

# Public Relations Committee Keywords Report Fall 2006

The Public Relations Committee is charged with marketing the American Iris Society. As such it has two responsibilities. First to understand the market, in other words, know what our members and potential members want. And second to inform everyone as to what we have to offer. Google's Adwords is a tool for doing both.

## **How does Adwords work?**

When someone searches the internet through Google and other search engines they are directed to websites that have the keywords they used in their search. If they are not careful in their choice of search words they get a lot of unwanted garbage. For example a search for Iris would produce information on Iris Murdoch the mystery writer, Earthquake date from the program Iris, info on the iris in the eye, and scores of other useless info if you are really looking for plants. Whenever someone does a search, to the right of their search-results boxes appear that are paid ads for related products that send the person to a website. Google charges a few cents to the advertiser every time someone clicks through to the advertiser's website. Thus you only pay for someone that has actually viewed your product.

As an experiment a campaign was started to see if we could get people to the AIS website. In the box to the right of a search for Iris one of two messages might appear.

1. American Iris Society Your Iris resource from dwarf to tall, discover the worlds of Iris

This ad had 51,984 impressions with 360 clicks through at a rate of 0.69% and \$0.27per click for a total of \$95.93

2. American Iris Society from pool plants to perennial beds, discover the worlds of Iris.

This ad had 6,786 with 95 clicks through at a rate of 1.40% and \$0.31per click for a total of \$29.48

## **Choice of keywords;**

As noted above poorly designed searches could result in results that have nothing to do with Iris. So searches that were called general content may or may not be for the plants but we pay nothing for people who do not click through. The campaign resulted in 56,841 impressions of our ad being displayed to someone with Iris as the general content. But remember many of these may have had nothing to do with the plant.

By choosing phrases such as 'Tall-bearded Irises' as keywords we can be certain that the person is looking for information concerning the plant whereas 'tall-bearded' alone might produce a search for people, animals, etc. As a start 8 keywords were chosen that span the variety of Iris classifications.

## **Limitations;**

The campaign was limited to spending \$75 /month and no more than \$1 per click. A given search may show 8 boxes to its side, depending on how many people are advertising using that particular keyword. The first box is the number one position. Google calculates your best bid for position, given your parameters. If fewer people are bidding on the topic the cost is lower per click through.

Results are shown in the chart below.

Starter Campaign data between August 3-September 28, 2006 for The American Iris Society shows all keywords

| Keyword                      | Keyword Minimum Cost Per Click | Current Maximum Cost Per Click | Impressions | Clicks | Click Through Rate | Avg Cost Per Click | Cost     | Average Position |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|------------------|
| Dwarf Iris                   | \$0.03                         | \$0.50                         | 161         | 10     | 6.21%              | \$0.35             | \$3.54   | 2.6              |
| Garden Irises                | \$0.03                         | \$0.47                         | 24          | 2      | 8.33%              | \$0.79             | \$1.58   | 2                |
| Historic Iris                | \$0.04                         | \$0.47                         | 37          | 2      | 5.41%              | \$0.24             | \$0.47   | 1.1              |
| Pacific Coast Iris           | \$0.04                         | \$0.99                         | 71          | 2      | 2.82%              | \$0.38             | \$0.75   | 2.1              |
| Siberian Iris                | \$0.03                         | \$0.54                         | 1407        | 104    | 7.39%              | \$0.28             | \$29.27  | 1.8              |
| Species Iris                 | \$0.04                         | \$0.47                         | 25          | 3      | 12.00%             | \$0.13             | \$0.39   | 1.2              |
| Spuria Iris                  | \$0.04                         | \$0.47                         | 71          | 1      | 1.41%              | \$0.11             | \$0.11   | 1.2              |
| Tall-bearded Irises          | \$0.03                         | \$0.47                         | 5           | 0      | 0.00%              | \$0.00             | \$0.00   | 4.6              |
| Total - content targeting    |                                |                                | 56841       | 330    | 0.58%              | \$0.27             | \$89.12  | 2.4              |
| Totals and Overall Averages: |                                |                                | 58642       | 454    | 0.77%              | 0.28               | \$125.23 | 2.3              |

**Discussion:**

The results were somewhat surprising if not shocking.

First let us note that we sent 454 people to the AIS website at a average cost of \$0.28 per person.

It is generally assumed that most people are interested mainly in tall-bearded iris. Surprisingly this was the least searched keyword. Apparently Siberian Iris is the current hot topic.

I have tried many ways to explain this result. Do people not know the term Tall-bearded Irises? I am confident that the keyword 'Species Iris' is not reflective of most gardeners since only Irisarians or less knowledgeable gardeners would use that term. The correct term would be 'Iris species'. So it is likely the bad grammar would limit the searches for that phrase.

It is possible that because I used the term 'Tall-bearded Irises' instead of the more correct 'Tall-bearded Iris' I may have understated the searches in the same way that the species are understated.

Still it is amazing the disparity between the numbers if TBs are what people are really interested. Another explanation was provided by someone who worked a public sale of Tall-bearded rhizomes. They pointed out that people wanted TB plants but that no one asked questions about them. All the questions were about other types of Iris. This person felt that the public feels they know everything they need about the TBs and it was only the other types about which they needed more information.

Another explanation is that many advertisers are paying more than \$1 for Tall-bearded Iris ads. Indeed the chart shows that if we would have had a click through on the 5 impressions where our ad was displayed we average 4.6 in position. It is possible that our impressions for Tall-bearded are being totally out bid such that all available slots are being charge more than \$1.

I believe the reason people join societies is to learn. If these are the topics that people online are looking for than I would hope that they would feel that they could learn about them by joining AIS. **In this context I would make the following suggestions.**

1. That the title page of the AIS website show at least two irises, one a tall bearded and one a Siberian. Perhaps four smaller pictures would be more appealing with 4knockout pictures showing the diversity of Iris with a TB, Siberian and two other types.
2. That copy be created on growing other types of Iris beside TBs be included on the cultural page of the website.

The American Iris Society's purpose is to promote the genus. It appears that it would be a stronger organization if it promoted the diversity within the genus to a greater degree than present.