# Ad testing in a multi-format world of responsive search ads, three headlines and more

Text ad testing has been thrown for a loop with the introduction of responsive search ads and the addition of ability to tack on a third headline and second description line to what are already called enhanced text ads. (Do we call them extended enhanced text ads?)

With so many variables and unknowns about how the ads will display, not to mention incomplete reporting, it can be hard to know if any of these new formats are working better than your existing enhanced text ads. Later this month, at SMX West in San Jose, CA, Brad Geddes, founder of ad testing platform AdAlysis, and Cara deBeer, paid search director at digital agency Catalyst, will share insights gained in their experience with responsive search ads (RSAs) so far. They'll also provide advice on how to test and evaluate performance when you blend formats in ad groups.

Geddes has been working in search advertising since the beginning. Looking ahead to his talk, I asked him about what these changes mean for ad testing strategies and what search marketers should be doing in response to Google's efforts to shake up text ads.

Brad Geddes, Co-Founder, AdAlysis and author of Advanced Google AdWords, will be speaking at SMX West about ad testing.

## Ad testing for text ads is becoming more complex with the introduction of additional titles and descriptions and RSAs. At a high level, what do these changes mean

## for ad testing? Is it still possible?

At the moment, Google doesn't give any conversion stats with regards to how RSAs appeared. That means you can't examine an RSA's data to create your top combinations of ETAs. Until Google does show that data, ad testing will not change much. Once that happens, this will be like using DSAs to mine for keywords. You'll use RSAs to mine for your ETA combinations to test.

You can test RSAs vs ETAs (hint: there is a clear winner and it's not what Google wants you to think) to see how the overall formats are doing.

## Where do you see text ads evolving in the coming year?

I don't think we're going to see a huge change in the next year outside of the possibility of using RSA to find potential combinations. Google's automated ads never took off. They aren't doing great with RSAs; so, for the foreseeable future, humans just beat computers at creatives and that's not going to change anytime soon.

## Is there anything search marketers can or should be doing to prepare for what might be coming?

Most marketers don't test ETAs well to begin with. Most accounts rarely test or have a strategy in place on how to test, read results, and keep track of results. So most accounts are better off putting a firm strategy into place with how they manage ETAs. For those doing that already have a

strategy, they should just keep on doing what they are doing right now.

*Geddes and deBeer will share their extensive experience in ad testing in their presentations at SMX West. To hear their valuable insights (and download their slides as a key takeaway) be sure to attend our SMX West conference in San Jose January 30-31, 2019.*

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## About The Author

Ginny Marvin is Third Door Media's Editor-in-Chief, managing day-to-day editorial operations across all of our publications. Ginny writes about paid online marketing topics including paid search, paid social, display and retargeting for Search Engine Land, Marketing Land and MarTech Today. With more than 15 years of marketing experience, she has held both in-house and agency management positions. She can be found on Twitter as @ginnymarvin.
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