimization. 360i also gleans insights from consumer search behavior to deliver Search Informed MediaSM solutions, including display media and emerging media such as mobile search and RSS. 360i maintains a select group of premier clients such as Office Depot, Food Network and H&R Block, employing the most progressive and robust technology to manage, optimize and track campaigns across a broad spectrum of online media to ensure return on media investment. For more information, please visit www.360i.com.

About SearchIgnite

SearchIgnite is a leading search bid management and portfolio optimization technology that uses complex algorithms to help marketers and advertising agencies achieve their ROI metrics across all the major engines. With comprehensive proprietary campaign measurement and optimization tools, SearchIgnite delivers a single dashboard to manage multiple simultaneous campaigns in real time. Clients include advertising agencies, online marketing firms and sophisticated marketers. For more information on SearchIgnite, please visit www.searchignite.com.

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