

**THE REAL ESTATE  
MARKETING GUIDE TO**

# **KEYWORD RESEARCH**

**HOW TO DO  
EFFECTIVE RESEARCH  
FOR KEYWORDS  
YOU CAN WIN**



## CHAPTER 01

# Cutting Through the Noise



Why  
Keyword  
Research  
Matters

*“There is your audience. There is the language. There are the words that they use.” -Eugene Schwartz, copywriter*

**The real estate business is more competitive than ever.**

A few years ago, real estate agents and brokers who maintained a website had an automatic advantage over those who didn't. But as the web becomes more central to the way real estate professionals do business, that advantage is quickly disappearing. In 2013, 70 percent of Realtors reported having a website for at least five years, while 12 percent reported having a real estate blog.

Today, **nine out of ten** real estate firms have a web presence, while **62 percent** of Realtors have a personal site.

*Competing for visibility on the web is about knowing and pursuing the terms your customers are using to search for you.*

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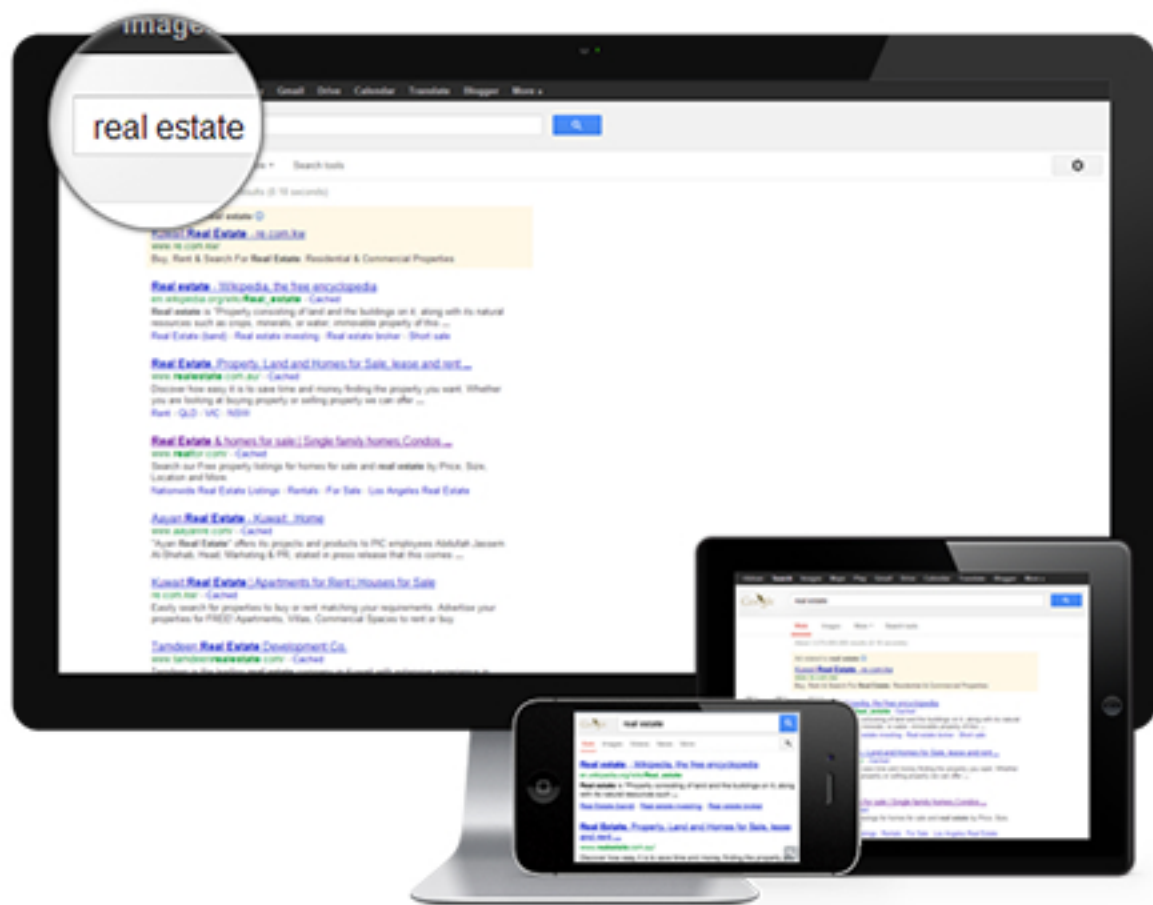
To make matters worse, big real estate publishers have further changed the marketing landscape. Whether you're a one-man shop or a franchisee from a big firm, you're now competing with giants like Zillow, Trulia, and Realtor.com for the attention of real estate customers online.

Even in this environment, however, a small real estate company with limited marketing spend can still beat the big guys.

How? The answer is simple: search. By ranking highly on search engines like Google, you can drive qualified leads to your website and win new customers, even on a modest budget.

Before we start exploring how to do this, let's see why search is so crucial for real estate professionals.

## By the Numbers



92%

92 percent of people on the Internet use search engines, and

59%

59 percent say they do so at least once a day.

175<sup>b</sup>

Around the globe, there are over 175 billion searches conducted each month (115 billion from Google alone.)

Sources:

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2011/08/09/search-and-email-still-top-the-list-of-most-popular-online-activities/>

<http://www.statista.com/topics/1001/google/chart/898/number-of-searches-handled-by-search-engines-worldwide/>



*“You can spend every penny you have on a website, but it will all be for nothing if nobody knows your site is there.” -Marc Ostrofsky*

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As for how people are using those search engines, here are some insights on user habits:

- Forget ads: **94%** of searchers click organic links on their search results pages, compared to 6% who choose paid links. In other words, your site has to appear in organic search results to earn the traffic you're looking for.
- If you're ranking on page two, you might as well not rank at all: **75%** of users never scroll past the first page of search results
- It's not enough to be number eight or ten, either: **53%** of organic search clicks go to the top result on the results page, followed by **15%** for second place, and **9%** for third. That leaves just **23%** of clicks for everyone else.

*“If it isn't on Google, it doesn't exist.” -Jimmy Wales, founder of Wikipedia*

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- **47%** of consumers confirm they use their smartphones to search for local information, and showing up in mobile results can be even more rewarding: 73% of mobile searches trigger follow-up actions like phone calls, emails, or in-person visits.
- People put a lot of faith in search results: 58% of people trust search engines for news and information. Only 41% say the same about social media.



Don't be so quick to  
jump on the

# Facebook Bandwagon

Search marketing is

# Efficient Marketing

search is the number one driver of traffic to content sites, beating social media by more than 300%.

SEO leads have a **14.6% close rate**, while outbound leads (such as direct mail or print advertising) have a **1.7% close rate**.

*“We live and breathe words.” -Cassandra Clare, author*

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The Takeaway: consumers are searching. All the time. Everywhere. As a real estate professional, you stand to benefit from all of this searching...but only if you can make it onto the front page.

Luckily, winning the search keywords your potential customers are searching is easier than you might think. All it takes is an understanding of how search engine rankings work and the research necessary to find the right keywords for your business.



*Read on to find out how to research and select the right search keywords for your business.*

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# This eBook will show you:

- The anatomy of a good keyword phrase.
- How to use the long tail to improve your search ranking
- How to research keywords that are worthwhile and winnable
- The best tools for keyword analysis, and how to use them to develop a solid keyword list.
- How to set up your website with the right keyword structure.

CHAPTER 02

# Anatomy of a Keyword

## How to craft the right keyword

So what's the definition of **keyword research**, exactly? According to Dale Bertrand, CEO of inbound marketing agency Chimaera Labs, keyword research is **the process of uncovering what your target customers type into Google to find what you offer.**



*For more key SEO terms and definitions, be sure to check out Placester's Little Black Book of SEO Terminology.*

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Let's review a few more terms you'll need to know.

**Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** The process of implementing tactics (like keyword research) in order to achieve a higher rank on a search engine result page (SERP). The higher a website ranks, the more prominently it will be displayed in search results, and the greater the chance that users will visit it.

**Keyword:** The word or phrase a user enters as the query in a search engine. SEO campaigns target certain keywords or phrases to maximize search traffic.

**Keyword Analysis:** The process of researching the industry and target demographics of a specific company or website in order to identify the keywords and keyphrases that customers are searching for.

**Query:** A keyword or key phrase inquiry entered into a search engine or database-- basically, whatever a user types in.

# A Note on Hummingbird

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*“People communicate with each other by conversation, not by typing keywords--and we’ve been hard at work to make Google understand and answer your questions more like people do.”*

*-Amit Singhal,  
May 2013*

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In September 2013, Google announced a brand new version of its search algorithm: Hummingbird. Unlike Penguin or Panda, which made small tweaks and additions, Hummingbird is a complete overhaul of Google’s search engine architecture. In fact, according to Google’s search chief Amit Singhal, there hasn’t been an algorithm update this dramatic since he joined the company in 2001.

While Hummingbird introduced lots of subtle changes, the most significant improvements are to Google’s “conversational search” functionality, which aims to understand the intent behind users’ search queries, instead of simply matching them with pages that contain the same words.



Some search experts panicked after the Hummingbird announcement, with some suggesting that the new algorithm was a death knell for SEO. Thankfully, they're wrong, for a few key reasons.

**Hummingbird won't hurt your ranking.** In fact, the algorithm had been up and running for more than a month before it was announced, and no one even noticed.

**Hummingbird takes some of the pressure off keywords.** In an effort to make search more flexible and commonsensical, conversational search effectively rewrites less precise queries, funneling them to the terms people are really interested in. In other words, Hummingbird relaxes the arbitrary rules of older

algorithms, allowing you to focus on what's more important: providing real value with your web presence.

**Hummingbird isn't perfect.** For all its improvements, Hummingbird is still essentially a computer program, and the Internet is still a crowded and noisy place. Until it's jacked directly into your brain, Google will continue to use the same underlying keyword standards and practices as a foundation for delivering the most relevant results for searchers.



# What's in a Keyword?

Search keywords may seem pretty intuitive at first, but a good keyword isn't just a string of words about what you're selling. Rather, it's a living phrase, one that the people you most want to reach are actually typing into their search bars at this very moment.

First, let's discuss which keywords you shouldn't target.

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*Competing for visibility on the web is about knowing and pursuing the terms your customers are using to search for you.*

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# Bad Keywords

Generally speaking, ineffective keywords have one of two basic problems.

## 1. No one is searching them.

Many keywords contain information that may seem relevant to you, but isn't actually important to searchers. Some examples include:

### **Your name or the name of your company.**

While this might be an important part of your business with respect to branding and referrals, remember that searchers don't want you, per se. Instead, they want answers to their questions. Anyone who's typing your name into a search engine already knows what they're looking for, so why waste time and energy on them?

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*Choosing the right keywords starts with common sense. Just think about the words you'd use to search.*

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### Technical Terms

Just because you know the vocabulary of your industry and your market doesn't mean your customers will. "I may discover that very few of my client's target customers are searching for their product directly," says Dale Bertrand. "Their prospects may not know their product even exists. How many people type 'culinary tourism conference' into Google?"

### Subjective words like great, fantastic, amazing, etc.

While these words may have some benefit in ads and on your website, they don't mean much to searchers or to Google. It's obvious I'm looking for a great apartment, and that everyone will claim to have one, so why would I bother using the word at all?

### Fluff and Filler

Years ago, people targeted variants and misspellings of key business terms, believing it would give them a competitive edge among a sliver of searchers. Today, Google filters out and automatically corrects all such errors, so there's little value in targeting them. Google also filters out "stop words" like is, the, and a, so including them in your target keyword is usually a waste of time.



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*Pursuing keywords that everyone is searching can be just as detrimental to your business as pursuing keywords no one is searching.*

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## 2. Everyone is searching them.

Let's say you're a Realtor in New York City. You figure that, since your customers are looking for homes in your area, you should make new york homes your target keyword phrase. Makes sense, doesn't it? Unfortunately, there are a couple problems with this phrase.

### **Competition is too high.**

While you've realized that new york homes is a phrase your customers are likely to search, so has every other real estate agent and broker in the area. In addition, big real estate portals like Zillow will also be pursuing this keyword--and unless you're the biggest, richest agent in town, it's not likely that you'll win.

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*A good keyword isn't just popular: it's popular with the right people, the ones who are interested in your products and expertise.*

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### **Conversion is too low.**

Let's say you've gone through the slow and costly process of ranking for new york homes. You may appear in search results for a lot of people. You may even get a flood of visitors to your site. But New York is a big place. Some searchers will have their sights set on a specific neighborhood: Tribeca, Harlem or Gramercy. Others may actually be interested in moving to Buffalo, or White Plains, or Albany. Still others are in the earliest stage of the search process, and may not be ready to buy. In any case, most of these people will likely refine their searches and move on, making your hard-fought ranking for new york homes essentially worthless.



# Characteristics of a Good Target Keyword

So what kinds of keywords should you be targeting? Let's look at two examples:

columbus ohio apartments

new homebuyer's guide

columbus<sup>2</sup> ohio<sup>2</sup> apartments<sup>3</sup> new<sup>1</sup> homebuyer's<sup>3</sup> guide<sup>4</sup>

**1. Length:** The average keyword phrase is between 2-4 words long, and includes only the important terms, rather than a full sentence or question.

**2. Generally Location Information:** As a real estate agent, it makes sense to include terms related to the “where” of your business: city, state, region, neighborhood, etc.

**3. Relevant product or service keywords:** These are terms related to the “what” of your business: real estate, homes, apartments, rentals, foreclosures, etc. It's crucial that

these service keywords match your website content and company focus. Will people who search a particular keyword be satisfied with what they find on your site? If not, don't target it. It won't help you.

**4. Content Descriptors:** For content marketing, terms that describe what your site is offering: guide, handbook, plan, how to, study, infographic, introduction, beginner, steps, how to, etc.



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*“The hidden benefits of keyword research include the opportunity to discover adjacent markets and compelling offers for your target customer.”*  
*-Dale Bertrand*

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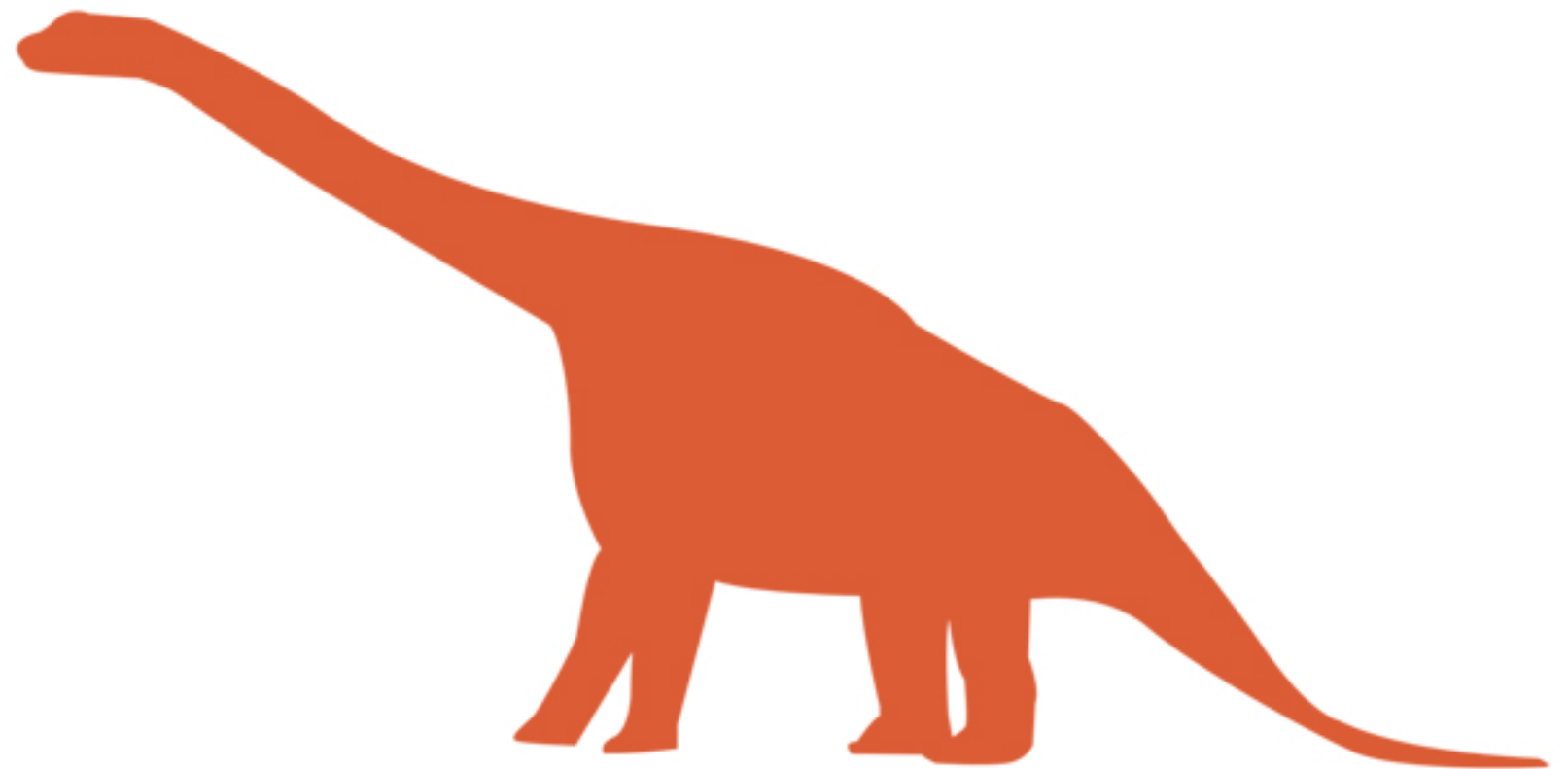
**5. Commonly used words and phrases:** Put yourself in the average real estate consumer’s shoes. Remember, your customers don’t necessarily have your expertise, so try to avoid using overly technical terms. At the same time, you should try to choose words that are closely connected to your industry. Otherwise, you’ll be competing not just with other real estate websites, but with all kinds of websites.

All that said, these are still fairly general and competitive keywords. If you want to increase your chances of being found by consumers looking to buy, you need to get even more specific. This is where the long tail comes in.

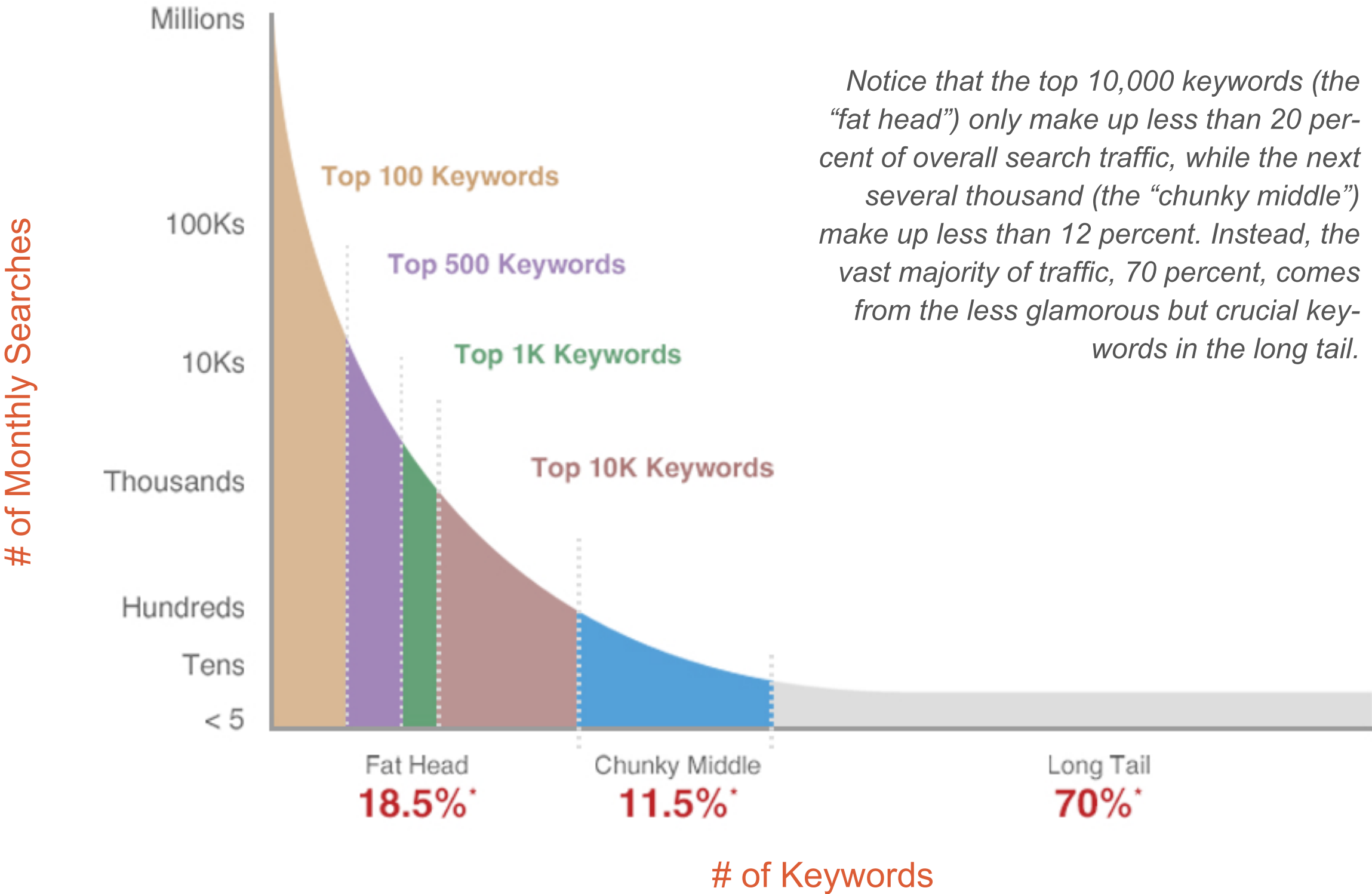
1. Less Competition
2. More Qualified Leads
3. Improves Head Term Rankings

# The Long Tail

You might assume that the majority of search traffic on Google comes from the most popular keywords, the ones that are searched thousands or millions of times every month. The reality, however, may surprise you.



# CHAPTER 02: ANATOMY OF A KEYWORD



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*Taken together, the keywords of the long tail account for the vast majority of the searches we perform every year.*

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Perhaps not surprisingly, keywords in the long tail are usually longer (5+ words) and more specific than the average keyword. In real estate, many long tail keywords refer to a particular neighborhood, property type, or industry niche: downtown columbus ohio luxury apartments. Others might be exact title matches for existing marketing content: guide to preparing your home for vacation rental.

Because they're so specific, long tail keywords are searched much less often: anywhere from a dozen to a couple hundred times a month. Still, they're enormously important for three reasons:



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*“Whatever business you’re starting, think about how to serve millions of markets of dozens instead of dozens of markets of millions.”*

*-Joe Kraus,  
entrepreneur*

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**1. Less competition.** It’s clear that “downtown columbus ohio luxury apartments” returns far fewer results than “columbus ohio apartments.” That means there are fewer sites out there actively pursuing that keyword, which gives you a better chance of reaching the number one spot with less time and effort.

**2. More qualified leads.** Anyone searching a long-tail keyword as specific as “owner’s guide to preparing your home for vacation rental” already knows what he or she is looking for. That means that visitors who end up on your site as a result of a long tail search will be much easier to close.

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*When you rank highly for long tail keywords, you'll see progress for your more competitive phrases as well.*

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**3. Improves head term rankings.** Since long tail keywords often contain many of the same words as your more competitive “head terms,” pursuing the long tail will likely improve your rankings for most of your other keywords.

Remember: while the long tail should have a prominent place in your strategy, you should be pursuing them in combination with higher-traffic primary keywords. Concentrate solely on your long tail keywords, and your traffic will slow to a trickle, no matter how highly you rank for them.

## CHAPTER 03

# Keyword Research

## How to Analyze and Choose the Right Keywords

Now that we've outlined the anatomy a good keyword, it's time to figure out how to decide which ones you'll target for your business. You can do this in two ways:

- 1. Keyword Discovery:** Formulate keywords based on topics and phrases that are relevant to your business.
- 2. Competitive Research:** Identify the relevant keywords your competitors are targeting (or not targeting).



Let's start with tools and strategies for **keyword discovery**.

# Google

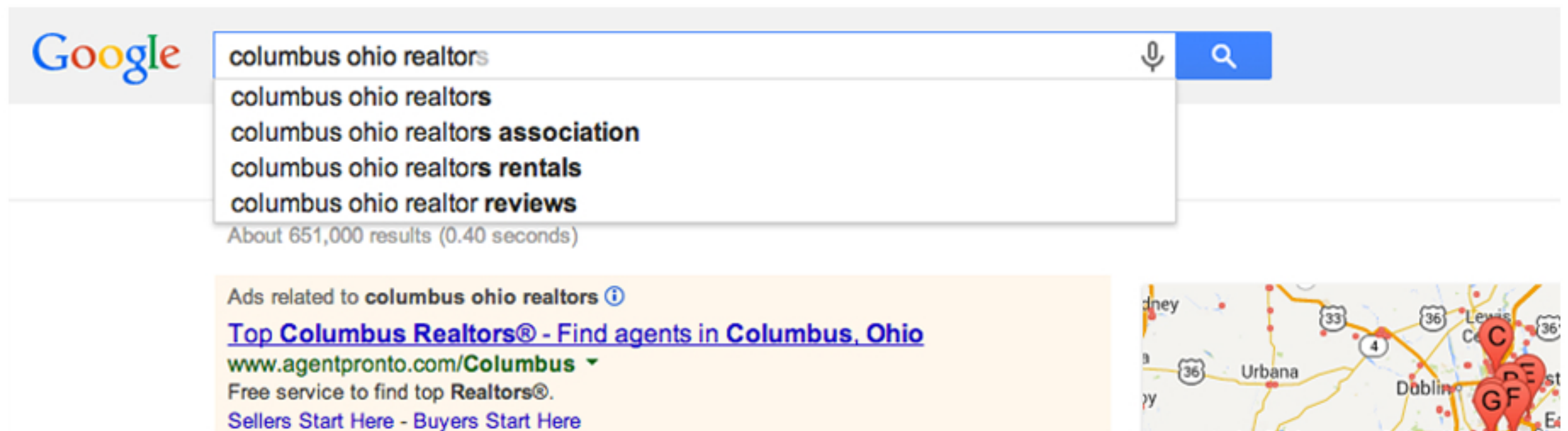
As the search engine most of your potential customers are using, Google has a lot of useful data at its disposal, and offers a few of its own tools to help you identify your keywords based on that data.

1. The Search Bar
2. Google Analytics
3. Google AdWords
4. Google Trends
5. Other Tools



## The Search Bar

To begin, you can use Google's conversational search capabilities to research your target keywords without ever leaving the search results page. Start typing in the search bar, and Google's instant search function automatically provides suggestions for finishing your search. As results appear below the search bar, Google also bolds related terms in the listings themselves.



Once you complete your search and hit enter, you'll also find several related searches at the bottom of the results page.

with us. View homes for sale on RE/MAX.

## [Columbus, OH Realtors – KingThompson.com](http://www.kingthompson.com/realtors/Ohio/Columbus.htm)

[www.kingthompson.com/realtors/Ohio/Columbus.htm](http://www.kingthompson.com/realtors/Ohio/Columbus.htm)

Coldwell Banker King Thompson can help you find **Columbus, OH real estate agents**, realtors and information about the Columbus real estate market.

## [Columbus Real Estate & Columbus Homes For Sale — Trulia.com](http://www.trulia.com/OH/Columbus/)

[www.trulia.com/OH/Columbus/](http://www.trulia.com/OH/Columbus/)

Results 1 - 15 of 7386 - Find Homes For Sale in Columbus. Search **Columbus, Ohio real estate**, recently sold properties, foreclosures, new homes, school ...

Sun, Feb 9 Open House: Feb 09 02:00pm ...

Sat, Feb 15 Open House: Feb 15 11:00am ...

### Searches related to **columbus ohio realtors**

[franklin county ohio realtors](#)

[columbus ohio real estate](#)

[dublin ohio realtors](#)

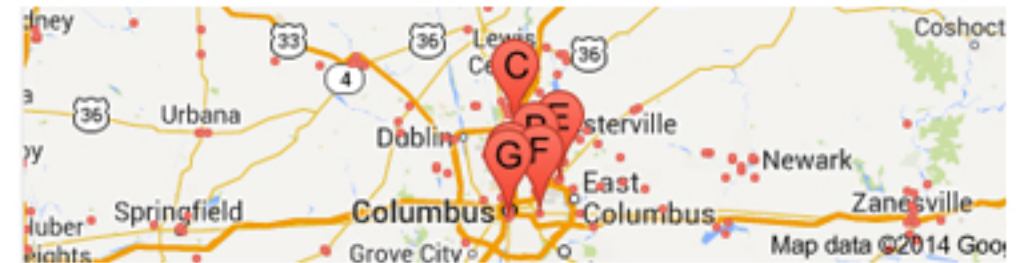
[columbus ohio rentals](#)

[columbus ohio realtors rentals](#)

[cincinnati ohio realtors](#)

[columbus ohio commercial realtors](#)

[dayton ohio realtors](#)



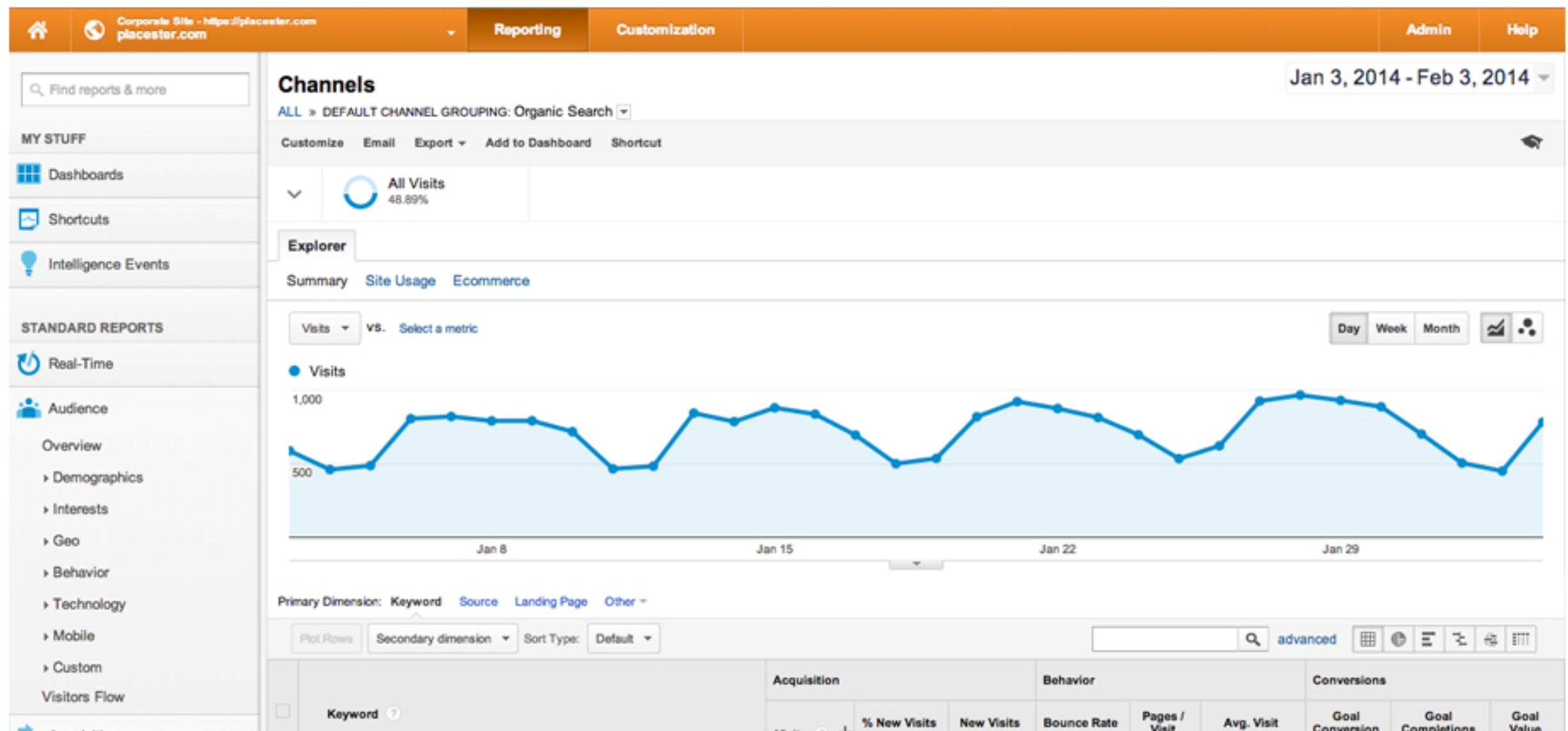
Map for **columbus ohio realtors**



You can also use the search bar to quickly gauge the popularity of a keyword. By entering your search in quotes, for instance, you can see how many web pages contain an exact phrase. If that phrase still returns several hundred thousand pages, you'll know you need to make your keyword more specific.

## Google Analytics

A few years ago, your best bet for finding keywords to pursue was to examine the existing traffic to your site with Google Analytics. Unfortunately, times have changed.



Above, you'll find our Google Analytics Dashboard. Notice that for the vast majority of visitors, the keyword is (not provided). As of September 2013, Google's encrypted search feature now hides all organic search keywords used by anyone browsing over the secure HTTPS standard. (Paid search keywords are still visible.) As of February 2014, (not provided) makes up about 83 percent of overall traffic from Google, and is set to hit 100 percent by August.

Until that time comes, however, the keywords that are still visible can tell you a bit about what your visitors are searching, and what phrases you already rank pretty highly for. To see them, log into your Google Analytics dashboard, select Acquisitions from the menu panel on the left, then click on Organic Search. For added insight, you can adjust the date range in the top right corner to see your top search keywords from the past week, the past month, etc.

# Google Adwords Keyword Planner

Now we come to the real, heavy duty keyword research tools, starting with the Google Adwords Keyword Planner, which replaces the AdWords Keyword Tool. Some SEOs have complained about the new tool, saying it lacks key features and filters from the Keyword Tool. Still, its function is the same--namely, to measure the popularity and competitiveness of a given keyword and suggest others. The AdWords Keyword Planner shows results for paid search rather than organic search, but many of the insights will carry over.

To use the Keyword Planner, simply type in a phrase you want to research. You can refine your results by choosing a product category (“Real Estate,” in this case), or by adjusting your “keyword options” to include only closely related ideas. You can also filter your results according to location and language in the “Targeting” section.



# CHAPTER 03: KEYWORD RESEARCH

Google AdWords Home Campaigns Opportunities **Tools**

**Keyword Planner**  
Add ideas to your plan

Your product or service:  Your product category:

Targeting <sup>?</sup>

- Ohio, United States
- English
- Google
- Negative keywords

Customize your search <sup>?</sup>

**Keyword filters**

- Avg. monthly searches  $\geq 0$
- Suggested bid  $\geq \$0.00$
- Ad impr. share  $\geq 0\%$

**Keyword options**

- Show broadly related ideas
- Hide keywords in my account
- Hide keywords in my plan

**Include/Exclude**

Ad group ideas **Keyword ideas**

Search terms	Avg. monthly searches <sup>?</sup>	Competition <sup>?</sup>	Suggested bid <sup>?</sup>	Ad impr. share <sup>?</sup>	Add to plan
columbus ohio apartments	1,300	High	\$1.00	0%	»

1 - 1 of 1 keywords

Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches <sup>?</sup>	Competition <sup>?</sup>	Suggested bid <sup>?</sup>	Ad impr. share <sup>?</sup>	Add to plan
columbus ohio apartments for rent	390	High	\$1.26	0%	»
apartments in columbus ohio	5,400	High	\$0.99	0%	»
apartments columbus ohio	1,300	High	\$0.93	0%	»
columbus ohio apartment rentals	110	High	\$1.92	0%	»
apartments for rent columbus ohio	720	High	\$1.40	0%	»
cheap apartments in columbus ohio	480	High	\$0.92	0%	»
luxury apartments columbus ohio	480	High	\$1.44	0%	»
apartment finder columbus ohio	390	High	\$0.89	0%	»

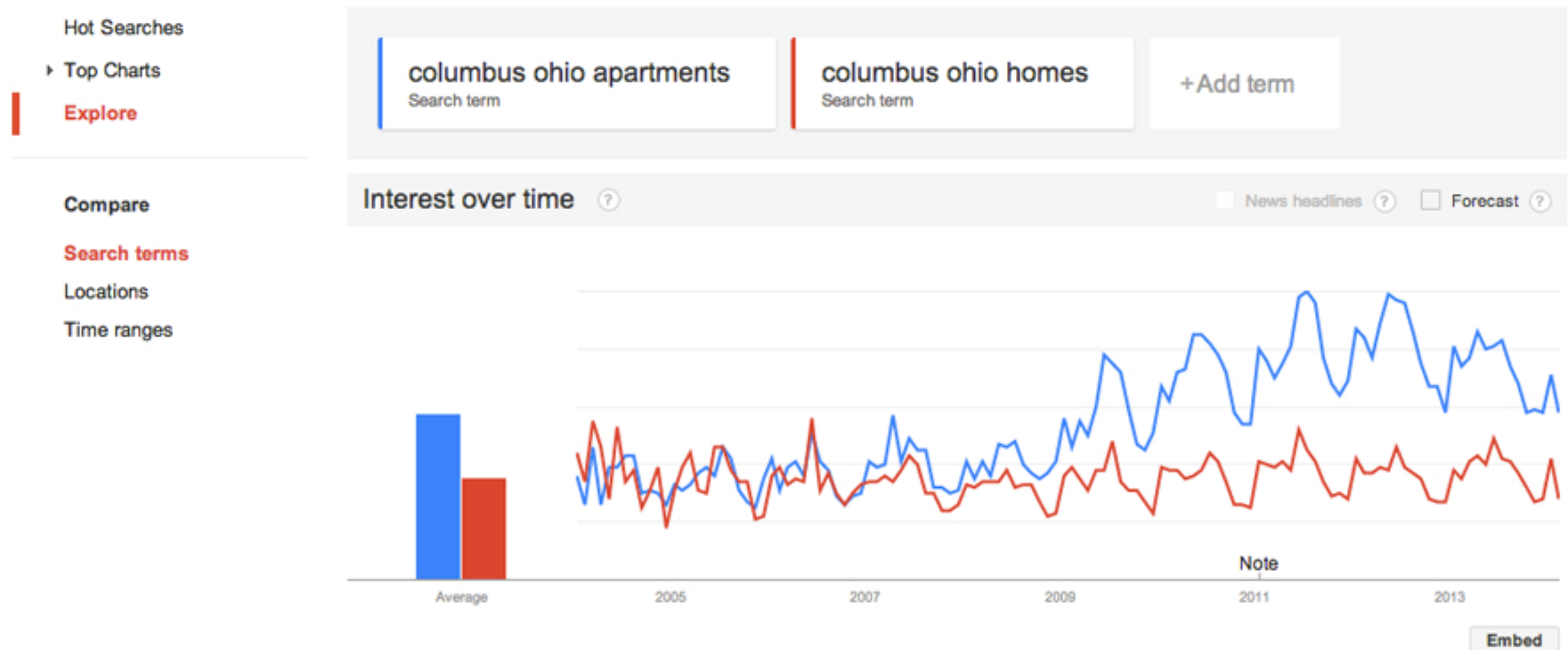
# Google Adwords Keyword Planner [Contd.]

After hitting Search, you'll see a list of suggested keywords, which can be ranked according to relevance, competitiveness (High, Medium, Low), average monthly searches, or Google's suggested bid. You may find that your initial term is too competitive and too broad, or that no one is searching it at all. Use the Keyword Planner's suggestions to make a list of keywords that strike a comfortable balance between popularity and competition.

Should you automatically avoid keywords that are in high competition? Of course not. You should, however, supplement your more popular and difficult keywords with several easier-to-win long tail phrases.

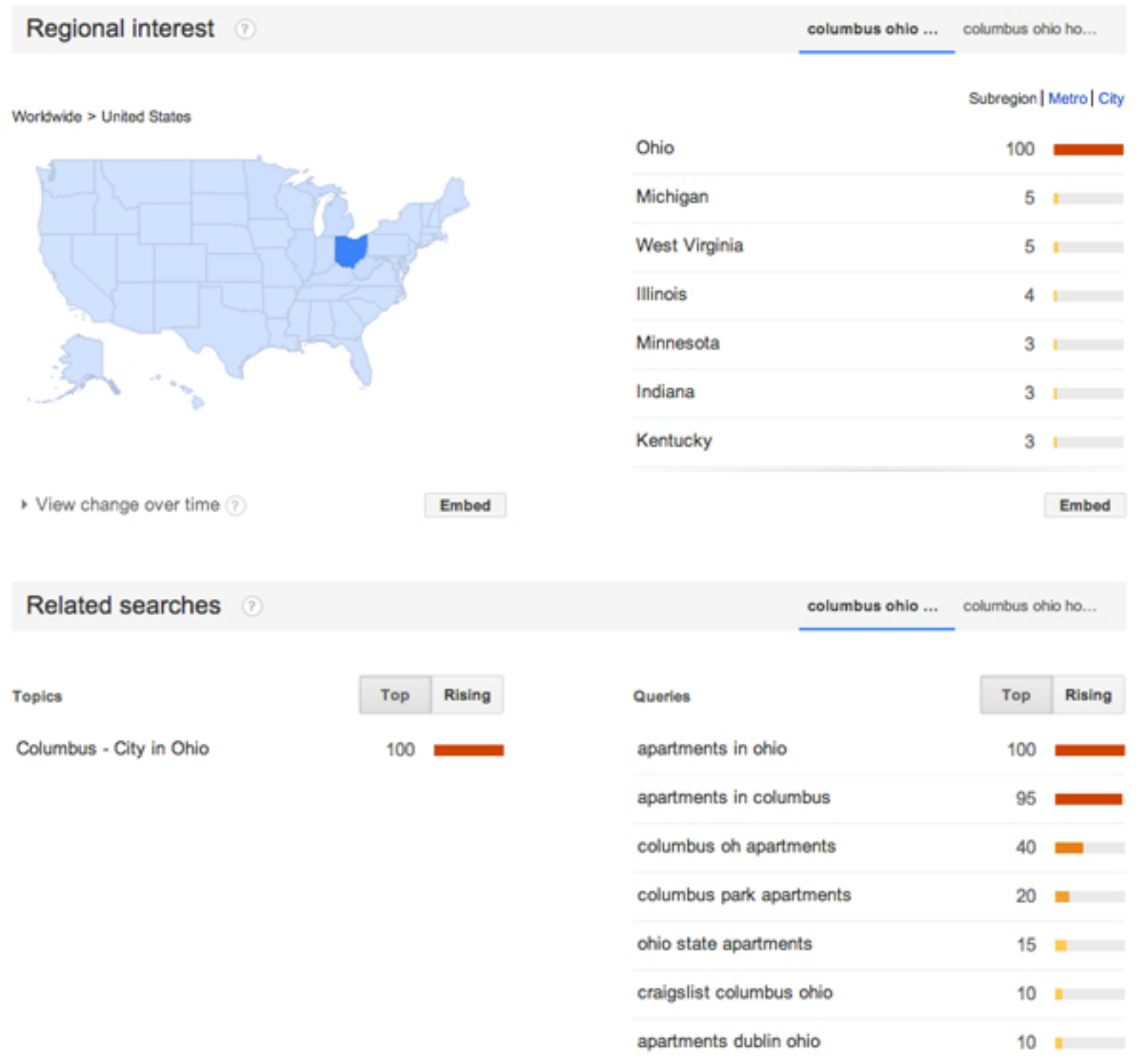
## Google Trends

Obviously, you'll want to pursue keywords that are becoming more popular with time, rather than less. With Google Trends, you can evaluate keywords according to their popularity across the web as far back as 2004. You can also see stats on multiple keywords at once. Simply add your target keywords, and you'll get a line graph with different colors for each word.




Google Trends assigns each keyword a score from 1-100, where 100 represents its most popular moment relative to the total number of searches done on Google over the same time period. The tool also allows you to filter your results according to time, region, and category. You can even do some basic forecasting to see how your keyword might fare in the coming months.

Finally, Google Trends will also offer suggestions for related terms, which you can use to hone your keywords.



# More Keyword Discovery Tools

Keyword analysis shouldn't end with Google: there are lots of other great tools and programs out there to help you research your target keywords.

The logo for Übersuggest, featuring the word "Übersuggest" in a white, bold, sans-serif font with a slight shadow effect, set against a dark gray background.

**Übersuggest** - This classic brainstorming tool expands on the information provided by the Google Keyword Tool, combining the terms you enter with other popular keywords and offering an practically unlimited list of alphabetized keyword variations.

The logo for soovle, featuring the word "soovle" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by a circular arrangement of five yellow stars, all on a white background.

**Soovle** - Soovle allows you to explore the most popular keywords not just on Google, but also on Bing, Yahoo!, Answers, Wikipedia, YouTube, and Amazon. Type in a root keyword, then use Soovle's instant auto-suggest feature to brainstorm.

The logo for Bing Ads, featuring the word "bing" in a dark grey sans-serif font and "Ads" in a yellow sans-serif font.

**Bing Keyword Tool** - The only Bing-specific solution on this list, Bing's Keyword Tool offers up to six months of historical search data instead of the monthly averages of Google's AdWords Keyword Tool. Bing's solution also focuses solely on organic, rather than paid search.

The YouTube logo, consisting of the word "You" in black and "Tube" in white inside a red rounded rectangle.

**YouTube Keyword Tool** - If you're using (or considering) video as part of your content marketing strategy, YouTube's Keyword Tool can help you find phrases to optimize your titles and tags. You can also use this tool to discover video topics and opportunities.

The WordStream logo, featuring three blue wavy lines above the word "WordStream" in a blue sans-serif font.

**Wordstream Keyword Tool** - Wordstream offers 30 free searches and allows you to filter adult phrases and target certain niches (groups of related keywords) with its trillion-keyword database.





**Wordtracker** - Powered by SEMRush, Wordtracker makes keyword data easier to understand. With the Keyword Efficiency Index (KEI), you get an up-front appraisal of a keyword's potential based on volume and competition. You can also create keyword maps to help you structure your website in a keyword-rich way. Wordtracker offers a 7-day free trial, then moves to \$69 a month.



**HubSpot Keyword SEO Tool** - Part of a comprehensive package of inbound marketing software tools, HubSpot's Keyword SEO Tool lets you analyze keywords, increase rankings, and calculate search ROI. When you find words that are too difficult, HubSpot will also suggest long-tail variations. HubSpot's basic subscription starts at \$200 a month with a 30-day trial.



1. Why It's Important
2. Identifying Your Competitors
3. Competitive Analysis Tools

# Competitive Research

In addition to forming your own thoughts and insights on your keywords, it's important to monitor your competitors. This will help you:

1. Identify which keywords other real estate professionals are already targeting, and how successful they are.
2. Find weaknesses and opportunities to compete for those keywords.
3. Determine what tactics others are using to gain an advantage.

Let's look at some tools and strategies for gauging your competition.



### The Search Page

Once again, we start by using an ordinary Google results page. An SERP can give you a general sense of how competitive a keyword is. For instance, if you're trying to compare two keywords, simply look at the total number of results for each term. The fewer pages that contain your phrase, the fewer you'll have to compete with for a spot in the top ten.

Looking for a more advanced trick for using Google to gauge competition? Try pasting “&start=990” at the end of the URL for your search results. This will take you to the last page of results. Google will only display a maximum of 1000 listings, omitting anything that doesn't make the cut. For many keywords, however, Google will actually return fewer than 1000 results. The lower the number of results, the lower the competition for that keyword.



### Diving Deeper

While search results are useful, they can only offer a quick reference when it comes to competitive research. For real, in-depth analysis, you'll need a more specific focus and a more robust tool set.

First, you should narrow down the millions of pages that contain your desired keywords and identify a handful of your most serious competitors. One way to do this is to type your keywords into every major search engine and record the top ten results, making note of any sites that rank for more than one phrase. Many of the keyword discovery tools we discussed earlier will also display the top-ranked domain for a given keyword.

# More Competitive Research Tools

While you can't exactly view your competitors' keyword documents or log into their Google Analytics accounts, you can use a variety of tools to gather public data about their current search profile and behavior. Here are a few of our favorites. (Note that most of these tools also offer advanced keyword discovery tools alongside competition analysis.)



**SimilarWeb** - The only free-as-in-free tool on this list, SimilarWeb tool offers a goldmine of performance and content info on competitors. Just type in a competitor's URL to see their referring keywords, along with traffic, audience demographics, and more. You can compare up to three sites at once.



**Keyword Spy** - Another paid option for gaining insight on other sites' keyword efforts, Keyword Spy also offers a lifetime free trial with some great features. With the “domain spy” tool, for instance, you can get reasonably accurate data on how much a site is spending in paid search, what keywords they spend the most money on, and who their competitors are. You can also export this information to a Google or Excel spreadsheet.



**SEOMoz Keyword Difficulty Tool** - Built by the experts at SEOMoz, this tool provides a “keyword difficulty score” for any term or phrase and shows the top 10 rankings for any keyword, along with competitive analysis metrics. You’ll need a subscription to Moz Analytics, which provides a 30-day trial for its \$99-a-month-and-up plans.





**SEMRush** - Just type in a competing site's URL, and SEMRush will show you their search positions for the keywords they're tracking. SEMRush can also tell you the value of your existing keywords by comparing the organic traffic generated by a keyword to the cost of buying the same amount of traffic through ads. SEMRush offers free access to the top 10 results for up to 10 searches per day, while the full tool starts at \$70 a month.



**SpyFu** - Like SEMRush, SpyFu offers the top 10 results for free and provides data on budget and keywords for whatever domain you type in. The real value, however, is in SpyFu Kombat, which allows you to view common and site-specific keywords for up to 3 websites, displaying results in overlapping Venn diagram-style circles. Full access to SpyFu Kombat and a range of other tools starts at \$79 a month.



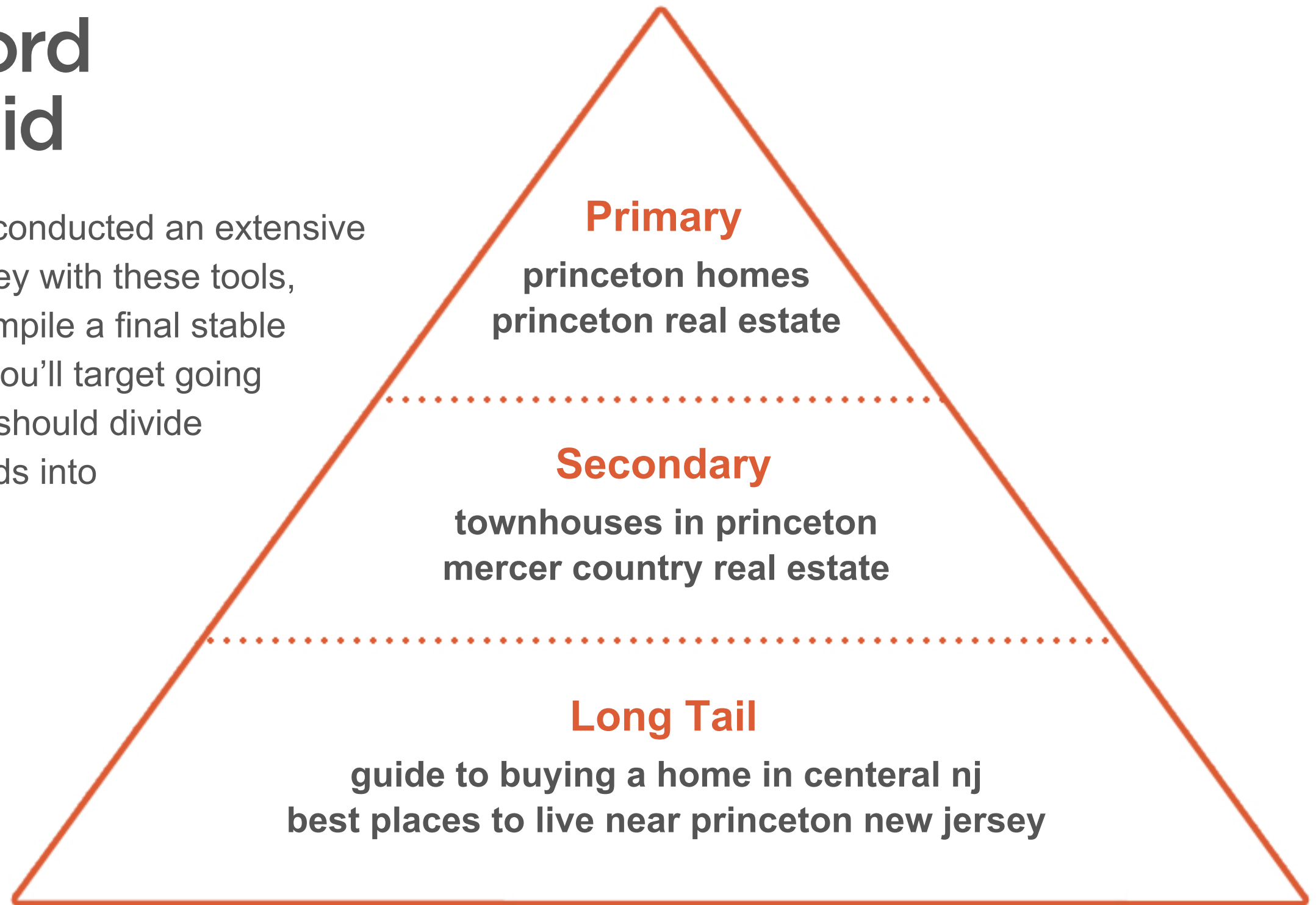
**Keyword Eye** - This tool offers up many of the same keyword discovery and competition analysis features as the other solutions on this list, with a visual twist. Instead of the usual list or table of terms, Keyword Eye creates visual maps of keywords, coded by size and color according to popularity and competition. Keyword Eye's keyword discovery functionality is free for up to 10 keywords a day; for competitive research, you'll need a subscription, which runs £9.99 a month (about \$16).



**Market Samurai** - An all-in-one SEO solution, Market Samurai offers different modules for topics like keyword discovery, competitive analysis, search ranking, and domain research. It also offers a content tool that suggests content marketing ideas based on your target keywords. Instead of a monthly subscription, Market Samurai offers its full software for a one-time fee (\$149).

## Keyword Pyramid

Once you've conducted an extensive keyword survey with these tools, it's time to compile a final stable of keywords you'll target going forward. You should divide these keywords into three lists:



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*Follow the shape of the Keyword Pyramid. Spread yourself too thin on lots of labor-intensive primary phrases, and you'll have no time for the more winnable words on your other lists.*

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### List 1: Primary Keywords

3 of your ideal keywords: the shortest, most popular, and most competitive phrases you'll target with every page on your site. While ranking for your primary keywords is your long-term goal, you should start out by concentrating on the comparatively easier-to-win terms of the next two lists.

### List 2: Secondary Keywords

3-5 slightly more specific keywords with lower competition than your primary keywords. These may be targeted all across your site, or on specific landing pages. You'll be pursuing these words more actively and aggressively than your primary list.

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*A good keyword list is a diverse keyword list. Reach more customers by approaching them from multiple angles.*

---

### List 3: Long Tail Keywords

4-6 long tail phrases that are easier to win and highly relevant to your business. Typically, you'll target these phrases specifically on a select few pages. Use this list to inform your site content so people looking for those specific terms will find you.

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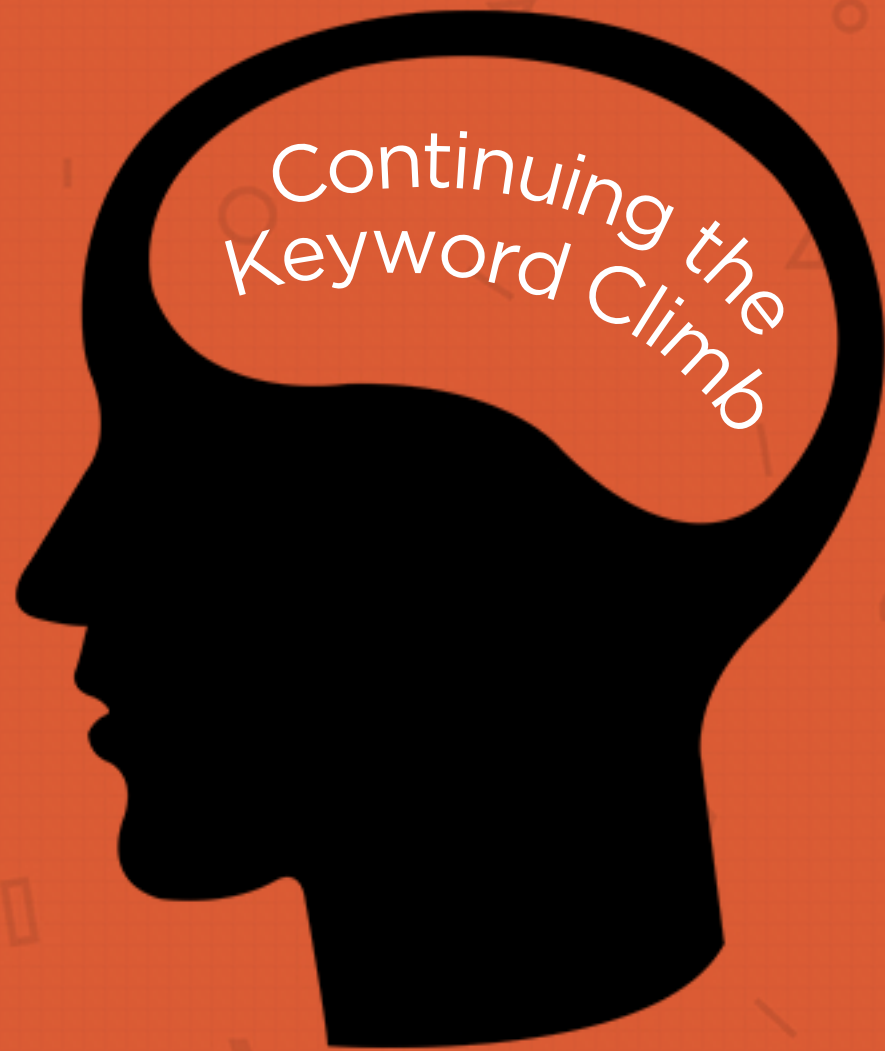
*Keyword research isn't a "set it and forget it" strategy. Be sure to continue honing and refining these lists as you learn more about your customers and your competitors.*

---

You can also divide these lists into content marketing and real estate categories.

You can then further refine the your real estate keywords according to location (downtown, metro), niche (foreclosures, rentals), or property type (apartments, homes).





CHAPTER 04

# Looking Ahead

**Keyword research is  
only the beginning.**

With your keyword lists in hand, it's time to begin the real work of ranking for your target keywords.

*"I don't think writers are sacred, but words are. They deserve respect. If you get the right ones in the right order, you can nudge the world a little."*

*-Tom Stoppard, playwright*



Google approves of WordPress

WordPress ranks highly in its own right

WordPress offers tons of additional SEO plugins

# Platform

One of the most important steps you can take toward winning your keywords is to build and manage your website on a platform that is search friendly from the start. These days, there are dozens of content management systems to choose from, many of which make grandiose claims about their SEO benefits. Nevertheless, we continue to recommend and develop with WordPress for a few key reasons.

**Google approves of WordPress** - Back in 2009 Matt Cutts, head of Google's Webspam team, declared that “WordPress takes care of 80-90 percent of Search Engine Optimization.” That’s because independent of its content, your WordPress site’s structure is designed to be easily indexed and crawled by search engine bots.



Google approves of  
WordPress

WordPress ranks  
highly in its own  
right

WordPress offers  
tons of additional  
SEO plugins

**WordPress ranks highly in its own right** - WordPress is the most popular CMS out there, powering more than 60 million websites. This popularity can only help you in your quest to rank for your keywords.

**WordPress offers tons of additional SEO plugins** - WordPress's open source architecture and robust developer community means there are dozens of plugins and extensions available to help you further optimize your site for search engines.



1. Title tag
2. Header
3. Meta description
4. Body content
5. URL
6. Anchor text

# Site Elements

Once you've got a solid site foundation, you'll want to make sure your target keywords appear in the following website elements:

**1. Title tag** - The text displayed at the very top of the browser window or tab when visitors reach your website. More importantly, though, it's what appears as the text in the clickable link for your site on Google's results page. Search engines weight title tags highly among the onpage factors considered.

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*Optimizing the elements of your website will ensure that searchers see the most descriptive and attractive representation of your content.*

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**2. Header** - This is the title or headline for your page content. The H1 is typically brief, descriptive, and the largest text on a web page. Though similar to a title tag, your H1 carries less weight with search engines, and is largely meant to entice and inform site visitors about your content.

**3. Meta Description** - Though it's not visible to site visitors, the meta description is important in that it explains your page's content to searchers. It is usually short, about 140 characters or less.

**4. Body Content** - No need to get hung up on keyword density percentages here: just keep your keywords in mind as you write your main page copy, incorporating them wherever it makes sense to do so.



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*Don't try to target all your keywords everywhere all the time. Instead, choose only those that are most relevant to a particular page's content.*

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**5. URL** - If you're lucky enough to have a domain that's an exact match for one of the keywords you're targeting, great. If not, consider using your keyword phrases in the URLs for your landing pages.

**6. Anchor Text** - Instead of using words like "this" or "here" for internal links, try to substitute relevant keywords.

When linking externally, try using keywords in a natural way to signal to search engines what that page is about.

Don't go overboard on any of these. Instead, focus on maximizing your site's usability, incorporating your target keywords whenever possible.

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*Don't stuff keywords into your site at the expense of clarity: concentrate on providing great content first.*

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# Quality Content

Finally, don't let pursuing your keywords make you lose sight of your audience. While you're tweaking your site to speak more clearly to search engines, it's important to remember that those search engines are designed and refined to send users to sites that answer their questions and provide value. That's why, above all else, it's crucial that you spend the necessary time and money to create high quality written and visual content for your website, rather than simply packing your target keywords into generic or nonsensical posts.

When in doubt, create value for the user, and the search engine will notice.



# Final Thoughts

Of course, this is just a glimpse of the SEO work ahead of you. Nevertheless, by starting with a firm grasp of what makes a good keyword and developing a complete list of the phrases you want to target, you can create a solid foundation for your SEO efforts and generate more leads for your real estate business than ever before.

# More from the Real Estate Marketing Academy

[eBook] An Introduction to Google Analytics for Real Estate

<https://placester.com/real-estate-marketing-academy/ebook-an-introduction-to-google-analytics-for-real-estate/>

[eBook] The Ultimate Guide to Building a Real Estate Website: Everything You Need to Know to Become a Smarter Marketer

<https://placester.com/real-estate-marketing-academy/ebook-the-ultimate-guide-to-building-a-real-estate-website/>

Marketing Academy Secrets: How to Optimize Your Website for Local Search [VIDEO]

<https://placester.com/real-estate-marketing-academy/marketing-academy-secrets-how-to-optimize-your-website-for-local-search/>

Marketing Academy Secrets: How to Set Up Google's Webmaster Tools [VIDEO]

<https://placester.com/real-estate-marketing-academy/marketing-academy-secrets-how-to-use-the-wordpress-seo-plugin-by-yoast/>

Placester's Ultimate Guide to Real Estate Blogging

<https://placester.com/real-estate-marketing-academy/placesters-ultimate-guide-real-estate-blogging/>

# Further Reading

## Guides and Articles

The Professional's Keyword Research Guide, SEOMoz.

<http://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo/keyword-research>

The Beginner's Guide to SEO: Keyword Research, SEOMoz.

<http://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo/keyword-research>

Keyword Research for Web Writers and Content Producers, Copyblogger.

<http://www.copyblogger.com/keyword-research/>

Keyword Basics, The Wordtracker Academy.

<http://www.wordtracker.com/academy/keyword-research-guide>

## Books

Keyword Intelligence: Keyword Research for Search, Social, and Beyond, Ron Jones.

<http://www.amazon.com/Keyword-Intelligence-Research-Search-Social/dp/1118061837>

Long Tail Keywords - How to Find Them, and More Important, How to Use Them!, Keith Thompson.

[http://www.amazon.com/Long-Tail-Keywords-Important-ebook/dp/B0055O04L6/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1364333505](http://www.amazon.com/Long-Tail-Keywords-Important-ebook/dp/B0055O04L6/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1364333505)



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