

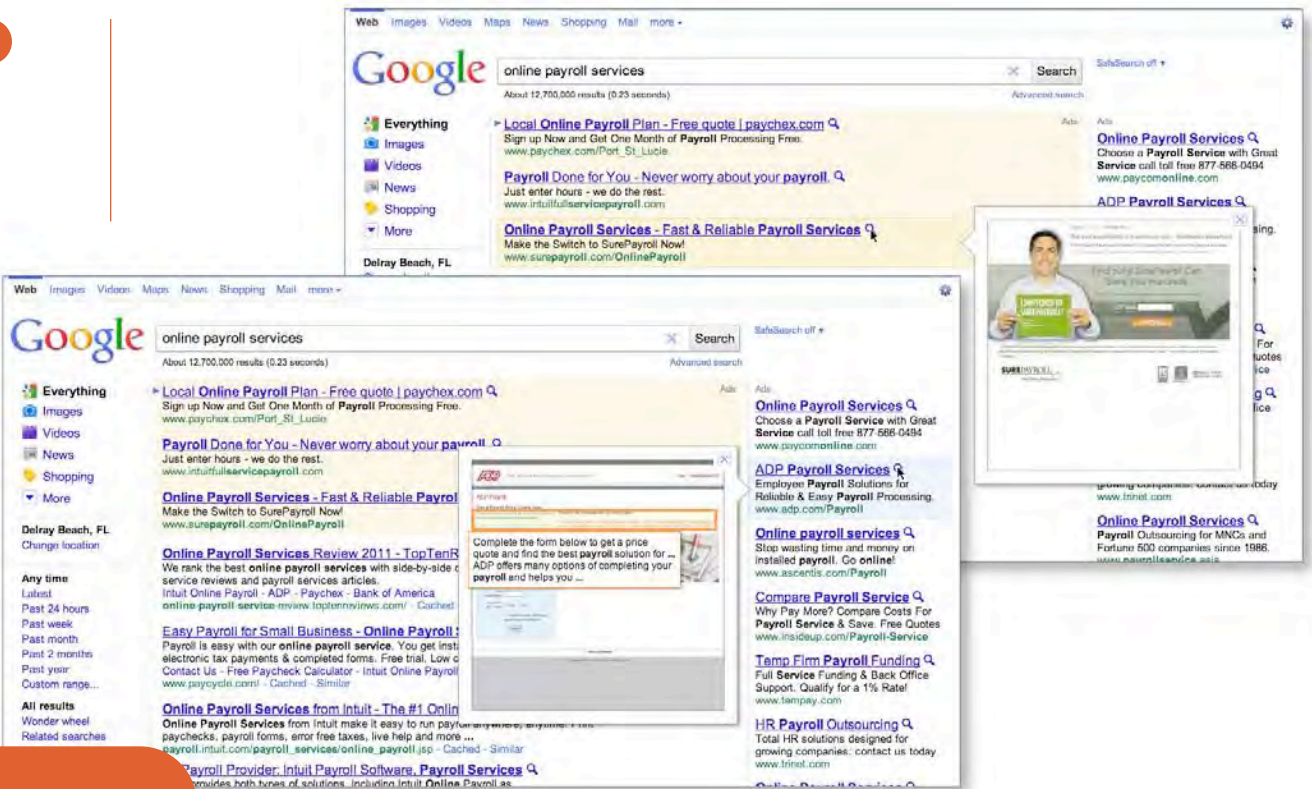


# GUIDE TO GOOGLE INSTANT PREVIEW

## THE NEW IMPORTANCE OF LANDING PAGES

AND THEIR IMPACT ON CLICK-THROUGH RATE (CTR), COST-PER-CLICK (CPC) & POSITION

The screenshot displays a Google search for "georgia health care plans". The search results list several insurance providers, each with a preview of their landing page. The providers include Blue Cross Blue Shield GA, Humana, GoHealth Insurance, and AARP Health Options. The previews show various forms and text related to health insurance plans, such as "Free Quote. Apply Online Today!", "Now Offering 3 New Personal Health Plans for GA Residents", and "Our health plan options include: Affordable monthly premiums; Discounts on medical care; Your choice of doctors." The search results also show the number of results (About 56,900,000) and the time taken to load the results (0.21 seconds).



For marketers, this is the most significant change to come to paid search in nearly a decade.

## Which ad would you click on?

As you read this sentence, someone is using the preview of your landing page to help them decide to click on your ad. How do your landing pages stack up? And how will your paid-search ROI be affected?

Until recently, users searched using Google and decided which listings to click on based upon short text blocks. They had very little information to go on when making that choice. Consequently, they were often disappointed with their subsequent experience, leading to a lot of 'back' button action, low conversion rates, a lot of wasted time and frustration. And a lot of wasted marketing spend as users abandoned after the cost of the click was incurred.

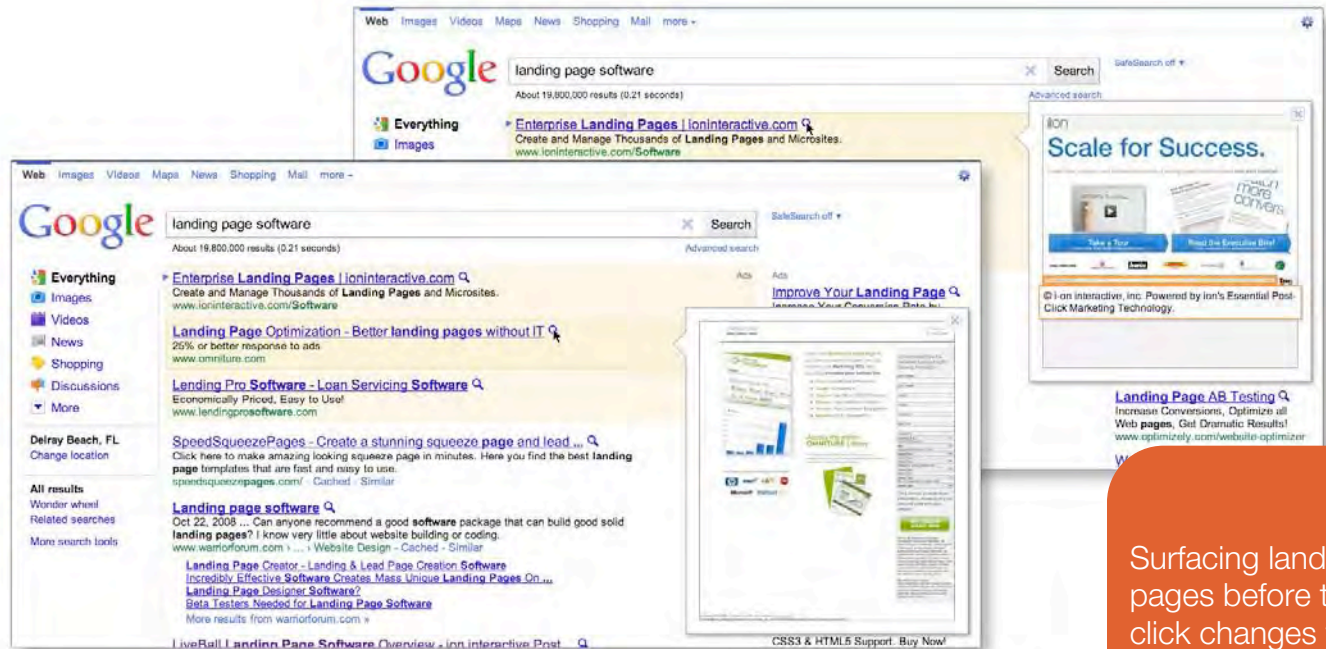
Frustration and waste are not good words on which to base a business — not even a business as entrenched as Google search. Google instant preview improves search by showing users what comes next — before they click — helping them make better choices and waste less time.

With Google instant preview, the search giant has evolved its offering and begun to address the gap between generic search and more specific, targeted alternatives like paid social.

**For marketers, this is the most significant change to come to paid search in nearly a decade.**

# Landing Pages have Become a Pre-Click Force

Prior to Google instant preview, the value of landing pages was almost entirely on the post-click side of the fence. While there's tremendous value and ROI to be derived post-click, surfacing landing pages before the click changes their role entirely. It makes them part of the pre-click decision.

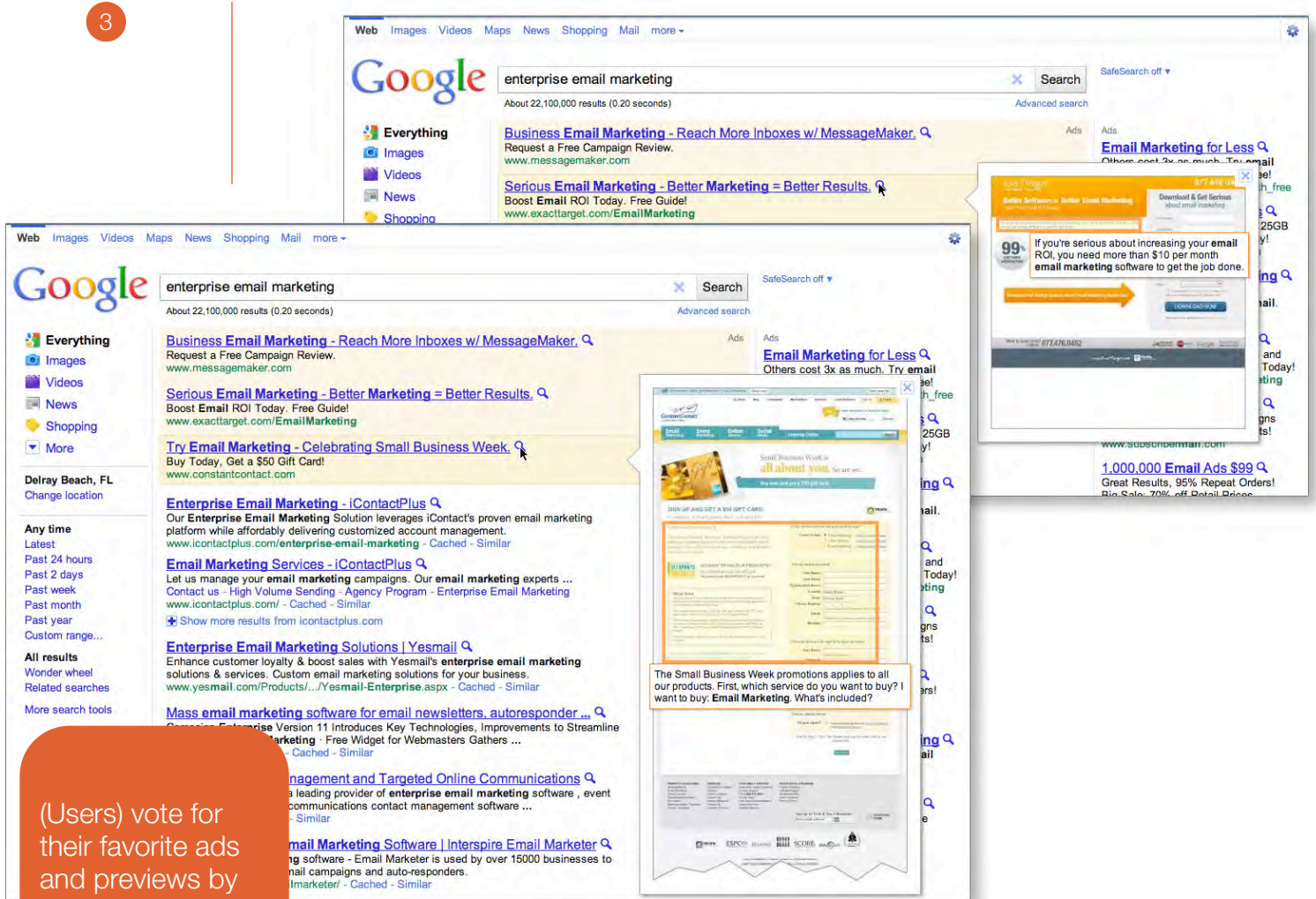


Surfacing landing pages before the click changes their role entirely. It makes them part of the pre-click decision.

## Now Users Have More Information & More Control

Quality score has traditionally been Google's way of evaluating the suitability of landing pages in relation to paid search ads. Users never had a say, until after they clicked. And a high quality score didn't translate into a good user experience. So while quality score may have been better than nothing, it's wasn't a good predictor of user satisfaction. Quality score was an abstract notion — not surfaced to users and not fully understood by advertisers — but rather used by Google in algorithms to help prioritize and maintain some semblance of quality control. In short, Google decided for users, and they were often wrong.





## Preview is revolutionary more than evolutionary.

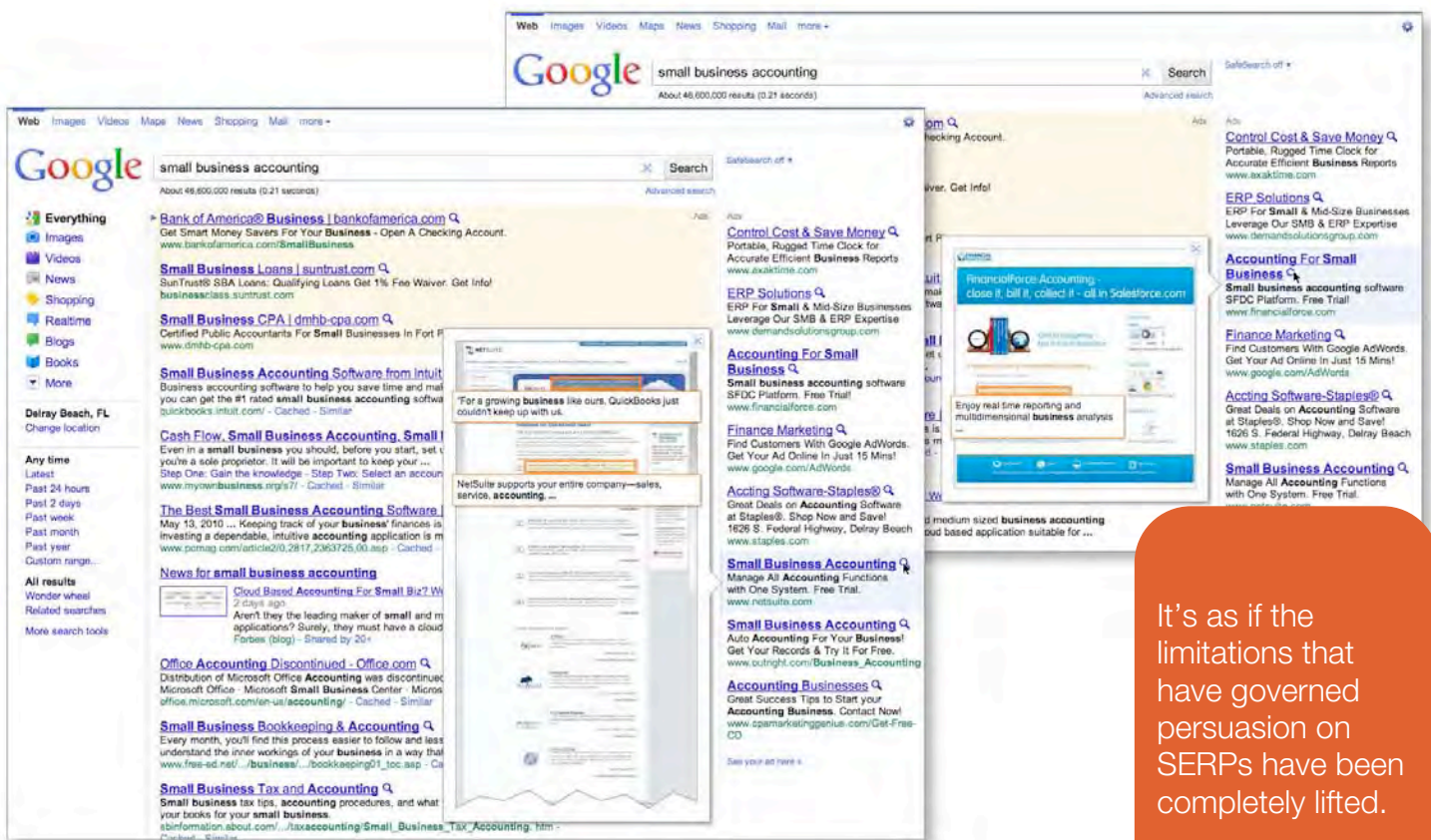
It may be tempting to relegate the importance of instant preview as iterative rather than innovative. So what if you can now see a thumbnail of a page? Before giving it the 'so-what' brush off, consider how instant preview affects search dynamics:

1. Instant preview is **visceral** — it's surfaced to users front and center, before they make a choice
2. Instant preview is a **picture** — rumored in history to be worth at least 1,000 words — far more than your text ad
3. Pictures are **emotional** — people connect more deeply to emotional appeals than intellectual ones
4. Instant preview is new and **dynamic** — once conditioned, users should give it more and more credence over time
5. Instant preview is a **brand opportunity** — even without paying for the click people will see your preview

Instant preview provides a lot more for users to go on. They are in control of assessing what's good, bad or indifferent. They vote for their favorite ads and previews by clicking. And marketers can earn that vote by providing the best, most specific and persuasive landing pages. This is all in stark contrast to quality score.

## Instant preview affects the decision to click.

The statement that 'instant preview affects the decision to click' represents a fantastic new opportunity for search marketers. It's as if the limitations that have governed persuasion on SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages) have been completely lifted. If you have great landing pages mated to your ads, they just became more valuable. If you don't, you've just been presented with an incredible green-field opportunity to take a competitive advantage.



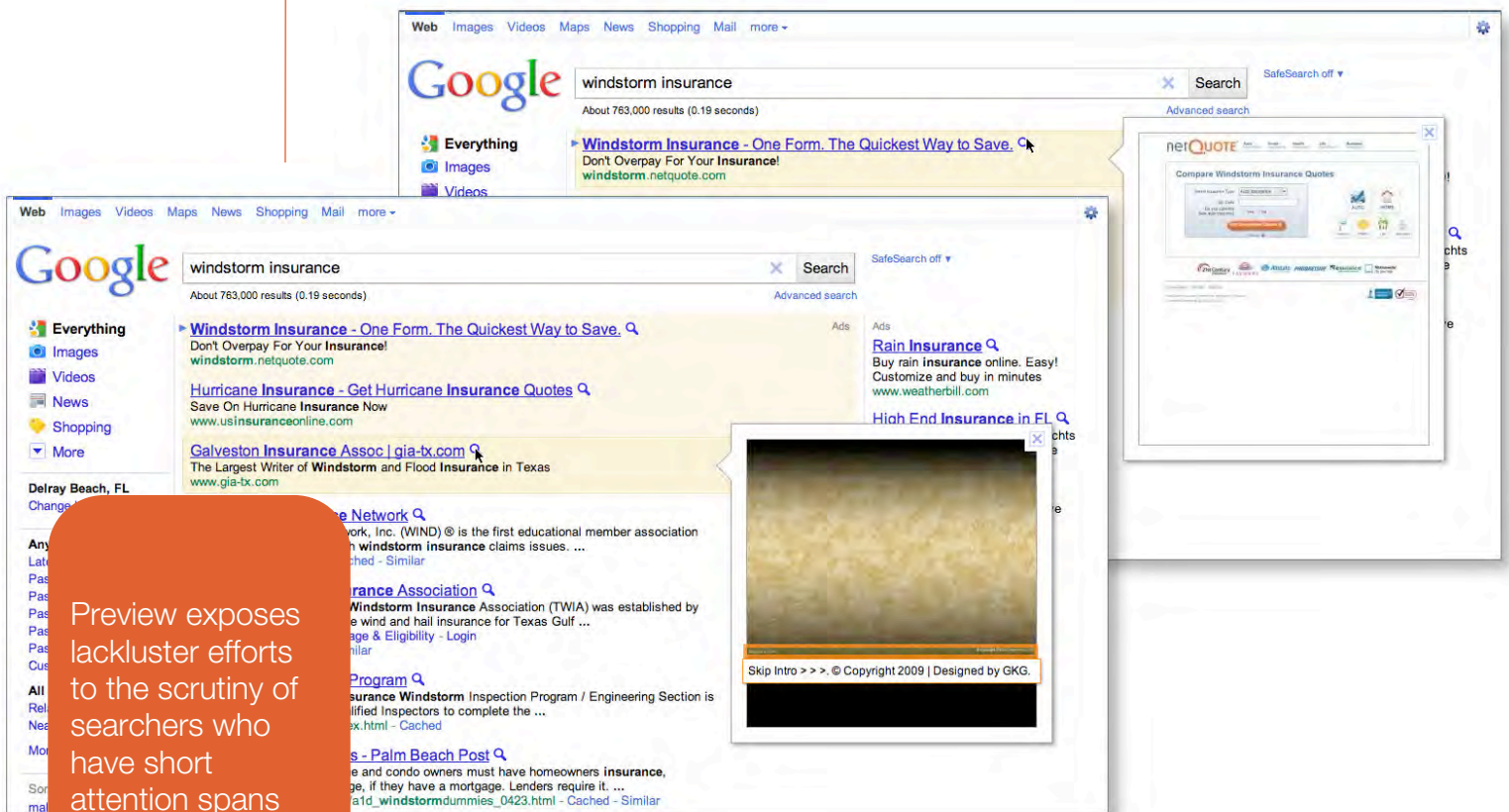
## Differentiation now has a canvas in Google SERPs.

Now, not only can good landing pages compel a click over poor landing pages, but alternative formats of user experiences can be surfaced to visitors in direct competition with others. Now users can make the choice of which looks better to them — a form, a microsite with navigation, a conversion path presenting a simple



choice, or even an organic page? Visual competition for the all-important first impression will dictate whether you even earn a click. The 'landing page' can no longer hide beneath the veil of an equalizing text ad. Differentiation has been given a canvas.

With users in control and a visual canvas at their disposal, marketers have new incentives to make their landing pages great. Now that their pages are competitive weapons that directly impact their click-through-rates (CTR), those pages also begin to affect cost-per-click and ranking.



Preview exposes lackluster efforts to the scrutiny of searchers who have short attention spans and no time to waste. It rewards landing page excellence and penalizes landing page neglect.

If your organization gets by with home-page or deep links into your website, think about how those pages look in preview. If you rely on the tried-and-true long-form landing pages to present one-size-fits-all content, have a look at those long, complex previews and ask yourself if they look inviting. Google instant preview is no equalizer. It elevates concise, simple, targeted pages to a whole new level of prominence. And it exposes lackluster efforts to the scrutiny of searchers who have short attention spans and no time to waste. It rewards landing page excellence and penalizes landing page neglect.

Messaging continuity, concise headlines and engaging visuals are all characteristics of highly successful landing pages. Google instant preview pushes these characteristics right into the searcher's browser and shows them a picture of your effort. If your page matches user expectation, you'll have a good shot at earning

their click. If not, they'll move on to the next ad.

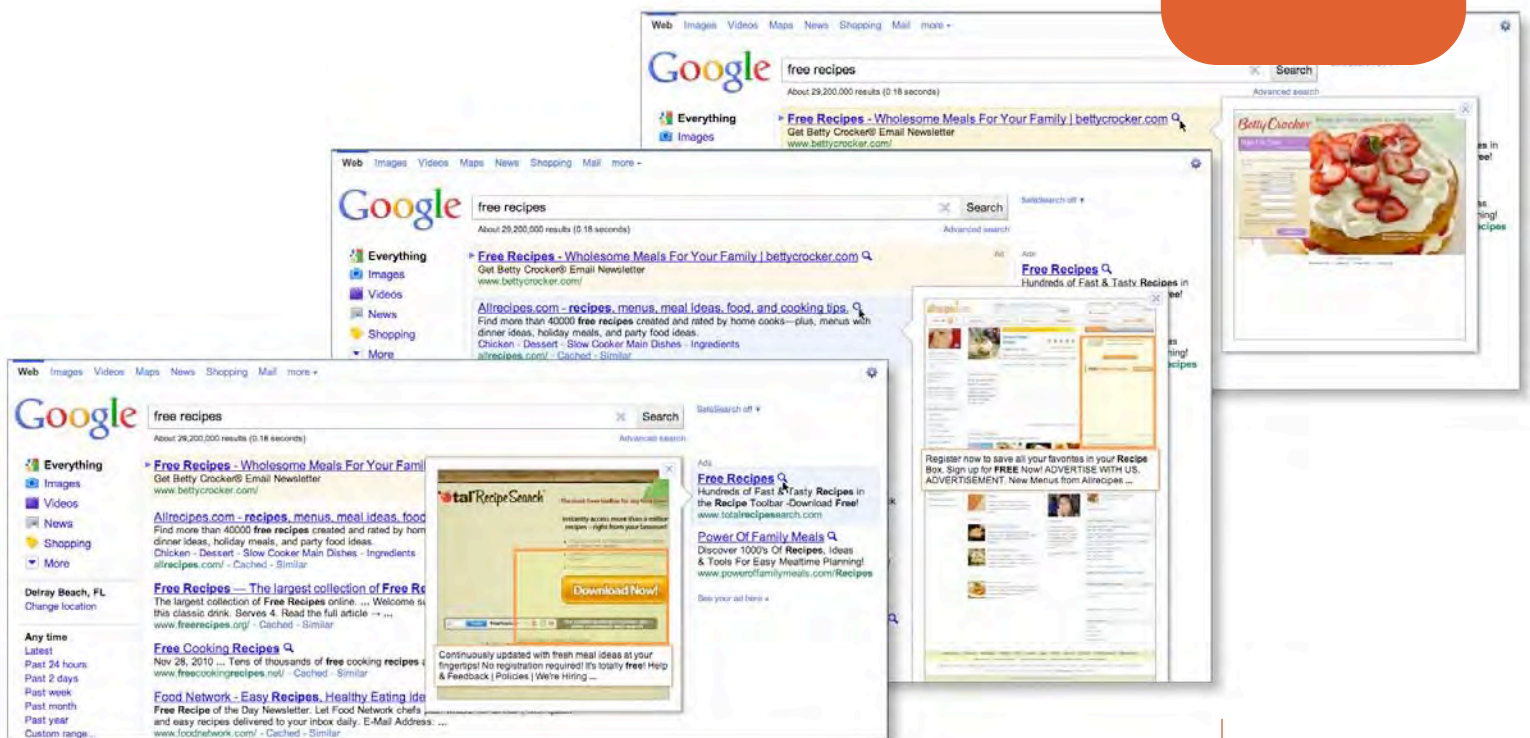
Many successful landing pages are actually multipage experiences. By splitting content up into shorter pages, each page appears less daunting and more inviting. Instant gratification is rewarded in search marketing with high conversion rates and low bounce rates. In order to present a compelling instant preview that suggests instant gratification, the first page of your multipage experience must be short and simple. This makes the preview easy to read and easy to judge as relevant.

### Can paid outflank organic?

Without instant preview, paid ads might be at a disadvantage to organic listings. Despite being positioned in premium spaces, paid ads have less to work with and less credibility than their organically ranked counterparts. With preview, that balance can change.

Organic previews are generally long, cluttered pages loaded with content. While that might be good for getting crawled and ranked, it doesn't look inviting in an instant preview. In comparison to a well-designed landing page, many organically ranked pages can appear heavy and overwhelming. Before we had the previews, those comparisons were mute. With preview, they're inevitable.

Marketers have increased incentives to make their landing pages great. Now that their pages are competitive weapons that directly impact their click-through-rates, those pages also begin to affect cost-per-click and ranking.



*Perhaps there's another new opportunity tucked inside Google's instant preview? Using paid to persuade away from organic? Which one looks tastier to you?*

## Great Landing Pages are Imperative

Without a doubt, the moral to Google's introduction of instant preview is that great

Google has elevated the landing page to become part of the ad — an extension of the promise and a highly persuasive element in a split-second decision.

landing pages are imperative to paid-search success. Pre-click metrics — including cost-per-click (CPC), click-through-rate (CTR) and average position now depend upon a lot more than 135 characters of text. What people click on now depends on what they **see** in addition to what they read in the ad.

And then there's conversion — the ultimate reason most of us buy paid search. Quality landing experiences have always lead to higher conversion rates — more people buying your product, submitting your lead form or following or liking your brand socially. Whatever conversion is for you, best-practice-driven multipage landing experiences will get your search spend to yield more conversions.

Now your incentive is much higher. Incremental conversion rate increase is no longer THE reason to engage in a structured landing page program. Now your pre-click search metrics are directly impacted by your landing pages.

Google has challenged paid-search marketers to improve the user experience. They've elevated the landing page to become part of the ad — an extension of the promise and a highly persuasive element in a split-second decision.

The dynamics of search marketing have been forever changed. Google instant previews makes a structured landing page program absolutely essential for paid search success.



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# Catch more fish.

Manage Enterprise-Scale  
Post-Click Campaigns  
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# LiveBall software...

LiveBall is software for a whole new breed of marketer.  
From a whole new kind of marketing technology company.

It's software for marketers and agencies that helps them catch more fish.

LiveBall optimizes the performance of online campaigns by delivering ideal user experiences.

With LiveBall, anyone can make & optimize conversion-focused, user experiences — without code, developers or help from the IT department. There's nothing to install, nothing to maintain, nothing to worry about.

LiveBall turns post-click friction into freedom by delivering enterprise-scale marketing agility. Subscribe to LiveBall and start making and optimizing post-click campaigns.



- **Produce & launch** brand-standard multi-page post-click experiences — microsites, conversion paths & landing pages — without code or developers
- **Target & track** content, offers and forms with codeless segmentation & conditional rules
- **Test & optimize in real time** using instant, integrated A/B and multivariate methods



"As soon as we get statistical significance on a test, we drive immediately to a champion in real time. On Mother's Day alone, the real-time change in traffic splits resulted in over \$45,000 in incremental revenue."

*Tessa Fraser*  
Interactive Marketing Manager, AG Interactive, Inc.

## ...and services to ensure your success.

You want to maximize your PPC, email, social, affiliate, direct and online advertising results. You're in the right place. Our services can help you get the most out of your LiveBall subscription by giving you all the expertise you need to be successful.

ion has been delivering technology-driven online marketing services since 1997. We're passionate about helping our customers achieve success. From implementation to optimization, our team will help you make LiveBall an integrated and productive piece of your digital marketing program.

### When it comes to post-click marketing, we've got your back—and your ROI.

Some of our service packages are outlined below. When you subscribe to LiveBall, let us know which services make sense for you. Not sure? We can help you figure it out.

Service	LiveBall Support	Smart Launch	Post-Click Coaching	Full Service	Custom Engagements
<b>Description</b>	We train & support you	We do the initial work to get you off on the right foot	Strategic and tactical guidance to maximize results	We manage & execute your post-click programs	Personalized professional services based on your needs
<b>Your Need</b>	Using LiveBall	Expert help launching LiveBall	Expert guidance	Ongoing landing page management & testing	Let's talk
<b>Timeline</b>	Lifetime of your subscription	2-6 weeks	2+ months	4+ months	Based on needs
<b>Price</b>	Free!	\$5,900	From \$2,500 / month	From \$12,200 / month	Based on scope



"I love LiveBall. We use it to convert our paid search, email marketing and even online quizzes to leads. Our SEM conversion rate is up to over 15%, our leads are higher quality and we've reduced our spend by two-thirds."

*Sally Lowery  
Internet Marketing Manager, Bronto Software*





### LiveBall gives marketers the power & freedom to optimize.

#### For marketers. By marketers.

Point, click and change it. Change what? Everything — forms, text, images, Flash, links, brands, page layouts, SEO controls — you name it.

#### Testing without code or IT

Test it all. LiveBall delivers sophisticated testing without code or developers. Launch A/B or MVT in three clicks.

#### Industry-leading forms

LiveBall includes an agile, flexible, sophisticated no-code forms engine. Make flexible, world-class forms all by yourself.

#### Unparalleled SEO features

Nine ground-breaking features that make LiveBall the most search-friendly post-click platform.

#### Clear, actionable reporting

Effortlessly get meaningful, real-time reports as HTML, PDF or Excel XLS and automatically send them to colleagues.

#### Mobile optimization

Every user deserves an ideal experience. LiveBall keeps that promise by optimizing for the latest mobile devices.

#### Flexible, branded templates

'Template' is no longer a dirty word — not even in the most creative circles. LiveBall includes proven, flexible page templates — custom-branded for you.

#### Flexible conditional logic

Design your own if/then statements for advanced logic — trigger actions from 31 different conditions — code-free.

#### Asset management

LiveBall centralizes images, Flash, fulfillment, forms, email responders, tags and templates, so it's easy to reuse them.

#### Seamless data sharing

Export to Salesforce.com, post to a form, send email, a delimited or vCard file — LiveBall gets your data where you need it.

#### Flexible open integration

LiveBall customers mix and match components in their own loosely coupled architecture to attain best-of-breed status in each key sales & marketing area.

#### LiveBall usability

LiveBall gets out of your way — saving you time & resources at every step. Even the training is fast.

### LiveBall is cloud-based, marketer-friendly and scalable.

Enterprise-class software-as-a-service (SaaS) is reliable, easy to buy and easy to live with. With LiveBall, you simply order your solution, we provision it and get you started, you just log in and use it. You pay based only on the number of unique visitors you send to your LiveBall pages — from 10,000 to millions per month — starting at \$1,295 per month.

- **Content management** — make all the pages you want
- **Testing** — powerful A/B and multivariate testing
- **Reporting** — real-time analytics at your fingertips
- **Hosting** — go live in minutes
- **Support** — high-touch service from nice people
- **Users** — everyone in your company can use it
- **Quick start** — everything you need to get started fast

- **Unlimited seats** — everyone can use LiveBall
- **Unlimited pages** — create and launch all the pages you want
- **Unlimited visits** — multiple visits from a unique count as one
- **Unlimited testing** — run all of the code-free tests you want
- **Unlimited support** — via phone & email — for one user



1.888.ion.idea (466.4332) or +01.561.394.9484 outside the U.S. & Canada

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Look who's powered by ion's LiveBall platform:

