

KEYWORD RESEARCH

Mine Multiple Keyword Sources

When doing keyword research don't just depend on one keyword tool's results as each tool has different sources. In addition you may be relying on tainted information due to:

- Automated rank checking software.
 - Typically third party tools that companies frequently use to see how well they rank on their phrases in the search engines.
- The "shell game".
 - You might be looking for the best key phrases but your competitors could be trying to hide them from you by auto inflating the keyword frequencies of related phrases though the use of automated scripts or manual searching.

Instead, use multiple sources when collecting keyword research, compare and verify the accuracy of the data from each source by:

- Looking for realistic phrase variations.
 - **Tip:** Sort your keywords in Excel alphabetically to see how realistic the phrase variations are.
 - Look for questionable phrases typically in the long tail (Long Tail means phrases with 3 or more words in them
Eg: "affordable professional wedding planner California")
 - Long tail phrases are rarely searched more often than the root or "head" of the phrase (Eg: wedding planner), be suspicious of those that are.
- Use common sense!
 - If the phrase looks to good to be true, it probably is.

Don't just rely solely on keyword research tools to identify all your great keyphrases. Instead:

- Track searches being done in your site's internal search box.
 - Your site doesn't have one? Purchase or build one.
 - Make sure it tracks the actual phrases being searched. Those new found phrases can provide great insight into what your visitors are looking for and new keyphrases to add to your SEO and/or SEM campaigns.
- Mine your logfiles.
 - Look at what phrases are driving traffic to your site that you didn't internationally optimize or PPC on? Are there opportunities there?
 - Do PPC broad match on the "head" of phrase to identify new "tails"
Eg: "women's shoes", identifies "purchase women's shoes online"
- Talk to your Customer Service Reps (CSRs)
 - What phrases are being used by your clients to describe your products or in questions asked of your CSRs?

KEYWORD RESEARCH (CONTINUED)

In doing keyword research on the term “shoes” notice in the below chart the extreme search frequency variations in the Top 10 phrase being searched from each source. Highlighted phrases are unique Top 10 phrases that appear in one source but not in the Top 10 of the other.

Wordtracker Top 10	Daily Searches	Trellian Top 10	Daily Searches
shoes	11453	shoes	1427
payless shoes	2229	womens shoes	306
platform shoes	2035	jordan shoes	236
nike shoes	1898	nike shoes	255
new balance shoes	1638	mens shoes	126
pleaser shoes	1614	dc shoes	122
keen shoes	1608	vans shoes	94
ellie shoes	1559	puma shoes	82
timberland shoes	1508	payless shoes	74
dc shoes	1473	skate shoes	57

Determine Keyword Difficulty

Make sure you do your due diligence and a “reality check” on the keyphrases you’ve chosen to see how likely you’ll be able to rank on them.

- Determine how many “players” there are online for your target phrase.
 Eg: You’re trying to rank on women’s shoes. Notice how the searches done in Google below help to reveal the number of sites who just might want to rank on the same phrase.
 - womens shoes 12,300,000 (Results in Google)
 - “womens shoes” 1,920,000
 - allintitle: womens shoes 381,000
 - allintitle: “womens shoes” 105,000
 - allinurl: “womens shoes” 99,400
 - allinanchor: “womens shoes” 61,200
- Tip: You can combine different queries together:
 - allintitle: target keyphrase allinurl: target keyphrase

Finding the Unexpected in the Long Tail

Thorough keyword research uncovers surprising topics in every study. It also presents us with numerically supported ratios that challenge our assumptions about our industry (eg. we may think that oversized bikinis are searched 5% as often as string bikinis, but research may show a different numerical relationship; this deeply affects the relative prioritization of different strategies). As with most statistics, numbers can be used to prove almost any hypothesis. But, taking an unbiased, non-ego-driven, exhaustive look at keyword research can find stuff even 30-year veterans of ANY vertical do not already know. This is a vital strategy for companies that want to grow.