# 10 MINUTES TO TESTING

## WITH THE GOOGLE WEBSITE OPTIMIZER

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# GETTING YOUR FIRST GOOGLE WEBSITE OPTIMIZER TEST RUNNING IN 10 MINUTES

You signed up for Google's free multivariate or A/B testing platform, and I'd like to welcome you to the world of conversion rate optimization on steroids. For the longest time a quality testing platform was too expensive for many, but now it is available to all of us. Getting started is really easy. If you are willing to invest 10 minutes, I'll walk you through the process of setting up and performing your first test.

## The Non-Technical Technical Overview

Even if you are uncomfortable with technical stuff, you should understand setting up. That way, if you have to talk to someone technical, you will be able to communicate effectively. The process is really simple. We'll need a name for this experiment; we'll call it "First Test".

1. The first thing you must do is identify which page you want to test (*Test Page*). For the sake of getting your first test started, let's say you are going to test your homepage.



2. Identify the page your visitor must reach to qualify as a successful conversion (*Conversion Page*). Is it your order thank you page, your registration success page, your contact us confirmation page, or a begin download page? In other words, the *Conversion Page* is the page your visitor gets to once they've taken the action you want them to take on your *Test Page*.

For this example we'll use our Contact Us Thank You page.

3. The Google Website Optimizer will generate little bits of code, called "tags," for the *Test Page* and the *Conversion Page*. All you or your technical person needs to do is a little copying and pasting. Google will even check (validate) that you've placed the tags correctly before you can begin. On the *Test Page*, put the "Control Script" code at the top part of the page (called the "head") and the "Tracker Script" at the bottom of the page (before the </body> tag). You only need to tag the *Conversion Page* at the bottom with the "Tracker Script." Please note the tracking script specifies in its code which is the test page and which is the goal page.



*Control Script - Test Page*



*Tracker Script - Test Page*



*Tracker Script - Conversion Page*

*Test Page*: "Control Script" at top + "Tracker Script" at bottom
*Conversion Page*: "Tracker Script" at bottom

4. Now, look at the *Test Page* and decide what pieces or elements (*Sections*) of the page you want to test. You can test up to 8 *sections* on any one page.

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## Testing Headlines

For the purpose of this run-through, we didn't spend time crafting a knock-out headline.  But you will definitely want to do this.   Learning to create good head-lines takes skill and practice.  As you come to learn what works best for your audience, your ability to create truly per-suasive headlines will improve.  Here are some ideas for testing your headlines:

Test fractions (3/4) or percentages (75%) to prove your claim.

Test using numbers in your headlines.

Test asking questions in the headline (make sure you directly answer the question after the headline).

Test using news in headlines to appeal to visitors.

Test using emotional-laden words.

Test different types of bolding, fonts, col-ors, capitalizations, sizes, and format-ting.

Test background colors for headlines.

Test the number of words used in the headline.

Test using exclamation points.

Test using text to convey the benefits ver-sus the features of your products or services.

Test self-focused text (we/I) in the head-line.

Test customer-focused text (you) in the headline.

Test using quotations in the headline (consider the length of the headline).

Test the reading level of the headline.



The above image shows a "multivariate" test we ran on our home page header and image - two *sections* with three variations each.

For now, we'll set up test of only one *section*.  This is commonly referred to as an A/B test. Let's choose a *section* we know has a high impact on any site.

a. On your *Test Page* there is one *section* almost every visitor sees: the first headline. Headlines are the easiest *section* to test, because you don't need anyone else to come up with any copy or images – all you need to change is a few words (remember it is only a test). Your headline should start with an <h1> (could be h2, h3, etc.) html tag.



b. Once you have identified the *section* you are testing – in this case the first headline – you need to place a "section script" (a tiny piece of code) right before and after the html that renders your headline. Google recommends excluding as much HTML as possible when defining sections.  In this *section script*, you to change the name of the *section* in the code so you can identify it. For example:

> <h1><script>utmx_section("Description")</script>
> Your Current headline
> </noscript></h1>

Change the "Description" to "Headline Test".

It should now look like this on your page:

```
<h1><script>utmx_section("Headline Test")</script>
Your Current headline
</noscript></h1>
```

Make sure the </noscript> tag follows your original content in a section.

c. Try to come up with 2 different variations of your headline other than the one you currently have (you'll have a total of three headlines). Once you tag your pages (see Step 3), you'll be able to add these variations into Google's Website Optimizer yourself and get your experiment running.

Hopefully you were able to tag these pages yourself or had someone else do it for you by now. When the Optimizer has validated these, you can begin to enter your section variations.



You're ready to begin your first experiment!

## Create and Enter Variations

Google's Website Optimizer interface will show you a box (*Variation Entry Form*) labeled "Headline Test", and it will show the html code you put the section script around (<h1>Your Current headline</h1>) grayed out.

1. On the left you will see a hyperlink that says "+ Add another variation". Click that.



2. A small box will appear in front of the *Variation Entry Form* that asks you to create a new variation. You just need to supply a short, descriptive name.



3. It will then show you the code to edit in the *Variation Entry Form* with the new variation name you just came up with. All you need to do is this: between the <h1> and the </h1>, where "Your Current Headline" is, type one of the 2 variations you came up with over the words 'Your Current Headline".



4. Repeat steps 1 through 3 to add your second variation.

5. When you are done adding variations click on "Save and continue."

## Review Test Setting and Launch

The Google Website Optimizer presents a summary identifying the *Test Page* address, the *Conversion Page* address, the name and number of variations you created and the total number of combinations you are testing.  It also allows you to decide what percent of your total traffic should be exposed to the test. In our example, we'll leave it at 100%.

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Click the "Launch Now" button. The fun of testing now begins! Next step, wait for the results. You have successfully launched your first test.

# WHAT TO DO NEXT

How can you tell if your results are valid? Certainly it's important to be aware of "freshness" factors that can influence your conversion rates, things such as seasonality or even time of day. It's important to run your tests concurrently, ideally for a couple of weeks, making certain your sample size is adequate and the results between tests are statistically meaningful.

Remember, you do not want to marginally beat out what you have; you are looking for *significant* increases. Make sure you define what will constitute success when you start testing. You can base your criteria for success based on a certain number of conversions or sales, or you can measure results over course of time.

To be sure your test is showing a statistically meaningful impact on the variables, you have to know if you've demonstrated enough of a difference between the tests to declare a clear winner. As a rule of thumb, you should have at least a three times larger result (e.g., if A is 5, B should be 15).

The beauty of Google's Website Optimizer is that it takes care of all the math and shows you which elements or combinations of elements will work best for you.

When you are ready to take the next step to multivariate testing (as in our earlier example), just add an additional section script before your element and go through the same process of creating and entering variations. It's that easy!

## Additional Resources

*Call to Action: Secret Formulas to Improving Online Results*.  Bryan Eisenberg and Jeffrey Eisenberg with Lisa T. Davis.  Nashville: Nelson Business, Thomas Nelson Publishers.  2006.

*Which Sells Best?: A Quick Start Guide to Testing for Retailers*.  Bryan Eisenberg and Anthony Garcia.  Future Now, Inc.  2006.  http://www.futurenowinc.com/shop

*Contact Me or Submit?: A Quick Start Guide to Testing for Lead Generation*. Bryan Eisenberg and Anthony Garcia.  Future Now, Inc. 2006.  http://www.futurenowinc.com/shop

Learn more about testing and conversion, in plain-spoken language laced with an attitude, through *GrokDotCom*, Future Now, Inc.'s free conversion rate marketing newsletter.  http://www.grokdotcom.com

The Google Website Optimizer helps you take out the guesswork when it comes to optimizing your landing pages and provides documentation that helps you understand the technical aspects of testing.  Best of all, the service is free.  http://services.google.com/websiteoptimizer

Future Now, Inc. offers consulting services from site analysis to Persuasion Architecture, as well as training and coaching for individuals, small groups and companies.  http://www.futurenowinc.com/con-sultingservices.htm

Good luck and best of conversion to you.

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# THE AUTHOR

**Bryan Eisenberg**

Bryan is recognized worldwide as a leading expert on online marketing and marketing analytics. One of the co-founders and CPO (Chief Persuasion Officer) of Future Now, Inc., Bryan has been helping companies realize that to maximize results it is essential to incorporate expert persuasion techniques and a deep understanding of customer behavior into all marketing efforts. Bryan also is an inventor of Persuasion Architecture™ for which a patent is pending. Persuasion Architecture is a process for persuading customers when they ignore marketing.

Bryan is a co-author of the #1 best-selling *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *BusinessWeek* best sellers: *Waiting For Your Cat to Bark?* and *Call to Action*. He is the publisher of Future Now's award-winning newsletter *GrokDotCom*, is the author of ClickZ's column "ROI Marketing," and has been a featured speaker at Ad:tech, DMDAYS, Search Engine Strategies, Shop.org, Internet World, Net.Marketing, DMA Annual, eMetrics Summit, Electronic Retail Association, & ClickZ Email Strategies and also teaches at Roy H William's Wizard Academy.

Bryan has been featured by *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *Business 2.0*, *CXO Europe*, Forrester Research, Jupiter Research, *Miami Herald*, *BrandWeek*, *Publish*, *Internet Advertising Report (IAR)*, *Chicago Business Tribune*, *Inc Magazine*, *Entrepreneur*, *Target Marketing*, *DM News*, Microsoft's bCentral, MarketingSherpa, the *Toronto Star*, *Smart Money* and *Internet Retailer* for his thought leadership in the critical area of internet marketing, website design and improving online conversion rates, and web analytics.

Bryan is also one of the founders and Chairman of the Web Analytics Association. A successful entrepreneur in his own right, he also has consulted to and run seminars for companies such as: Universal Orlando, GE, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, AeroTek/ Allegis Group, Dell, Volvo, Computer Associates, Overstock.com, LowerMyBills, Agora Publishing, CafePress.com, SAS and many others.