

Choosing The Keywords Your Website Should Target

Choosing which keywords your website should target is perhaps the most important decision you can make when beginning search engine optimization. The aim of keyword research is to discover which words and phrases will not only bring traffic to your website, but more importantly, bring targeted traffic to your site. Targeted traffic is the traffic that will generate most sales as the searchers will actually get what they are looking for when they enter your website.

Before you use the first keyword that pops into your head it's wise to first do some research, firstly to find out how difficult it will be to get a good ranking for your chosen keywords and also the number of people that enter those keywords into the search engines, which will give you some idea on the amount of traffic you can expect.

Research Your Keyword

In order to research your keywords you can use WebLink SEO's [Overture Keyword Research tool](#). The keyword research tool enables you to enter a word or phrase and view other similar words/phrases that people have search for, and also how many competitor websites there are for each keyword suggestion. This enables you to search for niche keywords that do not have high levels of competition while also generating targeted traffic to your website.

For example, lets pretend you operate a website that sells wedding cakes. We can see from the Overture Keyword Research tool that the number of people who typed "wedding cakes" into Overture was 155,018 for the previous month.

Overture Keyword Research

The tool will also find the number of competitor websites for each keyword suggestion.

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Enter Search Term: Overture US

Keyword Results:

#	Keyword Suggestions	Search Count	# Competitor Websites
1	cake wedding	155018	7310000
2	cake picture wedding	39039	3890000
3	cake toppers wedding	16038	1640000
4	cake design wedding	8653	2160000
5	cake photo wedding	5852	4860000
6	cake gallery wedding	4017	3190000
7	cake recipe wedding	3819	2260000
8	cake topper wedding	3069	4730000
9	cake cupcake wedding	2976	187000
10	cake idea wedding	2809	1960000
11	cake top wedding	2740	5700000
12	cake fall wedding	2672	3140000
13	cake unique wedding	2385	2100000
14	bakery cake wedding	2342	871000
15	cake stands wedding	2219	1570000
16	cake elegant wedding	2086	2140000
17	cake fountain wedding	1878	1100000
18	cake square wedding	1702	2740000
19	cake chocolate wedding	1617	3190000
20	cake price wedding	1545	2740000
21	cake decoration wedding	1518	1280000
22	cake shower wedding	1480	2100000
23	cake picture square wedding	1399	2470000
24	cake flower wedding	1358	1970000

However, let's assume the product or service your website offers is not available to a global audience, but rather you want to target a local audience. There's little point targeting the phrase "wedding cakes" as the majority of people that come to your site won't be able to buy any wedding cakes as they might not be in the same country as the shop itself! You might get a large amount of traffic to your site, but it's unlikely you will get good conversion rates, and also the additional time you spent optimizing for this popular phrase could be wasted. Instead you should try to get 'Targeted Traffic'. This is where you get traffic to your site that is most likely to lead to a sale.

So let's say our wedding shop is in New York. Rather than targeting the keyword "wedding cakes" you should target "wedding cakes new york".

Overture Keyword Research

The tool will also find the number of competitor websites for each keyword suggestion.

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Enter Search Term:

Keyword Results:

#	Keyword Suggestions	Search Count	# Competitor Websites
1	wedding cake new york	406	3140000
2	wedding cake new york city	73	2320000
3	wedding cake in new york	68	2840000
4	cake filling new wedding york	48	1700000
5	wedding cake in rochester new york	32	643000

If we now look at the overture keyword tool again, we can see that the number of people that type "wedding cakes new york" was less than the number that typed "wedding cakes", but because we've targeted a more specific phrase, the visitors you do get will be more likely to lead to a sale. It will also be much easier to get a high ranking in the search engines for the term "wedding cakes new york" as there is less competition for that particular phrase.

Analyzing The Competition

So, we now have an idea of what phrase we want to target, let's look at how difficult it will be to get on the first page in Google for that phrase.

At this stage I want to introduce a new concept - Google PageRank. The way Google (and other search engines) decide which order websites appear in its results is to look at how many websites provide links to a certain website. The more links a website has, the more popular it is deemed to be, and the better the position in the search engine it will receive. This is currently the major factor that determines what position a website will appear in the search engine results. There are other factors (which I will cover in later guides), but this is fundamentally the main factor that the search engines use.

Google PageRank offers a measure of how many incoming links (or backlinks as they're known) a website has. The PageRank itself is an exponential scale between 0-10, the higher the PageRank of a website, the more links it has coming into the website.

If I use the Search Engine tool in [WebLink SEO](#) we can see the Google PageRank for the top 10 results for the term "wedding cake new york".

	Domain	URL	Page Title	PageRank	
<input type="checkbox"/>	http://www.theknot.com	http://www.theknot.com/vs_NEW_YO...	NEW YORK Wedding Cakes Wedding P...	4	V
<input type="checkbox"/>	http://www.theknot.com	http://www.theknot.com/	Weddings and wedding planning! Wed...	7	V
<input type="checkbox"/>	http://www.newyorkmetro.com	http://www.newyorkmetro.com/shopp...	New York Weddings 2005 - The Bakeri...	6	F
<input type="checkbox"/>	http://www.newyorkmetro.com	http://www.newyorkmetro.com/shopp...	New York Weddings 2005 - The Bakeri...	4	F
<input type="checkbox"/>	http://www.weddingsolutions.com	http://www.weddingsolutions.com/Ne...	Discounts on New York wedding cakes ...	4	S
<input type="checkbox"/>	http://www.weddingsolutions.com	http://www.weddingsolutions.com/Ne...	Wedding Planning, Wedding Vendors, ...	4	o
<input type="checkbox"/>	http://www.topweddinglinks.com	http://www.topweddinglinks.com/Nati...	New York Wedding Cakes , ny Weddin...	3	D
<input type="checkbox"/>	http://www.topweddinglinks.com	http://www.topweddinglinks.com/Nati...	New York Weddings , ny Top Wedding...	4	n
<input type="checkbox"/>	http://ny.topweddingsites.com	http://ny.topweddingsites.com/	New York Wedding , NY Wedding , Ne...	4	w
<input type="checkbox"/>	http://www.nytimes.com	http://www.nytimes.com/pages/fashi...	Fashion & Style - Weddings & Celebrat...	7	R

I can see that my website would need a PR of at least 4 to stand any chance of getting in the top 10 results. So how many incoming links to my site would I need to get a PR4? Here is a chart that approximately shows how many links are needed to achieve a certain PR from pages with a particular PR.

PR of page	Links for PR4	Links for PR5	Links for PR6	Links for PR7	Links for PR8	Links for PR9
1	3,055	16,803	92,414	508,277	2,795,522	15,375,371
2	555	3,055	16,803	92,414	508,277	2,795,522
3	101	555	3,055	16,803	92,414	508,277
4	18	101	555	3,055	16,803	92,414
5	3	18	101	555	3,055	16,803
6	0.61	3	18	101	555	3,055
7	0.11	0.61	3	18	101	555
8	0.02	0.11	0.61	3	18	101
9	0.00	0.02	0.11	0.61	3	18
10	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.11	0.61	3

From the chart you can see for example that if you want to achieve a PR of 5 you need 18 PR5 pages linking to you, 3 PR6's or just one PR7. This of course is just an approximation. If the page has 30 links instead of 50, more PR would be passed and less links are needed to achieve the same PR.

I hope this guide has helped you get started with optimizing your website, and introduced the basics of search engine optimization. In the following guides I will walk you through the process of optimizing your website for the target keyword, and the different methods that can be used to get links from other websites.