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PPC Bid Management Technology

Buyer's Guide

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PPC Bid Management Technology



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Econsultancy London
4th Floor, 91-93 Farringdon Rd
London EC1M 3LN
United Kingdom

Telephone:
+44 (0) 20 7269 1450

<http://econsultancy.com>
help@econsultancy.com

Econsultancy New York
41 East 11th St., 11th Floor
New York, NY 10003
United States

Telephone:
+1 212 699 3626

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1. Introduction

Econsultancy's buyer's guides are the ideal starting place for anybody researching new suppliers in digital market sectors. They contain **in-depth vendor profiles**; to help you quickly evaluate suppliers and service providers, as well as **market analysis** to help you put things into perspective. Vendors are selected for the report based on a combination of factors, *not limited to but including*:

- **Analysis of capabilities** (services / products)
- **Clients**
- **Experience** (qualifications / trade bodies / case studies)
- **Expertise** (by sector / topic)
- **USA and/or UK status** (occasional exceptions are made)
- **Ability to take on and fulfill new projects**
- **Recommendations from trusted sources** (or anecdotal evidence to the contrary)
- **Google visibility**
- **Business model** (a high % of turnover should be related to these services)
- **Company website**

Econsultancy does not explicitly recommend any of the suppliers featured in these guides, principally because it is impossible for us to work with all of them to form a first-hand opinion. But we do believe - based on an intensive and careful selection process - that the chosen vendors represent quality.

Buyer's Guides are updated on an annual basis, so the information contained within is recent and thus valid. Send any questions or comments to Econsultancy's Research Director Linus Gregoriadis (linus@econsultancy.com)

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1.1. About Econsultancy

Econsultancy is a [digital publishing and training group](#) that is used by more than 200,000 internet professionals every month.

The company publishes [practical and time-saving research](#) to help marketers make better decisions about the digital environment, build business cases, find the best suppliers, look smart in meetings and accelerate their careers.

Econsultancy has offices in New York and London, and hosts more than [100 events](#) every year in the US and UK. Many of the world's most famous brands use Econsultancy to [educate and train](#) their staff.

Some of Econsultancy's members include: Google, Yahoo, Dell, BBC, BT, Shell, Vodafone, Virgin Atlantic, Barclays, Deloitte, T-Mobile and Estée Lauder.

[Join Econsultancy](#) today to learn what's happening in digital marketing – and what works.

Call us to find out more on +44 (0)20 7269 1450 (London) or +1 212 699 3626 (New York). You can also [contact us online](#).

Further Econsultancy Reading:

UK Search Engine Marketing Benchmark Report

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/uk-search-engine-marketing-benchmark-report>

SEMPO State of Search Engine Marketing Report

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/state-of-search>

Paid Search Marketing (PPC) - Best Practice Guide

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/paid-search-marketing-ppc-best-practice-guide>

Search Engine Marketing: PPC – Digital Marketing Template Files

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/search-engine-marketing-ppc-digital-marketing-template-files>

Paid Search Agencies Buyer's Guide

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/paid-search-agencies-buyers-guide>

Marketing Budgets 2010

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2. Executive Summary

The focus of this guide is PPC (pay-per-click) bid management technology, a market that is thriving as search marketing continues to grow in popularity and becomes more competitive.

As budgets have become more significant and the stakes have become higher, the number of advertisers paying for bid management and related search marketing technology has increased accordingly.

The huge growth of the paid search marketing industry in recent years has led to the creation of a number of third party tools which can help advertisers use their budgets more efficiently by optimizing pay-per-click campaigns.

The **PPC Bid Management Technology Buyer's Guide** is aimed at those who are investigating the US and UK markets for paid search bid management technology.

The report contains profiles of 18 leading suppliers, a detailed analysis of market trends and guidance about how to select the right technology. The guide also looks at the pros and cons of using a third party bid management tool.

Areas addressed in this guide include:

- Looking at the PPC marketplace and where and how bid management fits in.
- The different types of management systems to help you decide which will best suit your needs.
- Pricing models and other potential costs involved with bid management.
- Considerations to make when choosing a technology provider.
- Tackling strategic and tactical issues related to bid management.
- Profiles of the leading technology providers.

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3. The Market

3.1 Focus of report and market definition

This report focuses on the market for PPC (pay-per-click) **bid management technology**, with an analysis of market trends and detailed profiles of leading vendors operating within the space.

Vendor profiles are included for those seeking to compare bid management technologies and to select the most suitable tool for accurately and effectively controlling paid search campaigns.

As well as providing technology, many of these featured vendors also offer related consultancy services aimed at helping businesses improve and expand their PPC activities.

The document is focused on the leading vendors in both the US and UK markets, but many of the topics and trends are relevant for advertisers operating in other countries.

What is PPC bid management technology?

3.1.1. Types of bid management technology

PPC bid management technology functions by using a sequence of finite instructions to process data and calculate bids. It is important to understand the differences in how these systems work as they can have an impact on the performance of paid search campaigns and the way they are managed.

What the vendors say

“Paid search is becoming more complicated. In the past 12 months, the very nature of PPC has changed dramatically under the umbrella of Universal Paid Search. We’re seeing new ad formats, new targeting options and more data sharing from the engines. As the complexity intensifies, search is becoming more competitive and it’s hard for businesses to scale or maintain their ROI without adding staff. More companies are looking to search technology to get a competitive edge, especially tools that offer intelligent features to help marketers prioritize their optimization”.

SAMPLE QUOTE

3.1.1.1. Portfolio management

The phrase “portfolio management” derives from the business world and is used to describe a balanced approach to investment where individual assets need to be seen in the context of the bigger picture. Applied to paid search marketing, this approach involves optimizing an entire PPC campaign against a specific business objective.

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3.1.3 Positional optimization

Positional optimization works by attempting to find the ideal position in PPC search results, in order to achieve your business objective.

As discussed in Econsultancy's [Paid Search Marketing \(PPC\) - Best Practice Guide](#)¹, the major search engines typically determine PPC positions based on three key variables.

1. Maximum cost-per-click (CPC)
2. Click-through-rate (CTR)
3. Quality Score

3.3 Return on Investment (ROI)

Bid management technology can help organizations improve their return on investment from paid search by...

- **Reducing costs**
 - Improves overall PPC campaign performance.
 - Optimizes individual ads at keyword level.
 - Competitive pricing
 - Maximizes budget

3.2. Market trends

3.2.1. Advertisers turn to technology to improve performance

The 2010 Econsultancy / Guava UK Search Engine Marketing Benchmark Report found that almost half of companies (45%) are now using a third-party bid management technology for their paid search activity.

Technology has become even more important as a result of CPC inflation caused by increased competition and search engines attempting to maximize their profits. There is less low-hanging fruit available for advertisers, which means that they need to take advantage of any increased efficiency available as a result of technology.

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¹ <http://www.Econsultancy.com/publications/paid-search-marketing-ppc-best-practice-guide/>



The global picture

As well as keeping up-to-date with technological developments, search marketers and vendors need to be conscious of user search habits based on geography.

What the vendors say

“Most companies are now innovating every quarter and, hence, adding new features and functionality. Vendors have to continually be creative and innovative to keep pace.”

SAMPLE QUOTE

4. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

4.1 Strengths

- **Easier time management**
 - Technology can generally function 24 hours a day, all year round. Therefore, an automated system that has been set up efficiently can ensure that keyword or ad group bidding follows a continuous process, even overnight, and through the weekend or holiday periods.
- **Controllable dimensions of campaigns**
 - Manually managing thousands of keywords can be an extremely arduous process. Any large set-up that is running across numerous search engines is likely to benefit from automatic optimization.

What the agencies say

“A key strength is that PPC technology, if used well, can provide a platform to pull insights that make a difference for client campaigns.”

SAMPLE QUOTE

4.2 Weaknesses

- **Technology doesn't always understand**
 - Even the most advanced forms of bid management artificial intelligence cannot make correct account management judgments under certain circumstances.
 - An organization can thoroughly understand its business and objectives, yet any third-party technology can only respond to a set of rules it is given.

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4.3 Opportunities

- **Bid management technology which helps marketers see the bigger picture**
 - There is an opportunity for analytics vendors who can offer bid management software within the framework of a broader analytics and digital optimization proposition. Many companies welcome the idea of having a coherent approach and consistent data across different channels.

5. Costs and Pricing Models

5.1 Introduction

The UK Search Engine Marketing Benchmark Report found that “cost” was the most important criterion for companies assessing bid management technology tools.

The costs associated with these vendors need to be weighed up against the incremental returns which such tools can help to deliver. What appears to be the most expensive technology could be the best solution, because of the value it delivers.

5.2 Set-up fees

The vendors profiled in this report can be divided fairly evenly into those who charge set-up fees and those who do not.

The cost of implementing a bid management solution will vary depending on the size of a PPC campaign and/or the PPC objectives, as well as the vendor and its services.

5.3 Other costs

There are numerous other costs involved in bid management that need to be considered. Some examples include:

- **Flat rate charges**
 - A fixed fee is levied by the technology provider. This is generally a monthly charge, similar to a management fee, although it can occasionally be disguised as an additional set-up fee.
- **CPA**
 - A CPA (cost-per-acquisition) charge is sometimes set, instead of using a CPC payment model.

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6 Tips and Pitfalls: how to find the right technology supplier

6.1 Introduction

To find the right bid management technology provider, it is important to understand that there are a range of suppliers in the marketplace.

As a buyer, you need to find a product which can help you deliver against your overall marketing objectives.

Some initial issues to consider include:

- What unique offering does the technology provider have, that can benefit your business?
- Has the technology been tried and tested?

6.2 Key considerations

This section can act as a check-list and should also draw your attention to some pitfalls to avoid.

- **Delivery**
 - What type of bid management algorithm is the technology based on (portfolio, rules-based, positional or hybrid)?
 - Which search engines are supported?
- **Targeting and optimization**
 - How often are keywords optimized?
 - Can the management system work around day-parting implementation?

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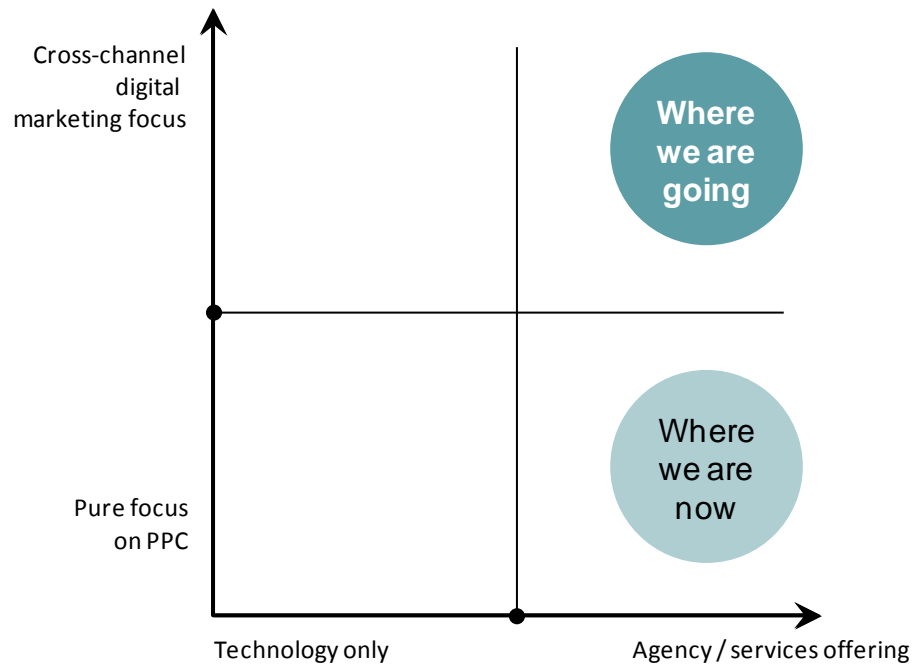
<http://econsultancy.com/reports/ppc-bid-management-technology-buyers-guide>



7

Market Positioning Charts

7.1 Explanation for Chart 1 – type of company



The **vertical** axis charts whether the bid technology supplier is geared towards purely PPC or covers a wider scope of digital marketing.

The **horizontal** axis shows to what extent the company is based around bid management. Is it purely a technology-based organization, or does it offer other services, such as being an SEM agency?

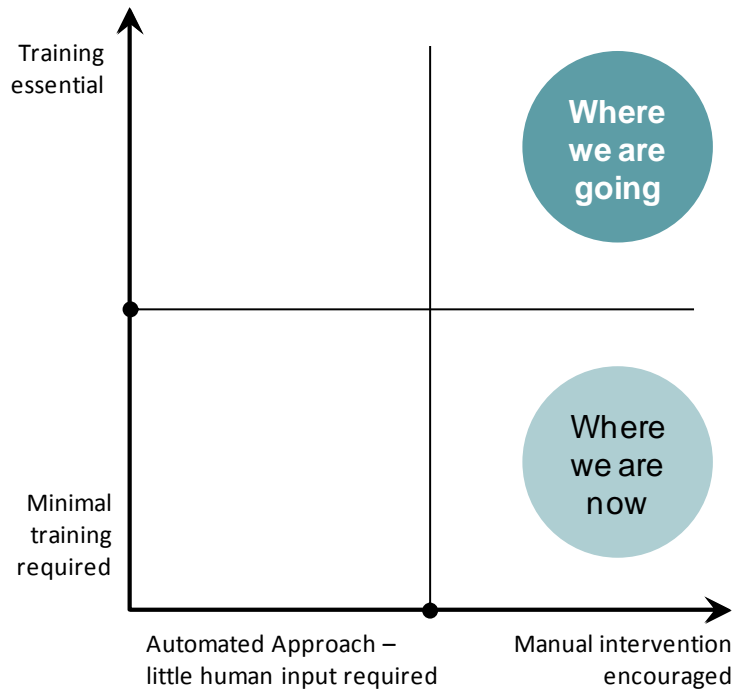
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7.2 Explanation for Chart 2 – type of technology



The **vertical** axis charts to what degree the bid management product requires the client to be trained to use it.

The **horizontal** axis charts as to what extent the technology is automated rather than benefiting from regular manual intervention.

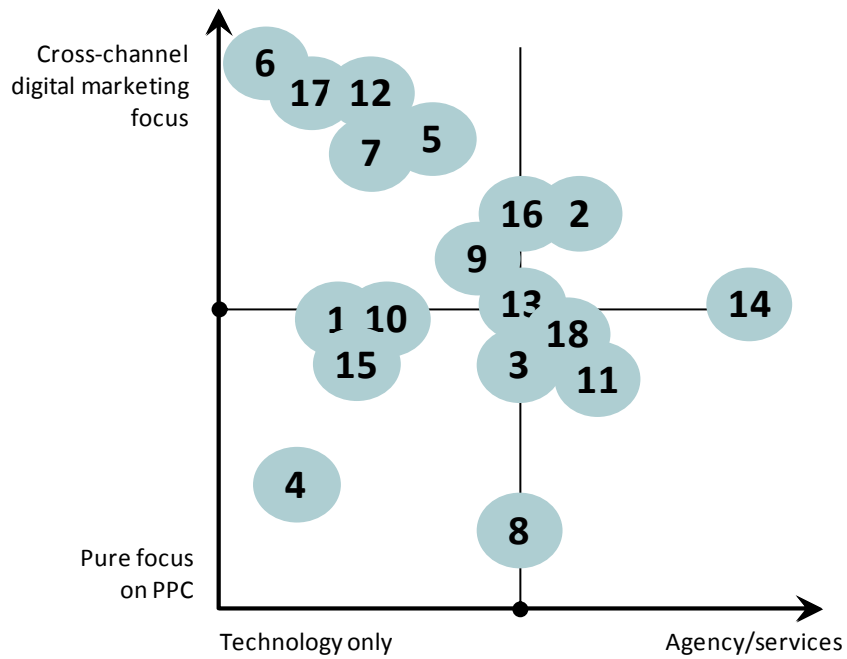
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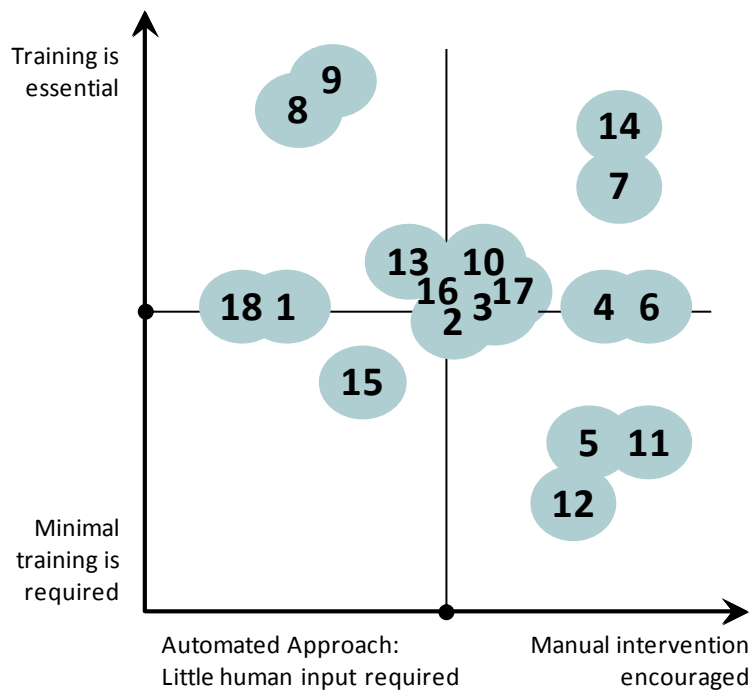
<http://econsultancy.com/reports/ppc-bid-management-technology-buyers-guide>



7.3 Type of company - summary



7.4 Type of technology - summary



8 Supplier Matrix

8.1 Guide to core services

An at-a-glance overview of who's doing what:

Vendor matrix: a fast guide to services	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	SAMPLE	
	Target market																		
Enterprise	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mid-market	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
SME solution	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Type of technology																			
Rules-based	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Portfolio / algorithmic approach	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Other	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Major search engines supported																			
Google (AdWords)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Bing (Microsoft adCenter)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Yahoo!	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
MIVA	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ask.com	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Other (including international)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Delivery Model																			
Licensed software	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
On-demand/hosted service	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Do you sell technology independently of services?	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●



Vendor matrix: a fast guide to services	Acquisio	ChannelAdvisor	Clickable	ClickEquations	Coremetrics	DART Search	DC Storm	Efficient Frontier	Kenshoo	Marin Software	Quant (Greenlight)	SearchCenter	SearchIgnite	Search Laboratory	SearchForce	TradeDoublor	Unica	VCCP
	Features & Functionality																	
Targeting and optimization																		
Time-based / day-parting targeting	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Can keyword/ad/campaign conversions be reported on an hourly basis for day parting strategy set-up?	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Budget targeting	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Hourly optimization	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Optimization according to quality score performance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Predictive modeling	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Bid optimization based on information passed back within tracking tag, e.g. product price / margin	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Recency (modeling)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Importing historical data?	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ad copy optimization	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

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Vendor matrix: a fast guide to services	Acquisio	ChannelAdvisor	Clickable	ClickEquations	Coremetrics	DART Search	DC Storm	Efficient Frontier	Kenshoo	Marin Software	Quant (Greenlight)	SearchCenter	SearchIgnite	Search Laboratory	SearchForce	TradeDouber	Unica	VCCP	
	Operation and synchronization																		
Real-time product database integration	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Synchronization with existing accounts / campaigns	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Integration with SEO	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Integration with Universal search	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Integration with social-search	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Integration with affiliate marketing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Can universal tags be used instead of technology-specific tags?	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Apportioning click value to series of keywords	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Journal facility	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Can off-site conversions be recorded?	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Tracking and Measurement																			
Click or landing tracker	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Click fraud analyzer	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Comparing against other channels / media	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
De-duping against other channels / media	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Content network / placement targeting	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

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	Reporting																	
Cross-engine reporting	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ability to perform ad hoc queries	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Import / export features	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Historical performance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Brand-bidding monitoring	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Branding impact measurement	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Campaign Creation																		
Automatic ad copy creation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Automatic keyword generation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Timed campaign launches	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
International capabilities																		
Can optimize multi-territory campaigns	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Can optimize multiple currencies in one single currency	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Can report in multiple currencies	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Supports double-byte characters	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Additional Services																		
Competitor analysis	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Simulations / Forecasting	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Has landing page optimization capabilities	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Vendor matrix: a fast guide to services	Acquisio	ChannelAdvisor	Clickable	ClickEquations	Coremetrics	DART Search	DC Storm	Efficient Frontier	Kenshoo	Marin Software	Quant (greenlight)	SearchCenter	SearchIgnite	Search Laboratory	SearchForce	TradeDoublor	Unica	VCCP
	Partners and Integration																	
API integration with Google	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
API integration with Yahoo!	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
API integration with Bing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
API integration with ask.com	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Other	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Operational Support																		
Charging																		
Set-up costs	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
CPC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Flat Fee	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Percentage of search spend	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
CPA / Performance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Number of keywords	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Number of bid reviews per day	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/ppc-bid-management-technology-buyers-guide>



9. Supplier Profiles

9.1 SAMPLE COMPANY

Company Details

Company Name	
Company Logo	
URL	
UK office address	
USA office address	
Other office locations	
Contact name	
Contact telephone	
Contact email	
Company proposition and overview	
Brief company history	
How long have you been in business?	
Number of employees	
Revenue figure for 2009	
Proportion of income relating to paid search technology and services	
Projected turnover for 2010	
Projected year-on-year growth for 2010	

USP

What sets you apart from competitors?

Clients

A selection of clients

Case Study

Case Study

Target Market

Enterprise

Mid-market

SME solution

Type of technology

Rules-based

Portfolio / algorithmic approach

Other



Verticals/sectors

Please give details of any particular sector(s) you are focused on

Major search engines supported

Google (AdWords)

Bing (Microsoft adCenter)

Yahoo!

MIVA

Ask.com

Other (including international)

Delivery Model

Licensed software

On-demand/hosted service

Do you sell technology independently of services?

Other

Features & Functionality

Targeting and optimization

Time-based / day-parting targeting

Can keyword/ad/campaign conversions be reported on an hourly basis for day parting strategy set-up?

Budget targeting

Hourly optimization

Optimization according to quality score performance

Predictive modeling

Bid optimization based on information passed back within tracking tag, e.g. product price / margin

Recency (modeling)

Importing historical data? (If yes, how far back is this available, e.g. 60 days)

Ad copy optimization

Other

Operation and synchronization

Real-time product database integration

Synchronization with existing accounts / campaigns

Integration with SEO



Integration with Universal search	
Integration with social-search	
Integration with affiliate marketing	
Can universal tags be used instead of technology-specific tags?	
Apportioning click value to series of keywords	
Journal facility	
Can off-site conversions be recorded?	
Other	
Tracking and Measurement	
Click or landing tracker	
Click fraud analyzer	
Comparing against other channels / media	
De-duping against other channels / media	
Content network / placement targeting	
Other	
Reporting	
Cross-engine reporting	
Ability to perform ad hoc queries	
Import / export features	
Historical performance	
Brand-bidding monitoring	
Branding impact measurement	
Other	
Campaign Creation	
Automatic ad copy creation	
Automatic keyword generation	
Timed campaign launches	
International capabilities	
Can optimize multi-territory campaigns	
Can optimize multiple currencies in one single currency	
Can report in multiple currencies	
Supports double-byte characters	



Additional Services

Competitor analysis

Simulations / Forecasting

Has landing page optimization capabilities

Other

Partners and Integration

API integration with Google

API integration with Yahoo!

API integration with Bing

API integration with ask.com

Other

Operational Support

Please provide details about the level of support you provide to customers

Costs and pricing methods

How do you typically charge clients?

Charging

Set-up costs

CPC

Flat Fee

Percentage of search spend

CPA / Performance

Number of keywords

Number of bid reviews per day

Other costs

Including support fees, training, upgrades etc

Are API tokens charged to the client? If they are, for which type of API service.

Additional, supporting information

Please add any other information you feel is relevant

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/ppc-bid-management-technology-buyers-guide>

