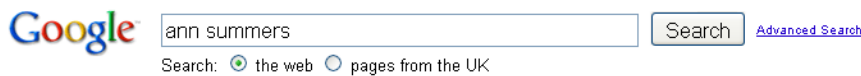


# Google Paid Site Links

Tue, Sep 15, 2009 | Posted by [Sam Fenton Elstone](#)

Google has recently begun beta testing a new paid ad format that includes natural search style site links. Currently limited to only a handful of advertisers, those selected will be able to display an additional four links under their premium position Ad.

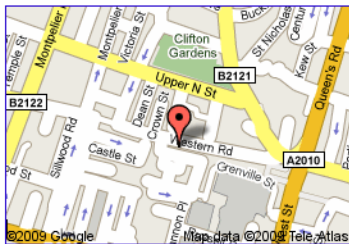
Advertisers are able to submit up to ten links but only four will be displayed at any one time and there is a strict criterion that must be met in order for the links to appear. The Ad must appear in 1st position in the auction and also meet an additional quality threshold to be modified into a Sitelinks ad?



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This criteria means that we will most likely see these ads appear against brand searches but any keyword that meets the criteria can be modified into a Sitelinks ad.

It is an exciting prospect to be able to offer users additional points of entry to your site when arriving from generic or brand searches. Up until now brand searches would typically land the user at the furthest point from conversion ? the home page. Similarly generic terms tend to land users at higher, category-level pages. The Sitelinks Ads enable advertisers to present multiple options to the user, increasing their choice and leading them to deeper parts of the site, closer to conversion.

On the face of it this should be seen as a positive step for bigger brands. We will be seeing the majority of these Ads matched against brand terms and this may go some way in alleviating the concerns of brand owners since Google allowed a free for all on brand bidding. If the brand owner is utilizing the Sitelinks Ad, they are owning a larger proportion of the search real estate as well as having a point of difference from competitor's standard text Ads.

On the other hand it could just be seen as another Google strategy to maximize revenue. These Ads aren't only restricted to brand but the only Ads eligible for this type of Ad will be those in 1st position and with a good CTR. This equates to a lot of spend for some generic terms, and if the value of 1st position suddenly increases we will see competition for that position increase. If everyone ups their bids in an attempt to win the battle of the premium positions, we will see CPC inflation all round. If a Sitelinks Ad improves an advertisers CTR and therefore their Quality Score, it may make it even harder for top placed advertisers to be dislodged. It will be advertisers with deep pockets that emerge victorious.

At iCrossing, we are monitoring the impact this will have on the performance of our clients that our taking part in the beta test. It will be interesting to see what sort of impact on CTR and conversion, Ads will have. Expect Google to roll out more paid search beta test in the near future in their attempt to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Binghoo!) and hold onto the majority of advertiser's cash.