



USING AI AGENTS TO BOOST
PPC
Productivity
& Profit

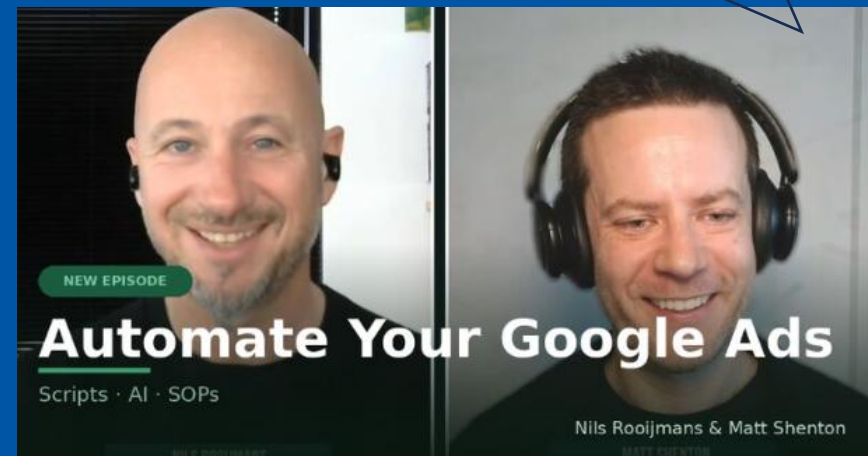
NILS ROOIJMANS

SEM Stories - Edinburgh - 2026

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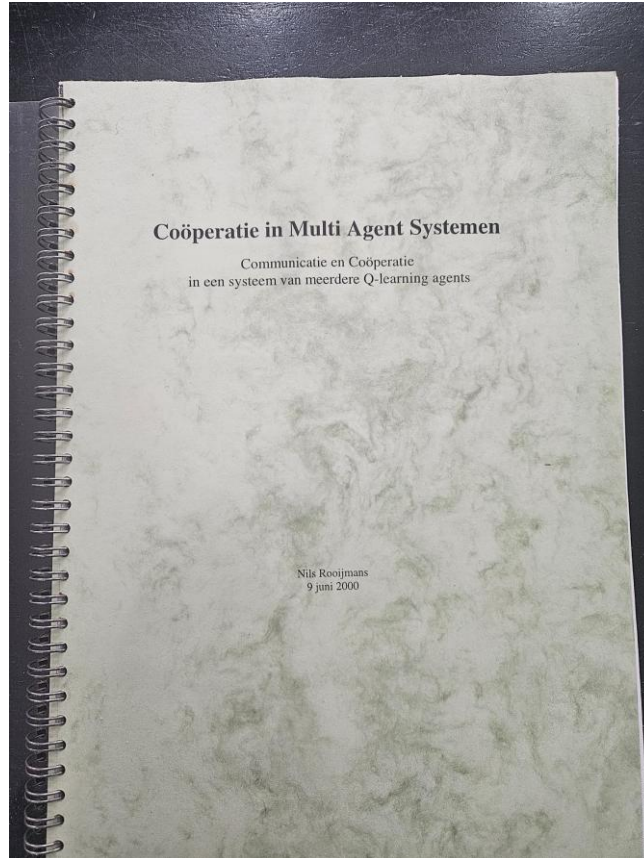


What is an Agent?



A BIT OF HISTORY

Agents aren't new.



30+
YEARS

of agent technology in academia and industry — long before LLMs.

June 2000: “An agent must satisfy a number of fundamental properties. Some of these properties are autonomy, adaptability, reactivity, and goal-directedness.”

WHAT IS NEW

LLMs as the reasoning engine.

We've had goal-directed software for decades. The recent shift is that an LLM can now read messy real-world inputs and reason about them.

My 2026 Definition.

An AI agent is a system that pursues goals through autonomous adaptive decision-making and action.

Five properties to help you think about AI and Automation

USE THIS AS A CHECKLIST

Five properties of a real agent.

1

STATE AWARENESS

It observes its environment

e.g. watches your Google Ads account

2

REASONING

It interprets and decides next steps

e.g. impression share is low — let's add price extensions

3

ACTIONS

It manipulates its environment

e.g. actually adds the price extensions in your account

4

GOAL-DIRECTED

Aligned to a stated objective

e.g. maximize revenue while POAS > 150%

5

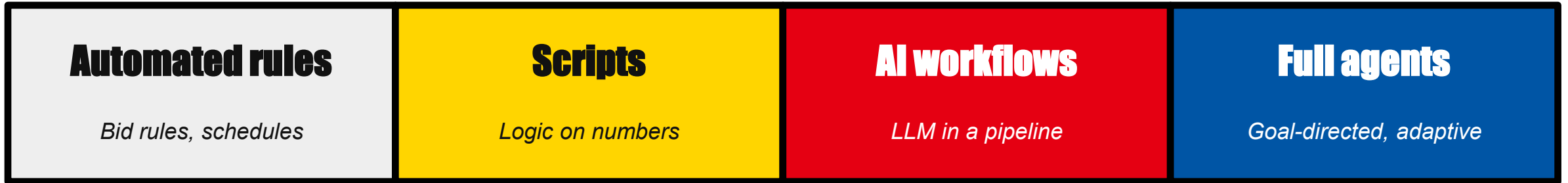
ADAPTIVE

Learns from outcomes

e.g. price extensions increased IS in 8/10 ad groups → do that more often

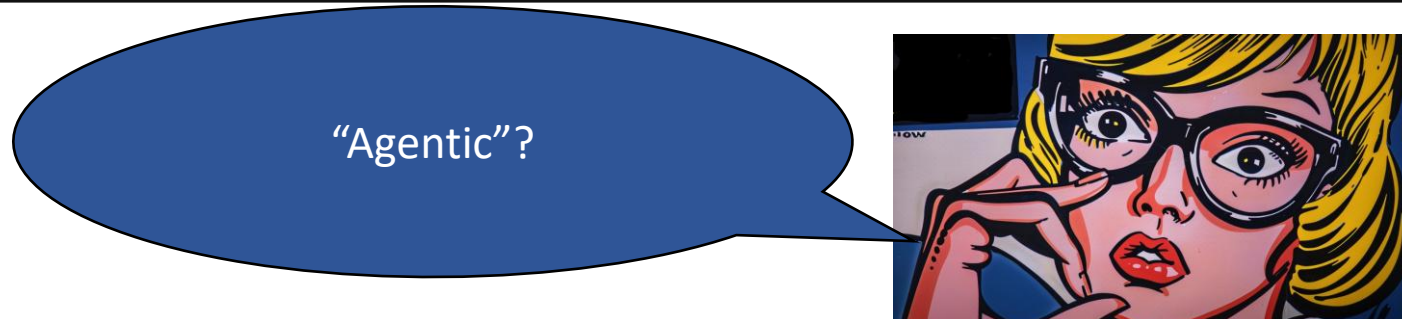
Automation lives on a continuum.

Map your problem onto this line — that tells you what to build. The right answer is rarely "build a full agent."



DETERMINISTIC

AUTONOMOUS





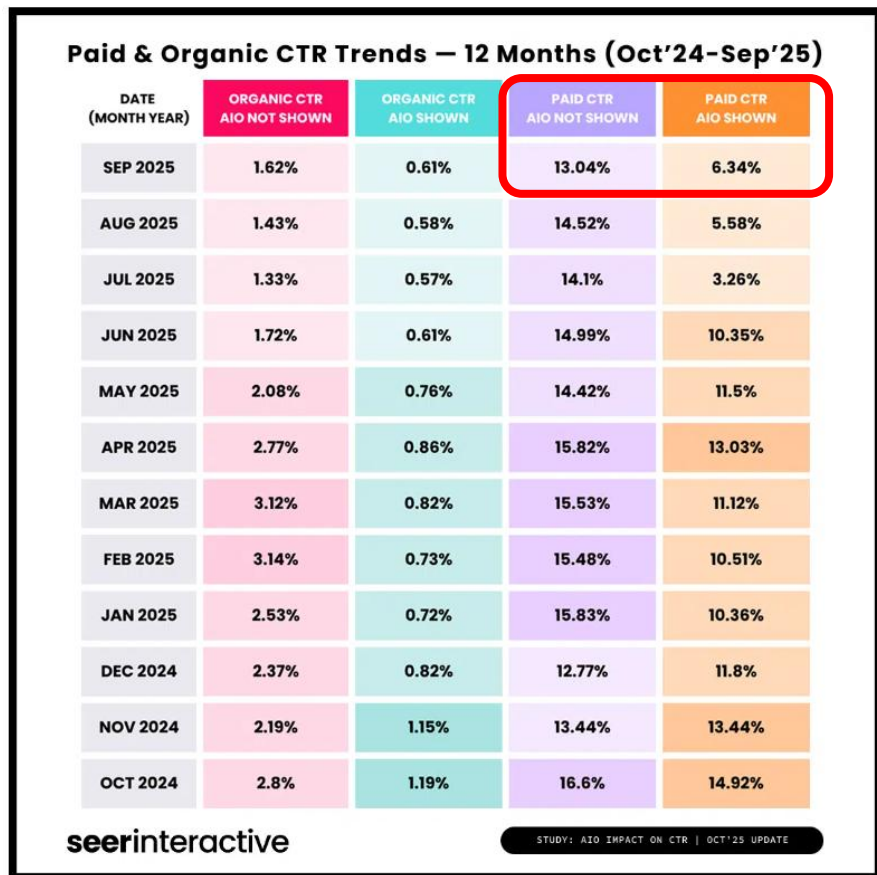
Prevent Wasted Ad Spend.



A real PPC problem we can solve with agents.

PROBLEM #1

Google's AI Overviews are eating the SERP clicks.



THE RESULT

Fewer ad impressions and clicks for our keywords.

UNLESS ...

we adopt Broad Match and / or AI Max , or PMax.

These match types may introduce your ads inside AI Overviews — but they introduce a new problem.

PROBLEM #2

Broad Match & AI Max (also) generate junk.

KEYWORD: auto insurance quote online

SEARCH TERMS:

car insurance near me (but we don't have local offices)

geico (they are looking for our competitor)

chopper insurance (we don't insure choppers)

cheap auto insurance (our USP is service, not price)

Avg CPC: **\$68**

WE NEED TO EXCLUDE THEM — TWO REASONS

01 Stop wasted spend.

Every irrelevant click is paid for. The total compounds fast on accounts with high CPCs.

02 Signal Smart Bidding.

Smart Bidding learns from your conversion data. Junk traffic poisons the model — bad in, bad out.

AND IT NEVER ENDS

Filtering search terms takes ages.

THE WORKFLOW

1. Open Google Ads UI (SSSLLOOOOOWWWWW)
2. Navigate to campaign → search term view
3. For each term: figure out the user intent
4. Decide if that intent is one we want to target
5. If yes — is this the right ad group? Does the copy match? Does the LP answer it?
6. If no — pick the right level (ad group / campaign / account / NKL)
7. Add as a negative, What match type?



THE PAIN

Hundreds of new search terms every day.

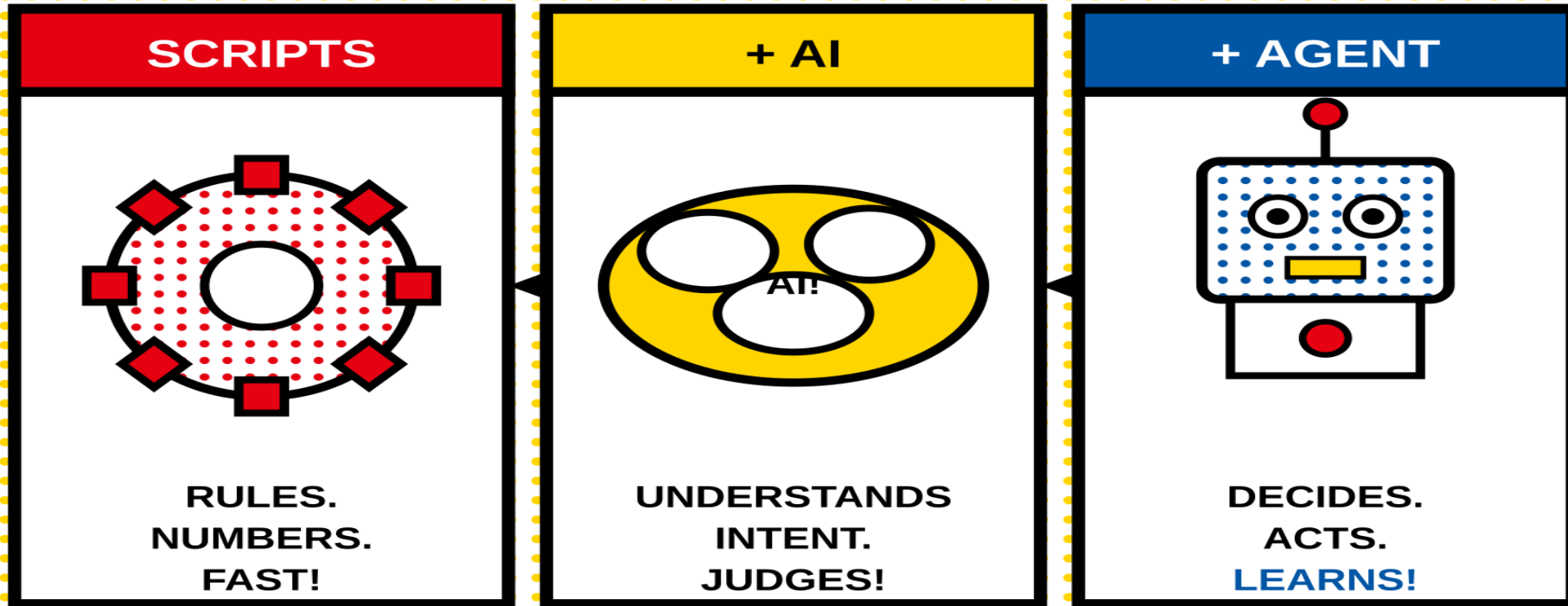
→ Humans only review top spenders.

→ Long tail of low-volume waste slips through unnoticed.

→ For some accounts this needs to be done **DAILY**.

THREE STAGES OF AUTOMATION

EVOLUTION OF PPC AUTOMATION!



Scripts → Scripts + AI → Scripts + AI + Agent

DETERMINISTIC LOGIC ON NUMBERS

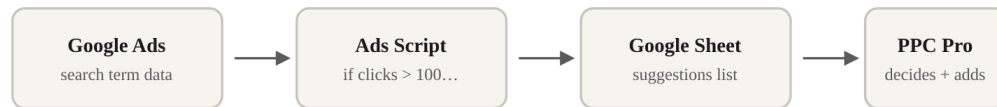
Stage 1: Scripts.

LAYER 1

Scripts

Deterministic logic on numbers

```
if (clicks > 100 && conversions == 0)
  suggestNegative(searchTerm);
```



searchTerm	campaignName	adGroupName	impressions	clicks	ctr	avg CPC	cost	conversions	isNEGATED	campaign	adGroup	list	ignore
			2172	181	0.08	0.47	84.44	0	FALSE	e	b		
			4979	115	0.02	0.62	71.25	0	FALSE				
			2780	57	0.02	0.68	38.52	0	FALSE				1
			317	53	0.17	0.72	38.29	0	FALSE			b	

GREAT FOR

Reliable, repeatable rules based on hard criteria (ie: numbers, strings).

THE CATCH

Needs reliable numbers — i.e. a lot of clicks before the rule fires. That's already wasted spend. And scripts can't read intent.

Get the FREE version of the script:

<https://nilsrooijmans.com/google-ads-script-negative-keyword-suggestions/>

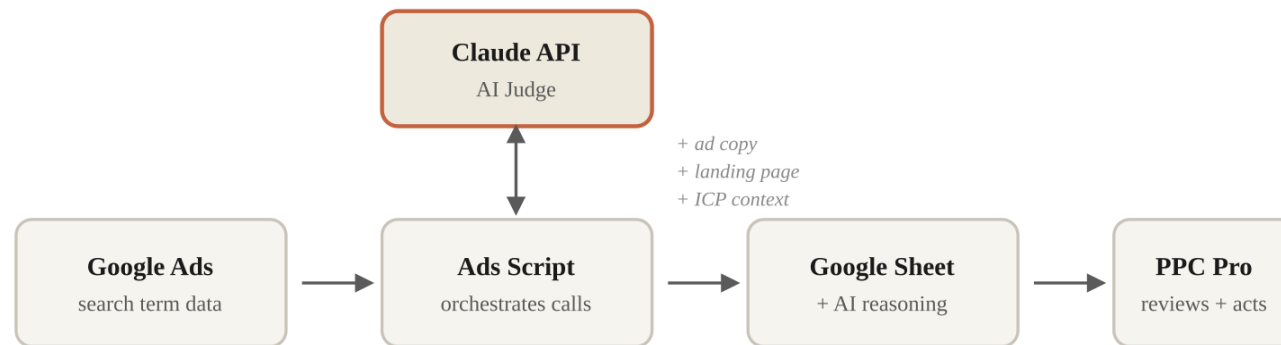
NOW WE CAN READ INTENT

Stage 2: Scripts + AI.

LAYER 2

Scripts + AI

AI interprets intent · still human-reviewed



```
1
2 // Example script to show how you can connect to the Open AI GPT API and use the API to help you with your PPC tasks
3 //
4 // (c) Nils Rooijmans - https://www.linkedin.com/in/nilsrooijmans/
5 //
6 //
7 // WANT TO LEARN HOW TO USE CHATGPT TO CREATE SCRIPTS FROM SCRATCH?
8 // SIGN UP FOR MY WORKSHOP: https://nilsrooijmans.com/5-day-chatgpt-and-google-ads-scripts-challenge/
9
10
11 function main() {
12
13   var systemPrompt = "You are a senior Google Ads consultant with excellent skills in creating and optimizing Google Ads campaigns.";
14   var userPrompt = "Please provide keyword suggestions for a high end yoga resort that targets lawyers and doctors in the US.";
15
16   var gptResponse = getGPTResponse(systemPrompt, userPrompt);
17
18   console.log(gptResponse);
19 }
20
21
22 // START OF GPT CODE
23
24 // 1. Set API endpoint
25 const ENDPOINT_URL = 'https://api.openai.com/v1/chat/completions';
26
27 // 2. Insert API key, get your key at https://platform.openai.com/account/api-keys
28 const CHAT_GPT_API_KEY = '';
29
30 // 3. Choose your model, see details https://platform.openai.com/docs/models/overview
31 // Possible models: gpt-4, gpt-4-0613, gpt-4-32k, gpt-4-32k-0613, gpt-3.5-turbo, gpt-3.5-turbo-0613, gpt-3.5-turbo-16k, gpt-3.5-turbo-16k-0613
32 const GPT_MODEL = 'gpt-4';
33
34 // 4. Set temperature, what sampling temperature to use, between 0 and 2. Default is 1.
35 // Higher values like 1.8 will make the output more random, while lower values like 0.2 will make it more focused and deterministic.
36 const TEMPERATURE = 1;
37
38 // 5. Set nucleus sampling. The model considers the results of the tokens with top_p probability mass.
39 // So 0.1 means only the tokens comprising the top 10% probability mass are considered. Default is 1.
40 const TOP_P = 1;
41
42 // For more details on the parameter options, visit https://platform.openai.com/docs/api-reference/chat/create
43
```

<https://nilsrooijmans.com/gpt-api-example-script.txt>

```
if (AIJudge(term, ad_copy, lp) != "relevant")
  suggestNegative(term);
```


NOW WE CAN READ INTENT

Stage 2: Scripts + AI.

Negative keyword suggestions

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Gemini Extensions Help

100% 123 Default... 10 B I A

	A	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
											Add as negative?		
	searchTerm	impressions	clicks	ctr	avg CPC	cost	conversions	isNEGATED	AIJudge	campaign	adGroup	list	ignore
1	car insurance near me	317	16	0.05	78.12	1249.92	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: We operate exclusively online and do not have local offices for in-person service.				
2	kia k3 insurance	789	26	0.03	39.28	1021.28	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: As a premium service provider, we exclusively insure high-end cars rather than cheaper cars at the low end of the spectrum.				1
3	cheap auto insurance	293	15	0.05	48.12	721.8	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: As a premium service provider, we focus on high-quality coverage and excellent service rather than competing on the lowest price.				
4	geico	512	10	0.02	24.56	245.6	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: This is a direct competitor brand name and does not align with our specific service offerings.				
5	chopper insurance	261	4	0.02	55.65	222.6	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: Our insurance products are strictly limited to cars; we do not insure motorcycles or choppers.				

THE AI CAN...

- Interpret search-term intent.
- Cluster similar terms.
- Read ad copy and judge alignment.
- Read landing pages and check the answer.

STILL NEEDS

Lots of context about the business and ICP, plus a human reviewing every suggestion.

NOW THE GOAL IS OWNED

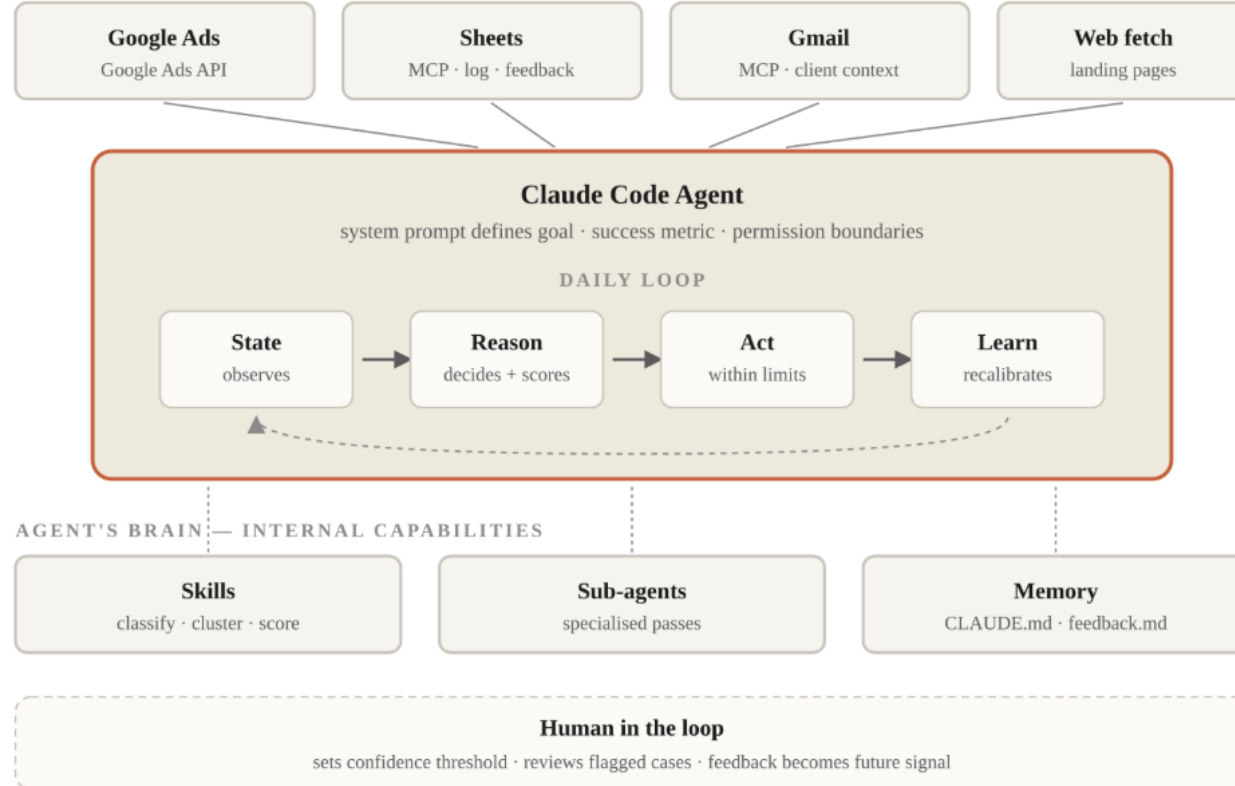
Stage 3: Scripts + AI + Agent.

LAYER 3

Scripts + AI + Agent

Goal-directed · permission-bounded · learns from feedback

THE AGENT'S SENSES & HANDS



Claude Code Workspace

Data layer

- Business description
- Business goals (KPI + targets)
- ICP description
- Brand guidelines
- Google Ads Strategy
- Raw Google Ads account data (CSVs)
- Data driven insights in (MD files)
- Work logs

Skills

- SOPs for all PPC tasks (MD files)
- Some Tools (.js / python scripts)

Agents

- (YAML + MD) files
- Basically Skills that live in their own subprocess, context

Hooks for safeguarding

NOW WE CAN READ INTENT

Stage 3: Scripts + AI + Agent.

Negative keyword suggestions

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Gemini Extensions Help

Search Menus 100% 123 Default... 10 B I A

	A	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1															
2	searchTerm	impressions	clicks	ctr	avg CPC	cost	conversions	isNEGATED	AIJudge	Confidence	campaign	adGroup	list	ignore	FEEDBACK
3	car insurance near me	317	16	0.05	78.12	1249.92	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: We operate exclusively online and do not have local offices for in-person service.	0.68					add "near me" as a negative at the account level
4	kia k3 insurance	789	26	0.03	39.28	1021.28	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: As a premium service provider, we exclusively insure high-end cars rather than cheaper cars at the low end of the spectrum.	0.62					we do also offer insurance for inexpensive cars at the lower end of the spectrum
5	cheap auto insurance	293	15	0.05	48.12	721.8	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: As a premium service provider, we focus on high-quality coverage and excellent service rather than competing on the lowest price.	0.89					correct, price is not our USP, but note that we do have very competitive prices for sports car insurance
6	geico	512	10	0.02	24.56	245.6	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: This is a direct competitor brand name and does not align with our specific service offerings.	0.92			p		
7	chopper insurance	261	4	0.02	55.65	222.6	0	FALSE	Irrelevant: Our insurance products are strictly limited to cars; we do not insure motorcycles or choppers.	0.83			p		

Want it? ->

<https://nilsrooijmans.com/paid-scripts-support-call/>

The Negative Keyword Agent.



GOAL

Reduce wasted spend on irrelevant clicks. KPI: spend on irrelevant clicks.

STATE

Search-term performance + sheet feedback + recent client emails.

REASONING

Is this term relevant? How **confident** am I?

ACTION

Add negative keyword if I have **permission** at this confidence level.

LEARNING

Incorporate human feedback to recalibrate next decisions.

The five properties of a true agent — instantiated for one specific PPC problem.

THE HUMAN CONTROLS ONE NUMBER

Trust grows. Permissions expand.

CONFIDENCE THRESHOLD FOR AUTO-ACTION



All suggestions to sheet — human approves each.

Auto-add ad-group level only.

Auto-add ad-group + flag campaign-level.

Auto-add campaign-level. Account-level still escalates.

You start the agent at 0%. Every suggestion is reviewed. As feedback accumulates and confidence calibrates, you slide right. The agent earns autonomy.

RESULT

Your own team of interns 24/7 at your disposal



RESULT

AB test : campaign performce with VS without Negative Keyword Agent

High ticket lead gen account, SQL tracking

Campaign with 15 BROAD match keywords, 3 Ad Groups, Max Conversion bidding, limited budget

The screenshot displays the Google Ads Experiments interface. On the left is a sidebar with navigation icons for Campaigns, Goals, Tools, and Billing. The main header shows 'Experiments' with a filter dropdown set to 'Not applicable'. Below the header are tabs for 'All', 'Campaign features and settings', 'Assets', 'Campaign types', and 'Custom'. A status bar indicates 'Status: Saved as draft, Creating..., + 5 more' and includes an 'Add filter' button. The experiment list shows one experiment: 'Negative Keyword Agent' (Custom search), running from Mar 31 to May 25, 2026. It is marked as 'Active' and shows a green trophy icon with the text 'Control arm won'. Performance metrics are displayed for both arms: Cost / conv. (+37.2% up), Conversions (-17.6% down), Cost (+13% up), and Clicks (+15.8% up). A red text overlay states: 'The agent added negatives to Control arm, left Treatment arm untouched'. At the bottom right are 'Apply' and 'End' buttons.

Experiment Name	Custom search	Cost / conv.	Conversions	Cost	Clicks
Negative Keyword Agent	Mar 31 – May 25, 2026	+37.2% ↑	-17.6% ↓	+13% ↑	+15.8% ↑

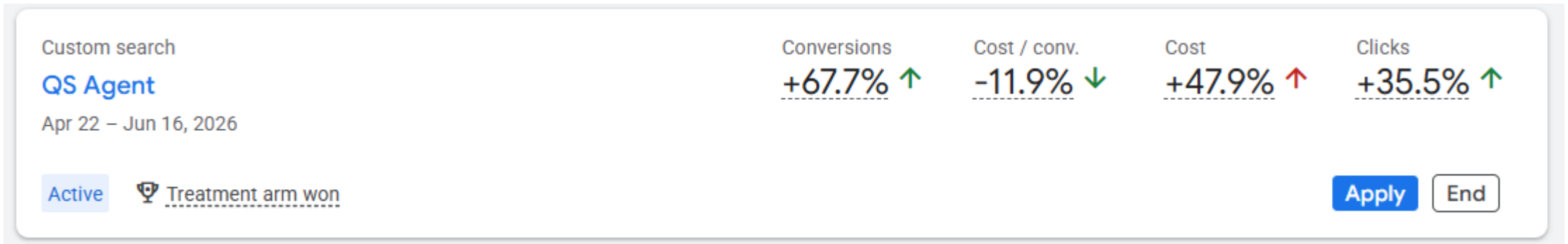
The agent added negatives to Control arm, left Treatment arm untouched

RESULT

AB test : campaign performce with VS without Quality Score Agent

Valet Parking Service account,

Campaign with ~100 EXACT match keywords, 6 Ad Groups, Max Conversions, “unlimited” budget





What's Next?

*"I've seen things you people wouldn't
believe..."*

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

Spark your creativity

- **Counterpoint**: An agent that monitors (competitor) reviews for complaints and translates insights into ideas for competitor keywords, ad copy and landers (ie: 'X charges ridiculous hidden fees' -> "X hidden fees" -> 'No Hidden Fees. Ever.')
- **Funnel Doctor**: An agent that is on the lookout for CRO opportunities and sends the most concrete CRO tips to your client every month, including the HowTo's

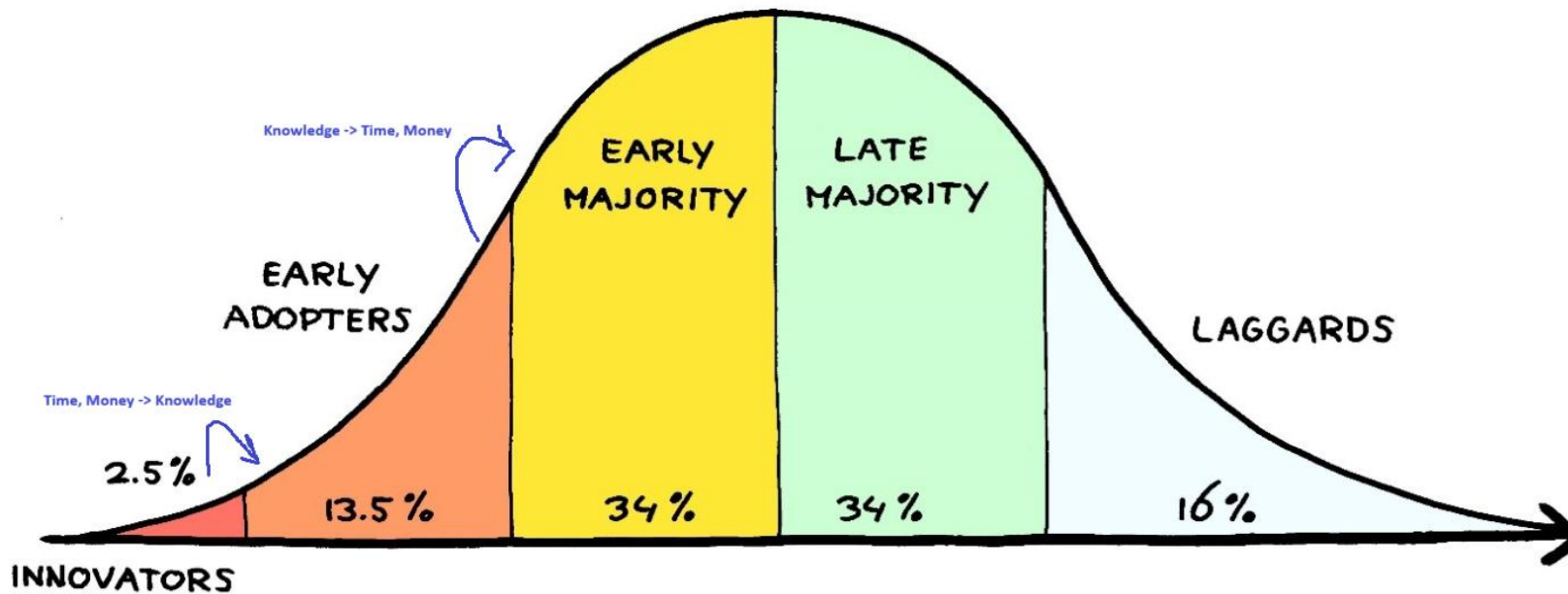
Use the AI to feed your imagination.

The biggest added value lies outside of your Google Ads accounts.



ADOPTION IS UNEVEN — FOR NOW

Where are you on the curve?



Team leaders: Ask yourself, who is who in my team?
Spot the innovators and early adopters.

WHERE TO BE

Early adopter.

Late enough that the tooling exists. Early enough that you build the muscle before your competitors do.

"The future is already here — it's just not evenly distributed."

THREE CONCRETE STEPS

Your Monday morning.

01

Pick one painful, repetitive task.

Search-term review. Budget pacing. Feed health. Whatever your team complains about most. The pain is the signal.

02

Build a script for the deterministic part first.

Scripts solve the easy 60%. They give you the data pipe and the action surface the agent will need later.

03

Layer on AI judgement, then agent autonomy.

Add Claude as the judge. Run human-in-the-loop for weeks. Move the confidence threshold as trust earns it.

THANK YOU.

Questions?

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Slides + agent template via
<https://nilsrooijmans.com/sem-stories-2026>

