



## Encoding Search

One of the trickier aspects of Search is that numerous pages are often combined into a single page name. In particular, you'll likely find that browsing through additional pages of search results and advanced search results are both combined with the Search Results page. For proper analysis of Search, it's important to remove this problem by identifying each of these pages uniquely. To achieve this, you will need to add custom code to the tag or change the way the URL (or whatever you are using to identify pages) is coded.

In addition to removing this conflation of page names, there are a number of aspects of Internal Search that should be encoded in special variables. The more important that search is on your site, the more extensive should be the coding. For large web sites, where search is used in more than 10% of all visits, it is good practice to try and tag every aspect of search usage.

For all sites, it is essential to create both Traffic and Conversion variables for the Search Term used. In addition, we strongly recommend the same treatment for the number of results returned.

For sites where Search is a key navigation item, we strongly recommend encoding additional variables about search usage including all of the following (if applicable):

- Variable tracking when a programmed (suggested) search result is PRESENT in the results
- Variable tracking when a programmed (suggested) search result is CLICKED in the results
- Variable tracking the categories of results returned (when applicable) by a Search
- Variable tracking the category of result CLICKED in the results
- Variable tracking the position number of the Search Result that is CLICKED

In all cases we recommend coding both Traffic and Conversion variables if possible. If insufficient variables are available, we recommend coding programmed search results as Conversion variables and all the others as Traffic variables.

In addition to this coding of variables, some sites choose to code Search as a success event. Since the relationship of particular pages and visit attributes to Search behavior is often an important analytic area, we would recommend this strategy whenever Search is a key navigation element on the site.

Although Omniture is generous about most cardinality limits, heavily used sites can easily spin off a tremendous number of different search terms. If your search term reports are getting truncated, you should take this up with Omniture as cardinality limits can often be raised (though there is a fairly hard upper limit around 500K).