

24 EXPERTS ON THE
**BIG 2017
PPC
TRENDS**

YOU NEED TO KNOW

WRITTEN BY
DANNY GOODWIN

SEJ Search Engine®
Journal



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24 Experts on the Big 2017 PPC Trends You Need to Know

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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24 EXPERTS ON THE BIG 2017 PPC TRENDS YOU NEED TO KNOW

PPC in 2016 was never boring.

We saw some major changes to the PPC landscape (goodbye right-side text ads, hello Expanded Text Ads). PPC marketers also gained access to several new and promising features and ad formats from Google AdWords, Bing Ads, Facebook, and other social networks.

So what PPC trends do you need to know in 2017 if you want to drive more traffic, leads, and conversions, make the most of your budget, and stay ahead of your competition?

Without a doubt, PPC will continue to unpredictably evolve with more features aimed at providing better audience targeting to reach consumers at the right moment of their journey. Google and Facebook will continue to dominate as essential paid channels.

You'll also want to watch the evolution of AI (artificial intelligence) in PPC. And could this be the year we see explosive growth in voice search?

Check out what 24 of the top PPC marketing experts say will be the biggest trends in paid search, social ads, and remarketing in 2017 – and beyond.

We've gathered insights from these PPC pros:

[Jeffrey Baum](#), Director of Services, Hanapin Marketing

[Justin Freid](#), Senior Vice President – Digital Marketing & Emerging Media, CMI Media

[Brad Geddes](#), Founder, AdAlysis and Certified Knowledge

[Andrew Goodman](#), President, Page Zero Media

[Patrick Hutchison](#), Search Product Marketing Manager, Marin Software

[Pauline Jakober](#), CEO, Group Twenty Seven

[Larry Kim](#), Founder, WordStream

John Lee, Bing Ads Senior Manager, Client Training & Development, Microsoft

Aaron Levy, Manager of Client Strategy, Elite SEM

Jennifer (Johnstone) Lopez, Global Director of Biddable Media, Piston Agency

Melissa Mackey, Search Supervisor, gyro

Elizabeth Marsten, Senior Director, E-commerce Growth Services, CommerceHub

Samantha Noble, Director of Strategy, Koozai

Marc Poirier, CEO & Founder, Acquisio

Lisa Raehsler, Founder, Big Click Co.

Diane Sidden, Regional BlueKai Audience Manager, Cisco

Bruce Swann, Senior Product Marketing Manager, Adobe

David Szetala, Owner & CEO, FMB Media

[Katy Tonkin](#), VP of Digital Strategy, Point It

[Frederick Vallaeys](#), CEO, Optmyzr

[Purna Virji](#), Senior Bing Ads PPC Training Manager, Microsoft

[Evan Waters](#), Director, Growth & Performance Marketing, Naspers

[Kirk Williams](#), Founder, ZATO

[Ben Wood](#), Head of Digital, Hallam Internet



JEFFREY BAUM

Director of Services, Hanapin Marketing

2017 will be the year search marketers need to figure out how to leverage the confluence of big data and [attribution](#). Today's [conversion paths](#) are extremely complex and as a result, [micro-moments](#) matter more than ever.

Engaging with customers' days, weeks, and even months before they're ready to convert is going to be the new norm. Gone are the days when paid search marketers can solely depend on a last

click attribution strategy as an effective way to [building a loyal customer base.](#)

In September 2016, Facebook sold out its inventory for the first time. Audience marketing has grown in popularity throughout the year and is driving good results. The challenge now is to effectively take the data from all these different channels and turn them into insights that drive holistic strategies across multiple channels – to build relationships well before customers are in “buying mode.”

Investing in all areas of the funnel, as opposed to just the bottom, builds trust and loyalty that pays off at a later time. Failure to build top to bottom relationships will put businesses behind their competitors in 2017.



JUSTIN FREID

Senior Vice President – Digital Marketing & Emerging Media, CMI Media

Google has continued to make many changes to their SERPs over the past few years. [The Knowledge Graph and instant answers](#) continue to take up more real estate. This means it is going to be increasingly difficult to attract the attention of searchers.

To combat this, SEM and SEO managers will need to analyze SERPs on a deeper level and coordinate their efforts even more.

On the SEM side, we'll all need to take advantage of the extra characters available through ETA's and utilize all appropriate ad extensions to ensure paid search ads are taking up as much real estate as possible.



BRAD GEDDES

Founder, AdAlysis and Certified Knowledge

The past few years, a growing trend has been the personalization of the ad experience.

However, it's never been widely adopted by marketers.

It makes me think of the 5+ years we heard "this will be the year of mobile" before it actually happened. The predictions for mobile took years to come true, and the same will be said of personalized advertising. 2017 will see the adoption of semi-personalized advertising on a mass scale.

In 2015 and 2016, we saw the rise of audience targeting within search. However, it didn't see thorough adoption by most

companies, mostly due to the lack of easy-to-implement features, restrictive interfaces, and everyone wanting a “taste” but not fully ready to commit.

This year we will see a dramatic increase in actual audience targeting adoption by marketers. This will fuel the search engines to devote more resources to making audience targeting easier and more robust for companies of all sizes.

The last two years will be known as the rise of the audience targeting features. 2017 will be the adoption.

In the end, targeting really just says to show an ad (or don't show one) to this user type. The actual ad is one of the most important aspects of all PPC accounts since it's the connection point with the potential customer.

While we've had features (e.g., ad customizers, keyword insertion, and countdowns), they have only been adopted by a small group of savvy advertisers. While I don't think we'll see mass ad customizer adoption this year, we will see a continued rise of semi-personalized ads done in more static formats (e.g., companies creating specific ads for user types based upon age, behavioral signals, and gender).

The more savvy marketers will personalize these ad formats even more by devices and other user characteristics. This will eventually lead to us to create highly personalized ads based upon user characteristics within 2-3 more years. However, 2017 will see the rise of semi-personalized ads on a massive scale.

The last few years, we've seen the rise of audience targeting and personalization, but if a company wasn't fully committed, they weren't that far behind their competition. In 2017, if you aren't using the full potential of audience targeting, you will be left behind. This is the year of audience targeting and semi-personalized ads mass adoption by advertisers.



ANDREW GOODMAN

President, Page Zero Media

Google and [Facebook](#) continue to rack up record advertising revenues. How much is too much?

It's not a question that Google is likely to fret about. Don't like the price? Someone else will pay it.

It's hard and expensive to get noticed at scale. We'd love to find a workaround, wouldn't we?

I loved "Purple Cow" (2003) by Seth Godin. "Being remarkable" probably is a prerequisite to being remarked upon, but Seth underplayed how much it costs to amplify remarkability. He argued that the "new rule" was to "create remarkable products that the right people seek out."

In so arguing, Godin was selling to marketers approximately the same thing as Moz and HubSpot have been selling: hope.

For most businesses, thinking you'll get noticed "on your merits" is false hope, a [Walter-Mitty-esque fantasy](#). A very large gatekeeper stands between you and the customer.

In recent years, it's all gone Google's way. Google provides incredible user experiences and an incredible ad platform we live in every day. But the ecosystem around it feels a bit stacked. Almost like you'd want to "stop Google," just because. They control search, YouTube, Android, Chrome, DoubleClick, Analytics, Gmail (under "declining open rates," see The Promotions Tab), and the list goes on. (See Godin's 2013 blog post, "[The Choke Point](#)".)

It's so hard to get noticed anymore! Start up a blog, no one comes. Want to somehow become a YouTube sensation? Good luck, unless you're "hot" (and a lot younger than you or me). [Facebook organic reach](#)? A thing of the past – pay to play.

The powerful VC investors in Medium (estimated valuation: \$600 million) claim that there is a need to solve this very distribution problem for content creators. Certainly, for now, [publishing remarkable content on Medium](#) beats starting up a blog and hoping they will come.

Medium aside, a lot of people are unhappy with the gatekeeping function Google plays. Some of them, explains Microsoft Distinguished Engineer [James Whittaker](#), are the most influential people in the tech world: engineers, software developers. To chase a little freedom, to make cooler stuff, they move onto another company that provides a crack of daylight. Often, they're just other big companies – let's be clear about that.

Whittaker and his co-conspirators are offering nothing less than to drain the digital swamp.

The main "other companies" these influencers work at: Microsoft; Facebook; Amazon; Apple; Tesla; blue chip startups like Medium, Square, and Slack.

In the short term, these freedom fighters have at least had the effect of neutralizing Total Google Dominance.

Longer term: these companies, Google included, will be monster R&D hubs where big data, the Internet of Things, and AI converge to transform our every waking thought and routine. In this context, is it even relevant to talk about the advertising model, however “native” it may be?

Study not only ad models, but the sweeping technological changes these firms’ engineering forces represent.

Self-driving cars aren’t some random boy toy hobby, as Whittaker points out. Massive data and the Internet of Things completely change how many industries will orient themselves in relation to consumer and societal demands.

When the dust settles, ad revenues will be in tatters. These companies will also have made bold, heavy-handed moves to be your “marketplace” directly.

It’s enough to make me want to go to the mall. You know, the real-life one with the creepy Santa, the fun escalators, and deep discounts at Abercrombie & Fitch.

Technology isn't just changing advertising models; the endgame is that it largely replaces them.

The weird irony is that many of the engineers who control this future are more culturally attuned to the naïve AdBusters, No Logo critique of “how capitalism sounds” than you'd expect, given that ads pay their salaries.

To hit your numbers in 2017, you have little choice. Keep forking over ad dollars to Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Amazon, and the broader display ecosystem, not necessarily in that order. Considering the alternatives, that's not such a terrible fate. Keep doing it until it stops working.

Ultimately, that's a pretty quaint setup in comparison with what seems to be in store for the corporate world formerly known as “advertisers.”

Today, the world's most technically accomplished utopians live inside powerful software companies, and – back to their roots, a purer version of the engineering mindset – have decided they don't like advertising. What they replace it with might not be your idea of a good time. I didn't want you to be the last to know.



PATRICK HUTCHISON

**Search Product Marketing Manager,
Marin Software**

In 2017, Google and Facebook will continue their reign as king and queen of digital marketing. It's estimated that the pair will capture \$0.73 of each additional \$1.00 of digital ad spend.

Over the coming three years they'll be competing for the \$33 billion of net-new spend expected to be invested on their respective platforms. The contest to capture the lion's share of that new spend is already underway.

Each company will continue to encroach on the other's core competency – Google will continue to bolster its audience buying and visual shopping capabilities, while Facebook works to diversify its revenue stream with the launch of search ads.

Facebook currently fields around 2 billion searches per day – some of which have commercial appeal – and in Mark Zuckerberg's own words from the Q3 2016 earnings call, "Once there's a large volume of people interacting with businesses, giving businesses tools to reach more people ... that's ultimately the business opportunity."

Given the influx of new marketing dollars – and increased competition for consumer’s attention – we tend to believe it’s the marketers who coordinate their demand-generation and demand-fulfillment campaigns across Google and Facebook who’ll be best positioned to thrive in this new environment. We derived this opinion from our observation that marketers running integrated Google and Facebook campaigns see up to ~70% higher returns.



PAULINE JAKOBER

CEO, Group Twenty Seven

In 2017, the theme is “go big or go home.”

Google Shopping Ads

These will continue to hold court for retailers. But **Shopping ads** will be bigger and hold more real estate on the SERPs in the coming year.

We are still coming across sites that sell items on their websites, but do not have Shopping campaigns. Some of these are larger advertisers that sell B2B products and are slower to adopt for various reasons.

We've also encountered some smaller retailers that have yet to get started on Shopping and are still expecting the same results they received 5 years ago from Search ads. Not going to happen!

Google Search Text Ads

These will take up more space in the search results and increase in size in 2017 because Google will continue to add more ad extensions. There are exciting new extensions in beta now that seem great for B2C and the retail side of things, but we're hoping Google will think about B2B in 2017 and create extensions that will lean towards B2B.

Google Ad Budgets & CPCs

Both rose significantly in 2016, and I think we can all expect the same in 2017. The advertisers that can't increase their budgets to roll with this trend should consider putting less emphasis on the traditional search network keyword-only targeted advertising and more on developing things like RLSA, customer match, GDN campaigns, and video ads.



LARRY KIM

Founder, WordStream

The big PPC trends in 2017 are basically a continuation in 2016:

- Facebook Ads sucking up PPC ad budgets like crazy thanks to remarkable demographic and interest-based targeting options.
- Facebook-style audience targeting options becomes increasingly integrated in Google Search ads (e.g., RLSA/ Customer Match, Demographics for Search Ads)
- Use them together! Facebook to drive awareness, RLSA in Google search and remarketing to convert newly created awareness into leads and sales.



JOHN LEE

Bing Ads Senior Manager, Client Training & Development, Microsoft

The next year is going to feel a lot like 2016.

There will be plenty of buzz around voice search in 2017. Mobile will no longer be “on the rise” – it will simply be a dominant factor in the marketing mix in 2017. Shopping will get the vast majority of the press in the digital advertising industry while B2B advertisers drop millions across search, display and social and reap the rewards.

What will be different?

How we look at and label devices. At some point in the next year, someone will figure out how to best monetize the Internet of Things (and therefore a big chunk of voice search queries).

Amazon Echo and Google Home are the go-to devices in this category, but what about all of the other smart devices around our homes (TV’s, refrigerators, etc.)? None of these “things” are computers, tablets or mobile phones. Perhaps we’ll soon have another category for setting bids?

How about targeting at large? The convergence of all the data in the cloud means that targeting is more than keywords, more than location and more than audience. It is the sum of ALL of these parts – the contextual intent of all of these factors.

What does this look like? This is a targeting form factor that we simply don't know yet. It doesn't exist. But it could very well come to fruition in 2017.



AARON LEVY

Manager of Client Strategy, Elite SEM

2017 will be the year of small data in PPC. I'm forecasting smarter use of big data and making it feel small and precise.

I know that big data has been “the thing” for years, and is only growing larger. We have an ever-growing library of information about every single user who touches an ad, a site, a product, or for that matter who even logs in to Google.

Over the course of the past few years, engines have been providing more ways to optimize our campaigns based on these micro-data points. We can modify bids based on device, geography, age,

gender, income, voting region, favorite ice cream flavor (probably), proximity to an airport – the list goes on, and it's nearly exhaustive.

What we're starting to see along with these tiny levers is a saturated marketplace. CPCs have been rising annual since as long as Google has been around, and I'm of the firm opinion that we're reaching a break point where advertisers will no longer be able to blanket the nation with a single message.

I foresee 2017 as the year when engines will open the micro-segmentation floodgates and allow efficient customized messages to individual users. We will see better targeting tools based on user behavior, including ramped up behavioral targeting in search – **lookalike audiences** are only the first step.

I predict we'll see an increase and improvement in budgeting tools, allowing marketers to isolate key target markets and focus efforts on a precise scale without additional manual setup. I expect we'll be able to target virtual assistants with customized messaging outside of a traditional text ad, but rather with a more human response – a paid answer, if you will.

I expect with all of this, attribution will (finally) be at the forefront of innovation. In a sense, Google killed true last touch attribution in 2016 when they merged cross-device conversions with last touch.

In 2017, I suspect all engines and platforms will up their education on precisely how attribution works (both online and offline), and increase offerings to make sure marketers are viewing every single part of the funnel.



JENNIFER (JOHNSTONE) LOPEZ

Global Director of Biddable Media, Piston Agency

My team and I say it all the time, “Search is constantly evolving.” Even with this current reality though, 2017 will be the biggest year of testing and transformation yet.

In 2017, paid search will be so revolutionized by new betas and releases working to foster relevancy and usefulness for users, that it will hardly be recognizable.

The signs of this are already emerging on Google now, like with the new **message extensions** allowing users to chat directly with businesses from search ads. Another example is the new sitelink image extensions which allow ads to showcase attractive and clickable images making for a more “edgy” user experience (very

reminiscent of the 2013 image ads though, which are now extinct). With additions like these, paid search will be changing so rapidly that users will hardly notice that they are clicking on ads anymore – making it a very native experience.

What I find most interesting about these rapid changes that we'll see in 2017 are the motivations behind them. Could it be that this continuous revamp is not just about aesthetics and catering to the end-user, but also about something larger – like Google working to outrun the evolution of programmatic search?

Many people believe that eventually, one of the major ad tech companies will introduce the ability to create, target, buy, optimize and fully-manage paid search ads programmatically, similarly to the way programmatic display is purchased. At its most basic level, this means search marketers could target beyond the search term – adding in other layers of complexity to target their potential customers (think: Customer Match and way beyond).

With that targeting, they'd also have a sliding adjustable bid scale, that fires off the ideal bid for that person – a bid not based on what we “think” is ideal, but a bid based on historical data and predictive algorithms that gauge the probability of that person to convert. Also inherent in programmatic search would be the ability to

purchase search ads from multiple publishers, particularly as users fragment off of Google and onto other engines like Amazon (which we are already seeing).

That being said, does this mean Google will be releasing its own programmatic search platform? It's hard to say.

If AdWords continues to evolve and other platforms can't keep up, the default is for paid search marketers to stay put, using their existing UIs and BMPS rather than testing out a programmatic search platform, keeping their budgets in just a few places. However, if Google finds too much fragmentation and sees users rapidly moving off of Google Search, they would benefit from becoming the first programmatic search platform and could make a percentage off of other publisher's inventory (envision a percentage of media cost similar to what you see with DoubleClick Search).

While I would double down that the continued new releases will change the look and feel of search for the end-user, I would place a side bet that there's a larger game being played between ad tech companies.



MELISSA MACKEY

Search Supervisor, gyro

2017 will see significant growth in Facebook ads, at the expense of Twitter and LinkedIn.

Facebook's ad platform will continue to innovate, with new and different ways to target users. New ad formats will emerge, enhancing Facebook's current offering of video, carousel, and image ads. I wouldn't be surprised to see Facebook Live videos turned into advertisements somehow.

In addition, Facebook will add even more B2B targeting options, allowing them to supplant LinkedIn as the premiere advertising channel for B2B advertisers. LinkedIn's only hope in 2017 will be a rescue by Microsoft, which has been slow to roll out so far.

Voice search will also experience explosive growth in 2017. Amazon Echo is already dominating the holiday season as one of the hottest-selling items; similar devices such as Google Home, and digital personal assistants like Siri and Cortana, will make voice search an everyday event.

PPC marketers can only hope the search engines will develop a way to indicate whether queries originated from typing or voice, so we can tailor messaging not only to the user, but to the type of search (audio vs. screen).



ELIZABETH MARSTEN,

**Senior Director, E-commerce Growth
Services, CommerceHub**

When it comes to e-commerce, it's the needs for feeds. If you thought you were sending a lot before, get ready to send more.

Whether that's to expand and be active in dynamic product ads, additional marketplaces or social platforms or supplementing product information in quasi-organic results like product cards, we're going to need to supply the details. The competition in the e-commerce space is fierce and the price we're willing to pay per click or action is comparatively low to lead gen, so we need to make those click-throughs count.

We're going to see more remarketing efforts, smarter and in more places, we're going to see and expect richer results with not just

product or seller reviews, but rankings and specifications that help us make the decision right within the SERP. Especially when it comes to mobile.

Product information is getting sprinkled in and mashed around in newsfeeds, cards, and even embedded in product ads. And for now, it's primarily powered by feeds.



SAMANTHA NOBLE

Director of Strategy, Koozai

Over the past couple of years we have seen a significant rise in ad platforms (such as Google, Facebook, and Twitter) making audience targeting available within their systems. In the last 12 months, we have seen [Instagram ads](#) come on the scene with the same targeting as Facebook and Pinterest.

As we move into 2017, I would like to see more advertisers thinking along the lines of sequential advertising funneling potential customers in to the top of the funnel and channeling them through to the purchase stage. At present, I think advertisers think of campaigns and features in isolation rather than considering ways

in which to move people further down the conversion path with different touchpoints.

Customer Match and Remarketing Lists are pretty much available in all the ad platforms now so it would be good to see advertisers making real use of this and linking paid media strategies together to get more revenue at the end of the journey and not leave money on the table.



MARC POIRIER

CEO & Founder, Acquisio

I think more search marketers will take advantage of their own search data to craft audiences to use for retargeting on Facebook and RTB.

When someone clicks on a search ad, the data related to that ad is available for marketers to capture. This includes the obvious, such as the keyword or search query, the ad they clicked, the ad group and campaign that originated the click, but also things like the max CPC for that ad, geolocation information, language, and many other data points that can be pulled from their ad.

It's possible to craft interesting marketing strategies from this data. While we saw many marketers explore these over the past couple years, there's a clear momentum in this direction and I expect it to accelerate in 2017.



LISA RAEHSLER

Founder, Big Click Co.

In 2016 we saw a bit of a departure from straight-up desktop PPC search campaigns.

With nearly **60 percent of search queries on mobile**, it's no wonder even SMBs are getting more creative with campaign types and targeting.

Heading into 2017, I suspect the same will remain true. However, there is a bit of a disconnect when it comes to attributing conversions back to these campaigns (for example call-only campaigns or display). Even with assisting data, there is still a challenge.

I think we're going to see more forward movement in measurement and attribution. Otherwise, it will be difficult for these businesses to justify the media spends.

In addition, I think we'll see more feature releases from Google and Bing addressing the attribution issue – especially as it relates to advertisers with physical locations and how we bridge the gap between clicks and in-store sales.

Are hot **technologies like voice search** and **VR** are your radar? Advertisers should be thinking about this, but it's not going mainstream in 2017. After all, many advertisers are just now getting their mobile game together and changing their mind-set to embrace the inevitable.



DIANE SIDDEN

Regional BlueKai Audience Manager, Cisco

In 2017, the PPC expanded ad formats need to be a focus of the modern marketer. Many companies have already taken advantage of this – and rightfully so.

Studies have shown increases in CTR of up to 20 percent, and with the expanded ad format now device independent, you don't have to create specific ads for mobile anymore – one ad fits all!

As PPC advertisers move to ETAs (all AdWords users must transition by end of January 2017) it will be critical to continually review and optimize content. Using real-time call-to-actions and relevant sitelinks will be critical to PPC success.



BRUCE SWANN

Senior Product Marketing Manager, Adobe

The biggest trend marketers should focus on with **remarketing** is constantly raising the bar of the consumer experience. In order for remarketing to be successful, marketers must provide a thoughtful, relevant and timely message across all channels.

When done successfully, marketers can reengage with customers across various touchpoints on the **customer journey** to drive engagement, conversions and loyalty. However, an irrelevant or ill-timed message risks a disruptive experience that can result in an opt-out.



DAVID SZETELA

Owner & CEO, FMB Media

Many PPC advertisers believe the topic of mobile is sooo last year. Not so fast! I see evidence that many of them have not taking all the steps they should to fully capitalize on the fact that smartphone searches are still growing.

What PPC marketers should be doing:

Adopt Google’s mantra of “Mobile First.” Plan and build PPC accounts that assume most traffic (and phone calls) will be coming from mobile devices. Segment PPC data reports to show whether this is true for you. Write separate ads for mobile and desktop. It’s now possible, given Google’s device-specific bid modifiers, to run mobile-only campaigns – use them as appropriate.

Speed up slow mobile site performance. Google says that 53 percent of smartphone users abandon a site if it takes longer than three seconds to load. I believe them. Use speed measurement tools from Google and others to measure site performance. Their reports even tell you what to do to speed up page loads.

Make lead submission and ecommerce check-out/payment one-click simple. For example, think about using Amazon's checkout system to benefit from the fact that Amazon stores shipping addresses and payment info. Let customers place items into their shopping carts and access them later for final checkout on a laptop/PC. I've been noticing more and more retailers offering streamlined mobile checkout – this stuff's not rocket science, folks.

If your business drives phone calls via PPC, don't send callers to a maze of menu instructions. Route them to a trained human who answers immediately and don't send them to voicemail!

One last prediction: keywords aren't going anywhere in 2017. The percentage of voice searches is certainly rising, but people will continue to type search queries. The search platforms will get better at determining intent, which will be great for advertisers, but don't expect to be targeting search ads based on psychographic info anytime soon.



KATY TONKIN

VP of Digital Strategy, Point It

Two big PPC trends to watch:

2017 is Going to be a Year of Investment

The removal of right rail ads this year shook things up and made people consider alternative investment strategies, including other channels. The shrinking SERP primarily impacts desktop searches.

With more than half of searches taking place on mobile, defining advertisers' mobile strategy is critical. I'm still surprised by the number of advertisers who choose to turn away from mobile. As an agency, our job is to monitor trends and the impacts of shifts in technology, and my expert advice is: mobile is (still) key to prolonged PPC program success.

But for those who depend on desktop paid search to drive the lion's share of their conversions, it's time to think about pay-per-click diversification.

Paid social is the first place I'd advise clients to expand, as the channel will continue to grow in 2017. Companies will use their budget to fund audience-focused marketing strategies (like social

media advertising) to augment any losses they have seen from shrinking search page real estate.

2017 Will See the Rise of Better Data for Paid Search

Our job as search marketers is to do two things: match to the most relevant, quality traffic and drive highly qualified searchers to a high-converting landing experience.

Over the last 10 (or more) years paid search experts primarily focused on understanding keyword intent. This has become more pronounced as innovative new audience data gets injected into PPC, providing deeper wells of data which have forced paid search to evolve and catch up to the audience segmentation capabilities of other channels like Paid Social.

The quality of our prospect interactions is improving and along with it, our performance. These enhanced capabilities also allow marketers to choose the most cost effective channel to reach a consumer segment.

Where the challenge still lies is in the ability to cross reference data for deeper, more accurate targeting. In 2017, I predict that we'll see marketers pushing on data owners to release comprehensive audience data in more user friendly ways. Whether that's third-

party data being made available for PPC targeting or other sources collaborating in a data alliance – behavioral data must be further integrated into paid search for advertisers to offer deeper personalization.

I like to imagine the power of social media platform data, search query data, and demographic data joined together to create super-queries offering advertisers unparalleled targeting. On the user-side, it means hyper-relevant and perfectly timed advertising that resembles more of a value-added service than an intrusive ad.

Could this help our industry avoid death by ad blockers? Possibly. Could it help build trust and confidence in advertising from both an advertiser and audience perspective? Absolutely.



FREDERICK VALLAEYS

CEO, Optmyzr

For advanced PPC advertisers, I think search ads will become as much about audience targeting as they are about keyword targeting. Of course keywords will continue to play a critical role in how ads are placed on search results pages, but advertisers who are fed up with ever-increasing CPC prices will embrace any option that lets them spend money

more efficiently, and audience targeting enables them to do just that.

This means that more advertisers will embrace Remarketing Lists for Search Ads (RLSA) to exclude irrelevant audiences and bid higher for audiences comprised of highly qualified leads.

It also means there will be more advertisers using the synergy between social and search ads. Relatively cheaper clicks with amazing demographic and behavioral targeting options will be used to drive users from social networks to advertisers' sites where they can be cookie'd and added to the appropriate audience list. Then these prospects will be targeted on search results pages with more relevant messaging and more appropriate bids.

Finally, the rising complexity associated with managing more channels, more targeting segments, and more ad variations will increase the popularity of tools, including free ones like Ad Customizers, AdWords Scripts, and Bid Strategies from Google, and also paid tools, like those from Optmyzr and others.



PURNA VIRJI

**Senior Bing Ads PPC Training Manager,
Microsoft**

I think there will be three notable trends to watch out for:

Visual Content & Visual Ads

Investment in visuals is just going to keep growing. Advertisers have seen tremendous success with formats such as Product Listing Ads and Facebook videos.

We'll see these continue to rise in popularity, for one simple reason: it works. A study from Pixel Road Designs found that consumers are 80 percent more likely to engage with content that has relevant images.

Bing Ads has already been testing video ad extensions, which are larger, more visual ads that especially stand out on mobile devices:



Furthermore, we'll see more interactive, experiential content such as augmented reality sales tool like Sephora's Virtual Artist studio. It's simply brilliant and ties-in to technology we already carry with us everywhere: our mobile phones.

Predictive Analytics & Artificial Intelligence

Thanks to the machine learning capabilities which are helping turn the big data into proper predictive analytics, I think we'll see increased opportunities to refine and enhance our targeting.

Imagine the impact that lookalike audiences had on our PPC efforts and scale that by 10 times.

Artificial intelligence has already been able to study big data and help find cures for cancer, can write poetry and can beat world champions at chess. That's the power that we'll have to learn to channel within our campaigns and strategies.

Voice Search

I believe it's likely that we'll see the first monetized voice search campaigns start to kick off in 2017. I'm still not sure which company will be first to market but for us advertisers it will be increasingly important to watch and pay attention and test the waters as early as possible – like I've urged people to do for much of 2016. My prediction is that the first two areas to see voice search campaigns kick-off will be shopping campaigns and local search campaigns. Overall, it's a fascinating time to be working in our industry!



EVAN WATERS

**Director, Growth & Performance Marketing,
Naspers**

In 2017 you will see smart organizations waking up to the need to compete on customer journey from both an access and measurement perspective. In many competitive verticals, companies are reaching both price and feature parity and it is becoming more difficult to win on the superiority of a single customer touchpoint.

Broadly across high-growth markets we find businesses focusing more on attribution models and longer horizons of lifetime value to support sustainable cross-channel growth. With very few instances of an “app only” strategy working at scale, smart marketers are engaging with users on the users’ terms — be it with in-browser push via progressive web apps, personalized email campaigns for high value desktop users, rich-media push for core app cases, or SMS for those pesky push opt-outs.

Not only do companies need to provide delightful experiences across all available touchpoints, they need to appropriate value aptly for the cross-platform, cross-device world for which they

develop. In doing so, the marketer drives efficient spend and find pockets of growth that their last-click competitors are blind to.

Ultimately, businesses with sophisticated measurement and lengthier win-back windows can afford to bid higher and drive more scale. Nowhere is this truer than in markets characterized by low-spec smartphones, high app uninstall rate, and spotty internet connections, where finding high value users is sometimes like looking for a needle in a haystack.



KIRK WILLIAMS

Founder, ZATO

I believe 2017 PPC will see significant advances in two primary areas: audience targeting and automation. While neither of these are complete strangers to the PPC world, they are both growing in complexity and possibility. In my opinion, if we want to continue to keep up with PPC evolution, we will need to focus on these areas in our personal work habits.

Audience Targeting

While Google tries to find its way in audience targeting with toddler-like unsteadiness, Facebook audience targeting continues to power confidently forward (think Usain Bolt).

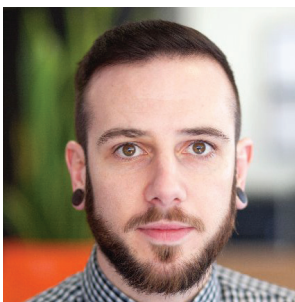
When I first started running my first Facebook ads in the early days, I remember thinking it was amazing that I could choose the ages and gender of my target audience. Today (I kid you not), I just put an ad for my house on Facebook in which I targeted a specific income level and age group within 25 miles of Billings, who were actively looking for a house to purchase. Our current house is a great starter home, so I threw “first time home buyers” in as an interest target as well.

I am convinced we will continue to see audience targeting grow as Google and Bing continue to figure it out as well (this complexity is already growing, as both have demographic bidding now). My hope is that Bing will offer LinkedIn demographics as remarketing audiences in 2017! Regardless, the smart PPCer in 2017 will figure out how to incorporate audiences into their marketing strategy, not simply keywords.

Automation

With scripts and automated rules, automation is no stranger to PPC. However, as AI and Personal Assistants and computers in general grow in complexity and intelligence, we will continue to see tasks taken out of our hands by Google and Bing... whether we like it or not.

This isn't all doom and gloom for marketers, however. The smart PPCer will utilize automation to her advantage in managing and compiling data, and then grow in her expertise of analyzing the data so she continues as a valued member of the marketing team.



BEN WOOD

Head of Digital, Hallam Internet

In 2017, I would encourage businesses to focus on smarter use of PPC automation to boost ROI, saving them time to focus on the bigger picture. As an agency, we have found the use of automated bid management tools enable us to limit over-spending, achieve desired ROI and hit CPA targets for clients, which has enabled us to focus more time on top level PPC strategy and testing across additional networks.

For savvy ecommerce businesses, optimizing product data feeds for both Google and Bing shopping should become a priority in 2017. Google shopping is already a cost effective tool for ecommerce businesses to advertise their products in Google search, and I expect its functionality to increase over the coming year with the rollout of features such as [shop the look ads](#). Moreover, Bing has been [proven to be cheaper in terms of CPA than Google search](#), so if you haven't already run tests on Bing, it's certainly worth considering doing so in the new year.

Finally, I expect there are even more sophisticated ad formats in the pipeline from Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Thus, businesses should budget more time and money to test the ever-expanding number of paid advertising options at their disposal across both paid search and social ads in 2017.

OK – the experts have spoken. Your turn! What do you think will be the PPC trends to watch in 2017?