

Search Click Through Rates

9/21/2011

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Quick Background

Background



CTR – Click Through Rate

- Clicks / Impressions
- $100 / 1,000 = 10\%$ CTR
- Upping your CTR will mean more traffic without higher rankings
 - Or more juice out of an already #1 rank
 - CTR is impacted most heavily by the page Title Tag or PPC Ad Headline

Leaked AOL Data

Leaked AOL Data

Back in 2006, some AOL data leaked out that gave insight into natural search CTR.

Somehow - people started tossing around the percent of clicks/traffic figure (47%) as if it was the same thing as CTR.



Actually. It was always 23%.

Don't just listen to the echo chamber.

Impressions	Clicks	CTR	% Clicks
9,038,794	2,075,765	23.0%	47%
9,038,794	586,100	6.5%	13%
9,038,794	418,643	4.6%	9%
9,038,794	298,532	3.3%	7%
9,038,794	242,169	2.7%	5%
9,038,794	199,541	2.2%	5%
9,038,794	168,080	1.9%	4%
9,038,794	148,489	1.6%	3%
9,038,794	140,356	1.6%	3%
9,038,794	147,551	1.6%	3%
9,038,794	4,425,226	49%	

Process & Notes

Process & Notes

Being part of a large agency, we've got a lot of data.

- All of our partners are verified in GWT, giving us organic search impressions/clicks.

Should be noted, these are *rounded* estimates

- We also have access to their Adwords accounts, which gave us exact impression/click data.
- All sites are e-commerce businesses.
- All Trademark terms were removed.
- Terms with <100 clicks were removed.
- All data is from a 30 day window.
- Does NOT include Google Shopping clicks.
- Individual terms stray significantly from the averages.

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED



Results

Natural Search Results

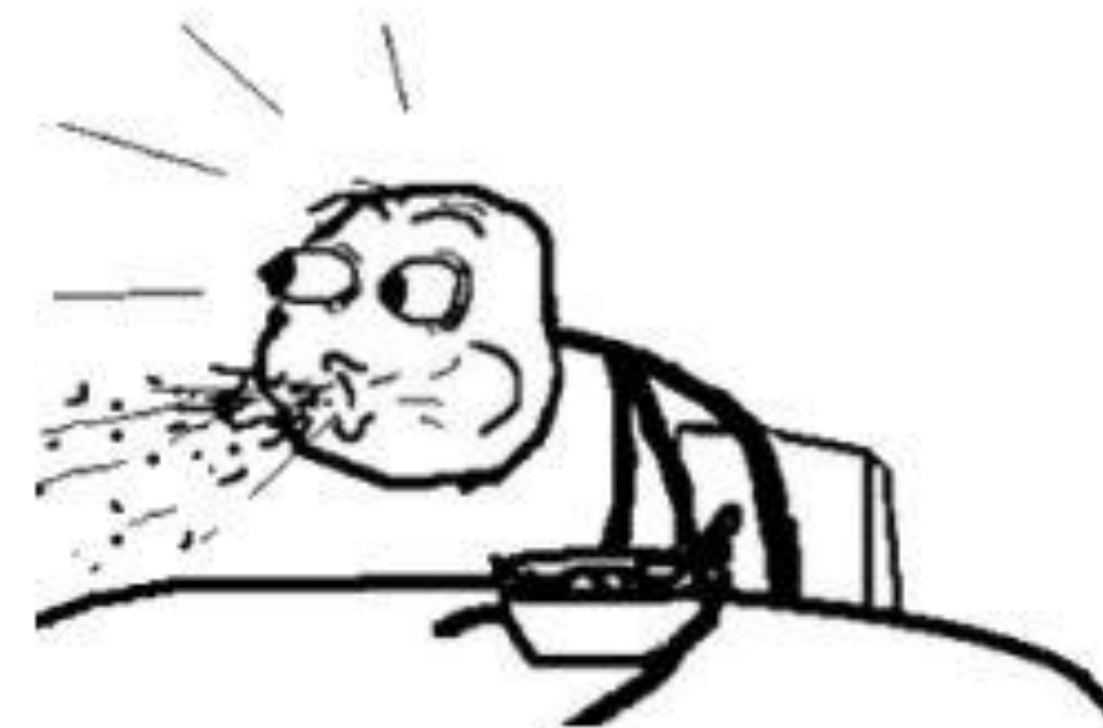
Position	Impressions	Clicks	CTR
1	284,720	42,948	15.08%
2	928,020	95,207	10.26%
3	1,376,260	100,722	7.32%
4	1,808,900	89,403	4.94%
5	2,059,950	101,907	4.95%
6	1,311,060	29,016	2.21%
7	1,242,820	25,411	2.04%
8	1,343,680	32,167	2.39%
9	2,033,850	29,512	1.45%
10	977,670	18,031	1.84%
	13,366,930	564,324	

After combining data from multiple stores and stripping out the trademark terms, we were left with a data set of...

13,366,930 impressions

564,324 clicks

2,069 keywords



PPC Results

Position	Impressions	Clicks	CTR
1	27,470,845	1,246,721	4.54%
2	100,046,173	1,789,516	1.79%
3	86,332,062	1,307,359	1.51%
4	43,775,200	514,195	1.17%
5	28,492,345	264,265	0.93%
6	10,628,650	81,335	0.77%
7	4,441,799	30,299	0.68%
8	2,518,067	13,668	0.54%
9	806,793	4,091	0.51%
10	304,278	1,738	0.57%
	304,816,212	5,253,187	

After combining data from multiple stores and stripping out the trademark terms, we were left with a data set of...

304,816,212 impressions

5,253,187 clicks

10,983 keywords



Expectations & Implications

Expectations & Implications



Let's do some math...

Normalized Natural Search

Position	Impressions	Clicks	CTR
1	100,000	15,084	15.08%
2	100,000	10,259	10.26%
3	100,000	7,319	7.32%
4	100,000	4,942	4.94%
5	100,000	4,947	4.95%
6	100,000	2,213	2.21%
7	100,000	2,045	2.04%
8	100,000	2,394	2.39%
9	100,000	1,451	1.45%
10	100,000	1,844	1.84%
Total	100,000	52,499	52.50%

If we hold the CTR as a constant, we can draw conclusions about how the traffic would flow for any individual term.

This example assumes 100k impressions.

Based on our data, the total natural search CTR is roughly **52.5%**

Normalized Paid Search

Position	Impressions	Clicks	CTR
1	100,000	4,538	4.54%
2	100,000	1,789	1.79%
3	100,000	1,514	1.51%
4	100,000	1,175	1.17%
5	100,000	927	0.93%
6	100,000	765	0.77%
7	100,000	682	0.68%
8	100,000	543	0.54%
9	100,000	507	0.51%
10	100,000	571	0.57%
Total	100,000	13,012	13.01%

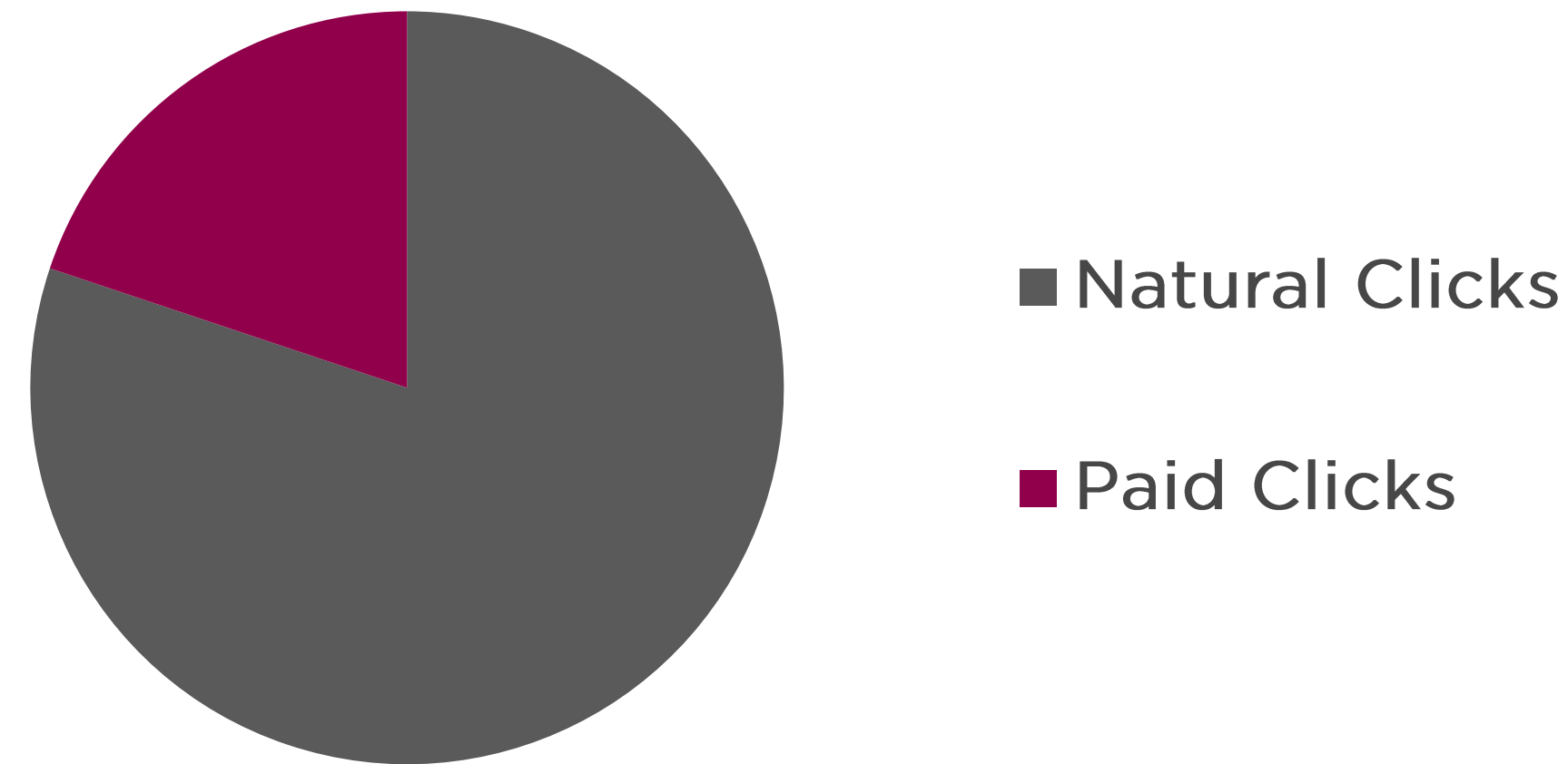
If we hold the CTR as a constant, we can draw conclusions about how the traffic would flow for any individual term.

This example also assumes 100k impressions.

Based on our data, the total paid search CTR is roughly **13%**

Total SERP

Impressions	100,000
Natural Clicks	52,499
Paid Clicks	13,012
Total Clicks	65,511
Total CTR	65.5%
SEO of Total	80.1%
PPC of Total	19.9%



For 100,000 impressions, we can expect:

A **65.6% CTR** – 80% for natural search and 20% for paid search.

~35% of searches resulting in either failure, map listing clicks to Google pages, clicks to YouTube Videos, or Google Shopping results.

Change from 2006 (Natural Search)

2006 AOL		2011		
Position	CTR	Position	CTR	Change
1	23.0%	1	15.1%	-34%
2	6.5%	2	10.3%	58%
3	4.6%	3	7.3%	58%
4	3.3%	4	4.9%	50%
5	2.7%	5	4.9%	85%
6	2.2%	6	2.2%	0%
7	1.9%	7	2.0%	10%
8	1.6%	8	2.4%	46%
9	1.6%	9	1.5%	-7%
10	1.6%	10	1.8%	13%

From 2006, we're seeing a large uptick in the value of spots 2-5.

We believe this is caused by the increased presence of vertical results being embedded into the SERPs, which is drawing visitors eyes down the page.

Final Thoughts

Despite Google's continued insertion into SERPs, total Natural CTR went from 49% to 53%

With the top natural ranking being worth less – diversifying is more important than ever.

PPC / Local / CSE / Video – **This stuff isn't optional.**

Getting stuck at #2 or #3 isn't *as bad* as it used to be.

Microsites are an awesome strategy if you have the bandwidth.

Contact

Questions?

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