Prospectus

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About Koios

Koios is dedicated to preserving access to public information, primarily by assisting public libraries with online discoverability and analytics. We conduct independent research, and offer consultation. Our support for libraries extends to library advocacy groups and other public information advocates.

Overview

Libraries are increasingly developing their online community outreach. The best way to reach your *whole* community is by advertising on Google – using a grant from Google to pay for it. If you don't already know about Google Ad Grants, let us introduce you.

Google for Nonprofits offers several programs to qualified nonprofits. One of these, Google Ad Grants, offers up to $10,000 *per month* in advertising credit. You apply once, and it continues indefinitely. With active management, these ads can reliably bring in 5,000 or more visitors per month to your website, most of whom are new. US public libraries are eligible through their Friend group or Foundation. Canadian public libraries registered as charities with the Canada Revenue Agency are eligible.

Clicks on ads bring people to your website. These are people who were probably not looking for a library – but they were looking for *something*, and, by advertising on Google, you can reach these people at their point of need. For many libraries, visitors brought in by these ads represent 15%, 20%, often more, of *total* website traffic.

It is also equitable. If you use email for outreach, for example, you communicate with your existing patrons; social media posts also go to a self-identified group. But advertising on Google reaches everybody, it is the clearest way to reach the most diverse audience.

Koios works with libraries to get the grant, then manages the Google Ads account to really make it work. This includes exposing a library's catalog to online searches, a resource that is otherwise invisible to online searches.

Ads for Libraries

Libraries are a great fit for Google Ads

- Libraries have the information people are actively searching for
- Ads reach people outside a library's patron base
- Ads bring people directly to resources
- Libraries are trusted, so people click on ads at a high rate
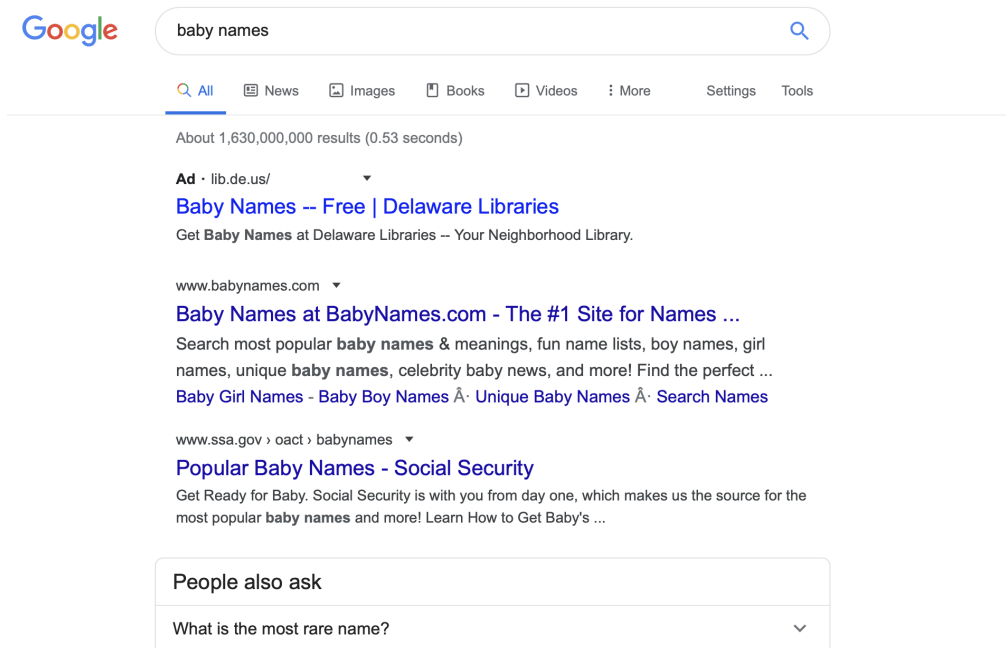
A Google search for 'baby names' brings up an ad, followed by organic results. Google makes its money from advertising, so ads float to the top, where a click is more likely.

The Google Ads platform is intended for commercial advertisers, but libraries are well positioned to benefit. A huge inventory makes library catalogs relevant to a wide array of searches. Click rates for libraries are high (12% for Koios members where 3% is the industry average). Ads can be geo-targeted to a library service area – there is no better way for a library to reach new people online.

Scenario

Libraries are more innovative than many people realize, offering a wide array of programs and resources. It is not always easy to guide people to resources within a website hierarchy, but ads can make people aware of these resources, and bring them directly to an interior page that relates to a specific interest. At Koios, we create campaigns to bring attention to specific web pages.

In the US, for example, many libraries are authorized by the US State Department to provide passport services, but the public mostly does not know it. Our campaign features a set of ads to promote the service, for example:

Passport Services | Kansas City Public Library - kclibrary.org
Ad www.kclibrary.org/ ▼
We Promote Lifelong Learning And Literacy For A More Vibrant Community. Visit Today! Pursue Your Interests At The **Library**. Free To Residents, Commuters and Students. Search Catalog. Subscribe To Newsletter. Highlights: Customer Service Available, A Digital **Library** Branch Available.

Clicking on the ad brings the user directly to the Passport Services page at the library.
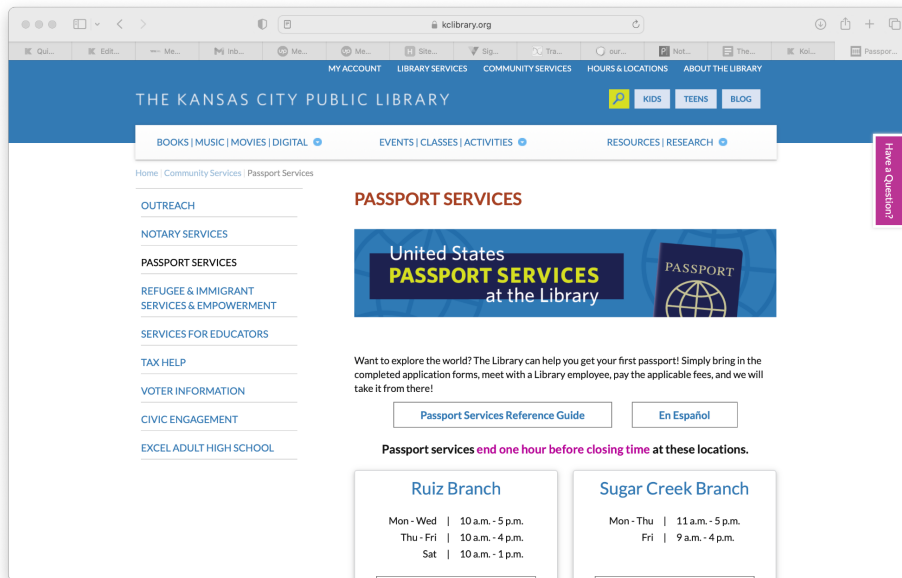
Passport Services at Kansas City Public Library. A click on an ad brings the user directly to the relevant resource.

Catalogs

Online catalogs encompass thousands of ideas, which should make them the most effective way to bring people, who are searching online for information, to a library website. But catalogs reside in databases that Google does not crawl, and are invisible to online searches. Transforming a catalog into many thousands of ads makes it visible.

Here is an ad that might appear in Google search results from a query for "Abraham Lincoln".

Clicking on the ad takes the user to a results page that shows items in the catalog related to "Lincoln".

Results page for 'Lincoln"-- connects a user with relevant catalog records.

Management

Google Ads is Google's flagship product, it brings Google nearly all of its income. The Google Ads interface is complex, designed to meet the needs of commercial advertisers who may spend thousands or even millions of dollars on advertising each month. A library can get an Ad Grant from Google, but, in most cases, library staff do not have the time to manage a Google Ads account. At Koios, we have invested the time to learn the Google Ads platform, and to exercise fully Google's monthly Ad Grant allocation. We are certified by Google as Ad Grants Professionals, and maintain our Google Partner badge.

We provide libraries a simple online reporting dashboard, which shows account performance, and places it in context with Google Analytics.
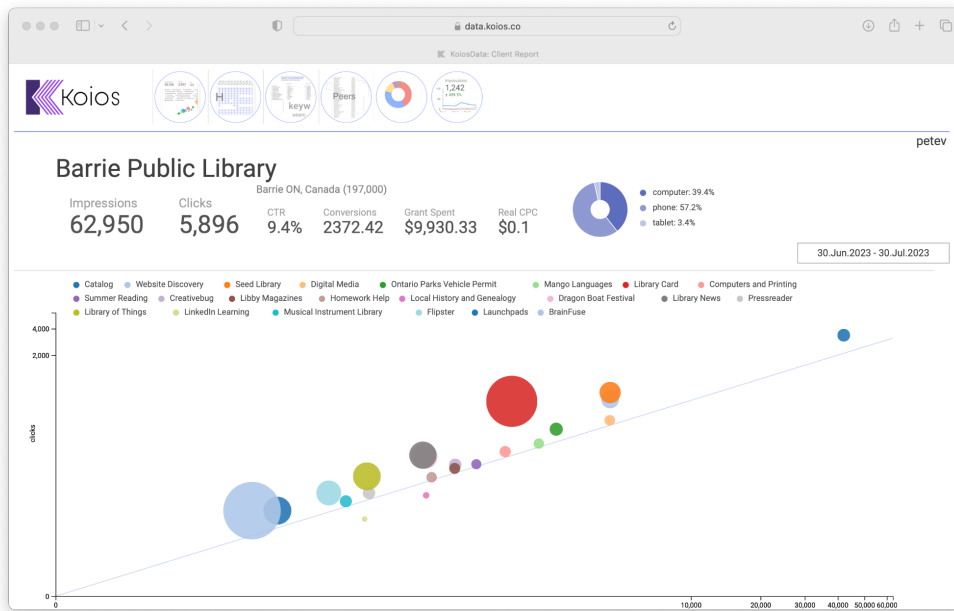
Campaign view for Barrie (Ontario) Public Library, July 2023, showing performance of 22 campaigns, impressions, clicks, and total spend. Clicks bring visitors to library websites.

To see the impact of these ads, we show a Google Analytics report. Traffic brought in by Koios (Paid Ads) is shown in an Acquisition donut chart (below). Its proportion will vary, depending on a library's size; for a large library, with a service population over a million, it will be under 10%; for small libraries (service population under 20,000) it is usually over 50%.
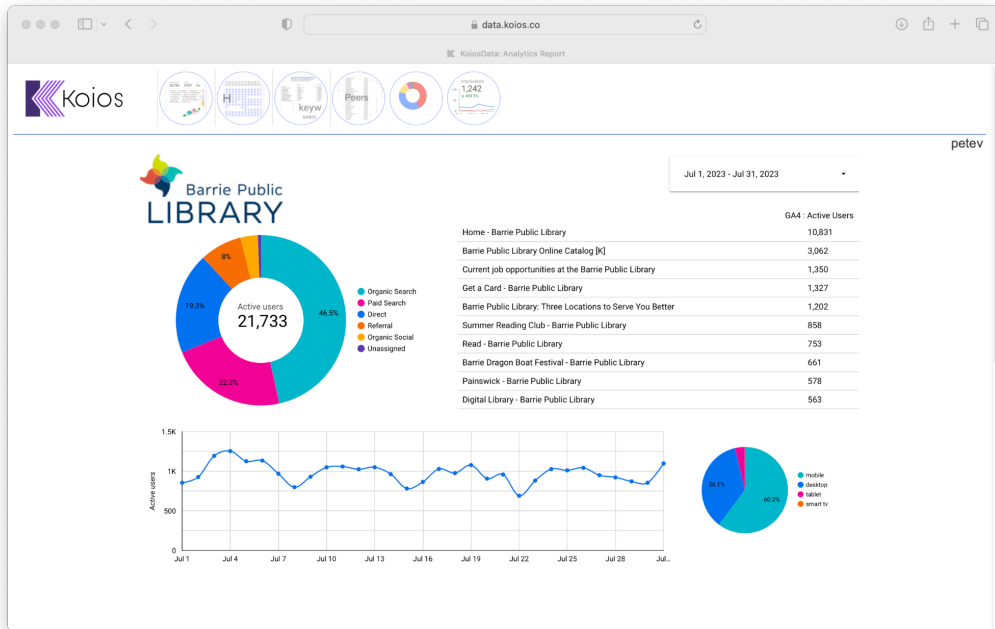
Google Analytics for Barrie Public Library (Ontario, Canada, service population 198,000). It shows that Koios (Paid Ads) brought in over 22% of the library's *total* website traffic in the same period.

Results - One Year

Google places text ads in its search results page (impressions). An advertiser is charged when the ad is clicked; the cost of a click varies with market demand, but the average cost of a click is $2 USD. A Google Ad Grant can promise, nominally, 5,000 clicks per month; these clicks result in website visits. The addition of 60,000 website visits in a year are significant for a small library; for a large library, the primary value of these clicks is in highlighting out-of-the-way resources and exposing catalog records.

Example: Champaign, IL – 90K service population in central Illinois. Koios brings in 26% of total website traffic, delivering, in a year, almost a million impressions, and highlighting resources like YouTube, Driver's Ed resources, Digital Media, and others.
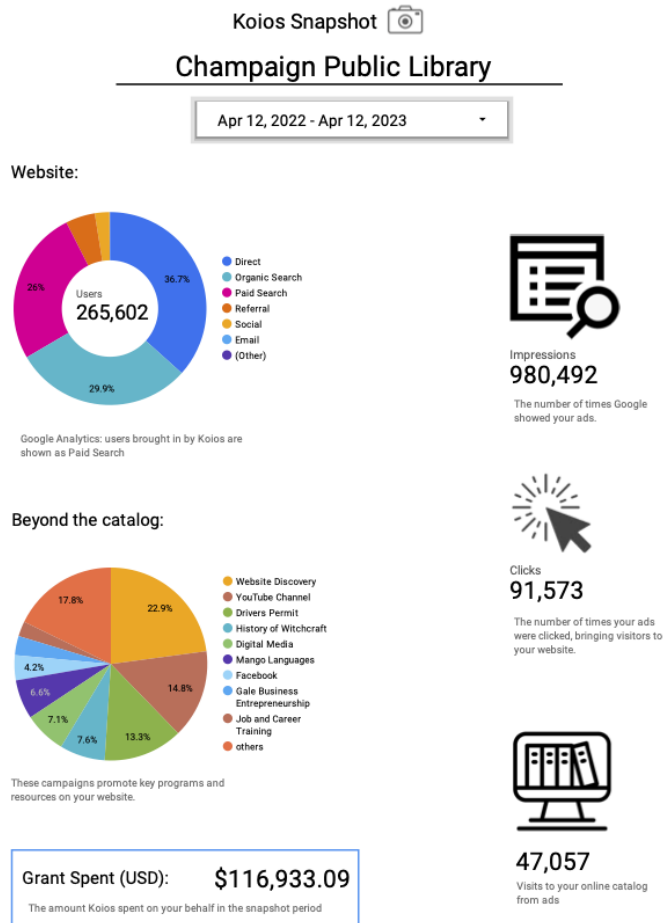
One-year Snapshot for Champaign (IL) Public LIbrary

Example: Capital Area District Library, MI – 238K service population in Lansing, Michigan. Koios brings in 17% of total website traffic, delivering, in a year, over a million impressions, and highlighting resources like Test Prep, Digital Media, Homework Help, Kanopy, and others.
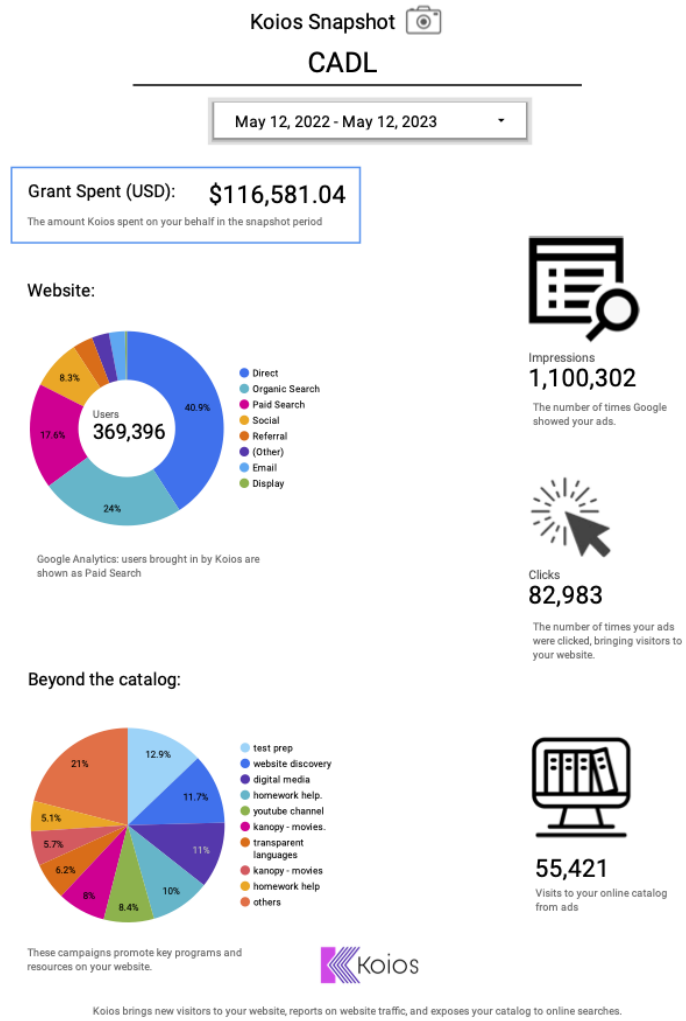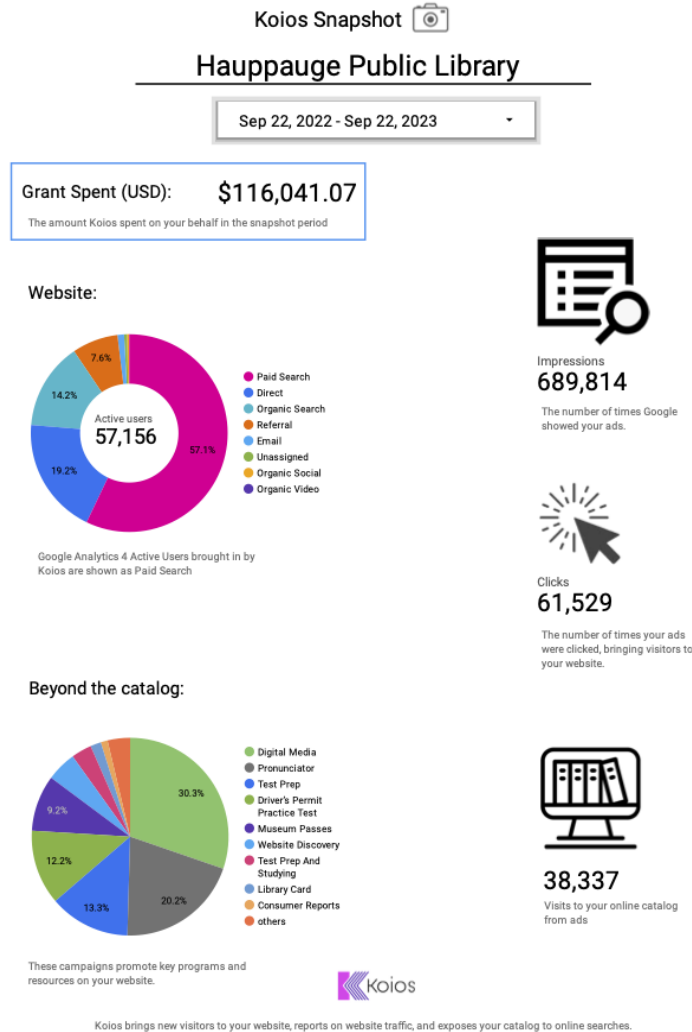

One-year Snapshot for Capital Area District LIbrary (Lansing MI)

Example: Hauppauge Public Library, NY – 11K service population in Hauppauge NY (Long Island). Koios brings in 57% of total website traffic. The library is small, but benefits from being in a high population-density area, where the overall volume of searching is high.

Working with Koios

We apply for Google Ad Grants on behalf of public libraries; we do this part for free because, whether we are involved or not, we want libraries to take advantage of this useful resource. The grant, and the Google Ads account that comes with it, belong to the library.

A library gets a Koios subscription to manage its Google Ads account, to spend its grant allocation effectively, to report results, and to keep the account in compliance with Google's policies.

A Koios subscription includes:

- Monitoring Google Analytics to measure website impact.
- Configuring Google Tag Manager to track important actions (conversions).
- Meetings to review performance and advertising priorities.
- Reviewing campaign structure and content on a regular basis, improving them based on performance data, industry best practice, and research.
- Reporting through the Koios online dashboard.
- Keeping the account in compliance with Google Ads policies.

We will need a few things from you:

- Work with us to determine your Ad Grant eligibility.
- We will request access to your Google Analytics properties.
- We will request access to your Google Tag Manager container.
- We will request periodic MARC dumps of your online catalog.
- We will ask you to create a subdomain where we can direct visitors.

The subscription is for a year, renewable.

Summary

Libraries provide an indispensable public service, of which we would like to remind the public, to the degree we are able. The most effective way to reach the largest and most diverse audience is by advertising with Google, which offers a program of free advertising to qualified nonprofits. Google Ads is a complex product most library staff do not have time to manage effectively. Koios offers to manage Google Ad Grant accounts for public libraries. A Koios subscription brings visibility to a library's online catalog, directs visitors to specific resources, and contributes a visible proportion of traffic to a library website. Contact us at info@koios.org, we'll help you.