NEWSLETTER

May 2014

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1 RESEARCH SAYS 56 PERCENT OF "ON THE GO" SEARCHES HAVE LOCAL INTENT

In a recent study by comScore, it was **found** that 78 percent of local-mobile searches resulted in an offline purchase (usually in a few hours).
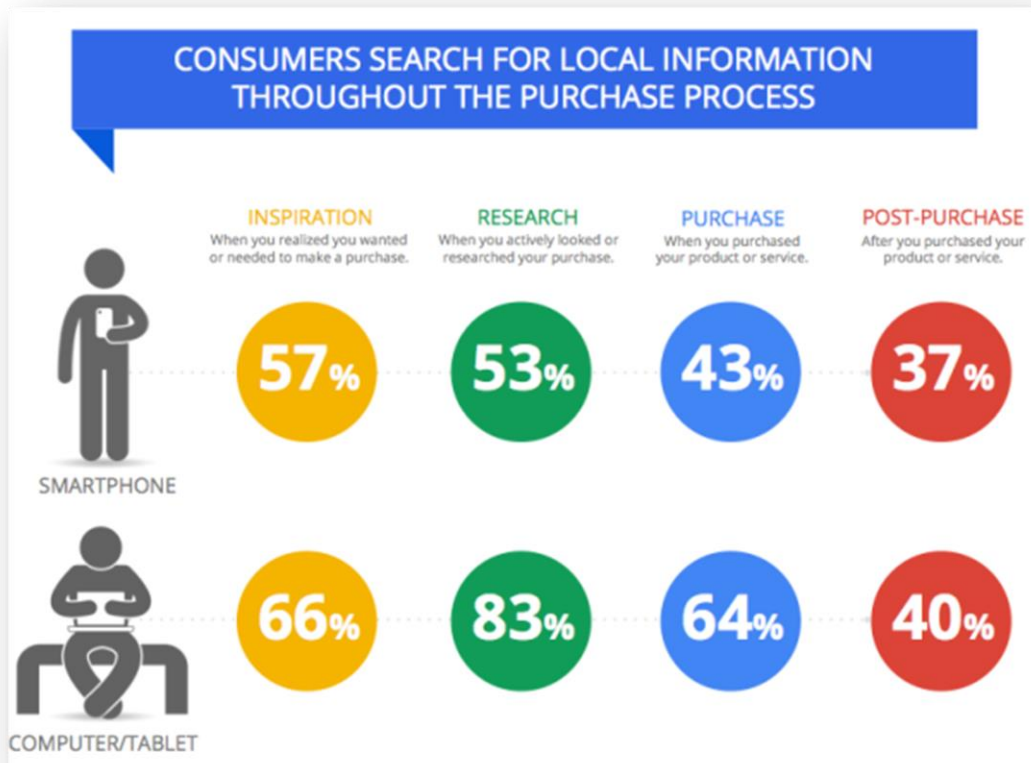
Ipsos conducted the online survey of 4,500 consumers across nine vertical segments: Auto, CPG, Finance, Local Services, Media & Entertainment, Restaurant, Retail, Tech and Travel. The firm also reviewed and incorporated data from a smartphone shopper diary study involving 653 respondents.

The survey/data collection occurred in mid-December and January earlier this year.

The survey found that 88 percent of smartphone users and 84 percent of tablet owners conduct local searches. Most of those queries were dominated by hours, directions, address and product availability queries.

People tend to think of local search as a "last mile" behavior. However like the comScore research Ipsos found that local search was used at all phases of purchase cycle. The study also found that users conducted local searches both at home and on the go, though the most common location was at home.
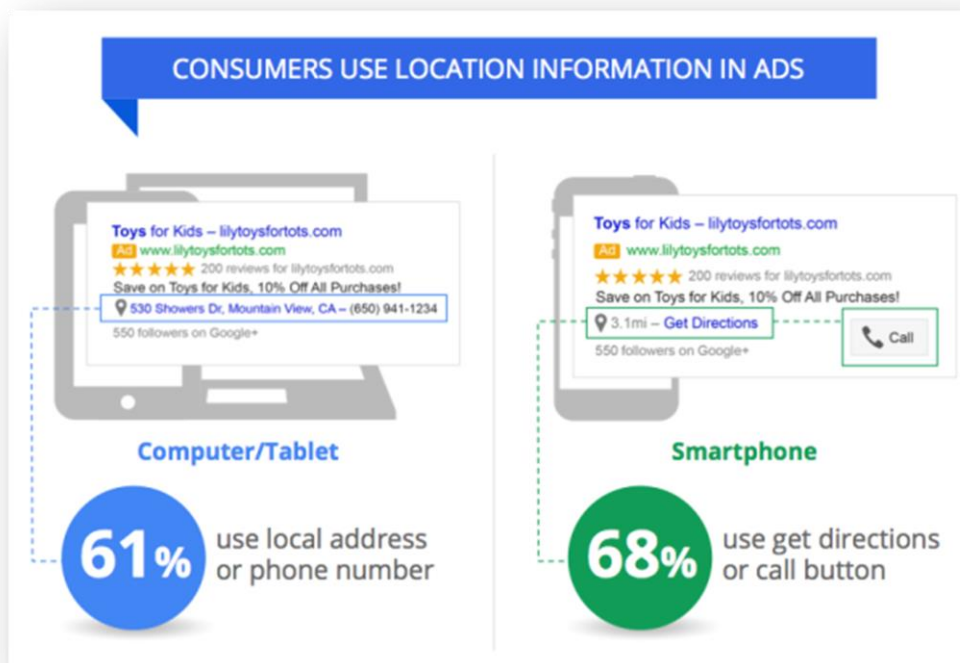
CONSUMERS SEARCH FOR LOCAL INFORMATION THROUGHOUT THE PURCHASE PROCESS

	INSPIRATION	RESEARCH	PURCHASE	POST-PURCHASE
	When you realized you wanted or needed to make a purchase.	When you actively looked or researched your purchase.	When you purchased your product or service.	After you purchased your product or service.
SMARTPHONE	57%	53%	43%	37%
COMPUTER/TABLET	66%	83%	64%	40%

Strikingly the research discovered that among the substantial subset of those who searched "on the go," a majority of those searches (56 percent) carried a local intent. This is not saying that 56 percent of all mobile queries are local, however.

Back to the point about the last mile (and related purchase intent); Ipsos found that conversions after a local search were more than 2X as likely vs. a non-local search. And half of smartphone searchers visited an offline store within 24 hours, following a local search.

CONSUMERS PURCHASE AT A HIGHER RATE AFTER LOCAL SEARCH

18% of local smartphone searches led to a purchase within a day compared to 7% of non-local searches

Local Search — 18% made a purchase

Non-local Search — 7% made a purchase

Another powerful finding: "one in three searches on smartphone occur right before consumers visit a store." In addition, the majority of store visits following a local search occurred within a 5 mile radius of the user's location. (Compare a recent survey that found local consumers were generally willing to drive 17 minutes to get to a local business location.)

There were a number of questions that asked about user engagement with mobile search ads in particular. The study says that as a general matter "consumers prefer and act on location-based ads" and "4 in 5 consumers want ads customized to their city, zip code or immediate surroundings."

CONSUMERS USE LOCATION INFORMATION IN ADS

Computer/Tablet — **61%** use local address or phone number

Smartphone — **68%** use get directions or call button

Although most AdWords advertisers don't use location extensions, Ipsos found that roughly 60 percent of mobile device owners have interacted with or used location information in search ads. Large majorities of users also consider this information important: address, "get directions" link, phone number and call button — in that order.

Finally exposure to local search ads often resulted in visits to stores and purchases (32 percent), and even unplanned visits and purchases (19 percent). There are more data available in the [full study](#).

The big-picture takeaways are these:

- Almost 90 percent of mobile users search for local information
- They expect information returned or presented on mobile devices to be localized
- These are high quality searches that often turn into (mostly offline) purchases
- Marketers need mobile optimized sites with complete location information (if applicable) to satisfy user expectations
- AdWords advertisers should be using Google extensions to localize/personalize their ads

Related Entries
- [Google Maps App Now Showing Uber Ride Options, Lane Navigation, Offline Maps](#)
- [How To Build A Local Brand Through Online Marketing](#)
- [Content Free: 25 Percent Of Google+ Reviews Are "Empty"](#)
- [Survey: Older Generations Embrace Mobile As Local Shopping Companion](#)
- [Study: 78 Percent Of Local-Mobile Searches Result In Offline Purchases](#)

[Survey: 85% Of SEOs Shoot For 1-5 New Local Reviews Per Month](#)

6 EXCELLENT TIPS TO GET YOUR MULTI LOCATION BUSINESS MORE ONLINE COVERAGE

2

Marketing your local business online is becoming more complicated as technology advances and your potential customers expect to find your business instantly. If you're working with a business that has multiple locations, we've put together a few best practices to that'll help your business rank better in the Carousel or the Local pack in Google SERPs.

1. **Use Schema.org Markups**
   For a single location, search engines are usually very good at parsing a business's web site and determining its NAP (Name, Address and Phone) information. However, it gets a bit trickier for the search engines to get it all right for businesses with multiple locations, which have several (perhaps even hundreds) of addresses and phone numbers. The good news is that Google and Bing have made it easy for us to distinguish exactly which NAP information goes together with a specific form of structured markup called **Schema**.

   Schema data is more or less equivalent a business card for the search engines though. Your schema markup clearly tells them what your business name is, along with the street address and phone number combination for each and every one of your locations. It is advisable to use schema wherever you display NAP info on your Web site.

   Here is an example of a schema code for a local business:

```
<div itemscope itemtype="http://schema.org/LocalBusiness">
        <span itemprop="name">The Cleaning Authority</span>
        <div itemprop="address" itemscope itemtype="http://schema.org/PostalAddress">
                <span itemprop="streetAddress">610 North Alma School Rd, Suite 44</span>,
                <span itemprop="addressLocality">Chandler</span>,
                <span itemprop="addressRegion">AZ</span>
                <span itemprop="postalCode"> 85224</span>
        </div>
        Phone: <span itemprop="telephone">480-857-4045</span><br>
        <a
href="https://www.google.com/maps/preview?ie=UTF8&cid=16227635319544351318&q=The+Cleaning+Au
thority+-+Maid+%26+House+Cleaning&iwloc=A&gl=US&hl=en" itemprop="maps">Location Map</a>
</div>
```

   And, here is how it will appear on your website:

   The Cleaning Authority
   610 North Alma School Rd, Suite 44, Chandler, AZ 85224
   Phone: 480-857-4045
   Location Map

   Be completely sure that you are using almost all of your available **options** for a particular type of schema. Follow this **link** for the various examples of schema markups used by big brands.

2. **Each Location Should Have Its Own Independent Page On The Website**

Make sure that each of your location pages is unique and useful. When a searcher lands on a location page, it needs to answer most of the questions that users normally have like:

- Where the store is on the map.
- Driving directions.
- The days and hours that you're open.
- Basic contact information & a contact form for that specific location.
- Products and services you offer.
- Testimonials from happy customers served by that location.
- Methods of payment you accept.
- Certifications or Licenses.
- Photos of staff and storefront.
- Staff photos and bios.
- Newsletter sign up form.
- Testimonials from happy customers served by that location.

Have unique content on every page. Do NOT simply substitute geographic terms on top of boilerplate content. The greater the percentage of unique content you present, the greater your probability of ranking well.

Here is an example of boilerplate content that should be avoided.
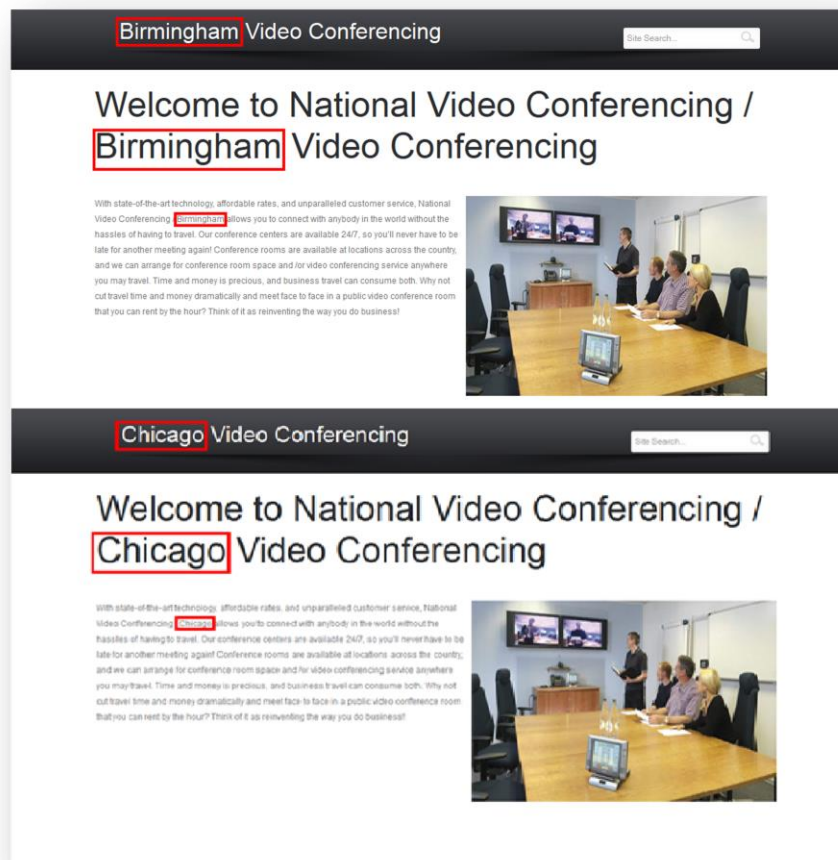
Be sure you provide information specifically about that location in <u>text form</u> so that the search engines can read and index it. Any store that shows in the local pack of the search engines should send users to the exact landing page for that location. Read more direct recommendations from Google on this topic <u>here</u>.

3. **<u>Use Clear Store Locator Pages</u>**
   You need to create an optimized main store locator page that's linked to from your home page and from most other pages on your site. When you're creating this page the first thing you'll need to decide is how many levels of pages you need to have within your store locator section. The ideal hierarchy should be:

Main Page - www.yourdomain.com/locations or www.yourdomain.com/stores
State and/or City Pages - www.yourdomain.com/locations/colorado or www.yourdomain.com/locations/denver (if you do not use state pages)

Neighborhood Pages - www.yourdomain.com/locations/denver/stapleton and www.yourdomain.com/locations/denver/lakewood

Each neighborhood page should link back to the main locator page, the state, page, the city page and to the pages of nearby neighborhoods.

4. **<u>Don't Rely Completely on Searchable Store Locators</u>**
   You often see store locators on Web sites asking you to enter the city or zip code and you're given a result or several results to choose from.

Find a Location Near You

We have locations all across the United States and in Canada. Locate us in a city near you.

Please enter the postal code you wish to have serviced.

Postal Code: [＿＿＿＿] [Find]

While this may be useful for some users, it isn't ideal for everyone. If your customer doesn't know the zip code of the area or the names of the towns nearby them then this resource becomes completely useless. These types of locators are also absolutely terrible for the search engines because they can't fill out the form and see any results.

If you use this type of store locator, then store locator pages must also be utilized.
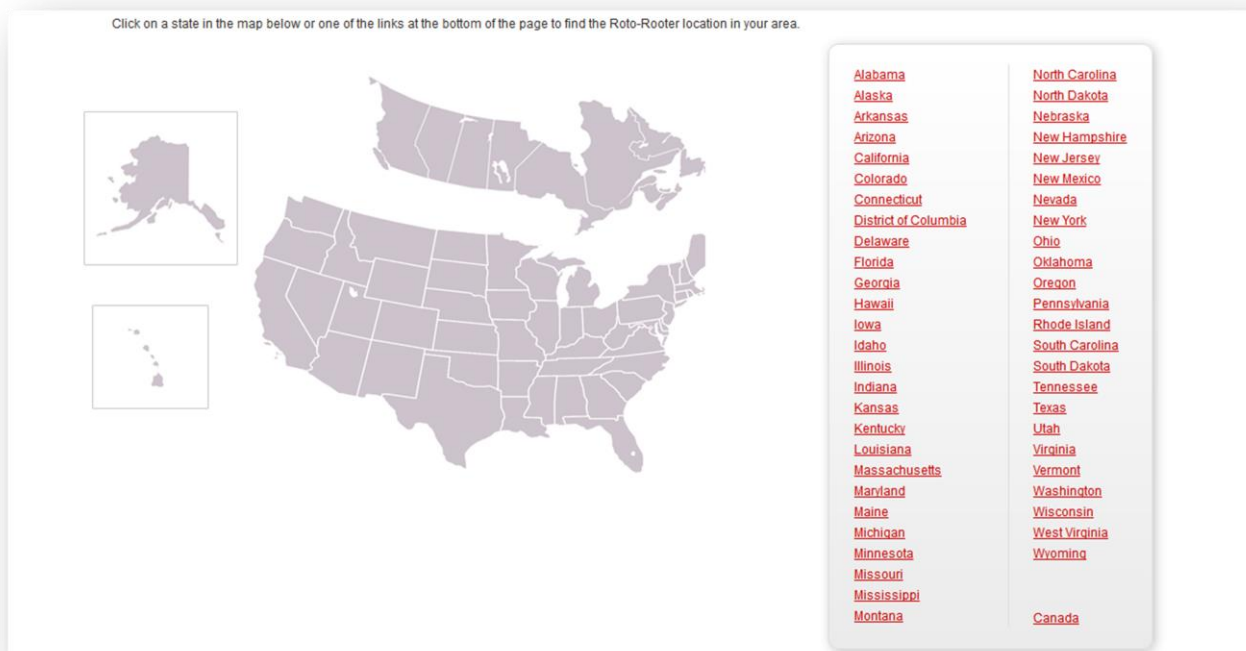
5. **Don't Rely Completely on Drill-Down Maps for Store Locators**
Drill-down maps tend to be very useful for searchers who are planning their travel, are already on the road, or are unfamiliar with the area for any reason - such as being newly arrived. However, they can also be a barrier to the search engines and if used exclusively, they prevent individual store location pages from being crawled and indexed.

If you use this type of store locator, then store locator pages must also be utilized.

6. **Consider Using All 3 Types of Store Locators**

Rather than trying to dictate to people how they should look for a store page on your site, you should strongly consider using all 3 types of store location finders. That way your human visitors may use either a search feature or drill down via a graphic map and the search engines will see all the rich, location-specific URLs, text and links. Here's an example of one way to accomplish this.

Click on a state in the map below or one of the links at the bottom of the page to find the Roto-Rooter location in your area.

Alabama	North Carolina
Alaska	North Dakota
Arkansas	Nebraska
Arizona	New Hampshire
California	New Jersey
Colorado	New Mexico
Connecticut	Nevada
District of Columbia	New York
Delaware	Ohio
Florida	Oklahoma
Georgia	Oregon
Hawaii	Pennsylvania
Iowa	Rhode Island
Idaho	South Carolina
Illinois	South Dakota
Indiana	Tennessee
Kansas	Texas
Kentucky	Utah
Louisiana	Virginia
Massachusetts	Vermont
Maryland	Washington
Maine	Wisconsin
Michigan	West Virginia
Minnesota	Wyoming
Missouri	
Mississippi	
Montana	Canada

3   MATT CUTTS: OVER TIME BACKLINKS WILL BECOME LESS IMPORTANT

Google's head of search spam, Matt Cutts, said in a video that backlinks, over time, will become a little less important. Matt did say that backlinks in the Google ranking algorithm still have many years left in them.

Matt explained that Google is focusing a lot now on working on ways to determine if a web page is meets the expectations of an expert user. They do this currently by looking at the links to the page, the reputation of the site and pages and the quality of the content on that particular page.

When Google is better at understanding actual language, natural language, which you see with their conversational search efforts. Google will be better to understand expert user's queries and match them better to a better answer.

If they can tell a story is written by an expert in a specific field, then it is easier. Google said they are working on an expert author boost for their rankings. But without that, that is where using natural languages comes in to help determine if the author is an expert on the subject query on a page by page basis.

Matt Cutts added that for the "next few years" links aren't going anyway and will still be used for determining reputation. But overtime, Google will rely a little bit less on links for reputation purposes.

It's obvious that social signals will play a very important part in determining the authoritativeness of a domain. We have already started implementing social votes as a core part of our strategy. We believe this will help us in the long run.
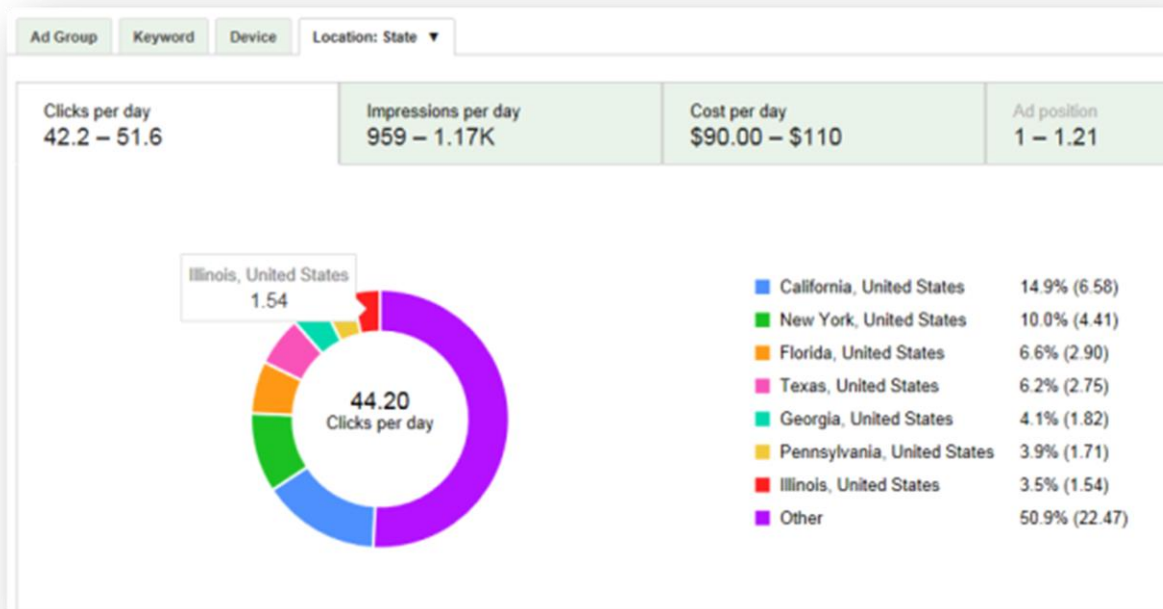
Here is the video:

## GOOGLE ADDS NEW FEATURES TO THE KEYWORD PLANNER TOOL

4

Google has added nine new features to the Google Keyword Planner Tool -

1. Nice graphical visualizations and estimates for geographics that breaks out locations with volumes. You can change your time views as well.

2. Location breakdowns for geographics of your targeted location. For example, if you are targeting an area such as the United States you have the following options: In blue you will see your Targeted Locations with estimates for the geographic targeting you have specified. In Red you will see the automatic breakdowns for further granularity of your targeted location.
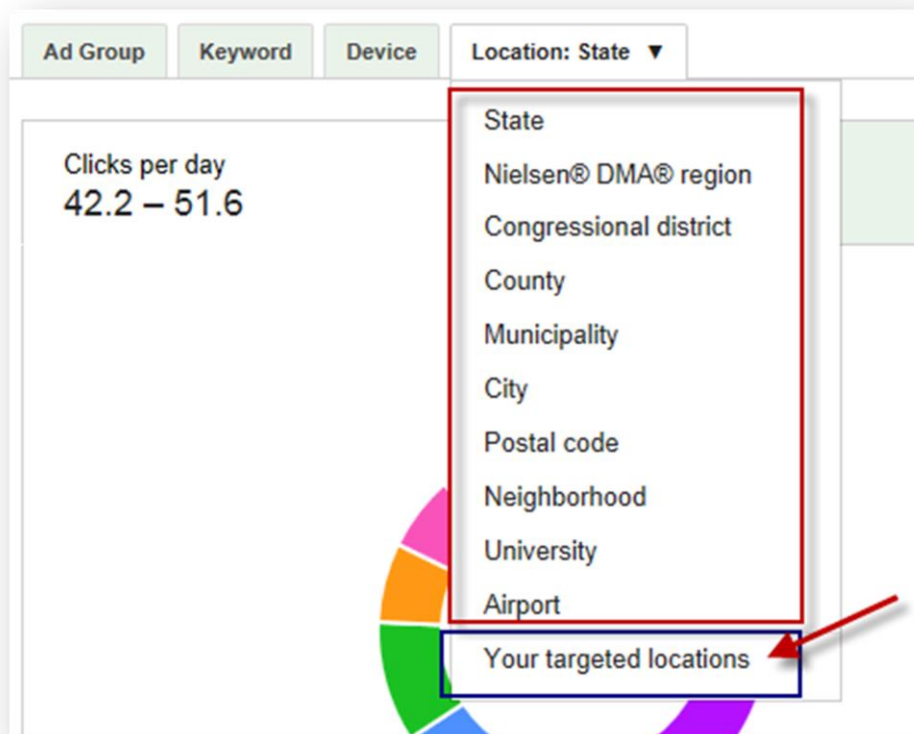
3. Device segmentation and bid adjustments. See a breakdown of volume estimates by device and get estimates specific to mobile bid adjustments. Device specific estimate breakdowns. Estimates are based on the baseline bid applied to all devices. Add a bid adjustment and adjustments based on the bid adjustment will be provided.

Device	Bid adjustment	Clicks
Desktop		46,153.80
Mobile	0%	46,752.41
Tablet		11,881.05
Total		**104,787.27**

4. Flexible time periods. In addition to daily estimates, you can scale results to get Monthly, Quarterly, or Annual results. Advertisers can also specify the period of time on which the estimates are based.

5. You can see breakdowns by device and targeted locations. This feature provides data with a visual graph allowing advertisers to understand the expected contribution from individual devices.
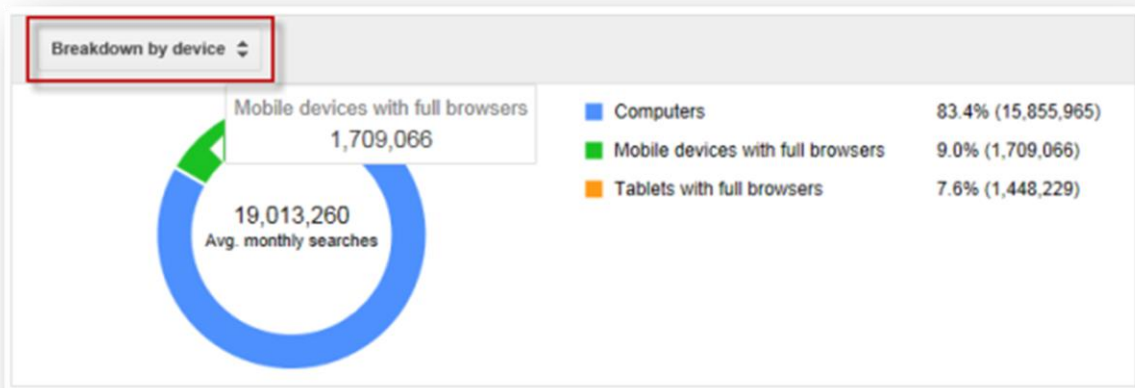
6. View mobile trends in green compared to the total volume across all types of devices in blue. When you place your mouse over each bar the volumes will be displayed.
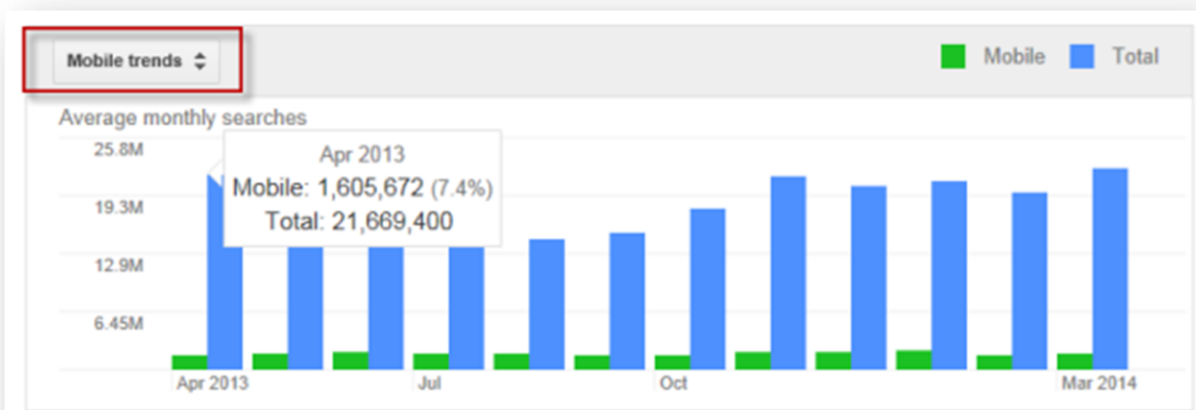
7. You can now see absolute and relative changes for each ad group and keyword's volume comparing two periods. You can sort by these columns to understand what keywords are in-flux or on the decline by reviewing total change or percent change.

8. A Period of Time Comparison. You now have the ability to perform time period comparisons which are also displayed in a visual graph.
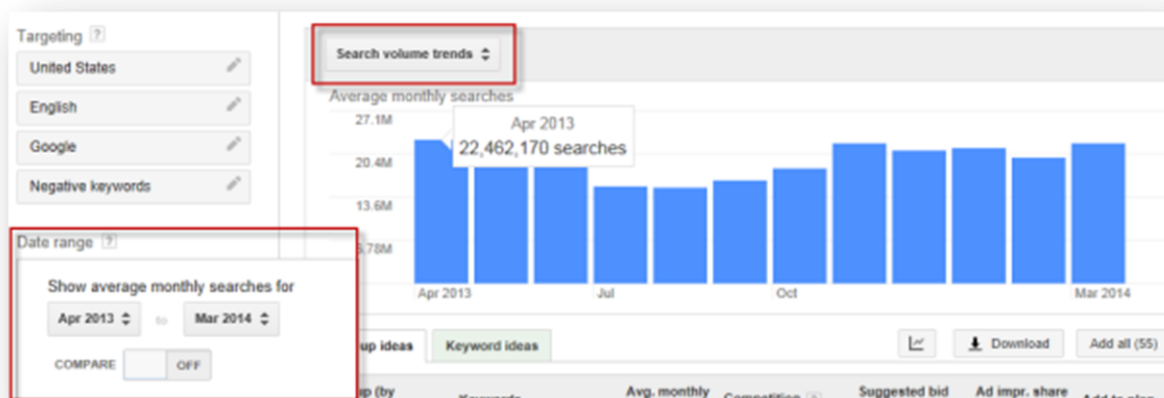

9. Specify a time period. Keyword suggestions and volume estimates will be provided around the time period specified. Included will be a graph that provides a visual of changes over time. Mouse over a bar for details on that months.

5   AMPLIFY YOUR CONTENT WITH +POSTS ADS

Just like its name, "Google plus", it makes one more addition to its cart by rolling out a promotional feature called "+Posts ads". These ads aim to reach a vast audience across all the screens – desktop, smartphones & tablets via Google Display Network. All Adwords advertisers can now run +post ads with minimum requirement of 1,000 followers. This will expand the reach of your Google+ content across the web, creating an engaging ad that will change the face of how this Social Network operates.

The first to experience this feature are Toyota USA, RITZ crackers & Cadbury UK. This will boost brand's engagement level by turning Google+ posts into ads. Users browsing across various websites can now +1, comment, follow a brand or join the hangout after clicking on the ad. The ad pops out as a light box, highlighting the ad completely.
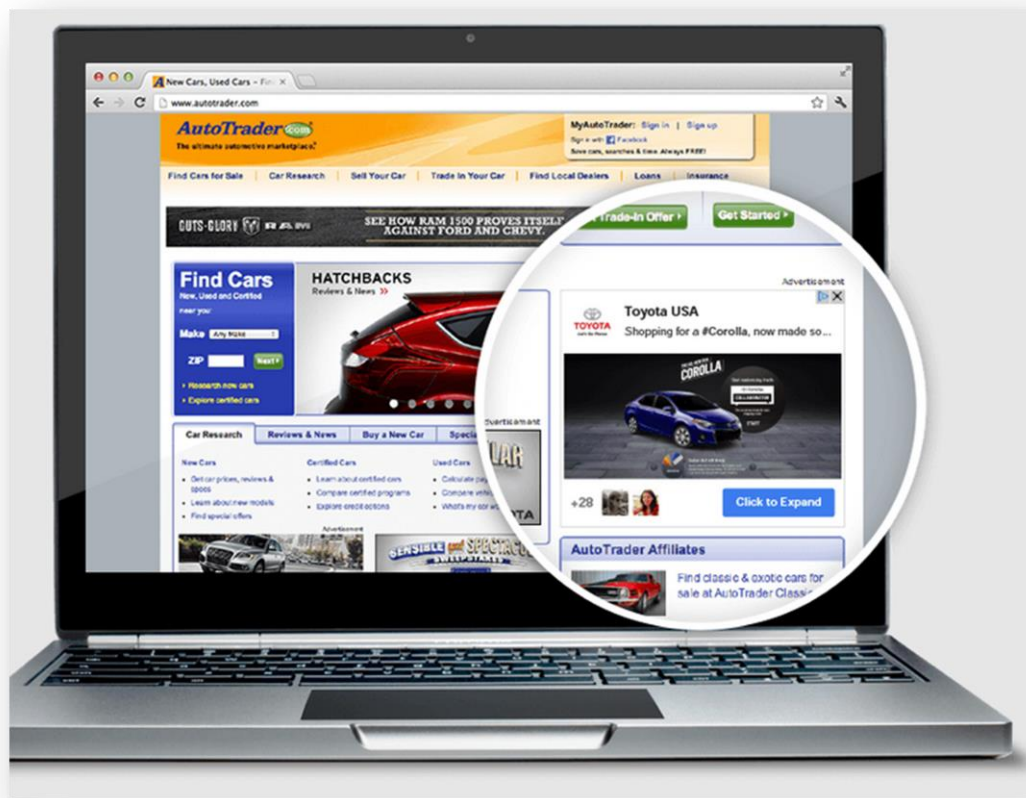
Concentrating on how Google will charge for the ads, advertiser's only need to pay when a user engages with the content. Not only this, it will continue to display your paid ad will be displayed even after the campaign ends when someone discovers the posts through search or Google+.
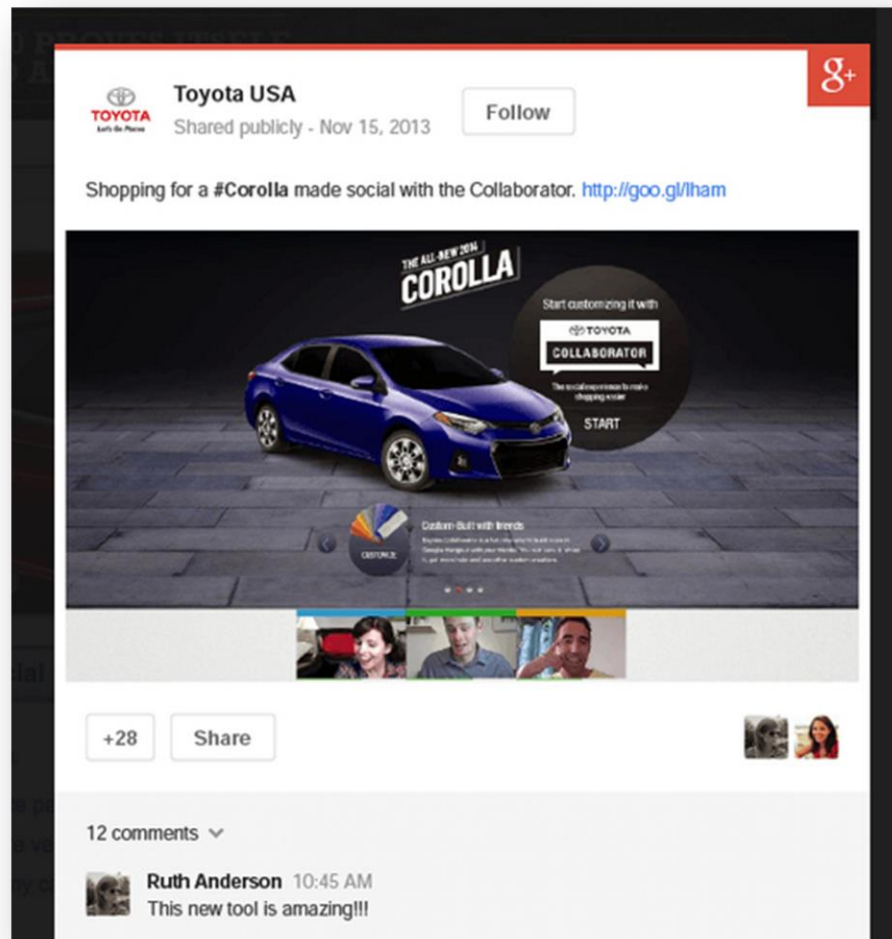
In a layman's term, it will reach to the right audience at the right time & that's exactly what every advertiser seeks while promoting its content.

+Post ads takes the level of online advertising to the whole new level, beating the traditional way of online advertising i.e. Facebook Ads & Adwords. If rumors are to be believed, Google+ was on the verge of extinction but with "+Posts ads" it is sure to relive its life.