

Google gives search advertisers more transparency

Article

The news: Google is giving advertisers greater control and visibility over where their search ads are placed, per Ad Age.

- Beginning on March 4, the company will let advertisers access impression-level data about sites where their ads appeared on as part of **Performance Max** campaigns—[a popular](#)

[campaign format](#) on Google that was launched in 2021 and is now a testing ground for [cutting-edge AI features](#).

The change comes after industry activist **Adalytics** [published a report in November](#) that found Google ads were appearing on sites hosting pornography, pirated material, and in countries sanctioned by the US.

The Adalytics effect: The move from Google will offer a new level of transparency to advertisers buying search placements and is the second step Google has taken to address the November Adalytics report.

- In December, Google allowed Performance Max advertisers to opt out of placing ads on “search partner” sites after the Adalytics report found that its partner vetting processes were letting problematic sites slip through the cracks.
- That’s two measures to address one report—but that wasn’t the only report Adalytics published. The industry activist group, led by Krzysztof Franaszek, [published a flurry of reports](#) on Google’s ad business in the second half of 2023 with a list of allegations, including improper video ad placements, improper tracking of childrens’ data, and more.
- Google claimed those reports contained significant errors, and [subsequent investigations from industry groups](#) found that Adalytics had somewhat overstated some of its findings—but there was still truth to them. More importantly, Adalytics’ work significantly affected advertiser sentiment toward Google, forcing the ad giant to respond.
- Google [quietly issued refunds](#) to advertisers who had their video ads placed on low-quality partner sites and [joined calls to ban advertising to minors](#) (with some caveats) in October.

Our take: Adalytics’ reports revealed an underlying advertiser discontent with Google that the company now has to address. The company’s enormous market share means advertisers often have to commit advertising spend or risk losing out to competitors. Now, with the industry clamoring after a series of reports, the company is moving in historic fashion to increase transparency for advertisers.

Meta and Google Share of US Total Political Ad Spending, 2024

% of total political ad spending

Meta	4.6%
Google	4.5%

Note: includes advertising related to federal, state, or local politics, including elections and lobbying activities; includes advertising directly related to legislative and regulatory issues
Source: Insider Intelligence | eMarketer Forecast, Jan 2024

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