

7 Keyword Research Myths Debunked

When I started out reading the Warrior Forum and various blogs about Internet Marketing, I had no clue which information was accurate and which information would lead me down a dead end road. Needless to say I went down a looooooot of dead end roads.

Unfortunately, there are many myths and urban legends about various aspects of Internet Marketing that are like viruses that just keep replicating and infecting people and sabotaging their online business' health!

OK...maybe that's a dramatic analogy, but wasting your time, effort and money doing stuff that gets you nowhere sucks. Don't you agree?

Lemme axe you sumthin'...have you heard that keyword research is super important?

Well...it is! It's 110% true that keyword research is VITAL to any marketer who builds affiliate websites, adsense websites, amazon review sites and *any type of site* that depends upon organic search engine traffic to earn money.

If you don't get your keyword research right, you're almost guaranteed to fail.

It pains me to say that I've bought a bunch of WSOs and read tons of PDFs and blogs about keyword research and the fact is that the great majority of the advice you hear is utter bullocks.

In this report I dispel 7 common keyword research myths. It took me over a year of building successful (and plenty of unsuccessful!) websites, speaking with expert niche site marketers and getting my facts straight from primary sources and reputable SEOs to put together this report.

Actually, the real meat is in my video course **Smart Keyword Research** – <http://www.smartkeywordresearch.net> - but the information in this report alone might save you hundreds of hours of your precious time.

Enjoy!

You're free to share this report on your blog, offer it to your list and otherwise spread it around the net so long as you keep it EXACTLY as it is. You may not sell it and if you modify it in any way, karma will ensure that you are reincarnated as a particularly slimy slug ;-)

Myth #1 – The Competition Bar

I've read many times both on the Warrior Forum and abroad that the competition bar in the Google Adwords Keyword Tool tells you how competitive your keyword is.

....Really?

Well it actually IS true IF it means “competitive” for the advertisers bidding on it.

But it's totally, 100% false if it means that the competition to RANK a website in a good position in Google is strong.

The competition bar simply indicates the number of advertisers who are bidding on a given keyword in their Google Adwords account. How do I know? Google says so! Behold:

***Competition:** This column shows the number of advertisers worldwide bidding on each keyword relative to all keywords across Google. The shaded bar represents a general low-to-high quantitative guide to help you determine how competitive ad placement is for a particular keyword.*

Let's step inside the shoes of an advertiser for a second and do a little role playing.

Imagine that you're a company who sells allergy medicine.

You need a way to get new customers both online and offline but let's just focus on your online efforts. How do you locate new customers?

Well, since your customers are people with allergies, you have to ask yourself what kinds of things they might be typing into Google in order to find a solution to their problem. Terms like “how to relieve allergies” or “dealing with allergies” are a few examples and I bet you can think of a zillion more good ones.

Then, in order for these people to notice YOUR product, you have to be highly visible when these people view the search results in Google or click through to a website about this topic.

While it varies widely across different niches, it just so happens that in the “allergy” niche, there are tons of different allergy medicines and each respective company that produces them wants to attract as many buyers to THEIR allergy medicine as possible. **So do you.**

And since allergy sufferers are searching for many of the same terms to find a solution to their problem, the allergy medicine companies have to outbid each other for these terms in order to have their ads displayed in the most prominent locations. **So do you.**

Why? Because it means that more people click on YOUR ad and buy YOUR allergy medicine, while a competitor's less prominently displayed ad won't attract as many clicks and thus, buyers.

So if you search for “how to relieve allergies” in Google and the very first ad you see on the right hand side of the search results page is for Claritin, then that means that Claritin paid more to display an ad than Allegra and Zyrtec and whatever other advertisers may have bid on that particular search term, which in this case is “how to relieve allergies”.

These competitors may still have an ad showing but it is in a less prominent position. Generally, you want your ad to be as high up on the page as possible for the best click through rates.

Why would advertisers get into a bidding war with each other?

The answer is simply because they've determined that out of aaaaalllll the visitors to their website, on average, a given percentage will buy a bottle of their product and that they'll make more money from those sales than they paid for the ads.

This is called a positive ROI (return on investment). So even though they spend money for advertising, the sales they make earns them MORE money than they spent for advertising and if their product works really well, then they may have just acquired a lifetime customer, whose business is certainly worth more money to their company in the long run than the cost of the advertising that attracted them.

If, however, an advertiser runs an ad that turns out to be UNprofitable, then they simply test NEW ads until they get one that makes them more money than the cost of the ad (positive ROI).

As a builder of Adsense sites, the point is that you WANT as much competition among advertisers as possible because it drives up the cost-per-click (CPC), which means that you'll be more likely to make better money from your websites.

In other words: FULL competition bar is good!

By the by, the more that you're able to think of internet marketing in **fundamental** terms of supply and demand, the less confusing it will be. Always ask "what's in it for this guy?" and you can probably figure out the rest from there.

Myth #2 - aCPC = CPC

Many people are under the misapprehension that the approximate cost-per-click (aCPC) that you see for various terms in the Google Adwords Keyword Tool is an indicator of the ACTUAL cost-per-click (CPC) that YOU might expect to be paid to you from ads on your site.

Well OK, I admit it, I used to think that this is the case, too. But it isn't.

Like many others, I just ASSumed that whatever info people wantonly post on the Warrior Forum or wherever else is for the most part accurate. Oh, how wrong I was.

To begin with, according to Google itself, Adsense publishers (you and I) only receive 68% of the CPC of a given ad. So if a click costs an advertiser \$1.00 and their ad is displayed on your site and somebody clicks on it, you'll only get \$0.68.

(But this isn't accurate either because there are other factors that play a role in your CPC.)

Moreover, the approximate CPC is for the SEARCH network.

In other words, when you do a Google search, the ads that appear on the results page are ads that were bid on by advertisers in the Google SEARCH network, NOT the content network. The ads that you're planning to make money from are CONTENT network ads. These are the ones that show up on websites.

Another caveat is that ads are location-targeted.

So somebody living in Los Angeles who visits your site about "teeth whitening" may see an ad for a local teeth whitening clinic. If there are several other teeth whitening clinics in L.A. advertising with Google and competing for that customer, you can expect a higher CPC. But if your website visitor is from Daggum, Alabama, where teeth whitening is not nearly as competitive an industry as in image-conscious L.A., your cost per click just might suck!

Wait, there's more:


Google has a thing called "Quality Score". Here's what Google says about it:

*"The AdWords system calculates a **Quality Score** for each of your keywords [as an advertiser]. It looks at a variety of factors to measure how relevant your keyword is to your ad text and to a user's search query. A keyword's Quality Score updates frequently and is closely*

related to its performance. In general, a high Quality Score means that your keyword will trigger ads in a higher position and at a lower cost-per-click (CPC).”

Advertisers also supply a whole group of keywords when they launch their ad campaigns with Google so you never know which ones trigger the displaying of your ad. Advertisers are also entering and leaving the marketplace *constantly* and changing their bids constantly.

If you roll over the little question mark near the aCPC column in the GAKT, it flat out tells you that this is what *advertisers* (not publishers!) might expect to pay to bid on this term.

	Approximate CPC This is the approximate cost-per-click you might pay if you were to bid on the keyword. The CPC is averaged over all the ad positions.	
Approximate CPC 	Extracted From Webpage	Google Search N
\$1.45	-	

Yes, you generally want to pick keywords with higher aCPCs but a high aCPC is not a guarantee of a profitable keyword because you don't know what kind of click-through-rate this niche enjoys and you also need to look at the quantity and relevance of competitors to your primary and secondary keyword terms!

Fact: Building AdSense websites is fundamentally unpredictable. Approach it intelligently - which is why you're reading this report, you smarty pants, you! ;-)- but don't be shocked when a website you built turns out to be a dud on the one hand, or an unexpectedly excellent money-maker on the other. You just never know.

Myth#3 - Assessing Competition By # Of Results, Allintitle, Allinurl, Etc.

You've probably heard that if there are 35,000 or more competing sites for a keyword then you shouldn't go after it. Or that you should assess competitiveness *purely* based upon how many sites have the keyword in the Title tag or in the URL.

This is the bullshit of all bullshits.

The ONLY competitors that matter are the first 3 sites that rank for your keyword term in Google. That's where all the traffic is so THAT is where all the moolah is.

You'll definitely want to check the title tag, description and URL for the keyword of those top 3 guys but what the heck does it matter if there are 5 million other sites out there that *mention* your keyword or have it in their title or URL? If their websites were relevant, targeted and high-quality enough, then they'd ALREADY be in the top 3 in Google (or at least on the first page!)

The fact is that there are PLENTY of websites that mention PLENTY of keyword terms and may even have an article on the term that you're targeting. But 99.9 % of them rank for a keyword unintentionally!

But you're building your entire website - not just a page! - around that ONE term. So whom do you think Google will consider to be the more relevant dude (or dudette)? That's right, you!

Repeat After Me: "The volume of competition is irrelevant."

The STRENGTH of competition **for the top 3 spots** is the ONLY thing that you need to look at. Period.

Myth #4 - Being On The First Page Vs Being In The Top 3 Vs Being #1

The truth is that only the first couple of spots in Google will get you any useful amount of traffic. There've been a number of studies done on the percentage of clicks that each position in Google search results receives.

#1 gets about 40% of the clicks, #2 gets about 12%, #3 gets about 9% and the rest get peanuts.

What does this tell you?

It tells you that being on page 2 is about as good as being on page 347.

Since your adsense earnings are going to be a function of your traffic levels, it should also tell you that only the first couple of spots in Google will make any decent money.

If you're going for keyword terms that get a lot of traffic (10,000 exact match local searches or more), then being anywhere on the first page can make you some money.

But this isn't the case with micro niche sites because they don't receive nearly as much traffic. Your income is dependent upon your traffic so if you plan on building micro niche sites, make sure that you pick keywords you KNOW you can get to #1.

Beating The Top 3

Since the Google Panda update, a few things have changed. Simply putting up crappy content and bombarding your site with backlinks won't allow you to achieve a #1 ranking for your keyword term as reliably as it did in the past. And this is increasingly going to be the case as Google updates its algorithm.

Google values quality and relevance above all.

While the ranking factors in the list I'm about to go through with you still matter, I've now noticed that the amount of relevant, quality content on a site plus the amount of relevant, quality backlinks play a huge role in how well a page ranks.

On top of the items in this list, look for your competition to have thin, uninformative content and backlinks from websites unrelated to the

keyword term.

Quality + Relevance = Rankings!

So here's the checklist I use:

The more of these that you answer "no" to, the better.

Is this is a top level domain? (top level domain = www.website.com;

non-top level domain = www.website.com/page)

Is the keyword in the Title?

Is the keyword in the URL?

Is the keyword in the description?

Does the page (NOT the domain) have 30 backlinks or less?

Are the backlinks for the most part coming from sites relevant to the keyword term?

Is the PR of this page (NOT the domain) 3 or less?

Is the content on this page informative and relevant to the keyword term?

Is this an exact match domain (exact match domain = www.keyword.com or www.keyword.net. Non-exact match domain = www.keywordcity.com or www.bestkeyword.net)?

Are there other affiliates anywhere on the first page?

Do they look like they know what they're doing (i.e. following this checklist themselves, good content, good layout, etc.)?

All of these factors are going to vary for each set of competitors that you analyze and in the end it's a judgment call on your part whether or not a keyword is too competitive for you. If you're just starting out, don't be afraid to think big but make sure your competition is beatable in a reasonable amount of time or you'll get burned out!

If you plan to build an authority site or a site around a very competitive term then you should still look for the items on this checklist but don't be surprised if the top ranking websites have their act together. Sometimes, you just have to do better than the other guy!

You NEED To Buy Expensive Keyword Tools

....Nah.

All of the tools you need to do solid keyword research are available FREE online.

Here they are:

SEOquake: This is a free add-on for either Google's Chrome browser or the Firefox browser. I personally prefer Chrome because it doesn't hog all of your computer's memory whereas Firefox is more demanding on your RAM. This tool shows you various information about search results in Google with a little bar underneath each result. You get to see things like PR, Domain Age, # of pages indexed by google, # of backlinks to the page, # of backlinks to the domain, etc. The bar also appears at the top of your browser while you're on a website and displays all that information. Additionally, you can quickly check on-page SEO and keyword density. In short, this tool absolutely rocks! www.seoquake.com

GAKT: The Google Adwords Keyword Tool, affectionately known as "GAKT!!", is also totally free. You need a Google Adwords account, which doesn't cost you a penny in order to see the full list of related keyword suggestions. Make sure you're logged in when using this tool or you won't get the full spread of results.

Blue Backlinks: This is a web-based backlink checker that can be found at www.bluebacklinks.com and will show you the approximate number of backlinks that a competitor has, where they're coming from, whether they're "follow" or "nofollow" and what the anchor text is.

iWebTools' Backlink Checker: This is another backlink checker I use. This one shows the PR of the linking sites. http://www.iwebtool.com/backlink_checker

OpenSiteExplorer: This is yet another backlink checker. The reason I usually run my competitor's website through all 3 backlink checkers is because they all tend to come up with different results and I get a clearer picture of a site's backlink profile if I check it across different tools. You have to sign up for a free account to use this tool. <http://opensiteexplorer.org/>

Google: Depending upon the country that you're building websites in, you'll need to check competition for that country accordingly. So if you're targeting a keyword in the UK, make sure you're on google.co.uk. If you're targeting a keyword in the States, make sure you're using Google.com or else you'll be looking at the wrong competitors!

If you decide to get serious about doing keyword research and making a long-term business out of building websites then there is 1 paid tool I recommend. Do you NEED it? No. Can it save you oodles of time and help you organize your campaigns? Yes.

Check it out below, it's called SECockpit and is bar none the best, fastest tool on the market and it is totally cloud-based! If you're wondering, it spans Market Samurai in every possible respect.

www.smartkeywordresearch.net/secockpit (affiliate link)

Global vs. Local Monthly Searches

This is a mistake that I made up until quite recently and it's one that a lot of seasoned Internet Marketers still make and it is this: confusing the Global Monthly Searches of a keyword term with the Local Monthly Searches.

It's important to base your keyword decisions on the exact match local monthly searches. "Local" in this case means YOUR country. The reason this is so crucial is because a term can have 60,000 global monthly searches and 59,000 of those searches are performed outside of your country, which means that your keyword gets only 1,000!

Make sure you select your country in the Google Keyword Tool or it'll show global searches even in the "local" column.

Why does it matter where your searches are coming from?

Because the bulk of your site building and backlinking efforts take place in your country. On the other hand, if you find a low-competition

keyword term that receives tons of traffic in – say, the United Kingdom – then you could certainly buy a “co.uk” domain and do your backlinking from UK sites.

But unless you find an out-of-this-world keyword, that strategy will be an unnecessary pain in the gluteus, particularly because there are so many great keywords in your country.

I hope that some of the things I’ve shared in this report will help save you some time, frustration and maybe even make you some money real soon.

I’ve put together an “over the shoulder” video course showing these principles in action. It has plenty of live examples for ClickBank keywords, Adsense and Amazon.

Check it out at <http://www.smartkeywordresearch.net>

Thanks so much for reading and keep at it, you’ll be working from a beach in Thailand in no time! ;-)

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