

RocketClicks

www.RocketClicks.com

Insights on Negative Keywords

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Video of This Presentation Available at:

www.NegativeKeywordVideo.com



Negative Keywords

The What and Why of Negative Keywords

What Are Negative Keywords?

Keywords added at the ad group or campaign level that prevent impressions for search queries containing the negative keyword term.

Why Use Negative Keywords?

- Filter out unprofitable traffic unrelated to your offer, improve CPA.
- Phrase and broad match necessitate negatives. (Negatives aren't needed for exact match.)
- The broad match type offers the greatest exposure, but with the greatest risk. Moving from exact to phrase to broad match, an advertiser loses a degree of control. Negative keywords keep the traffic but add back control.



Negative Keywords

Quality Score and Negative Keywords

Myth: Because negative keywords improve click through rate (CTR), they improve Quality Score which is based in large part on CTR.

Truth: Negative keywords can only improve CTR for broad and phrase match keywords. Because the CTR that factors into Quality Score is Exact Match CTR, negative keywords won't improve your Quality Score.

The Bottom Line: QS aside, negative keywords still directly improve your CPA, your profit, and your revenue.

See our Rocket Clicks discussion on Quality Score for more information about the interrelation of CTR, Quality Score, and Exact Match.



Negative Keywords

Match Types for Negatives

Negative Broad

Default negative match type, usually just called “Negative Keywords” or sometimes “Standard Negative Keywords”

All individual words in the negative keyword must be present in the search query for the negative keyword to be activated as a filter.

Google doesn't recommend you do this because you risk losing conversions, but
Best Practice: Apply negatives as broadly as you confidently can.

Negative Phrase Match

The rules of phrase match apply to the search query for the negative keyword to be activated as a filter.

Negative Exact Match

The keyword needs to appear exactly in the search query for the negative keyword to be activated as a filter.



Negative Keywords

A Special Use for Negative Exact Match

If your CTR is high enough for a broad match keyword, Google will drop individual words out of your query.

If this generalization doesn't work in your favor, counter it with a negative exact match.

EXAMPLE:

- § You sell uniforms.
- § You make a lot of money off the keyword “security guard uniforms”, and your successful ad has a high CTR.
- § Google broad match starts showing you for the more general search “security guard” which isn't profitable.
- § Add **–[security guard]** and **–[security guards]** as Negative Exact Match keywords.



Negative Keywords

Categories of Negative Keywords

Try this perspective:

Informally, we talk about *three categories* of negative keywords at Rocket Clicks.

No, *not* match types, but categories of negative keywords based on the reasons for using them.



Filtering for Ambiguity



Filtering for Relevancy



Filtering for Profit



Negative Keywords

Filtering for Ambiguity

The keyword has more than one definition and I don't want traffic from the meanings that aren't applicable to my business.

EXAMPLE KEYWORD: *caps*

If I sell baseball caps, but I don't sell nutritional supplements in capsule form.

If I sell baseball caps, but I don't sell online games made by Pop Cap.

If I sell baseball caps, but I don't sell bottle caps.

-capsule

-liquicap

-prohormone

-veterinary

-bejeweled

-tutorial

-game

-flash

-recycle

-collection

-price guide

-crown cap



Negative Keywords

Filtering for Ambiguity

BOTTOM LINE: All the traffic these negative keywords stop is unprofitable traffic.

While it's theoretically possible someone looking to buy capsules also happens to want a baseball cap, it would be a random act of chance.

PUT INTO PRACTICE... Find as many of these negatives as you can, because each one can only help you. Mine your search query report for them. Seek them out by exploring the other meanings of your high traffic keywords. Even if each individual keyword doesn't equate to a lot of traffic, as you build your list, it's only improving your bottom line, and the cumulative effect matters to your bottom line.

WHERE TO FIND THEM... Dictionary definitions of your key terms, Wikipedia entries explaining the ambiguity of key terms, titles of unrelated books, songs, movies, TV shows, words related to online gaming, and of course by monitoring your existing traffic.



Negative Keywords

Filtering for Relevancy

It's the right definition for the keyword, but the particular keyword though related to the general subject matter is not relevant to my business.

EXAMPLE KEYWORD: *caps*

If I sell baseball caps, but I don't sell Baltimore Orioles caps.

If I sell baseball caps, but I don't sell collectible caps.

If I sell baseball caps, but only from active teams.

-oriole

-orioles

-baltimore

-os caps

-signed

-autographed

-autograph

-ichiro

-senators

-pilots

-expos

-colt 45s



Negative Keywords

Filtering for Relevancy

BOTTOM LINE: Almost all of the traffic these negative keywords stop is unprofitable traffic.

*While it's possible someone looking to buy a Washington Senators cap also happens to want a baseball cap from an active team (after all, the searcher is interested in baseball), it's extremely unlikely you can turn a profit on these words. Why? Because you can't fill the need in the "inner conversation" of the searcher.**

PUT ***Best Practice:** Words on your negative list because as filters for relevancy should be reviewed as *positive* keywords for Content campaigns. n a list

WH Satisfying the need in the "inner conversation" no longer matters out by
on the Content Network, so names of competitors, of products you fic
don't sell, aspects of your business you don't focus on can be en
profit sources in contextual advertising though wasteful in search. s of



Negative Keywords

Filtering for Profit

It's the right definition for the keyword and it's relevant to what I sell, but I can't be profitable with it.

EXAMPLE KEYWORD: *caps*

If I sell baseball caps including Yankee caps, but there are so many competitors selling Yankee caps, I can't get traffic at a profitable CPA.

If I sell baseball caps and also know how to clean and repair old collectable caps, but that's not profitable business.

If I sell baseball caps and caps of football teams, but can't get football cap traffic at a profitable CPA.

-new york
-yankee
-newyork
-yankees

-repairing a
baseball cap
-baseball cap
repair
-baseball cap
cleaning

-football
-cowboys
-jets
-steelers



Negative Keywords

Filtering for Profit

BOTTOM LINE: Not enough of the traffic these negative keywords stop is profitable traffic.

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Best Practice: Remember it's preferable to make money with a keyword than give up on it. Filtering for profit with negatives is a measure of last resort. Monitor and test!

Usually bid management, landing page adjustments, ad copy changes, the peel & stick move, and adding negatives based on relevancy and ambiguity should be tried first.

Let traffic and potential revenue and proximity to profit determine when to try harder on a keyword or deploy this tactic instead.

example.



Negative Keywords

Research Tools – Where Do I Find These?

“That’s SO NOT what I meant”

Use these tools to filter for ambiguity before you launch campaigns.

“Disambiguation” on Wikipedia

Wikipedia “(disambiguation)” pages

Irrelevant Band Names, and Song and Album Titles

Amazon (music), iTunes Store Search, eMusic

Irrelevant Book Titles

Amazon (books), Google Book Search, Bookfinder, Library of Congress

Irrelevant TV and Movie Titles, Characters, Actors

Google Video Search, Hulu, YouTube, Megavideo, Surfthechannel, IMDB

Irrelevant Video Game Language

Amazon (video games), Wikia Gaming, Wowwiki, GameFAQs.com

News Stories Surrounding Your Keywords

Google News, Google Trends, New York Times, WSJ.com,
Marketwatch, local regional papers and sites

Unrelated Product Names

Google Product Search, Amazon (general), eBay, Target, Walmart
Search Function on Competitor Sites *(often overlooked)*

“Own the language around your business”

Use these tools to know the keyword traffic around your advertising.

Google Web Search/Keyword Tools

Google AdWords Search Query Report

Google.com, .uk, .ca, .au, etc

Google AdWords Keyword Tool

Google Search Based Keyword Tool

Google Insights for Search *(especially “rising searches”)*

Google Sponsored Links *(often overlooked)*

Google Sets

Beyond Google

Trellian, WordTracker, AdIntelligence, Reference.com *(“related searches”)*

Affiliate Elite, KeyCompete, Ispionage, Compete.com

Blogs & Tweets

Google Blog Search, Technorati, Google Reader

Search.Twitter.com, Tweetgrid

Analytics Tracking Systems

Google Analytics

Web Trends, Omniture, Web Analytics, proprietary back end software



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