

Yahoo Introduce Video and Images into Sponsored Search.

Yahoo is offering select Y! Search Marketing users the opportunity to integrate images and video into their pay-per-click listings.

Sponsored search remains one of the top-performing tools available to online marketers today. Yahoo's new service, Rich Ads in Search, would incorporate characteristics of banner advertising into sponsored search ad placements, reports MarketingVOX. Marketers could include videos and images, for example, making the experience "more engaging [...] for advertisers," said VP-Search Monetization/Distribution Tim Mayer of Yahoo.



Google is currently piloting a less "rich" program called PlusBox, which enables users to click on a "+" symbol beside search results to see more offerings from a sponsor. These can include product images, posted in a format that mimics auction listings on eBay.

Display advertising is among Yahoo's strengths. But as the recession presses hard on budgets, marketers are increasingly scaling back on less measurable ad options, including display, and pouring more cash into performance-based models like sponsored search. This trend was reflected in Yahoo's Q4 earnings report, which saw display advertising fall 2% from the previous year as search ads rose 11%.

Rich Ads in Search was tested for a year with clients like dog food vendor Pedigree. A query for "Pedigree" on Yahoo brings up a pale blue box atop the search results page, where users can click to watch a Pedigree ad.

Other participants in the pilot included Sobe, Pepsi and Home Depot. Yahoo claims some advertisers saw click-through rates rise by as much as 25%, according to The New York Times.

"What the search results look like is a very different experience with rich ads in search versus the text link," said SVP-Revenue/Market Development Joanne Bradford. "There is consistency to the experience, which all advertisers want, and were unable to get until this point."

Instead of following the auction-based price model that rules rates in keyword-based sponsored search ads, Yahoo is charging a monthly fee for Rich Ads in Search. For the time being, only major advertisers with existing ads or logos will be permitted to participate.

Early last year, a JupiterResearch study found users prefer to have relevant content - such as maps, images, reviews and videos - blended into search results. It stands to reason that a similar media-blending method may increase ad relevance to users within sponsored results.

Search Engine Marketing is the fastest growing advertising medium in the world, projected to become 10x more powerful and influential than traditional media outlets such as: network television, cable television, local television, network radio, local radio, satellite radio, national newspapers, local newspapers, magazines, billboards, direct mail, telemarketing and more.

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An aside for consideration are the the distinct segments within the field of Search Engine Optimization. Clarification and separation are required in terms of paid search marketing, sponsored search advertising, pay per click, email marketing (spam), and the foundation of strategic internet marketing: Organic Search Engine Optimization (Organic SEO) are also referred to as Natural Search Engine Optimization (Natural SEO).

Key Organic Search Engine Optimization Facts:

- Keyword search is the 2nd most popular online activity, rapidly approaching the popularity of email retrieval.
- 90% of all new website visitors are delivered by a major search engine and/or directory.
- 98% of all keyword search activity results are powered by the big 4 search engines: Google, Yahoo, MSN and AOL.
- Keyword search results on Google, Yahoo, MSN and AOL are determined by search engine spiders and/or robot crawlers.
- Recent internet marketing studies confirm that keyword searchers prefer the organic results at a 6 to 1 ratio vs. pay-per-click sponsored search advertising listings.

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