

Search
Engine
Journal®

PPC TRENDS 2025



Which lead would you want to send to Google Ads?

A. AN MQL

B. A phone call

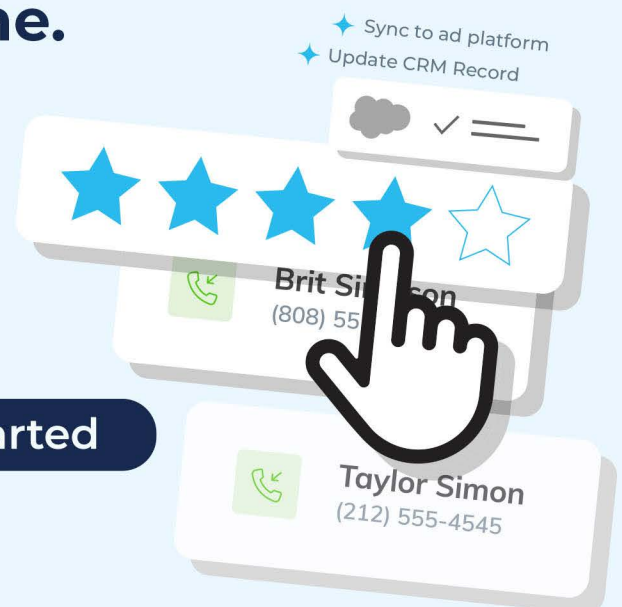
C. A 90-second phone call to sales with purchase intent who booked a demo for next week

Stop optimizing for volume. Optimize for **quality**.

Unlock valuable AI call insights to boost ROAS from your online and offline conversions.

 CallTrackingMetrics

Get Started



PPC TRENDS 2025

Published by Search Engine Journal
160 W. Camino Real, Unit #606
Boca Raton, FL 33432
SearchEngineJournal.com

Copyright ©2024, Search Engine Journal

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law.
For permissions, contact editor@searchenginejournal.com.

Contents

Introduction	5
AI In PPC Platforms	8
AI & Automation In PPC Platforms & Workflows	21
The Never-Ending Third-Party Cookie Dance	24
Free Discussion And Insights	37
Do You Have Predictions To Share?	53

Click or tap this icon ☰ on the lower right of each page to navigate back to the Table of Contents.

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

MENACHEM ANI

Founder & CEO, JXT Group

ANDREA ATZORI

Director, Ambire

NAVAH HOPKINS

Evangelist, Optmyzr

AMEET KHABRA

Founder, Hop Skip Media

BROOKE OSMUNDSON

Director of Growth Marketing,
Smith Micro Software, Inc.

KIRK WILLIAMS

Founder & Owner,
Zato PPC Marketing

BEN WOOD

Performance Director, Hallam

EDITORIAL

KATIE MORTON

Editor-in-Chief

BEN STEELE

Managing Editor

BEA PE BENITO

Editorial Assistant

ABBY VILLARICA

Ebooks Project Manager

DESIGN

PAULO BOBITA

Director Of Design

ROBIN JUN BIONG

Graphic Designer

ROCHELLE CARINO

Project Manager

SUPPORTED BY

Search Engine **Journal**[®]

Introduction



BEN STEELE

Managing Editor, Search Engine Journal



AI is a blessing and a curse for PPC professionals, and it's not slowing down. New tools and platforms provide new opportunities, but losing legacy features and fine control forces marketers to adapt to circumstances that can impact performance. Privacy and legislative developments have also made 2024 an unpredictable year in PPC.

We asked several leading experts what they thought about two of the biggest trends in PPC: AI and cookies. Then, we asked them to give us their best thoughts about what PPC agencies and marketers should be prepared for in the next year.

They must react quickly as technology improves and new user preferences emerge. It's difficult to predict which new experiences users will prefer as the technologies behind them improve. So, there's a paradox of needing to be on your toes and in a testing mindset while budgets are conservative and many businesses are unwilling to perform extensive testing.

While [third-party cookies aren't going away](#), it's likely you'll need to find first-party solutions anyway. The option isn't being removed, but it may become less viable as time goes on.

In each section, you'll find responses from:

- [Menachem Ani](#), Founder & CEO, JXT Group.
- [Andrea Atzori](#), Director, Ambire.
- [Navah Hopkins](#), Evangelist, Optmyzr.
- [Ameet Khabra](#), Founder, Hop Skip Media.
- [Brooke Osmundson](#), Director of Growth Marketing, Smith Micro Software, Inc.
- [Kirk Williams](#), Founder & Owner, ZATO PPC Marketing.
- [Ben Wood](#), Performance Director, Hallam.

As usual, with SEJ's Trends compilations, the contributors had tons of fascinating insights. They're our favorite ebooks of the year – always exciting, always thought-provoking, and sometimes reflecting the frustration of a whole industry.

You might find that many of the contributors share similar perspectives and insights during the first two sections. This is good news because it's a little easier to find a path forward when there is consensus, whether you're moving with it or bucking it.

The final section of the ebook, where contributors open up about the trends they notice in a more freeform way, is full of gems. It's always enlightening to give several different experts from different industries an open stage to discuss whatever they find most important. The insights you can gather are powerful.

Let's get into it.

Search Engine **Journal**[®]

AI In PPC Platforms



BEN STEELE

Managing Editor, Search Engine Journal



AI sections are obligatory at this point. It's becoming an all-consuming topic of conversation as the technology develops and platforms continue to push [AI products and features](#).

Fast rollouts have resulted in some unexpected new variables for PPC marketers, such as compliance issues with automatically generated assets and campaign performance impacts.

AI shows many signs of exponential growth in terms of capabilities and adoption, and no one knows when – and if – it will slow down. This is good news for the underlying technology, but anything exponential is difficult to adapt to. It isn't easy to conceptualize and prepare for that kind of trajectory.

The first prompt that I asked contributors to respond to was:

What should readers know about AI integrations into advertising platforms? What should they expect, or how can they find success with new types of automation?

MENACHEM ANI

Founder & CEO, JXT Group



AI isn't going anywhere – ad platforms have invested too much in them, and they are too profitable to be ignored. As their presence becomes more prevalent, we will see new features and functionality across every ad platform. Even Pinterest has its own version of Performance Max.

Agencies and marketers can only make AI work in their favor with two things: high-quality data inputs and outputs.

If you don't take the time to source and feed the system with strong data about intent, conversion value, and customer behavior, it cannot do what you want it to.

To find success, make sure that you provide it with as much information about your business as possible. This includes customer lists, tracking specific goals, CRM integration, offline conversion data, and strong audience signals.

ANDREA ATZORI

Director, Ambire



Most AI integrations within advertising platforms are still in their inception phase. Therefore, you should approach any tools or suggestions with caution.

The developers of these platforms themselves are still learning the implications of embedding generative AI into their toolkits.

That being said, things are likely to evolve and change fast, so it is important to start familiarizing ourselves with AI to understand how it can help our specific needs and can be leveraged within our own workflows and processes.

As opposed to expecting that generative AI is able to replace fundamental expertise, skills and experience are (still) required to set up and manage successful ad campaigns.

With time, generative AI will certainly help more with asset generation. This will alleviate the issue many advertisers have of not being able to produce relevant multimedia content, such as images and videos. I feel that the option is not there yet, at least for now.

For example, when we tried to generate images for PMax campaigns with Gemini from within the Google Ads platform, the results were quite underwhelming and far from being acceptable for advertising.

But then again, such tools are in their early stages and will improve rapidly as Google, Facebook, and all other major platforms continue to invest in AI solutions to bring automation and lower barriers to entry for advertisers who don't necessarily have the means to invest in tools and resources for ad creation.

NAVAH HOPKINS

Evangelist, Optmyzr



The first thing that comes to mind with AI is creative because that is where ad platforms, such as Google, Microsoft, Meta, and others, have really invested in making lives easier for advertisers to engage with more than just search text ads.

AI outputs aren't always perfect and are highly vertical dependent. For example, ecommerce advertisers setting up images for their merchant center shopping ads/feeds are going to have to rely on whether humans are a critical part of the creative.

The more a human needs to be present for the image to make sense, the less likely it is the AI is going to be able to succeed in creating an engaging image.

The other major mechanic of AI is in conversational reporting and understanding what is happening within accounts. While interesting and helpful, it also presents a potential risk that people will get so dependent on AI for analysis that they won't actually develop their own strategic perspective.

It's really important that AI is seen as ideation support and a starting point, not the end product.

Tools like Copilot and Gemini are fairly well-baked into the ad creative process and the general keyword targeting ideation piece.

On the flip side with Meta, while there is a certain degree of sophistication, the AI is far more prominent in searching for content through Facebook or WhatsApp. So, how AI is seen by each ad platform is going to be different. We need to be prepared for a dynamic approach versus one size fits all.

AMEET KHABRA

Founder, Hop Skip Media



I'm just going to say the obvious: AI in advertising isn't just a passing trend – it's reshaping our entire industry. From conceptualization to execution, AI is leaving its mark on every stage of the advertising process.

While some browsers have bid farewell to third-party tracking, Chrome's hanging on for now. However, the industry trend is still moving towards more privacy-focused solutions.

Advertisers should prepare for a future where third-party cookies may be less reliable across browsers (or gone entirely), prioritizing first-party data strategies and exploring contextual targeting options.

AI can be our secret weapon, whether we want to admit it or not.

It's supercharging personalization and fine-tuning optimization like never before. The advertising big players are integrating AI into everything – from audience targeting to creative testing. And although the results right now are hit or miss, with more data, they will get better.

My biggest qualm is that mastering these AI tools isn't a walk in the park. It requires a hands-on approach. You have got to dive in, test different features, and really get to know what works for you and your business and clients. And please remember, AI is meant to be an assistant, not a replacement.

Staying current on updates is crucial. Our field is evolving at hyperspeed, and what worked yesterday might not work tomorrow. Invest in your team's skills – they need to do more than just operate these tools; they need to truly understand them.

I know it can feel overwhelming. The pace of change in advertising can make your head spin. But embracing this AI revolution isn't just about staying relevant but seizing incredible new opportunities.

BROOKE OSMUNDSON

Director of Growth Marketing,
Smith Micro Software, Inc.



AI integrations in advertising platforms are quickly becoming the new standard, and knowing how to leverage these tools can give you a serious edge.

At its core, AI is all about improving efficiency and accuracy. These tools are designed to take the guesswork out of campaign management, giving you more time to focus on strategy.

That said, success with AI isn't just about flipping a switch and letting automation run wild. The key to getting the most out of AI is understanding the data behind it. You need to be hands-on in setting up clear goals, feeding the right inputs, and constantly reviewing performance.

AI can help predict trends and optimize bids, but it's your expertise that will steer the ship. Regularly audit your campaigns, refine audience targeting, and experiment with different creative formats to see what resonates.

Additionally, there's always privacy concerns when it comes to AI. If you work for an agency, it's always a good idea to get a client onboard with integrating any sort of AI platform into their PPC account.

Expect these integrations to keep evolving, so staying informed is crucial. New features – like conversational AI for ad creation – are making it easier to test new strategies and create more personalized, engaging ads.

Embrace the tools, but don't rely on them blindly. Your intuition and experience, combined with the power of AI, are what will drive truly impactful results.

KIRK WILLIAMS

Founder & Owner, ZATO PPC Marketing



I think we are still in the transitional early stages of adoption, in which actual AI (by AI of course, we primarily mean machine learning and/or LLMs) usage will be more experimental for the next 12-18 months in advertising.

What this means is that, this is the key time for education on AI and advertising, as opposed to widespread adoption (which will come as AI evolves).

Keep up with how the ad platforms are thinking about AI and do all you can to learn about them so that as AI matures to the point where it's more useful than not, you won't be left behind.

The key ways I see AI being utilized in Google Ads (where I spend my days), are primarily on the bidding and targeting side (similar to the focus of Google over the last few years, just better), as well as the creative side. Product Studio and PMax asset generation is a great example of how Google is increasingly bringing AI into the picture.

Both of these are clunky now, but they'll be incredible in time ... so know how to utilize them within your PPC strategy.

BEN WOOD

Performance Director, Hallam



AI-driven tools are increasingly central to campaign management, from automated bidding strategies to AI-generated creative assets. These tools allow for greater efficiency and scalability, but they also require careful oversight to avoid potential pitfalls, such as reduced ad originality.

99% of the time, when we talk about “AI” in advertising, we’re really talking about machine learning, which is a subset of AI responsible for most of what we see being incorporated into Google Ads and other ad platforms.

Machine learning relies heavily on quality data, so think of ML as the car, and data as the fuel to power successful campaigns.

To thrive, advertisers must focus on high-quality data integrations in order to provide ad platforms with the most relevant signals for optimization.

While AI can clearly optimize campaigns and help us scale management, human expertise will remain crucial for maintaining brand differentiation, integrating the right data sources, and strategic direction around budgeting and campaign planning.

AI & Automation In PPC Platforms & Workflows

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



CHRIS TODD

Principal of Marketing Operations,
CallTrackingMetrics



A prediction I really hope comes true is a move away from using AI to make our jobs easier and finding ways to do them better.

AI has flooded the process of spinning up a search campaign. It's much easier to have AI write headlines and come up with ad creative, but the long-term effectiveness of the approach remains uncertain. What we can be sure of next year, as it has been forever—is that getting to know your customers and the humans you do business with will lead to better campaigns.

What does AI have to do with getting to know humans better? Listening. AI is a surprisingly good listener.

The phone calls, text messages, and live chats marketers use to capture leads also capture real conversations. Conversations where your customers and prospects speak about your brand in natural language. Asking questions. Looking for solutions to their problems. All the things marketers can leverage to inform high-converting headlines and landing pages.

And when it's done analyzing the conversation, you've taken qualitative characteristics of a human conversation and turned them into insights. Insights you can send to Google Ads to optimize campaigns based on qualified leads tagged with purchase intent instead of relying on form fills. Insights you can send to your CRM to better segment your marketing automation. Insights you can spend time with and get to know your audience in ways that weren't feasible before.

Search Engine **Journal**[®]

The Never-Ending Third-Party Cookie Dance



BEN STEELE

Managing Editor, Search Engine Journal



There are tons of metaphors I could use to describe how silly the third-party cookie issue has become. Google could be the Roman emperor who can't decide on the fate of a gladiator. Maybe it's sitting in a field with a daisy, plucking petals – I love third-party cookies, I love them not, I love third-party cookies, I love them not...

Well, Google loves them again. Sort of.

Cookies are in a strange place because, despite Google not really getting rid of them, they are still impacted by regulatory forces and user preferences.

I felt that I had to ask the contributors about their plans going forward. So, the question they responded to is:

What's your opinion on the back-and-forth with third-party cookies? What advice can you offer marketers about data sources, compliance, and/or sustainable campaigns moving forward?

MENACHEM ANI

Founder & CEO, JXT Group



The back-and-forth over cookies is just one symptom of a larger situation, which is that ad platforms have far less meaningful data than they used to.

More importantly, it's almost guaranteed that they will face additional signal loss over time.

My recommendation is to invest time in implementing what they've built to bridge this tracking gap: offline conversion tracking, enhanced conversions, conversion API, etc. Give the system as much business and intent data as you can to help it fill in the blanks.

Ultimately, it is what it is. More and more, we will need to make advertising decisions with limited data – understanding that all this data is a signal – and a deeper understanding of the people we're advertising to.

Use multiple data sources to guide your decisions, but make sure that everything ultimately aligns with revenue, which should be your source of truth.

ANDREA ATZORI

Director, Ambire



The latest backflip by Google on third-party cookies was probably unexpected, but we have seen how difficult it is to completely move away from a system that has been at the foundation of the online marketing advertising industry for so long.

Whether or not one day we will be able to leave third-party cookies in the past, the reality remains that things have dramatically changed in the past few years.

These changes are often driven by privacy concerns and regulations, compliance, and technology advancements, prompting brands and advertisers to rethink the way they connect and engage with their target audience.

Additionally, Google's Privacy Sandbox and Facebook's approach to data privacy will significantly influence targeting and measurement strategies. That fact will not change anytime soon, leaving marketers with the need to be more focused on building and nurturing their own audiences.

As users become more aware of their data privacy, businesses will need to prioritize transparency and ethical data collection practices to maintain trust.

Building stronger CRM systems and leveraging customer data from various touchpoints will become crucial for effective PPC campaigns, so my advice would be to invest the time and effort required to create meaningful connections that add value to users.

On the other hand, we live in a world where personalization is expected. Gone are the days when it was enough to take shortcuts and blast your message with a spray-and-pray approach. People value their time and privacy and are empowered with choice.

Whether or not third-party cookies stick around for much longer, it won't change the general consensus that first-party cookies are the future – and probably the only way to create sustainable campaigns moving forward.

NAVAH HOPKINS

Evangelist, Optmyzr



I will admit – my first reaction to the announcement that third-party cookies were not being deprecated after all was laughter.

There are so many brands who have made their entire marketing efforts focused on the death of the cookie.

But it's not a wasted effort. The cookie remaining doesn't change the fact that different markets are starting to implement increasingly restrictive regulations regarding privacy.

While there isn't a loss of technology from Google, it doesn't mean that the technology will still be applicable and we'll have the same efficacy moving forward.

What this means for advertisers is that they need to get very comfortable very quickly, not having perfect attribution and reporting. They will instead need to rely on connecting their own sources of truth to help influence models for reporting, as well as build consent into the marketing conversation, specifically getting consent for increased communication.

Finally, it is really important that marketers don't put this off just because the cookie is staying. We have had since 2018 to get our affairs in order. And if the six years of back and forth have taught us anything, it is that relying fully on the ad platform to solve the problem will mean holding the "ROI on our efforts" bag.

We need to own conversion tracking. We need to own business operations and the efficacy of our leads. And we need to own the landing page experiences that entice people to say yes to letting us track.

AMEET KHABRA

Founder, Hop Skip Media



Let's be honest here. This back-and-forth with third-party cookies is a headache for all of us.

Google's delay in phasing them out is like ripping off a Band-Aid in slow motion – it might hurt less. But it prolongs the inevitable and keeps us in limbo, which, I would argue, hurts more.

We need to accept that there is no quick fix. We're in a transitional phase, which will likely get messier before it improves. Yes, Google has delayed third-party cookie removal, but for how much longer? Other browsers have already moved ahead, creating a fragmented landscape that's a bit of a nightmare to navigate.

So, instead of waiting for the day Google will likely be forced to remove third-party cookies, we should start making moves now and attempt to use them less.

Yes, it's going to be painful – and yes, it might impact your short-term performance. But the marketers who will come out on top are those who adapt early, not those who cling to outdated methods until the last possible moment.

Invest in first-party data like your business depends on it – because soon, it will. Get creative with contextual targeting. And for the love of everything good in the world, stop looking for loopholes or workarounds.

Instead, focus on creating genuine value that makes users want to engage with your brand willingly.

Remember, privacy isn't just a regulatory hurdle; it's becoming a top priority for our audiences. In the long run, the brands that respect user privacy while still delivering personalized experiences will win.

It's going to be a bumpy ride, but those who start adapting now will be the ones still standing when the dust settles.

So, roll up your sleeves and get to work – the future of marketing isn't waiting for stragglers.

BROOKE OSMUNDSON

Director of Growth Marketing,
Smith Micro Software, Inc.



The back-and-forth on third-party cookies has certainly been a wild ride for marketers, but it's clear that relying on them is no longer a sustainable strategy.

Even with Google scrapping its deprecation of third-party cookies, there are going to be more restrictions on data privacy and regulations to navigate. The era of easily tracking user behavior across the web is ending, so the question is: how do you adapt?

First, make the most of your first-party data. This is gold.

Whether it's from your CRM, email lists, or loyalty programs, these are people who've already interacted with your brand. By layering on predictive modeling or using AI to uncover trends, you can create powerful segments that don't rely on cookies.

Second, compliance is non-negotiable. With privacy laws like GDPR and CCPA, transparency is key. Build trust with your audience by clearly communicating how you're collecting and using their data.

Prioritize opt-ins and make it easy for users to manage their preferences. This isn't just about avoiding fines – it's about building long-term relationships with users.

Finally, for sustainability, embrace cookie-less technologies like contextual targeting or data clean rooms. These allow you to create relevant, engaging campaigns without invading privacy.

The future of marketing will be all about creativity and ethical data use. Lean into that, and you'll be ready for whatever changes come next.

BEN WOOD

Performance Director, Hallam



Instead of phasing out third-party cookies, we now know that Google will provide the user with a choice to either accept or block cookies as part of their browsing experience.

This means **third-party cookies will still disappear** – at least most of them – in Chrome. This happened when Apple introduced App Tracking Transparency controls; most users opted out of tracking, causing a significant drop in third-party targeting and the advertising that depends on it.

While Google Chrome will continue to enable third-party cookies, we must also remember that cookie-based attribution over-emphasizes short-term, immediate response channels and will struggle to measure the true impact of brand campaigns.

Relying solely on digital attribution for measurement can foster short-termism in marketing and lead to the wrong decisions being made around budget allocations.

Successful brands will continue to explore alternative measurement tactics to truly understand the effectiveness of different marketing channels and their impact on the bottom line.

We're still recommending brands explore additional measurement solutions to get a better understanding of the ROI delivered from each marketing channel – namely, incrementality testing, media mix modeling, and multi-touch modeling.

Aside from measurement, there are multiple other routes to finding your audience, such as contextual targeting, leveraging data partnerships, or Google's own Privacy Sandbox when it's fully available.

Search Engine **Journal**[®]

Free Discussion And Insights



BEN STEELE

Managing Editor, Search Engine Journal



Finally, I asked the contributors to comment on whatever they wanted. Trends conversations are best led by the experts doing the work, so it was important to give them space to express whatever they wanted.

Getting to read the candid thoughts of a variety of experts is a fantastic opportunity. I always enjoy it, and I hope you do as well.

This year, PPC experts are concerned about what the continuing pace of automation will mean for legacy signals and campaign types.

They're also predicting that new technology and emerging channels will challenge Google's dominance in the advertising space, and you may be able to reach new audiences comparatively inexpensively compared to established platforms.

They also advise that you choose carefully what you allow AI to take over while building your strategic skill sets.

MENACHEM ANI

Founder & CEO, JXT Group



Algorithmic Campaigns Will Consume Legacy Signals

A common theme across all major ad platforms is the increasing shift toward algorithmic campaigns. You see this as Performance Max in Google Ads, Advantage+ Shopping in Meta, and Smart campaigns on TikTok and Pinterest.

With the amount of money that ad platforms invest in these technologies and how they've impacted ad revenues, there is no escaping them.

In the future, more of what we currently use will likely be deprecated into legacy campaigns. Even supporting elements like keywords risk being traded in for less specific intent signals.

Take the time to figure out how to make these new algorithmic campaigns work for you and your clients. This will be the key to succeeding with paid media over the next five to 10 years.

ANDREA ATZORI

Director, Ambire



Build Consistent Experiences With An Omnichannel Approach

This could be unpacked into two different trends, but continuing from the previous point I made about brands needing to focus on delivering meaningful experiences that add value to their customers, cross-channel and omnichannel PPC strategies will grow in importance.

An integrated approach across multiple channels, including search, social media, and display networks, will be key to not only measuring the effectiveness of media but also, more importantly, achieving better results.

PPC strategies will need to be designed to deliver a cohesive customer experience across touchpoints. Seamlessly integrating PPC campaigns across various channels, like search, social media, and display, will be critical for reaching and successfully engaging customers.

An omnichannel approach that provides a consistent experience across channels will help build brand loyalty and boost performance.

This approach might also push more advertisers and agencies to invest in Media Mix Modelling (MMM), as there will be a growing emphasis on channel attribution, decomposing sales (so splitting sales into base sales, those that would happen without marketing efforts, incremental sales, generated by marketing, and external factors), and ultimately optimizing spend by understanding which media channels drive the best results.

The omnichannel, integrated approach will also be a key factor in driving seamless personalization across the different stages of the customer journey, delivering consistent messaging across different channels.

NAVAH HOPKINS

Evangelist, Optmyzr



Expand Your Horizons Beyond Google And Test New Networks

Google has done so much to improve its PMax tools and mechanics. It doesn't change the fact that there are quite a number of friction points with Google Ads that other ad networks are poised to pick up.

Some reasonable tests to consider are Microsoft's Performance Max, and a search campaign that excludes the audience network, and then layer on top an audience network campaign. Both of these will give you access to a lot of the same inventory you would be getting through Google's Performance Max, but at a cheaper rate.

One of the things I found really fascinating about Microsoft's audience network is how driven by conversions it is, despite the fact that it is ultimately a top-of-funnel sort of channel. So, making sure that your conversion tracking is set up correctly for this is really critical.

On Amazon's side, not enough people are paying attention to the non-seller offering they have, which is essentially a lead generator. They are actively looking to get advertisers to test this channel and to reward those who do through lower auction prices and product manager access.

Whether you have tested display before for your campaigns, this represents a really interesting opportunity to layer in inexpensive leads.

There are things that Amazon is still working through, but they do represent a very customer-focused product team. So, the chances are good that they will hear your feedback.

Google is great, and there are a lot of great things to do on Google, but my biggest takeaway is that Microsoft and Amazon present a really powerful opportunity for marketers who want to test other channels.

AMEET KHABRA

Founder, Hop Skip Media



Let's Talk AI, Privacy, And Consent

As someone who's been in the digital advertising industry for over a decade, I can't help but be amazed at how AI is reshaping our industry. We're at the crossroads of a technological revolution and a privacy awakening.

Exciting? Absolutely. Challenging and a little terrifying? You bet.

AI-powered advertising tools are nothing short of magic when it comes to personalization and optimization. They're opening doors we never knew existed.

But here's my issue: These AI tools have quite the appetite for data, and that's where things get tricky. With GDPR and CCPA lurking about, we marketers find ourselves in a bit of a tough spot.

So, what are we to do?

First, let's discuss privacy-preserving AI.

It's not just a buzzword, my friends. We're talking about clever tech like federated learning and differential privacy. I know these terms might sound like they belong in a computer science textbook, but bear with me.

Federated learning is like a book club where everyone discusses the book without actually bringing it to the meeting (... which is what a book club is, right?). It allows AI to learn from data across multiple sources without centralizing that data. It's actually pretty neat!

As for differential privacy, think of it as adding a bit of "noise" to your data. It's like slightly blurring a photo – you can still see the big picture but can't make out the individual faces. This technique adds calculated inaccuracies to data sets to protect personal privacy while maintaining data accuracy.

Essentially, they're just smart ways to get the insights we need without compromising individual user data. It's like having your cake and eating it, too.

Next is first-party data.

If you're not already all over this, it's time to hop on board. It's the golden ticket in our new privacy-first world. And the most beautiful part? AI can help you squeeze even more value out of it!

Third, let's chat about consent management.

AI-powered platforms in this space are game-changers. They're like having an assistant who ensures you always play by the rules.

Speaking of rules, transparency is the name of the game these days.

Look for AI solutions that can explain their decisions in plain English instead of confusing you with a lot of complex jargon. It'll save you a lot of headaches down the road.

There's one thing that's for sure: This space is changing faster than you can say "algorithm."

Staying informed isn't just good practice; it's survival. And while you're at it, make sure your team is up to speed, too. They need to be bilingual in AI and compliance – it's no longer a "nice to have" skill; it is now a necessity.

At the end of the day, we have to acknowledge that we are losing user trust. Navigating the AI and compliance tightrope is the new normal we all must embrace. If we do this correctly, we could build back some serious trust with our audiences while staying on the right side of the law.

It's truly a win-win situation.

BROOKE OSMUNDSON

Director of Growth Marketing,
Smith Micro Software, Inc.



AI Can Help You Move Quickly, But Needs Supervision

One trend that's rapidly transforming the marketing landscape is the growing role of AI in creative processes.

From automating ad copy generation to producing visual assets, AI is now a key player in streamlining campaign production. The major benefit? Speed and scalability.

AI allows you to produce a variety of creative variations quickly, test them across platforms, and gather real-time data to make more informed decisions. What used to take days or weeks can now be done in a matter of hours.

But here's the thing: While AI is incredibly efficient, it's not a replacement for human creativity and strategy. The temptation might be to let AI handle the bulk of the work, but that can lead to generic or misaligned messaging. My advice is to use AI as a tool to support your creative vision, not drive it.

Take the time to fine-tune what AI generates, ensuring it fits your brand's tone and connects emotionally with your audience. Make sure whatever AI assets you choose to use fit the authenticity of your brand.

Customers are more in tune with brands than we may think, so they'll be the first ones to spot when something doesn't align with your brand.

Additionally, keep a close eye on performance and optimize regularly.

AI can help you move faster, but your insight into what resonates with your audience will still be the difference between a good campaign and a great one. Especially with the scalability in AI outputs, you should be able to test faster and more efficiently, which can boost ROI in the long run.

KIRK WILLIAMS

Founder & Owner, ZATO PPC Marketing



Build Skills In Incrementality And Track Behavior Impact

If there is one thing all PPC marketers need to be aware of and be prepared to address in everyday tasks, it is the reality that (between privacy changes and Google black box choices) identifying incrementality and impact on new customer behavior will be crucial to the success of your PPC campaigns in 2025.

It has been my experience that brands are now more margin-conscious than ever, have less capital flowing their way than in past years, and are more hesitant to run expensive tests than used to be the case.

The need to identify the impact of Google Ads on its new customer growth is even more crucial to the savvy brand operator ... and yet, it is even more difficult as privacy efforts and Google changes continue to impact their ability to track users (especially across multiple devices and accounts).

Due to this, increasing knowledge of incrementality testing and basic marketing principles will be even more crucial for the PPCer who cannot simply rely on pivot table skills like the past days of yore.

It's also time for Google to begin rolling out more expansive (and successful) incrementality testing tools for businesses. Although until this happens, the PPCer with the knowledge to adequately measure incremental sales will continue to remain valuable in 2024 and beyond.

It's not enough to simply show tracked numbers to a mature band of brand owners now. One must go beyond to show business impact, especially in terms of new customer growth.

The PPCer who has that figured out is going to be just fine in 2025.

BEN WOOD

Performance Director, Hallam



Pay Attention To Emerging Platforms For New Opportunities

As we approach 2025, search advertising is poised for significant disruption due to the rapid advancement of AI-driven search assistants like SearchGPT and Perplexity.

These technologies are already beginning to integrate ads, and will have the objective of eroding Google's user base over the next few years, signaling a fundamental shift in how consumers search for and discover brands.

We also have the fact that the U.S. is considering breaking up Google's "monopoly" on the search industry, so the months ahead are poised for significant disruption to search as we know it.

For PPC professionals, this means it's more crucial than ever to diversify ad spend beyond traditional Google Search.

As AI assistants gain traction, they will likely siphon off search volume from Google, meaning there is less demand to harvest on Google alone.

By allocating budget to emerging platforms and testing new ad formats within AI-powered environments, marketers can stay ahead of these changes and look to capitalize on cheaper CPCs while there is less competition for ad inventory.

Preparing now will ensure that your campaigns remain effective and that your clients continue to capture demand as search dynamics evolve.

Do You Have Predictions To Share?

I hope the contributions from these experts spark conversations with your team and provide some guidance as you form your strategy. Many of the contributors to this ebook write for SEJ, so you should [subscribe to the SEJ newsletter](#) to stay up to date with the latest in the industry.

Do you have predictions? We would love to hear what you think of the ebook or what's coming in the world of PPC. Feel free to tag SEJ on your favorite social media platform to continue the conversation.

[LinkedIn](#)

[X](#)

[Facebook](#)

A few days after downloading this ebook, you'll receive a survey in your email inbox. Please use this opportunity to tell us what you think of the ebook, whether you found it useful, and what we can do to improve your experience in the future.

Next up is SEO Trends, the last ebook of the year!

Thank you so much for reading!

Ben Steele

Managing Editor, Search Engine Journal