

Google Announces Largest Ads Bidding Update In Over A Decade via @sejournal, @brookeosmundson

PPC bidding just got a lot more interesting.

Just announced at Google Marketing Live, Google is launching Smart Bidding Exploration, a new opt-in feature designed to help advertisers capture more conversions from their existing campaigns.

This update marks one of the most significant changes to Google Ads bidding over a decade.

This isn't a cosmetic update or a tweak to an existing bidding model.

It's a fundamental shift in how Google allows advertisers to find value in queries they've likely been overlooking.

If you're focused on maximizing ROAS or sticking tightly to past performance data, this is one update worth paying attention to.

How Does Smart Bidding Exploration Work?

Smart Bidding Exploration works within the bounds of your existing campaign structure.

It doesn't expand your audience targeting or broaden your

keyword strategy (no pun intended).

Instead, it allows the bidding algorithm to more aggressively pursue opportunities you were eligible for, particularly on Broad match and Dynamic Search Ads (DSA) campaigns.

But, there is a catch for using it: you'll need to allow some flexibility in your ROAS targets to use it.

Advertisers can opt into Smart Bidding Exploration by giving Google permission to bid below their typical ROAS threshold, generally in the 10-30% range.

That means Google may raise your bids on certain queries if its AI systems determine those queries could convert at a healthy volume and cost.

Smart Bidding Exploration is a different approach to just adjusting ROAS targets across the board at the campaign level. In fact, constantly adjusting ROAS targets could cause more volatility in performance instead of improving it.

Instead, Smart Bidding Exploration fine-tunes bidding for queries that would otherwise be filtered out.

What You Can Expect From Reporting

While advertisers won't see a detailed breakout of every new search query due to privacy threshold, Google is giving visibility into the **impact** of Smart Bidding Exploration through the Bid Strategy report.

You'll be able to track:

- The number of unique search categories generating impressions and conversions
- How much traffic came from these categories
- The volume of new conversions compared to your baseline

While the reporting is currently aggregate, Google is looking

for more granular visibility on the roadmap.

The feature is also compatible with Drafts & Experiments, so you can run clean A/B tests to isolate results.

Support for Portfolio Bid Strategies is included at launch, and SA360 support is expected soon.

Why Should Advertisers Test This?

For marketers managing Search campaigns that have stalled in growth or seem overly narrow in scope, this could be a solid way to unlock additional conversions.

The feature offers a way to capture more conversions without blowing up campaign structure or budget.

Additionally, this feature is **not** changing your audience targeting. That's an important distinction.

For example, Optimized Targeting on Display or Demand Gen actively expands who sees your ads.

Smart Bidding Exploration doesn't do that. It keeps your targeting exactly as is, but unlocks the potential to show up for queries you wouldn't have previously been eligible to show for, all within your existing targeting.

If you're running campaigns that are too tightly bound by a strict ROAS target, you may be unintentionally capping performance.

Smart Bidding Exploration is a way to loosen those constraints just enough to let Google's AI find opportunities you didn't realize were there.

What This Signals From Google

Smart Bidding Exploration is more than just a new feature

toggle.

It's a fundamental shift in how we think about conversion opportunity within Google Ads.

Marketers are often pushed to optimize for what they already know works, especially under pressure to hit ROAS or CPA goals. But that approach can keep you from capturing the full value of the market.

With Smart Bidding Exploration, Google seems to be nudging advertisers to stop optimizing for comfort and start optimizing for growth.

<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/google-announces-largest-ads-bidding-update-in-over-a-decade/547249/>