

YOUR GUIDE TO KEYWORD RESEARCH

Everything You Need to Know to Get
Your Content Seen



CadenceSEO

Keyword Research: Everything You Need to Know to Get Your Content Seen

Investing in your content marketing strategy is one of the best things you can do for your brand. In fact, [70%](#) of marketers are actively investing in content marketing because they believe that it's either "very important" or "extremely important." When most marketing teams think of content marketing, they think of creating and sharing valuable content across their platforms – which is the basic idea. However, if you want to see serious results, you need to invest in the right set of tools to help your content rise above the rest – one of those tools is keyword research.

Keyword Research Helps Your Website Rank on Search Engines

When you write a new piece of content, whether it's a blog post, product page, or even a social media post, the first thing you need to do is come up with the initial concept or topic idea. From there, you let the creative juices begin flowing, polish up the final piece, and hit the "share" button! Right?

Well, you can – but that's not going to guarantee you get the results you want. Sure, while nothing in content marketing is guaranteed, having the right set of tools at your disposal can help you increase not only your content's reach, but your overall return on investment as well. One of the most beneficial tools that you can invest in is keyword research.

With keyword research, you can come up with content topics easier. Topic ideation can be quite simple for the skilled marketer who has their eye on the industry and can spot noteworthy changes that need to be addressed and discussed at greater lengths. However, turning those ideas into engaging, actionable content that your audience will want to read requires that you take the time to turn your idea into a searchable topic. After all, the primary reasons for content creation are addressing a frequently asked question or providing a solution to a common problem. Keyword research helps you target the audience searching for these answers and solutions.

What is a Keyword?

In content creation and research, a keyword is most easily defined as your primary topic. Picture a content topic map – the bubble map that helps you navigate from one topic to the next. You always begin with a single topic bubble. This bubble is your primary or your focus keyword. From there, you can start mapping out additional bubbles that relate to your primary topic to help you flesh out the entire piece. In content creation, these can be thought of as your secondary keywords.

Primary/Focus Keyword:

The primary keyword is the most important and most specific keyword that you're going to target in your content. This is your primary topic.

Secondary Keywords:

These are additional keywords that you can use as subtopics or tangents to your primary keyword.

What is Keyword Research?

These are more than just your topics. They are the terms and phrases that your audience enters into the Google or Bing search bar when they start looking up their questions, problems, or interests. You'll be placing these keywords strategically throughout your piece to help optimize the final product. That ensures that search engines cannot only tell what your content is about but also rank it accordingly and place it in front of your desired audience.

Keyword research is the process of finding the best keywords to optimize your content with. While it's a relatively straightforward process, it does take some time and effort to get your strategy up and running. However, when you finally have your keywords in place, it will lead to an increase in your content's visibility and performance.

This process takes a little bit of time because it involves not only knowing who your audience is and what information they are searching for, but it also involves understanding who your competitors are and what their content marketing strategy looks like. To do that, many brands choose to conduct [competitor research](#) as a preliminary step to their keyword research – but it's not a necessary step, especially if you already have a solid idea of who your competition is and how they are approaching their audience.

Benefits of Keyword Research

Keyword research has more benefits than you may realize. Sure, it helps your content become discoverable by the right audience, but it can also help:

Increase Your Content's Reach: Keywords are a great way to reach new audiences and grow your reach by creating content around a specific topic.

Increase Your Conversion Rates: When your content is optimized for a specific target audience, it can help increase your conversion rates by giving your audience not only the information they are looking for but help them see you as the authoritative figure to turn to for solutions.

Increase Your Content's Performance: When your content is optimized for a specific target audience, it can help increase your content's performance by giving your audience the content that they want.

Increase Your Brand's Visibility:

When your content is optimized for a specific target audience, it can help increase your brand's visibility by attracting new visitors and giving them content that they will want to share.

Increase Your Return on Investment (ROI):

When your content is optimized for a specific target audience, it can help increase your ROI by providing additional content that search engines will like. Studies show that the standard content marketing campaign that utilizes keyword research has an average ROI of [16%](#).

When taken seriously and done right, keyword research can help you see some significant changes in not only your online rankings, but in your brand awareness and audience engagement as well.

Keyword Research 101: What You Need to Know

Before you can start diving into keyword research, there are a few key pieces of information you'll want to know, such as basic terms you are going to come across and some of the best tools available to help you in your researching efforts.

Keyword Research Terms to Know

Before you can decide on a tool, you'll want to familiarize yourself with some of the most frequently used terms that will help guide you on your journey to finding only the most relevant keywords to utilize in your various forms of online content.

Search Volume

One of the most common terms you are going to come across is search volume. A keyword's search volume represents the number of times a keyword has been entered into a search box on Google or Bing over the last 30, 60, or 90 days – depending on the research tool you are using.

Search volume is a great way to determine whether a keyword or keyword phrase is relevant to your target at the moment. Since these numbers are based on searches that have taken place within a specific time frame, it's easier for you to determine the current relevancy of the topics instead of using tools such as Google Trends, which will show you how well a specific keyword has been performing over a greater period of time (such as months or years). While this is still a helpful tool, it doesn't help nearly as much with the here and now, meaning it won't help you determine which keywords are working right now.

Keyword Difficulty

The next term you are going to come across is keyword difficulty. This number often falls on a scale between 0 and 100 and will tell you how difficult it is to rank for a specific keyword or keyword phrase.

Typically, the larger the number, the more difficult a keyword or keyword phrase is to rank for organically. Again, this will depend on the specific tool you choose to use. For example, if you're using Semrush, then the higher the keyword difficulty score, the harder it is to rank for.

Competition

In keyword research, the [competition score](#) defines how many people are bidding on a keyword or keyword phrase. It's similar to search volume, but it represents the number of people that are competing for a specific keyword or keyword phrase instead of how many times a keyword or keyword phrase has been searched for.

Clicks/Click-Through Rate

The goal of your content marketing strategy is to get people to click on your content and complete some kind of action – whether it be a purchase of your product or a subscription to your blog. When conducting keyword research, it's essential to take the time to look at the average clicks or the click-through rate (this term/phrase will differ depending on the research tool you choose). This will tell you how many people clicked on a page that ranked for your particular keyword.

It's important to note that just because a keyword has a high click-through rate doesn't necessarily mean it's performing as the brand had hoped. So, while it's a good indicator of how well a keyword is ranking, it's not always a good indicator of how successful it will be in helping you reach your goals.

Cost-Per-Click

Another term you are likely to come across during your keyword research is cost-per-click. This number represents the amount of money that someone is paying for every click on an advertisement connected to that specific keyword.

If you are conducting keyword research for a PPC campaign, this number will help you understand what you will be paying for each click on your advertisement or sponsored post.

Synonymous Keywords

Synonymous keywords are essential to successful content marketing. These are keywords that have the same meaning as your primary keyword but may be worded differently. Another term that you may see in place of synonymous keywords is long-tail keywords. Again, these are keyword phrases that have the same meaning as your primary keyword but are worded in the form of a phrase. That's because these keywords can then be used to branch out from your main topic.

For example, the term dog treats may have synonymous or long-tail keywords such as:

- dog treats recipes
- dog treats amazon
- worst dog treats
- dog treats brands
- dog treats Walmart
- vet recommended dog treats

Each of these examples has something to do with the primary keyword "dog treats," but allows you the opportunity to further build your content to discuss types of dog treats, where to buy dog treats, and even discuss vet recommended options.

Search Queries

Finally, while you may not come across this term while using a keyword research tool, it's essential to know when conducting research and choosing your keywords.

Search queries are the terms, phrases, and questions that consumers enter into the search box of their favorite search engines. Once a consumer hits "enter," the search engine goes to work and starts pulling up relevant information. However, to do that, they need to understand the intent of the searcher.

For instance, [Google describes](#) intent as either:

- **Know** – to find information
- **Do** – to accomplish a goal
- **Website** – to find a specific website
- **Visit-in-Person** – to locate a local business

While there are hundreds of different types of search queries that are used to help define user intent, there are **five primary queries** that search engines utilize when retrieving and sorting search results to help consumers find what they are looking for:

- **Informational Queries:** These are queries for information that is based on specific knowledge.
- **Navigational Queries:** These are queries for specific information based on a website URL or location.
- **Transactional Queries:** These are queries for information based on completing a transaction or purchasing a product.
- **Commercial Investigation:** These are queries for information based on specific information related to a business or brand.
- **Local Queries:** These are queries for specific information based on a location.

By incorporating these search queries into your keyword research, you can ensure that you base your content on what consumers are looking for during their journey.

Keyword Research Tools

Once you are comfortable with the background information, it's time to start looking into your keyword research options. The good news? There are plenty of options to choose from! The hard part will be picking the right tool to help you meet your goals. Here are only a handful of the most widely used keyword research tools:

Google Search Console

Google's Search Console is the most widely used search tool in the world. When it comes to keyword research, it's a great place to start. With the Search Console, you can:

- Search for keywords that you are currently ranking for on Google.
- Discover new keywords that you may not have considered.
- Analyze competitor's keywords to see what they are ranking for.
- Track the performance of your content based on keywords.
- Discover new backlinks and opportunities for more content creation.

Google Keyword Planner

The Google Keyword Planner is a free tool that many content creators use to help them discover new and trending keyword opportunities. With the Keyword Planner, you can:

- Get keyword ideas based on search volume and competition.
- Determine the best time to post your content.
- Discover new keywords based on search volume and competition.
- Discover new backlinks and opportunities for more content creation.

Ahrefs Keywords Explorer

Ahrefs Keyword Explorer is one of the most popular keyword research tools out there, and for a good reason, too. It allows you to:

- Get keyword ideas based on search volume and competition.
- Find the best time to post your content by looking at what time your audience is most active and what content they are most likely to search for.
- Find the best keywords based on popularity and competition.
- Discover new opportunities to build connections and create more content.
- Analyze competitor's keywords to see what they are ranking for.

Semrush

Semrush is another powerful keyword research tool that provides content creators with not only the best keyword research tools, but allows you to analyze the performance of your own website, as well as your competition's. Now, when it comes to the keyword research capabilities, SEMrush is capable of:

- Showing you the keywords that your audience is currently searching for.
- Identify keyword and backlink gaps that you may be able to fill.
- Find the best keywords/phrases to draw in organic and PPC results.

5 Steps to Doing Keyword Research

After you've had time to go through your options and pick out the tool that best suits your needs, it's time to get to work. Here is a simple five-step guide to help you get started with your keyword research:

1. Conduct an SEO Audit of Your Current Content

Before diving into your keyword research, you want to begin the process by conducting an [SEO audit](#) of your current content. This should include not only your blogs, but your website as a whole. This will help give you an idea of what keywords you are already ranking for, how well you're doing, and where you may be able to improve.

This is a vital step because you don't want to cannibalize any keywords that you may already be successfully ranking for. In fact, an SEO audit may even help give you some seed ideas to help you with your research later on.

2. Define Your Content Marketing Goals

Once you understand where you stand with your current content, you'll want to start defining your content marketing goals moving forward. The best way to approach this is to start by setting [SMART goals](#). This approach will help you define each of your goals down to the letter. Once you have your goals outlined, you can start identifying which types of queries you'll want to target as part of your research.

3. Conduct a Keyword Ideation Session

With your current keywords and your goals and query targets at the ready, it's time to sit down and conduct a keyword ideation session. This can be done alone or with your marketing team, and the goal is to simply start developing a list of new seed keywords that you may be able to target to help you reach your content marketing goals.

The key here isn't to stick with what you have – but to build upon it. Remember, there are many ways to approach keywords, which is why you want to break outside of the "standard." Instead of "dog treats," think of very specific topics that pertain to dog treats. It doesn't have to be a single term or even a grammatically correct phrase. "Dog treats Walmart" isn't grammatically correct, but search engines don't always consider or "see" filler words such as "from" or "at."

4. Utilize Your Keyword Research Tools

With your seed keyword list at the ready, you can now turn to your keyword research tool and let the fun begin. The best part of keyword research tools is that they make it easy to gather the necessary information to help you make an informed decision on what keyword will work and incorporate synonymous keywords into your work.

Make sure you are taking notes of [various metrics](#), including:

- Average search volume
- Backlinks
- Clicks
- CPC bid price
- Impressions
- Keyword difficulty
- Traffic

5. Prioritize Keyword Opportunities for the Most Impact

Based on the notes you take and your carefully defined content marketing goals, you'll be able to start prioritizing your newly found keyword opportunities. For instance, if your goal is to jump on a trend bandwagon to help you increase brand awareness, you'll want to prioritize your keyword opportunities by not the only difficulty, but current search volume as well.

With your list of keywords organized, you and your content team can get to work and start creating and sharing content that stands out from the competition.

Let CadenceSEO Do the Heavy Lifting for You

As a small to midsize company, we get that it can be difficult to focus your attention on finding that keyword hotspot that keeps your content in front of your ideal audience. Instead of tasking your team with keyword research, let the skilled professionals at CadenceSEO take over so you can focus your team's skills where they are needed most.

Our SEO experts can help with everything from SEO audits to keyword research and everything in between.

Get started today with your free SEO video analysis!