## UNIT - 4

Introduction

Keyword research is one of the most important, valuable, and high-return activities in the search engine marketing field. Through the detective work of dissecting your market's keyword demand, you learn not only which terms and phrases to target with SEO, but also more about your customer base as a whole.

Keyword research enables you to predict shifts in demand, respond to changing market conditions, and ensure that you are producing the products, services, and content that web searchers are already actively seeking. In the history of marketing, there has never been such a low barrier to entry in understanding the motivations of consumers.

Understanding the Long Tail of the Keyword Demand Curve

It is wonderful to deal with keywords that have 5,000 searches per day, or even 500 searches per day, but in reality these "popular" search terms may actually comprise less than 30% of the overall searches performed on the Web. The remaining 70% lie in what's commonly called the "long tail" of see Following Figure 5-1. The tail contains hundreds of millions of unique searches that might be conducted only a few times in any given day, or even only once ever, but when assessed in aggregate they comprise the majority of the world's demand for information through search engines.
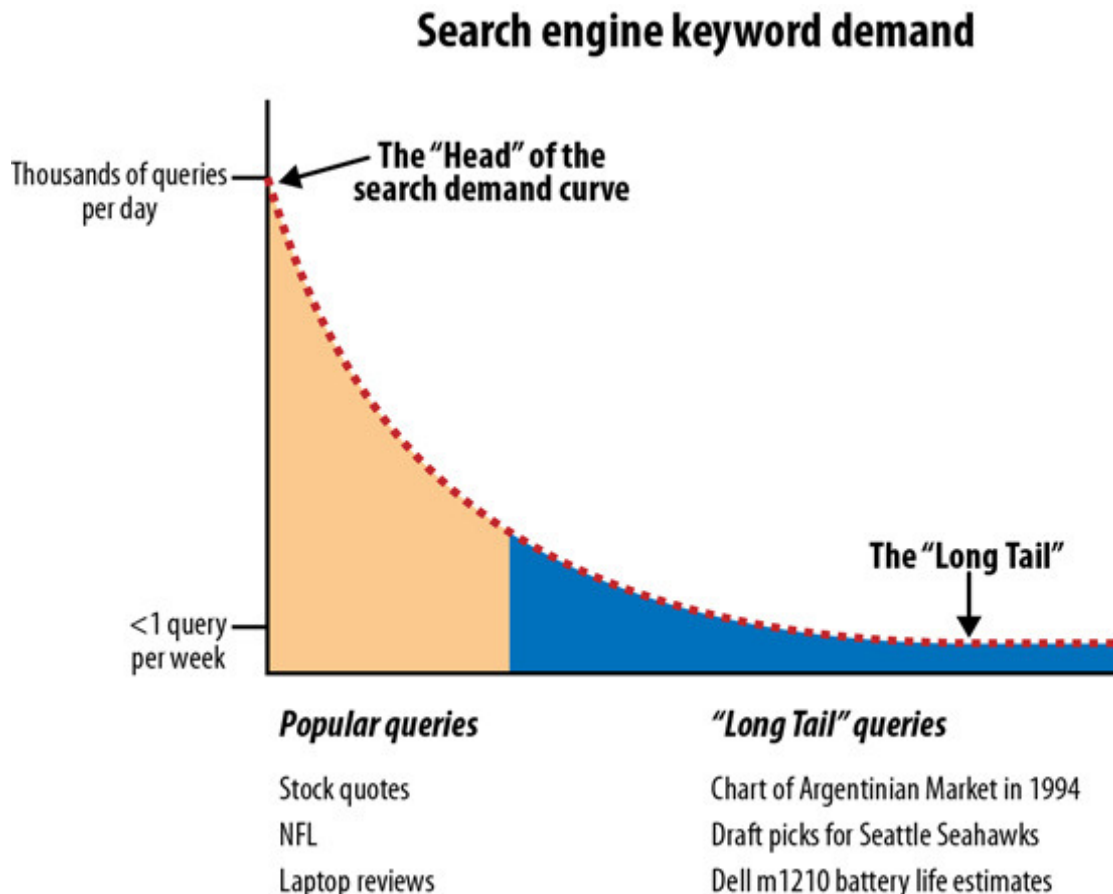
Traditional Approaches: Domain Expertise, Site Content Analysis

One of the smartest things you can do when initially conducting keyword research is brainstorm original ideas with business participants before getting keyword tools involved. This can be surprisingly effective for coming up with numerous critical keywords. It can also help you understand if your organization thinks about your offerings using different language than your customers, in which case you may want to adapt!

Start by generating a list of terms and phrases that are relevant to your industry and pertain to what your site or business offers. The brainstorming phase should ideally result in a list of several dozen to several hundred or more keyword searches that will bring relevant visitors to your site.

One easy way to begin this process is to gather your team in a conference room and then follow these steps:

1. Produce a list of key one- to three-word phrases that describe your products/services.
2. Spend some time coming up with synonyms that your potential customers might use for those products and services. Use a thesaurus to help you with this process.
3. Create taxonomy of all the areas of focus in your industry. It can be helpful to imagine creating a directory for all the people, projects, ideas, and companies connected to your site. You can also look at sites that are leaders in the industry and study their site hierarchies as a way to start your thinking about taxonomy.
4. Broaden your list by thinking of higher-level terms of which your products or services are a subset.
5. Review your existing site, and extract what appear to be key phrases from your site.
6. Review industry association and/or media sites to see what phrases they use to discuss your topic area.
7. List all your various brand terms.
8. List all your products. If your site has a massive number of products, consider stepping back a level (or two) and listing the categories and subcategories.
9. Have your team imagine they are potential customers, and ask them what they would type into a search engine if they were looking for something similar to your product or service.
10. Supplement this by asking some people outside your business what they would search for—preferably, people who are not directly associated with the company.
11. Use your web analytics tool to see what terms people are already using to come to your site, or what terms they are using within your site search tool if you have one.

Include Competitive Analysis

12. Review your competitors' websites and see what key phrases they use for their products and services that compete with yours.
13. Record what non branded terms they use for their business.
14. Read any articles they have written that are published on sites other than their own.
15. Observe what the media may have had to say about them.

Once you have completed these steps you will have in hand a rich set of terms of interest. The next step is to expand those terms of interest using keyword research tools.

Determining Keyword Value/Potential ROI

Once you have obtained the raw keyword data by doing research with your favorite tools, you need to analyze which keywords have the highest value and the highest ROI. Unfortunately, there are no simple ways to do this, but we will review some of the things you can do.

Estimating Value, Relevance, and Conversion Rates

When researching keywords for your site, it is important to judge each keyword's *value*, *relevance*, and potential *conversion rate*. If a keyword is strong in all three criteria, it is almost certainly a keyword you want to plan to optimize for within your site.

Determining keyword value

When judging the value of a keyword, you should contemplate how useful the term is for your site. How will your site benefit from targeting different keywords?

Identifying relevant keywords

To identify relevant, high-quality keywords, ask yourself the following questions:

1. How relevant is the term/phrase to the content, services, products, or information on your site? Terms that are highly relevant will convert better than terms that are ancillary to your content's focus.

2. Assuming a visitor who searches for that term clicks on your result in the SERPs, what is the likelihood that she'll perform a desired action on your site, create a link to your site, or influence others to visit? It is a good idea to target keywords that indicate imminent action, because searchers are more likely to perform the corresponding action on your site when they search for those terms than they are when they come to your site from terms such as $honda$ $civic$ or $cranium$ $board$ $game$. Your click-through/conversion rates are likely to be higher if you target keywords that indicate the intent behind the search. You can also test this by setting up a PPC campaign and buying clicks on a given keyword and seeing how it converts for you.

3. How many people who search for this term will come to your site and leave dissatisfied? Pay attention to your site's content and compare it to what other sites in the top results are offering—are these sites doing or offering something that you haven't thought of? Do you feel as though these sites offer a more positive user experience than your own? If so, see what you can learn from these sites and possibly emulate them. You can also use an analytics program to check which of your pages have the highest abandonment rates. See what you can change on those pages to improve the user experience and increase users' level of enjoyment when using your site.

It is important to categorize your keywords into terms with high and low relevance. Generally, keywords of higher relevance will be more beneficial to your site in that they more closely represent your site as a whole. If, when judging the relevance of a keyword, you answer "yes" to the preceding questions, you've found a highly relevant term that you should include in your targeting.

Determining conversion rates

A common misconception is that a conversion refers only to the purchase of an item on your site. However, many different types of actions users perform can be defined as conversions, and they are worth tracking and segmenting.

The many different types of conversions create distinct opportunities for targeting various keywords. Although one keyword may work well for purchase conversions, another may be well suited to getting users to subscribe to something on your site. Regardless of what type of conversion you are optimizing for, you should strive to have each keyword that you intentionally target convert well, meaning it should be relatively successful at getting searchers to click through to your site and, consequently, perform a specific action.

Leveraging the Long Tail of Keyword Demand

As we discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the long tail of search is where 70% of search queries occur. Only 30% of those precious queries happen in the more obvious terms that people use, the so-called "head terms." Another way to underscore this is that in May 2007,

Google Vice President Udi Manber indicated that 20% to 25% of all search queries that Google receives on a given day are queries that Google is seeing for the first time. You can think of this as the "ultra-long tail."

The long tail of search queries in a given industry is typically not visible via any of the major keyword research services or search engine ad databases. In these instances, there is a method to find those terms that can carry value, but it requires a good amount of research and analysis. With this in mind, let's outline a few methods for finding long-tail terms.

Extracting Terms from Relevant Web Pages
One source for long-tail terms is web pages that do well for searches that are relevant to your target market. Here is a basic process for finding those pages and extracting that information from them:
1. Extract the top 10 to 50 most common search phrases at the head of the distribution graph from your existing keyword research in the industry.
2. Search Google and Bing for each term.
3. For each page in the top 10 to 30 results, extract the unique usable text on the page.
4. Remove stop words and filter by phrase size.
5. Remove instances of terms/phrases already in your keyword research database.
6. Sort through the most common remnants first, and comb as far down as you feel is valuable.

Trending, Seasonality, and Seasonal Fluctuations in Keyword Demand
One of the subtleties of keyword research, and of any fully developed SEO strategy, is that the use of keywords varies significantly over time. For instance, major holidays inevitably lead to bursts of keyword volume related to those holidays.

If you want to write holiday-related content, it will be important to have your site visible in the SERPs for those search queries prior to that holiday's buying season so that you'll get optimum traffic for those terms. And since it takes the search engines a long time to discover and rank new pages or changes in existing ones, advance preparation is required.

In most cases searches start increasing about two to three months before the holiday, so it is important to acknowledge that and start crafting your content and targeting those keywords in sample time for them to be indexed before the searches start gaining traction.

The Opportunities in Vertical Search
Vertical search has been around for almost as long as the major search engines have been in existence. Some of the first vertical search engines were for image search, newsgroup search, and news search, but many other vertical search properties have emerged since then, both from the major search engines and from third parties.

Rank	Name	Share
1	Google	79.98%
2	Google Image Search	9.54%

3	Google Mail	5.51%
4	Google News	1.49%
5	Google Maps	0.82%
6	Froogle	0.46%
7	Google Video Search	0.46%
8	Google Groups	0.43%
9	Google Scholar	0.27%
10	Google Book Search	0.25%
11	Google Earth	0.22%
12	Google Desktop Search	0.18%
13	Google Directory	0.10%
14	Google Answers	0.09%
15	Google AdWords	0.07%
16	Google Local	0.05%
17	Google Finance	0.03%
18	Google Calendar	0.01%
19	Google Talk	0.01%
20	Google Labs	0.01%

Optimizing for Local Search

In 2010, Bing released data showing that 53% of Bing's mobile search volume was local in nature. In 2011, Google published data indicating that 20% of its desktop search volume had local intent. Being that this is a

large and growing segment, search engines have sought to increase their advertiser bases by moving aggressively into providing local directory information.

Applications such as Google Maps, Yahoo! Local, and Bing Maps have introduced disruptive technology to local directory information by mashing up maps with directory listings, reviews/ratings, satellite images, and 3-D modeling—all tied together with keyword search relevancy. This area of search is still in flux, as evolutionary changes continue to come hard and fast. However, these innovations have excited users, and the mapping interfaces are growing in popularity as a result.

Despite rapid innovation in search engine technology, the local information market is still extremely fractured. There is no single dominant provider of local business information on the Internet. According to industry metrics, online users typically go to multiple sources to locate, research, and select local businesses. Traditional search engines, local search engines, online yellow pages, newspaper websites, online classifieds, industry-specific "vertical" directories, and review sites are all sources of information for people trying to find businesses in their area. This fractured nature of online local marketing creates considerable challenges for all types of organizations, whether they're small mom-and-pop businesses with only a single location or large chain stores with outlets across the country.

Yet, success in these efforts is critical. The opportunity for local search is huge. More than any other form of vertical search, local search results have a major presence in web search.

Here are the key guidelines for making choices for these data elements
1. *Business Name*
2. *Address*
3. *Phone Number*
4. *Website*
5. *Description*
6. *Categories*

Optimizing for Image Search

Optimizing for image search can be a smart strategy for many search marketers. Even if you're working on a site that you don't feel truly lends itself to an image optimization strategy, you may be able to leverage images or photos on your website for SEO.

However, we should note that for some sites, there may not be a lot to gain here. Some e-tailers report poor conversion on image search traffic and lots of the people coming in appear to be focused on stealing their images. You need to weigh the benefit of image search capability against the costs and other opportunities for SEO on your site.

Nonetheless, many sites do very well with image search, and image search optimization does not have to take much time. A significant amount of traffic can come from image search, and the number of people competing effectively for that traffic is much lower than it is in general web search. Industries that don't immediately seem to provide compelling subjects for images may enjoy greater potential in this area, because the competition might never clue in to the advantages of integrating images into their sites and into an overall search marketing strategy.

Image Optimization Tips
1. Make sure the image filename or img src string contains your primary keyword.
2. Always use the image alt attribute.
3. Avoid query strings for img src tags, just as you should for page URLs.
4. Use good-quality pictures, which will read well when shown in thumbnail format.
5. Do not save images as graphics files with embedded thumbnails—turn this feature off in Photoshop and other image editing software
6. Don't store the image in a sidebar column with your ads or inside the header/footer navigation elements.
7. Have a proper copyright license.
8. If you are using images that may also be displayed on other websites, store/display them at different sizes from how they were provided to you.
9. You need to ensure that your server configuration allows your site's images to be displayed when called from web pages on other domains.
10. If it is a fit for your business, specify that others are free to use your images for online display.

Optimizing for Product Search

Google Product Search is less popular than some of the other Google-owned properties. However, top rankings for product-based businesses in Google Product Search are critical. This is because the top three Google Product Search results sometimes make their way into

the main web search results, grouped together as a *onebox*. This Product Search onebox can appear anywhere on the page—top, middle, or bottom.

Getting into Google Product Search

The first step toward optimizing your website for Google Product Search is to put together a feed for your products and submit them to the Google Merchant Center.

To be included in Google Product Search, you need to upload true physical/tangible products. The Google Merchant Center will accept other types of items, such as flights, hotels, car rentals, travel packages, and real estate, but such items will not get into Google Product Search.

In your feed, populate as many fields as possible with data. These additional fields will help Google Product Search match you up with more potential customers. It is also important to update your feed as often as possible. Some major e-tail sites update their feeds on a daily basis.

Product search optimization

Here are some of the basic things you can do to optimize your feed for Google Product Search:

• The most important optimization step is to make sure that your feed is accurate. Pricing must match exactly, taking into account all factors, such as shipping and handling.
• Change your feed whenever product availability or pricing changes.
• Create descriptive, accurate item titles.
• Use long-tail terms in your titles, particularly for highly competitive products.
• Seller ratings play a big role in rankings in Google.
• Product ratings are also important.
• It appears that product names plus brand names in item titles are the best choice.
• Always include product images.
• Other factors that also may play a part include the following:
— The perceived authority of the domain
— Specific pricing details
— The website's ranking for the keyword in web search
— Whether any of the products are deemed "adult"
— Users specifying Google Checkout items only
— The number of users who have added your Google Product items to their individual Shopping Lists within Product Search, or placed them on their Shared Wish Lists

Optimizing for News, Blog, and Feed Search

News, blog, and feed search is another large potential area of opportunity for optimization. This has a bearing not only on obtaining traffic directly from the search engines, but also in promoting your business in whole new ways.

Getting plugged in to news search, for example, can bring you plenty of quality traffic, but it can also result in your site being spotted by major media editors and writers, as well as bloggers who consume that media. This is the type of exposure that can lead to numerous links. Blogs and RSS feeds offer a similar dynamic of getting your content in front of new readers through new channels. There is also a social aspect to blogging, due to the built-in mechanism for comments and the tendency for bloggers to interact heavily with each other.

RSS Feed Optimization (Rich site summery)
Many people mistakenly lump blogs and RSS together, but RSS has infinitely more applications beyond just blogs. RSS feeds can also be used for reporting upon or announcing news alerts, your latest specials, clearance items, upcoming events, new stock arrivals, new articles, new tools and resources, search results, a book's revision history, top 10 best sellers, project management activities, forum/listserv posts, and recently added downloads. A good place to start is with basic SEO practices.

Blog Optimization
Blogs are great publishing platforms for those who want to write articles on a regular basis. First, they make it easy to publish the content. Authors only need to log in and use a relatively simple set of menu choices to input what they want to publish, preview it, and then proceed to publish it. It is far easier than coding your own HTML pages by hand.

News Search Optimization
Most people are so conditioned to the fact that Google is the dominant provider of search that few of them realize that the king of news search engines is Yahoo! News. Yahoo! News gets nearly three times as many
visitors as Google News does. If you are able to implement a true news feed on your site, you should submit to both Yahoo! News and Google

Others: Mobile, Video/Multimedia Search
Mobile and video search are two areas experiencing rapid growth. Each has its own challenges and requires a unique approach.

Mobile Search
Mobile search is a dynamic and growing market. In June 24, 2011, group product manager for mobile ads at Google, Paul Feng, told Mashable, "Google has seen mobile search grow at an exponential rate; it's increased five-fold worldwide in the past two years. That rate of growth in Mobile search queries focus more heavily on immediately decisions. Estimates suggest that 30% of mobile searches are to find an address or directions. Mobile search sites may therefore want to focus on driving foot traffic and offline conversions rather than trying to generate purchases online.
If you offer a desktop experience to a mobile user and she finds a competitor that offers a tailored mobile experience, you may have just lost the attention of a potential customer. Mobile searchers tend to be more focused on shopping and price comparisons, as many searchers already know what they want and are committed to the brand. Focus on getting them the info that they need to finalize a purchase decision.

Video Search Optimization
Video search optimization is in its infancy, but it is growing rapidly. The increasing penetration of high-bandwidth Internet connections is going to drive more and more demand for online video content. So, creating video content and optimizing it is something you should consider.
The problem is that video search engines have not yet been able to look inside the videos to tell what their content is from a human "eye" perspective. For that reason, they rely on other on-page factors, the metadata within the video file itself, and inbound links and anchor text to determine what a video is about.