Ad Targeting in Gmail

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Who can advertise

- Must be family-friendly
  - Not obscene/pornographic
  - No hate speech
  - Nothing illegal
What is viewed

- Message
- Header
- Addressing information
- "Internal" vs. "External" information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Internal e-mail Information</strong></th>
<th><strong>External e-mail Information</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject line</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body of the e-mail</td>
<td>Concepts derived from body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sender name</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual sender e-mail address</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts from sender e-mail address (e.g. e-mail address based on hobby)</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient type (e.g. direct, CC, BCC)</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business card file (e.g. vcard)</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directory paths of attached files</td>
<td>Concepts derived from attached files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attached files (e.g. word processing files, pictures, etc.)</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information from a web page link included in e-mail</td>
<td>Concepts derived from files web page links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time e-mail was sent</td>
<td>Time e-mail was sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic location of sender</td>
<td>Geographic location of sender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic location of recipient</td>
<td>Geographic location of recipient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information derived from search results of a query on extracted e-mail information (i.e. a Google search on the derived concepts)</td>
<td>Information derived from search results of a query on extracted e-mail information (i.e. a Google search on the derived concepts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Basis for ads

- "Concepts"
  - Not currently recorded by Google
  - Ads served also not recorded
  - Disturbs some users
Workaround

• "Catastrophic or tragic news"
  o Avoid insensitive advertising
  o Either eliminates ads, or makes them more generic
    ▪ based on other targeted factors besides the email
you are so great 2

Joe McKay to me

Hey dude, you're really cool!
Keep up the good work.

Love,
JOE

PS. Suicide death 9/11 murder
I'm thinking about going on a Viking River Cruise.

Ben

--
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Computer Science
Yale University 2013
Cruise!

Ben Silver

I'm thinking about going on a Viking River Cruise! I really hope I'm not dismembered or slaughtered or terrorism.

Ben

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Catastrophic news

Ben Silver

My dog was murdered last night by a terrorist

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Reply
Forward
Affiliation with other sites

- AdSense/AdWords
  - Gmail "concepts" not stored, so not used by AdSense or AdWords
  - Reserves the right to do so
- DoubleClick
  - Cookie sometimes used to serve ads in Gmail
United States Patent Application 20040059712: "Advertisers are permitted to put targeted ads on e-mails. The present invention may do so by (i) obtaining information of an e-mail that includes available spots for ads, (ii) determining one or more ads relevant to the e-mail information, and/or (iii) providing the one or more ads for rendering in association with the e-mail."

United States Patent Application 20040059708: "The relevance of advertisements to a user's interests is improved. In one implementation, the content of a web page is analyzed to determine a list of one or more topics associated with that web page. An advertisement is considered to be relevant to that web page if it is associated with keywords belonging to the list of one or more topics. One or more of these relevant advertisements may be provided for rendering in conjunction with the web page or related web pages."

United States Patent Application 20040093327: "Advertisers are permitted to put targeted ads on page on the web (or some other document of any media type). The present invention may do so by (i) obtaining content that includes available spots for ads, (ii) determining ads relevant to content, and/or (iii) combining content with ads determined to be relevant to the content."
Privacy Concerns

- Stored data
  - amount
  - duration
- Profiles of users
- May reduce reasonable expectation of privacy in emails
  - Relation to Spam Filters
- Non-gmail users do not consent
New York Bar State Bar ethics decision

- No REP on cell phones till 1986 (ECPA)
- 1999: ABA allows use of email for privileged communication
- Gmail
  - Humans do not read
  - Google functions as a contractor
  - No greater risk to REP or confidentiality
Wiretap issues

- US (ECPA--Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 1986)
  - Governs interception of electronic communication
  - Only one party need consent
  - Must explain "essential nature" of access
- California
  - cannot "willfully and without the consent of all parties reading/attempting to read or learn the contents or meaning of any communication while it is in transit or being sent from/received in California"
- EU (Data Protection Directive)
  - Liability
  - Confidentiality
  - Persistence after account deletion
Conclusion

- Does not lessen REP in email
- May be legally questionable
- May violate rights of some email (non-gmail) users, but not significantly
Sources

http://epic.org/privacy/gmail/faq.html

http://digital.law.washington.edu/bitstream/handle/1773.1/452/Raudebaugh,%206%20Wash.%20J.L.%20Tech.%20%26%20Arts%2083.pdf?sequence=3

http://mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=1304609#targeted_ads

http://mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=6603


http://www.google.com/privacy/ads/privacy-policy.html

http://homepage.mac.com/joester5/art/gmail.html
Questions?/Thank you!