Ask An SEO: Does Dwell Time After Google Ad Clicks Impact Organic Rankings? via @sejournal, @rollerblader

Lalindra from Ontario asks:

> *"Does the dwell time and user engagement after clicking on Google Ads impact search engine rankings? If yes, since when has this been in effect?"*

That is a really good question! It goes along the common myth of PPC impacting SEO, where the more you spend, the better your SEO is.

In theory, no, clicking a PPC ad and dwelling probably won't impact your SEO – positively or negatively. It will impact your budget if Google Ads assumes it was a legit click and visitor. But, if Google thinks it is a fraud click, you might not be billed for it.

Does PPC Spend And Click Help Boost SEO?

For years, some agencies and in-house SEO professionals have claimed that spending more on PPC increases SEO presence and visibility.

The Google leak, combined with the DOJ trial, fueled these rumors even further. But, the idea that higher PPC spend improves your SEO is a myth, not a fact.

This applies even more to a few users clicking and then dwelling. A single user or small group is likely not a large enough audience to cause any form of signal about the page's user experience.

Google deals with massive data sets and volumes, so a few clicks, even a couple hundred, is likely not enough to signal page quality. For the same amount of time and money, you could likely get media coverage, which would move the needle further.

That said, there could be some potential for increased visibility if PPC clicks lead to actions that suggest a positive user experience like dwelling, scrolling, and engagement.

For example, there are theories that started from the Google leak and DOJ trial about "navboost" and "glue."

I wrote about a possible scenario based on a video from Cindy Krum and explanations from Marie Haynes on my blog where, if these are true, then a browser extension for shopping that is used by a large enough amount of people could potentially impact rankings.

Could PPC Campaigns With High Volume Of Traffic Impact Rankings?

If you are sending massive volumes of PPC traffic to a blog post or product page from a specific keyword phrase, and Google does not associate them with a PPC click, the reaction of the traffic could in theory work with dwell time.

This would also require the browser to track both the query searched and dwell time while ignoring the factor that it was a click from PPC.

The browser would also need to feed the data back to the core

SEO algorithm, say that the PPC click experience was relevant for a query, and give it a priority for SEO.

In this scenario, it can be assumed that Google Ads and Google SEO are working together – but they likely are not.

I think they play with the interface and queries, as well as recommendations to boost profits, but I don't think the PPC team has control over SEO results – just a personal opinion.

If Google Ads sent signals for Google SEO, you wouldn't see smaller brands and new sites rank, you would see the big brands who are spending the most money. Type "t-shirts" into Google. You likely won't see big brands like Target, Walmart, Macy's, etc. dominate organic search results.

If big brands spent big money, and the PPC algorithm fed this into SEO, it would be their golden opportunity to generate a large traffic volume.

By losing some money on PPC for a generic term, they get the big prize of organic SEO traffic.

If it were that easy, there would be no SEO industry because the big brands could simply buy their way to the top.

But small companies can still compete and win. We have clients in highly competitive niches who can move quickly because they are not tied up in red tape needing to negotiate layers of approval. This means they are responsive, can act on the fly and beat major brands

When Can PPC Support SEO?

So, what could be true here? If you spend money building a brand via PPC and the traffic is relevant and coming in volumes, users may start searching for your brand by name or brand + modifier, e.g., "[Your Brand] T-shirts."

If your domain already has trust and authority and now has a significant volume of people looking for your t-shirts because of a viral social media video and your large spending on PPC ads, the SEO algorithm may pick up this demand.

This means that users are actively saying “your brand has these, so please show it to us”. If the search engine does not show it to them, they go to a different search engine or may try a large language model (LLM) to search.

I have seen this happen firsthand – that the algorithm starts sending traffic for generic phrases in these scenarios. It was especially true when I worked in the infomercial product space.

As users naturally began searching for the product type alongside a brand or domain name, websites started showing up for non-branded phrases in search results.

You may have a product such as a mop or broom, something that waters plants, or a blanket that is going viral. As your product takes off, signalling this is the product brand users want, the generic search can trigger your product and website as the best result.

This helps it climb up (along with quality backlinks, media coverage, and social media chatter) and rank for the generic phrase.

If you have the budget to build virality through PPC, it could potentially help your SEO if it results in a large number of people from all over searching for your brand + product.

But, it isn’t the dwell time that is helping; it’s the actual queries being searched via SEO because of the virality.

But once the trend wears off, you have to do real SEO work to keep it.

I could also see this working for larger purchases that

require multiple website visits, such as real estate, luxury vacations, mattresses and furniture, etc.

Bottom Line

In short, no, clicking your own PPC ad and dwelling won't help your SEO.

You'd have to do it at large volumes and make it appear to be unique users, all having a good experience.

But, running large-scale PPC campaigns that generate branded searches and repeat visits could help send signals that influence Google's algorithm to test your website for similar phrases.

I hope this answers your question. The only way to know is to test; if you do, I'd love to see the results.

More Resources:

Featured Image: Damir Khabirov/Shutterstock

https://www.searchenginejournal.com/ask-an-seo-does-dwell-time-after-google-ads-click-impact-ranking/538891/