

Arts Audiences

New Media Mentoring Scheme

Mentoring Report

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This report was written specifically for publication on the Arts Audiences website, and for subsequent discussion on the Arts Ireland group on LinkedIn. If you are reading this in PDF from, you may like to visit www.artsaudiences.ie, where you will be able to click through links which you'll find throughout the document.

Google mentoring to Éigse Carlow Arts Festival 2010

Our ambition in the mentoring project was to increase SEO (Search Engine Optimisation), customer participation and general web traffic of our website as a tool for increasing box office sales and developing potential audiences. Having benefited a sales increase in 2009 from an expansion in our online media presence we wanted to optimise these and build / develop them further and smarter. Due to financial pressures the in-house part-time administration staff and CE scheme staff were being trained to fill the gaps to lighten the load of the seasonal Marketing Manager position so the mentoring was timely and necessary.

Our ambition was quite wide so we worked with a fantastic team from Google on the following:

- Google AdWords maximisation
- Website optimisation
- youtube channels

In this report, I'll concentrate on the Google AdWords experience we gained as we focused quite heavily on this during the mentoring process. Some of this is quite detailed as we were fortunate to have Google employees guide us through the process but because of the large nature of the Google organisation you may not be as fortunate and may stumble on a few of the setup steps, so my aim is to guide you as quickly and painlessly through the more awkward steps.

AdWords are the text advertisements along the right hand side of a Google search page, they appear in gmail (linking words in your received emails to relevant words in the AdWord text). Websites can also use AdWords as an income generator by placing a Google AdWords banner on their page allowing AdWords to be displayed. AdWords generally look like this:

[Carlow Arts Festival](#)

Fun For All the Family

June 2010, Visit Our Site Now!

www.EigseCarlow.ie

Of significant importance to the arts community is the fact that Google provide grants for non-profit organisations (which many arts organisations are) to spend up to \$10,000 per month on Google AdWords with no need to reapply annually and no fixed end date (providing you stick within the policies set down by Google Grants). To learn more on Google grants for AdWords visit <http://www.google.ie/grants/details.html> The help section of Google Grants is quite useful also, see <http://www.google.com/support/grants/> Read the guidelines, fill in the application form and you will be later asked to set up your AdWord account and submit your Customer ID for the Google team to approve the application. This can take some time so it's best to use this time to familiarise your team with the AdWords facility and FAQ so you will be ready to go.

Tips on completing the Google Grant form:

To apply for a Google Grant, you must set up a new AdWord account specifically for the grant AdWord account, even if you already have one, because of a few grant restrictions in place. (see link to Google AdWords Online Classroom below to see how to set up an account) Google Grants provide grants in *American dollars* \$ **only**, so you must change the currency to \$ for the AdWords account that you will be applying for grants (and since this can only be done in the setup stages, any account you already have will most likely be set up in €euros). During this time if you start creating draft campaigns, AdWords will continuously ask you to submit your billing information. Ignore this request and once your account has been activated by Google, these messages will disappear.

Once you have gone through the necessary email address verification process you can start building your first campaign (which will remain inactive until your grant application has been approved).

The grants are only provided for AdWords that appear in a *Google search engine* **only**, they do not cover AdWords on other content network sites / websites that host Google AdWords so in the Campaign settings stage, in the 'Networks and devices' section, tick 'Let me choose...' and select the 'Google Search' box only (untick Search Partners and Display Network). So you will have to bear this in mind every time you create a new campaign in your grant AdWords account prior to activation (once the grant has been activated these will become the default settings)

***Note*:** If these settings are not completed at the time of setup, a lengthy and complicated process of unlinking primary email addresses and setting up new email addresses follows, so take my advice and set it up correct from the start!

Should you not be eligible for Google Grants then it would make more sense to continue using your own account (if you have one) or set up a new account in euros and also make use of the other network options to maximise the exposure of your AdWords and your organisation. It is also useful to have another non-grants AdWords account for this purpose and to set aside a specific budget to maximise your online presence.

Google AdWords:

Google AdWords Online Classroom <http://adwords.google.com/support/aw/bin/static.py?hl=en-uk&page=webinars.cs> is exceptionally helpful for the 'getting started' section (before you start) and 'Improving you adwords performance' (once you have an account). You may have to register or login for some of these but it's free.

Google AdWords apply a quality rating system to AdWord accounts. The higher your quality of account, the cheaper the cost and the higher rank it receives when viewed. It's a bit like a search engine; the more relevant you make your website, the higher up the search it will appear.

The quality scoring of Google AdWords are based on the following factors:

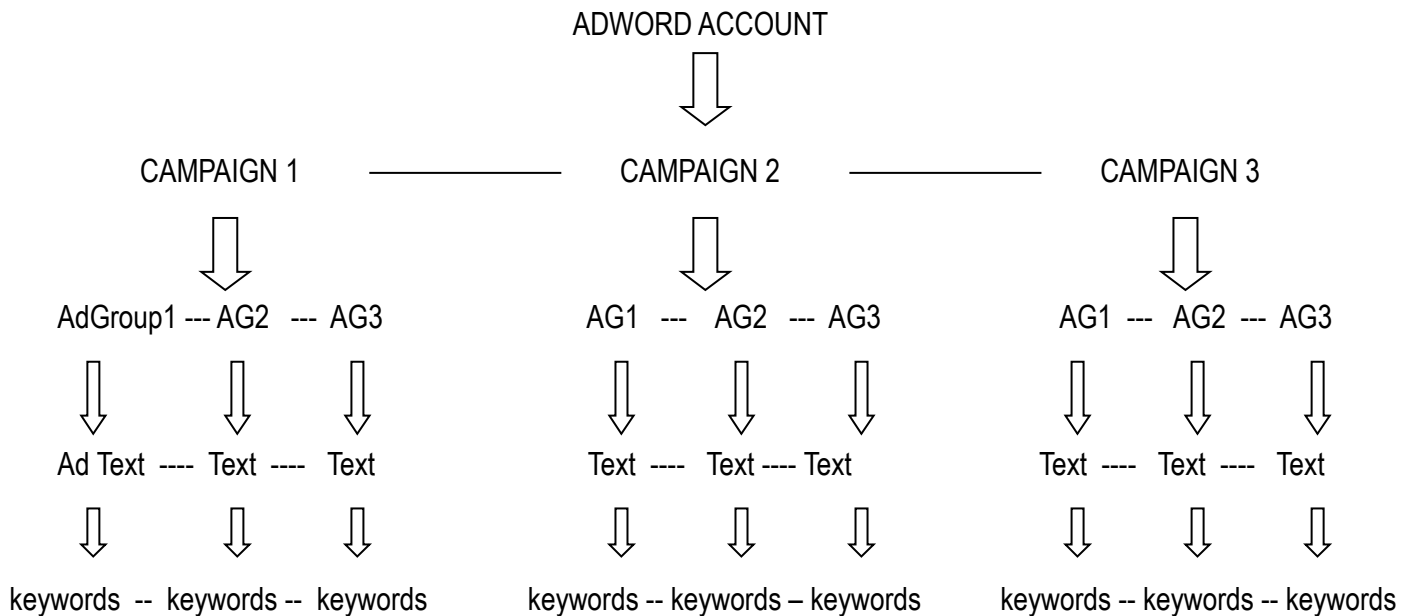
- Keyword / AdWord relevancy
- Click through rate (CTR)
- Relevance of ad text and your landing page
- Historical account performance
- Various relevancy factors

So they recommended keeping a tight link between your keywords, ad text and your landing page / destination URL (the page you direct the AdWord clicks to). Relevancy is the key factor.

Google AdWords is based on clicks (CTR – Click Through Rate) rather than on impressions so it helps to focus on the goals for your conversion as these will also be relevant factors. Our goals were 1. to increase traffic to our website and 2. to increase ticket sales. Recognise what is your unique selling point and focus on that.

Creating our AdWord campaigns:

Under the guidance of the google mentoring team, we set up AdWord campaigns and structured them into the various categories we felt would work best. It was hard at the start to get our head around the AdWords structure. What was more suitable as a Campaign? Or an AdGroup? It's a bit like a filing system, the 'Campaign' is the overall folder e.g. Artists / Brand / Region specific. The options that are selected at this level are regions and finance, so it may help to have different Campaigns for these if you want to target these in a different manner e.g. Branding National / Branding Local / Branding International. For us, the online classroom section of 'Improving your AdWords Performance' helped the penny drop into place.



Sample:

We titled one of our Campaigns ‘Artists’. Within this campaign heading we created AdGroups for various high profile artists appearing at the festival. Jerry Fish & The Mudbug Club were one of the performers appearing at the festival so we created an AdGroup titled ‘Jerry Fish’. We then created a number of Ads (text) relevant to this event.

The Ad (text) should contain a keyword, date and a call to action (buy tickets now). We were advised to create approximately three different ads for each AdGroup, focusing on different aspects. Google AdWords will show the different ads for different searches and compare which ad is receiving more clicks and it will favour this ad. A cute trick – place the following text in the first line of the ad {keyword: Jerry Fish Concert} (use your own text in the brackets), this ad will then be used as a default ad should the search text be longer than your keywords. You can also use capital letters to start each word (including in your web address) so that it can be easier to read www.EigseCarlow.ie. Note: while you write the website as a short web address, it will increase your quality scoring if you direct each ad to the relevant page on your website. The option for this is in the ‘Destination URL’ box below the web address when creating your ad.

We then created keywords we thought might be relevant to the Jerry Fish performance

e.g.

- Jerry Fish
- Gerry Fish
- Jerry Fish Mudbug club
- Jerry fish tickets
- Jerry fish Carlow
- Jerry fish tour
- Etc...

(Capital letters are not taken into consideration in search engines)

The key to increasing your AdWords quality rating is to keep the keywords as relevant as possible. Your ads will be penalised by being placed further down the page (or on consecutive pages) if the keyword isn’t relevant to the text in your ad (which in turn must be relevant to the text on your website). To further increase your rating (receive better placement and cheaper ads), you can create negative keywords so that people searching for non-related searches won’t be shown your ad e.g. Jerry Fish CD or Jerry Fish American tour. This will help keep your click through rate higher.

Tools to help optimise and analyse your Google AdWords performance:

In your AdWord Account under the opportunities tab, some of the most useful tools are:

- Keyword Tool
- Search Based Keyword Tool
- Keyword Insertion Tool
- Bids Tool
- Ad Preview Tool
- Insights for Search Tool (compare search volume across regions / categories / timeframe etc.)
- Various other tools in the opportunities tab of your AdWords account – click ‘more tools’
- Google Trends (data on media / news items that lead to search peaks and could provide you with ideas and timelines to tie in with searches)
- Google Analytics (from your website) – utilise the search words or traffic source from which they arrived at your website and link / track the conversion goals to see how far along the process did each click generate
- Have a look at Google Labs for new tools that are under experimentation at Google.

AdWord timelines for a festival:

- Campaign on the festival brand: small presence all year round.
- Build on the branding AdWords campaign in the two months prior to the programme being released.
- To ensure you don't waste any sales opportunities, make sure box office is ready to go at the time of activating the artists / programme AdWords campaigns. January is recognised as the month where holidays are booked (Google Trends and other analytics tools will support this statement). Ideally part of a summer festival's programme (Éigse is in June), would be in place by then to tap into these holiday planners.
- Highlight special offer campaigns when necessary
- Include campaigns on holidays / regional etc. but try to keep them as specific as possible as vague ads will get a poor click through rate and this will end up costing you more money and preventing your ads from being displayed above the fold / on the first page. It can be more beneficial to use the vague terms eg. Music / theatre for region specific and specify counties in your catchment area.
- Throughout the rest of the year create AdWords campaigns for fundraising events, recruitment, search for volunteers etc.

Costs:

Google grants caps keyword CPC (cost per click) at \$1 so if you want to bid on keywords above this you can include that keyword in your own paid account. Luckily (but also unluckily) for the arts, searches for arts related words aren't huge and most are well under the \$1 mark. Vague keywords such as 'music' / 'music gigs' / 'theatre' should be avoided as you will be competing against large-scale music / theatre events worldwide meaning your click rate and placement will be poor.

Our 2009 AdWords weren't optimised to the maximum and the small budget put aside seemed to dwindle relatively quickly. The mentoring from the Google team and receiving Google Grants has really increased our online presence in a smarter way. Our AdWords did have a short lead-in time to this year's festival due to the timing of the project but none-the-less increased our web traffic and click through rate from last year. We'll be exploring its possibilities further throughout the year!

Our Top tips:

1. Google AdWords is an exceptionally powerful tool but do beware of the linking and unlinking glitches that occur which could have you on an unpleasant merry-go-round for long periods of time. Double check analytics codes and account IDs to make sure they are linked up correctly to ensure you get things right from the start.
2. Make use of the optimisation and analytical tools that are available to get the most from your AdWords.
3. Link your AdWords account with your other Google services such as Gmail, Google Analytics etc. or start using these services by clicking on the My Account tab at the top of your AdWords account. Click on Preferences and beside your email address, click 'Edit in Google Accounts', this will open up an overview of your Google services where you can link or start using new Google facilities.