

# Greenlight's top 10 predictions

LONDON, UK: With Google's Instant Preview here to stay, leading search marketing specialist and technology firm [Greenlight](#), has 2011 pegged as "web design year" with app search, hotter competition and a huge growth in the PPC model as just some of its predictions.



[Greenlight](#) predicts Google and Bing will offer app search before the year is out, competition between the two to heat up and duplication filters to get even tougher as the search engines take more drastic measures to limit the amount of resource they spend on less valuable content. For paid search\*\*, [Greenlight](#) predicts 2011 will be the year display marketing starts to mirror much of what is search in practice.

It expects there to be huge growth in the contextual based pay-per-click (PPC) model - pulling away from the search engine domain to advertisers such as eBay or Amazon and the Yahoo! "Rich ads in Search" proposition to take off, prompting Google to counter with a more appealing model.



These are just a few of [Greenlight's](#) top 10 predictions in its annual *Year in Review Briefing*, charting what's in store for natural and paid search marketing in 2011. It also looks back at what unfolded in 2010, surprises included, and how its predictions panned out. Among others they included Google factoring in the content of videos into page relevancy scores and the search giant finding more ways to monetise the excess inventory in AdWords, to internet use on mobile phones accelerating and mobile search taking off.

[Greenlight's](#) top 10 predictions for paid and natural search\* in 2011 include:

## 1: Google and Bing will offer app search before the year is out

Smartphone users likely already feel the pull of their respective app store/marketplace as much as if not more than a traditional search engine like Google, if/when they have a particular need. That, according to Adam Bunn, director of search at [Greenlight](#), is a new frontier for search: the idea that instead of finding a website that will be able to answer your question right now, you'll go and find an app and install that app because it will answer the question, and questions like it, again and again, in a more usable way (in the long term).

"To maintain any kind of grasp on the mobile user, search engines will need to be able to point out apps that might be relevant to the searcher's search - and even give them a one-click install option for when the search is being carried out from a mobile with the right operating system. This will manifest as another type of vertical search on Google and Bing, as well as being pulled into the normal results as a universal search element," says Bunn.

## 2: Display marketing will mirror much of what is search in practice

Google's acquisition of Double Click, Yahoo! Right Media Exchange, and Direct Response crossing over; and MSN bringing its exchange to the forefront, as well as offering similar display programmes and formats to search advertisers - is turning what we all once knew as 'traditional display marketing' to a very search-like feel to display.

The Ad Exchanges specifically have been pivotal to this evolution, providing real-time bidding and optimisation. It is making advertisers and brands rethink their display strategy and investment - and ask the question: Does display have a new lease of life?

"The best example of this was Google's acquisition of Double Click", says Hannah Kimuyu, director of paid search at

[Greenlight](#). "It transformed its Content Network into a fully fledged display network (also rebranded Display Network) proving that in fact traditional display (blanket run of network etc) is a thing of the past, and marketers can expect more sophistication, control and results from a new era of display. Imagine having search-like control with display - moving into 2011 we expect to see more from this new form of display marketing."

### 3: Google versus Bing - competition will hot up

Among other things [Greenlight](#) expects:

- Bing to imitate Google Instant Preview and introduce image previews of sites, with some additional functionality over the Google implementation such as the ability to zoom or "grab and scroll" the preview with the mouse to take a closer look before selecting which site is of interest;
- Google to introduce a feature similar to Bing's "Recent Searches" only called "Recent Pages". It will list the viewers five most recently clicked on search results for easier recollection later on. Data pertaining to how often a site is revisited when in the respective user's recent pages list will be fed into the algorithm.

"Expect this amidst a continued advertising push by Bing throughout the year," adds Bunn.

### 4: Yahoo! "Rich ads in Search" proposition will take off, prompting Google to consider offering display style ads within the search engine results page (SERPs)

A little similar to Google's recent introduction of Video extensions via its AdWords programme. Yahoo! has launched its 'Rich Ads in Search' (RAIS) proposition. In summary, RAIS are designed to deeply engage the target audience through images, videos and multiple direct links to the respective site. Unlike Google, Yahoo! is offering permanent real-estate. You buy full inventory over a fixed period of time and are charged on a CPM (cost per thousand impressions).

RAIS is focused on branded search. It aims to highlight a respective brand even further, incorporate its video assets and extends its search functionality including site links and a search function in the ad as well.

The proposition is expected to increase click through rates (CTRs) significantly for brand owners. It aims to take back some of the control/brand visibility lost from affiliates and competitors.

According to Kimuyu, RAIS has to be one of the most exciting things to come from Yahoo in a while. "In my opinion it is a great example of the search networks finally taking responsibility over their advertisers' brands. Although Google's version is yet to make its mark, we do expect Google to up its game, especially now Yahoo! has shown its hand."

### 5: Too much content on the web

The real problem is not that there is too much *content*, but that there is too much *similar* or *identical* content that offers no real value for search engines the second, third or thousandth time they come across it.

2010 saw Google implement its "May Day" algorithm update, part of which penalised cookie cutter content that is excessively template driven or syndicated to multiple sites in favour of more unique and valuable pages.

In 2011, [Greenlight](#) expects duplication filters will get even tougher as the engines take ever-more drastic measures to limit the amount of resource they spend on less valuable content and maximise the focus on everything else.

### 6: There will be massive growth in the contextual-based PPC model - pulling away from the search engine domain to advertisers such as eBay or Amazon

With the success of Google's Content Network (now rebranded the Display Network), many publisher sites and shopping

aggregators are following with similar paid-for-listings models, offering their real estate at a price. Although very early stages, none of them have quite mastered a 'quality score' of some type, making the payment model very much a fixed cost per click (CPC) but still split by vertical.

For advertisers, this is another advertising option that in most cases is a cheaper option. With CPC's being relatively low it helps spread the risk, so all an advertiser's budget isn't just spent with Google. However, it does not quite offer the same amount of reach as advertising via one of the search engines or Google's contextual network.

That said it's an interesting proposition and one which many advertisers (especially retail and travel) are already exploiting. So far the biggest selling points are the competitive CPCs some of these publisher sites are offering, almost undercutting the search engines. Are they offering something different? In addition, do they have a real chance of cutting into Google's monopoly of the contextual space? [Greenlight](#) thinks so.

## **7: Instant Previews are here to stay, making 2011 'web design year'**

With the introduction of Google Instant Previews, search engine users now get to see a site before they arrive at it. This means they will be making important decisions before the site has any chance to engage the viewer with the strength of its content or functionality. Although Instant Previews usually contain a few highlighted snippets of text as well as the overall screen-grab, those snippets are barely noticeable at present, making the previews basically entirely graphical. Consequently if a site design is not up to scratch, it will start to see click through rates (CTRs) dropping, which will have knock-on effects on the site's rankings too.

In addition, CTR optimisation will become its own semi-discipline built around the arrival of Instant Previews and incorporating competitor analysis, title and meta description optimisation, to offer a rounded and compelling package to top ranking sites.

## **8: Pre-targeting, re-targeting, re-marketing - all will be a prerequisite of any search strategy**

Personalised re-targeting, is the channel that allows advertisers to re-engage with lost customers via personalised banners across the Internet. Some of the biggest players in this market include Criteo, Struq, My Things Media and adGENIE. Even the search engines are giving it a go with Google's Remarketing or Yahoo! Smart Ads. Personalised retargeting is quite a unique proposition and twist to display in some ways, to the point whereby dynamic personalised retargeting has been proven to drive increased CTRs and conversion rates from what is considered the typical 0.005% for traditional display versus personalised re-targeting which normally starts off around 0.8% CTR and has been known to reach as high as 5% CTR.

The dynamic nature and flexibilities of re-targeting mean advertisers can optimise their ads in real-time, therefore responding to what their consumers really want and getting the most out of their investment. Again this is another example of display marketing taking on the qualities of paid search - and making it work for the advertiser.

"Combining our earlier prediction (Display marketing will mirror much of what is search in practice) with the re-targeting model sees search marketing expanding its remit within the online space - claiming more investment, and presenting more opportunities to close the loop outside the existing buying cycle," says Kimuyu.

## **9: Quick Response (QR) codes will replace "search online" calls to action in above the line (ATL) advertising**

Some time ago we started to see the advent of search-based call to actions in ATL advertising, where an advert ends with the line "search widgets online" rather than a website address.

[Greenlight](#) predicts that in 2011, QR codes will usurp search calls to action in display advertising. This is probably just as

well given the hash most companies seem to make of search-based calls to action when it comes to search engine optimisation (SEO), often failing to achieve or even try to rank naturally for the keyword they are encouraging people to seek and use.

So what's a QR code? A QR code is a "matrix" or 2D barcode that can be read by many mobile phones. It has a URL (among other things) encoded within it, letting advertisers replace the whole affair with a simple point and click.

## 10: Google comparison ads will be rolled out across all finance (and perhaps more) vertical keywords

Over the last year, Google introduced Comparison Ads into the mix (part of the AdWords programme). After a successful trial in the US, Google rolled out the proposition in the UK at the beginning of 2010. Invited advertisers were able to set a target cost per acquisition (CPA) against a group of specific keywords and not have to worry about inflating CPCs as a result of a poor quality score or aggressive competition. This programme alone not only assists Google in monetising its excess inventory. It also allows the advertiser to have confidence in securing a positive return on investment (ROI).

Now almost a year on, it makes sense for Google to push this proposition out across the entire financial sector and most likely into travel.

However, what does this mean for the aggregators, as Google is effectively taking a punt at their business model? Furthermore, with some of the aggregators being Google's biggest clients, is Google shooting itself in the foot by trying to recreate its own version of this market? It remains to be seen.

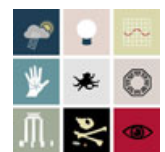
### Explanations:

\**Natural Search* - Listings in search engine results pages that appear because of their relevance to the search terms

\*\**Paid Search* - an Internet advertising model used on websites, in which advertisers pay their host only when their ad is clicked. With search engines, advertisers typically bid on keyword phrases relevant to their target market

The full presentation of Greenlight's *Year in Review Briefing* charting paid and natural search predictions for 2011 and what transpired over 2010 can be viewed here - [bit.ly/bchpta](http://bit.ly/bchpta).

#### For more:



- Biz Trends 2011: [Marketing & Media South Africa](#)
- Biz Trends 2011: [Marketing & Media Africa](#)
- Biz Trends 2011: [Retail](#)
- Twitter Search: [#biztrends2011](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>