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Exploring Beyond Keywords Into Behavioral Research

By John Alexander

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If you have ever studied search engine optimization, then you'll know that most educators place tremendous importance on performing good keyword research. After all, it's true that we need to optimize our pages for the best phrases, or we will never realize our true traffic potential. It's all about trying to attract the ideal audience of searchers to our Web site, right? Is that not what most of people do? They build a Web site offering their business services, then they say to themselves "How do I get traffic to my site?" For many Web site owners, their source of traffic is an after-thought.

It's much wiser, to first try and discover what keyword phrases people are searching for on the major search engines and then optimize Web content for those specific phrases. However, there are still further regions to explore that go beyond keyword research. Let's call it researching the "behavior" of your target audience.

The difference between keyword research and behavioral research is that keyword research keeps us in a rather technical mode and focused on finding out what words people are entering while searching. Behavioral research has the added advantage of enlightenment and understanding that not only reveals what keyword phrases are being used, but why those keywords are being used.

Give this some careful thought. What could possibly be more important than getting inside the head of your target audience and discovering what they really want? Actually nothing! Once we understand exactly what someone is looking for, we can give them exactly what they want. Think "behavior." Every day, people around the world use the Internet as a tool for a vast array of purposes. A study of behaviors can carry you much deeper into understanding the desires of your target audience and ultimately, an understanding of what kind of useful content to provide for them.

While most people are thinking about what keywords to use, try to expand your scope to focus and discover the fullest possible picture of what your customer REALLY wants, what they really are doing, by simply studying their searching behavior on the major search engines.

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Why make all this fuss about behavior trends anyway? What creates behavioral trends? Think about it this way. If you can discover how a certain target audience is using the Internet, then chances are the rest of your target audience may be doing exactly the same thing. This is not only helpful with respect to the ideal keyword phrase selection but also may be helpful to your writing style. How you communicate to a grandmother will have a completely different spin than how you communicate with a sports enthusiast looking for sports scores or a photographer searching for a place to review several different lenses.

If you happened to learn that a grandmother is shopping online to buy a gift for her daughter's newborn baby, then what are the chances of there being many other grandmothers doing the same thing. If enough grandmothers are doing this in real life every day, it creates a trend.

So lets get down to talking about behaviors then.

Some people have already realized that online consumers are searching for price comparisons online. Wouldn't it be useful to know exactly what prices or what products people are comparing? How easily you could you take advantage of this information by creating ideal content within a retail site, that compares exactly these things that people are searching for and want to know! Not only that, but suppose you could research those exact products and determine fairly quickly where the biggest "window of opportunity" would be for you?

One of the most powerful and useful tools for researching human behavior is

. As an

official member of Wordtracker's question and answer support team, I help answer peoples questions about keyword research every day. The questions I answer are mostly things that customers are curious about, but often the answer to their question does not allow me the time to explain about some of the special advantages of Wordtracker. This is why I wrote an e-book called Wordtracker Magic, to help people understand some simple, easy alternatives to performing keyword research and behavioral research. Many people miss the behavioral trends simply because they are thinking too narrowly about "keywords" which may already be pre-programmed into their minds. Remember, if there is enough common interest in any topic, so that a similar search behavior is occurring then it will often leave an identifiable trend behind in Wordtrackers database. Every time you can discover those trends, it's like pure gold!

John Alexander is the Co-Director of Training of Search Engine Workshops with Robin Nobles. Together, they teach 2-day beginner, 3-day advanced, and 5-day all-inclusive "hands on" search engine marketing workshops in locations across the globe. John also teaches online search engine marketing courses through

, and he's a member of Wordtracker's

official question support team.

Keyword Research Made Simple!

By Kim Thaysen

Keyword Research is the first task in optimizing your web site and pay-per-click campaign. Here you need to know what keywords your target group is using.

Your keywords are the words and phrases that people might use to find your products, brands, services, or information, via search engines.

Step 1: Keyword Identification

The first step in your keyword research is to identify keywords. Keyword identification is about finding the keywords that your target group is using. You can probably develop a few ideas very quickly. If you run a pet shop, you may identify keywords such as: "dog food" and "cat food".

Step 2: Find Keywords

The second step in your keyword research is to find keywords what people actually use and to organize your keywords by their popularity.

To find keywords and their popularities use the keyword search box from Aleksika to learn the search behaviour of your audience. Find out what they call things, how they identify subjects, how precisely or broadly they generally search.

You can also get good keyword ideas from the top keywords collection that contains the top 100.000 keywords of the year or the keyword directory where you can find keywords organized by subject.

Step 3: Choose Keywords

Copy the relevant counts and phrases into a spreadsheet. After you've examined all the individual phrases that could apply to your site, your spreadsheet will contain every phrase of importance.

Next, sort the phrases by the "count" column. The resulting display shows the relative importance of each phrase.

You will have to choose keyword phrases that are most relevant to your Web site – two and three-words keyword phrases that best describe your products and services. Many searchers enter one-word queries into the search form but the chance of competing successfully for one-word search engine keywords is fairly remote. The number of competing websites is simple too high.

Instead of wasting your efforts then you choose keywords with one-word, it is suggested that you concentrate on those keywords, which are easily manageable.

You can read more about Keyword Research on Aleksika's web site.

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Kim Thaysen, Manager for Aleksika. Experts in Search Engine Marketing. Aleksika is all about helping you do smarter business by increasing marketing Return on Investment.

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