

BP makes move to influence consumers' views on oil spill

By [Matthew Whiteway](#)

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London, UK: British Petroleum (BP) has purchased Google and Yahoo search terms in order to influence consumers' views on the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. To some the move could be a very clever public relations move; to others it may be more a matter of trying to hide the truth about the ecological disaster.



According to Matthew Whiteway, director of campaign management (paid search) at Greenlight, a UK-based independent search marketing agency, BP's buying up keywords in the search engines could be viewed by some as a PR masterstroke. Others will feel it is just a desperate attempt to stop the public from finding out the true damage of the disaster. From a search perspective, however, this is the best move BP could have made to protect its image under the current circumstances.

"BP's purchase of Google and Yahoo search terms in order to influence consumers' views on the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is clearly a move to try to protect its brand image following the catastrophe of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, turning to paid search in an attempt to present a more compassionate image. With BP buying top position in paid search, it hopes to drive users to its corporate response page, which attempts to paint a more positive picture of the BP brand," says Whiteway.

Vast majority of comments are negative

Whiteway says that excluding the paid search listing in the results page, 95% of the listings are very negative. A search in Google for "BP Oil Spill" presents the user with a number of listings that are being very cynical of BP, including YouTube clips of the impact the disaster has had on the local area and its wildlife.

"Today, internet users expect to get up-to-the-minute reports on world events and the recent oil spill is no exception. People now turn to search engines to find out information, read reports, and watch videos on latest events. Recent search trends for terms such as "oil spill" show the level of interest in the events in the Gulf of Mexico. Whilst some would argue that BP is trying to deflect attention away from damage the oil spill has caused, others will agree BP is just giving internet users the

information they are looking for; after all, users are not forced to click on the paid search advert," says Whiteway, adding: "Paid search is the quickest way to see tangible results in online marketing. From a search perspective, this is the best move BP could have made to protect its image under the current circumstances."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matthew Whiteway is director of campaign management at Greenlight. With over eight year's online experience, Whiteway has a wealth of knowledge and strategic know how. His experience stems from previous roles at Yell.com and 192.com where he was responsible for the online marketing efforts of a number of blue-chip clients. Greenlight is an independent specialist SEO and PPC consulting and technology firm, believed to be the largest of its kind in Europe and also believed to be the fastest growing. The company has more than 100 blue-chip clients including Vodafone UK, Nespresso, New Look, Thomas Cook, Interflora, Co-operative Financial Services and ghd, and a multitude of awards to its name and is a leader in the search marketing space, being recognised for its commitment to delivering record ROI for its clients and investing in the future of search. Go to [\[www.greenlightsearch.com\]](http://www.greenlightsearch.com).

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