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## Editorial

This is going to be a great year for Free Pint, I just know it. There was a lot of development work on the site last year, and this continues as we work to enhance the site even further. Watch out for new announcements soon about site search, interacting with the Bar by category, enhancements to our UK company research gateway and Free Pint Jobs. We are also working on ways of getting Free Pinters together (both online and offline) to share experiences, so look out for that too.

All these improvements explain why I know it's going to be a great year. Therefore, we don't need to focus on the fact that I have a big 'decade' birthday tomorrow. I'm not telling you which one it is, but hey, you're all researchers so you find out.

We're still regularly asked how Free Pint is funded. A good proportion of our income comes from advertising and sponsorship. It's great to have a number of annual advertisers, including Factiva, Esmerk, Nerac and MarketResearch.com, and of course all the job recruiters. We sold a lot of individual adverts in the January Sale too, and they've each received a bonus 50,000 banner exposures on the Web site.

So, if you respond to an advert, either here in the newsletter or by clicking on a banner on the Web site, then do let the advertiser know that you saw them in Free Pint. It gives them valuable feedback and means that we can continue to provide this service to you for free.

There's loads of good stuff in today's

newsletter. We look at business information in Germany, paying to get your site listed in the search engines, and loads of other site tips, news and happenings at the Bar.

If you enjoy today's edition then do pass it on. We're nearly at the 50,000 subscriber milestone. Make sure you visit the Web site too as there's plenty of great stuff there  
<<http://www.freepint.com>>.

Regards  
William

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## Online Version with Activated Hyperlinks

<[http://www.freepint.com/  
issues/070202.htm](http://www.freepint.com/issues/070202.htm)>

## Adobe Acrobat Version with Newsletter Formatting

<[http://www.freepint.com/  
issues/070202.pdf](http://www.freepint.com/issues/070202.pdf)>

## About Free Pint

Free Pint is an online community of information researchers. Members receive this free newsletter every two weeks packed with tips on finding quality and reliable business information on the Internet.

Joining is free at <<http://www.freepint.com/>> and provides access to the substantial archive of articles, book reviews, jobs, industry news & events, with answers to your research questions and networking at the Free Pint Bars. Free Pint Regulars (paid-up members) also receive a weekly current awareness newsletter, discounts and publicity.

Please circulate this newsletter which is best read when printed out.

To receive the Adobe Acrobat version as an attachment or a brief notification it's online, visit <<http://www.freepint.com/subs>>.

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<<http://www.freepint.com/bulk/>>

"I would recommend the list hosting system to anyone who runs an internet newsletter." ActNow.org.uk

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## My Favourite Tipples from Robert Berkman

Some of my favorite free business research sites on the Web:

- [http://seitti.funet.fi:5000/etusivu\\_en.html](http://seitti.funet.fi:5000/etusivu_en.html) - If you're looking for sources of official statistics around the globe, my favorite site is the searchable database created by Library Statistics of Finland.
- <http://www.globalarchive.ft.com/> - It's very hard to find a free substantive searchable archive of news on the Web, but a real find is FT's Total Search Global Archive.
- <http://bubl.ac.uk/link/countries.html> - Impossible to catalog the Web? Not here - BUBL Country Studies has identified, described and catalogued the best country information sites on the Web.
- <http://marketguide.com/screen/Screen.asp> - Market Guide Screening lets you identify companies by a very specific type of criteria; e.g. their earnings, valuation, and dozens more.
- <http://typewriter.rydia.net/> - Since I do have a life outside of business research, I also like collecting antique typewriters - a favorite site is the virtual typewriter museum.

Robert Berkman  
<[bberkman@findsvp.com](mailto:bberkman@findsvp.com)> is Editor of The Information Advisor a newsletter for business researchers  
<<http://www.informationadvisor.com>>  
and the Best of The Business Web  
<<http://www.bestbizweb.com>> free E-letter.

Tell us about your top five favourite Web sites. Email [simon@freepint.com](mailto:simon@freepint.com)

## Free Pint Gold

This time last year we introduced ADSL, something we wouldn't be without in the Free Pint office. There was also an overview of eBooks, with discussion of the problems and a road test of various 'reader' software.

- Free Pint No.80, 1st February 2001. "An adventure in ADSL: the Superhighway finally becomes 'super?'" and "E-Books"  
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/010201.htm>>

Two years ago, Martin White supplied a selection of his favourite classical music portal sites. There was also a very good article on finding good market researchers.

- Free Pint No.55, 3rd February 2000. "Classical Music Web Sites" and "Researching the Researchers - Finding Market Research Agencies on the Web"  
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/030200.htm>>

In 1999 there was a personal account of using the Web as a free resource for working as a researcher at home. A range of resources were highlighted too for the so-called "Silver Surfer".

- Free Pint No.31, 4th February 1999. "Researching from home" and "Internet Resources for Seniors"  
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/040299.htm>>

Four years ago, Free Pint's William gave some tips on reformatting information you find on the Web. The packed feature article, written by last year's "Information Professional of the

Year" Roddy MacLeod, introduced a wide range of resources of interest to engineers.

- Free Pint No.7, 5th February 1998. "Fabricating Information" and "Engineering resources: examples and sources"  
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/050298.htm>>

## Free Pint Fact

It is widely known that there are a number of 'Quick Jump' boxes around the Free Pint site enabling you to jump straight to a particular entry in a part of the site. But there is also the 'Go' facility which is a short URL "http://www.freepint.com/go/" followed by a letter and number, which does the same thing.

The letter can be one of the following:

e = Event  
b = Bar posting  
s = Student Bar posting  
j = Job listing  
r = Regular entry  
p = Portal category

So, for instance, to view posting 15880 at the Free Pint Bar you would use  
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b15880>> or to see entry 1597 in Free Pint Jobs you would use  
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1597>>.

## Glen Recruitment

Glen Recruitment is a leading independent Employment Consultancy dealing in the recruitment of Information Specialists, Knowledge Professionals, Business Analysts, Researchers and Librarians.

We provide both permanent and temporary staff at all levels from senior managers to recent graduates. Our client list could not be more exceptional and includes prestigious organisations of all sizes. For more details call 020 7745 7245 email [info@glenrecruitment.co.uk](mailto:info@glenrecruitment.co.uk)

**Free Pint Bar**  
**In Association with Factiva**  
**a Dow Jones & Reuters Company**  
**Reviewed by Simon Coltery**

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/070202.htm#bar>>

**Free Pint Bar** <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>

[Note: To read a posting enter the message number in place of XXXXX in the address  
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/bXXXXX>>]

The lion's share of postings in the last few weeks have been from Free Pinters researching all sorts of industry and issue. There have been queries about serial indexing (15387), designing user documentation (15486), courses in knowledge management (15544), customer relations (15405), food price inflation (15509) and learning management systems (15324).

Questions about moving from profit to non-profit (15415), fundraising software (15398), the pharmaceutical industry (15427), the UK pub industry (15490) and feminism in women's magazines (15469) have all been dealt with.

But we are still holding out for answers to postings about training exercises (15353), consumer electronics sales figures (15417), ebooks for information professionals (15508) and standards for academic libraries that specify the ideal ratio of staff to student (15562).

There were also several business related matters that have not yet received any attention. We'd love to hear from you if you can help out with predicted music industry figures (15374), business plans for charities (15414), leasing office equipment (15550), email list providers (15348), renewal contracts for information products (15495), a list of business managers in UK banks (15499) and the name of a small business service that sends out reminders about taxes deadlines, new legislation, etc. (15320).

We've had the usual wealth of recommended resources covering free downloads (15521), sources of management tips and quotes (15419), a list of UK quangos (15335), good information newsletters (15288), free access to databases (15311), amendments to UK government documents (15453) and Chinese mobile telecoms data (15361).

You'll also find reviews of a great online reference resource (15406), a news portal (15566), and the Tallis library management system (15317) in the Bar. And the latest edition of the Internet Resources Newsletter is out. It lists some of the best sites, portals, articles and tools on the Web (15505).

Money matters have been on the agenda too, with postings about rates for freelancers (15510), database information pricing (15540), academic library budgeting (15470), sources of merger and acquisition data (15587), a multilingual finance dictionary (15507) and Merton's strain theory as applied to tax avoidance (15590).

As usual, there have been lots of techie questions on matters such as changing the mouse pointer in Access (15442), speeding up a really slow PC (15586), reopening Excel books (15330), working out some Access

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UK Individual Director Reports were only launched in October, but now account for one in three of all report sales by Free Pint. If you want to find out more about a UK company director then there's no better way for only 8 pounds plus VAT.

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<<http://www.freepint.com/icc/sample>>

syntax (15452), exporting an email list to and from Excel (15423, 15573), replacing ISDN lines (15482), using a mobile modem (15564), sending photos by email (15359) and the name of a digital image file extension program (15466).

Quite a number of software matters have been raised too. Free Pinters have been looking for applications for disabled users (15369), library management tools (15533), Usenet message viewers (15481), help with SSPS (15511), Web based storage space (15340), synchronizing online and offline favourites (15408), Web authoring packages that include a database (15506), reading MS Publisher files (15516) and site search tools (15379).

Finally, there have been miscellaneous postings about standards for document version numbering (15532), electronic point of sale equipment (15297), hiring a room fitted with a large number of computers (15504), recycling old computers (15457), wine ageing charts (15318), deciphering equipment component numbers (15458), details of a UK student magazine called Cake (15298) and finding a copy of Disraeli's 1872 Manchester speech (15347).

**Free Pint Student Bar**

<<http://www.freepint.com/student>>

[Note: To read a posting enter the message number in place of XXXX in the address  
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/sXXXX>>]

A Free Pint Student has been looking into people's reasons for choosing to study librarianship and information studies, what their background is, how they've got on so far, etc. (2164). This posting has received some very interesting responses. Perhaps you'd like to add your own experiences?

Other students have been researching library collection development policies (2148), the effects of information communication technologies on employment (2154), library budgeting formulae (2160) and the Resource Discovery Network's Virtual Training Suite (2161).

There were also questions about choosing a course in information science (2145) and finding set books for an Open University course (2163).

Simon Coltery, Content Developer  
<[simon@freepint.com](mailto:simon@freepint.com)>

If you have a tricky research question or can help other Free Pinters then do post a message at the Bar.

### The Factiva Advantage

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### Free Pint Jobs

[<http://www.freepint.com/jobs>](http://www.freepint.com/jobs)

As well as the listings below, you might also like to check out the new weekly Bar posting which lists the latest additions to Free Pint Jobs. This week's edition is at [<http://www.freepint.com/go/b15580>](http://www.freepint.com/go/b15580).

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

#### Researcher

[<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1564>](http://www.freepint.com/go/j1564)

Provision of a research and KM service to external clients and internal business development in a consultancy environment.

Recruiter: Recruit Media Ltd

#### Research/Analyst Telecoms

[<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1603>](http://www.freepint.com/go/j1603)

Suit young, confident person to perform research (desk and field) for top Business Information organisation.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

#### Finance Cataloguer - Scotland

[<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1597>](http://www.freepint.com/go/j1597)

Coding, cataloguing & bar-coding wizz? Experience of technical or financial/legal data sets? Well paid contracts available in Edinburgh

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited

[The above jobs are paid listings]

Free Pint Jobs is THE place for information-related vacancies. Whether you're job searching or have a position to fill, you should be using Free Pint Jobs.

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Find out more today at [<http://www.freepint.com/jobs>](http://www.freepint.com/jobs)

### Have it your way at the Bar

Did you know that you can totally personalise the way the Free Pint Bar looks by setting your own options?

Choose the time frame, the number of messages per page, the format of dates, etc., etc. Just click on "Preferences". If you're logged in, then it will even remember your settings the next time you visit:

[<http://www.freepint.com/bar>](http://www.freepint.com/bar)

### Events

[<http://www.freepint.com/events>](http://www.freepint.com/events)

You won't be short of things to do if you want to visit some top quality information-related conferences in March.

In the UK, the Association of UK Media Librarians (AUKML) have their annual conference in Liverpool. The University of Glasgow are organising the "1st International Conference on IT & Information Literacy (ITIL 2002)" to talk about "... the preparation of individuals to be effective information-users ...".

Information Today Inc. are busy with their fourth annual "Internet Librarian International" in London. They also have "Computers in Libraries" in Washington, DC, and the "InfoToday" conference in New York.

Also Stateside, the Association of Dissemination and Information Centers (ASIDIC) have their Spring Meeting in St. Augustine, Florida looking at the survivors of the short-lived dot.com era.

Whilst back in Europe, TFPL'S European Business Information Conference (EBIC) takes place in Madrid, Spain, and "Benchmarking your Taxonomy System" from Arkgroup looks at the taxonomies in use in a number of intranets, in Brussels, Belgium.

Details of these and many other conferences and exhibitions in the information industry can be found on the Free Pint Events page [<http://www.freepint.com/events>](http://www.freepint.com/events).

Submit details of your event for free promotion, and keep us informed about any changes to current listings.

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#### Directions and maps:

[<http://www.freepint.com/contact.htm>](http://www.freepint.com/contact.htm)

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**Free Pint Bookshelf**<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>**"The Quintessential Searcher: The Wit and Wisdom of Barbara Quint"  
Edited by Marylaine Block  
Reviewed by Caryn Wesner-Early**

When word spread through the information community that this book was forthcoming, the general response was "About time!". After years spent reading the pithy words of bq (as Barbara Quint is known to her fans), everyone was pleased that someone had finally shown up to organize them so that they can be found when needed. With such sterling source material, the only thing that could have ruined this book would have been bad editing.

Luckily, Marylaine Block is a very good editor. Her introductory comments explain, for the benefit of any benighted information professional who hasn't heard of bq, who she is and why this book was compiled. Editorial comments among the selections from Quint's writing are brief and only inserted when necessary to establish context. She has given us some (not all - that would make a much larger book than practical) of the best of Barbara Quint, in a very accessible format.

For those aforementioned benighted souls, Barbara Quint is one of the best-known writers and editors in the library world. She has written for and/or edited professional publications such as Information Today, the Wilson Library Bulletin, and Database Searcher, and currently edits Searcher. Her editorials and articles are usually the first items turned to when a new issue is received, and probably the most often recommended to colleagues as well. She was one of the founding members of the famous SCOUG (Southern California Online Users' Group), one of the first organizations to bring together information professionals on all sides of information product production, sales, and use.

Anyone who often makes speeches or presentations, or who writes on information-related subjects, will want to keep this book right next to Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, where it will probably be used more often than that venerable work. Quint is Grand Mistress of the mot juste, what we would have said if we could have thought of it in time. Especially on the subject of database vendors, she says what needs to be said, and says it well.

This is a good book, too, for anyone who does database searching regularly. Without giving specific how-tos, Quint sometimes shines a new light on the act of database searching. While reading this book, I was working on a rather involved search myself, and got some ideas on new places to look for what I needed. Reading this book and thinking about bq's ideas feels a lot like brainstorming.

There will probably be a run on The Quintessential Searcher this spring, as information people welcome new graduates to our ranks. This will make a very good graduation present for someone finishing an MLS or related program. It would also be a good gift for someone just starting out in a library program, to help them keep a realistic concept of library and information services. Barbara Quint pulls no punches about what is idiotic about information services and products, but serves up the bad with the good in grand style.

As Mick O'Leary said in Link-Up, "What Clapton is to the guitar, what Jordan is to the court, Barbara Quint is to online searching - the pro the other pros admire." (p. 198). Just buy the book.

Caryn Wesner-Early is a librarian interested in writing and the Internet. She maintains a Web site at <http://home.dencity.com/CarynW>

**Studying for an information-related qualification?**

Whether you're considering the options or have already enrolled on an information-related course, the Free Pint Student Bar will help.

Recently there's been help with a library management assignment, a survey of why people choose librarianship, and discussion of the options for a distance learning masters in information science.

Shouldn't you or your students be using the Student Bar?  
<<http://www.freepint.com/student>>

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## Tips Article

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/070202.htm#tips>>

### "Business Information in Germany" By David Scrimgeour

When it comes to gathering business information the main issues are usually cost and quality. When seeking out relevant information on the German market the language aspect will probably impact on the cost of the information, i.e., translation may be required. And the sheer size of the market can complicate the process of identifying quality information. The good news for non-German companies is that there is no shortage of good quality information on the German market. The bad news is that very little of it is available in English. Indeed it has been said that it is easier to get English language information on China!

The main sources of information can be broken down into 4 broad categories; Market Research, Databases, Government & Public Sources and Business Intelligence.

#### Market Research

Assuming that you are not doing this yourself - often the best option but requires specialist resources - then the basic choice is between high cost, low quality or the middle way. All the main international management consultancy and market research organisations have operations in Germany. There are also some home grown companies such as Roland Berger or Kienbaum Consultants. At the other end of the scale are the "Market Reports" prepared by staff at the British Consulates <<http://www.tradepartners.gov.uk>>. These can be good value as an initial overview but no more than that.

The best option is usually to identify a smaller, specialised consultancy which may also offer strategic input. However it is important to identify consultants who have experience of working with international clients. Using such an organisation you should be able to combine your knowledge of your own sector and markets with the information that they can provide on the local market. Two examples are RMM <<http://www.rmm.de>> and PbS <<http://www.pbs-ag.de/en>>.

#### Databases

These are numerous and serve a range of purposes. For example, Hoppenstedt <<http://www.hoppenstedt.de>> is a German Dun & Bradstreet (also available in Germany) with detailed information on companies including publicly available financial data. However one should be aware that the disclosure requirements for unlisted companies are less stringent than in the UK. This regulatory difference is especially important when one is researching the market for a joint venture or an acquisition. As a result you will need support on the ground for this type of search.

In order to check on the financial health of suppliers or customers Credit Reform <<http://www.konstanz-creditreform.de>> is the main source. This database is accessed through an accountant or lawyer. In addition there are now plenty of online databases, sometimes connected to a publishing house, where one can pay for a period of access or for the downloading of specific information e.g. <<http://www.genios.de/english/index.html>> or <<http://engl.gbi.de/index.htm>>.

## It's expensive filling information-related vacancies

Whether you advertise in the press or use a recruitment agency, it costs a lot of money to recruit someone for your vacancy.

A listing in Free Pint Jobs however costs just 195 pounds and is also promoted in the newsletter to 46,000 information researchers.  
<<http://www.freepint.com/jobs>>

#### Government and Public Sources

There is a wealth of general and sector-specific economic data available from banks e.g. <<http://www.db.com>> and government organisations e.g. <<http://www.german-embassy.org.uk>>. Such reports are often free but not always available in English. So, if the data looks useful, then it is worth considering having it translated. For translations into English always use a native English speaker.

The Chambers of Commerce (Handelskammer) <<http://www.ihk.de>> in Germany can be excellent sources of information and what they provide for their members can also be of use for incoming companies. The German government, through the Chambers, is generally supportive of links with foreign companies so it is worth asking what programmes are available - there may even be funding for market research.

Other good sources are the inward investment agencies. Each region (Land) and all the major cities have such an agency and the provision of information is part of their remit. Even if you are only considering establishing a sales office you will get help and, if you are planning a larger investment, financial assistance may also be on offer. In particular, the agency responsible for the eastern part of Germany has valuable data on different aspects of this regional economy <<http://www.iic.de>>.

Trade associations, of which there are hundreds, also produce sectoral studies. The best way to track down this type of material is using the web. However, English language content is rare on such sites so a German speaker is useful here.

#### Business Intelligence

In many instances the best, most up to date information can be gathered at trade fairs, conferences and from business partners and contacts. In terms of trade fairs there are the international events such as CeBIT and the Industrie Messe (both in Hannover) but there are also dozens of German fairs at locations across the country <<http://www.auma.de>>. Here you can get inside information from the salesmen, relaxing in the bar after a hard day on their feet, who like to show off their knowledge of the industry!

Conferences and seminars are undervalued as sources. Because the cost of attending is relatively high then the participants are usually senior managers and other decision-makers. In this case understanding and speaking German is a necessity. The German business press also offers a wide range of business information and some of this is now available online and in English, e.g. <<http://www.handelsblatt.com>>. An offline example is "German Brief", a fortnightly business news sheet published by FAZ (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung). There are also specialised search engines, such as <<http://paperball.fireball.de>> for searching the daily press.

With over 4 million .de websites, there are rich pickings on the German web. For example, press releases on corporate sites give information on company strategies, partners, etc. Also the larger companies may have their annual accounts available as downloads. In this way it is possible to build up a picture of the main players in a particular industry simply by surfing the Net. Search engines to use are either the German versions of players such as Google <<http://www.google.de>> and the German engines like Abacho <<http://www.crawler.de>> or MetaGer <<http://meta.rzrn.uni-hannover.de>>.

### Finally

Whatever your source of business information, and it is likely to be a combination of all four of the above categories, it is worth investing in a competent German researcher who could be a member of staff or an outsourced resource. If you are planning to be in business in Germany for the long term then this approach will certainly improve your research results and thereby speed up your successful entry into Europe's largest market.

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KS Consulting GmbH specialises in business advising for UK and other companies entering or expanding in the German market. David Scrimgeour, a Scots lawyer with over 11 years German experience in investment, business development, marketing and networking, has advised a range of private and public sector clients.

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### Feature Article

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#### "Pay Per Click Search Engines and Promoting your Website"

By Duncan Parry

Pay per click engines have been a hot topic of recent months amongst web marketers and search engine commentators, with popular search engines like Yahoo! and Lycos incorporating their results alongside their own. So how do pay per click engines work, and how can you use them to promote your website for a low cost?

### What are Pay Per Click Engines?

Conventional search engines send out spiders to gather information about websites and build the database of web pages used to serve up search results. This means that web designers must build web pages to achieve high rankings on search engines for relevant words - using meta tags, etc. - and adjust these for each engine. This takes time and costs money; and three months down the line competing websites may have moved up the search results, so the process has to start again.

Pay per click search engines take a different approach, and are aimed at commercial sites that have an advertising budget, big or small. Websites only appear in PPC search result for words and phrases relevant to the products/services they offer, with titles and descriptions they choose. Every time a user clicks on the website's link in search results, the website pays the PPC engine a small fee (starting around 5 pence) for the traffic. If several websites have chosen the same words, they can increase how much they are willing to pay to be at the top of search results - this is often referred to as bidding on keywords. This means the website only pays for relevant, targeted traffic it receives; and the searcher only gets relevant (mainly commercially orientated) search results to look at.

PPC engines employ editorial teams to ensure websites only bid on relevant search terms and use grammatically correct titles and descriptions that meet their style guidelines. Many offer online tools to help websites select the most relevant words, monitor traffic and improve their campaigns over time - and will write and manage campaigns for a fee.

The advantage of listing your website on PPC engines are two fold; firstly you only pay for the traffic you receive and secondly their results are used by many of the popular search engines you need to be promoting your website on. Often these are described as "sponsored listings" or "partner links". The "sponsored matches" on this page at Yahoo! UK are from the PPC engine Espotting, for example: <<http://uk.search.yahoo.com/search/ukie?p=travel&y=uk>>.

### Pay Per Click Engines and their Search Engine Partners

So who are the PPC engines, and which search engines use their results? Below are the main engines and their partners; most of them are also used on ISPs.

Europe

Espotting Media <<http://www.espotting.com/>>

Currently operates PPC engines for the UK, France and Germany, with plans to move into Spain and Italy.

Results used upon these engines in the UK:

Yahoo! UK <<http://www.yahoo.co.uk/>>  
Lycos UK <<http://www.lycos.co.uk/>>  
HotBot UK <<http://www.hotbot.co.uk/>>  
BTLookSmart UK <<http://www.looksmart.co.uk/>>  
Ask Jeeves UK <<http://www.ask.co.uk/>>  
UKPlus <<http://www.ukplus.co.uk/>>  
Netscape UK <<http://www.netscape.co.uk/>>

Overture (formerly GoTo) <<http://www.overture.com/uk/>>  
Currently operates USA, UK and German engines; believed to be planning moves into other European territories.

Search results used upon these engines in the UK:

Freeserve UK <<http://www.freeserve.co.uk/>>  
Ask Jeeves UK <<http://www.ask.co.uk/>>  
AltaVista UK <<http://www.altavista.co.uk/>>

Google UK <<http://www.google.co.uk/>>  
Currently, Google's "AdWords" PPC style advertising is only shown on their website; but press speculation suggests they will begin to offer them for incorporation into other websites.

Sprinks <<http://www.sprinks.com/>>  
Although mainly US focused, this PPC engine is owned by About.com, and provides some results that appear next to About's UK guides <<http://www.about.com/aboutuk/index.htm>>.

USA

Overture <<http://www.overture.com/>>  
The heavyweight of the US PPC scene, which started the business model off as GoTo.

Used on these US engines:

Yahoo! <<http://www.yahoo.com/>>  
AOL <<http://www.aol.com/>>  
AltaVista <<http://www.altavista.com/>>  
Lycos <<http://www.lycos.com/>>  
Netscape <<http://www.netscape.com/>>  
InfoSpace <<http://www.infospace.com/>>

Kanoodle <<http://www.kanoodle.com/>>

Used on:

Ask Jeeves <<http://www.ask.com/>>  
CNET <<http://www.cnet.com/>>  
Dogpile.com <<http://www.dogpile.com/>>  
NetZero <<http://www.netzero.com/>>  
Metacrawler <<http://www.metacrawler.com/>>  
Mamma.com <<http://www.mamma.com/>>

Google US <<http://www.google.com/>>  
Currently their own "AdWords" only appear at their websites; expect this to change.

Sprinks <<http://www.sprinks.com/>>  
Results used on About.com amongst others.

FindWhat <<http://www.findwhat.com/>>

### Promoting your website on PPC Engines

Each PPC engine has a different signup fee - some charge a registration fee, some don't but include a minimum spend in the signup cost. You can always add extra funds to your account or suspend certain words if you no longer want to receive traffic on them. Most will not make your words live straight away; instead they'll be reviewed by an editor first to ensure relevancy, correct grammar, etc.

### Writing your Campaigns

To write and manage your campaigns on PPC engines is easy, but there are some important points to note. The steps below will help you easily create campaigns that are highly targeted and easily maintained. From experience, I'd suggest you do this in a spreadsheet with a column for each campaign. This makes it easy to compare campaigns and copy text as you go along. Make sure you use the spellchecker, too.

1) Realise you should write a campaign for each page on your website that details a different product or service.

This will make it easy to manage your campaigns in the future; if you stop offering a product or service, you can just remove the campaign for that item. If you create one campaign covering everything, you'll have to manually sort through that, removing words that have become irrelevant - or start again from scratch. This is time consuming if you've got thousands of words, or campaigns running on more than one PPC engine.

2) Write lists of the relevant words for each campaign.

These should be based upon the text of the pages, your meta tag keywords and words supplied by the online tools PPC engines offer advertisers. These will suggest the most popular words for a particular type of search, but aren't foolproof, so some good old fashioned thought comes in here. Make sure you cover combinations of words, synonyms, plurals and the most common spelling mistakes. Note that some engines won't let you use these.

E.g. for a car price comparison service:

car  
compare car prices  
compare car price  
compare price car  
compare car price  
car price comparison  
car price comparisons  
motor car price comparisons, etc.

Remove any duplicates and common words like "the", etc. - you can't bid on these, and the PPC engine's editors will remove them from your campaigns anyway. Don't include competitors name's, brands or URLs.

Include variations with your country's abbreviation before the most popular terms, e.g. "UK price comparisons" - people type this sort of thing into search engines regardless of them being a territory specific engine like Lycos.co.uk.

Make sure you include a campaign for your homepage with:

- the most generic terms, e.g. (for a fictitious price



comparison  
site):

price comparison  
compare prices  
shopping bargains, etc.

- variations on your URL, e.g.:

www pricecompare co uk  
www pricecompare  
pricecompare website, etc.

- variations of the company name

pricecompare ltd  
pricecompare uk

3) Write a title and description for each of these campaigns.

Make sure the title includes a short sentence to catch the searcher's eye - something that matches the search word and makes clear what your site offers. In the description expand on the title.

E.g.: Compare car prices at PriceCompare Compare the price of your dream car from the major car suppliers and save money at PriceCompare, the unbiased price comparison website.

Some PPC engines offer a piece of code which will insert the words the searcher types into your description and title. If you can use these (and preserve good grammar in your campaigns), do - it reinforces the relevancy of your website.

E.g. (for the search "car prices"): Compare <> at PriceCompare Compare <> at the major car suppliers and save money at PriceCompare, the unbiased price comparison website.

4) List the links for each campaign.

Don't just include the link of the page you want the visitor to go to

- you need to setup a tracking link so you can see how much traffic the PPC engine sends you (although their advertiser area on their website should also do this, it's best to have your own way of monitoring this).

On most websites this is easy; just add this to the end of your link: "?= "and type the name of the PPC engine after the "=" sign, e.g.

www.freepint.com/index.html?=espotting. Make sure your link works.

You need to make sure that the software you have installed to monitor the traffic to your website will record this - a good free (with limited features) example of this is WebTrendsLive <<http://www.webtrends.live.com/>>.

5) Some PPC engines also let you display a logo next to your description; this is useful as a way of reinforcing your brand. Make sure you obey any instructions the PPC engine lays down regarding file size and type, or you are likely to have your logo rejected.

### Managing your campaigns

So you've written your campaigns, the PPC engine's editors have approved and made them live, and you are seeing a

steady flow of visitors to your website. Now you need to manage your campaigns and optimise them from time to time.

1) Keep your campaigns up to date.

If you remove a page on your website, remove the campaign that drives traffic to it (or you are wasting your money). If you change your site structure, update the links in your campaigns. Many websites don't do this, and waste their own money as a result - or wonder why some of their campaigns are suspended by the PPC engine.

2) Add more words once a month.

Only add new, relevant words that you haven't got in any campaign - this might be new combinations of words, plurals you missed, or new words suggested by the PPC engine's tools.

3) Rewrite your descriptions occasionally.

How often depends on how much traffic your website receives; the more times your descriptions are viewed, the more likely they will soon become "stale" as many searchers have already seen them.

4) Add new campaigns as you add new products or services to your website.

Many websites forget to do this, and wonder why their amazing new product isn't getting any PPC engine traffic.

5) Increase your bids.

Make sure there is enough money in your account and occasionally check you are listed in the top three results for each search, and increase your bids accordingly to move above your competitors - most of the major search engines only use the top three to five results from PPC engines that are partnered with. If you aren't in these, the traffic you receive will decrease - or stop completely.

### Conclusion

Pay per click engines can drive highly targeted traffic to exactly the right page of your website that the visitor requires; this can offer increased conversion rates, turning more visitors into customers. You only pay for the traffic you receive and can reach potential clients across the majority of major search engines in one go using the top two or three PPC engines (I'd include Google's "AdWords" advertising in this). As the sign-up fees are relatively low compared to the cost of full scale meta tag optimisation, this means that SMEs can start to advertise their services and products alongside multinationals with large online and offline advertising budgets.

Of course, they are not a full replacement for ensuring your website has the right meta tags and page titles or building reciprocal links - but they are a valuable tool for anybody with a website to promote online.

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Duncan Parry works in the UK editorial team of European PPC search engine Espotting <<http://www.espotting.com/>>, writing and maintaining campaigns on behalf of websites. He also writes for EuropeMedia about the UK Internet industry <<http://www.europemedia.net/editors.asp?EditorID=113>> and promotes business websites <<http://www.digitalstrike.co.uk/>>.

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See you in two weeks!

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