

How to Find Your Most Cost-Effective Keywords

9 Ways to Discover Long-Tail Keywords that Drive Traffic & Leads



A WordStream Guide

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If you've ever tried to market a new business or product with a new website, you've probably struggled to rank for a competitive keyword. Unfortunately, it's extremely difficult to rank for those seemingly desirable, high-volume keywords known as "head terms" — keywords like "shoes" and "car insurance." It can take years to build up the authority to rank for high-volume keywords in SEO, and those keywords can be very expensive on a cost-per-click basis in paid search, or PPC.

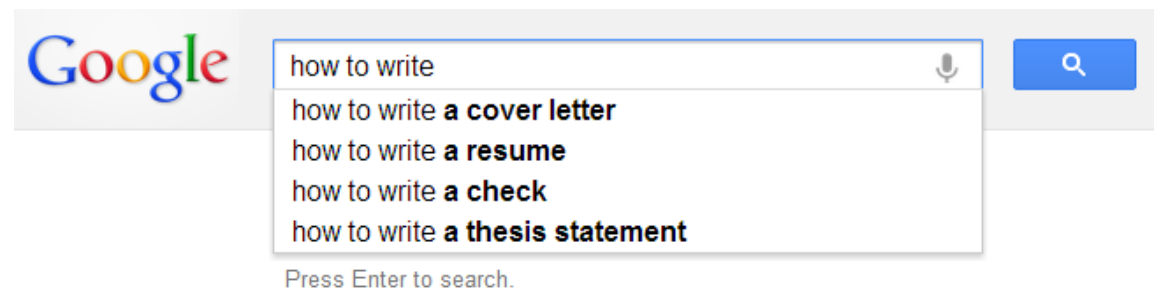
So what's the answer? 1) Stay determined and keep trying, and 2) target more specific, less competitive **long-tail keywords** in the meantime.

Long-tail keywords are longer, more specific, more targeted keywords that reveal more intent — meaning it's easier to guess what the searcher is looking for when they use a long-tail keyword. (Compare the very broad "shoes" to a more long-tail term like "size 9 men's boat shoes," for example.) When you target long-tail terms in your SEO and content marketing efforts, you're more likely to rank faster and drive more targeted traffic. And in PPC, long-tail keywords are much more cost-effective. They not only cost less to bid on, they often drive higher click-through rates (CTR) and more conversions.

Hopefully by now, whatever the size, type, or age of your business, you understand that long-tail keywords should be a part of your online marketing strategy. So where should you go to find those traffic- and lead-driving long-tail keywords? Here are nine tips to get you started.

1. Use Google Suggest

[Google Suggestions](#) are an awesome source of long-tail keyword variations. Just start typing your primary keyword into the Google search box and see what variations Google suggests:



If it turns up in a Google suggestion, you know that it's a phrase people are searching for. These suggestions won't necessarily inspire your faith in humanity (we all remember the "[I am extremely terrified of Chinese people](#)" debacle ...), but they might inspire good content.

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2. Use Google's Related Searches

Same principle as the Google Suggestions that appear while you're typing your query, but these suggested related searches appear at the bottom of the SERP, below the first page of organic results:

Searches related to **halloween costumes**

[halloween costumes websites](#) [halloween costumes fort collins](#)
[halloween costumes clearance](#) [halloween costumes 2012](#)
[halloween costumes pictures](#) [baby halloween costumes](#)
[halloween costumes denver](#) [scary halloween costumes](#)



You may get slightly more suggestions here (in this case, eight keywords versus just four above), and they may also be slightly more personalized (Google knows I live in Colorado, hence the “Denver” and “Fort Collins” modifiers).

3. Use More and Different Keyword Research Tools

If you only use one keyword tool every time you do keyword research, you're selling yourself short and probably missing out on tons of long-tail keyword variations. The Google Keyword Tool is a great basic tool and a good place to start, but if you're looking for more long-tail keywords, try these other options too:

- **WordStream's [Free Keyword Tool](#)** — Sorry to toot our own horn, but you really will get more long-tail suggestions with our keyword tool than most other tools out there. The [Keyword Niche Finder](#) is great for this purpose too.
- **[Google Trends](#)** — Find out what people are searching on right now (like “[Who will win the 2012 election?](#)”).
- **Social Media Tools** — For example [YouTube's keyword tool](#) and [Twitter Search](#).

The more keyword tools you consult, the more long-tail keyword variations you're likely to find.

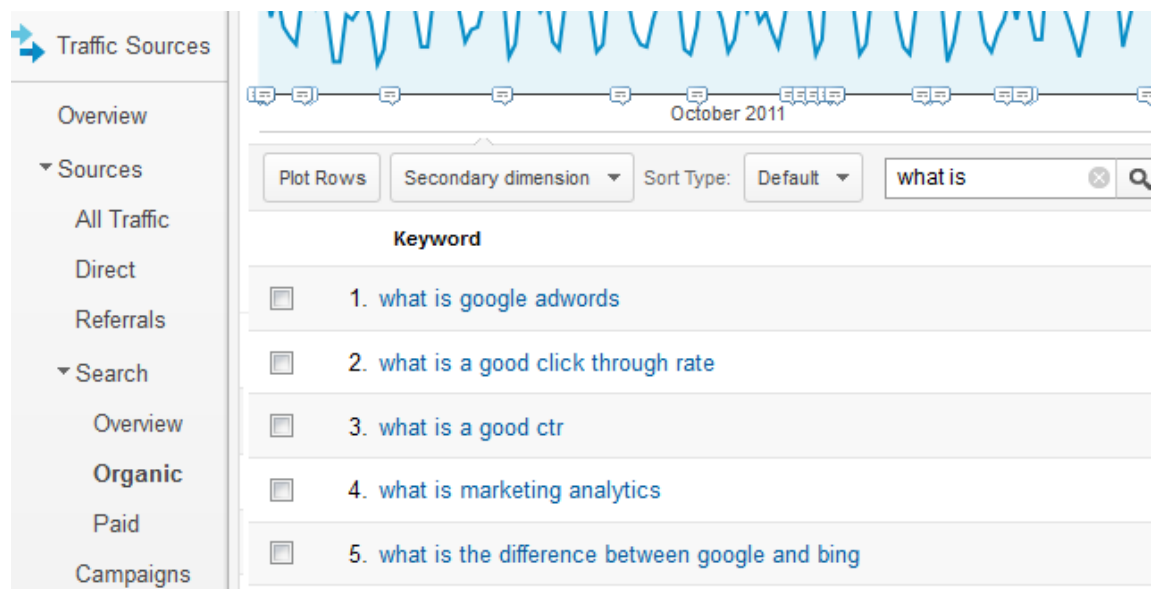
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4. Mine Your Analytics

Your analytics will tell you [many, if not all](#), of the keyword phrases that lead visitors to your website. By digging through these keyword referrers, you'll be able to find a bunch of long-tail queries that are driving traffic for you. These keywords may be relevant to your business but not yet highly targeted by a single page on your site. For example, a few years ago we found that a lot of people were searching on the phrase "[what's a good click through rate](#)" to wind up at our site, but we didn't have a page with that title, so we wrote one, and now it drives tons of traffic.

To find your own private store of long-tail keywords, go into your analytics and locate your organic keyword referrals (in Google Analytics, the path is Traffic Sources > Sources > Search > Organic). You can simply scan all the terms for good, relevant long-tail keywords you can turn into content, or you can set the time frame to something pretty large (depending on your traffic flow, try a 3-, 6-, or 12-month period) so you'll have a lot of data to look at, then search for patterns. For example, you might search for [question keywords](#) (i.e., terms that begin with "what," "why," etc.).

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5. Mine Your Search Query Reports

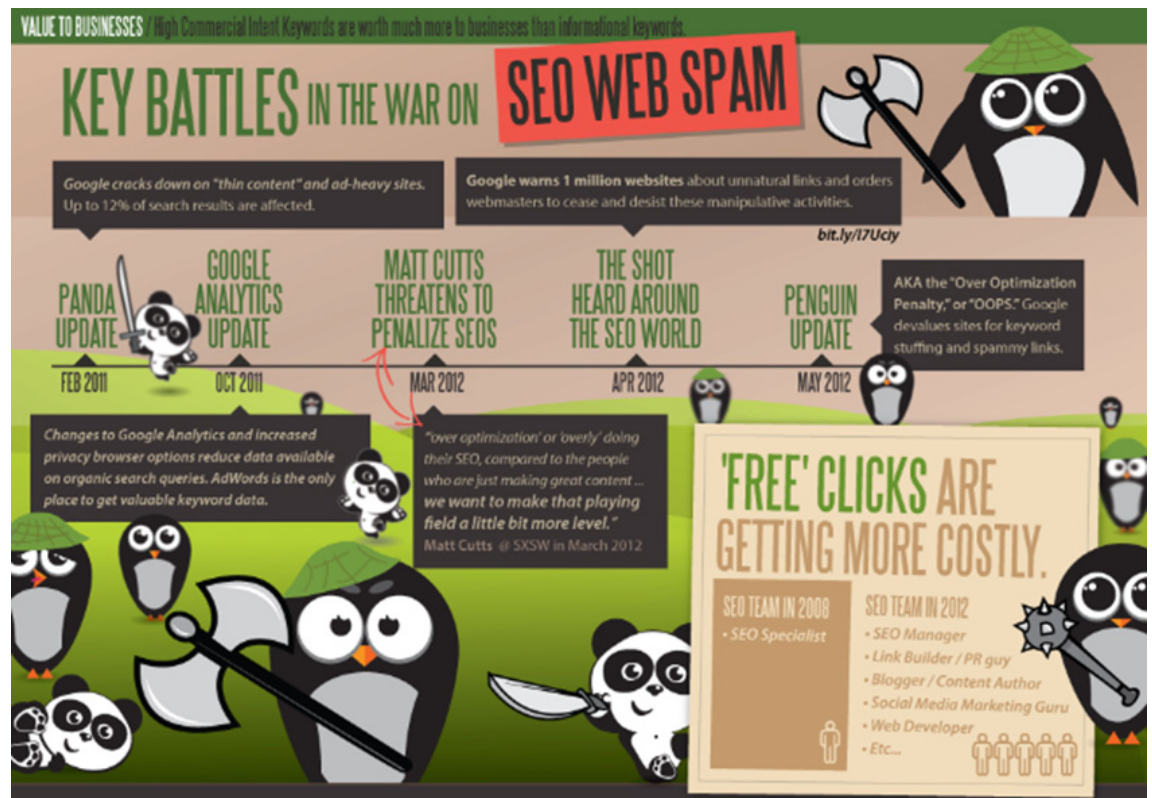
If you're running a PPC campaign in AdWords, don't forget to use your [Search Query Report](#) the same way you'd use your analytics, just one of many ways that [PPC data can inform your SEO](#). Your Search Query Report shows you the search queries that drove people to click on your ads, rather than your organic search results. As an added bonus, you get fuller access to this data than you do your organic referrers in Google Analytics. It may also be easier to see which keywords are driving conversions, not just traffic. High-converting long-tail keywords are especially worth chasing.

6. Browse eHow

Sites like eHow are pretty much entirely fueled by keyword research, primarily long-tail keyword research. Demand Media, the company that owns eHow, Cracked.com and other sites, uses powerful algorithms to [find long-tail keywords it can then rank for with hyper-targeted content](#).

You might not have Demand Media's data sources or insanely profitable content algorithms on your side, but you can still learn from this methodology. Browse these sites for keyword ideas. If eHow is targeting a keyword phrase, you can bet it has search volume and that advertisers are interested in buying placement on those pages. Another good bet? Whatever they have produced to target those keywords is probably pretty lame. The content eHow churns out is produced on the cheap by freelancers and tends to be thin content, the kind of stuff that [post-Panda Google](#) no longer favors. If you can create strong content with real value that is also hyper-targeted, you have a good chance of outranking the content farms.

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7. Browse Q&A Sites

Like Demand Media properties, Q&A sites can be a good source of long-tail keyword ideas. I'm talking about sites like:

- **Quora** (here are some [tips for using Quora to find content ideas](#))
- **Yahoo Answers**
- **Answers.com**
- **Askville** by Amazon
- **LinkedIn Answers**

Questions make great long-tail keywords — it couldn't be more obvious that these people are looking for answers and information.

is there anything you can take to make your temperature rise?



Tharnpfeffa answered:

I could tell you what I did when I didn't want to go to school, but they don't make that kind of thermometer anymore.

• 32 mins ago

[Food & Drink](#) > [Cooking](#)

Can I sell used handbags on Amazon



smitha answered:

Yes of course, for that you need an amazon account. Shipping Fees & Delivery Times To ensure you deliver your items in a timely manner and that your shipping fees aren't too costly, it's recommended...

• 33 mins ago

[Amazon](#) > [Amazon.com](#)

Of course you'll want to do a little keyword research to find the version of each question that has the right search volume and competition level. Not every question you find on a Q&A site is going to be a worthwhile keyword to attack.

8. Browse Wikipedia

Is Wikipedia the most optimized site on the Internet? It's definitely up there. You can learn a lot by copying Wikipedia's on-page optimization. When doing research around a base term, try checking the Wikipedia page. For example, look at the table of contents (this for the "Quantum Mechanics" page):

Contents [\[hide\]](#)

- 1 History
- 2 Mathematical formulations
- 3 Mathematically equivalent formulations of quantum mechanics
- 4 Interactions with other scientific theories
 - 4.1 Quantum mechanics and classical physics
 - 4.2 Relativity and quantum mechanics
 - 4.3 Attempts at a unified field theory
- 5 Philosophical implications
- 6 Applications
- 7 Examples
 - 7.1 Free particle
 - 7.2 Step potential
 - 7.3 Rectangular potential barrier
 - 7.4 Particle in a box
 - 7.5 Finite potential well
 - 7.6 Harmonic oscillator
- 8 See also
- 9 Notes
- 10 References
- 11 Further reading
- 12 External links

Always check out the competition when you're chasing a keyword term.

A lot of these headings translate into long-tail keywords (“history of quantum mechanics,” “mathematical formulations of quantum mechanics,” “applications of quantum mechanics,” etc.). You can also do a page search (Control-F) on the page for your primary keyword and see what other variations appear throughout the text. In addition, the “See Also” section at the bottom of many Wikipedia articles can be helpful for finding clusters of related terms.

9. Steal From Competitors

For informational queries, Wikipedia is often your competitor. But always check out the competition when you're chasing a keyword term. Start with head and mid-tail terms that you're trying to rank for, and see what types of keyword variations are used on the pages that are ranking in the top 5-10 spots. For example, let's say you're chasing the keyword “holiday crafts.” Scope the page that ranks #1 for that keyword on Google and see what keywords it's using (keywords everywhere!):

Crafts

Search Crafts



or use Craft Finder

Kids Crafts by Age

Crafts by Type

Crafts by Material

Home & Garden

Cards & Gifts

► All Holiday & Seasonal Crafts

New Year's Crafts

Valentine's Day Crafts

St. Patrick's Day Crafts Ideas

Spring Crafts & Gardening Fun

April Fools' Day Crafts

Mother's Day Gift Ideas

Summer Crafts

Father's Day Crafts

4th of July Crafts & Decorations

Fall Crafts

Halloween Crafts, Decorations & Costumes

Thanksgiving Crafts

Winter Crafts

Christmas Crafts

At the Craft Table
How-To Videos

Holiday & Seasonal Crafts

From **summer crafts** to **christmas crafts**, make the most of every holiday and season with festive and fun crafts.



Summer Crafts

While the long summer days away with fun crafts inspired by the outdoors and nature.

Backyard Nature Crafts

Outdoor Art Projects

Beach Crafts

Summer Beach Accessories

Woodworking Projects

T-Shirt Decorations

Classic Camp Crafts

Backyard Forts & Structures



Father's Day Crafts

Show Dad you care with Father's Day gifts and Father's Day cards that celebrate his hobbies and make him feel like a King.

Homemade Father's Day Gifts

Homemade Father's Day Card Ideas



4th of July Crafts & Decorations

Celebrate Independence Day with clever party invitations, easy-to-make crafts, and star-spangled decorations.

4th of July Crafts for Kids

4th of July Parade Wear



Fall Crafts

Colorful leaves, shiny apples, bright pumpkins – bring the flavor of fall into your home with these awesome autumn crafts.

Apple Crafts

Nature Crafts

Now What? How to Use Your Long-Tail Keyword Research

Once you've found those long-tail keywords, the next step is to use them in your search marketing campaigns, both paid and organic:

- **SEO** — Create blog posts, how-to guides, videos, infographics, and other SEO content using those keywords. For more help check out: "[How to Rank for a Keyword in 10 Steps](#)"
- **PPC** — Organize closely related long-tail keywords into ad groups in your PPC campaigns. Use the [Keyword Grouper](#) to help you sort your research into tightly knit keyword groupings.

If you're already running a PPC campaign, and you're not sure if you're using enough long-tail keywords, use the AdWords Performance Grader to get a free performance report that checks your account for long-tail keyword optimization and other key PPC metrics including Quality Score, click-through rate, impression share and more.

How Strong Is Your AdWords Account?

Find out! Get a free, instant report with the AdWords Performance Grader.

About WordStream

[WordStream Inc.](#) provides search marketing software and services to small and medium-sized businesses that want better results from paid search. WordStream's easy-to-use PPC Advisor software facilitates more effective PPC campaigns by providing a customized workflow, the 20-Minute PPC Work Week, to help advertisers increase relevance across Google, Bing, and Yahoo and get expert-level results in a fraction of the time. Whether you're new to search marketing or are an experienced PPC manager, WordStream's PPC management software can provide the boost you need to grow your business and drive better results.

