

In my opinion, this lack is an outright deficiency, but you're not totally clueless about how your ads are faring in Google. The Control Center issues one of five status levels for each keyword, displayed in the Status column. These status levels are

- ✔ **Strong and Moderate.** (Both in green.) Strong and Moderate keywords are cooking along fine. No action is necessary.
- ✔ **At risk and Slowed.** (Both in yellow.) At risk keywords are in imminent danger of being disabled by Google. Slowed keywords cause the ad(s) associated with those keywords to suffer infrequent displays until you correct the situation.
- ✔ **Disabled.** (In red.) Disabled keywords take their associated ads out of circulation on search pages and content pages matching those keywords. You may resuscitate your disabled keywords, but keeping them alive becomes harder after they have been disabled.

**Note:** Chapter 9 explains in detail how to correct keywords that are at risk, slowed, or disabled.

Figure 8-7 illustrates a keyword statistics screen in an Ad Group, on which three different status levels are exhibited. The warning atop the page (whose red background is quite alarming in color) appears when any keyword on the page has been slowed. Figure 8-8 illustrates another page with the Disabled status in full display.

Look at Figures 8-7 and 8-8, particularly at the keywords labeled At risk (*developmental disabilities*), Strong (*charity auction*), and Disabled (*maroon 5*). Look at the CTR column for all three keywords. Notice anything peculiar? The Disabled keyword (*maroon 5*) owns a robust clickthrough rate of 1.7 percent — well above Google's danger threshold of 0.5 percent. The *charity auction* keyword, labeled with the Strong status, owns a weak CTR of 0.4 percent. The keyword immediately above it (*developmental disabilities*), labeled At risk, has performed better than the Strong keyword!



None of this seems to make any sense, but there's a simple explanation. Google computes a separate clickthrough rate based on the performance of ads on Google's search pages, exclusive of the extended search and content networks. Google uses that CTR to evaluate the performance of keywords and their ads. Performance on the extended networks doesn't matter in determining whether a keyword is slowed or disabled. However, Google doesn't provide the result of this Google-only CTR calculation, preferring instead to furnish the status warning system instead. Because that crucial CTR number is not broken out from the total CTR figures that *do* include the extended networks, the status warning (and status praise) sometimes seems out of touch with reality as expressed in the CTR numbers. This strange reality warp occurs when an ad performs much better or much worse in the extended networks than it does on Google's pages. (The disparity isn't too uncommon.) File this odd fact away for now; I come back to it with a vengeance in Chapter 10.