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14 DIGITAL MARKETING EXPERTS  
SHARE THEIR PREDICTIONS FOR 2014

With every passing year, digital marketers find themselves 1) armed with more tools to reach their target markets than ever before and 2) with more channels to try to manage all at once while attempting to reach those target audiences.

While the playing field has expanded, the biggest challenge has been to cover each area of that field with a limited team.

If there is one common thread in the responses we got from our industry experts for this document, it is that while the means by which advertisers can reach people have expanded, the challenges inherent in making use of each of the channels available to marketers is expanding exponentially.

There were no real surprises in 2013. In fact, it seems like most of what we thought might happen in the year ahead last year came to pass, and with little or no fanfare, despite the challenges they represent.

But anticipating challenges and being ready to meet them are two different things.

This year we're giving you 14 predictions from some of the industry's best marketers, which we hope will help to equip you with all you need to face the challenges of the year ahead.

There are no dire predictions here; what we have is a group of digital marketers who foresee the means by which online advertisers can continue to be successful, and to take the message of those who entrust them with their advertising efforts to more people in more highly targeted environments than ever before.

**It's shaping up to be another great year ahead. So let's find out what our 14 have to say on '14...**





**Jeff Allen**  
President, Hanapin Marketing

2013 was the year of Mobile. So was 2012, 2011, and 2010. 2014 is going to be the year we put marketing back in digital marketing. We'll get back to the notion that creating a compelling message and value proposition is more important than Average Position and Click-Through Rate. We'll understand that a well-placed ad has value beyond the direct revenue it generates.

As our day-to-day tasks are taken over by algorithms that are smarter and faster than the account managers that used to pull the levers, digital marketers will find smart strategies that create true, lasting value for consumers, and business are more impactful than the same tactics that everyone has at their disposal.

While no agency will ever understand a business as well as those inside it, agencies will realize that the path to winning and keeping clients is to do everything to understand the business it represents better than any other agency can. Those that invest in training, on-site visits, and the time it takes to better understand the value its clients create in the marketplace will find substantial growth.

The story of 2014 is, hopefully, a story of digital marketing growing up from a spoiled kid with too much money to a sophisticated marketing channel with the right balance of art and science.



**Greg Meyers**  
President & Founder,  
Afterclicks Interactive

As we have seen in 2013, there has been a push by all new and existing platforms to find ways to increase advertising revenue. Because of this trend, I believe we will see a movement by Yahoo and Bing to expand their networks and try to take a bigger piece of the Search Marketing Landscape. With Marissa Mayer at the helm at Yahoo, we have already seen enhancements within the Bing Ads platform, better integration to import Google Adwords accounts and more Marketing efforts to persuade advertisers to spend more of their ad budgets Bing Ads.

I also believe that with this emergence by Bing/Yahoo, Social Media platforms such as Facebook Ads and Twitter ads will continue to decline due to poor performance, as well as try to do some damage control due to the recent studies that have said that 70% of users almost never click on FB Ads, and they would be willing to pay a monthly fee to NOT show any ads. In conclusion, 2014 will be a rebuilding year for Bing Ads, and I believe that more advertisers will shift more of their budgets to Search and Retargeting Networks and less on Social Media Platforms due to the lack of “real revenue” performance.



**Mona Ellesseily**  
Vice President of  
Online Marketing Strategy,  
Page Zero Media

I see the Hummingbird update, as well as the move to contextual search results extending to PPC (paid search). I believe Google (and eventually other search engines) will rely on search context and not so much specific keyword terms in an account to trigger PPC advertising. If you look closely, you can see several examples of this already:

1. With Google product listing ads (PLA), ads are not triggered using keyword terms. Instead, Google uses product information in a feed (the Google Merchant Center) to display appropriate advertising.
2. In Dynamic campaigns. With these ads, Google scrapes the content of your site and creates relevant ads for advertisers.
3. Google automatically adds synonyms/plurals to all match types and this no longer falls within the specific realm of "broad" match.

It's an easy leap to see how ads with no specific keyword terms and/or contextual advertising can extend out to regular PPC keyword advertising campaigns.

Additionally, PPC ads are increasing in size and are taking up more screen real estate. One obvious example of this is with the addition of extension products (like sitelinks, call extensions, review extensions, etc) to ads. I think this trend will continue and we may eventually see paid listings interspersed with organic listings. We're already seeing confusion between paid ads & organic listings with the ever-lightening orangy/pinky background of the premium ads spots (above organic listings). Today, the background is almost non-existent.

**Dan Golden**

President, Chief Search Artist,  
Be Found Online

The big story of 2014 is going to be the device shift. While every year since 2008 has been the “year of mobile,” advertisers in 2014 are going to be facing the reality of a mobile or tablet first consumer purchase cycle.

While we know mobile conversion rates are abysmal compared to desktop, many marketers are still undervaluing the contribution from mobile & tablet devices and are subsequently under investing in their fastest growing traffic sources. Multi-channel retailers and restaurants have already been living in a mobile-first world but we’ve started to see the scales tipping in more traditional retail verticals.

Cross device analytics, which is imperfect and still in its infancy, should help solve the puzzle but is still a long way from telling the full story with attribution data that CMO’s and CFOs can agree on. Google’s addition of Estimated Conversions is a step in the right direction, but preliminary data isn’t enough to justify ecommerce retailers opening the mobile floodgates through paid media.

Google has doubled down on cross device marketing with the launch of Enhanced Campaigns, arguably before most search marketers were ready for it and well before tracking was in place to justify the shift. But it’s happening. The eyeballs are already there and thus the dollars must follow. The winners in this new marketplace will be the marketers that embrace this shift in consumer behavior and provide an optimized cross-device experience for their customers without significant gaps in coverage.



**Matt Van Wagner**  
President, Find Me Faster

I think the Big Story of 2014 will be display advertising.

In 2013, we witnessed humungous disruptive events in the search engine marketing world and most SEO and PPC professionals probably feel like Google's punching bags after the rollouts of Panda, Penguin, and Enhanced Campaigns (oh how I still abhor that name).

The economics that have propelled the search engine marketing industry into prominence are continuing to erode. The events of 2013 may only be accelerants as other market forces, such as social networks, mobile devices with fewer ad slots and smaller form factors, and increasing competition in search engine advertising itself.

Display advertising, however, is long overdue for a renaissance, and the market opportunity for advertisers is immense -- easily dwarfing the potential of search marketing. Most of the time we spend on the internet is spent away from search engines -- consuming content on traditionally online spaces like websites, social networks and games, and increasingly in traditionally offline spaces, like elevators, taxi cabs, urinals, and well, everywhere.

Although display advertising predates search advertising, the technology that powers most display ad placement is still rooted in crude, twentieth-century technology and ads are sold through "media buy" contracting methods that date back at least a hundred years earlier. Google, a relatively late entrant into the display network space, has been developing increasingly sophisticated targeting functionality sold through its self-serve auctions. Networks who stay fixed in old ways will inevitably fold, and hopefully other players are stepping up investments to counter Google's growing technological advantage.

Display advertising, with all its varied formats, text only, text and image (like PLAs and Facebook ads), image-only, and interactive and rich media ads present a new landscape and new challenges for advertisers. Search marketing folks will have to learn the ways of images, colors and managing digital assets to augment their expertise with keywords and text ads. Traditional media buyers will have to learn the ways of keyword targeting, and bidding in auctions.

In 2014, we'll start to see new tools emerge to help with the creation, asset management, and placement of all these ads in all their various places. We may also start to see consolidations or major acquisitions in the display networks space, to counter to Google's quietly growing advantage. Who could mount a challenge? Would it be too crazy to consider Amazon? Microsoft?

There probably won't be one big breaking story for 2014 in display advertising. More likely, millions of little ones.



**Aaron Levy**  
Director of PPC, SEER Interactive

Earlier this year, Sergey Brin said his original vision for Google was delivering information as you needed it, not when you searched for it. The company has made billions by providing answers (from an advertiser or otherwise) from various Google properties. Nowadays however, a good deal of customization & external data is required to deliver the most accurate information possible.

Enhanced campaigns and Google+ were baby steps, setting the stage for a big push to personalization. Gone are the days of serving the same ad to every searcher. No longer will display campaigns come from individual media properties. The big story in 2014 will be marrying data to create context for each and every ad.

Cross device tracking will improve immensely across free tools, but not for the sake of attribution alone. Cross domain tracking will improve for the same reason – to blend user data and browser-behavior data with self-surrendered social and sales data to craft stronger, more relevant ads.

2014 will hold the first major step towards fully targeted, Minority Report-style advertising online. Not just with social signals, but across ad formats and devices. Users may not like it, but if that's the case they simply won't purchase. Advertising market economies have a way of self-correcting – with the amount of data we'll have we should be able to figure out what's working.

If I had to guess two years, I'd say 2015 is going to be the year of attribution and PhD's.



**Melissa Mackey**  
Search Supervisor, gyro

Social PPC (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, etc) is going to grow dramatically in 2014. We're seeing social PPC take a bigger and bigger role in client marketing strategy, and that trend is accelerating into 2014. More and more advertisers will be taking advantage of social PPC on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Facebook's recent rollout of Custom Audiences is a big win for B2B advertisers who want to target a specific audience; this will get more attention in 2014 than it's getting now.

The social PPC engines will need to get better in 2014 to keep up with advertiser demand. Too many articles have been written about the shortcomings of social PPC ad platforms; they're going to have to innovate fast to hold on to advertiser dollars. I see Facebook as the leader in platform innovation, with Twitter not far behind. LinkedIn has a long way to go before advertisers will flock to their platform – if they can get up to speed in 2014, I see them becoming a contender for some serious marketing budget dollars, especially in the B2B space.

Advertisers have to do better and be smarter in 2014, too. To that end, more companies will be integrating their marketing across channels. Social PPC complements other marketing, so to be successful, you must align all of your marketing channels so they are working toward the same goal. Advertisers are finally starting to understand this, and those who do it well will reap the rewards.



**David Iwanow**  
SEO Product Manager,  
Marketplaats.nl

The next leap forward for true attribution modelling will arrive at some point in 2014, so advertisers can now fully realize the actual conversion path because of cross-device tracking. There will be some steep learning curves for marketers as the shift may require fundamental technology changes but now marketers can better understand how other devices, such as phones or tablets, are used along a journey that ends up with a conversion or transaction.

I would put my money on Google to be the first to deliver a mass-market solution because of its control of the Android/Chrome ecosystem and its dominance of online advertising they want advertisers to increase their spend across multiple platforms. The first step in cross-device tracking already happened when Google launched Chrome Sync tabs which enabled signed-in users to see tabs you had opened on other computers or mobile devices with Chrome for iOS or Android. The next logical step is for Google to track non-signed-in users.

After Google I would take a long bet on Facebook or Apple as they have been playing their cards close to their chest and have the most to gain by offering their advertisers better insights so they feel comfortable spending more. Apple is the dark horse in the race as they have already moved from the early unauthorised device tracking UDID profile to new authorized Identifier for Advertisers (IDFA) that is a software based identifier specifically for App developers. Apple could exclusively utilize UDID or MAC Address for iAd or offer premium advertisers better insights not available to their app developers. While it seems Microsoft has big plans for cookie-less tracking tied into cross-device tracking they don't have a great track record of mass-market adoption of their Advertising platforms so we will have to wait and see who can match Google.



**Liesl Barrell**  
Senior Business  
Development Manager,  
Unbounce

Those who tell a great story will keep winning our hearts with content and those who've mastered their metrics will look to Conversion Rate Optimization to win more of our data and dollars. This will be the year for the best of both worlds to cross-pollinate over better analytics to forge more meaningful connections between online activity and real-world experiences.

Google and Facebook will up the ante in their war for our marketing dollars, and our privacy continues to be the main casualty while they dance with our data in new paid formations. The social sharescape will shift as teens keep flocking to new platforms to avoid their moms and nannyware. SnapChat, WeChat and others will vie for attention while marketers assess whether adding emerging networks to an already crowded mix of channels will benefit their strategy.

Android's domination will continue for the best part of the year, so be good to droids and Apple will hopefully stop coloring within their own lines to issue real new products. Mobile as a whole will persist as the responsive fly in our digital ointment until hardware commits to wearables and moves further in with Kurzweilian nanotech. Holding devices or screens (even of the second variety) will soon look quaint to us, so suck it up and relaunch that damn website in 2014 while we can still enjoy it without surgically implanting anything into our skulls.



**Ian Lopuch**  
PPCian.com

My prediction: The days of someone just doing paid search are over. More power to PPC professionals! I foresee a very similar trend for agencies as well; I predict that PPC-focused agencies will gain even more responsibility across media channels.

### **Some other predictions:**

- 2014 will mark the year that digital marketing and customer experience product management truly collaborate. The digital landscape is competitive; Media optimizations can get you far, but not all the way to a fully-optimized program. I expect those in marketing will wear their product management hat (and vice versa), finding ways to improve conversion rates and customize user experience as a team (especially top-of-funnel “landing page” experiences). Executing and driving maximum yield will require values-driven business professionals who are true non-territorial collaborators.
- The last few years have been all about ad extensions, and 2014 will be no different. Those that quickly embrace new ad extensions (and proactively approach search engines with new ideas) will thrive. I anticipate vertically-specific extensions, and extensions that challenge the status-quo.
- With our “hot” market and a record number of companies getting funding and launching new products, I expect 2014 to be a year of aggressive salespeople pitching new technologies. As a long-time digital marketing executive who loves testing new ideas, I have become really good at choosing the winners and weeding out the hype. My advice: Keep an open mind and always test, but also learn to avoid aggressive sales. For your core platform, stick with those who have a long values-driven track record and their economies of scale will take you the furthest.



**Larry Kim**

Founder & CTO, Wordstream

The average cost-per-click for mobile searches is around a third less than desktop searches. In 2014, this anomaly will start to correct itself as more marketers wise up to the value of mobile – the gap will narrow or pull even – because mobile clicks and calls are worth more.

The intent behind mobile searches is stronger than that of desktop searches.

Enabling this trend will be new tools (e.g. better tracking, reporting, bidding and mobile targeting options) and cool new ad formats (e.g. Tablet preferred ad formats) that will enable advertisers to realize more ROI from mobile and better understand the value it drives.



**Marc Levesque**  
Co-Founder & Managing Director,  
Webrunner Media Group

If content is king, then his castle is mobile.

The most important thing for marketers to keep in mind this year is the exponential growth of the use of mobile devices.

Tablet sales are growing by nearly twenty percent. Smartphones aren't far behind. Over 17% of global web traffic comes through mobile. It is absolutely essential that your marketing and outreach initiatives be compatible with mobile devices. People are accessing your website, your newsletter and your Facebook page via their phones and tablets.

Forty-three percent of email is opened on a mobile device! If your newsletter isn't optimized for mobile devices, it's likely to be deleted by nearly half your audience. If your website is impossible to navigate on a smartphone, potential clients are likely to look elsewhere. You must create content that is user-friendly for those on mobile devices. Responsive web design is a great way to do this.

Your website will look good to mobile users as well as those using desktop computers. Responsive web design also makes it easier to manage your content and simpler to retain link authority.

Producing quality content will remain a top priority, but it won't be enough. That content has to be optimized for mobile users.



**David Szetela**  
Owner & CEO, FMB Media

In 2014, the Google Display network will become a much more important and prominent tool in the PPC manager's arsenal.

Look for additional ways to use Remarketing Lists to target previous site visitors with more-relevant ad messaging.

The lines between Search and Display will continue to blur. Advertisers will be able to target Display advertising based on user search behavior. Search Companion campaigns will finally come out of beta, to be followed by other campaign types that leverage search behavior.

Google's ability to infer user intent based on their search and browsing behavior will continue to improve. We'll see more targeting options like the recent rollout of In-market Targeting, which lets advertisers display ads to people who are on the verge of buying a range of consumer goods.

Google will provide more sophisticated tools to help advertisers reach YouTube's massive audience. Look for video advertising via a simplified interface, more tightly-integrated with "regular" AdWords.

Advertisers will increasingly take advantage of the huge impression inventory available in mobile apps and web sites – all easily accessible as part of Google's Display Network.

Google's Display Ad Builder will continue to evolve, making it easier for advertisers to create high-production-value image ads.

But what about Microsoft? The BingAds Content Network has been a tiny shadow of Google's, made up mostly of Microsoft owned-and-operated (OOO) sites.

Microsoft could buy into a competitive position simply by establishing a pay-the-publisher system like AdSense, and/or buying a few ad networks like Right Media. I for one would welcome such a move!



**Marc Poirier**  
Co-Founder  
& VP Business Development,  
Acquisio

## 1. Native ads hit a wall and ad partnerships will emerge.

While native ad formats present opportunities for marketers to find their audiences on specific web properties, it can make for a rather unwieldy marketing program. With so many different places to advertise, causing more and more work for marketers, it's likely that marketers will begin to lose interest, or just ignore these opportunities altogether. There are just too many ad formats to make it manageable for the average digital marketer.

With that in mind, we could start to see some partnerships begin to emerge between the major players like Pinterest, Facebook, Google, Twitter, etc. Facebook ads running on Pinterest, or a partnership of this nature, would be a great way for both sites to generate additional revenue for each of them, as well as simplifying the process for marketers.

## 2. Change at Microsoft and Bing Ads – for the better

There will be a new CEO at Microsoft soon. On April 8 2014, XP will not be supported anymore, which is a significant part of their OS share. Users will need to upgrade to Windows 8.1.

Microsoft's Smart Search returns Bing search results on in the Windows 8.1 environment that are a mix between what's on your computer, your email, and the Internet. Those pages already allow advertisers to start presenting ads to people right on their computers, although it's not currently possible to target these results specifically, with time it will likely become possible.

Once 8.1 gains more traction, Microsoft will start grabbing a significant part of search, which opens the door for them to start stealing a larger market share in search advertising. Even those who haven't paid to use the OS will be reached in this way, which will open up new market opportunities where Bing is weak, in EMEA and APAC for example.



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