GOOGLE ANNOUNCES NEW PRODUCTS & FEATURES

BACKGROUND
Google’s annual performance marketing summit, Google Marketing Next, took place this year in San Francisco from May 23rd – May 24th. The 2-day conference discussed key topics for marketers, including attribution, consumer insights/ analytics, and automation. Google also revealed several new product updates, many of which will be available to advertisers immediately or later this year.

Google’s product announcements and updates can be organized into five key themes, each of which addresses advertisers’ need for more consumer insights and greater data usage across marketing channels:

- Audience
- Measurement
- Productivity
- Online to Offline
- Assistant

AUDIENCE
Google has announced the ability to target consumer patterns and life events across YouTube and Gmail properties. Additionally, the long awaited in-market audience affinity targets will be available as bid modifiers within AdWords, and advertisers will be able to leverage YouTube ad views and channel views as a retargeting list within search.

Consumer Patterns & Life Events on YouTube & Gmail

What is new?
YouTube’s existing targeting has grown over the last few years to include affinity audiences (e.g. auto enthusiasts), in market audiences (e.g. actively shopping for a car brand: Acura), and custom affinity audiences. Earlier this year, Google announced the impending capability of using a consumer’s Google search history as a targeting parameter within YouTube.

How will this impact advertisers?
The new targeting parameters will give advertisers more control than ever before, allowing them to reign in broader audiences across YouTube and Gmail and specifically target consumers using a greater depth of signals than previously available. Advertisers who depend on consumer life events, and who market based on life events, will see the greatest benefit from these changes as they yield more precise targeting. For all advertisers, leveraging remarketing pixels on their sites will continue to be crucial to understanding more about their audiences (including affinities & in-market behaviors) via Google’s Audience Insights within AdWords’ shared library.


The latest features announced at Google Marketing Next expand that targeting further to now include consumer patterns and life events (i.e. graduating college, getting married, having a baby, moving) across YouTube and Gmail.
YouTube Retargeting within Search

What is new?
Advertisers will be able to target consumers who have been exposed to their channels or one of their YouTube ads. These users can be targeted via AdWords similar to RLSA or Similar Audience lists.

How will this impact advertisers?
Leveraging every brand touch point will empower advertisers to differentiate their messages and personalize their search strategy to maximize spend against consumers with the highest likelihood to convert. For advertisers with a well-established YouTube presence or larger investments in the platform, there are considerably more opportunities, including the ability to tie back themes highlighted within YouTube ad creative to their search ad copy, which can create a more cohesive experience for consumers.


In-Market for Search & Shopping

What is new?
As previously noted, in-market audiences have long been available for GDN and as YouTube as targeting parameters; however, Google announced that these same in-market audiences (e.g., in-market for trips to Las Vegas) will be available as targets for both search and shopping campaigns. As of May 23rd, there are over 490 in-market audiences for advertisers to choose from. Google takes many factors into account when qualifying users for in-market audiences, including clicks on related ads and subsequent conversions, along with the content of the sites that consumers visit and the recency and frequency of the visits.

Google has steadily grown their audience-based search targeting toolset since their initial release of RLSA in 2013. In late 2016, Google announced the time-saving feature that allowed advertisers to append lists (RLSA & Customer Match) at the campaign level instead of the ad group level and increased list membership duration to 540 days. Google also recently took Similar Audiences for search out of beta and publically released it for all advertisers.

How will this impact advertisers?
These changes will allow advertisers to refine targeting across keywords that are actively being targeted, leveraging bid modifiers in either direction (positive or negative) as an efficiency lever. Furthermore, advertisers can augment their search strategies by increasing the scope of their existing keyword structure, targeting keywords that may have been too expensive to bid on previously due to their broader nature, and using in-market audiences as a qualifier for stronger engagement and conversion rates.


MEASUREMENT
All advertisers know that implementing a cross-screen, multi-channel attribution model is a complex undertaking. Google is rolling out a response to advertiser and agency demands for better attribution models and ways to better understand how touchpoints in the consumer journey contribute to brand goals. Potentially the most exciting update from Google Marketing Next, they announced three new attribution and measurement products:

- Google Attribution
- Google Attribution 360
- Unique Reach Reports

Google Attribution
What is new?
Currently in beta, Google will be releasing a new standalone tool that measures multi-touch, multi-channel, and cross-device across all properties. The goal is a holistic, single path to purchase view. This will be available to consumers at no cost.

How will this impact advertisers?
Today advertisers can analyze cross-device and multi-touch points within a specific channel. Although cross-channel measurement tools and platforms exist, few advertisers have a comprehensive model in place due to the challenges associated with it. The ease of implementation coupled with the no-cost version of Google's new tool will eliminate hurdles for many advertisers who do not currently have a solution in place. It's the first step in evolving past models that disproportionately attribute value to first or last click.

This tool will help highlight what touchpoints actually assist throughout the consumer journey and, as a result, will enable smarter budget allocation, strategies, and optimizations, to ultimately make advertisers more relevant to their consumers and drive sales.

The tool integrates with the suite of Google products, AdWords, Analytics, and DoubleClick, so there will be no retagging. Google did not mention if the free version will allow for external integrated data outside of these products.

This is a huge step forward for attribution, but advertisers should keep in mind that there are a few pre-requisites to getting this right. One of the most important pre-requisites is the need to eliminate silos. Internal advertiser teams and agency partners need to work cross-channel, share data, and align on KPIs in order to enable meaningful action from the data.

Launch date: In beta, available later 2017.

Google Attribution 360
What is new?
Google Attribution 360 is the enterprise version of the tool. It will be sold to enterprise organizations and comes with additional data source options.

How will this impact advertisers?
For more customization and sophistication, brands can purchase the 360 version. Much like Google Analytics 360, this will be one of Google’s offerings for paying customers. With this version, advertisers can add additional data layers and have additional modulating flexibility at their disposal.
Unique Reach

What is new?
Unique Reach is a new report that will show advertisers how many people they reached individually by device and network, and by ad format. The report also arms advertisers with a frequency metric that shows how many people were served display or YouTube advertising. There’s also an average impression per unique user metric in the report.

How will this impact advertisers?
This non-cookie reliant metric helps identify if advertisers are effectively reaching their goal, whether that’s new users or reinforcing a message. Put another way, it’s a way to stop annoying users. How many times in the same session do you really need to see the same YouTube commercial?

Launch date: Currently available in AdWords and rolled out in DoubleClick in Q4 2017

PRODUCTIVITY

To help advertisers increase productivity and impact, Google is launching AMP Ads, rolling out the new AdWords interface, integrating Optimize and Surveys 360 within AdWords, and unveiling new planning capabilities across DBM (DoubleClick Bid Manager).

Accelerated Mobile Page (AMP) Ads

What is new?
Search campaigns that meet landing page AMP standards will now be eligible to leverage AMP ads for quicker load times. From a display perspective, the majority of the display ads will automatically convert into the AMP format should it appear on an AMP landing page. This improved user experience will likely help drive conversions for brands.

How will this impact advertisers?
AMP constructed landing pages are meant to improve a user’s mobile experience. This positive experience can now be leveraged in search campaigns. Advertisers who implement AMP ads should monitor:

- Increase in revenue or conversions due to gaining lost opportunity
- Bounce Rates (time should decrease)

Launch date: Available immediately

Adwords Interface Updates

What is new?
Currently in Alpha, with the option to toggle back and forth between the new and old version, this AdWords interface update aims to mimic a dashboard. The new interface is more visual in nature and allows for building more filters into the different views, faster. The revamped design also highlights recommendations for audiences and can make optimizations more seamless.

How will this impact advertisers?
The updated interface is great for advertisers who primarily manage search campaigns within AdWords. The new interface allows for a more colorful and digestible view of the data. However, for advertisers or agencies who use a Bid Management Platform (BMP), this is a less exciting update.

Launch date: Mid year 2017

Optimize & Surveys 360

What is new?
Google Surveys 360 will integrate with AdWords so that advertisers can perform quick market research across users and audiences in their campaign, including remarketing lists. This update allows the ability to quickly understand the impact of advertising and sentiment of the consumer.

Optimize offers both a landing page health check and an easy way to build and test new landing pages without involving a web developer. Landing page tests can be run at the keyword level, associating different keywords with different pages based on keyword intent.

How will this impact advertisers?
Thanks to the Surveys 360 integration, understanding audiences and how to provide them with value may now only be a few questions away. This new opportunity would be best focused on campaigns that have loose intent based keywords or are not converting well. These insights can help unlock more actionable potential for optimizations and a direction that advertisers may not have seen clearly with data analysis alone.

It’s clear that by integrating Optimize into the platform that Google is trying to solve for pain points, like relying on web developers for landing page changes and testing. This new level of control may help advertisers test more quickly to better understand their audiences. What's more, these learnings can then be leveraged on a larger scale throughout the organization to inform other types of messaging.

Launch date: Mid year 2017

DoubleClick Bid Manager Planning Tools

What is new?
This is a new pre-campaign planning feature. It is based on understanding historical learnings to make recommendations for new placement, budget, and more. There will be an option to export and create campaigns from the tool.

How will this impact advertisers?
Planning tools in the digital world never seem to be as useful as marketers need them to be, so any tool or feature that truly helps to plan and execute are always beneficial. Depending on its accuracy, this tool could help make media buying more efficient and easier to implement with the export option.

Launch date: Mid year 2017
ONLINE-TO-OFFLINE

Google is helping connect the dots for advertisers with an offline presence, launching Store Sales Direct, Store Sales Partners, Store Visits for YouTube, and Local Formats on Display & YouTube.

Store Sales Direct & Partners

What is new?
Since its debut in 2015, Google’s store visits has been a game-changing metric for advertisers with a brick and mortar location. In 2016, advertisers whose products sit on shelves within retailers were finally able to get a sense of online media’s offline impact with the launch of affiliate location extensions. Now Google has announced Store Sales Partners and Store Sales Direct as a way for both location-based advertisers and manufacturers alike to get a sense of their offline ROAS (Return On Ad Spend).

Using Store Sales Direct, advertisers can partner with Google to share point-of-sale data, including e-mail addresses, which can then be mapped back to users who have clicked on paid search ads. Store Sales Partners leverages Google’s third-party partnerships to extrapolate consumer spending behaviors and tie those purchases back to search ad engagement. These partnerships capture approximately 70% of credit and debit card transactions in the United States.

How will this impact advertisers?
This link between the online and offline worlds brings advertisers one step closer to being fully connected as brands with an offline presence can now leverage this data to correlate online behavior with offline purchases. This use of this data will largely impact advertisers’ existing measurement approaches, improving the accuracy of optimization towards metrics that impact the bottom line. For these advertisers, the new offline ROAS metric will give them a data point that had previously been estimated via proxy.

Launch date: Store Sales Direct available immediately. Store Sales Partners to be available later in 2017.

Store Visits for YouTube

What is new?
Advertisers will now be able to measure the store visits that their YouTube ad campaigns drive.

How will this impact advertisers?
Today advertisers heavily rely on CPV (Cost per View) and CPM, coupled with brand lift or search lift studies, to measure the impact of their YouTube buys. For advertisers with store visit KPIs, this enhances their ability to track the impact of a larger piece of their overall digital media budget without costly studies.

Launch date: Available later in 2017.

Local Formats on Display & YouTube

What is new?
Location extensions can help consumers find advertisers’ locations by showing ads with an advertiser’s address, a map to their location, or the distance to their business. Now Google has announced that it’s also rolling this feature out to their display (GDN) and YouTube platforms.

ASSISTANT

At its 2017 I/O event, Google made many announcements about expanding Google Assistant, its virtual assistant platform. At Google Marketing Next, Google demoed some of those advances.

Ultimately, Google has increased its investment and technology in machine learning, leveraging it to build neural networks to improve the consumer search experience initiated by voice. For example, Google Home is now compatible with streaming music services and could initiate phone calls on command.

Voice Search

What is new?
Google unveiled many new features, including Google Assistant for iPhone, third party Assistant Actions expanding to phones, Google Home can now initiate free phone calls to any number in the US and Canada, Google Lens visual search, Assistant added support for text input, and Voice Commerce for shopping with just voice on Google Assistant.

How will this impact advertisers?
Voice Commerce represents a frictionless means of purchase, but also removes many of the opportunities advertisers now utilize to reach consumers during their purchasing process. This increases the importance of integrating with Voice Commerce, as well as creating Assistant Actions to allow consumers to utilize advertiser-created actions to seek additional information.

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