



TECHNICAL DOCUMENT

Use of Google AdWords for HIV prevention among men who have sex with men in the European Union/European Economic Area

An ECDC guide to effective use of digital platforms for HIV prevention

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ECDC TECHNICAL DOCUMENT

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5. Google AdWords

[Google AdWords](https://adwords.google.com/)¹ is one of the most established digital advertising platforms in the world, and is used by organisations of many different sizes to achieve their marketing goals. The platform is popular due to the support [Google](https://www.google.com)² provides and the fact that it can be adapted to budgets of any size and is suitable for people with varying experience of digital advertising. This module will outline the opportunities that Google AdWords provides for HIV prevention and will explore the following:

- **Getting started:** how to begin setting up a successful [Google AdWords](https://adwords.google.com/) campaign.
- **Creating a campaign:** how to create and optimise your campaign for maximum success.
- **Targeting:** how to effectively target key MSM populations.
- **Budgeting:** what costs are associated with a campaign and how to distribute budget.
- **Reporting:** measuring the success of a campaign and applying this experience to future work.
- **Summary:** a brief checklist to consider before making your campaign live.

5a. Getting started

It is important to understand how Google AdWords is structured before you begin advertising on the platform. Google AdWords has a three-layer design:

Account	This is the top level of the structure. The account contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a unique email • password billing information.
Campaign	You will need to set up at least one campaign before you can create ads in your account. A campaign is a set of related ad groups that is often used to organise the categories of services that you offer. Your account can have many campaigns. For example, you could have 'PreP Awareness' and 'HIV Testing' campaigns.
Ad Group	An ad group lets you organise and target your ads in a campaign. For example, it is possible to have different target groups for the 'HIV testing' campaign. You can therefore create an ad group for each target group in the campaign.

Creating an account

Setting up a Google AdWords account is free and Google frequently offers free credit for new sign-ups. When setting up a new account, be on the look out for offers of ad credit from Google to help you get started with your advertising.

If you already have a Google account for your organisation you will be able to create a Google AdWords account using the same sign-in details. If you do not have a Google account you will require an email address or you can set up a Gmail email account.

Payment method

You will be required to set up a payment method, which is usually either a debit or credit card. The options on this can vary in different countries so please check what the payment options are for your country and organisation.

Manager account

If your organisation uses multiple Google AdWords accounts you might want to consider setting up a manager account. This is a Google AdWords account that lets you easily view and manage multiple Google AdWords accounts from a single location. This is only useful if you intend to manage multiple Google AdWords accounts as it will help you save time by using a single sign-in to access all the Google AdWords accounts you manage.

Granting access to your account

It is possible to grant other people access to your Google AdWords account via their Google accounts. This means they can access your account without you having to give them your sign in details. This is something you might

¹ <https://adwords.google.com/>

² <https://www.google.com>

consider if you want to work with an advertising agency using your Google AdWords account. Google recommends that you learn about how Google AdWords works before hiring agencies as this will make it easier for you to discuss well-defined advertising goals for Google AdWords with any agency. When granting access you will be able to control the access levels.

5b. Creating a campaign

The first step to creating a campaign is to be clear on what you want to achieve. Your advertising goals will determine the type of campaign you choose to create.

Your campaign goals could be:

- to generate traffic to your website - for example, getting people to visit your website to access information on how to prevent HIV.
- to increase brand awareness – to build awareness and positive associations with your organisation or a specific sexual health campaign. For example, you might have a new service that you want people to know about and you create adverts that tell people about the service.
- to take direct action on your site- for example you might have an offer of condoms packs and you want people to order them from your website.

Each campaign can have a start and end date so you can set targets for your campaign within clear timelines.

Where your adverts can appear

Having clarified your goals you need to think about where your adverts might be shown by Google AdWords. There are two main platforms: the Search Network or the Display Network.

Google AdWords Search Network³

The Google Search Network is a group of search-related websites and apps where your ads can appear close to search results when people are searching for specific goods or services.

For example, when someone searches for 'HIV test', your advert can appear next to the search results. In the example below, you can see that the top list of results for a search on HIV test are adverts from different providers of HIV testing services.

Figure 1. Example of results for a search on 'HIV test'

The screenshot shows a Google search for 'hiv test'. The search bar contains 'hiv test' and the search results page displays several paid advertisements. The first ad is for 'HIV Test in 60 Secs £60 - Clinics Across London. Walk In - citydoc' with a link to www.citydoc.org.uk/FastestScreen. The second ad is for 'Discreet STD / STI Test Kits - 5th Generation HIV Available - testd' with a link to www.testd.com/. The third ad is for 'HIV Testing today-Walk in' with a link to www.samedaydoctor.org/. The fourth ad is for 'London HIV Test Clinic' with a link to www.doctortoday.co.uk/hiv.htm. The search results also show the Google logo, search filters (All, Shopping, News, Images, Videos, More, Settings), and the number of results (About 8,230,000 results (0.76 seconds)).

³ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/1722047?co=ADWORDS.IsAWNCustomer%3Dfalse&hl=en>

It is important to note that in the Search Network it can be harder to target gay and bisexual men with certain keywords such as 'HIV test' as they could be used by anyone. You can use demographic targeting to target men only and specific age groups. You can also refine your target audience using remarketing lists but these do not usually work very well for exclusively targeting gay and bisexual men.

*Google Display Network*⁴

The Display Network comprises over two million sites, videos and mobile apps that partner with Google to show ads. Unlike the Search Network, these ads are shown in places where people are not necessarily already searching for specific goods or services. You can choose where your adverts can be shown so that you reach the relevant people and you can also exclude places where you do not want them to be shown.

Choosing a campaign type

Google has a set number of campaign types that you can choose from and each campaign type also determines where customers will be able to see your ads. It is therefore important to think which platform (Search or Display Network) will work best for your goals. When you create each campaign you can set the geographical area in which you would like your advert to be seen. The table below shows the campaign types you can choose from.

Table 1. Google campaign types

Campaign type	Description
Search Network with Display Select opt-in	This campaign type allows you to reach people via the Search Network as well as the Display Network based on the keywords you select for your adverts.
Search Network only	Ads in a Search Network only campaign will appear near Google search results and other Google sites when people search for terms that are relevant to the keywords in your advert.
Display Network only	Your ads appear on websites or mobile apps that include content that matches targeting you choose based on topics, placements, interests and remarketing, demographics and more.
Shopping	This is used by retailers to promote products. Ads are seen in results of searches for specific products.
Video	Video campaigns let you show video ads on their own or within other streaming video content on YouTube and across the Google Display Network.
Universal app	Promotes your app across all of Google's advertising platforms with ads that make it easy for people to install your app.

Getting more information on how to create a campaign [here](#).⁵

Creating ad groups and ads

Ad groups

After you have created your campaign you can proceed to create ad groups for your ads.

Ad groups allow you to organise your campaign into sets of ads and different targeting.

Using the '[It Starts With Me](#)'⁶ campaign from England as an example, you could have an HIV testing campaign arranged to promote four aspects of HIV testing:

- 'When to test' tool – a risk assessment for determining when people should get tested for HIV.
- 'Where to test' tool – a clinic finder.
- 'Which test' tool – a tool helping people find out more information about the HIV test options available to them.
- Order a free postal test – promoting the national home sampling testing.

⁴ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2404190?hl=en>

⁵ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/6324971?hl=en&co=ADWORDS.IsAWNCustomer%3Dtrue&oco=0>

⁶ <https://www.startswithme.org.uk/>

With an HIV testing campaign you could therefore create an ad group for each of the four elements.

Campaign: HIV Testing- It Starts With Me

Ad group 1:
When to test

Ad group 2:
Where to test

Ad group 3:
Which HIV
test

Ad group 4:
Home
sampling

More information is available on creating ad groups [here](#).⁷

Creating ads

When creating ads there are two very important considerations: quality score and ad rank, as they both can impact how your adverts perform and how much you pay.

Quality score

This is an estimate of the quality of your ads, relevance and landing pages. According to Google, higher-quality ads can lead to lower prices and better ad positions. It is therefore important to think of how easy it will be to understand the ad, how you make it relevant to your target audience and the experience that people will have on the website you send them to. People should find it easy to locate what you advertised when they get to the website. You might have a very good advert but if the experience on your website is terrible this might affect the position your advert obtains.

Find out how you can check your quality score [here](#).⁸

⁷ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2375452?hl=en&co=ADWORDS.IsAWNCustomer%3Dtrue&oco=0>

⁸ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2454010?hl=en&co=ADWORDS.IsAWNCustomer%3Dfalse&oco=0>

Ad formats

Google AdWords allows you to use many different advert formats for both the Search and Display Networks. The ad format you are able to use may depend on the campaign types. The table below shows some of the most basic adverts you can use, although there are other formats that are usually used by more advanced Google AdWords advertisers.

Table 2. Basic advert formats in Google Adwords

Format	Description	Main benefits
Text	Text ads on the Search Network show above and below Google search results. A text ad on Google search is the simplest online ad offered by Google AdWords. It has three parts: headline text, a display URL and description text. Text ads on the Display Network will look different to those from the Search Network.	These are quick to create and maintain. They can be used with ad extensions. You can find out how to create text ads here . ⁹ http://bit.ly/2tk37ch For tips on creating successful text ads please see the guide from Google AdWords here ¹⁰ (http://bit.ly/2s1h00B)
Responsive	Responsive ads automatically adjust their size, appearance and format to fit available ad spaces. They can transform into text or image ads. They are available on the Display Network	Responsive ads solve a big problem for display advertisers: the sheer number of ad sizes and types across the web. With responsive ads, you can create one ad that fits almost any ad space. You can find out how to create responsive ads here ¹¹ (http://bit.ly/2shp3FZ)
Image	Static or interactive graphics. Animated ads in .gif and Flash format can be used.	This allows you to visually showcase your campaigns or services You can find out how to create image ads here ¹² (http://bit.ly/2smzvqx)
App promotion ads	Drive app downloads and engagement with app promotion ads.	If you have an app, this is the best way to promote it as it can send people directly to an app store on compatible devices. You can find out how to create app promotion ads here ¹³ (http://bit.ly/2toNEbK)
Video ad	Video ads that display online. Run standalone video ads or insert them into streaming video content.	You can find out more about video ad formats here ¹⁴ (http://bit.ly/2sRdxQc).
Shopping ads	Text ads that contain product features and pricing information. Goes to a product purchase page on your website.	These are useful if you have products to sell and you want people to see them before they go to your website. You can find out how to create shopping ads here ¹⁵ (http://bit.ly/2tkpRZN)
Call-only ads	Ads encouraging people to make a phone call. The advert contains a call function.	If you have a helpline number this option could be good for promoting it. The adverts only appear on devices that can make a phone call. You can find out more about call-only ads here . ¹⁶

Always try to make ads that are relevant to what people will find on the website page where they will arrive after clicking on your advert. Although tempting, creating adverts that are not a true reflection of what you are advertising just in order to get people to click on them is not advised. Your adverts might be disapproved of by Google. They might even cost you more as they will have a bad quality score. Relevant adverts mean that the people who click on them will not be annoyed when they get to the website as they will not feel tricked into clicking on something which did not turn out to be the main focus of the advert. Increase the chances of people clicking on your ads by creating

⁹ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/1722117?hl=en&co=ADWORDS.IsAWNCustomer%3Dtrue&oco=0>

¹⁰ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/1704392?hl=en-GB>

¹¹ https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/7005917?hl=en-GB&ref_topic=3121943

¹² <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/1722096>

¹³ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/6309967?hl=en-GB>

¹⁴ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2375464?hl=en-GB>

¹⁵ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2454022?hl=en-GB&co=ADWORDS.IsAWNCustomer=false>

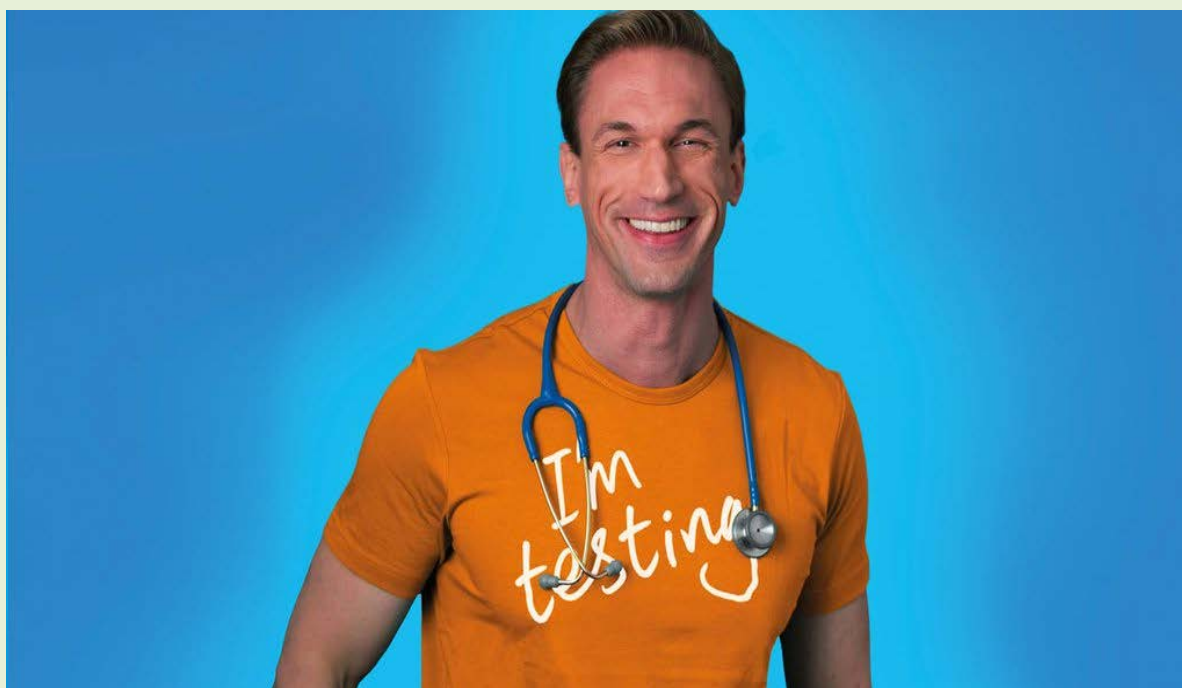
¹⁶ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/7159344>

visually compelling and relevant adverts. You can also increase the chance of people clicking on your adverts by using [ad extensions](#)¹⁷ such as a phone number or site links and these are free to add.

Your adverts will undergo an ad approval process where Google checks whether your advert is safe and appropriate and whether it violates any of the Google [AdWords advertising policies](#).¹⁸ Please do familiarise yourself with the advertising policies. This is especially important when thinking of advertising around sexual health as how you talk about sex on adverts can lead to them getting banned. Healthcare advert policies are also stricter in terms of what can be advertised. This is to protect people against receiving potentially harmful healthcare adverts. In some cases you might have to apply for pre-authorisation with Google to advertise healthcare-related content.

Case study: HIV Prevention England

HIV Prevention England used a selection of models, including celebrity doctor Christian Jessen, to promote National HIV Testing Week to gay men in 2015. By using Google AdWords to target websites and pages with content relevant to MSM, the adverts successfully promoted a home sampling service, a self-assessment tool and a tool for finding the best way to test.



5c. Targeting

Ensuring that your adverts reach the right people is essential in order to run effective and cost efficient advertising campaigns. There are various ways to target people and some of these are outlined below.

Search Network targeting

Keyword targeting: you choose words or phrases relevant to what you are advertising so that your ads appear when people use those terms to search on Google or search partner sites. By creating a highly relevant keyword list, you increase the chances that your ads will be shown to the most interested customers.

Location and language targeting: Google allows you to also choose the language and geographic locations – such as a country, region or city – in which the people you want to target are located. It is always important to ensure that you set your location so that you do not spend money on people in locations that are not relevant to your work.

Device targeting: show your ads to the right people across all devices, based on their specific location, time of day and device type. For example if you have something that you know would work best on a mobile phone you might want to target only mobile phones.

¹⁷ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2375499>

¹⁸ <https://support.google.com/adwordspolicy/answer/6008942>

Audience targeting: show your ads to people who have previously visited your website by using remarketing lists for search ads.

Keyword planner

Choosing the relevant keywords is important for delivering a cost-effective and successful advertising campaign. Google provides a useful tool, the Keyword Planner, to help you choose the best and most relevant keywords. It also helps you plan your budget and get forecasts of possible results from your campaign. This can be accessed via the tools tab in your Google AdWords account.

Display Network targeting

Keyword targeting: choose words or phrases related to your product or service to target relevant websites, apps and videos on the Display Network by using 'Content' keywords.

Topic targeting: target your ad to multiple pages on certain topics simultaneously. Topic targeting lets you reach a broad range of pages on the Display Network. Google AdWords analyses web content, considering factors such as text, language, link structure and page structure. It then determines the central themes of each web page and targets ads based on your topic selections. This is different from keyword targeting in that you choose your topic from a list provided by Google. Two examples of the topics you could choose are the 'Same-sex marriage' and 'Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgender'. For MSM, you might want to refine your targeting on these by adding demographic targeting where you exclude females.

Placement targeting: this option allows you to choose websites on the Display Network visited by the people you would like to target where you would like to see your ads. This will only work if the website you are targeting runs Google adverts. A placement might be an entire website or a subset of a website so sometimes you might get a website which has a section that has content targeted at MSM. You could then choose to target that particular section of the website rather than the entire website.

Audience targeting: this option allows you to reach different audiences: people who have visited your site before, affinity audiences, in-market audiences or similar.

Location and language targeting: choose the language and geographical locations – such as a country, region or city – in which your customers are located.

Device targeting: choose to show ads to your customer when they visit Display Network websites only on desktop and laptop computers, only on iPhones and Android devices, or on all of these.

Display Planner

To help you plan for your campaigns on the display network, you can use the Display Planner. This tool will help with ideas for ad groups by showing the potential reach and costs of targeting ideas. It will help you decide on how much to bid and give performance forecasts. The tool can be accessed via the tools tab in your Google AdWords account.

5d. Budgeting

Setting a budget on Google AdWords involves setting a daily budget. This is the maximum amount you would like to pay per day based on what you want to achieve and the average amount you are comfortable spending each day. This can easily be changed at any time and as often as you want.

Tip

To set a budget, decide on how much you want to spend in total for a campaign and how long you want the campaign to run for. You can then divide the total amount by the number of days you will run the campaign for in order to get your daily budget.

For example, a total budget of EUR 800 for an eight-week long campaign can be calculated as follows:

$$\text{Daily Budget} = \frac{\text{€800}}{(7 \times 8)}$$

This will give you a daily budget of EUR 14.29 for your campaign. If you work with monthly budgets you can always divide your monthly budget by 30.4 (the average number of days per month).

It is useful to start with a smaller daily budget to learn where you can get the best value for your money. For example, a Search Network campaign for HIV testing with a total budget of EUR 800 running over eight weeks could have a daily budget limited to EUR 5 in the first two weeks instead of setting it at EUR 14.29. After the first

two weeks you could look at the results and decide what keywords you might want to prioritise and increase your bids for the remaining budget period.

Bidding

For your adverts to be shown on Google AdWords, they have to go through an ad auction. The Google AdWords advert auction is different from a standard auction in that when deciding whether your advert is shown and at what position it is shown the quality score of your advert is also considered. This is important as it emphasises the need to create adverts that will get a high-quality score and making a high bid does not mean your adverts will get priority. An advert with a lower bid and a higher quality score can get priority over one that has a higher bid and a lower quality score.

You will be prompted to make a bid when you are setting up your adverts. You can make your bid using either automated or manual bidding

With manual bidding you set the maximum amount you are willing to pay per click on your advert. You may pay less than your maximum bid, depending on the auction. Manual bidding works well for small advertising budgets as it gives you more control. This is usually a good starting point if you are a beginner on Google AdWords. If you choose to use manual bidding, you can use [bid simulators](#)¹⁹ to help decide how much to bid.

When using automated bidding you give Google AdWords permission to adjust your bid so that you stay competitive in the auction and get the best results. You will still be able to cap the daily amount for your campaign. To use automated bidding effectively it is advisable that you have some experience of Google AdWords. Being automated does not mean you can activate your bid, forget about it and let Google AdWords do all the work. While Google AdWords will be using data to improve the performance of your campaigns, you should still be actively engaged in monitoring your campaigns and making adjustments where necessary.

Both automated and manual bidding provide various bidding strategies which help you achieve your goals. Each bidding strategy enables you to focus on any of the following:

- Clicks
- Impressions
- Conversions
- Views and interactions (video only).

Bid adjustments

Google AdWords offers bid adjustments to enable you to compete more or less for keywords, devices, ad scheduling or targeting methods. For example, you could use an ad scheduling bid adjustment to increase your bid for specific times of the day when you know your target audience might be more active online. More information on the different bid adjustments available and how they work is available [here](#).²⁰

5e. Reporting

Google AdWords provides reports that enable you to measure how your adverts are performing, including the following key issues:

- Clicks: the number of times people click on your advert.
- Click-through rate (CTR): a ratio showing how often people who see your ad end up clicking it.
- Average Cost-per-Click (Avg. CPC): will tell you how much you are paying on average per advert.
- Keyword performance: you can assess which keywords are working well for your goals.
- Search terms report: this gives you a list of search terms that lead to people seeing your ad and clicking it.
- Impressions: each time your ad appears on Google or the Google Network, it is counted as one impression.
- Ad reach: an estimate of the number of people within a location target, based on people who are signed in to their Google accounts.
- Frequency: the average number of times that a unique user sees your ad in a top position over a given period.
- Conversions: specific customer action that you have defined as valuable to your business. For Google AdWords to measure conversions you need to set up conversion tracking. This is a free tool showing when a person completes an action that you have defined as valuable after clicking your ads. You can find out more about conversion tracking [here](#).²¹
- Average Cost-Per-Acquisition (CPA): The average cost for each acquisition (conversion) from your ads.

¹⁹ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2470105?hl=en>

²⁰ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2732132?hl=en>

²¹ <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/1722022>

You can link your Google AdWords account to your Google Analytics account. By doing this you can analyse a visitor's activity on your website after they have clicked an ad, potentially providing insights which can help improve your ads and website. Linking also allows you to import your Google Analytics goals. Find out more about Google Analytics goals and linking your Google AdWords account [here](#).²²

You are best placed to understand the results that matter most to the overall goals you want to achieve with your campaigns. However, it is important to ensure you ask the right questions, depending on the goals. The table below may be useful when considering what to focus on.

Goal	What to focus on
Generating website traffic	Clicks, click-through rate, keyword performance, search terms
Creating awareness	Impressions, customer engagement, reach and frequency
Conversions	Conversion data, landing pages.

The cost-related reports will help you understand the results to expect and give you insights into where you might want to spend more or less money.

Google Ad Grants

Google runs a scheme where they provide non-profit organisations with free advertising of up to USD 10 000 per month on Google search result pages. This is only available to organisations in a number of eligible countries. You can find out more about Google Ad Grants and eligibility [here](#).²³

5f. Summary

- Setting up a Google AdWords account is free.
- You can grant access to your Google AdWords account without having to share your password.
- Always be clear on your goals before you create a campaign.
- Google AdWords has two main advertising networks - the Search and Display Networks.
- In each campaign you can create many ad groups focused on different aspects of your campaign.
- There are many types of advert to choose from. Select the ones that are most appropriate for your goals.
- You can spend as little or as much as you want and you have control of when to start and stop spending.
- To measure results you need to start with clear goals and ask the right ad performance questions for those goals.

Helpful information

[Set-up and basics](#)

[Personalised advertising policy](#)

[Google AdWords overview](#)

[Google AdWords benefits](#)

[Google AdWords - how it works](#)

[Google AdWords costs](#)

[Manage ads](#)

[Measure results](#)

[Billing](#)

²² <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/1704341?hl=en-GB>

²³ <https://www.google.co.uk/intl/en/grants/>

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