

“A step-by-step technical guide to encourage voter turnout through social media...”

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## LIKE, SHARE, VOTE: A TOOLKIT

centre for the analysis of social media

LIKE, SHARE, VOTE

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DEMOS

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# Introduction

Work by Demos and others has shown that social media are an increasingly important venue for political activity and activism, and could be a powerful tool to reverse current trends of political disengagement. This is especially true for young people, who are among the least likely to vote and the most likely to use social media regularly.

Social media are increasingly affecting the way political parties and campaign groups form, organise, communicate and listen to potential voters. They also create new opportunities for NGOs and campaigners to listen and respond to citizens' concerns, and, through this, reconnect voters to politics. In 2011 as part of the Digital Populism series, Demos undertook its first large scale survey distribution through Facebook advertising, targeting supporters of far-right and populist groups and organisations. This effort resulted in 13,000 responses from members of some often hard-to-reach groups at very little cost.

This step-by-step technical guide has been developed by Demos to harness social media to help turnout campaigns and third sector groups reverse the trend of political disenfranchisement through the use of social media advertising. It explains how to conduct Facebook advertising and Google AdWords advertising using text-based and video adverts, while limiting costs and maximising effectiveness.

# Facebook

## Introduction

Facebook's advertising functions present voter turnout campaigners with an array of relatively low-cost, effective campaigning tools. Facebook advertising can be used to promote campaign posts and pages, to stimulate the uptake of applications or digital tools, and to circulate surveys for research purposes.

This section provides a step-by-step guide to Facebook advertising for those with little experience of advertising online. It focuses on one particular type of Facebook advert, a 'clicks to website' advert. This type of advert is designed to promote clicks to an external web page, be that an online survey page, a relevant page from a campaign website, a voter registration form download page or any other web page. This guide will cover the key steps of the advert creation process, and those details relevant to voter turnout campaigners.

## 1. Selecting an Advert Type

First, create a Facebook account or log in to an existing account. Click the 'Create Adverts' button in the top right drop-down menu. You will be prompted to select what kind of results you wish to achieve with your advert. A variety of options are presented to you, including adverts designed to stimulate event attendance and to promote engagement with a campaign page, a Facebook post made by a campaign page, and adverts to promote Facebook users to install an app.

The type of advert best suited for online social action is 'Clicks to Website'. This type of advert promotes an external page. Facebook users who click on the advert will be directed to whatever page the advert creator wishes them to be directed to. Select 'Clicks to Website' and proceed.

You will be prompted to enter the URL of the web page you wish to promote. It is important at this stage to consider what the precise action you desire is, and how it can be achieved with the least effort for those people you are targeting. For example, if you want Facebook users to sign up for an email mailing list, do not insert the URL for your website's main page ([www.website.com](http://www.website.com)) but the URL to the relevant page ([www.website.com/maillinglist](http://www.website.com/maillinglist)). By reducing the number of clicks that it takes for someone seeing your advert to undertake the desired action, you can reduce the threshold for participation and make action more likely to occur.

## 2. Selecting Demographics

Determining which demographics you target with your advert requires careful consideration, but the process is not as complex as it first appears.

There are a number of basic demographic filters that can be applied to Facebook advertising. Location filters can be used to target Facebook users in specific countries, cities, towns or villages. You can also opt to exclude users from certain locations from being shown your advert. For example, it would be possible to target people from London, but specifically not those living in Dalston, Hampstead or Wandsworth. Age and gender filters similarly allow you to target a specific gender or age range. All of these demographic filters can be applied in conjunction with each other.

The target group can also be filtered for more sophisticated demographic information, from education level to relationship status, the school a user attended or their workplace. Despite this sophistication, there are a number of demographic features that cannot be targeted directly, including ethnicity, religion and socio-economic status.

Users who have expressed an interest in certain topics can be targeted. For example, if advertisers wanted to target Muslims, they might filter for people who have ‘liked’ Islam or the Qur’an; if they wanted to target Liberal Democrats, they might filter for people who have liked the Liberal Democrat page.

Modifying these demographic filters will change the ‘potential reach’ of adverts, or the maximum number of people an advert might reach. The size of this audience is important. Too large, and your advert will be seen by a broad group, but its effect will be diffuse, and the effort might prove expensive. Too small, and the advert will not have sufficient reach, limiting its effect. An indication of whether or not an advert is too specific, too broad or just right is presented by the audience definition ‘swing-o-meter’, which changes as you modify demographic settings.

The image shows a screenshot of a targeting interface, likely from Facebook Ads Manager. It features several sections for filtering an audience:

- Locations:** A dropdown menu showing 'United Kingdom' and 'All United Kingdom', with a text input field for 'Add a country, county, town or postcode'.
- Age:** A range selector with '13' and '--' as endpoints.
- Gender:** Three buttons: 'All' (selected), 'Men', and 'Women'.
- Languages:** A text input field with the placeholder 'Enter a language...'.
- More Demographics:** A dropdown menu that is open, showing a list of categories: 'Relationship' (selected), 'Education', 'Work', 'Ethnic Affinity', 'Generation', 'Parents', 'Politics (US)', and 'Life Events'. A sub-menu for 'Relationship' is also visible, showing 'Interested in' and 'Relationship Status'.
- Interests:** A section with a 'Browse' button.
- Behaviours:** A section with a 'Browse' button.
- Connections:** Two radio buttons: 'All' (selected) and 'Advanced connection targeting'.

### 3. Budgeting the campaign

The next stage is to define how a campaign is paid for. The first stage of this is merely providing basic account information: the country you are in, the currency you wish to pay in and the account time zone. You then name your advertising campaign (this identifier is not seen by the public) and choose your budget. When it comes to choosing your budget, there are two decisions to make: the budget limit and the frequency of that limit – per day, per week, per month and so on. For example, a typical advert might run with a budget of £5 per day.

We have found that a daily budget is the best option, as it allows for more effective micromanagement of a campaign and a tighter control on costs as a campaign progresses, which is especially important for smaller organisations. You also define the dates between which you wish your advert to run.

The next step is deciding how you will pay for an advert. The cost of your advert will vary depending on a number of factors. It is more expensive to advertise to certain demographics, for example wealthy demographic groups, as there is increased competition from other organisations seeking to advertise to them. If a campaign performs poorly, the price per advert might increase. Successful adverts might well lead to a decline in costs, as the more frequently an advert is clicked, the more cost effective it is for Facebook to run it compared with someone else's advert. Particularly ineffective adverts might cost 30 pence per click, while very effective adverts can cost as little as 1 pence per click. Because of these factors, prices fluctuate. Subsequently, it is hard to budget for the overall cost of your advertising campaign from the outset. You will need to test this a few times before you can make an accurate judgement of the cost of your campaign.

Whatever the price of an advert, there are two main methods by which adverts can be paid for: through 'bid for clicks' or 'bid for impressions'.

If you decide to bid for impressions, you will pay a small fee every thousandth time someone sees your advert. This is a good payment method for advertisers wishing to increase brand exposure (merely wanting to get something seen by many with little engagement). However, for the vast majority of voter turnout efforts, bidding for clicks is mostly the optimal bidding method. Bidding for clicks means that you only pay for the advert when someone clicks on it.

Once you have chosen how to pay, you then choose how much to pay. You have two options. First, you can either allow Facebook automatically to optimise your bids, suggesting a price for your adverts. This initial price per click is determined by the demographic you are targeting, but it adjusts itself depending on the effectiveness of your advert. Second, you can choose to set your maximum bid for clicks manually so that Facebook cannot increase the price above a certain point. When deciding between manual or automating bidding, it is important to remember that you are protected from overspending by the daily budget cap you have established. For beginners and less experienced users, we strongly recommend that you allow Facebook to set your bids automatically. As you become more familiar with Facebook advertising, and you see how prices affect performance, you might wish to start manually setting bid prices.

## 4. Choosing Advert Images

Having budgeted your campaign, you will be prompted to upload the images that you wish to use in your advertisements. You can upload up to six images per advert, and the number of images you use does not have any cost implications.

Choosing the right images for your adverts is key to a successful campaign. Your images need to be clear on potentially small screens, eg. mobile phones, and they need to stand out to the users you want to target. On a more sophisticated level, they need to appeal to the identity of members of your target group.

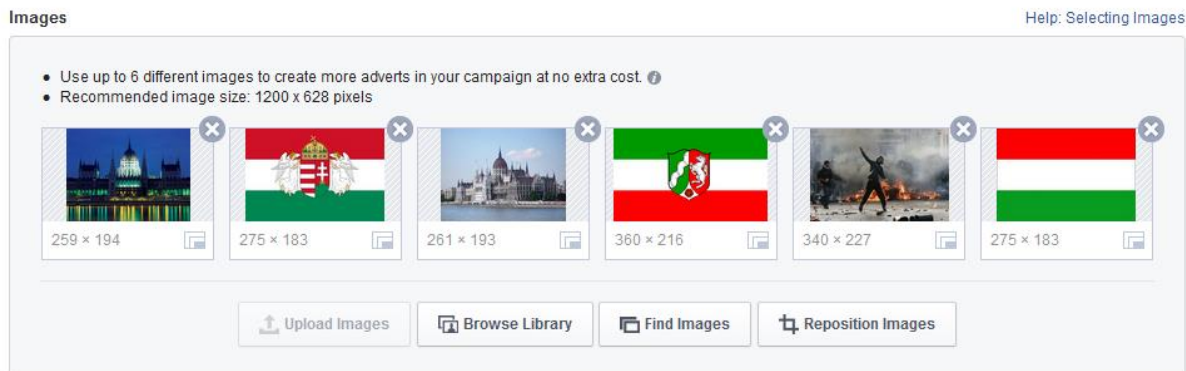
Determining which images might do this can be difficult. If you are seeking to appeal to people of a certain ethnicity, positive images of people of the same ethnicity might be effective. If you are appealing to people with certain political values, images related to that ideology or political culture might be appropriate. Humorous images or images that a certain group might associate with might also be effective. More generally, this could be images related to a sports team, a religion or a university.



Sometimes, images that you might think would be effective will not be, perhaps for unclear reasons. Likewise, images that you might not have expected to be effective will be. The process of determining which images work is largely a case of trial and error.

Facebook's split testing method is specifically designed with this in mind. The six image choices you make represent six different iterations of your advert. The images that garner the most clicks initially after the launch of your campaign will subsequently be promoted by Facebook more aggressively, while those adverts that do not garner many clicks will be promoted less vigorously.

For this reason, it is important to choose a wide variety of images to use, as opposed to slight variations on similar themes. The total failure of some images to garner clicks may lead you — perhaps a few days into the campaign, when the performance of your adverts becomes clear — to change some of the images you are using.



## 5. Determining Advert Location and Advert Text

Once you have chosen your images, you will be prompted to connect your advert to a Facebook page. This requires you to create a Facebook page (something that can be done as part of this process) and then to connect your advert to it. Doing this is optional; you do not need a Facebook page to create an advert.

However, there are certain advantages to having your advert linked to a Facebook page. For example, having your advert linked to a Facebook page is required if you wish your advert to appear in a user's news feed, as well as the right-hand text adverts column on their page, the standard location for Facebook adverts.

Having an advert appear in a user's news feed is advantageous because such adverts are larger than those that appear in the right-hand column. Furthermore, the advert appears not off to the side of but among the social information users generally focus most of their attention on. For these reasons, adverts that appear in the news feed are more likely to be clicked on. Furthermore, having your advert connected to a Facebook page allows your advert to appear on mobile phones and tablet devices. This is essential for campaigns that seek to engage with younger demographic groups, who increasingly access Facebook primarily through their mobile phones.

While connecting your advert to a Facebook page is recommended but not required, the headline of the article and the text that will appear below it is critical to the success of an advert. Both the headline and the descriptive text are limited to a certain number of characters, and therefore should be short, appealing and to the point. Headlines should be designed to grab the attention of the specific group you are appealing to.

The descriptive text below should then clearly state what the advert is about and what you want someone seeing the advert to do, and should emphasise the ease with which this can be done. Example headlines might be:

*Calling all young Londoners! Make your voice heard!*

While the descriptive text might read:

*Click this advert to download a simple voter registration form and guarantee that the government listens to you!*

Or

*Fill in our two-minute survey and tell us what issues really matter to you!*

At this point in the process, you have the option to preview how the advert will appear on mobiles and tablets, in the news feed and in the right-hand column. This is the final step in advert creation: once you have reviewed the order, placed it and entered your debit or credit card details, it will be examined by Facebook, and then launched once it is approved.

## 6. Advertising Manager

The advertising process does not end with the launch of your advert. For truly effective (and low-cost) advertising, periodic monitoring of your advert's performance, managing of costs and editing of content is required. The advert manager is the tool used for managing all of your advertising campaigns.

The advert manager is located on the left-hand side of your Facebook page. On first appearance it may look daunting, but its function is fairly intuitive. Your various advertising campaigns are listed in a table, with their status (active or inactive), the amount of clicks your advert has received, the cost per click, the reach of the advert (how many people have seen it), the start and end dates of a campaign, the budget, how much budget remains unspent for that day, week or month, and the total cost of the advert over the course of a campaign.

Clicking on any one of the advertising campaigns in this list will display more details, including the message and image used, the targeting information, and its performance, displayed as a line graph of clicks over time.

This information allows you to maximise the effectiveness of your campaign. If you are getting particularly high uptake on one advert, you might wish to decrease the bid cost, or change the images or messages of adverts that are not performing well to an image or message similar to those of adverts that are more successful. If the number of clicks received by adverts starts to decline, you might wish to renew them with slightly different demographic settings, messages or images. For best effect, it is advisable to check Facebook advertiser once or twice a day, to make small, 'reactive' edits such as these, increasing the effectiveness of your advertising campaign and reducing costs.

## Top tips

- Use a wide variety of images in your adverts, to see which most engage your audience; you might be surprised.
- Advertising in News Feed increases click through-rates and engagement levels, and advertising on mobiles and tablets expands your audience, so if you can, do so!
- Ensure that your messages (and your images) target the identity of the group you are advertising to, and that they are clear and punchy.
- Micro-manage your advertising campaigns: give failing or flagging adverts a lift by making small targeting or messaging changes to them.
- Don't be afraid to experiment; Facebook advertising is a flexible tool and can be used for a wide range of purposes.

# Google Adwords

## Glossary

**Google Display Network** – Google's Display Network includes more than a million sites, including sites like Google Finance and YouTube, not including Google Search. These adverts are keyword- or topic-based, but you can also define the audience of adverts through demographics, including interest category and so on. These adverts can be text or video adverts.

**Google Network** – All of the sites, platforms and apps where Google advertising content can be displayed. Divided into the Display Network and the Search Network.

**Google Search Network** – Google's Search Network includes Google Search, Google Maps, Google Images and so on, as well as non-Google 'search partner' sites like AOL. Adverts run on these platforms are keyword-based; they appear to people searching for certain terms. The adverts themselves generally appear in the search results or to the right-hand side of the results. These adverts cannot be targeted to particular demographics. Only text adverts can run on the Search Network.

**Google Search Network with Display Select** – This network option combines Google Search and some Display Network options, and is suitable for both video and text adverts, though video adverts cannot run on the Search Network.

**In-display** – In-display is the second way that a video advert can be displayed. The advert appears next to videos related to a certain topic, or that have been reached through a search for certain keywords, on either YouTube or the wider Google Display Network. They can also appear at the top of search results. The appearance of these adverts varies depending on the site they appear on: on YouTube, they generally appear as a thumbnail of the video, title and a couple of lines of text.

**In-stream** – In-stream is one of two ways that a video advert can be delivered. In-stream video adverts play before a video that a user is about to watch either as a result of a search for certain keywords by that user, or because the video is related to a certain topic. After five seconds, the user has the option to skip your ad. In-stream adverts can appear on the Google Display Network (including YouTube), or just on YouTube, depending on your selection.

**Text ads** – A text ad is a small, text-based advert that contains a headline, a few lines of text, a link and perhaps some contact information. It is the simplest type of advert, and can appear both in the Search Network and in the Display Network. It appears as a result of a user searching for certain predetermined keywords.

**TrueView video ads/video ads** – TrueView video ads (henceforth video ads) are video adverts created and run through AdWords. They are paid for on a cost-per-view basis, so you pay when a viewer watches the whole video or 30 seconds of it, whichever is sooner. They appear both on YouTube and other parts of the Google Display Network.

**YouTube Search Network** – includes the results pages for search queries on only the YouTube website, and can only run in-display video adverts.

**YouTube Videos Network** – includes the pages of videos, embedded videos and video channels on the YouTube website, and can run in-display and in-stream adverts.

# Introduction

The AdWords advertising function is more complex than Facebook advertising, but it reaches a far wider audience. AdWords encompasses Google Search, Google content, sites Google owns, like YouTube, sites that use Google advertising or search functions, and Google's partner sites. This broad spread of sites covers 90 per cent of all internet users, giving it a far larger potential audience than Facebook.

Advertising through AdWords can grant campaigners access to a very broad demographic. Almost anyone using the internet uses a search engine, while fewer people use social media. This in itself can be useful to some campaigns. Campaigners using AdWords need not target all these users, however, and through refining your target platforms, it is possible to target specifically the YouTube social media platform. Advertising on YouTube allows voter turnout campaigners to reach target groups in a dynamic and powerful way through video content. As part of a broader social media campaign, such efforts not only add depth of content, but can reach audiences that otherwise might not engage with a campaign.

Below we present a step-by-step introduction on how to set up an AdWords account, and how to create two types of advert: text-based adverts and video adverts. Google text ads are adverts that are displayed on Google Search Network sites like Google, but which can also appear on the websites that are part of the Google Display Network. Google video ads are adverts that are displayed on YouTube or on both YouTube and the wider Google Display Network.

This guide does not present every detail of the process of creating an advert, but covers the basics and those advanced settings that might be of importance to a voter turnout campaign.



# Create an Adwords Account

The first step is to create an Ad Words account. This allows you to create and manage text-based and video ads across Google, YouTube, and associated and partner platforms.

To set up an AdWords account, go to [Adwords.google.com](https://adwords.google.com). You will be given the option to sign up, and prompted to enter your email address and website.

## My First Campaign

When you first create an account, you will straight away be asked to create a text advert. This will be presented to you as 'My First Campaign'. For this first campaign, the order in which you create your text advert will be a little different to the normal process, which is used to create all subsequent adverts. It will be presented in a simplified manner, and you will be asked to fill out the budget information first and at the end of the process, your billing information. The guide below describes how to undertake the extended, regular process for all subsequent text adverts, but the information can be used to create an advert in My First Campaign.

Once you have entered this basic information, your account is set up. If you have not entered your billing information as part of the My First Campaign process, you do not need to until you start your first advert.

When you have entered this basic information, your account is set up and you are ready to begin.

# Adwords Text Adverts

Once you have set up your account, you are ready to start creating adverts. The simplest type of advert you can create is a text ad as opposed to a video ad. These adverts resemble the traditional 'small ads' you find in newspapers. Depending on the settings you choose for them, these text ads appear across the internet, on the Google Search Network, the Google Display Network, or both if you select Search Network with Display Select.

Despite their simplicity, therefore, these adverts can potentially be used to reach a larger number and broader range of people than other adverts. The appearance of these text ads to a user is stimulated through their use of certain keywords in Google search engines. For example, if you were to type 'Brighton bakers' into Google, you would receive text ads on the right-hand side for bakers in Brighton using Google AdWords.

## 1. Network choice

Google AdWords does not just allow you to advertise on sites like Google or Google Image search. AdWords allows you to advertise on sites that use the Google search engine, Google partner platforms, YouTube, and a host of other sites. Apart from in My First Campaign, the normal way to create a text advert is using the +Campaign button on the advertising management interface. When you press the +Campaign button, you are given the option of creating an advert for either the Google Search Network, the Google Display Network, or the Search Network with Display Select.

If you select 'Search Network only', your advert will appear on those sites that make up the Google Search Network, like Google Search or AOL. If you select 'Display Network only', your adverts will appear on the Google Display Network, including sites like Google Finance, Gmail, YouTube and so on. You can also select for your adverts to appear on both the Search and Display Networks, through the Search Network with Display Select option.

The process varies slightly depending on which network you select. The explanation below describes Search Network with Display Select, because this is the more complex network to design an advert for. If you were to select Search Network only, the process would be simpler, with fewer targeting and scheduling options. If you were to select Display Network only, certain steps are in a slightly different order, though the steps taken are much the same.

## 2. Targeting

Once you have selected where your adverts will turn up, choose a name for your campaign. This title is just for internal management purposes, not for public display. You are again given the option of defining which network you wish to advertise on.

You can then preload existing settings from a previous campaign. This is a useful time-saving measure if you have in the past created similar adverts to the one you are in the process of creating.

You then define whether or not you want to include ‘search partners’ – non-Google sites that use the Google search engine, and affiliated sites – in the Google Search Network. These options are reduced if you are advertising purely on the Display Network.

By default, your advert will appear on all types of computer, mobile and tablet, but you can also choose which devices your adverts show up on. One of the most important targeting options is location; this determines where your adverts are displayed in geographical terms. The geographical reach of an advert can be defined broadly by country, and specifically by postcode.

This gives Google advertising a huge degree of flexibility. Using advanced targeting, you can plot your advertising reach on Google Maps, giving you an excellent visualisation of your reach. You can even set a radius from a certain point (say 50km around Croydon town centre). You can target your advert on a series of specific towns with low voter turnout, or on the poorest 20 postcodes in the London area. You can also label areas that you wish to exclude; for example, you can target the London area, while at the same time excluding an area of London (say Kensington) from your advertising area. Such a sophisticated location tool is potentially very useful in specifically targeted campaigns.

You can then set the language of the sites you want your advert to appear on. This can be a useful way of reaching specific ethnic groups.

### 3. Bidding

The next stage is setting bidding conditions. This determines how you pay for each advert, and how much you pay for each advert. Depending on a whole host of variables – the success of your advert in its early stages, the target audience, the geographic reach, the time of day and so on – your adverts are always competing with other adverts for exposure. Choosing how much you bid is a balance between having a high enough bid that your advert regularly gets exposure, and keeping your bids low enough that you keep your efforts relatively cost effective. As with Facebook adverts, the more effective the advert and the better targeted it is, the cheaper an advert will be.

At this stage you will be prompted to set two budgeting conditions. First, similar to Facebook advertising, you have to choose between manual and automatic bidding. If you select manual bidding, you set the maximum value of a bid yourself, preventing Google from varying the price of a bid above that point. This can reduce costs, but also reduce the effectiveness of an advertising campaign. If you select automatic bidding, the value of bids is set by Google, and this bid value can vary. This can increase costs, but increase effectiveness.

It is recommended that new users use automatic bidding because less experienced users might not know how much an advert view should cost. Second, you set the daily budget at this point. How much you choose to spend daily depends on the scale of your campaign, but these adverts are relatively inexpensive; you may wish to start off small (perhaps as low as £5–10) and then increase your budget as you become more confident in your campaigning. By setting a modest daily budget, you can ensure that even using automatic bidding you will not end up spending more than you originally intended to.

## 4. Advert Extensions, Headline text & URL

At this stage you will be prompted to write the content of your advert. First, you will be asked to add ‘ad extensions.’ This is information that will appear in your advert in a set format. It can include an address (which can be easily linked with Google Maps), a website link and a phone number. This is particularly useful if you are promoting a physical location, like a polling station, a government building or an event. On the next page you will create the actual content of your advert. This consists of a headline and two lines of descriptive text, so it is important to make this message engaging, eye-catching and clear. As you enter information, a preview of your advert will be displayed, so you can see how it will appear to the public. At the end of this stage, the advert itself has been created.

## 5. Keywords

Along with location and device, there is another factor which determines who sees an advert: keywords. You must decide which keywords you want to activate your advert. There are several methods by which you might target such adverts. Targeting keywords like ‘election’ and ‘voting’ within an area of low voter turnout might cause your advert to appear to people with a tentative interest in politics in their area. Alternatively, you might focus your advert not on keywords but on geographic area, causing your advert to appear to people who type in common keywords (BBC, football, etc) based primarily on their geographic location. As you enter keywords, audience size estimates will be generated based on these keywords.

Whatever strategy you decide on, it is best initially to include a broad range of keywords. Once the advert has run for a while, perhaps a week, you can then see which keywords have attracted the most clicks, and which have not. Then you can edit the keyword list to promote more successful keywords and associated terms, while cutting back on those that are expensive or ineffective. Discovering the right keywords, like discovering the right social media strategy, is a process of trial and error.

## 6. Cost per Click & Billing

At this stage, you are shown an estimate of the cost per click on the advert. Again, as with Facebook advertising, you are charged per click on the advert. As well as a daily overall budget cap, you can set a cost-per-click maximum cap, above which your advert costs cannot rise. Once you have set this limit, you proceed to billing, where you enter your credit card information.

You have created your advert, and once it is approved by Google, it is ready for launch.

## 7. Advert management

Once your advert is launched, you can observe its progress, monitor it and edit it using the AdWords management interface. The AdWords management interface is an intuitive display which presents an array of performance-related statistics. You can observe how individual adverts perform, which keywords return clicks on your advert and at what cost, and whether the number of clicks your campaign is generating per day is increasing or decreasing.

This means that you can tweak the keywords you target as your advertising campaign runs. You can get rid of keywords or adverts that perform badly, and increase the budgets of successful efforts using this interface.

Constantly monitoring, managing and improving your efforts, perhaps on a daily basis, will make them more effective and keep costs low. Effective management is the key to a successful campaign.

# Adwords video adverts

Video adverts are more complex to create than text ads, but can be a powerful means through which to promote a campaign, adding dynamism and depth to social action efforts. Like text adverts, they are created through the AdWords system.

## 1. Starting and budget

You can start the creation of a video advert by clicking 'Video Campaigns' on the AdWords management interface. Alternatively, you can access video advert through the direct URL, [adwords.google.com/video](https://adwords.google.com/video). Select '+Campaign' to begin the process.

At this stage, as with the Google text ads, you have the option to load an existing campaign's settings, and you determine the name of the campaign and set the maximum budget per day. How much you choose to spend depends on the scale of your campaign, but like Google ads, video adverts are relatively inexpensive; you may wish to start off small and then increase your budget as you become more confident in your campaigning. By setting a modest daily budget, you can ensure that even using automatic bidding, you will not end up spending more than you intend to.



## 2. Delivery & Networks

In the 'Delivery Method' (advanced) tab, users are given the option to choose between standard and accelerated delivery. Standard delivery displays adverts evenly over a day. Accelerated delivery shows adverts as quickly as possible, without spreading the advertising budget across the day.

Standard delivery is almost always preferable; this reduces cost-per-view and ensures an even distribution of views throughout the day. However, for a last minute push for an event taking place on the day of advertising – for example, an event taking place that evening, the last day of voter registration or polling day – pushing out a high volume of adverts in the morning at slightly elevated cost may be useful.

At this stage, you also define which networks your adverts will be delivered on, in a similar manner to the text adverts. If you select 'YouTube Search', you will run in-display adverts based on the search queries that a user puts into YouTube. Then your advert will appear at the top of the search results returned when someone searches for certain selected keywords or topics. For example, if you had defined 'polling station' as one of your keywords, people searching for 'polling station' might well see your advert at the top of the results for that keyword.

If you select 'YouTube videos', you will advertise on channels and videos on YouTube, or embedded YouTube videos on other sites. For this setting, 'in-display' adverts can be displayed as above, but you can also display your adverts 'in-stream'. In-stream adverts run before (or during) videos related to topics or subjects that you have selected. Whether or not ads run during or before content depends on the length of the video the person is watching.

Viewers can choose to skip your advert a few (around 5) seconds after it starts playing. You only pay if a viewer watches for longer than 30 seconds or to the end of the advert, whichever comes first.

In-display adverts appear as a result of a YouTube user searching for certain subjects or using certain keywords in the YouTube search bar. They appear in the search results displayed to the user as a result of their query. For these videos, you pay when someone clicks on the video.

If you decide to run on YouTube videos, you have the option of running on the Google Display Network, which can run in-stream and in-display adverts. You might well not wish to select Google Display Network, because this further diffuses advertising efforts away from the YouTube social media platform.

### 3. Location & Language

As with Facebook adverts, choosing the locations that you advertise to is one of the most important stages. AdWord's location feature is excellent in this regard, allowing extremely specific targeting, and is used the same way as it is with AdWords text ads.

You can target your adverts at the level of countries, but you can also target cities, towns, or even postcodes. Furthermore, using the Advanced Search system, which employs the Google Maps interface, you can select radiuses of varying sizes from a central location: for example, all YouTube users 30km from the centre of Glasgow.

At this stage you also set the language you wish the advert to appear in.

## 4. Video URL, Presentation Format & Content

Now you add the actual video to your advert. To start the process, you add the URL of the video you wish to use as your advert (most probably a video you have filmed and uploaded to YouTube) into the 'Ad (Optional) input'.

This brings you to the next stage of your advert: defining what the content of the advert is, and how it is displayed. Two sub-categories of content definition appear: in-stream and in-display. There is a tick box option next to each type of advert. De-selecting either in-stream or in-display means that your advert will appear only in the remaining format. If you wish your advert to appear in both, complete both options.

In-stream adverts run before (or during) videos related to topics or subjects found that you have selected for your campaign. Whether or not ads run during or before content depends on the length of the video the person is watching. Viewers can choose to skip your advert a few (around 5) seconds after it starts playing. You pay if a viewer watches for longer than 30 seconds or to the end of the advert, whichever is first. In the in-stream section, you first choose a display URL and a destination URL. The display URL is the URL that is shown below the video in your advert. The destination URL is where people are sent when they click on your video advert as it plays. They do not have to be the same URL.

In-display adverts appear as a result of a YouTube video search. Your advert is displayed when users search for certain topics or use certain keywords. For these videos, you pay when someone clicks to watch your video. You are prompted to choose a thumbnail image from the video, to create a short headline, and to write two lines of descriptive text for your advert. You have to be concise, clear in the purpose of your advert, and appealing to the group you wish to access, while also appealing to them specifically. As you do so, the automatically generated preview on the right-hand side updates, showing how an in-search and an in-stream advert will appear to a viewer.

You also choose whether people clicking on your advert are directed to the ‘watch page’ of the video, or to a YouTube channel page. This second option can be a good way of directing traffic to a campaign or organisation’s dedicated YouTube channel.

Finally, you choose the advert name.

## 5. Schedule

At this stage you can create a specific schedule for your advert delivery. YouTube allows users significant control over this process. You can schedule both the days and the hours when adverts are played.

This level of detail is not often necessary initially, but you may well find, as your campaign progresses, that this level of scheduling micromanagement is useful. For example, you might find that on certain days or at certain times adverts cost more per view than at others. You can then remove these days from your schedule. Additionally, you may have a particular reason to want to run videos at specific times.

As well as scheduling when in the week an advert runs, you can also set a start and an end date to a campaign. There is no requirement to do so, and most often advertisers merely start a campaign immediately and turn it off once they have achieved the desired effect.

## 6. Delivery Method, Frequency & Operating System

Next, you are given the option to set a number of advanced delivery options. Most of these are very detailed and not very useful for the purpose of voter turnout campaigning. There are however a couple of options that might be worth considering, for example frequency capping. Frequency capping prevents overexposure by limiting the amount of times a specific user can see your advert, by day, week or month. For example, you might limit exposure to three times a week. This means that you will not continually advertise to the same people.

You can also choose to advertise to people or not based on the operating system or device they use. For example, you could advertise to people operating Android phones but not iOS phones, or even using specific models or phone networks. Again, this level of detail is probably not useful to most campaigns, but it is another possible way of defining an advert's audience.

It is possible to decrease or increase your bid for mobile devices compared with normal bids, depending on whether or not you think that reaching those platform users is more or less important. For example, you could set your bid to 'increase by 25 per cent' if you particularly want to reach people using mobile phones. The exact definition of this audience will affect the exact cost of your advertising campaign.

## 7. Cost per View Limitation

After continuing to the next page, you will be prompted to define the targeting group your advert will be aimed at.

After naming the targeting group, you will be prompted to set a maximum cost-per-view. Keeping this amount moderate will give you confidence that your advertising funds are being used to maximum effect. You will be shown the predicted cost-per-view, and the predicted views per day, allowing you to estimate what the reach of your campaign might be.

You can if you wish set separate maximum bid values for in-display and in-stream adverts under 'Customise Bids per Format'. Tailoring your costs by setting separate bids can improve the efficiency of your effort. Typically, in-display adverts costs a little more than in-stream adverts.

## 8. Targeting

You can further refine your audience at this point, through a number of different methods. Most simply, you can target certain demographic groups. For example, users aged 18–24, 25–34 or female users rather than male users.

There is also an unknown option. The age or gender of many YouTube users is unknown, particularly if they are not accessing YouTube through a profile or an attached email identity. So while targeting specific genders or ages might make your advert more precise, it might reduce your audience significantly. For this reason, it might be best, if you are targeting men, for example, to tick both the 'men' and 'unknown' option. Similarly, if you are targeting people aged 18–24, you might tick both '18–24' and 'unknown'.

You can target people searching for certain keywords. Make sure your keywords are likely to be entered by the specific group you want to target. It is best to start with a broad range of such keywords – say 15–20 – and then cut down the number, removing those that perform badly in practice and adding any new ones you think might perform more effectively.

You can also narrow your audience through factors other than age, gender, device, keywords and location. For example, you can target specific topics of interest, like ‘news’, ‘politics’, ‘ethnic and identity groups’ or ‘same-sex marriage’ to a remarkable level of detail. This enables you to target people with specific social or political interests with material that will appeal to them specifically. Through the ‘Placements’ option you can target people who watch specific YouTube videos or channels, which is especially useful if a video or channel is particularly popular with a specific group or demographic, or deals with a related or motivational issue or subject.

Once you have entered all the targeting information required, you can save the targeting group. If it contains no offensive content, Google will very shortly grant approval, and your advert is ready to run. If you chose to run your adverts from that moment as opposed to a future date, the adverts will start going out immediately after approval.

## 9. Advert Management

As with Google text ads, much of the effectiveness of your advert will be determined by the extent to which you manage its performance. The AdWords management interface intuitively and easily allows you to do this. Once your advert is launched, you can observe its progress, monitor it and edit it. The AdWords management interface is intuitive and presents an array of performance-related statistics.

You can observe how individual adverts perform, which keywords or topics return clicks on your advert and at what cost, and whether the number of clicks your campaign is generating per day is increasing or decreasing. The AdWords management interface also allows you to edit every detail of an ongoing campaign. You can get rid of keywords or topics or adverts that perform badly, and increase the budgets of successful efforts. Constantly monitoring, managing and improving your efforts, perhaps daily, will make them more effective and keep costs low. Effective management is the key to a successful campaign.

- Experiment broadly with your adverts. Try Search and Display Networks, YouTube only, video and text, in-display or in-stream. You might find that your target group can best be reached in a manner you would not expect.
- No marketing of video adverts is as important as the content itself. Make your content relevant, engaging and bright. Consider making it humorous and topically relevant, if possible using community-relevant celebrities to star in and promote your content.
- YouTube, like Facebook, is a social network. If there are certain YouTubers', channels or content-creators that are relevant to the groups you are targeting, work to involve them, or at least advertise their videos on their channels, or on keywords related to them.
- Closely manage your adverts to make your campaign more effective and help you achieve value for money.



# Social Media Monitoring & Management

Social media campaigns are much broader than just social media advertising. There is an array of platforms, tools and websites designed to help you manage your campaign or organisation's accounts effectively, and maintain an awareness of your organisation or topic of interest as it is being discussed on social media. The best tools for these functions change rapidly, as better tools emerge and others fall behind. A few of the most useful ones are discussed below, with a short description of how they work and how they can help your campaign. The most important thing is to be aware of the types of tool that you can exploit.

Often third sector organisations or campaigns seeking to engage people through multiple mediums manage several social media profiles: a Twitter account, a Facebook account, a Wordpress account and so on. One of the best ways to engage your audience effectively across these platforms, with minimal effort, is to use a social media management tool to deal with the management of all your accounts from a single platform.

Hootsuite is one of the better free social media management tools, and can be used for more than 35 social media networks. As well as bringing all your accounts into a single space, Hootsuite allows you to analyse the effectiveness of your social media messaging through regular reports, and what your audience is talking about more broadly. This can allow you to identify trends and hot topics that you can tie your messaging into. It also allows you to schedule tweets or other posts for certain times of the day, reducing your time commitment.

It is often useful for a third sector organisation or campaign group to know how their topic of interest – be that voter turnout or anything else – is being discussed within your target audience. Some tools can help you understand the various aspects of social media discourse. For example, SimplyMeasured can be used to generate reports concerning a number of social media platforms, which can help you understand the key influencers among your audience and the interests of your target group. SimplyMeasured allows you to analyse the characteristics, interests and conversations of your audience, though more detailed services are not free.

Other tools, like SocialMention, allow you to search more broadly across social media for content and discussions regarding certain subjects through keyword searches. This can help you understand how certain topics are discussed online more broadly, and what related hashtags, topics or keywords are most relevant to your area of interest.

The effective use of these simple tools and tools like them can help inform your campaign and messaging, and reduce the effort required for an effective campaign. However, it is important to remember that the effective use of social media monitoring and management tools is less important than having a meaningful, responsive, two-way engagement with your audience. The key to social media is that it is social. Responding to your audience, engaging them in conversation and not merely using social media as an information dissemination tool is critical to its effective use.

# Conclusion

Social media advertising is a potentially powerful tool for charities and social action campaigns, particularly in efforts to increase voter turnout. The effective use of social media advertising can help raise awareness of an issue, increase popular engagement in a campaign, promote specific events and stimulate donation.

Social media platforms are new digital public spaces that play an increasingly important role in the social and political lives of citizens worldwide. Third sector organisations must make effective use of this space. An effective advertising effort on AdWords and Facebook, while relatively simple to achieve, can have a profoundly positive effect on a social action campaign.

In this guide and our report, our aim has been to give third sector organisations the knowledge and tools to make more effective use of social media.

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