



Adthena

Industry Trends Report Spring 2021

Signals from search in five key verticals



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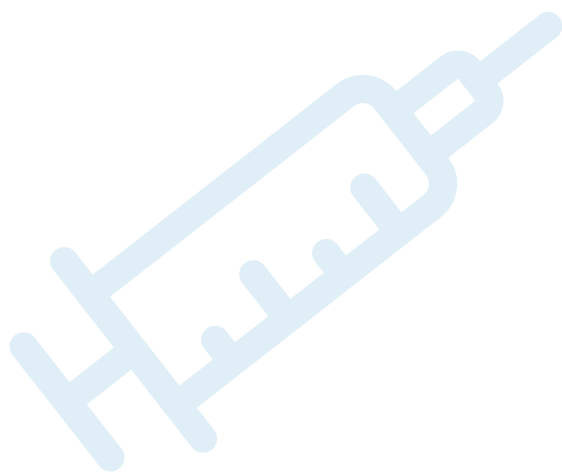
Introduction

Lockdowns, vaccines and hope driving spring trends

As we approach the one year marker since the coronavirus pandemic swept the world, we take a look at the rising and falling popularity of key search terms over the last four seasons. Search intelligence from the Adthema platform reveals high-level insights into customer behavior and mindset, as well as emerging opportunities across the industries.

Worldwide, online shopping has boomed, with e-commerce in the U.S. growing more in the first half of last year than it had [in the previous ten](#). Consumers are adapting to online car buying, continuing to invest in their homes (and scrambling to buy new ones), taking extra precautions before investing in new technologies, and planning vacations in fits and starts.

In this report, discover key competitive trends by industry, and set yourself up for PCC success this spring and beyond.

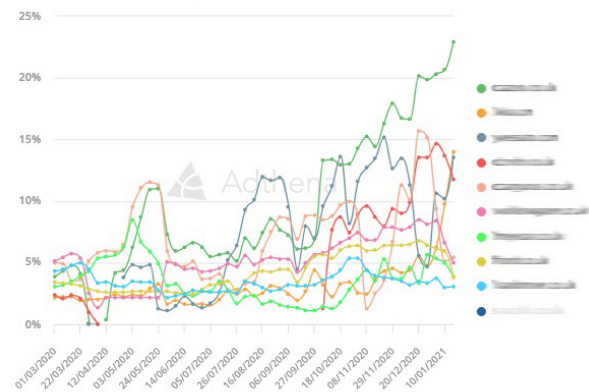


Automotive: dealing in digital transformation

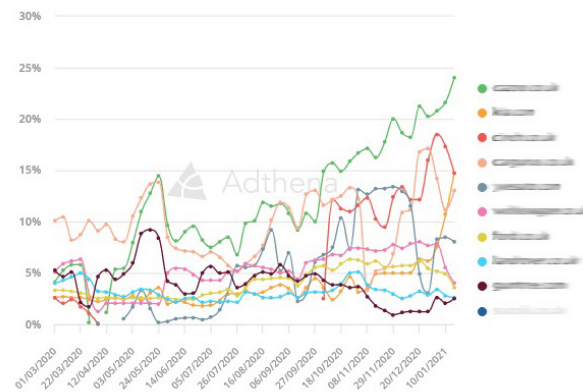
With lockdown after lockdown around the world, industries across the board have been affected as demand has soared for doing business digitally. The automotive sector, where potential buyers are accustomed to heading to dealerships and taking a car for the all-important test drive, is no exception. Auto brands had to adapt quickly last year to establish a strong online presence.

In March 2020, when the first lockdown moved everyone indoors, dealerships shut down in the name of public health. Since then, they have been able to remain open with the proper precautions, which led to a drastic increase in competition for clicks and higher CPCs.

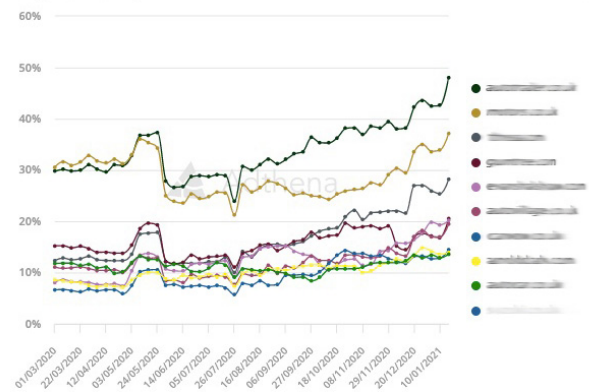
Paid Desktop (Text ads)



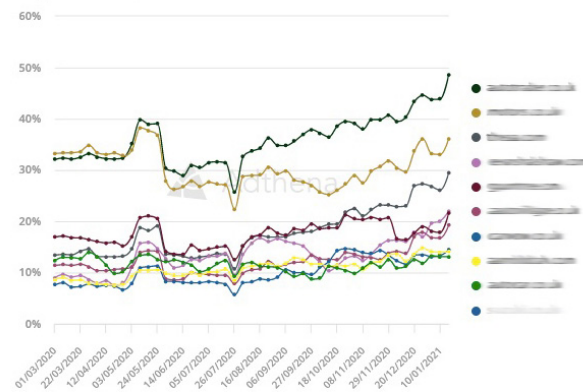
Paid Mobile (Text ads)



Organic Desktop



Organic Mobile



Dealership generic terms from March 2020 to January 2021 across Paid & Organic, Desktop & Mobile



Even though dealerships are now open, when we dive into activity quarter over quarter, Adthema data reveals increases across key search terms in Q4. In the UK for example, when compared to Q3, the number of advertisements where dealers bid on the terms 'online car dealers UK' and 'online car sales UK' increased by 76.4%. Within the same time frame, the number of ads referencing 'online' in the text grew 156% — which shows just how quickly marketers adapted to moving sales to digital.

Ad [redacted]
Used Cars From [redacted] Search A Wide Range Of Quality Cars And Buy Online. We...

Used Cars For Sale - Over 4000 Cars In Stock

Ad [redacted]
Used Cars From [redacted] Search A Wide Range Of Quality Cars And Buy Online. We Thoroughly Inspect And Fully Recondition All Our Cars To Make Sure You Love Yours

Used Cars For Sale - Over 4000 Cars In Stock

Ad [redacted]
Used Cars From [redacted] Search A Wide Range Of Quality Cars And Buy Online

Used Cars - Complete Peace of Mind

Ad [redacted]
Giving you the same exceptional level of service as a new car customer. Explore online.

new car offers - The Choose Brighter ...

Ad [redacted]
Register for downloadable voucher online. Orders 17/12/20 - 01/02/21. Excludes Mii. electric...


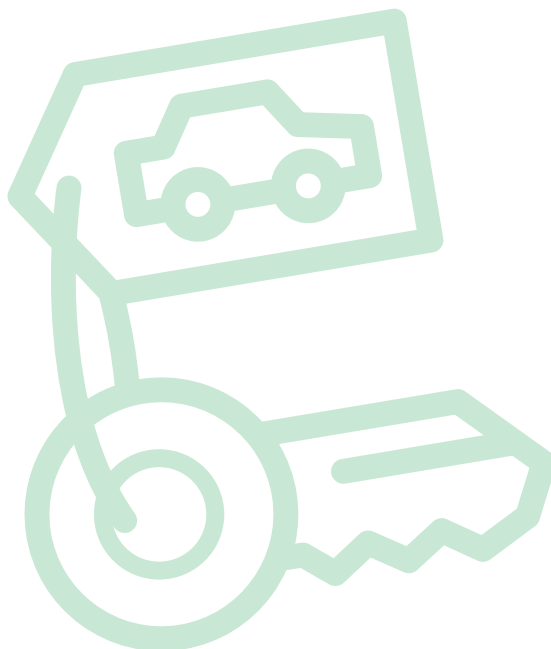
Dealership Top Ads with 'online' featured

Next steps for marketers

When auto brands revisit their 2021 strategy, they'll be looking to ensure they can manage their dealerships in a way that doesn't cannibalize their own search activity, and still compete in the same space as the car-buying comparison sites.

To prepare for the days ahead, marketers should take the time to:

- Use search intelligence to analyze dealership activity and note overlaps.
- Focus on locations where brand activity sees a boost in performance.
- Develop a whole-market strategy to ensure that all clicks are optimized.



+156%

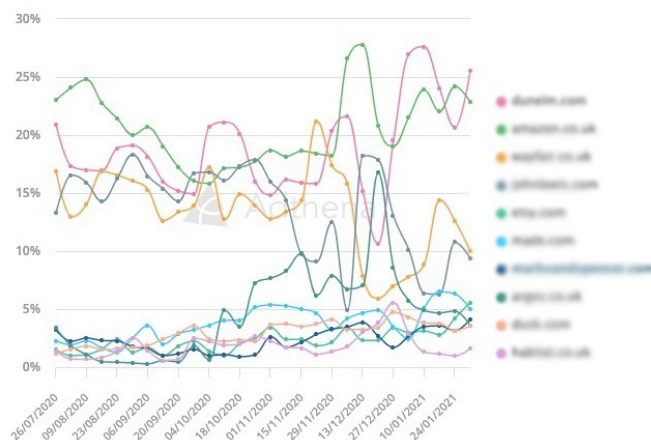
The increase in auto ads referencing 'online' from Q3 to Q4 2020.



Retail: another home run for homeware

In the second half of 2020, consumers continued to invest more in the places they spent the most time — their own homes — and homewares continued to hit it out of the park with constant high demand. If we look at homeware search terms over the last 6 months, we can see that large retailers took aggressive bids over the holiday stretch and managed to take clicks away from current market dominators across Product Listing Ads (PLA).

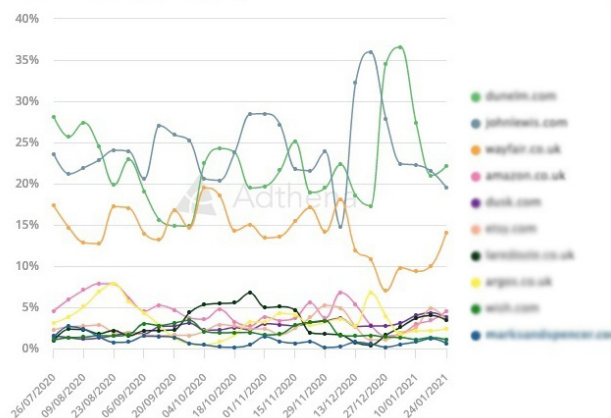
Paid Mobile (Text ads)



Homeware terms, share of clicks Aug 2020 - January 2021

When it comes to clothing, however, the market remained densely competitive throughout the high season in PLA, save for one competitor who enjoyed a 34% increase in share of clicks. The Text Ad market for clothing remained exceptionally competitive, with a steady increase in share of clicks across the top 10 competitors.

Total PLA (Google Shopping)



Clothing, share of clicks, Aug 2020 - January 2021, excluding all competitor brand terms



+34%

The increase in market share one leading clothing competitor enjoyed during the high season in PLA.

Next steps for marketers

The holidays always see an uptick in PLA competition, but to make the most of seasonal retail trends in paid search, marketers should take care to:

- Prioritize online presence — it's an essential, not a 'nice to have'.
- Optimize their PPC budget for the greatest impact, and determine which key search terms are the most efficient.
- Have a clear idea of their investment across Text Ad and PLA, and where they can maximise ROI.



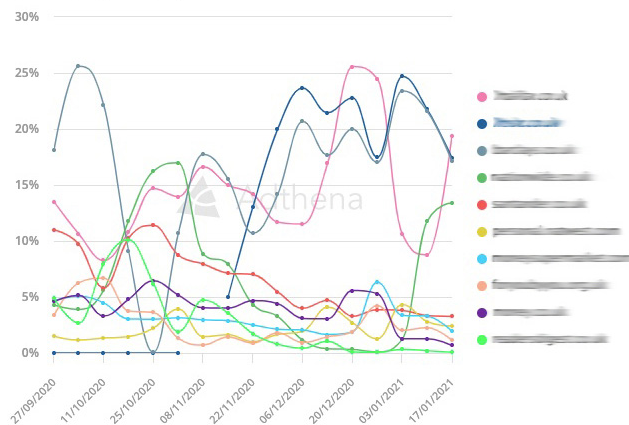
Finance: a race against the clock

To give the housing market a little extra help during the pandemic, in July 2020 the UK government lifted 'stamp duty' property tax for the first £500,000 of all property sales in England and Northern Ireland. The welcomed relief is set to expire on March 31, 2021.

With the deadline just around the corner, prospective buyers are running out of time to make the most of the government-led offer. In turn, share of spend and share of impressions in the mortgage market have grown to be more competitive in the past few months, as potential homeowners attempt to take advantage of the time that remains.

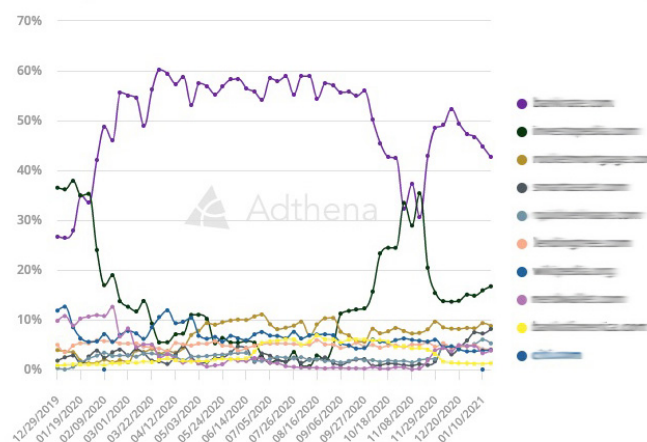
Across the pond, the US saw housing prices skyrocket more in 2020 than in any other year since 2005, despite there being no incentive for buyers. In Q4, the market had an influx of competitors for PPC, whereas organic had only one competitor dominate through the year. Aside from one competitor, all other top 10 rivals lost share of clicks in the period from Q3 to Q4.

Total Paid (Text ads)



Mortgage generic terms, UK October 2020 - January 2021

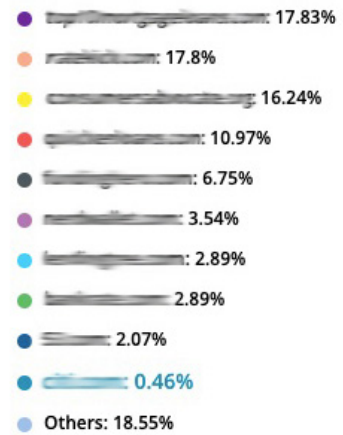
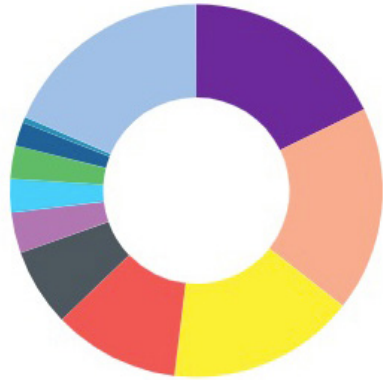
Total Organic



US terms - mortgage application, mortgage loan, mortgage, January 2020 - January 2021



Total Paid (Text ads)



US mortgage, Share of clicks, Q3 2020

Next steps for marketers

As we slowly head into spring, marketers looking to take advantage of these upward trends in home buying should also take care to:

- Ensure messaging grabs attention in a crowded marketplace by revisiting ad copy.
- Understand which terms deliver the highest ROI, and which can be implemented into their own campaigns.
- Monitor market trends to uncover any new opportunities in market share, and do a deep analysis on competitor strategies.



Tech: digital security rising in the ranks

With many people working from home and investing in faster Wi-Fi and ergonomic home office equipment, tech has become central and essential throughout the pandemic. But consumers aren't comfortable bringing just any new technology into their own homes.

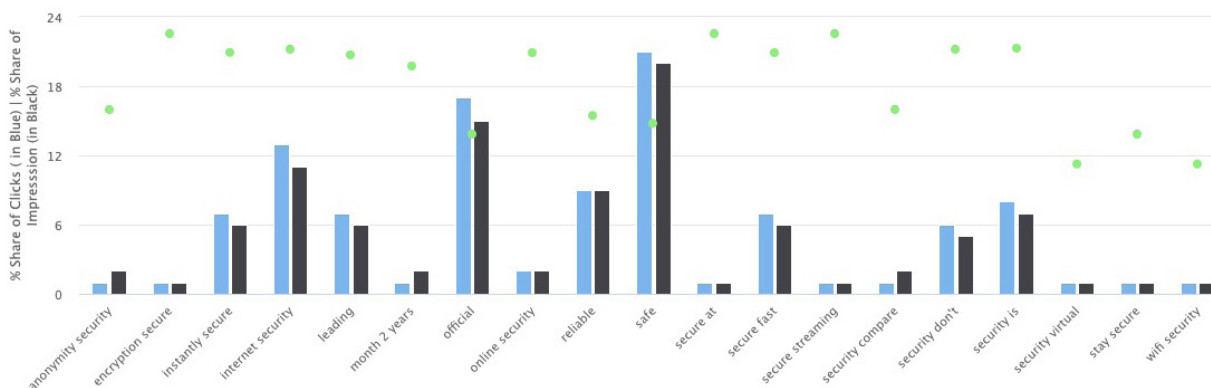
Search trends show that digital safety is top of mind for buyers, who want to make sure that they have the most secure tools available to them.

Messages emphasizing the safety features of tech products — such as terms like 'safe' — are delivering the greatest number of clicks. Other phrases that give consumers peace of mind, such as 'reliable' and 'stay secure' feature the highest number of competitors.

Though this search trend on tech safety is shared across the US and the UK, competition in the US is more varied, with the clicks spread across a wider range of phrases.



US phrases competition desktop



UK safety messaging top phrases on desktop



Next steps for marketers

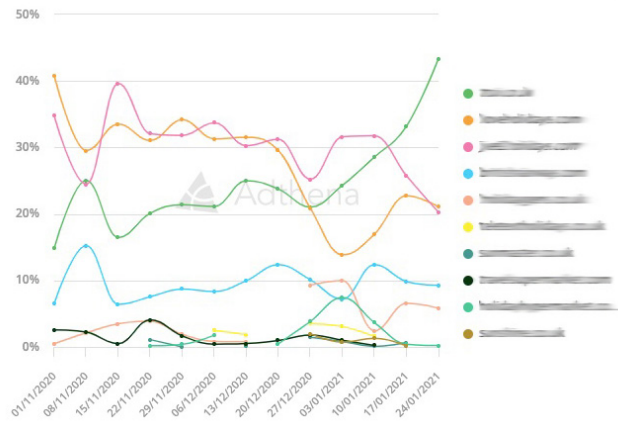
As remote work will continue to be a part of our lives in one way or another for some time to come, marketers should act carefully to make the most of this trend.

- Review ad copy, making sure that text has the maximum effect and includes references to digital security.
- Look for gaps in the market where there are fewer competitors, but higher average positions.
- Review messaging that has a higher impression share than share of clicks, and rework for greater impact.



Travel: dreams of jet-setting rise and fall

Total Paid (Text ads)



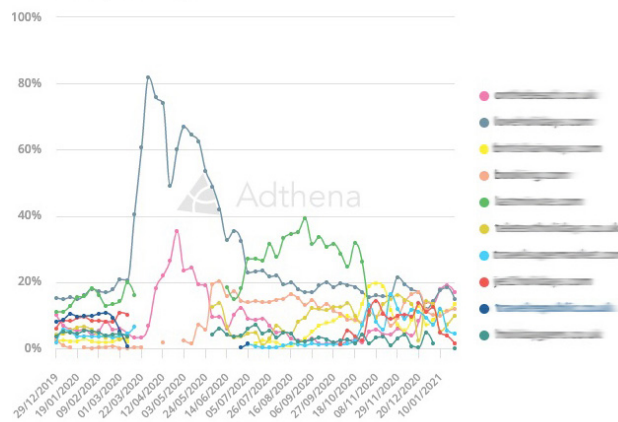
Summer holidays terms

When news of the first vaccine approval hit in the second week of November, future holiday bookings started to rise, with travelers looking forward to the 2021 summer holidays. However, when the reality of the vaccination program roll-out sunk in, people realized that things weren't going to pick up as quickly as they thought, and the trend flattened out before a new surge of hope fueled a second rise in January.

During this time, the UK closed its borders to all, and the government expanded its list of 'no-travel' countries. As more people began dreaming of getaways, it's no surprise that 'UK summer holidays' saw an increase in demand across the holiday season and on through to January.

Of course, getaways weren't the only type of travel affected. With a double hit from the pandemic and the economy, business travel also plummeted. As rules, regulations, and fines increased in severity, the uptick

Total Paid (Text ads)



Holiday generic terms - more competition in Jan 2021 than in 2020

in demand was met with a decrease in advertisements. Adthema data shows a 58% drop in the number of ads when comparing January 2021 to January of the year before.

Next steps for marketers

Warmer days are around the corner, but the pandemic regulations can be unpredictable. To be well-prepared, marketers should keep in mind that:

- Consumers are looking ahead, and planning much further out than they had before. Check whether offerings are aligned and reflect demand.
- Flexibility is key. Marketers should always be prepared to pivot as regulations change, and adapt to make the most of any opportunity.
- Tapping into current trends such as 'staycations' will be key to the success of your campaigns.



-58%

the drop in the number of travel ads in January 2021 compared to January of the year before.



Summary

Stay on your toes in 2021.

Although most businesses have already acclimatized to the fluctuating consumer behavior following lockdowns and the start of vaccination programs, some have been quicker to pivot than others. Yet, as we take an even longer-term view of the pandemic, we see an emerging story of resilience and adaptation.

Based on similar economic movements in the past, increasing consumer confidence will likely bring with it a storm of [‘revenge shopping’](#) and marketers need to be prepared to capture the surge in demand. But until then, they’ll be faced with the familiar challenges from 2020, and should focus on maintaining their adaptability, flexibility, and investment in digital.

As the world navigates through uncertain times like these, keeping a pulse on competitors and global search trends is more important than ever. Find out how Adthena can help your business gather and act on the insights you need to stay informed, and stay on top.

Read more on our [Industry Pages](#).



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