

Keyword Research

Please don't scan this report. Keyword research can be dull and boring and that's why most Internet Marketers do it badly. Keyword research is probably the most overlooked phase of any kind of Internet Marketing plan. Everyone wants to get on with it now and sees this stage as a waste of time, when in fact the complete opposite is true. A little bit more time invested in this up front pays off massively down the road. Anyway, enough intro, let me show you what I mean.

The Basics

You'll hear a lot of people talking about "Being number one in Google" or "On page one in Google" but this is only half the story. The fact is you are ranking in Google is for a particular keyword or keyphrase. So it'd be more accurate to say something like, "Number one in Google for the keyword backlinks" or "On page one in Google for the keyphrase free backlinks".

The next thing to note is that Google ranks pages, not websites. So if your website is all about pets (a pretty broad term) you don't expect your homepage to rank for every pet term. You'll have a load of categories for different types of pet (that might rank for that animal) and even more pages targeting the specific keywords for each pet. If you try to make the homepage rank for all of these terms, you'll fail. If you make a specific page for each term, you're setting yourself up to succeed from the beginning.

This second part is why it's possible to get an article on EzineArticles or GoArticles to rank so quickly for the keyphrase you've targeted. You're making use of the highly trusted, and massively backlinked, domain and combining it with a highly targeted article and a load of extra backlinks.

Finding keywords to target

The general rule when you first sit down to draw up a list of keywords to target is to start short and general and end long and specific. What do I mean by that? Let's say you're a dog lover. You've had dogs all your life, know loads about it and also have several dog related affiliate products you're looking to promote. The rookie mistake here is to make "dog" your keyword and just write a lot about dogs.

Ranking for that term would be amazing. Around two million searches a month just for the word dog and nearly 70 million searches for terms including the word dog (I'll come on to how to look up those numbers shortly). Unfortunately, the word dog has 333 million sites competing with you for that traffic so your chances of ranking are pretty low. Fortunately there are plenty of tools to let us drill down into the dog niche and help us find less competitive keyphrases to target.

The best tools for the job are the Google Adwords tool –

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

and the free Word Tracker keyword tool –

<http://freekeywords.wordtracker.com/>

The Word Tracker tool is OK but Google's Adwords tool is far superior. The main reason for mentioning it is to give you a second place to look up search traffic information. No one has complete and accurate information because people are searching in so many different places. As a result you need to spend a bit of time verifying the statistics Google gives you.

How would you like to generate keyword ideas? <input checked="" type="radio"/> Descriptive words or phrases (e.g. green tea) <input type="radio"/> Website content (e.g. www.example.co.uk/product?id=74893)	Enter one keyword or phrase per line: <div>dog</div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use synonyms Filter my results <input type="button" value="Get keyword ideas"/>
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To get started with the Adwords tool put the most general term you can think of (this is what I meant by starting short and general) into the keyword box on the right. Periodically Google will ask you to fill out a Captcha form to prove you're human and then click "Get keyword ideas". This tool was designed to help people do PPC (Pay Per Click) advertising but it's just as useful to us in figuring out what people are searching for.

Choose columns to be displayed: Show/hide columns				
Keywords	Advertiser Competition ?	Local Search Volume: May ?	Global Monthly Search Volume ?	Match Type: ?
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sorted by relevance ?				
dogs	<div></div>	6,120,000	20,400,000	Add ↵
dog	<div></div>	13,600,000	68,000,000	Add ↵
dog breed	<div></div>	74,000	550,000	Add ↵
dog collars	<div></div>	135,000	550,000	Add ↵
dog breeds	<div></div>	165,000	1,000,000	Add ↵
dog training	<div></div>	246,000	1,500,000	Add ↵
dog names	<div></div>	90,500	823,000	Add ↵
dog breeders	<div></div>	49,500	301,000	Add ↵
dog breeder	<div></div>	9,900	90,500	Add ↵
puppy dog	<div></div>	49,500	201,000	Add ↵

The results will look something like this. Along with the general term you searched to start with you'll also get dozens (or more) suggestions from Google about longer phrases you can target. The first thing we are going to do is customize this view of the data to provide us with more relevant information. To do this you use the drop down box at the top of this section marked "Choose columns to be displayed."

Hide –

- Advertiser competition – It's format is too vague to tell us anything meaningful.
- Local search volume – Unless you're targeting keywords specific to an area. In this case we don't mind whether people are searching for dogs in the USA, UK or anywhere else.

Show –

- Estimated Avg. CPC – This is the average amount people are bidding for clicks related to the keyword. Higher values (compared to similar terms) suggest a "buyer's keyword", which means it's worth more to rank for but they are usually more competitive.

Calculate estimates using a different maximum CPC bid:		Choose columns to be displayed: ?	
British Pounds Sterling (GBP £)	<input type="text"/>	Re-calculate ?	Show/hide columns
Keywords	Estimated Avg. CPC ?	Global Monthly Search Volume ?	Match Type: ? Broad
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sorted by relevance ?			
dogs	£0.39	20,400,000	Add <
dog	£0.61	68,000,000	Add <
dog breed	£0.28	550,000	Add <
dog collars	£0.88	550,000	Add <
dog breeds	£0.21	1,000,000	Add <
dog training	£1.40	1,500,000	Add <
dog names	£0.19	823,000	Add <
dog breeders	£0.31	301,000	Add <
dog breeder	£0.29	90,500	Add <
puppy dog	£0.51	201,000	Add <

Once you've updated the view it'll look something like this. Before we move on, let's look at an example of a "buyer's keyword". If you scan down the Estimated Avg. CPC column you'll see "dog training" averages much higher than the other terms. The other high value is "dog collars". It's easy to see how these terms are far more directly related to an end product than terms such as "dog names" and thus they are worth more.

Long Tail Keyphrases

The phrase "The Long Tail" was coined by Chris Anderson in his book of the same name. It refers to how subjects on the Internet become more and more specific, more and more niche. In this case we're breaking our keywords down from very general (highly competitive) terms and moving into the long tail specific keyphrases that get less searches but are a lot less competitive.

Before we look at how to dig deeper and deeper into a niche let's take a moment to understand Google's match types. The match type used can be set using the drop down box shown in the top right of the screen shots. There are four options but the ones you care about are –

- Broad – This shows how many searches contain the keyword or keyphrase regardless of whether other words also appear in the search or if the words are rearranged.
- Phrase – This shows how many searches include your keyphrase in that order.
- Exact – This shows how many searches contain that specific keyphrase with the words in that order.

So far we've done all our searching uses the broad match type. That means all the search volumes we're looking at include other words as well. So the results for "dog" is any search on Google that uses the word "dog". Just as using the tool for the word "dog" shows us lots of two word phrases we can also put in other high volume search terms and find out more specific versions of them.

Calculate estimates using a different maximum CPC bid:		Choose columns to be displayed: ?	
British Pounds Sterling (GBP £)	<input type="text"/>	Re-calculate ?	Show/hide columns
Keywords	Estimated Avg. CPC ?	Global Monthly Search Volume ?	Match Type: ? Broad
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sorted by relevance ?			
dogs training	£1.09	135,000	Add <
dog training	£1.83	1,500,000	Add <
dog training course	£2.26	3,600	Add <
dog obedience training	£1.89	60,500	Add <
dog training schools	£2.29	14,800	Add <
dog training courses	£2.34	5,400	Add <
dog training classes	£2.25	22,200	Add <
dog training class	£2.80	3,600	Add <
guard dog training	£2.48	12,100	Add <
dog trainer	£2.10	135,000	Add <

This shows the top few results when I put dog training into the search box. We can see the one and a half million searches are actually made up of lots of more specific phrases. But we don't have to stop there, there's 60,500 monthly searches for "dog obedience training" so let's drill down again.

Calculate estimates using a different maximum CPC bid:		Choose columns to be displayed: ?	
British Pounds Sterling (GBP £)		Re-calculate ?	Show/hide columns
Keywords	Estimated Avg. CPC ?	Global Monthly Search Volume ?	Match Type: ? Broad
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sorted by relevance ?			
dog obedience training	\$2.07	60,500	Add <<
dog obedience training schools	\$5.41	1,600	Add <<
dog obedience training classes	\$2.88	880	Add <<
dog obedience training club	\$0.55	1,000	Add <<
dog training and obedience	\$1.21	1,300	Add <<
dog obedience training	\$1.62	1,300	Add <<
dog obedience training courses	\$0.04	91	Add <<
obedience training for dogs	\$2.05	5,400	Add <<
dog obedience training in	\$2.16	4,400	Add <<
basic dog obedience training	\$1.89	720	Add <<
book dog obedience training	\$1.51	480	Add <<

Notice as we get more specific there's less traffic but the value of the search term increases. It looks like we've reached the end of this long tail. The keyphrases are now receiving a lot less search traffic so we're much more likely to be able to compete for them than terms like "dog" on its own.

You can follow this process for any niche. Start with a one or sometimes two keyword phrase that's really generic and keep drilling down gathering more and more keyphrases that you can potentially target. Record them in a list somewhere (or use the download links at the end of the list) and get ready to find out which keyphrases are better to target as we start to look at the competition.

Quoted vs Unquoted competition

One of the hottest SEO debates that you'll see all over the forums is what counts as your "true" competition. Whenever you read these discussions you have to keep in mind that no one outside of Google actually knows how their search engine works and it's so complicated that probably only about 1% of Google employees understand it as well. So when you see people claiming that some statistic or other is your "true competition" just nod, smile and politely ignore them. Everything we discuss about competition is purely an indicator towards levels of competition.



The first type of competition is the standard unquoted search. This is usual way people search for things in Google. Simply typing the words in and clicking "search". I've highlighted the most interesting part of the results in red in the screen shot above. As you can see there are about 1,130,000 pages competing for this keyphrase.

But these are all the pages that contain the words dog, obedience and training. They don't have to be together, they don't have to be in that order. So now we look at the quoted competition to see how many pages contain the complete phrase "dog obedience training".

[Advanced Search](#)
[Preferences](#)Search: ☒ the web ☐ pages from the UKWeb [Show options...](#)Results 1 - 10 of about 533,000 for "**dog obedience training**". (0.23 seconds)

Now we can see that there are half as many pages competing for the complete phrase. So if you go back to the original blue print at the start of this guide you'll remember I said, "Find a keyphrase that has less than 500,000 unquoted competition." So this keyphrase doesn't actually qualify but at just over a million unquoted and 500,000 quoted it's not terrible.

Remember rule number one of competition analysis. Everything is just an indicator. Although a million unquoted competitors isn't terrible we've already seen from checking out the average CPC for the term that it's highly valuable so there's every chance we'll be up against stiffer competition.

What we need is a way to dig deeper and find out who we're up against ...

Page Rank Analysis

Although page rank is another number that is only ever an indicator that doesn't make it a bad one so the first thing we want to check out for our competition is the page rank associated with the page and domain.

[Secrets to Dog Training | Dog Obedience Training to Solve Dog ...](#)

Dog obedience training by Secrets to Dog Training. Learn how to obedience train your dog effectively to stop your dogs behavior problems.

www.kingdomofpets.com/dogobediencetraining/ - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

In this screen shot I've highlighted the page listed for a typical Google search result. The next thing to do is head over to PR Checker (http://www.prchecker.info/check_page_rank.php) and enter both the page and domain of the listing to see how highly it scores with Google. If there's only a website listed then you just need to do a single look up.

You'll frequently find the top results in Google come from very high Page Rank domains such as Wikipedia, EzineArticles and GoArticles, while the page itself has little or no Page Rank itself. This is exactly the behavior that is so easy to exploit for fast, high rankings with less time invested.

The easiest results to compete with are ones where both the domain and page have little or no Page Rank. In this case the page is ranking purely based on the keywords on the page and maybe some backlinks.

The next category are low Page Rank pages on higher Page Rank domains. This sort of page is the best place to start for yourself. These pages typically rank well due to the highly targeted page combined with the authority of the domain it's on.

The hardest category of results to compete for are ones where the pages themselves have high Page Rank. There's just no need to compete for these terms and it's beyond the scope of this guide to discuss how to do it.

Backlink Analysis

You've probably realized by now that you're not the only one who knows that getting backlinks makes your pages rank higher in Google. While this is true there are still tons of keyphrases out there where the top results are there purely due to the on page factors and the domain they are on. Our goal is to find these search terms as they are a lot easier to compete for than ones where people are actively backlinking already. Added to that, if we do stake a claim on a keyphrase and start backlinking for it, it's a lot less likely that someone else will try to compete with us because they will pass it over for less competitive terms.

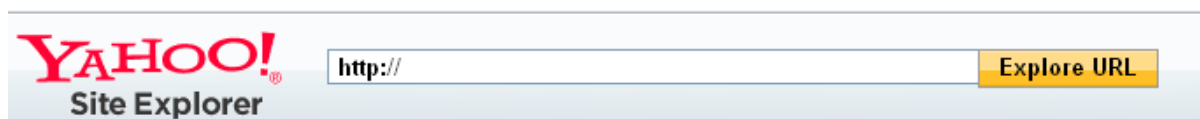
Both Google and Yahoo provide free tools for exploring our competitors' backlinks. Google's is very basic and very unreliable since they mask the results to prevent people getting too much information about how their systems work.



Web [Show options...](#) Results 1 - 10 of about 509,000 linking to **www.google.com**. (0.18 seconds)

Simply do a Google search for "link:www.YourSiteName.com" and it'll give you an indication of how many backlinks a site has. Fortunately, Yahoo's tool contains more accurate data.

<http://siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com/>



Enter the name of the site (or page) that you want to get information about and click on "Explore URL".



This is an example of searching for "<http://www.google.com>" so, as you can imagine, there are a lot of backlinks. When you first do a search the "Pages" section will be displayed so you need to swap over to the "Inlinks" section to do the analysis.

It's useful to change the first dropdown box to "Except from this domain" as this prevents Site Explorer from including links from the domain itself. You don't want to be put off competing with a site that has a lot of content (and thus internal links) but not a lot of external backlinks.

Then you should make sure the second drop down is set to "Only this URL" to make sure you're seeing the backlinks just the page has and not every single link to the site.

Domain vs Page Backlinks

It's worth looking to see how many backlinks both tools show to your main competing page and the domain's homepage (sometimes this will be the same thing). You'll often find competing pages are ranking based on the strength of the domain and not their own backlinks. If the domain (and site in general) have a lot of links but the page doesn't then you've found a good keyword to target.

Domain authority goes a long way towards helping a page rank well but you can combine good domain authority with backlinks to the individual page to out perform these competitors.

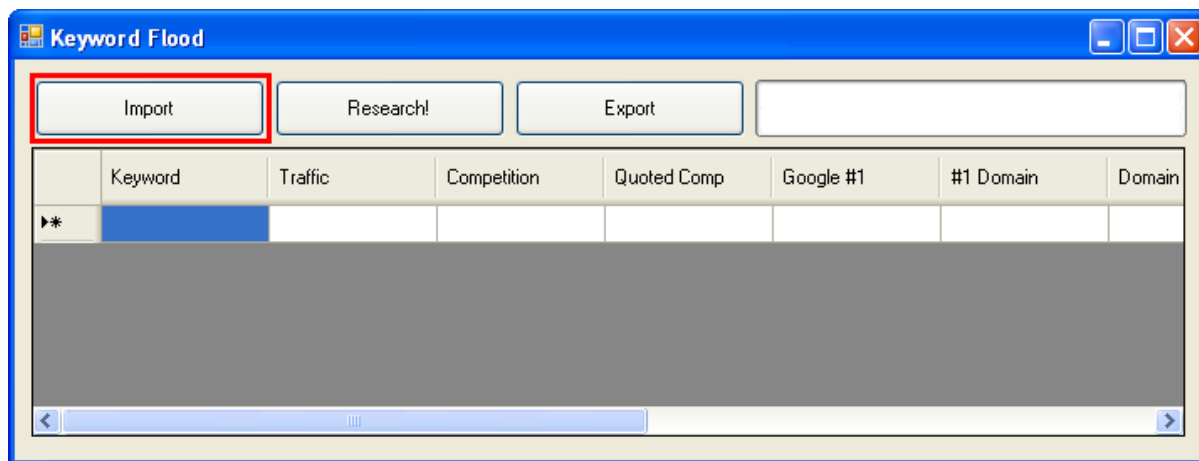
Keyword Flood Software

If you've read this far (and not just jumped to the end to see how the cool software works) you're probably thinking, "Won't that take me a long time to do?" And you're right. It's dull, it's boring and it takes ages. I got bored too. That's why I made Keyword Flood to massively speed up your keyword research.

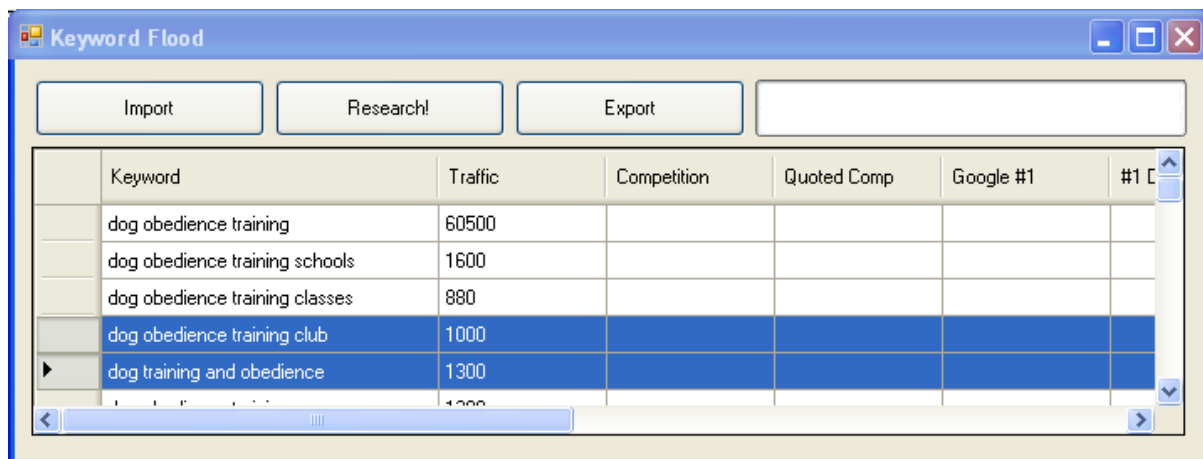
We still start with Google's Adwords tool to get ourselves a list of keywords –

behavior dog obedience trainer training	<div><div></div></div>	Not enough data	91	Add ▾
dog obedience training videos	<div><div></div></div>	Not enough data	260	Add ▾
dog training canine obedience	<div><div></div></div>	Not enough data	Not enough data	Add ▾
Add all 43 »				
Download all keywords: text , .csv (for excel) , .csv				

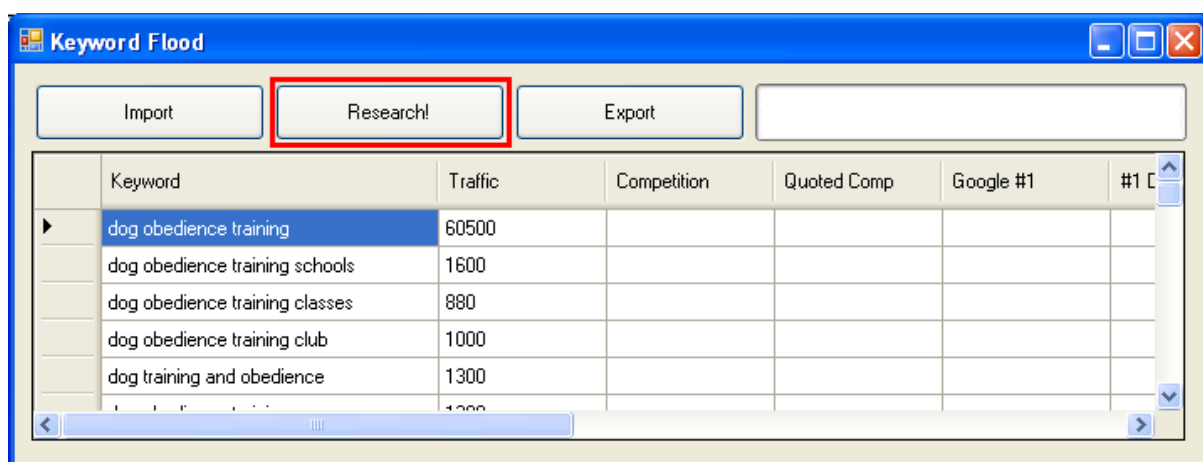
Once you have found a list of keywords you want to analyse, scroll down to the bottom of the section and click on the ".csv" link in the "Download all keywords" section. DO NOT choose ".csv (for excel)" as it uses a different format that is not compatible with Keyword Flood.



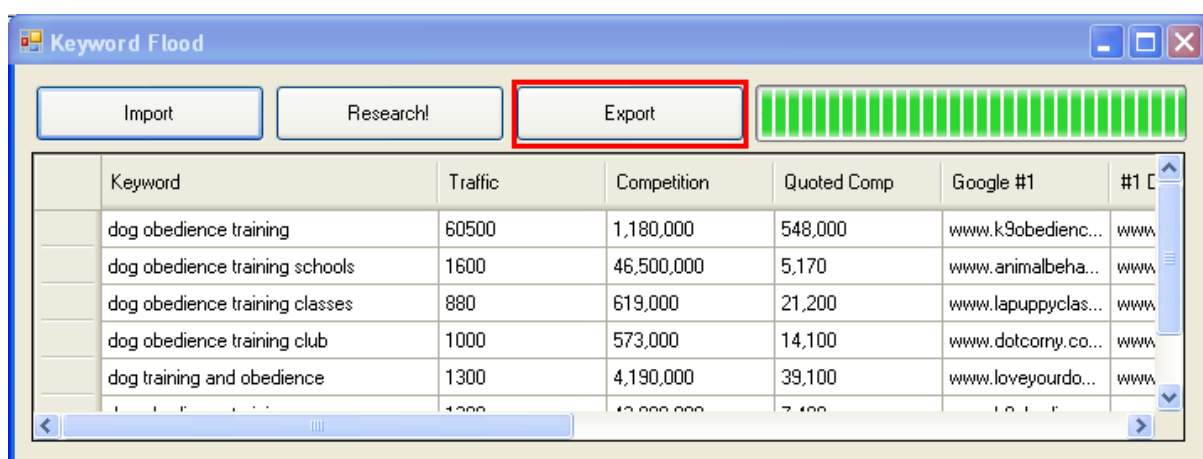
Click on the "Import" button and select the ".csv" file that you've just downloaded from Adwords.



Select any rows that you don't wish to do research for and press "delete" to remove them.



Click on "Research!" and Keyword Flood will go away and do all the research described above for each keyword in your list. Big lists can take a little while to process so the progress bar in the top right will tell you how far through it is.



Click on "Export" and choose where to save your data. This file can now be opened in Excel or Open Office to carry out a full analysis.