

“Listening In” to Online Search: Identifying Customer Needs and their Expressions in Search Queries

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Abstract

Identifying customer needs and their expressions in search queries is crucial for search engine marketing, as it forms the basis for selecting search queries for targeting and designing ad copies or website content accordingly. Yet, search engines hardly reveal data on how customers search online to firms. We address this lack of data by proposing a new approach that monitors online searches of customers when searching for products. We test our approach in a study of the US skin cleansing market. The resultant data allows to discover a rich set of customer needs and their expressions in search queries and link them to customer characteristics (e.g., age).

Keywords: *Customer Needs; Market Research; Search Engine Marketing*

Track: Digital Marketing & Social Media