

DYI Keyword Research

Use the free Google research tool: <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal> (or just go to Google and type in the search bar – google keyword tool – and it will pop up the page to link to).

Enter the main keywords you would like to explore in the specified box (one keyword per line). Use general search terms and leave the “find synonyms” box checked. Enter the captcha code and then click the “get keyword ideas” button.

The next page shows the results. Scroll down to the table that shows the results.

- Pay attention to the Keywords column and the Local Search Volume column.
- To the right you will see a box that has “Broad” (which refers to “Broad Match”) in it. Use the drop down feature to select the term “Exact” instead. This will change the results to Exact Match instead of Broad Match. (Exact Match is much more precise in helping identify the keywords getting the most search.)

To determine a keyword’s opportunity, use a tablet or a spreadsheet to set up a chart with these columns:

- Keyword
- Search volume
- Competing pages
- Opportunity

Then perform the following steps:

- Enter the Keywords you are considering into the Keyword column.
- To determine competing pages, go to Google and type in the keyword in quotes in the search bar. (For example, type in “fishing hats” instead of simply fishing hats.)
- At the upper right on the results page that appears, you will see: Results 1 – 10 of about xxx,xxx for search term. This number represents the number of pages that feature this exact keyword.
- Enter the number of results (the number that follows “of about”) under the Competing Pages column of your worksheet alongside the appropriate keyword.
- Now divide the number of results by the number of searches and enter that into the Opportunity column. (The formula is: Results Column cell/Search Column cell)
- The lower the Opportunity number, the better. A “1” means that there is an equal number of results and searches. Higher numbers indicate that there is much more competition for the keyword. Negative numbers indicate that there is HUGE opportunity because there are fewer pages of results than there are searches (a result that is extremely rare!) There is no one number to shoot for. What you should be looking for is the keywords with the greatest potential among those considered.

A common question is: what is an adequate search volume for a keyword to be considered “good?” Opinions vary, but a monthly Exact Match search total of 2,000+ is generally preferred. Some suggest 5,000 or more is even better.

What is considered to be too much competition? It’s not necessarily the number, but rather the Opportunity score which correlates the search volume related to the competing number of pages. The lowest numbers are always better from a competitive perspective.

Note: For search occurring in local markets for local results, the national numbers are somewhat irrelevant. However, national number still provide good trending information that can be assumed to be proportionately correlated to local market results in most cases.