

Case Study | Adwords Improves SEO

If [Google analytics](#) looks at [Search](#) as a whole and identifies people that come to your site from a specific search engine (ie Google.com), then why do we do we believe so whole-heartedly that Google would penalize you for having paid search traffic on your site? Maybe *penalize* is too strong of a word – but how about *discount*? Is it so hard to believe that a person who comes from the left side of the page versus the right side of the page is any less of a person coming from a search engine? They both searched. They both arrived.

Yet, for so many years I have heard the claims that there are only indirect benefits such as conversion lifts when you appear in both organic and paid, and there is better brand recognition, etc – but when asked if PPC helps SEO – the answer is always absolutely not. So like everything we do here at [Media Two](#) – we tested it. And we tested it again, and again, and again... Following is one example of one of the tests we ran.

Below is a graph of 8 weeks of [Google Adwords](#) traffic. The first 8 weeks (Green Line) was generally light traffic, primarily brand keywords. The following 8 weeks (Blue Line) was elevated traffic (1,211% elevated). This traffic was only run from Google's Adwords account.



Search sent 6,346 paid visits via 1 sources

Show: non-paid | total | paid

Site Usage	Goal Set 1	AdSense Revenue	Views: [Grid] [List] [Table] [Chart]			
Visits 6,346 Previous: 484 (1,211.16%)	Pages/Visit 2.13 Previous: 2.49 (-14.20%)	Avg. Time on Site 00:01:28 Previous: 00:01:39 (-10.89%)	% New Visits 84.51% Previous: 83.88% (0.75%)	Bounce Rate 63.73% Previous: 55.79% (14.23%)		
Source	None	Visits ↓	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1. google						
March 27, 2011 - May 21, 2011		6,346	2.13	00:01:28	84.51%	63.73%
January 30, 2011 - March 26, 2011		484	2.49	00:01:39	83.88%	55.79%
% Change		1,211.16%	-14.20%	-10.89%	0.75%	14.23%

Filter Source: containing [] Go Advanced Filter Go to: 1 Show rows: 10 1 - 1 of 1

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The next screen grab below shows the Organic trend lines for this particular site – the same 8 week period. Notice the blue line, which is the 8 weeks with Google AdWords in accelerated mode how it starts slowly and then gradually increases. There is no seasonality in play for this test. Notice that Google's organic traffic to the website actually increased by 19.48%, where Bing – where there were no ads running on their paid search program actually decreased 63.27%. This particular site, Google and Bing organic traffic normally parallel each other's movements (when one goes up – so does the other). So this draws us to believe that Google is identifying that there is more relevant users coming to the site, and although it may not be credited as highly as its link structure system, it is definitely showing us almost 20% more love simply for running paid ads at a time when Bing is actually decreasing.



Search sent 4,083 non-paid visits via 10 sources

Show: non-paid | total | paid

Site Usage		Goal Set 1	AdSense Revenue		Views				
Visits	4,083	Pages/Visit	2.19	Avg. Time on Site	00:02:07	% New Visits	47.47%	Bounce Rate	66.10%
	Previous: 3,825 (6.75%)		Previous: 2.50 (-12.16%)		Previous: 00:02:37 (-19.50%)		Previous: 38.59% (23.00%)		Previous: 56.89% (16.20%)
Source	Visits ↓	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate				
1. google									
March 27, 2011 - May 21, 2011	3,687	2.11	00:02:04	48.20%	68.32%				
January 30, 2011 - March 26, 2011	3,086	2.20	00:01:47	43.16%	63.45%				
% Change	19.48%	-4.46%	15.10%	11.66%	7.68%				
2. bing									
March 27, 2011 - May 21, 2011	227	2.93	00:03:08	28.19%	43.17%				
January 30, 2011 - March 26, 2011	618	3.86	00:06:44	8.74%	24.60%				
% Change	-63.27%	-24.07%	-53.40%	222.66%	75.53%				

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To make sure that the increase didn't have to do with natural increases in search activity from major news events, we compared the time range to Google Insights, and for the most part it was flat, if not a bit down for the increased period.



One study does not make a statistically convincing argument in my eyes, but we have seen similar trends with an educational client as well as an insurance provider, hospitality client and many other industries (8 total) – all of whom did no traditional Search Engine Optimizing or website redesign's, they simply increased their exposure on key terms and were benefited with higher organic SERP's as well as the ensuing higher organic traffic. Although the correlation is obvious, the theories range from valuable traffic being rewarded to analytics attribution counting 2nd visit searches as Organic even though their first visit came from Paid search. Regardless of the reasoning, we know for a fact that **Organic and Paid Search do work together** and your paid search specialists must be working with your SEO/Design teams to maximize these lifts.