Google AdWords FAQs and Troubleshooting

This article covers frequently asked questions if data between Act-On and Google appears to be out of sync.

Before reading this article, please ensure you have followed the steps outlined in the Google AdWords User Guide.

Issues with Connecting AdWords

If you are having trouble connecting AdWords to Act-On, ensure there are no processes running that would interfere with the OAuth connection. For example, please try:

- Disabling browser extensions such as AdBlock (you can re-enable them later once the connection is made)
- If the issue persists, disable all browser extensions (you can re-enable them later once the connection is made)
- Try a different browser, in case there is a browser-level blocker enforced
- If the issue persists, please contact your AdWords administrator to check for user permission issues or contact Act-On support

Data Missing from AdWords Report

If you have some campaign data already present but are not seeing the most recent updates:

1. Navigate to Inbound, and click Google AdWords Report.
2. Click Refresh to rebuild the report
3. Check the date range – is it the same as what your Google dashboard is showing?
4. Change the display option to Ads by ad group to align the report more closely with the Google AdWords campaign dashboard

Please be aware that it can take up to 24 hours for Google to update their records if you are making changes to your campaigns. If you see updated campaign data in Google that is not present here, clicking Refresh will not cause this to update – we are unable to pull this information immediately, but it will sync within 24 hours.

In general, we do not advise building your marketing plan around making frequent AdWords changes in response to daily performance. The best use of the feature is for analyzing previous-week or previous-month performance and trends.

LEADS AND LEADS/CLICK ARE MISSING

This information is dependent on your ad's {creative}, {keyword}, and {matchtype} fields being provided to the Act-On connector and being set in your ads.
You can check at a glance to see if your ads contain these fields in their URL in the Act-On AdWords report:

Navigate to Inbound > Google AdWords Report > Ads By Ad Group. Next, expand all collapsed categories until you get to a specific ad. Here you will see the destination URL of your ad (you may need to mouse-over the URL to see if the full address if it is too long to show).

Here, you can see that the {creative}, {keyword}, and {matchtype} ValueTrack components are present and properly embedded in the Ad's destination URL as a query-string.

If data is still not appearing for these columns, please keep the following in mind:

• Data may take a 24 hours to sync over due to delays in Google’s reporting
• The web page that clickers of Google AdWords ads are sent to must contain the Beacon Tracking code
• Other web pages that the visitors may come back to need to also have the tracking code
• A website visitor coming from AdWords will count as a lead only if they have converted themselves to be a known visitor
  ◦ This is done when they submit an Act-On form. Act-On's Beacon Tracking code remembers if a visitor first comes to your website via a URL containing your {creative} query string as well as the gclid information Google provides. When they complete a form, we are able to match their information with their activity history and AdWords behavior.
  ◦ Visitors do not need to complete a form located on the same page as where your AdWords ad sent them, but they do need to complete a form in the same session for it to count (meaning they need to complete a tracked form during their visit to your page after clicking an ad, rather than leaving your domain and doing it later).
  ◦ Lastly, the website visitor must have had their first visit to your website be from AdWords. If they have previously been marked as an anonymous visitor from a source that is not AdWords but then click an AdWords ad of yours, we will not attribute them to AdWords if they then complete a form to mark themselves known.

Destination URLs Must Have {creative}, {matchtype}, and {keyword}

First, we need to define some terms that will be used within the rest of this article and that you may see elsewhere outside of Act-On:

• Query string: A line (string) of text that is used to pass information. For our purposes here, this is always done inside a URL.
  ◦ For instance, when you search Google, you will see that your search terms are present in the URL when you look at results
  ◦ https://www.google.com/search?q=search+term is an example of this
    • https://www.google.com is the domain and is not the query string. The query string is q=search+term. "?" indicates the start of the query string, and characters that can't go inside a URL such as a space are encoded or changed (" " becomes "+").
• Field: The first part of a query string.
  ◦ In q=search+term, "q" is the field
  ◦ The format is field=value
• Value: The latter part of a query string
  ◦ In q=search+term, "search+term" is the value
If there are multiple fields and values, the format is field1=value1&field2=value2&field3=value3
(full URL example is http://.domain.com/?field1=value1&field2=value2&field3=value3)

- The query string starts with a "?" to separate it from the webpage address, and each subsequent query-string field-value pairs are separated by "&"

The {creative}, {keyword}, and {matchtype} tags are used to generate a unique query-string in your ad's URL that Act-On uses to capture information in -- they create a dynamic tracking URL, like what many other web services use.

Dynamic tracking URLs are URLs containing a unique value for each person, sometimes via query strings and sometimes through other means. Act-On uses a dynamic URLs throughout the application (such as to determine who clicks a link in an email, for instance) in addition to using dynamic URLs with query-strings in our AdWords integration.

Google officially supports this functionality in many ways, one of which is through their {creative}, {keyword}, and {matchtype} value within ValueTrack. ValueTrack is Google's terminology and name for this feature, and you can read more about it in their official article here.

{creative} is added to the destination URL of your Google AdWord ad, and generates a unique ID when someone clicks the Google AdWords listing as a query string appended to the end of the destination URL. Google can determine how and when an ad is clicked using their own systems, of course, without any sort of ValueTrack added, but {creative} passes this unique identifier to the destination URL in a visible form that can then be captured by other reporting systems such as Act-On.

For instance, if I create an AdWords using the {creative} ValueTrack value, my destination URL could be http://www.examplomain.com/?CreativeName={creative}. When someone actually navigates to this page by coming through the ad, the URL loaded their browser would be http://www.examplecompany.com/?myCre...me=34331698070 (or some other digit because this will change for each ad click). This unique ID is captured by Act-On and used to link the website visitor to other information for this record.

{keyword} is allows Act-On to capture the search terms used, and {matchtype} tells Act-On if the keywords used were a broad or exact match with the Ad's targeted keywords. Like {creative}, these also are dynamically loaded into the URL provided to those who click the ad.

This Google support article provides further elaboration on their implementations of dynamic tracking URLs across their network.

Required URL Query-string in Campaigns

The query-string needs to be added to the designation URL of your Google ad. Please note that this full URL is not visible to viewers of your ad.

- The actual destination URL of your Google ad listing simply needs to be the same domain as your listed web address. For instance, while examplecompany.com appears on your AdWords ad, your destination URL can be http://www.marketing.examplecompany.com/pages/subdirectory/mylandingpage/?create={creative}&keyword={keyword}&matchtype={matchtype}

The best source for instructions on adding or modifying your ad's destination URLs are from Google support itself:
• If you would like to see Google’s guide for getting started with a new ad, please see link
• If you have an existing AdWords campaign you would like to modify, please see link

Here is an example active ad campaign using the example "creative=(creative)&keyword=(keyword)&matchtype=(matchtype)" ValueTrack:

Note that the URL entry area above (highlighted) is too narrow to show the entire query-string added.

Sorting Data in Lists

You can create a segment of any of your lists that will filter records who have interacted with search engine terms. You can create a list segment by navigating to Marketing Lists, Other Lists > Form Submissions, or Other Lists > Account Lists. Next, hover your mouse over any list name for the More menu icon. Open the More menu, and choose Define A Segment of this List. You'll want to use a query-based segment with the behavior Searched.

If known-visitor John Doe found your website through a Google Ad or Yahoo/Bing search term and is also present on any of your lists, Act-On will associate this history with any list where his information is present, allowing him to appear in a query-based segment. Please be aware that Google secures all organic searches, so no third-party, such as Act-On, can record the search terms a visitor used to access your site unless it was through an ad network.