

# Seeking students through search

Education insights  
for digital marketers

For-profit colleges and universities will slowly grow through 2020

**SOURCE:**  
IBISWorld Industry Report 61131b,  
For-Profit Universities in the US,  
Lucas Isakowitz, February 2015.



\$27.2B

For-profit institutions are projected to see an annualized growth of 1.1% over the five years to 2020.

30%

Loans to students at for-profit schools expected to go into default over the next 15 years, vs. 12% of loans to students at not-for-profit schools.

For-profit colleges are facing **increasing government oversight** seeking to lower student loan default rates.

There is also increased competition from not-for-profit colleges and universities that are expanding their **online courses** to attract non-traditional students.

# Americans see value in higher education

96%

U.S. adults who say it's very or somewhat important for adults in this country to have a degree or professional certificate beyond high school.

94%

U.S. adults who say it's very or somewhat important to increase the proportion of Americans with a degree or professional certificate beyond high school.



**SOURCE:**

Gallup-Lumina Foundation, The 2014 Gallup-Lumina Foundation Study of the American Public's Opinion on Higher Education: Postsecondary Education Aspirations and Barriers, April 2015.

They believe  
higher education  
is essential for  
getting a good  
job now and  
in the future

Percentage of U.S. adults who  
agree that:

**SOURCE:**  
Gallup-Lumina Foundation, The 2014 Gallup-Lumina Foundation  
Study of the American Public's Opinion on Higher Education:  
Postsecondary Education Aspirations and Barriers, April 2015.



68%

Having a professional certificate or degree beyond  
high school is essential to getting a good job.

74%

A college degree or professional certificate leads  
to a better quality of life.

78%

A good job is essential to having a high  
quality of life.

69%

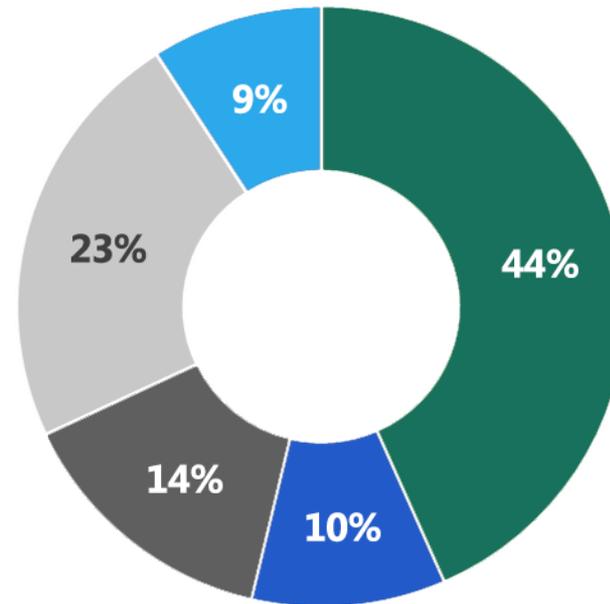
It will be more important in the future to have a  
degree or professional certificate beyond high  
school to get a good job.

# Half of adults without a college degree aspire to obtain one

15% of them are likely to enroll in school in the next 12 months.

Level of U.S. adults without a college degree would like to achieve

- Satisfied with current level of education
- A Certificate
- An Associate Degree
- A Bachelor's Degree
- An Advanced Degree





Will your campaigns inspire them to take action?

# Headwinds for for-profit colleges and universities

**SOURCE:**  
IBISWorld Industry Report 61131b,  
For-Profit Universities in the US,  
Lucas Isakowitz, February 2015.



## National unemployment rate

An improving labor market will cause more individuals to choose work over higher education.



## Controversy afoot

The quality of education has come under scrutiny as many students cannot find gainful employment after graduating.



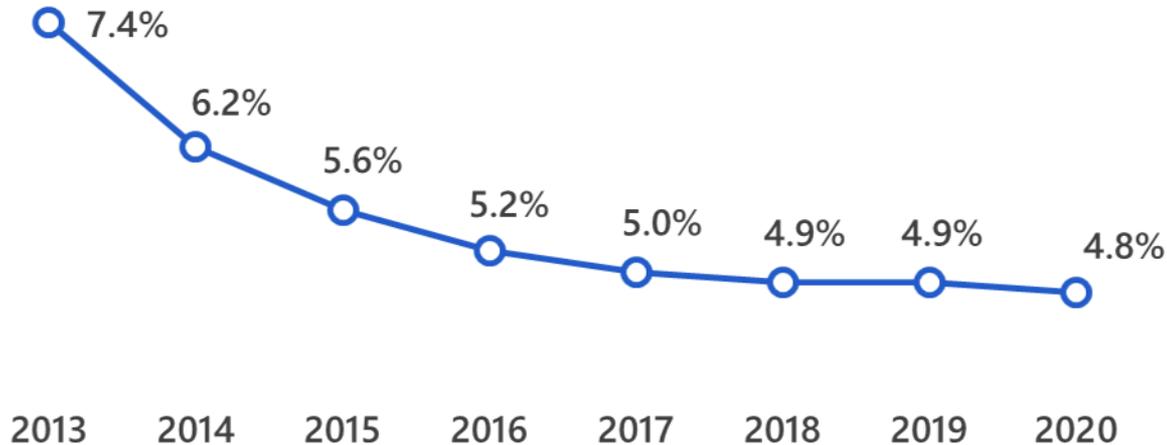
## Online services

Growth of online courses continues to broaden the industry's customer base.

# Strong employment drives work, not school

With the national unemployment rate under 6%, adults will have less incentive to invest in higher education over the next 5 years.

## National unemployment rate



### TIP

Use ad copy to highlight your work-flexible certification and degree programs to capture workers looking to learn new skills or change careers.

# For-profit schools need to show their graduates can earn a living—and pay off their loans

The new Gainful Employment regulations are now in effect, and for-profit schools risk losing their federal student aid eligibility.

20%

**of a typical graduate's discretionary income.**

Maximum amount for the estimated annual loan payment that would lead to gainful employment.

1,400

**programs serving 840,000 students.**

Estimated number of programs at risk of losing their eligibility for federal Title IV student aid due to the new regulations.



**SOURCE:**

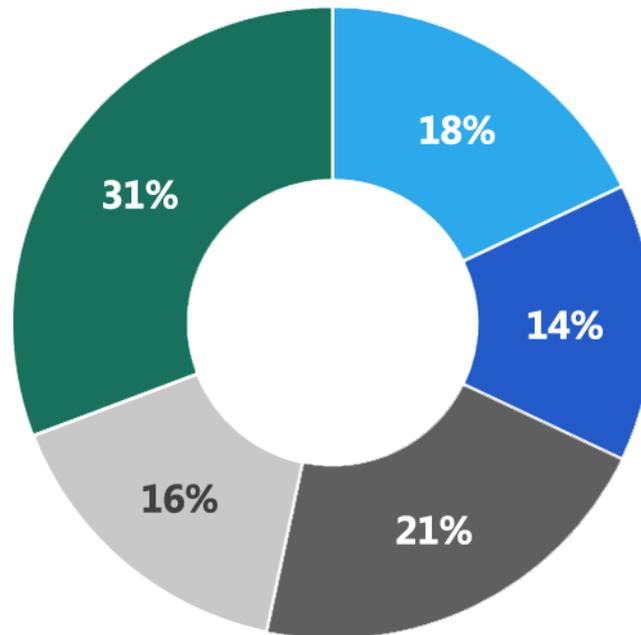
U.S. Department of Education, Fact Sheet: Obama Administration Increases Accountability for Low-Performing For-Profit Institutions, July 1, 2015.

# Online education is driving enrollment of younger students at for-profit schools

Attracted by the flexibility and variety of online programs, students aged 24 and under are on the rise at for-profit schools.

## For-profit market segmentation

- Students aged 21 and younger
- Students aged 22 to 24
- Students aged 25 to 29
- Students aged 30 to 34
- Students aged 35 or older



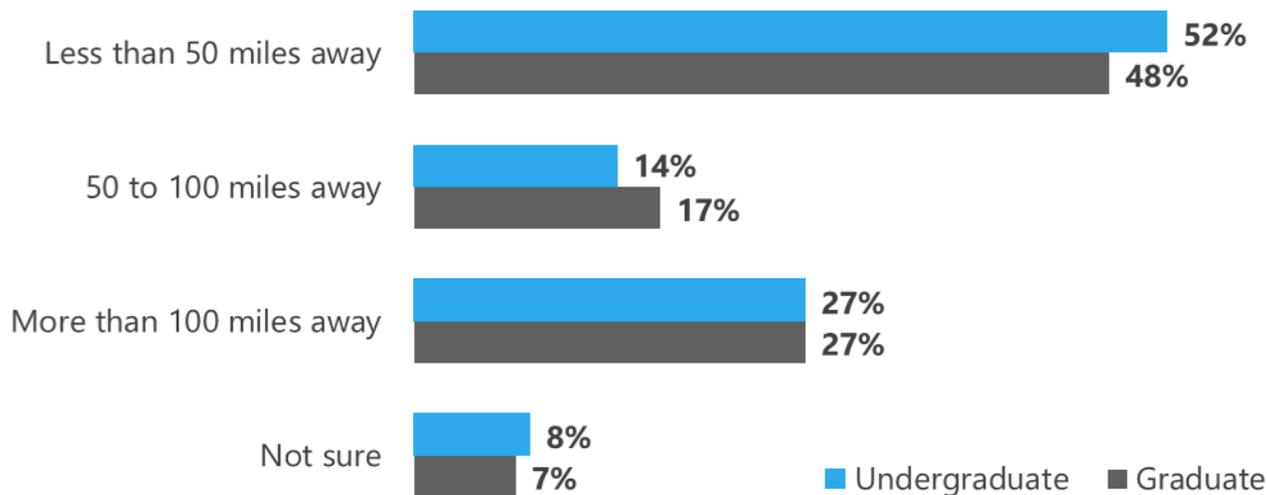
### TIP

Use Demographic Targeting to reach your audience.

# Online learners care about campus location

The majority are looking for nearby schools, even if they don't plan to visit campus.

## Distance from institution



### TIP

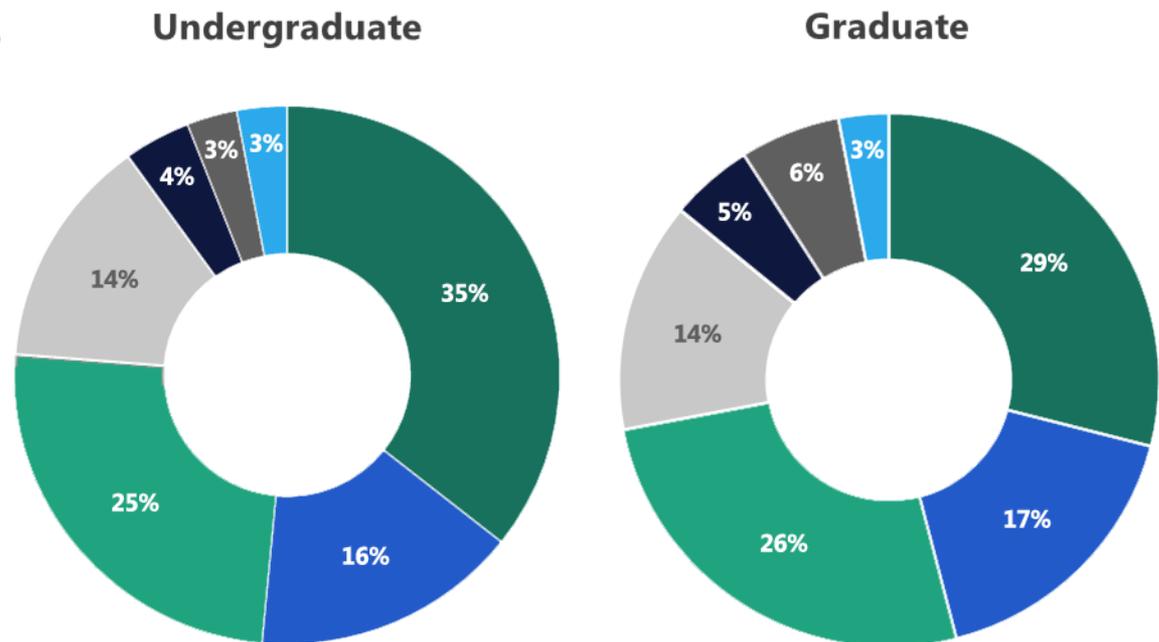
Use Location Targeting, Location Extensions, and Call Extensions to reach out to nearby searchers.

# Online students contact three schools or fewer

Advertisers need to build awareness of their brands early—while prospective students are researching programs and costs.

Number of schools students contacted or requested information from

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Six
- More than six schools



# They recognize the power of search

Prospective students turn to search engines to find out more about online programs and schools.

**SOURCE:**

The Learning House, Online College Students 2015: Comprehensive Data on Demands and Preferences, July 2015.

\*Not mutually exclusive.



# 65%

found search engines to be effective or very effective in raising awareness of online programs.



**TIP**

Bid on your own brand terms to build awareness, capture more clicks, and keep competitors at bay.

# 44%

primarily use search engines to gather more information on the schools they are interested in.\*

# 34%

primarily call the schools they are interested in to gather more information.\*



**TIP**

Use Call Extensions, like click-to-call, to help them reach you faster.

# Business and nursing programs top the charts

Top online programs of study:



## Undergraduate

Business administration	1
Nursing	2
Computer science and engineering	3
Information technology	4
Engineering	5
Sociology	6
Networks, computer networking	7
Elementary education	8
Social work	9
Criminal justice	10

## Graduate

Business administration	1
Nursing	2
Computer science and engineering	3
Information technology	4
Early childhood education	5
Counseling psychology, psychotherapy	6
Computer security, cybersecurity	7
Networks, computer networking	8
Technology management	9
Social work	10



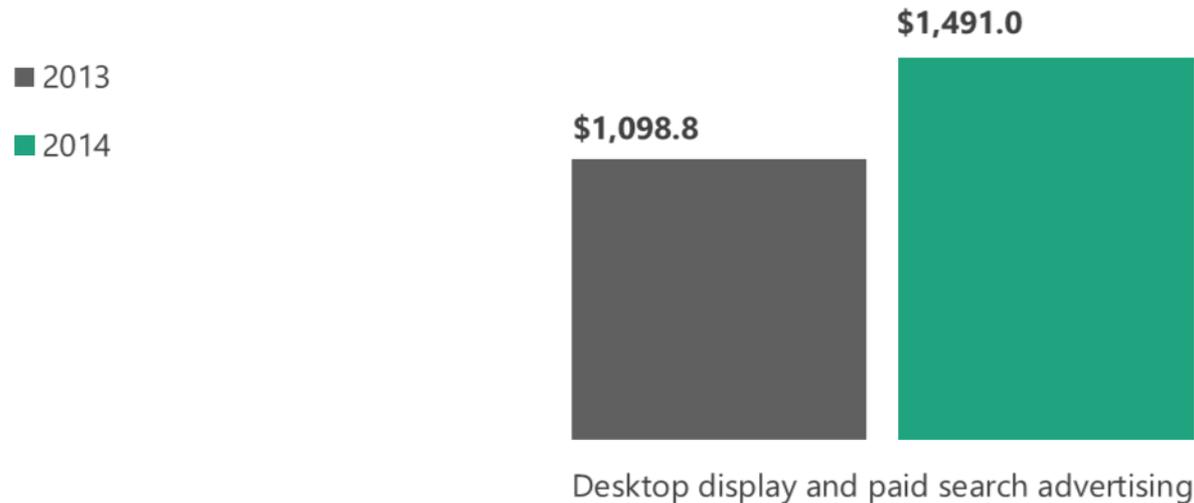
## TIP

Use Sitelink Extensions and Enhanced Sitelinks to point searchers to the programs and pages they're looking for.

# Education digital ad spending grew 35% between 2013 and 2014<sup>1</sup>

With slow enrollment growth this year,<sup>2</sup> expect competition to heat up for prospective students' attention and clicks.

## U.S. Education Industry Ad Spending, by Media, 2013 & 2014 (\$ millions)<sup>1</sup>



### TIP

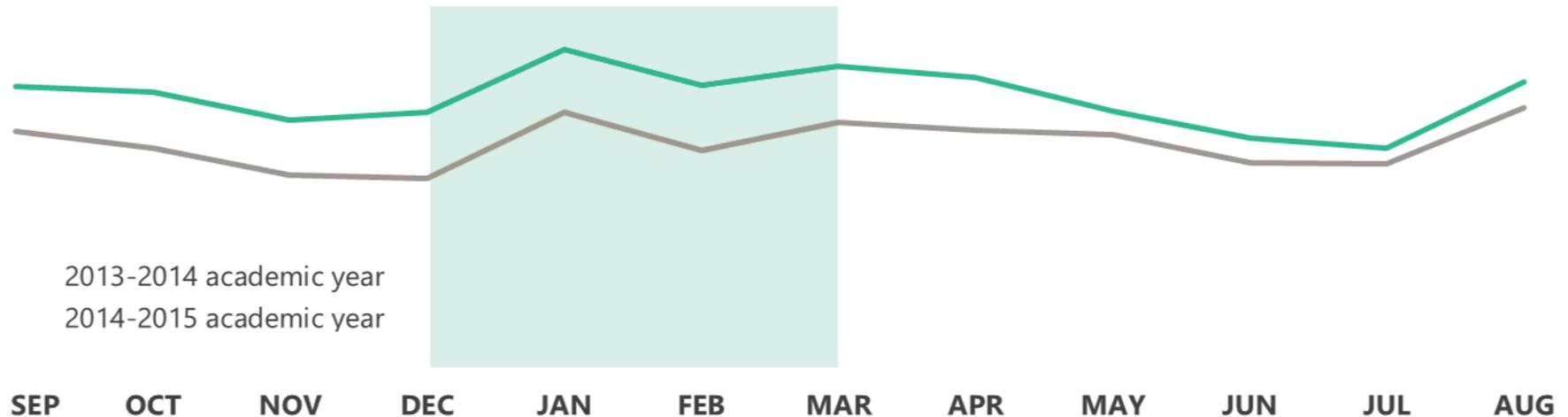
Use automated rules to monitor your campaigns and automatically adjust your bids and budgets.

# Bing Ads performance trends



# Searches for education-related terms are highest leading up to and during spring

Education provider-related searches

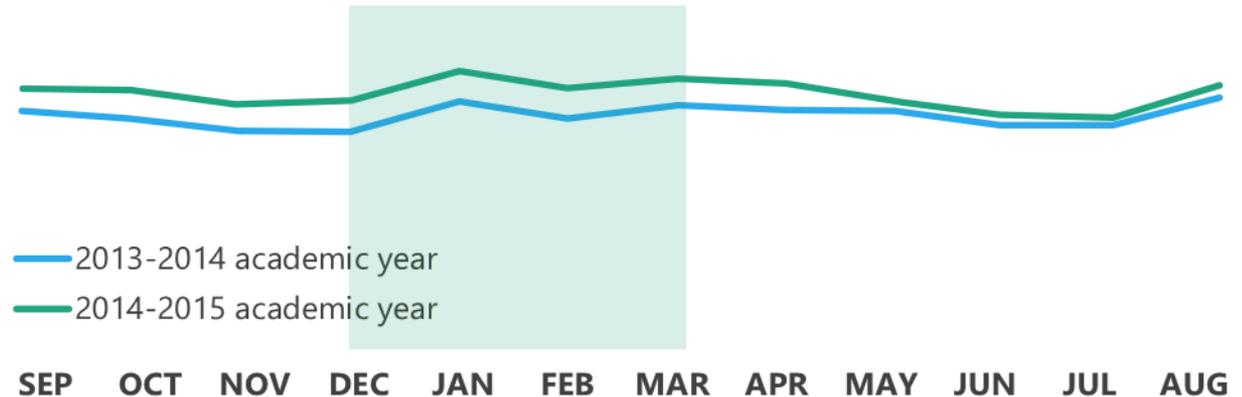


Education-related search volume has grown, especially during fall and spring semesters. Spring semester in particular is a key period, especially with people making New Year's resolutions to learn something new or advance their careers.

# Higher education search volume is growing at a higher pace than vocational training

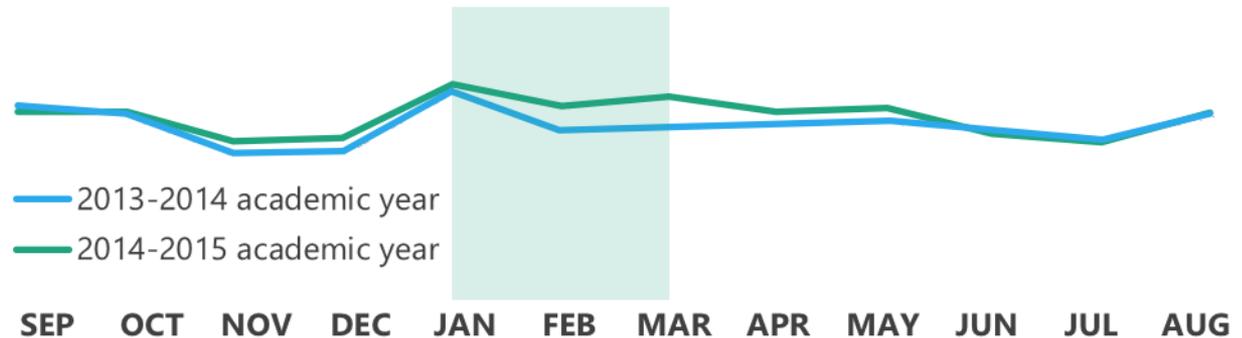
## Higher education

Much of the search volume increase was due to growth from searches related to Higher Education (Bachelor's or Advanced degrees). This was especially apparent during the spring quarter.



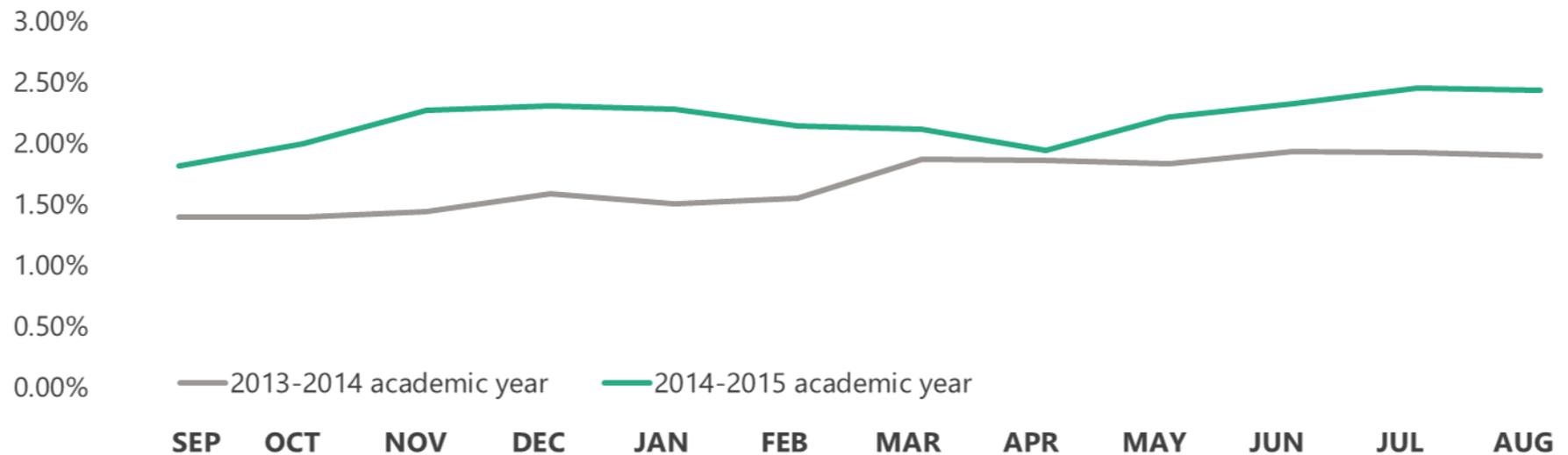
## Vocational training

search volume (such as searches for information on certificates or Associate degrees) remained relatively flat except for a slight increase towards the end of the spring quarter.



# Education provider-related ads are enjoying higher click-through rates this year

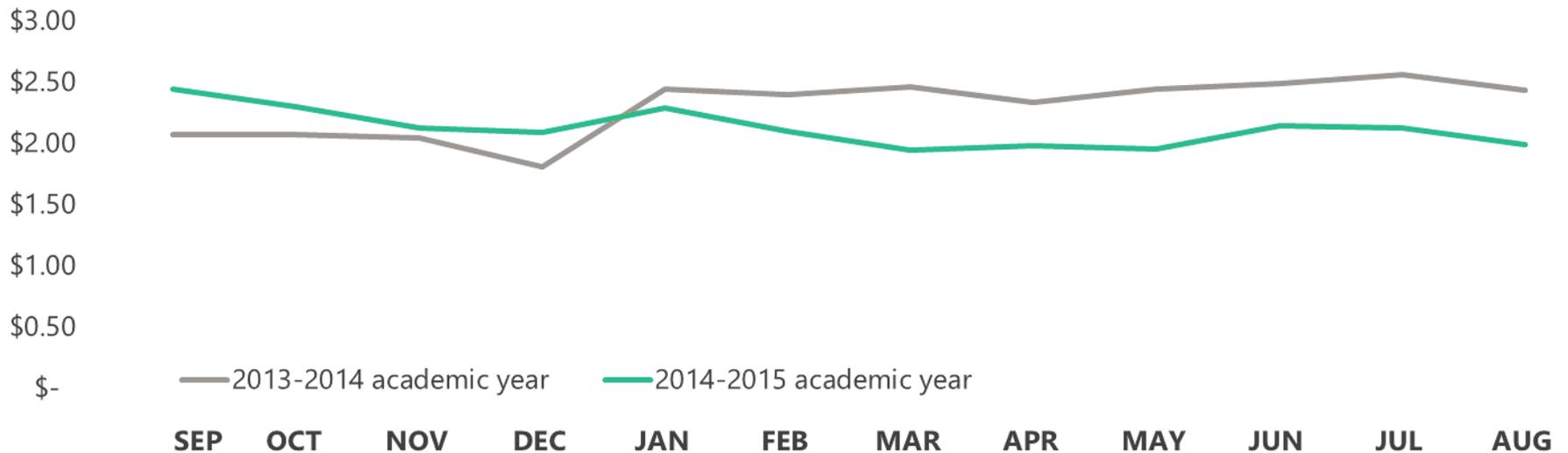
CTR of Education provider-related searches



Click-through rate for education provider-related searches have increased year over year. Improve your click-through rates by optimizing your ad copy.

# Cost-per-click has declined in recent months

CPC of Education provider-related searches



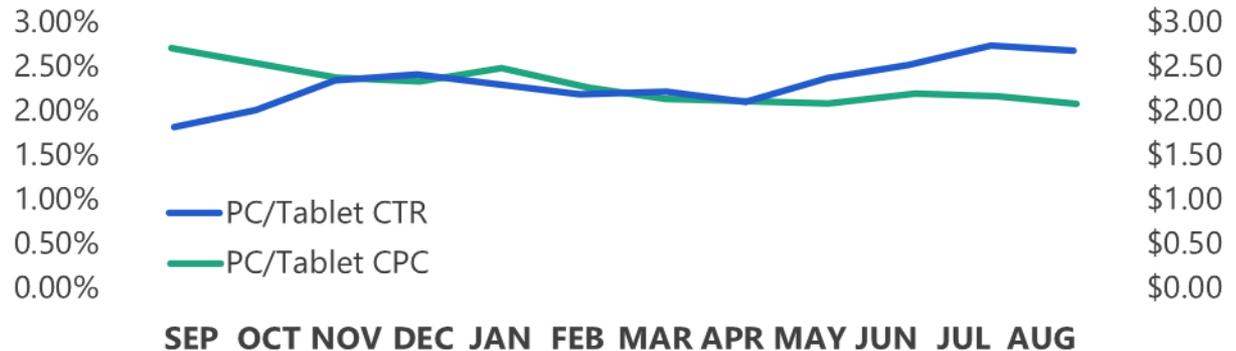
Education cost-per-click has been declining, providing greater cost efficiency for campaigns.

# Education provider-related campaigns might benefit from a PC/Tablet focus

## PC/Tablet CTR vs. CPC

2014–2015 academic year

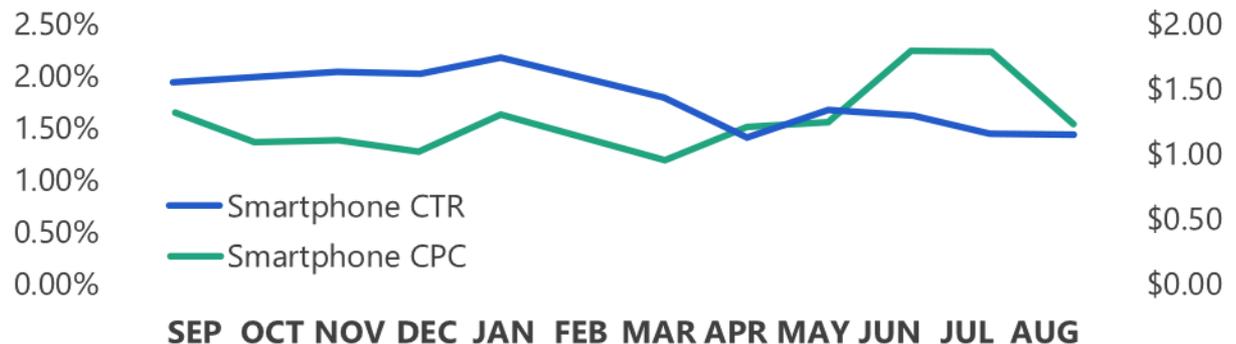
PC/Tablet click-through rate has been increasing as cost-per-click has been decreasing, providing better value for campaigns.



## Smartphone CTR vs. CPC

2014–2015 academic year

Smartphone cost-per-click fluctuates throughout the year, but remains relatively affordable.



The 2014–2015  
academic year  
saw these top  
education  
searches:

college, us colleges, university

online schools, online school

online education

accredited online colleges

common app, common application

penn foster, pennfoster edu

university phoenix, phoenix edu

amu

grand canyon university, gcu

kaplan university, kucampus kaplan edu

excelsior college, excelsior

ashford university, ashford edu

coursera



SOURCE:  
Microsoft internal data.

# Bing Ads audience behaviors



# The Bing Ads Network adds value for education

**SOURCE:**  
comScore qSearch (custom), US, September 2015;  
industry categories based on comScore classifications.



26M

Education searchers not reached on Google.

41M

Total education searchers.

167M

Total education searches.

37%

of all education paid clicks.

# Buying educational products online

Compared to Google, the Bing Ads audience is:



9%

more likely to have bought other literary or educational products online in the last 6 months.

5%

more likely to have bought educational software online in the last 6 months.



**SOURCE:**

comScore Plan Metrix, US, July 2015, custom measure created using comScore indices and duplication. July data was used to reflect the month prior to the beginning of the education season.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt. In the foreground, a black smartphone is visible, displaying a line graph on its screen. The background is softly blurred, showing the laptop screen and the person's face.

# Searching for educational products online

Compared to Google, the Bing Ads audience is more likely to have searched for other literary or educational products online in the last 6 months.

**SOURCE:**

comScore Plan Metrix, US, July 2015, custom measure created using comScore indices and duplication. July data was used to reflect the month prior to the beginning of the education season.

# Applying for an education loan

Compared to Google, the Bing Ads audience is more likely to have applied for an education loan offline in the last 6 months.

**SOURCE:**

comScore Plan Metrix, US, July 2015, custom measure created using comScore indices and duplication. July data was used to reflect the month prior to the beginning of the education season.



# Having school spirit

Compared to Google, the Bing Ads audience is:



9%

more likely to have bought college/amateur sports tickets offline in the last 6 months.

8%

more likely to have bought college/amateur sports tickets online in the last 6 months.



**SOURCE:**

comScore Plan Metrix, US, July 2015, custom measure created using comScore indices and duplication. July data was used to reflect the month prior to the beginning of the education season.

# Starting a new business

Compared to Google, the Bing Ads audience is more likely to plan to start their own business in the next 12 months.

**SOURCE:**

comScore Plan Metrix, US, July 2015, custom measure created using comScore indices and duplication. July data was used to reflect the month prior to the beginning of the education season.





Ad copy analysis

# Words that work

# Ad Copy Research Heat Map – Education Providers

Ad Description

	% Off	Call To Action	Careers	Courses	Degrees	Financial Aid	Find	Free	Institution	Official Site	Online	Price/Pricing	Superlative	Time
% Off	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Red	White	Yellow	Orange	White	Orange	Orange	Green	Green
Call To Action	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow
Careers	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow
Courses	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green	Orange	Yellow	Light Green	Yellow	Orange	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Degrees	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Light Green	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green	Light Green	Orange	Yellow	Yellow
DKI	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Free	White	Light Green	Orange	Light Green	Orange	Light Green	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green	White	Light Green	Orange	Orange	Orange
Institution	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
Official Site	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Light Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Light Green	Red	Light Green
Online	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow
Param Insertion	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Red	White	Orange	Red	Orange	Yellow	Red	Orange
Price/Pricing	Red	Orange	Light Green	Light Green	Orange	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Light Green
Superlative	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	White	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow

Ad Title



**SOURCE:**

Microsoft internal data.  
8,000 ads and 17 million impressions analyzed.  
Analysis period: January – March 2015.

Legend:



# Top Ad Copy Combinations by Sub-vertical/Theme

## Performing Ad Title/Description Combinations by Industry, All Devices

	<a href="#">% Off</a>	<a href="#">% Off</a>	<a href="#">% Off</a>	<a href="#">% Off</a>	<a href="#">Official Site</a>
<b>Education Providers</b>	<a href="#">Superlative</a>	<a href="#">Time</a>	<a href="#">Courses</a>	<a href="#">Call To Action</a>	<a href="#">% Off</a>
	<a href="#">DisplayURL</a>	<a href="#">DisplayURL</a>	<a href="#">DisplayURL</a>	<a href="#">DisplayURL</a>	<a href="#">DisplayURL</a>
<b>Vocational Schools</b>	<a href="#">DKI</a>	<a href="#">Jobs</a>	<a href="#">Jobs</a>	<a href="#">Learning</a>	<a href="#">Careers</a>
	<a href="#">Programs</a>	<a href="#">Careers</a>	<a href="#">Information</a>	<a href="#">Superlative</a>	<a href="#">Financial Aid</a>
	<a href="#">DisplayURL</a>	<a href="#">DisplayURL</a>	<a href="#">DisplayURL</a>	<a href="#">DisplayURL</a>	<a href="#">DisplayURL</a>

**Education Provider** ads perform best when the ad copy highlights promotions such as **% Off**, especially in the ad title. These ad copies do well with ad descriptions that contain terms from the categories **Superlative**, (e.g., "best", "top") or **Time** (e.g., "year", "month").

Other ways to grab your target audience's attention and motivate them to click is by pairing **% Off** in the ad title with specific **Courses** (e.g., "classes", "program", "certification"), or **Calls To Action** (e.g., "get started", "enroll today", "prepare") in the ad description.

The highest performing ad copies for **Vocational Schools** were those tailored to searches by utilizing **DKI** (Dynamic Keyword Insertion) in the ad title, combined with **Programs** (e.g., "program", "programs") in the ad description.

**Vocational School** ad copies containing **Jobs** in the ad title also did well, especially with ad descriptions that contained specific types of **Careers** (e.g., "design", "nursing", "culinary arts", "project management") or promises of further **Information** (e.g., "info", "information") when clicked.

Appeal to searchers concerned about the financial burden of a **Vocational School** course by creating ads with types of **Careers** in the ad title and **Financial Aid** related terms (e.g., "financial", "aid", "financial aid") in the ad description.



### SOURCE:

Microsoft internal data.  
8,000 ads and 17 million impressions analyzed.  
Analysis period: January – March 2015.

# Top Ad Copy Combination by Device

When it comes to **Education Provider** ads on **PC/Tablet**, the highest performing ad copy combination was **Free** terms (e.g., "free", "request free", "free info") in the ad title and **Financial Aid** related terms in the ad description.

On **Smartphones**, ad titles with **% Off** and ad descriptions with **Superlatives** (e.g., "best", "top") enjoyed greater success.

Terms in the **Careers** category (e.g., "design", "nursing", "culinary arts", "project management") boosted ad copy performance for **Vocational Schools** for both **PC/Tablet** and **Smartphone** devices.

**Vocational School** ads on **PC/Tablet** performed best when the ad title mentions **Careers**, and the ad description mentions **Financial Aid**.

Searchers on **Smartphones** were most attracted to ad copy with ad titles containing **Jobs** related terms and ad descriptions containing **Careers**.

	PC/Tablet	Smartphone
<b>Education Provider</b>	<a href="#">Free</a>	<a href="#">% Off</a>
	Financial Aid DisplayURL	Superlative DisplayURL
<b>Vocational Schools</b>	<a href="#">Careers</a>	<a href="#">Jobs</a>
	Financial Aid DisplayURL	Careers DisplayURL

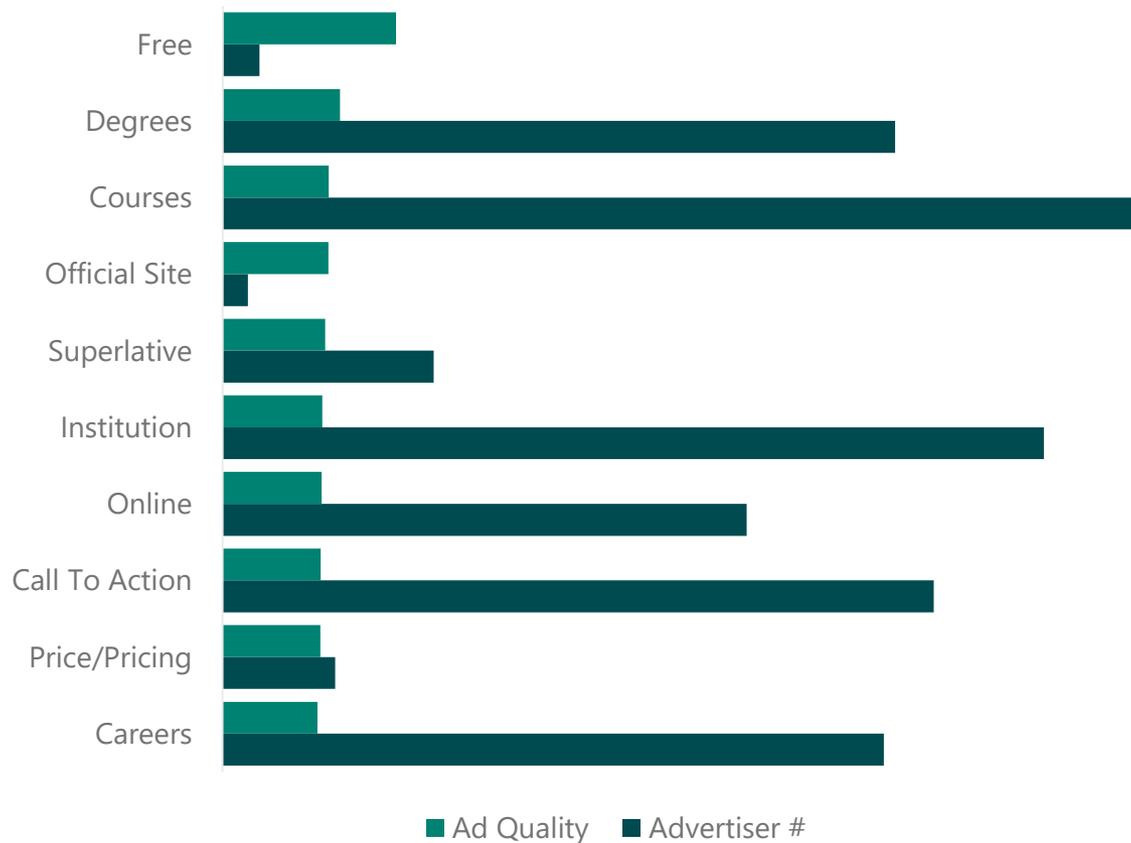


**SOURCE:**

Microsoft internal data.  
8,000 ads and 17 million impressions analyzed.  
Analysis period: January – March 2015.

# Sitelink Deep Link Analysis

Education Provider : Top Site Link variables  
Ad Quality & Usage



## OPPORTUNITY

**Free** (e.g., "request free", "free info") was a top performer when featured in Sitelink Extension ads and is a relatively untapped opportunity, with low usage by advertisers.

**Official Site** (e.g., "official site", "official") was another high performing term that was underutilized by advertisers.

Take the opportunity to stand out from the crowd and boost your sitelink clicks by including terms from these high performing categories in your Sitelink Extension ads!



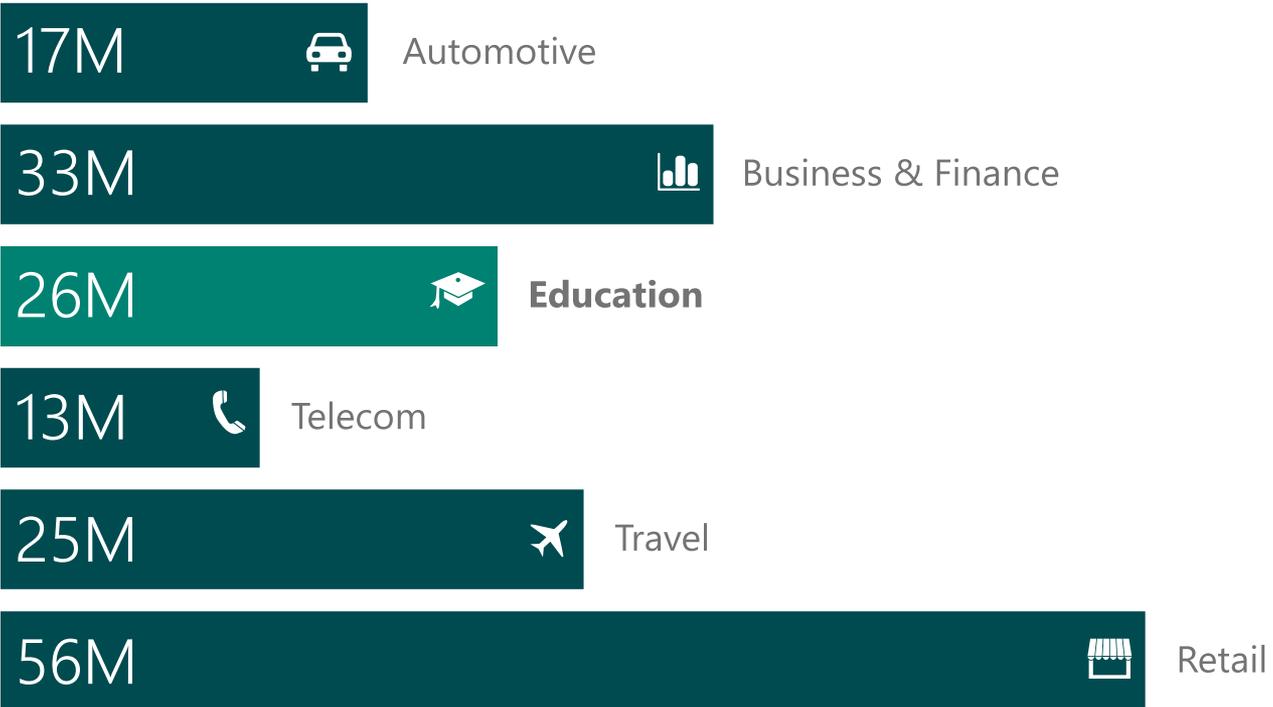
### SOURCE:

Microsoft internal data.  
8,000 ads and 17 million impressions analyzed.  
Analysis period: January – March 2015.



# Why advertise on Bing Ads?

# Access searchers not reached on Google



**SOURCE:**

Audience data represents Bing Web and Yahoo US Web Search from comScore qSearch (custom), US, September 2015.  
Industry categories based on comScore classifications.

# Drive even better performance with Ad Extensions

Lift in click-through rates

 20%

## Location extensions

Drive more in-store conversions with store locator, click-to-call, merchant ratings, and click-to-direction.

 10%

## Call extensions

Connect customers quickly to your business with click-to-call.

 13%

## Sitelink extensions

Improve click-through rate (CTR) and conversions by providing direct access to site content and purchase pages.

# You spoke, we listened.

We heard feedback from our customers, advertisers and partners and are delivering new features to make advertising on Bing Ads easier and more effective.



## You told us:



"Save me time,  
make it easier."



"Support me to be  
more effective."



"Provide me with  
more insights to  
make better  
decisions."

## We delivered:

### **Keyword management:**

Now manage one million keywords in one view.

### **Better interface:**

Bing Ads is now easier to navigate with a newly redesigned experience.

### **Targeting precision:**

geo-plus radius targeting in one-mile increments now makes local ads more accurate.

### **Scheduling precision:**

15 minute scheduling delivers the right ad at the right time.

### **Bing Ads editor:**

now faster, improved management, plus new targeting settings.

### **Bid predictions:**

bid landscape predicts impressions and clicks based on estimates.

### **Campaign optimization:**

delivery statuses now provide clear insights around ad performance.

### **Campaign performance:**

top mover report automatically locates key drivers contributing to account performance variations.

# Already advertising on Google AdWords?

It's quick and easy to import your Google AdWords campaigns directly into Bing Ads with just a few clicks.

[Learn how to import your campaigns.](#)

Connect with a  
Search Specialist  
who can help you  
get started today.

Call 1-800-518-5689 or check out  
[Getting started.](#)



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