



Before you invest in advertising, learn the pros and cons of the major online advertising programs.

By Ian Robert Anderson

**S**o you're thinking of doing some online advertising to drive traffic to your Web site – good idea! It's the new way to advertise and gain new supporters. Forget billboards in Times Square or commercials during the Super Bowl; using online text ads to promote your organization is extremely affordable (usually \$5 to get started) and simple.

Two of the best advertising programs are Google with its AdWords program and Yahoo! with its

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Sponsored Search program. There's a lot to consider when playing this game, and I've advertised on both. Here's a quick comparison of each online advertising program — with a bonus section every nonprofit advertiser should read.

### 1. Free Advertising Money

Since you're going to start advertising online somewhere, it's kind of nice to get some free advertising money to play around with. On Google, the most free advertising money offer I've seen is \$50. Not bad. Yahoo! has them beat by offering \$100.

**Winner: Yahoo!**

### 2. Intuitive Control Panel

Now that you have an account, you need to be able to get around

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and use it. After months of using both, I still get confused at the Yahoo! interface.

**Winner: Google**

### 3. Help Me with Keywords

Both programs offer a nice little feature that displays lots of keywords for you when you enter a few basic words about your organization. This eliminates the thinking needed to come up with search terms that people would normally use to find your Web site.

**Winner: Tie**

### 4. Number of Keywords

Google AdWords lets you add an unlimited (or at least I haven't found a limit) number of keywords to an ad group. Yahoo! limits you to 50 — a major negative.

**Winner: Google**

### 5. Network of Publishers

When you advertise with either Google or Yahoo!, your ads show up on that Web site. Google and Yahoo! also offer content publishers a way to monitor their Web sites by allowing them to carry your ads and split the profit. Google calls this a "Content Network"; Yahoo! calls it "Content Match." I've noticed that the number of impressions in Google's "Content Network" is at least five times greater than the impressions with Yahoo's "Content Match."

**Winner: Google**

### 6. Reporting

It's vital to know who is searching for what nonprofit keywords and who clicks on which ads. Google AdWords stats are in real time, while Yahoo! Sponsored Search stats are updated once a day. I also find Yahoo! Sponsored Search graphs less helpful than Google's.

**Winner: Google**

### 7. Payment

Paying for your advertising is also very different between the two programs. Google AdWords accumulates your advertising clicks, then bills your credit card once a month. This makes for easy accounting (especially if you have to run this expense by your board of directors). Yahoo! Sponsored Search makes you set a minimum advertising account balance and charges your credit card whenever that dollar amount is reached. This could potentially result in multiple credit card charges throughout the month.

**Winner: Google**

### BONUS TIP

This comparison seems to show that Google AdWords is a better charity advertising experience than Yahoo! Sponsored Search. Also, more people use Google as a search engine, which would seem to cinch the deal. Still, I would recommend splitting your advertising dollars between *both* programs in order to increase search engine optimization (SEO) and gain greater exposure.

When the "Content Network" or

"Content Match" Web sites display your ads, a search engine spider crawls the page. The spider will think that the publisher's Web site is linking to your Web site — increasing your Web site's back links (sites that link to yours). This will bring your Web site up in the search results, vastly increasing the number of people who visit your site and learn about your organization and all that it offers. ■

### Resources

Austin, Gene, "Ten Ways to Raise More Funds Over the Internet," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 24, No. 4.

Bhagat, Vinay, "Leveraging Your Web Site for High-Impact Marketing," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 23, No. 5.

Elges, Mary, "Driving Traffic to Your Web Site," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 20, No. 6.

These articles are available free at [www.snpo.org/members](http://www.snpo.org/members).

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*Ian Robert Anderson is cofounder of Intersection360 ([www.intersection360.com](http://www.intersection360.com)), which offers a wide range of Web applications for nonprofits. Intersection360 products include: CharityHelper360 (secure forms processing for nonprofits; get a free seven-day trial; no credit card required; just visit the Web site), WebEdit360 (an online Web site editor and more), and Impress360 (an easy way for nonprofits to get a complete Web site for one low monthly fee and no setup costs). Visit Intersection360's Web site to learn how your nonprofit can sell Intersection360 products and earn a 50% monthly residual commission on every sale.*

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