The Best <u>Free</u> Research Tools Ever...

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Table of Contents

Introduction

As Internet marketers or a people who have an online business of some description, I have no doubt that you already understand and appreciate the importance of research.

Indeed, you have probably discovered over the years, that good research methods are absolutely essential, especially when you are setting up a new venture.

In this situation, if you are working without accurate research results from the very beginning, it naturally follows that every individual aspect of your business that is based on this faulty research is built on very unstable foundations.

But, whilst it is a given that solid research is absolutely essential, it is not necessarily something that most of us involved in online marketing actually enjoy. If you're anything like me, you probably find that the research stage of launching a new product is probably the most frustrating, time-consuming and tedious aspect of the whole process.

So, would you believe me if I suggested that there is one research resource that you can utilize at almost every stage of the research process when you are setting up a new online marketing project, almost irrespective of what kind of marketing project you're involved with?

How about if I took this analogy one stage further and suggested that it is a resource that you almost certainly use every time you go online.

And how would you feel if I suggested that if for some reason there is the odd day in every 365 when you don t use this particular resource, you can be absolutely certain that there are millions of people all over the world who are busily making up for you in your absence.

Having read this far, you probably think that you are reading the ravings of a complete nutter. After all, is such a research resource existed, then you would surely know about it, right?

But that is exactly the point. You do know about it, and I am absolutely confident that 99% of people reading these words will be using this resource each and every day.

However, from what I know of my own experiences and that of many other experienced marketers who I associate with, I am also very confident that you do not use this particular resource to anywhere near the full extent of its capabilities or capacity. And that s a terrible shame, because the capabilities and capacity of this particular online center of research excellence are both vast and unbounded.

So, what are these wonder tools?

Where can you find them and what can they do for you and your business?

Everything will be revealed in the next chapter.

The Best Free Online Research Resource Is…?

Okay, I think I've kept you in suspense long enough…

The greatest online research resource that you are undoubtedly not using to the full extent of its capabilities is none other than the vast array of research resources provided by the number one search engine,
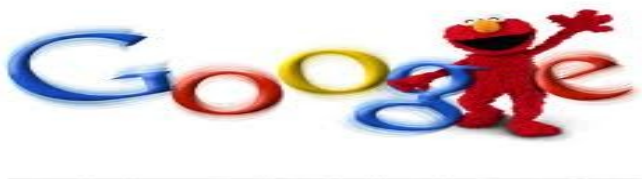
Now of course, given that Google command 69% of the search engine traffic on the internet every day right across the world and that in some countries, their share of the search engine market is in excess of 90%, it will obviously come as little surprise that you have heard of them.
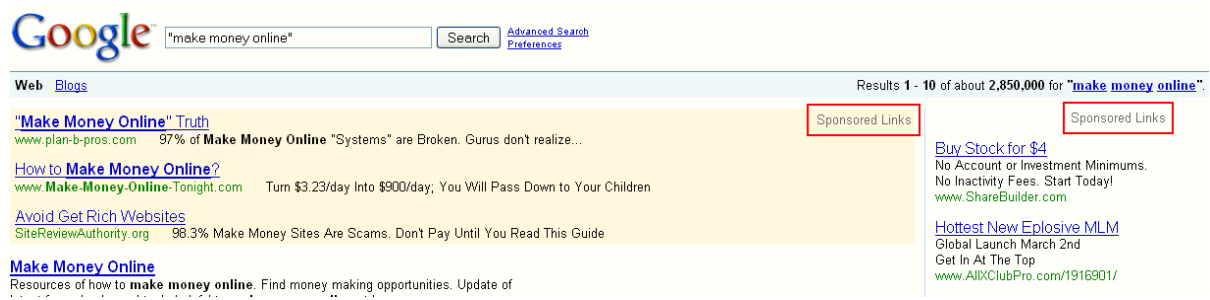
In fact, unless you have been living in a hole in the ground on the remotest Island possible, there is no way that you could have avoided hearing the name Google.
After all, the Oxford English Dictionary website lists no less than 34 references to Google:
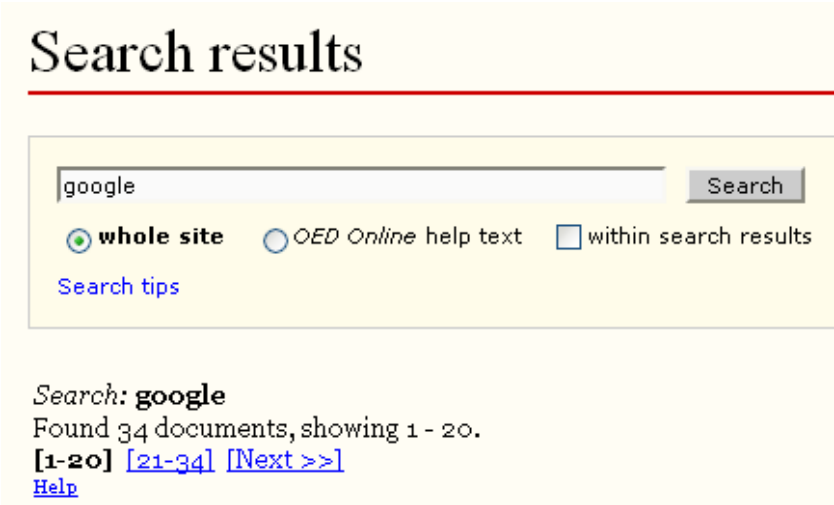
It is pretty evident that Google is indelibly etched within the common consciousness of people from all corners of the planet.

Moreover, with thousands of new net users getting online every day, the integration of Google into the common psyche is not going to judder to a grinding halt any time soon.

The vast majority of people though who use the net on a regular basis really have little idea that Google is anything other than their search engine of choice.

Of course, there will be many of these people who understand that Google has something to do with advertising as well.

After all, every time they search for information using their favorite engine, the results page has ads on it, and those ads are sponsored by Google.

When Google presents advertising on individual websites, it specifically mentions that those ads have been placed by their organisation.

The more savvy internet users, presumably those who have some interest in advertising online or have a website from which they are trying to generate an income might be aware of the AdSense and AdWords programs that are behind these adverts.

But the fact is, the vast majority of people are blissfully unaware that Google offers a very comprehensive range of net based tools and resources that would enable anyone to create an online business from scratch using almost nothing but Google owned tools.

As an example, if you wanted to launch a new business on the net tomorrow, then you re going to need a way of presenting your product, services or information to any searcher who is looking to something similar to what you are offering. In other words, you would need a website of some description.

Well, Google can certainly help you there. They have two ways of creating your own website and then allow you to publish it to the net, Completely Free.

Under normal circumstances, if you wanted to create a website from which you could operate a business, you would need a web hosting account. The company you choose would rent you some space on their servers. You can then build a site and then present it to the world.

Using Google however, you don t need web hosting, as they provide hosting services as an integral part of their site building tools. Of course, you would not just decide to launch a business today and do so tomorrow without research.

First you would want to identify viable online markets and establishthat there was money to be made within them.

Then you would need to put together a marketing plan to ensure that the people who are searching for the kind of product or information that you offer would easily find your site. None of this can be done without research!

This means analyzing the market in which you are thinking of becoming involved in great depth, because without knowing your market, the chances of your business being successful are slim to zero.

It is also important that you know who the competition is and how strong they are. How much money is changing hands and what the most popular product or services in this particular market sector are.

In fact, in almost all the areas of research that you care to think of, Google Offers the tools and resources to discover the answers to all the questions that you need to ask.

Google and the companies that they own provide a huge range of services that net users can benefit from everyday and more importantly, they provide the vast majority of these services at no cost.

You might, very reasonably, pose the question, why would they do this?

Well the answer is simple. Google is a company that is run by some incredibly smart people, people who understand that by offering free tools and resources, they are actively encouraging everyone who uses the internet to live their digital life using mainly Google products and services.

As we run through this report, you will see examples of downloadable Google tools that are extremely useful and the purpose that they serveand how they help heighten your awareness of the Google Brand.

Let me begin the process of highlighting exactly how much assistance you can get from Google by running through the process of setting up a new online business step-by-step.

As they are required I will highlight and explain the appropriate Google product or service that provides the best solution.

Starting a new business…

An outline of what needs to be done…

If you were thinking of starting a brand new online business, the first thing that you would need to do would be to come up with a business idea. You would have to find a market sector or niche that could potentially form the basis of your new business.

In effect therefore, you need an idea or a topic to get moving with. After that, the next important consideration would be whether the business idea that you have in mind has any potential for being a success.

This can be broken down into two areas that you need to establish.

First, with your new idea in mind, you need to establish whether there is a viable market place for whatever it is you want to provide.

For example, if you are thinking of creating your own information product, are there sufficient numbers of people searching for the kind of information that you are considering trying to sell?

If the answer to this question is no, this should tell you to go straight back to the drawing board to for an alternative idea. If on the other hand you believe that there is enough interest to justify pushing ahead with this project, then you can move on to the next step.

The next crucial piece of information that you must establish is, are these people willing to pay for that information, assuming that it is of sufficiently high quality and value to justify it.

This is important because whilst there are millions of people online every day searching for information, the vast majority are looking for information that does not cost them any money.

Indeed, most of these people are quite likely to spend several hours searching for information that is free rather than spending $17 or $27 on an e-book or video series that would provide them with all the information that they could ever need. In other words, as an online business person, you have to understand that the majority of people on the net are more than happy spending hours searching for information rather than spending a little money to get what they need in less than a minute.

Consequently, you must know with a reasonable degree of certainty that there is money being spent in the market sector into which you plan to make a grand entry.

Once you have researched the market and established that there are people looking for the kind of information you want to offer and that they are willing to spend money to obtain it, you can start thinking about how you might bring the product that you are going to create to the marketplace.

Whilst there are plenty of different options available, most online marketing strategies depend upon keywords and keyword terms for their effectiveness and therefore profitability. The next stage of the research process would therefore be to start building an appropriate keyword list.

You need to know what any competitors in the market are already doing. In particular, you would want to establish what kind of information they are providing and of course, you would pay particular attention to any existing products in your market sector that are already selling well, these are the kind of products that people are obviously willing to spend their money on.

Begin at the beginning…

So far, we have established that in order to set up your new business, the first thing you need is an initial idea or concept.

If you have gone through the research process yourself before, you will be aware that there are dozens of sites which you can use as a way of generating new ideas. No doubt you have your own favorites as we all do. However, as the focus of this book is on using Google as the central core of your research efforts, I m only going to focus on those services that are directly provided by Google, on services that are owned by them or failing that, on those services that use their information.

Let me start the hunt for inspiration and ideas with a scenario that most people who are interested in internet marketing will be more than familiar with.

Brainstorming…

One of the richest sources of ideas for a new online business is your own day-to-day life and existence. Perhaps you think that your life is mundane and a little lacking in color or excitement, but if you take a little time to brainstorm about your life, you might be surprised at how many good ideas you can come up with.

Think about your hobbies and interests, or the hobbies and interests of family members, friends, work colleagues or even your children.

Think about the places that you go to, the people you meet, the food that you eat, the books you read, the music you listen to, even the way you get to and from your place of work every day.

Look around the room that you are sitting in at this very minute. No matter how mundane or boring the things that surrounds you might appear to you, I can almost guarantee that there will be somebody somewhere in the world who finds what you consider to be boring to be something of extreme fascination.

For example, whilst you might not imagine that clocks would be a particularly fascinating topic, there are hundreds of people searching the net every day for information about clocks (and watches too).

If you spend a reasonable amount of time in front of the computer every day, then this is also something which you should think about. Think about information that you have recently browsed or even better downloaded.

I can almost guarantee that you will have many fascinating kernels of knowledge locked away somewhere on your hard drive.

Irrespective of where you might have buried it, Google have exactly the tool that you need to dig it back out of your hard drive.

Google Desktop

The Google Desktop utility allows you to search your computer for stored information, but it goes much further than the standard Windows Search utility ever could by making a far greater range of information searchable.

Indexing Plugins

TweakGDS
Download

Google Desktop Extreme
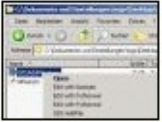Download

Archives plug-in for GDS
Download

DLL Indexer
No Image
Download

GDS Images and Document Maps 2.0

GDS AddFile
Download

Multiple File Types

Google Desktop automatically indexes, and allows you to search the full text over, the following types of items on your computer:

- Outlook Email
- Outlook Express
- Word
- Excel
- PowerPoint
- Internet Explorer
- MSN Instant Messenger
- AOL Instant Messenger
- Google Talk

- Netscape Mail / Thunderbird
- Firefox / Mozilla / Netscape
- PDF
- Music
- Images
- Video
- Zip
- Text and others
- Even more with these indexing plugins

For example, because it is fully compatible with Internet Explorer and Firefox, the utility keeps a record of all of the web pages that you have recently looked at so that you can recover them with a single keyword search. In the same manner, it can also search your e-mail messages in Outlook, Outlook Express and Mozilla Thunderbird.

It retains a record of any conversations you might have had using MSN or AOL Instant Messenger so that even if the information you re looking for came from nothing but an online chat, it will still be returned when you run a search.

These are the default programs that the Desktop utility will automatically recover information from:

And as you can see, you can extend this still further by accessing the list of indexing plug-ins.

The following screenshot only shows a section of the plug-ins page, but note that there is a plug-in that allows you to analyze the Meta data of any websites that you have been studying.

This is going to be extremely useful a little further down the line when you start looking at websites created by your competitors because although you can examine the Meta data manually, it is going to be far easier if you have a plug-in that cuts the time you waste to a minimum:

In addition to the vastly extended search capabilities that Desktop offers, it automatically performs many other vital „housekeeping tasks that in all likelihood, you would never get round to doing otherwise.

For instance, when your machine is idle, the utility will create an index of all of the information files on your machine to make searching considerably easier.

It even keeps a cached copy of the files and other information that you have been viewing or working with so that if you accidentally delete something, it may be able to help you to recover the information you need.

The Google Desktop utility is an excellent PC organizer that allows you to research the information that you already have on your machine in a far more detailed way than the standard Windows search utility.

Given the fact that it also helped to organize many different aspects of what you do everyday „in the background , it is also going to help save you a great deal of time and possible frustration too.

Web history and alerts…

In exactly the same way that you sometimes download valuable information on to your computer and then lose track of it, it is sometimes a fact that you forget to bookmark a particular webpage to which you plan to return at a later date.

And almost inevitably, this is going to be a page that you wanted to use for some specific purpose – possibly additional research for example – but when you come back to find it, you've lost all the information.

This no longer needs to be a problem if you use the [Google Web history](#) tool, because it allows you to search across the complete text of all the pages that you have visited, including Google searches, images, news stories, individual web pages and videos.

The tool also keeps a record of your activity on the internet and whilst it might not always be something that you are particularly keen on knowing about, it is probably true that you waste a great deal of time on the net doing things that are not work-related when you should be working.

Remembering that this is your own business we are talking about here, this wasted time translates into money that was never earned, so cutting down on wasted time could very well put extra money in your pocket. In other words, you might not want to know about it, but doing so will make you more profitable.

Once you have established exactly what the topic or subject matter of the business that you want to build is going to be, it will be a great help if you know when new websites are launched in your market.

After all, many of these websites are likely to be launched by potential competitors, so it would be invaluable if you have the opportunity of seeing what they are doing as soon as possible.

In the same way, if there is other activity in the market surrounding your particular product or service, you obviously need to know about it as soon as possible. Again, there may be developing trends, business to business or person-to-person conversations going on all over the net about what you do, and you must keep abreast of this.

All of these services are enabled by [Google alerts](#), which will send you an e-mail as often as you like detailing anything new that has happened in your market. All you need to do is input the keyword that you want to keep an eye on, decide how often you want notification, and that is it, alerts will now arrive in your e-mail box as often as you have asked for them.

Google Groups

As with many of the internal Google research utilities that we will consider in its report, Google Groups grew out of Google s first acquisition of another service provider in the industry when they bought [Deja News](#) in February, 2001.

Because of the history of the company that the business was bought from, [Google Groups](#) represents a searchable database of in excess of 700 million Usenet postings over the last 20 years.

It is also a site through which anyone with a Google account can create a special interest group that is focused on almost any topic in which they are interested.

Anyone who starts a group of this nature can then invite other Google account holders to join in the group so that they can send up-to-date information, articles and news snippets about their favorite subject matter to other group members.

Of course, anyone with a Google account can also join an existing group rather than creating a new one if that is what they want to do.

From your point of view, Google Groups presents a fantastic „snapshot of what people are doing and talking about on the internet. As we established earlier, you have to know that any core idea around which you re planning to construct a new info product has enough people interested in order to justify doing so which is exactly the kind of information you can find on the Google Groups site.

This site alone should be enough to generate a list of a dozen or even a couple of dozen general business ideas.

For example, you can click on any of these links at the top of the homepage as a quick way of establishing what is going on at the moment:

For example, clicking on the articles link generates this list at the top of the page. As you can see, there are at least two or three ideas here around which you might be able to build a new business website:

I'm not sure whether any of these topics would have occurred to me as a possible market sector or niche that people are interested in, but they are certainly ideas which are worth investigating further.

Click on any of the links at the top of the page and you should already have lots of ideas added to your „further research list.

Once you have done this, scroll a little further down the Google Groups page to see the initial group listings:
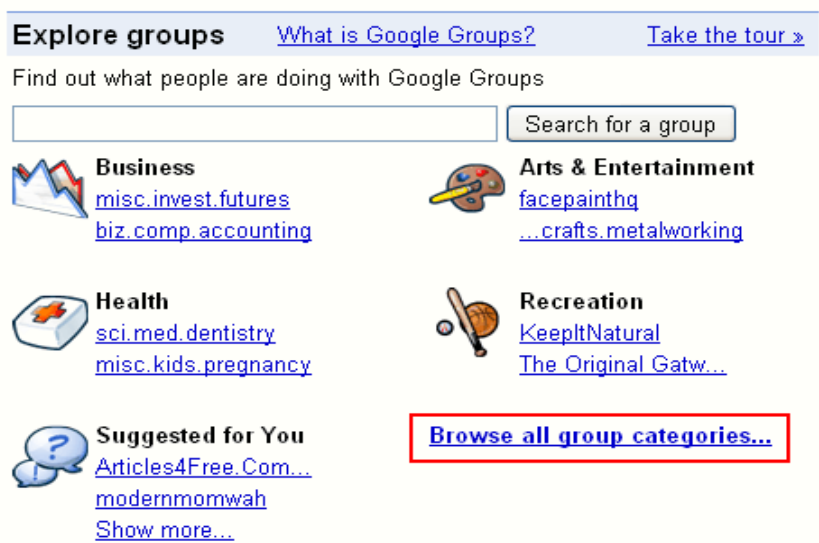
If you want to, you can view any of the individual groups shown but I generally prefer to hit the 'Browse all group categories link' straight away, simply because doing so takes me straight to the complete group categories list which saves time:

On this page, the groups are sorted by topic, region, number of messages or members and even languages. Again, I would tend to dive straight in by topic, focusing on general headings like Computers, Business and Finance or Health .

Topic
Computers (78308)
Society (70816)
Arts and Entertainment (66308)
Recreation (65770)
Schools and Universities (64327)
Business and Finance (46779)
People (43758)
Science and Technology (33695)
Other (28172)
Health (26418)
Home (15049)
News (13475)
Adult (1)

Region
Europe (34751)
Asia (34346)
United States (31698)
Latin America (14678)
Middle East (4632)
Africa (3829)
Canada (3650)
Oceania (2068)

Hungarian (7391)
Portuguese (Portugal) (6603)
Romanian (5616)
Hebrew (5080)
Ukrainian (3938)
Swedish (3187)
Danish (2975)
Czech (2805)
Greek (2775)
Lithuanian (2507)
Catalan (2146)
Finnish (2130)
Bulgarian (2092)
Croatian (1907)
Malay (1771)
Slovenian (1680)
Norwegian (Bokmål) (1553)
Slovak (1536)
Serbian (1264)
Hindi (673)
Tagalog (584)
Estonian (542)
Tamil (419)
Latvian (364)

Whilst there are other topic categories that show plenty of groups and members (e.g. „Society), remember that what you are looking for here are ideas from which you can make money. Thus, you should not pay a great deal of attention to the number of groups or members listed, because it is the moneymaking potential that you should be thinking about, and the money is in the three categories highlighted above.

People always want health-related information, and as often as not, they are willing to pay for it. Consequently, let us consider what people might be talking about in this particular group category. Clicking on the Health category link pulls up a list that looks like this:

Topic
Health - Medicine (3375)
Health - Conditions and Diseases (2848)
Health - Fitness (2509)
Health - Alternative (2340)
People (2206)
Society (2190)
Health - Mental Health (2069)
Health - Healthcare Industry (1945)
Recreation (1717)
Health - Beauty (1460)

This time, I am going to choose Health, Conditions and Diseases and when I arrive on the next page, by scrolling to the bottom I have a list of all of the Google Groups in this category. Many of these groups have restricted membership, so the amount of messages per month is not that relevant, so I would look for the groups that have the most members.

This group has a decent number of members, so there are obviously lots of people who use the internet to seek and give information about Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia. This would therefore be added to my list as would the topic/s around which the next group has been constructed as well.

Natural medicine, organic food, herbal products and so on are obviously extremely popular with Google Group members, so all of these topics would again be added to the list.

Without looking at any more categories, I am sure that you get the idea by now. Google Groups is a fantastic indicator of the kind of information that people are most interested in because each and every member of the groups that we have considered has taken the time and trouble to join that group of their own volition. Consequently, the groups with the most members represent the best potential markets for your new business.

Where Is The Money Being Spent?

Imagine that one of the markets that we think there might be scope for a product in is the weight loss business. Hence, we need to establish whether there is any money being spent because if there isn t, it clearly doesn't represent a market that you want to get into.

The first thing to do is run a standard Google search for the term weight loss. Even something as simple as this achieves a couple of objectives.

Firstly, by doing this, you can immediately establish what the competition in the market is, because they will tell you how many individual web pages that they have indexed for this particular phrase:

Note that I have enclosed the search term in inverted commas in order to ensure that the results are an exact match for the search term that I've used. If I did not do this, then the results that I would be presented with would reflect the number of pages that Google has indexed which contain *either* the word weight or the word loss.

And of course, in this situation, you would expect a great deal more pages to be returned:


There are nearly four times as many pages in this case, but as you should always use an exact match as your test, you do not need to worry about this too much.

For now, what we want to know is, is there any money being spent in this market?

We've already established that every search results page, particularly those terms or phrases which are popular, is going to show a number of advertisements. It stands to reason that the more advertisements there are on the results page, the more money is being spent on advertising in that particular market sector, because otherwise the adverts wouldn't be there.

Thus, the number of adverts on a search results page is the first indicator that there is money being spent in a particular market place.

This is the top of the weight loss search results page.
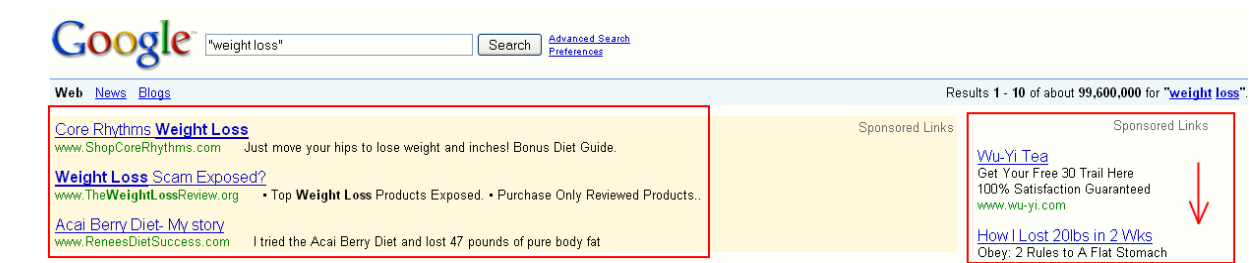
On every Google results page, there is a maximum of three adverts shown at the top left hand corner of the page and eight running down the right-hand side. On this particular page, there is a full house of three at the top left and eight on the right-hand side which immediately suggests that there are plenty of businesses and individuals who want to advertise on this page.
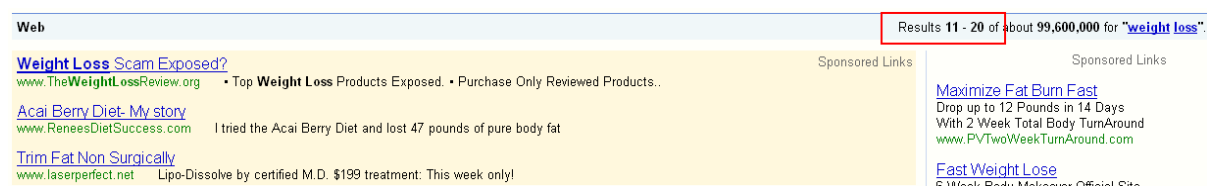
This is further confirmed by checking the second results page because you can be absolutely certain that if there are advertisers on this page as well, this is a market where there is lots of money being spent on advertising.

Again, another full house of adverts tells you that there are many companies clamoring for a place on the results pages for weight loss.

So, having established that there is money being spent, it will be helpful to know how much, because obviously the more money there is being spent on advertising, the more money there is in this particular market.

Open up the Google Traffic Estimator and punch in weight loss as your search term. Pitch your maximum cost per click at something like $50 because by doing so you ensure that none of the results are excluded because you have quoted an amount that is too low.

Also, note that I have included the keyword phrase in the three different formats specified by Google because this maximizes the effectiveness of this exercise.

Assuming that you are searching for English-language results, leave the language selection on the default setting, add all countries and territories to the list of places you want to include in your search, and finally hit the continue button at the bottom of the page.

On the next page, you will be presented with an estimate of how many clicks you could expect on any adverts you decide to place on the Google advertising network which focused on the keyword phrase weight loss. In addition, you would also see an approximation of how much each of those clicks is going to cost, so by combining the number of clicks with the cost, Google provides you with an indication of how much someone would have to spend to run a weight loss advert that appears in the first three advertising slots on a daily basis.

Just using the three variations of this one phrase, you could expect to spend anywhere between $14,000 to $22,000 on advertising daily. This is a lot of money by anyone s standards, adding up to a monthly advertising budget of anywhere between $420,000 and $660,000.

So, to return to the original question, is there any money being spent in the weight loss market? The evidence is overwhelming. This is a market where there is plenty of money being spent, which in turn means that there is plenty of money to be made also.

There is however one significant problem. if you create an information product which is focused on weight loss, you will find it almost impossibleto make any money.

Why? That's a question with a simple, one word answer.

Competition

Remember that even after narrowing down our weight loss search by seeking only web pages that returned an exact match, we still had over 26 million web pages of direct competition. That is way too many pages to try to compete with unless you have a serious amount of money to spend on promotion and plenty of time to wait before you start seeing any results.

What this is telling you is that creating an information product that uses weight loss as its main keyword hook is not going to get you very far.

It is essential to narrow down your point of focus from a phrase that represents a general market level to something more specific and targeted.

What you need to do is drill down into a sub niche within the weight loss market and in order to do this, you are going to have do use a non-Google tool to help you with your research in combination with the Google search engine.

It is necessary is to find exactly what kind of weight loss information people looking for. In order to do this, you have to balance the number of people searching for information every day against the amount of information that is available as indicated by the number of web pages that Google includes in their index.

To establish an approximate number of people who are searching for a particular aspect of weight loss every day, the most effective tool is the free version of the excellent Word Tracker keyword research tool , which although it is not directly related to Google is kind-of related in a slightly odd way!

Firstly, Word Tracker is an independent company that is not owned by Google. On the other hand, all of the keyword search results that you generate when using the tool are designed to show how many people are searching Google for a particular keyword phrase every day.

So far, so good, except for the fact that Word Tracker does not collect this information directly from Google themselves. Instead, their information is collected from other search resources like Dogpile and Metacrawler. It is these search resources that have the connection with Google, hence my suggestion that Word Tracker is kind of connected.

It is organizations like metacrawler.com that have the ability to provide Word Tracker with estimated Google traffic for any search term you might care to investigate.

Thus, using weight loss as our search term, we can use Word Tracker to establish what other phrases people are looking for that are related to our root term:

 According to this particular research resource, there are approximately 23179 Google searches everyday for terms of phrases that include weight loss (and remember, this is only an estimate – some marketers believe that number could be anything up to eight times higher than this).

All of these related search terms are listed beneath the top of the table, with an estimation of how many people are searching Google for the specific term in question on a daily basis.

Thus, it is now a question of establishing how much competition there is by going back to the Google search engine to look at how many web pages are returned for an exact match for every phrase in this list.

What you are ideally looking for is search terms that return less than 30,000 exact match pages. Moreover, it is going to make it considerably easier for you to create a viable product if you can find a group of keywords all focused on exactly the same „niche within the weight loss market.

These are the keywords which you will use in your marketing materials.

23,179 searches (top 100 only)	
Searches	**Keyword**
5951	weight loss
1729	fast weight loss
1466	weight loss plans
1184	quick weight loss
Results **1 - 10** of about **966,000** for "la weight loss".	
718	arbonne weight loss
698	la weight loss
547	weight loss programs
531	dottie's weight loss zone
498	dotties weight loss zone
488	weight loss pills
395	raw food weight loss
363	does la weight loss really work
316	fast weight loss tips
306	how much does la weight loss cost

As you can see from the previous screen shot, there are several prominent diet plans mentioned by name. As a starting point, you could use any of these to establish whether competition levels are reasonable enough to make it likely that your marketing efforts will succeed.

Let's start with la weight loss which enjoys 698 Google searches a day:

Okay, this is far better than 26 million competing pages, but 966,000 competitors is still far too many. I would grade competition at three levels.

If there are less than 30,000 competing web pages, getting a page of your site that is focused on that particular keyword into the top 10 results should be a piece of cake. In the second category, anything less than 50,000 competing pages is still relatively easy, and in the third category, anything less than 100,000 pages is still possible but it will take a little more time.

In other words, 966,000 competing pages is far too big a number!

Next for L.A. weight loss, there is does la weight loss really work with 363 daily Google searches. As a general rule, the more words that there are in a search term, the less pages Google will have that match that term, so let's see if this general theory stands up in practice:

Results **1 - 10** of about **2,390** for "does la weight loss really work".

Only 2390 competing pages would immediately tell me that this is a phrase for which I could grab a position in the top 10 search results fairly quickly.

Results **1 - 10** of about **749** for "how much does la weight loss cost".

So, I would research more L.A. weight loss related phrases in an effort to build a list of low competition phrases of this nature.

This enjoys 306 searches a day:

Results **1 - 10** of about **13,000** for "la weight loss reviews".

Quite a few more web pages, but it is still comfortably within our first band 30,000 competing pages limit.

Without looking for any more L.A. weight loss related terms, the three that we have already researched could generate over 950 visitors every day. It therefore seems obvious that there is considerable scope for a product based on the L.A. weight loss diet.

This being the case, you need to collect together as many L.A. weight loss related keyword terms as you can. Once again, Google has a free research tool that can help you in your quest.

Open up the Google keyword research tool , and type in the phrase that you want to research:

Click the get keyword ideas button to generate a long list of suggested keywords from Google.

The advantage of using the tool in this way is that you will be presented with an extremely comprehensive list of keyword alternatives. The disadvantage is that this particular Google tool does not give you an indication of searches in comparison with competition, so it is a little difficult to work out whether the keyword phrases that are recommended are worth working with.

Nevertheless, using the Google keyword research tool in this way should allow you to expand your keyword list significantly.

But here is a slightly sneakier and perhaps more effective way of using the same tools. Continuing with the L.A. weight loss theme, run another standard Google search (you can make this as narrow or as broad as you want, but I am going to use L.A. weight loss as the search term).

These are the top four natural search results for this phrase, which indicates that these pages are particularly well optimized for a Google search. These are therefore the sites that you want to copy so that you can duplicate their success.

Copy the URL of the most popular websites and paste them into the Google keyword research tool as indicated in the screenshot, leaving everything else as you see:

17

Hit the get keyword ideas button once again, and what you are presented with is a list of the keyword terms that the most popular sites in your market sector (i.e. your direct competitors) are using to pull visitors to their site.

Google are literally telling you the keyword phrases that your direct competitors are using so this is information that you cannot afford to ignore. Click the Add all link for each different subcategory of keyword phrases to add them to your keyword list.

We will return to the Google search engine later, because if you know the tricks of using it, it's possible to dig considerably deeper for information than we have already done.

Before doing that however, I want to look at a few more Google tools that you can use to generate more market ideas.

The first of these enables you to find a market that you could literally define as being trendy.

Google Trends

Google Trends is a site that is updated several times a day which shows what the hottest search terms are at the current time. Consequently, the information that you get from the Google Trends site is very current and up-to-the-minute, but a great deal of it is also very transient and temporary.

For example, as you would expect, when a new movie is launched or there is a big sporting event like the Super Bowl, you will tend to find that the main participants in either event will feature very highly in the today's hot trends list which is effectively a top 10 trends list shown on the home page.

As the screen shot title suggests, these are literally the trends that are hottest at the moment as indicated by searches. Thus, the chances are that if you checked the page tomorrow, the results would be very different.

However, if you click the more hot trends link as highlighted in the previous screenshot, you are presented with a list of the top 100 hot trends, and there may well be something here that you can used as the basis of a moneymaking site:

If you are interesting in caving or potholing, you would be interested to see that speleology is listed at number 8 (1), whereas a cricket fan could probably create a site that used India and New Zealand series 2009 (2) whilst Panasonic p9051 (3) represents the latest in mobile phone technology.

Google Trends is all about establishing what is happening in the very immediate here and now but that does not necessarily mean that you cannot make any money using this information.

19

For example, I have seen people throw together a very quick webpage with a CPA advertising offer of the kind that can be found at Hydra Network, COPEAC or Max Bounty that is somehow related to a Volcanic search term:

norm van lier

Hotness: Volcanic

They then offer a free report or some other kind of giveaway to anyone who comes to their webpage, but the visitor can only get the free gift if they complete the CPA enquiry form.

They then use Google AdWords advertising to send visitors to the CPA form. As long as the CPA offer is paying out enough (look for offers that pay $10-20 per lead) and the AdWords clicks are cheap enough, this represents a very easy way of making a quick few hundred dollars.

Insight is always valuable…

A valuable research resource that Google has introduced is their Insights for Search tool. This is a resource that enables you to analyze the global search history associated with any particular term that you want to know more about.

Most usefully, it allows you to analyze the term in relation to locations and time ranges, which could be extremely important if you are operating a business where you provide a product or service on a local basis.

Alternatively, you might only operate the business at certain times of the day, and therefore knowing how the times that you operate match-up with the times that people are searching for the kind of products that you offer could be extremely important to the long-term success of your business.

Continuing with the weight loss theme and leaving all of the default settings as they are.

Clicking on the search button yet again presents a wealth of information collected from the search results that Google have collated over the years.
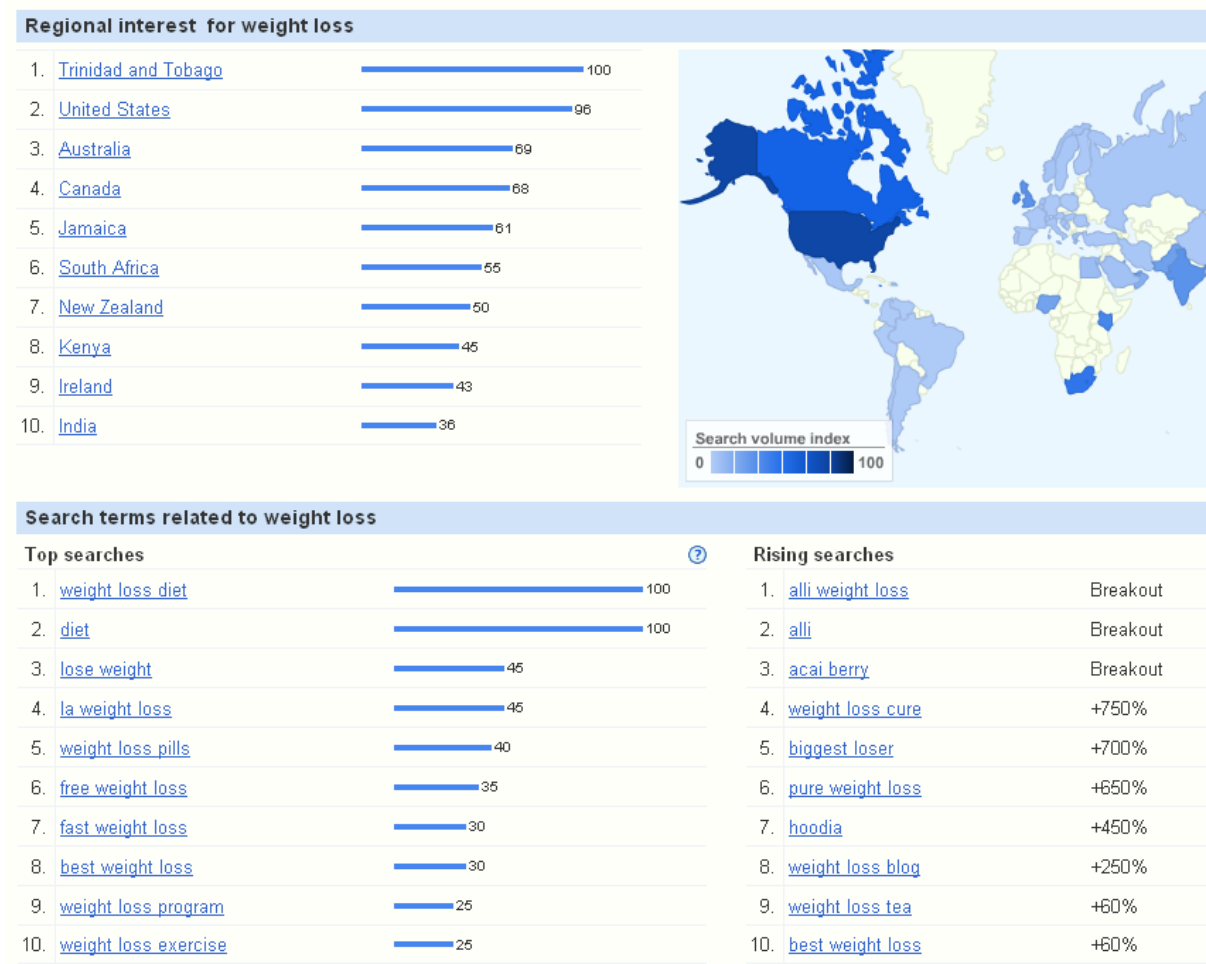
For example, who for moment would have thought that the strongest search interest for weight loss related information in the world would come from Trinidad and Tobago? It is also extremely interesting that the interest gap between T & T, the USA and the rest of the world is very noticeable.

This does not for one moment suggest that the rest of the world does not have a weight problem, indeed, some countries such as the UK also have obesity problems, yet they are not even in the top 10.

What this tells us is that few from the UK seems to be particularly interested in searching for weight loss information online, this is critical information if you are trying to geo-target your business.

Whilst the UK has undoubted weight problems, they do not seem particularly interested in information about how to reverse the trend, so there does not seem to be much point in wasting money or your time trying to promote a weight loss related product into the British market.

Another way of spying on the competition…

The Google Trends for Websites utility is another innovation introduced by Google that presents a past track record of information about individual websites over the last few years.

Being a relatively new service, the site does not as yet have information about every website, but when an individual site that you are trying to research is featured, you can gain a very valuable insight as to what they have been doing over the last couple of years or so.

For example, if you were trying to gain more information about Yahoo.com and the people who use the site, this is what you would see:

The site provides an immediate insight into where most site users are coming from, the other websites that they like to visit and the kind of information that they are searching for.

In marketing terms, this kind of information is pure gold because it enables you to target your marketing campaigns far more effectively.

For instance, if Wikipedia.org were a direct competitor of yours, you would immediately be aware that in regional terms, the site is only marginally less popular in Japan than it is in the USA. This is borne out by the fact that many of the also visited sites are Japanese as well.

Consequently, if you are in direct competition and therefore targeting the same markets, the first thing that should be obvious from this is that you need to get everything you do translated into Japanese.

Other ways of discovering what people want…

Google blog search

Exactly as the name would imply, Google blog search is a site from where you can search the blogosphere to see what is popular with bloggers at the moment. To do this, either click on any of the top stories links on the left hand side of the page or try typing your search word into the box at the top of the page.
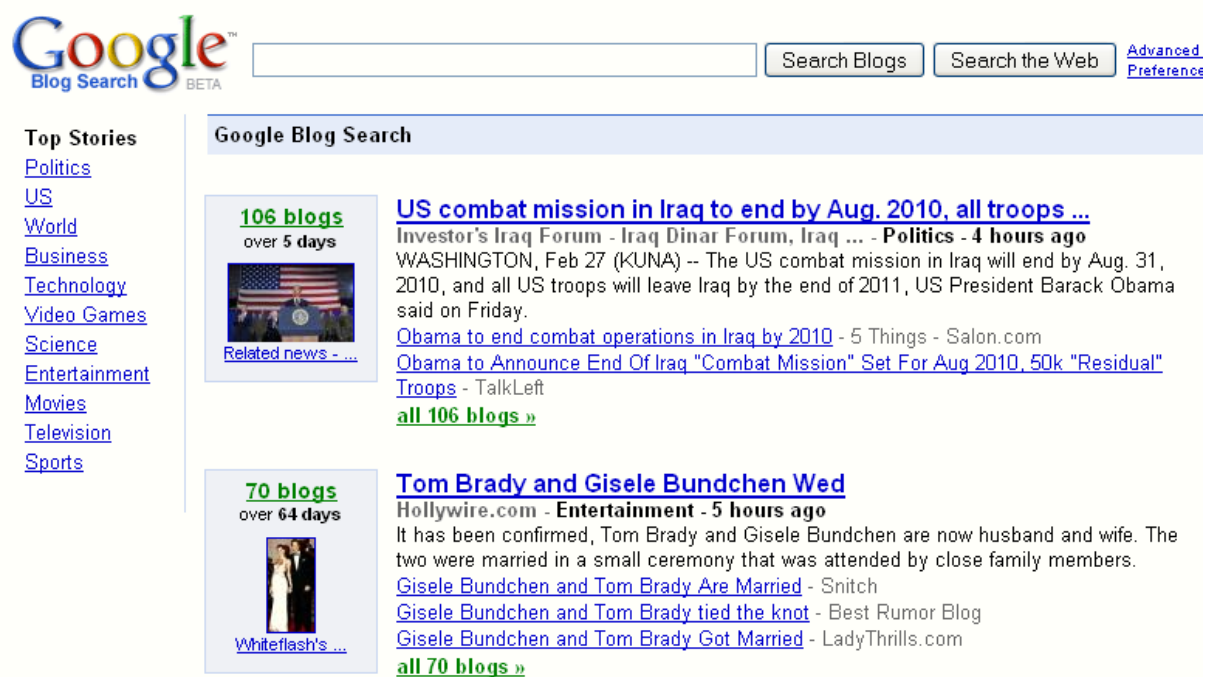
Because the blogs that are listed are shown in order of topic popularity, you can quickly use this blog search page to establish what bloggers are talking about at the moment. Blog owners are as competitive as anyone else and they want their blogs to appear at the top of the popularity charts, so you immediately know that this is a great way of gauging what people are really interested in.

Google US Government Search

This might seem a slightly strange one, but Google has a specific US Government Search page.

This is a terrific resource because the US government holds one of the largest back catalogues of public domain materials anywhere, and you can use these materials in a couple of different ways.

Firstly, you can use public domain materials for research purposes by typing in your search keyword at the top of the page.
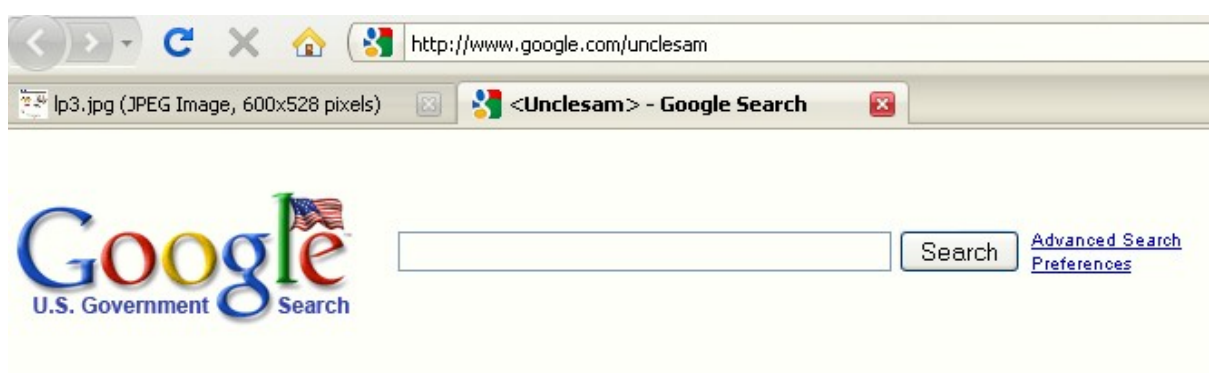
Alternatively and perhaps more importantly, you can also use public domain materials as a source for your own information product.

The whole idea of public domain materials is that they are no longer copyrighted if indeed they ever were copyrighted, so you can use most of them any way you want unless there are any specific restrictions attached to any materials that you want to use.

Remember how I asserted earlier that almost any information you want is available online for free if you know where or how to search for it?

Here is an excellent case in point, because very few people are aware of this particular search resource.

YouTube and Google video

YouTube is the number one video hosting company on the internet, and Google video is also an extremely popular video hosting site. Both of them are Google companies, with YouTube having been purchased in October 2006 for $1.65 billion before the company had ever turned a single cent in profit!

Online video is rapidly replacing TV as the entertainment medium of choice which again means that you can find out what is popular, exactly what information people are looking for and publishing by checking what videos are the most popular on either or both of these sites.

To do this with YouTube, you need to click on the videos tab at the top of the page and then the most viewed link further down (you could use the popular link next to it, but this is the way I find you get the best results).
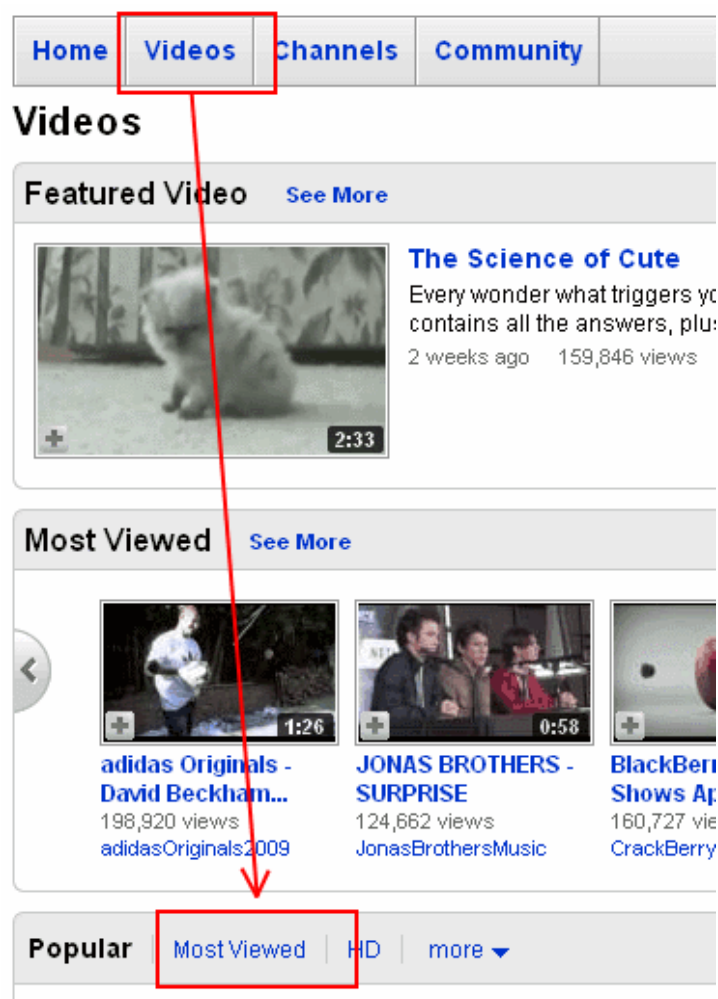
Now, you can select whether you want the most viewed from today, the past week, month or all time, so you decide what information is most interesting to you.

As a general observation, the longer the period you select, the more likely you are to see entertainment videos, with popular singers and the like. Nevertheless, these are the videos that are popular, so this is a great way of doing some more market or topic research.

Google video makes it even easier, as the default setting is to present you with the Hot videos without you doing anything else at all.

Advanced search engine usage

There are quite a few more interesting things that you can do with the standard Google search engine that can help you either discover or develop new ideas.

The first of these is Google suggest, which is a way of setting up the standard search page rather than being a standalone tool.

What this does is follow what you are typing into the main Google search box so that Google can present you with suggestions as you go along. Start with any letter of the alphabet.

After this, suggest will refine the information that it provides with every additional letter you add.

chi	
chinese new year	39,200,000 results
chicago tribune	10,300,000 results
chinese new year 2009	18,600,000 results
chilis	1,960,000 results
chicago	352,000,000 results
childrens place	20,800,000 results
chipotle	3,280,000 results
china	748,000,000 results
chinese zodiac	2,100,000 results
chicago weather	4,730,000 results
	close

And as you can see, it also gives you an idea of how many pages Google has indexed for each search term it is showing. Use of this one tool can provide you with dozens of new ideas and indicates what the competition is like too.

The other advanced Google search strategy that you can play with is to use specially formulated search terms as a way of generating specific results.

We have already established that using weight loss with inverted commas and without generates significantly different results. Now we are going to take the concept considerably further by looking at many of the hidden search variations that you can use to dig into the Google info-bank to a far greater depth.

For example, say you wanted to search for information about two or three things at the same time, perhaps looking for information about dogs, cats and horses all at the same time. In this case, you would use the search phrase dogs OR cats OR horses , and you would see a results page something like this.

Web

Horse - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
[36] **Horses** four years old are considered mature, although the skeleton ... **Horses** are adapted to grazing. In an adult horse, there are 12 incisors, ...
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse - 371k - Cached - Similar pages

    Dog - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
    According to the Humane Society of the United States, 3–4 million **dogs** and **cats** are put down each year in the United States and many more are confined to ...
    en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog - 241k - Cached - Similar pages
    More results from en.wikipedia.org »

About Cats - All About cats and kittens - Cat Care - Cat Behavior ...
All about **cats**: cat health issues, cat names, caring for **cats**, choosing cat food, cat behavior problems, pregnant **cats**, kitten care, getting a new cat, ...
cats.about.com/ - 33k - Cached - Similar pages

News results for dogs OR cats OR horses
    Humane Society Cares For Rescued Dogs - 26 Feb 2009
    Hundreds of **dogs**, **cats** and farm animals were found, sick, diseased and dying at what was supposed to be a shelter in Adair County. ...
    MSNBC - 151 related articles »
    Cadaver **dogs** search for Haleigh Cummings - MSNBC - 151 related articles »
    Portuguese water dog owners fear Obama effect - The Canadian Press - 814 related articles »

Palace Of The Golden Horses
Asia's Most Extraordinary Hotel, world-class award winning luxury hotel located within MINES

You have information about all three topics on the same page. You can incidentally do the same thing by including a pipe between each phraseas well dogs | cats | horses works just the same.

How about if you want to find pages where the search term you use is in the title of the page? Then you would preface your search term with intitle or allintitle. Maybe you want pages with Barack Obama in the title, so your search term would look like this.

intitle:"barack obama"

[Google Search]

And of course, every page returned has the name in the title as requested:

If you want to find pages where your search term is in the page URL, then you would do something similar by using inurl or allinurl in the same way, whereas if you want the information to be contained within the text of the page, you use intext: or allintext: .

If you know the particular file type that you want to find, you can narrow your search so that it will only return files of the type that you want.

Say you were looking only for hair loss related PDF files - this is how you would formulate your search term.

Again, the results page would confirm that you have done this correctly:

The point of using these variables is that doing so allows you to dig much deeper into the Google info-bank. Refining the search in this way gets rid of millions of pages that would otherwise clutter up your search results with information that you really don't need or want.

But here are another couple of tricks that can be invaluable when you have found sites or individual pages that represent your direct competition.

You're probably aware that Google decide upon the position they allocate to any individual web page in their natural search results based on links. Thus, knowing how many links your competitor has to their site is extremely important information.

Going back to our earlier example, these are the top rated L.A. weight loss pages.

In order to establish exactly how many links each of these individual pages has, you use a search like this:

This will produce a list of all of the pages that are linked to this particular page, and a note of how many pages there are that are linking.

There are 32 pages linked to the top L.A weight loss homepage, which is considerably less than you might expect. This would give you cause to investigate the page further to try to establish why there are the number one in this particular market sector.

Sometimes, you might want to establish how many related pages there are shown for an individual page. In this case, Google once again make it remarkably easy to uncover what pages are related to any individual web page you are investigating.

Searching for pages that are related to yahoo.com would return a list like this:

As you would expect, Flickr are related to Yahoo as are all of the other major search engines so there are no great surprises here.

Nevertheless, finding other sites that are somehow related to the websites of your competitors could be useful at times.

Keep A Sharp Eye On What's Happening…

Once you have your business website up and running, that is not the end of the job because there are two essential tasks that you must keep pushing ahead with.

Firstly, once your site is up and running, you have to promote it using such strategies as article marketing, writing articles that are based on the keyword phrases that you discovered during your research earlier.

Secondly, you need to keep a close eye on what is happening with your site in terms of visitors. Now, you can do this using statistical analysis programs that you will probably find already installed in the admin area of your site (if you are using your own web hosting).
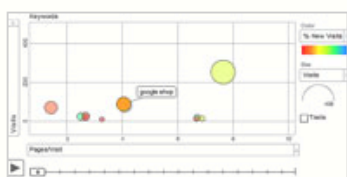
However, if you want a far greater depth and breadth of analysis (or you are using a free host like Google themselves), you need look no further than another free Google service, Google analytics.

Despite the fact that it is a free program, Google analytics is a very sophisticated and detailed program that allows you to analyze the traffic coming to your site in many different ways.

For instance, it allows you to apply segmentation to the visitors that are visiting your site. You might for example want to see how many visitors are being driven by AdWords advertising, so the analytics program allows you to isolate visitors from Paid Advertising.

Obviously, you re going to be interested in those visitors who converted (did what you wanted them to do), so again, it is extremely useful to be able to isolate visits with conversions .

You can create motion charts that enable you to compare the metrics of the visitors coming to your site over time to establish where the best quality traffic is coming from. You can then create custom reports so that the information is presented to you in exactly the way you want it.
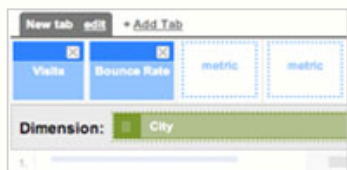
You can track how your keywords are performing in e-mail newsletters, paid links, affiliate campaigns and on all of the major search engines, including Google of course. The tool even allows you to see what part of the world your visitors are coming from, thus enabling you to see where your best converting traffic is coming from in geographical terms.

Google analytics is a tool that every webmaster who has built any kind of online business site should be using, simply because the information that the tool returns is invaluable for enabling you to improve your site, and thereby increase conversions.

And, of course, it is entirely free and remarkably easy to use as well. You literally insert a small snippet of code onto any page that you want to track, and that is that. If you are not using Google analytics, you should be, it is as simple as that.

Google Reader

Google reader allows you to get regular notification as often as you want that any blogs or websites that you are following have been updated.

This is an excellent way of keeping an eye on what your competition are doing without having to log into their site every day to see what is happening.

For example, a critical part of your research should be to establish what is new in your business as quickly as you can, and this tool offers an excellent way of doing so. By setting up an automatic incoming feed from competitors and major news resources, you will have an almost instant notification of new market developments.

Of course, you can collect information from any blogs or websites that you want for any purpose but in purely business terms, Google reader is another excellent and extremely easy to use spying tool.

It's Not Just About Business…

There are plenty of other Google research tools that are not necessarily directly related to business. Nevertheless, all of the tools in this list should come in useful for your business from time to time when your research requirements move slightly outside or beyond your normal activities.

For example, there may be times when you need to know where a specific place is, in which case, you could consult the Google maps page, or even take a virtual tour of places in the world that you have never been using Google Earth. Once again, all of these resources are completely free to use.

All of us have the need to get from one place to another from time to time, and having detailed instructions or directions about how to do so is an invaluable way of saving time and effort.

Whether you want to go from one side of town to the other or are planning to traverse the world, Google transit is another site that is worth investigating.

If you need to use public transportation to get from point A to point B, you will find everything you need on this site.

Other Google Resources

There are many other Google resources that are not really related to research which may nevertheless be of use to you at some point. Here is a brief list of some of the more prominent services that are either related to or owned by Google.

Blogger.com

Blogger.com is probably the best-known hosted blogging site, one that is owned by Google and is also entirely free. If you want to build simple sites with just a few clicks of your mouse button, blogger is definitely a site to consider using.

Google sites

If you want to build a slightly more sophisticated, more developed site than a blogger blog, using the recently upgraded Google sites enables you to achieve exactly what you want. By doing so, you can build a site that is as simple or as sophisticated as you need it to be, and even building a business related site is not out of the question.

Furthermore, because Google hosts the site for you, there are no web hosting fees to take into account if you choose to use Google sites.

Picasa

If you have digital pictures that you want to publish on the net, Picasa is the Google site where you can do so. You can build personal or business related photo albums, make them public or private and then keyword tag those photos so that the search engines can find them.

This would obviously be particularly useful for a business type image album.

Sketchup

Google sketchup is a free program that allows you to create, alter and then share 3-D models for free. This is a particularly useful for engineers and others who might need 3-D modeling, so it is not something everyone is going to use in the normal course of business.

Without any exaggeration, there are dozens of Google programs and sites which offer a huge range of different types of services to those who have different requirements.

For example, if you are interested in chatting to friends on the other side of the world, there is Google talk, and of course there is the much heralded, recently released Google chrome web browser that you might want to have a look at.

To get a better idea of just how comprehensive Google's research and web applications list is, take a look at the Labs page, because as it says, this page represents Google's technological playground.

In Conclusion

As you will have realized by now, when it comes to setting up, running and improving an online business, Google provides almost every kind of tool and resource you could ever need, and everything is for free.

In effect, Google makes research as easy as it possibly could be. If you have taken a look at the Labs page mentioned at the end of the last chapter, you would probably agree with me that there is undoubtedly plenty more to come from Google.

Of course, it is not the point of this manual to suggest that you should only ever use Google for your research, because there are many other extremely useful non-Google resources that cover areas of research, business establishment and development that the big G have not yet turned their attention to.

However, given their past track record of acquisitions (as of September 2008, Google had bought out 54 different businesses), it would be no surprise whatsoever if Google were to buy other leading research organizations at some point in the future.

For now, Google already provide a fantastic range of research resources, and after reading this book, you should now have a much clearer idea of what is available, what these resources can do and how you can use them to make your business ever more profitable.

I hope that you found this report of informative and helpful.

Special Note

If using all these tools looks a bit daunting, please note there are paid alternatives which speed up and automate the research process?

I have tried many of them in the past, but I believe that the best value for money and all round functionality, the tool of choice for most Internet Marketers has got to be...

Market Samurai

[Get Your Free Download Here](#)

Good Luck and Happy Marketing

G. S. Rodgers