



Welcome to the Panama Jungle:

A user's guide to Yahoo!'s new interface

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Introduction

There are two dates that marked a significant change in the evolution of Yahoo!: May 8, 2006 and February 5, 2007. The first marked the announcement¹ of Panama, the “completely redesigned search advertising platform...to help businesses more easily connect to Yahoo!’s vast audience.”

The second marked the official launch of the new Panama system and their new ad ranking system. For several months, advertisers have been migrating to the new interface and on February 5, the new ad ranking formula was implemented. Thus, the new Panama system was officially implemented and a new era at Yahoo! was born.

Whenever there is a major sea change, someone has to step up and be the first to document the new direction of the tide. The sea we’re swimming in is sponsored search marketing and the change is Panama, Yahoo!’s new advertising platform. Since Panama was announced on that infamous day in May 2006 there have been hundreds of forum threads discussing the

Whenever there is a major sea change, someone has to step up and be the first to document the new direction of the tide.

functionality, algorithms, ranking methodology, predictive tools, and the overall benefits and drawbacks of the new interface. Most of the industry is still in the midst of the migration to Panama, but we thought we’d cull together all the available information into one organic document that can serve as a reference tool for Yahoo!’s Panama — and throw a life preserver to those who are still struggling to keep their heads above the shifting tide.

Because we are a search engine marketing firm focusing on pay-per-click management, the migration to Panama has been exceptionally challenging and important to us. Most of our clients depend heavily on Yahoo! for their continued success in the paid search realm, so it has been of the utmost importance for us to fully comprehend the new interface as well mitigate any negative effects it might have on our campaigns. We were going to keep an in-house document of everything we learned during the process, but after reading all the blogs and forums, we realized this information would be of great use to many people. This is how *Welcome to the Panama Jungle* was conceived.

There are many resources you can tap into for information regarding Panama: industry blogs, forum discussions, articles in print and online magazines, as well as the documents and tutorials Yahoo! has published on its migration help site². However, we want to gather all this information into one locale, as well as expand upon and supplement the resources that are already available. *Welcome to the Panama Jungle* is not an exhaustive study of the new interface but an organic document that serves as a good diving board into the new Yahoo!. This handbook will be updated frequently with new

¹ <http://yhoo.client.shareholder.com/press/ReleaseDetail.cfm?ReleaseID=195477>

² <http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/ysm/sps/faqs/>

information, and expanded as new features are added to Panama. We'll do our best to keep you up-to-date so that you can always see the shore when you're feeling a bit lost at sea.

Migration Tips and Info

From the first announcement that Yahoo!'s Panama was becoming available to advertisers, Yahoo! has distributed a plethora of print and electronic materials on preparing for The Upgrade. This media frenzy was intended to educate current advertisers on the best methods for setting up their Overture (legacy) pay-per-click accounts to migrate easily to the new platform.

According to Yahoo!, these are the essential actions to take in preparing your account for the migration to Panama:

- Group similar keywords into categories.
- For each category, write a single title and description into which your keywords can be inserted.

However, there is also a full list of actions³ to take in order to be prepared when migrating from the Overture platform to Panama:

- Ensure that your contact information is accurate and up-to-date.
- Download current listings for reference.
- Categorize your ads (in reference to category-to-campaign transition).
- Don't change your password.
- Once your account preview is available, examine it for errors before upgrading.

These instructions, while helpful, oversimplify the complex process⁴ of migrating from the outdated Overture interface to the new Panama interface. We recommend taking the simplest approach to this process. With a little knowledge of how the Panama system operates, you can make your account work for you after your migration is complete.

If you do not have a Panama Account Preview available to you yet, don't worry. Starting today, begin moving keywords around so that you can group the most similar or relevant keywords together into categories. Take Yahoo!'s advice⁵ on this one and also make sure that you simplify your ad texts and URLs so that each keyword within a category is the same.

Upgrade Your Account

The new Sponsored Search enhancements are available for you to preview and use! To preview a read-only version of your upgraded account, click the Preview button to the right. When you are ready to upgrade your account and take advantage of all the new features, click Upgrade Now. If you do not click Upgrade Now by Feb 23, 2007, your account will be automatically upgraded. For best results, be sure to review the [Upgrade Tips & Checklist](#).

Preview

Upgrade Now

³ http://help.yahoo.com/help/1/us/yahoo/ysm/sps/migration/during_upgrade.html

⁴ <http://www.traffick.com/2007/01/panama-migration-industry-feedback.asp>

⁵ <http://help.yahoo.com/1/us/yahoo/ysm/sps/migration/index.html>

Once Yahoo! is ready to start your migration to Panama, they will do two things: notify you by e-mail, and allow access to a preview of your account in the new interface. You will have access to this preview for three weeks to a few months depending on the size of your account. This preview will allow you to navigate the account and familiarize yourself with the new surroundings. Take this time to make further changes to your category and keyword organization to see how it affects your account within Panama. At this point, you have the opportunity to minimize the chances of reliving some of the upgrade disasters that have occurred to other advertisers.

There are a few things to look out for during this preview phase. With a few upgrade previews that we received in-house, the organization of ad groups took us by surprise. Take note of these changes and attempt to follow

Simplifying your account should mitigate most negative byproducts of the migration.

Yahoo!'s logic so that you can understand the structure of your account. Beyond mere organization, pay careful attention to ad texts that have been amended or newly created for your account. In a few circumstances there were ad texts without titles; in other ad texts, the descriptions were made up of nonsensical words and sentences. When these errors were brought up with Yahoo!'s support staff, we were generally given stock

answers regarding the then-upcoming quality ranking score. Other times, we were given responses that alluded to the fact that initial upgrades didn't always work "perfectly" and that there were bugs that needed to be or that have been fixed.

Within our migrated accounts we have found that the transition from old category listings to new campaigns was rather painless. However, trouble can arise when Yahoo! breaks down your campaigns into ad groups. In a few instances, we have not followed our own advice and simplified our pre-migrated accounts, and our keywords were distributed into ad groups quite haphazardly. Some ad groups had only one keyword; others contained keywords that did not belong together; others had similarly themed keywords but the ad texts were incorrect. Simplifying your account should mitigate a few of these negative byproducts of the migration.

When you are ready to migrate your account to Panama, simply click the Upgrade Now button and allow about eight hours for the process to complete. At this point, your old Overture account will only be available for reporting purposes, as this data cannot be transferred to the new Sponsored Search database. If you find even after careful planning and re-organizing that your new Panama account is still a disaster, Yahoo! has listened to advertisers' complaints and offers a solution. Various advertisers (ourselves included) have received e-mails from Yahoo! offering a one-time consultation and bulk upload to situate your account exactly the way you want it.

Billing/Admin

New Account Accessibility/Invoicing System

Instead of going through the migration process, you can open a new account, or you just might have a new client that needs a new account. When you open a new account there are a few features you cannot access until you enter valid credit card information.

Here is a list of things you *can* do when setting up your account without a credit card:

- Set up your geo-targeting.
- Research keywords and add keywords to your ad group.
- Set your daily spending limit; then Yahoo! will give you an estimated cost-per-click (CPC) based on the keywords you selected.
- Create your ad text.
- At this point, after creating your ad text, you have to set up your username, password, e-mail, and company name.

In order to activate your account you must enter your billing information.

- Once you enter your credit card information, your account is activated, and at that point you can make changes to your account.
- When opening an account, you must use two credit cards, one as your main payment method and one as a backup.

Once you have set up your account you can edit and add credit card information for new or migrated accounts. However, if you want to completely delete a credit card from your account, you'll need to place a call to your Yahoo! account representative. You may run into another speed bump upon opening a new account: Whatever credit card number you enter becomes the default payment method for the first sixty days. You cannot use a different card number for payment within that probationary time period. However, as with deleting a card number from your account, a simple phone call to Yahoo! and your card numbers will be changed manually on their end.

If dealing with this credit card information is a hassle, you can apply for Yahoo!'s invoice system. Invoices for the previous month's clicks are issued between the first and sixth of each month. However, the invoice system is available only to Platinum status advertisers and higher. Even then, you have to spend approximately \$10,000 for three consecutive months to qualify for invoicing.

Account Status

Speaking of the invoice system, which is applicable only to Platinum customers, we thought it would be helpful to define the attributes of each account level. Below is an explanation of the different account levels:

1. Super Diamond:
 - a. Customers must spend \$120,000 a year to qualify.
 - b. Super Diamond accounts receive 100 campaigns, 1,000 ad groups, and 250,000 keywords.
 - c. This type of account also gets a dedicated customer service representative.
2. Diamond:
 - a. Customers must spend \$120,000 a year to qualify.
 - b. Diamond accounts receive 100 campaigns, 1,000 ad groups, and 150,000 keywords. That's 100,000 fewer keywords than Super Diamond status.
 - c. They also get a dedicated customer service representative.
3. Platinum:
 - a. Platinum customers must spend a minimum of \$80,000 a year.
 - b. Platinum accounts receive 50 campaigns, 1,000 ad groups, and 100,000 keywords.
 - c. They too get a dedicated customer service representative.
4. Gold:
 - a. Gold customers must spend a minimum of \$10,000 a year.
 - b. Gold accounts receive 20 campaigns, 1,000 ad groups, and 100,000 keywords.
 - c. Gold status also includes a dedicated customer service "team," in which you have any number of people supporting you, not one specific person.
5. New/Premier:
 - a. New accounts are called, well, new or premier customers. While they have no minimum spending limit, they do receive 20 campaigns, 1,000 ad groups, and 100,000 keywords.

Here are a few more items to keep in mind regarding account status:

- Yahoo! reviews all accounts every quarter (March, June, September, and December).
- They figure your monthly average and then decide who qualifies for which account status.
- If your account has not been active for an entire year, they will simply take your monthly average and determine in which status your account belongs.
- The monthly average includes all your accounts, domestic and international.

- All advertisers will be notified of account status changes.
- All new advertisers receive Gold status for their first 90 days. After that they begin determining your monthly average to decide in which status your account belongs.
- If you have separate accounts, you SHOULD link them together, which may get you into a higher status.

Account Management

General

The first account management feature noticed by any advertiser upon entering an account with Panama is the new Dashboard feature. While the Overture interface gave basic data within preset date parameters, this new functionality is far superior. The Dashboard gives a snapshot of the performance of an account at the campaign level within any date parameter an advertiser inputs.








Icon	Status
	Incomplete
	Scheduled
	Off
	Off - Editorial Status
	Deleted
	Expired
	Watch List

Figure 1

allows Yahoo! to more easily manage their new quality ranking score.

From this account entry point, advertisers are given relevant Alerts ranging from editorial processes, billing items, and anything else deemed important for the management of the account. Advertisers also can view graphed metrics for the listed campaigns without ever leaving the entry page.

As part of the Panama upgrade, there are new symbols to learn when dealing with account management (Figure 1). These symbols are used to notify advertisers of important actions needed, or merely to signify that changes have been made to the account.

The most important upgrade change to note is the incorporation of the campaign/ad group account structure. This organizational structure

Campaigns

In the new organizational structure, campaigns are the highest and most generalized tier. From the Campaign menu (Figure 2), advertisers can manage General Information, Tactic Settings, and Geo-Targeting. It is important to note that geo-targeting can only be managed at the Campaign level. This menu also allows the option of deleting the entire campaign.

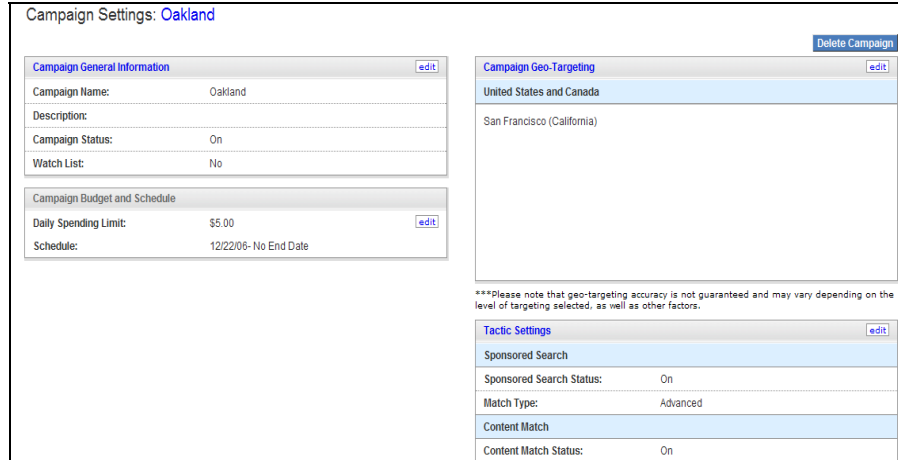


Figure 2

Ad Groups

The Ad Group menu (Figure 3) is nearly identical to the Campaign menu, but it does not include geo-targeting options. Once again advertisers are given the opportunity to make generalized changes, and edit Tactic Settings. The important difference here is that ad groups can be moved or copied. This menu gives you the option to move the specified ad group to an altogether different campaign, or to copy it for new placement while keeping the ad group itself in its current position. And it is also at this level that we first see default Sponsored Search and Content Match bid settings.

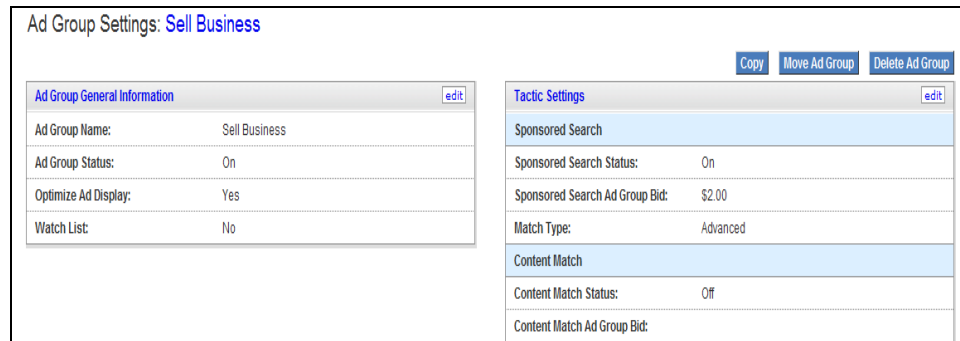


Figure 3

Ad groups are important to Panama's new structure, as this is where ad text is applied. Unlike the Overture platform, where each keyword had its own unique ad text and destination URL, Panama requires ad groups to contain similar keywords that are all under the umbrella of relevant ad texts and destination URLs. Due to the implementation of a quality ranking score, this is an important update for advertisers to note. Within ad groups are the management tools for both keywords and ad texts.

Keyword Management

Keywords are the core of any pay-per-click account, or any search engine marketing (SEM) strategy for that matter. The SEM industry is inundated with tools and strategies to utilize the keyword core. With the introduction of Panama, advertisers are given keyword tools both familiar and new. In this section of the handbook, we'll refresh you on the difference between Standard and Advanced Match, cover the basics of the new bid environment, and offer some hints and tips on navigating through keyword management.

When Yahoo! first offered detailed information about Panama's structure, one of the first things we noticed was that the keyword matching capabilities are the same as in the Overture platform. Standard Match is Yahoo!'s answer to an exact-matching strategy. In addition to showing ads for queries matched exactly to your keyword, Standard Match also incorporates variations in case, plural forms of keywords, common misspellings, and topics relevant to your keyword and ad text. Advanced Match is everything else, almost. The Advanced model is Yahoo!'s answer to broad and phrase-matching strategies. This allows advertisers a simpler way of bidding on complex query strings without considering every possible keyword.

In Panama, many keyword management functions are changed. The first of many changes is that the minimum bid (CPC) is now \$0.10. Now that Overture categories have become campaigns, with corresponding ad groups and keywords, the way we manage our keywords has changed. Now it is necessary to monitor your keyword bids from both the ad group and keyword levels. Every ad group has a default bid for both Sponsored Search and Content Match. This is easily changed from either the Ad Group Tactic Settings (Figure 4) or directly from the Ad Group screen by clicking on the actual bid amount (Figure 5). According to some SEM forums, when an account is migrated to Panama⁶, Content Match is turned on by default, regardless of whether or not it was on in the legacy account. However, with our in-house clients, we have discovered that this isn't always the case. We know of specific accounts that went through the migration process and Content Match *did NOT* default to the ON setting.

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⁶ <http://forums.searchenginewatch.com/showthread.php?t=15882>

Figure 4

	Keyword	Editorial Status	Bid (\$)	Avg. CPC (\$)
	Total			0
	Content Match		0.15	
	Sponsored Search		0.11	0

Figure 5

Previously in Overture, it was possible to manage the Content Match bid at the keyword level. This is no longer possible. Yahoo! is really pushing to make the hierarchal campaign/ad group structure work *for* advertisers by forcing them to group keywords together not only by relevancy but by bid activity as well. Still, it is possible to manage Sponsored Search bids at the keyword level. By clicking either the keyword itself or its corresponding bid, you will be given the opportunity to use the new bid forecasting tool (Figure 6). From this point, it is possible to estimate click traffic and average position depending on what you specify as the custom bid. Many advertisers mourned the loss of the bid to position tools from the Overture platform. However, with the addition of relevancy factors (quality score), Yahoo! has given us forecasting tools instead.

Figure 6

During the early stages of the migration process, many advertisers posted to blogs and forums that the new bid forecasting tool was only available when managing individual keywords. These comments were not without merit. When you check off multiple keywords for editing and click Set Keyword Bids, you are given a much different screen (Figure 7). While you are not given the visual graph of the bid forecasting tool, you are still given the ability to see the Bid Range for Top Positions. The top positions are the top three ads of the paid search results.

Keyword	Current Bid (\$)	New Bid (\$)	Prime Placement Range of Bids
licensed practical nurse jobs	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions
licensed nurse	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions
licensed practical nurse job description	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions
lpn position	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions
lpn job ct	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions
licensed practical nurse florida	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions
licensed practical nurse lpn	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions
lpn employment	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions
career on licensed practical nurse	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions
lpn nursing job	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions
licensed practical nurse	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions
lpn jobs	0.15	\$	Bid Range for Top Positions

Figure 7

In the Overture system, every keyword potentially could have had a unique destination URL. Panama still offers this ability. Setting a custom URL for a specified keyword is as easy as clicking through a keyword and clicking through on the Custom URL: Edit link. This Custom URL setting will override your specified ad URL. Panama also offers the ability to utilize excluded (negative) keywords. Yahoo!’s official instructions lead advertisers to set excluded keywords⁷ at the account level through the Administration settings. However, it is also possible to add excluded keywords at the campaign and ad group levels by using the bulk upload (Import) feature.

Entering new keywords into an account is made easy in Panama. Within an ad group it’s as simple as clicking one link — Add Keywords. If you already have keywords picked out, enter them into the tool and click Save Changes. Panama’s editorial system will automatically throw out duplicate keywords. Some keywords will be approved immediately and entered into your ad group under the default bid. However, if a keyword raises a flag within Panama’s editorial system, it may go into manual review and be placed in pending status. If this happens, give the system a few days to work on these keywords. After that, if your keyword still has not been declined or approved, either re-enter the keyword for approval or contact Yahoo!.

If you do not know what keywords you should enter for your specified ad group, there are some easy-to-use tools⁸ available for you, the first of which is a tool that will find related keywords based on terms you enter into the system. This is similar to the old Overture keyword tool that helped

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http://help22.marketingsolutions.yahoo.com/helpui/resources/content/us.market/content.source/en.language/16485_account.html#3

⁸ <http://www.ewhisper.net/blog/yahoo-panama-keyword-tool-allows-for-site-spidering/>

advertisers maximize on the “long tail” of keywords. Another available tool will actually crawl your site with a search spider that will glean keywords directly from your landing page. With these two tools you can also identify certain terms that must be included in keywords, as well as those terms that must be excluded.

Of all the great strides that Yahoo! has made in simplifying keyword management, they missed a big step in the process with Panama: They took away the ability to move keywords with historical data. Within the Panama interface, it is impossible to move a keyword from one ad group to another without deleting the keyword and reinserting it in a new location. Various calls by our staff to Yahoo!’s support have covered this topic.

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One possible solution to this problem is to move an entire ad group if it makes sense to relocate it to a new campaign. However, this isn’t always the smartest option, nor is it recommended. In a recent webinar hosted by Yahoo!, the topic of choice was Panama’s bulk upload (Import) feature. We took the opportunity considering there were four Yahoo! personnel present for Q&A. Finally, after months of toiling with bulk spreadsheet options and dead-end answers from Yahoo!’s support staff, we were presented with a solution for moving keywords.

Here are the specific directions⁹ for moving a keyword using the bulk upload (Import) feature:

1. While working with your bulk spreadsheet, decide which keywords need to be moved.
2. COPY the original row of the keyword you would like to move.
3. PASTE this keyword row into its “new” ad group home within the spreadsheet.
4. For this keyword row, change the AD GROUP ID column to reflect this new ad group. If this keyword is being placed into an altogether different campaign, change the CAMPAIGN ID column to reflect this new campaign.
5. *****VERY IMPORTANT STEP***** Delete the KEYWORD ID and CHECKSUM column information for this moved keyword.
6. Return to the original keyword row (from step 2) and mark the COMPONENT STATUS column as Deleted.
7. Save your file as a Unicode text type with a .csv file extension.
8. Import your bulk file into Yahoo! Panama.

There are a few pieces of information to note in this process. The first is that by moving a keyword in this fashion, you will lose all historical data associated with that keyword. You are in a sense deleting the keyword and inserting it into another ad group, as if it were a new keyword. Second, the advantage here is that it is now possible to do this through the bulk upload

⁹ <http://groups.google.com/group/SEM2/t/fbb0267c20af5663>

(Import) feature, thus saving advertisers the time and trouble of navigating through their Panama accounts and deleting and reinserting each individual keyword.

Ad Text Management

Part 1: Short and Long Ad Texts

Within the old Yahoo! interface, users were allotted one ad text and it could contain up to 180 characters. Every keyword was assigned a title, a description, and a destination URL. In Panama's ad groups, keyword groups are served with specified ad texts.

Each ad description is allotted one headline, two ad texts, a display URL, and a destination URL. Users have the option of using a short ad text and a long ad text. The short description can be up to 70 characters in length and the long description can be up to 180 characters in length.

The short text appears within Yahoo! search results. The long text appears within Yahoo! partner sites, via Yahoo!'s content distribution network, that can accommodate longer ad text descriptions. The content distribution network includes sites such as CNN, ESPN, USA Today, AllTheWeb, eBay, National Geographic, iVillage, and many others.

We suggest utilizing both the long and short description options. If you're going to use one description, though, we suggest using the short one. If you opt to use only the long text, your ad texts will be cut off at 70 characters within Yahoo! search results as well as within quite a bit of the content network. This means your entire description will not be displayed. Notice in these listings (Figure 8) that ad positions 1 and 4 are not

using the short description option and that their ad texts are cut off without delivering their entire message:

We suggest utilizing both the long and short description options. If you're going to use one description, we suggest using the shorter version.

SPONSOR RESULTS

SULTS

[Become a Published Author](#)
America's leading author services company since 1920. We've built...
dorrancepublishing.com

[Need A Quality Book Publisher?](#)
Learn Why More Authors Choose Xlibris. Get Your Free Publishing Kit.
www.xlibris.com

[Book Publisher](#)
Create and print your own book now. Sell your work online easily.
www.lulu.com

[Let us be your book publisher](#)
You get complete control, a completely custom product and 100% of...
www.dogearpublishing.net

Figure 8

Keep in mind that with Content Match, keyword matching does not determine the distribution or placement of your advertising. The content of your ad title, description, landing page, and the user's IP address are used instead.

Part 2: Dynamic Keyword Insertion

Since the new ad-ranking model is giving everyone a quality score that is determined by relevancy, one of the best ways to make your listings relevant is to automatically insert keywords directly into your ad text.

Keep in mind when using the keyword insertion tool that the keywords in your referring ad group will vary and may make your ad text too long. When this happens your listing will use the default text you include within the ad. For example, if your headline is "Register with us for {KEYWORD: Hawaii Information}," the searched keyword is "Free Vacations to Hawaii," but it will not fit into your headline. Your headline will then appear as "Register with us for Hawaii Information." But if the keyword fits within the allotted space, that is what will be used in your text.

As far as directions for utilizing this feature, YahooSarah posted rather clear instructions on WebmasterWorld, so we will defer to her post:

1. Click the Campaigns tab > Summary subtab. The Campaigns page opens.
2. Identify a campaign and click its link. The Campaign Details page opens.
3. Identify an ad group and click its link. The Ad Group Details page opens.
4. Click the Create New Ad link. The Create Your Ad page opens.
5. Decide whether to insert the keyword into the title or the description of the ad.
6. Enter the title and description of your ad. At the point in your title or description where you would like to insert the keyword, click the Insert Keyword link below the text field. {KEYWORD: DEFAULT_TEXT} will be inserted into your title or description, and you may then replace DEFAULT_TEXT with the keyword of your choice.
7. Enter the URL and ad name for the ad.
8. Click Save Changes.
9. In the Ad Group Details page, find the related keywords in the Keywords tab.
10. Click the Keyword link. The Keyword Details page opens.
11. Click the Edit link in the Alternate Text field at the top of the page. The Enter Alternate Text dialog box opens.
12. Enter the alternate text to display.
13. Click Submit.

Part 3: Ad Text Approval Timeframes

Most keywords and ad listings “go live shortly after submission — usually within minutes,” according to Yahoo!’s information. However, there is a caveat that listings with “sensitive material,” which need to be reviewed individually, will take longer to complete the approval process. For the majority of our submissions, we have found this to be true. However, it has not been uncomeven four. As far as we know, wedding accessories are not “sensitive material,” so we are not certain that the ad activation process is always running as quickly as Yahoo! claims.

Bulk Upload Options

As other parts of this handbook can attest; the bulk upload (Import) feature in Panama has left our staff and countless others in the SEM world scratching their heads in wonderment. From day one of our first attempt at a bulk upload fix, numerous problems have arisen resulting in repeated calls to Yahoo! support. While this process has been frustrating, it has been truly educational.

What have we learned?

- Only accounts labeled Gold status or higher even have access to the bulk upload (Import) feature to begin with. This has left many new advertisers, or those with smaller budgets, stranded and without a simplified option for working with their accounts.
- Depending on your account status, you will have a finite amount of campaigns with which to work. If you have more than the limit (say 21 of the 20 allotted to a Gold account), your bulk upload will not be accepted by Panama and will result in errors. This point has been confirmed on more than one occasion by YSM support staff.
- To combat an increasing sense of abandonment and discouragement among advertisers when dealing with the bulk upload feature, Yahoo! has made some concessions. The first is that they have the ability to convert third party accounts¹⁰ in the Panama interface (basically Google AdWords accounts). The second concession is for any advertiser who did not meet the status qualifications to receive the Import feature: Yahoo! will take an edited bulk spreadsheet either through their customer support system in Panama, or by e-mail or phone communication and push the upload through manually.

¹⁰

<http://help22.marketingsolutions.yahoo.com/helpui/resources/content/us.market/content.source/en.language/16898.html#1>

- Panama's bulk downloads have a new header row that advertisers should note. This new spreadsheet has previously unknown columns: Component Status, CheckSum, Alternate Keywords, etc. Advertisers should pay special attention to the information that they enter into their bulk spreadsheet to avoid errors when importing into the Panama system.
- It is possible to move keywords from one ad group to another using the bulk spreadsheet (please refer to the section on Keyword Management (Pp. 10)).
- When saving your bulk spreadsheet, there are specific directions on file type and extensions. You must save your spreadsheet as a Unicode text file with a .csv file extension in order for your upload/import to work properly.

We have also discovered another bug within the bulk upload feature that has affected a few of our accounts. The problem was in uploading ad text changes to our account. We uploaded a file and then received an error stating that our ad text was too long, but we were certain it wasn't. On a few of our uploads, we needed to make our texts 2 characters shorter than the space allowed. So if your title is 40 characters, make it 38 when doing the bulk upload; make the short description 68 instead of 70 characters; and the long description 188 instead of 190 characters.

Reporting

In the Reporting tab, you can't break reports down into specific multiple time frames (i.e., summary vs. weekly, monthly, etc.). You *can* select multiple months or days at the same time, but you will get a total of the entire time frame you selected. What you have to do is select each month in the calendar, manually for every month or day you need to report.

One feature that is missing from the Reporting function is the ability to view data for the lifetime of the account (all time). No one at Yahoo! knew for sure if these features were a work in progress. However, they did say that they would put this issue into the suggestion box for the next update of Panama. They also said that their main focus was getting everyone migrated; the next step is to make improvements according to the suggestions and complaints advertisers have given.

Another feature that is missing is the ability to run reports on specific ad texts. Currently, advertisers must make decisions on the performance of ad texts based on click-through-rate alone, as there is no visibility for conversion rates. Within a Yahoo! Webinar, support personnel have stated that both "all time" and conversion reports for ad texts will be available in the future.

There is some good news on the Reporting tab: They've added the option to graph the performance of your campaigns, ad groups, and keywords over any length of time. You can select a bar or line graph, sponsored or

Within a Yahoo! Webinar, support personnel have stated that both "all time" and conversion reports for ad texts will be available in the future.

content, and metrics such as impressions, clicks, conversions, cost, etc., to see the overall trending of a particular campaign, ad group, or keyword. You can also do this on the actual campaign level of your account, but there aren't as many options this way. It basically allows you to select a metric and a time frame.

For accounts using Full Analytics, the Reporting center includes Multi-Channel Performance information. Full Analytics, which utilizes URL tags that track user behavior from lead-through to conversion, can be turned on through the Administration tab in Panama. Multi-Channel Performance reports allow advertisers to track which campaigns and marketing activities are most effectively contributing to their accounts. These reports can be viewed in custom date ranges or as daily reports.

Conversion Tracking/Tracking URLs

One of the biggest concerns our firm had when the migration process began for us last November was how conversion tracking would be affected. If you allow an account to migrate from the Overture platform to Panama, your *old* conversion tracking code *will continue to work* in the new interface. Still, this process will only work if you DO NOT enable the Administration > Analytics¹¹ function in Panama. Once you select Enable Analytics (Figure 9) in Panama, *you MUST use the new code*.

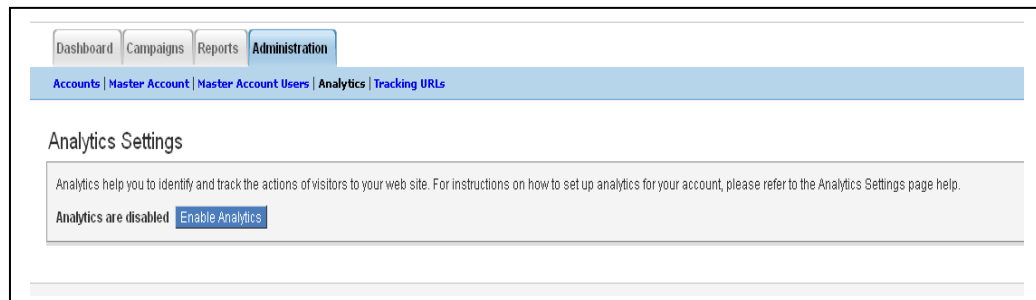


Figure 9

Several blogs and forums have covered this issue in part, mostly to highlight frustration with the lack of explanation from Yahoo! on this process. Many people came to Panama, saw that conversion tracking was disabled, and reacted quickly to turn this function back on. In doing so, they lost the ability to track conversions because they inadvertently activated a new tracking code snippet. Any new account created with Panama will automatically use the new conversion tracking code.

¹¹

<http://help22.marketingsolutions.yahoo.com/helpui/resources/content/us.market/content.source/en.language/16877.html#1>

Implementing Tracking URLs¹² will give any advertiser using an analytics program the ability to track click traffic with details such as search query, keyword, match type, and distribution tactic. This is a powerful tool for advertisers to optimize their Panama accounts for more relevant keywords and ad texts. This function can easily be activated from the Administration tab in the Panama interface.

Lack of Client Center

Within the SEM blogosphere, one of the biggest complaints¹³ about Panama has been the lack of a centralized “client center” similar to Google’s MCC. For search marketing firms who manage multiple clients, this is a major oversight that requires detailed manifests of login information.

This topic was discussed in a recent phone call with a member of YSM’s Platinum Team. Currently there is *no* functionality available to place multiple accounts (with separate billing information) under the same login information. When asked if this was a product feature that was in the pipeline, the support personnel did not have a definitive answer. The only bright side to this particular discussion was that if you do have multiple accounts within Panama that *share billing information*, then YES, it is possible to place these under a Master Account with a Master Login (a feature carried over from Overture). But these accounts must be billed together, not separately.

Local Search/Geo-Targeting

Utilizing geographical targeting within your campaign can be a helpful way to narrow your campaign’s scope. Panama’s Geo-Targeting tool has a few options to choose from. Geo-targeting is set up at the campaign level, which means if you set up a campaign to display ads in Illinois, all the ad groups within this campaign will display only in Illinois. If you want to display ads in Wisconsin as well, you’ll have to set up another campaign and geo-target those ad groups to Wisconsin. You may use the same keywords for each campaign, because they are distributed to different locales.

You have two options for setting your geo-targeting:

- state/province/territory targeting
- designated market area (DMA) targeting.

With regional targeting you can choose which state/province/territory will display your ads. This option allows you to choose cities, counties, or more specific areas.

DMAs, determined by Nielsen Media Research, basically break down states by metropolitan areas.

¹²

<http://help22.marketingsolutions.yahoo.com/helpui/resources/content/us.market/content.source/en.language/16897.html#1>

¹³ <http://forums.searchenginewatch.com/showthread.php?t=15882>

DMAs (Figure 10), determined by Nielson Media Research, basically break down states by metropolitan areas. This means if you choose to target Indianapolis, you focus on not only Indianapolis but its major metropolitan area as well. The coverage of DMAs differs from city to city.

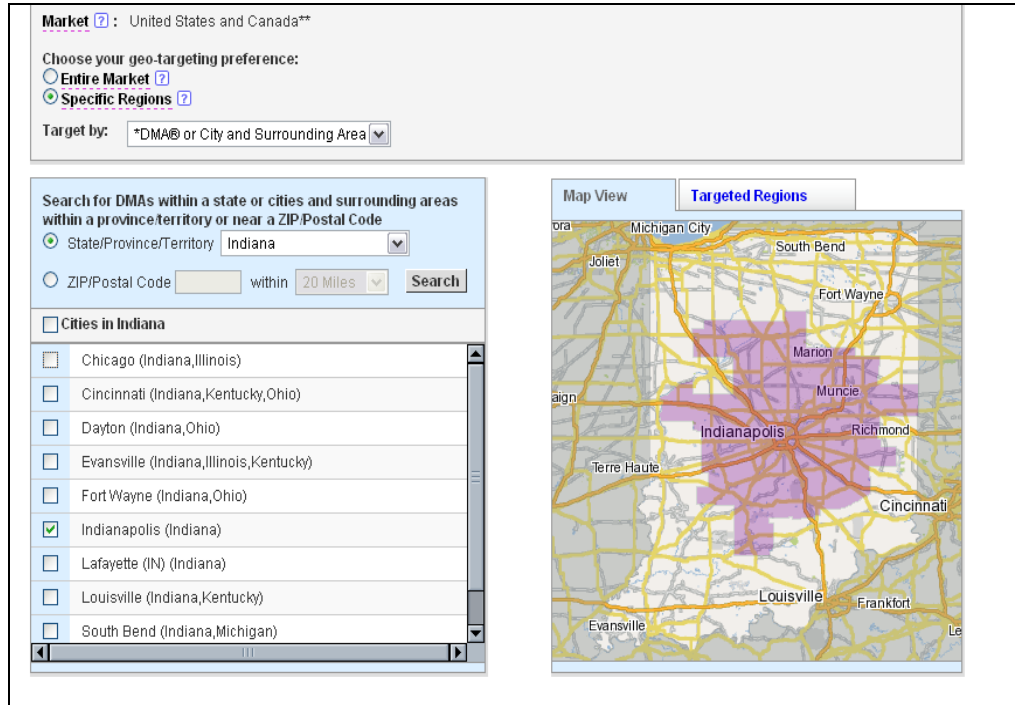


Figure 10

Account Performance

Ad Rank Quality Index

Yahoo! has been somewhat forthcoming with the definition of its quality index score. With a topic this sensitive, and still difficult to define, we thought we'd defer to the entry in Yahoo!'s help section¹⁴ to give you an idea of what they are looking for:

Overview

The quality index is a relative measure of how relevant an ad is. It reflects an ad's ability to meet the needs of users by taking into account various relevance factors and click-through rate compared to its position and other ads displayed at the same time. It also takes into account all keywords in your ad group.

¹⁴ http://help.yahoo.com/help/l/us/yahoo/ysm/sps/start/overview_qualityindex.html

Quality index is determined by:

1. The ad's expected performance — which is determined by various relevance factors considered by Yahoo!'s ranking algorithms.
2. The ad's historical performance — its click-through rate relative to its position on the page.

The quality index is a relative measure of how relevant an ad is.

You'll see the quality index represented by one to five bars — the more bars an ad has, the higher its quality. An ad's quality index may affect the amount you need to bid and the position in which your ad appears. Generally, ads with a higher quality index may require a lower bid to attain a position and/or may receive better placement on the page.

Benefits

- The quality index tells you which ads are effective and performing well, and which ads need attention. Ads with more bars are higher quality, and these may require a lower bid to attain a position, and/or they may receive better placement on the page.
- It also helps you focus your efforts on what matters most to your business — making your marketing messages effective.

How It Works

- Each ad's quality index is represented by one to five bars (more bars means higher quality).
- The quality index is updated daily.
- When you create a new ad, your quality index is initially based on various relevance factors for the keyword and ad. Please note that you may not see a quality index displayed in your account until the day after your first impression is recorded.
- As impressions and clicks accumulate, your click-through rate becomes a stronger factor in calculating your quality index.

Tips for Improving Your Quality Index

To help improve your quality index, focus on making your ads as compelling as possible (while keeping the ad relevant to the keyword and landing page) so that users will be more likely to click on them, thereby possibly increasing click-through rate.

Here are some tips to help improve your click-through rate:

- Create different versions of your ads and use ad testing to help you determine which ads perform best. Try testing different copy strategies, different offers, or different display URLs to see what works best.

- Look at the ads of your competitors. Are your ads as compelling? Is your offer as strong as it could be? Consider including a special offer in your ad to encourage users to click.
- Make sure that all the keywords in your ad group are highly relevant to the ads and geographic settings for which they are displayed. For example, if one or more keywords in your ad group are not performing well, consider moving those keywords into another ad group and writing ads that are highly relevant to those keywords.
- For best results, be sure to include your keyword in the title and description of your ad. Use the Insert Keyword feature to help you do that automatically.
- If you are using the Advanced match type distribution tactic, use the Excluded Words feature to block certain searches that you believe will not apply to your products or services, which can help keep your results relevant and focus your budget on the most likely customers.

For example, imagine a user is searching for “televisions.” Here is an ad that might receive a high quality index:

[Televisions from Electronics Planet](#)

Plasma, flat screen, HDTV and more. Free shipping on select models of televisions.

www.electronics-planet.com

Here is an example of an ad that might receive a low quality index:

[Super Hot Savings](#)

Hot deals on the best of the best! Click here for savings!

www.electronics-planet.com

Screen from user interface is subject to change.



Figure 11

Any changes you make to your ad can start impacting your quality index (Figure 11) right away. As more impressions are generated over time, the overall effect on your quality index should more accurately reflect your changes.

We have learned that it is in your best interest to migrate as soon as possible. (Most of you who are reading this probably have already migrated).

Those campaigns that have not yet migrated to Panama are at a slight disadvantage when competing against campaigns currently running within the new interface. Campaigns within the new interface are accruing a performance history that directly feeds into the ad rank algorithm. As we have stated, the ad rank algorithm is determined by the bid and ad rank score, and campaigns within the old interface are missing half of the formula: they have the bid, but they do not have a campaign performance history. This ad rank deficiency can negatively affect your ad rank and your cost-per-click.

Also, while you're still mastering the Yahoo! Quality Index Score we suggest that you take what is working well with your Google AdWords account and apply that information to your Panama account. This tip refers to ad group structure and ad text. The Yahoo! and Google quality scores are not the same, but what is relevant in Google's eyes should be relevant in Yahoo!'s eyes as well.

The Yahoo! and Google quality scores are not the same, but what is relevant in Google's eyes should be relevant in Yahoo!'s eyes as well.

To be honest, we have not noticed any outstanding negative effects on our campaigns due to the new Quality Score Index. A few of our clients are actually performing better since the new algorithm was instituted. In general the first impression within the SEM blogosphere has been rather positive as well.

However, if your account is not performing as well as you would like, Yahoo! has published a series of informative pages within their help section to give you some tips on how to optimize your account. Thus far the

series has been divided into four parts:

Part One: The Equalizer¹⁵

Part Two: Finding the Right Message for Your Customers with Ad Testing¹⁶

Part Three: Using the Insert Keyword Feature¹⁷

Part Four: Structure Matters¹⁸

¹⁵ <http://www.y SMBlog.com/blog/page/2/>

¹⁶ <http://www.y SMBlog.com/blog/2007/02/10/improving-ad-quality-part-ii/>

¹⁷ <http://www.y SMBlog.com/blog/2007/02/15/improving-ad-quality-part-iii/>

¹⁸ <http://www.y SMBlog.com/blog/2007/02/21/improving-ad-quality-part-iv/>

Conclusion

Panama is changing the tide of paid search marketing, and we are doing our best to ride this wave. We believe in Panama and we believe this new interface is a significant step forward for Yahoo! and search marketers. As stated in the official Panama press release on May, 8, 2006, future versions of Panama will include additional distribution options and audience targeting based on factors that could include demographic information or online behavior, as well as additional ad formats enhanced with graphics or rich media. For now we are just trying to master the initial interface, but as Panama continues to grow and mature, it will become more diverse in its functions and more viable for search marketing success.

A Yahoo! customer service representative told us that right now Yahoo! is focusing their energy and efforts on getting accounts migrated into the new system. They are taking feedback and suggestions from all customers. With this feedback they will begin working on improving the Panama system to meet customer needs and requests.

As stated in the introduction, this handbook is not an exhaustive study of Panama, but we hope this document culls together some useful information, as well as our experience with the new interface, into a single helpful document. We'll be updating *Welcome to the Panama Jungle* as more features are added, quirks are fixed, and we gain more experience with the new interface.