

ROI Marketing News is about using the Internet to build relationships for online marketers, published periodically by Rapport Online Inc. Feel free to forward this newsletter in its entirety to a friend or to link to the archived copy. See the end of this message for information about subscribing or unsubscribing.

Greetings from Sedona! The trees are turning bright yellow and daily temperatures are in the low to mid seventies -- This is my kind of November!

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Microsoft is Discontinuing Support for Front Page

We recently learned from Larry Johnson, president of our hosting partner Rapid System, that Microsoft is discontinuing support for Front Page. Most of our sites created before 2002 have been done in Front Page. If one of those sites was yours, this announcement may or may not affect your site. Only those sites that use server side extensions (in plain English, they do something a little fancy) are likely to be affected. We will be reviewing our sites to determine if your site is affected and will need to be modified.

Yahoo Search's New Advertiser Interface

We have just had a demonstration from Yahoo of the new search interface and it reminds me of that old seasonal song, "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Google." While it's hard to tell from a demonstration how easy it will be to adapt to the new interface, the premise of ad groups rather than keywords as the primary focus of organization will make it more like AdWords.

The feature we have been waiting for is geographic targeting. Yahoo promises geo-targeting to the major urban area level, similar to what we now have with Google. This will not affect advertisers that are already targeting to the US or internationally, but it should create additional opportunities for those clients targeting regions and states.

Meanwhile over at Google

It's always fun to look in on the Google Labs, <http://labs.google.com/>, to see what they are up to. They have had the online shopping outlet, Froogle, for some time. Now they have added a print catalog shopping service. I have not seen an appearance of this in Google search results yet, but I expect they will be pushing it in the same subtle way that they have pushed Google News, Froogle and Google Maps. Merchants with a printed catalog can learn about this service at http://catalogs.google.com/intl/en/googlecatalogs/help_merchants.html.

The way Google pushes its new services is through Google One Box, that is the special Google result that you see at the top in certain searches. For example, if you search for American Rug Laundry Minneapolis, Google displays an entry from Google Maps at the top of results showing the location in Minneapolis of American Rug Laundry. If you search instead for "oriental carpet cleaning" the top result is an entry from Google Local.

Another Google service that may be helpful to online marketers is Google Trends, <http://www.google.com/trends>. This service allows you to determine the volume of keyword searches over a period of time. For example, want to know when people start getting serious

about Christmas? A Google Trend search on the keyword Christmas shows the not surprising results that searches begin ramping up in September, with an ever steeper climb in interest until December 24 when it drops precipitously. This can be very helpful in determining the seasonality of products. For example, searching for "gun cases" in the US slacks off in the winter through early summer and then builds through December.

Other Search News Tidbits

- MSN finally completely divorced itself from Yahoo Search Marketing this summer. It seems to me that this has hurt Yahoo Search more than it could have benefited Microsoft and certainly more than it has benefited search advertisers. While our results through Yahoo Search have eroded, campaigns that we have tried through MSN are not bringing results in comparison to Google and Yahoo - barely worth the effort.

- Lycos has switched to Ask for both search and search advertising. Lycos has been trying to have their own search advertising for some time, first licensing the FindWhat pay per click search advertising software, which was bought out by Miva with disastrous results. Lycos briefly tried another service, but last month announced that both the regular search results and paid search results will be provided by Ask. Ironically, Ask is serving up Google AdWords.

- Not related to search, but in the "Thank Goodness for Norton Anti-Virus" department, the most recent phishing email that I received appeared to be confirmation of a big electronics order that I did not make with a popular online retailer. My first impulse would have been to sign into my credit card accounts to see if a charge had been made, but Norton had warned that there was a virus attached to the email. The virus turned out to be one that would report log-in information back to its sender. Yikes! This is a real problem for online retailers, because scam artists can so easily spoof email addresses for such phishing expeditions.

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