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# Keyword Research

A Real-World Guide



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*Keyword research* is a fundamental part of online marketing of all kinds, and is especially relevant for freelance writers, online publishers, and bloggers.

Compelling content is favored by search engines, but if you don't use the words people are actually *interested* in and actively searching for, you're *missing a lot of traffic*.

But the value of keywords goes well beyond SEO copywriting. In fact, close your eyes for a moment and imagine a world where search engines *don't* deliver traffic at all.

Would keyword research still be valuable? You bet.

Keyword research, at its essence, is *market* research. It tells you what people are interested in, and in what relative numbers.

Better yet, it reveals the *actual language* people are using when they think about those topics, which provides you with insight on how to converse with them via your blog.

That information is worth its weight in gold, *if you know what to do with it*. And that's what this ebook is all about.

Let's get going...

# Keyword Research: It's Not What You Think

*by Brian Clark*

"Words are powerful," my teacher said, looking out over my 7th grade English class. "These little blotches of ink have overthrown kings, governed religions, and caused millions of men and women to fall in love."

Yes, it was a tad dramatic, but my 13-year-old heart started racing. Those were the words that launched my writing career.

For well over a decade, I've been on a continuous quest to master the power of words, to wield them with great eloquence and effect. I've written thousands of pages, read hundreds of books, and now I'm making a living with nothing but words.

And I've learned one thing: my teacher was wrong. Words aren't powerful.

The *right* words are.

What's the difference between a headline that goes viral on Twitter and Facebook and one that's ignored? The *right* words.

What's the difference between a blog post that receives hundreds of referrals from search engines or none at all? The *right* words.

What's the difference between an opening paragraph that grabs the attention of your readers and one that has them looking for the Back button? The *right* words.

Choose the right words, and you'll receive traffic, subscribers, revenue, influence...everything you need to be a success. Choose the wrong words, and you'll be just another nobody that doesn't get it, forever clamoring for attention but forever ignored.

So where do you find the right words? You guessed it—by understanding what copywriting is really all about.

## The Origin of Keyword Research

*"There is your audience. There is the language. There are the words that they use." – Eugene Schwartz*

Hang around the web long enough, and you'll hear Search Engine Optimization (SEO) experts raving about keyword research. But they weren't the first ones to start talking about it. Copywriters were researching their "keywords" long before search engines even existed.

The above quote is from Eugene Schwartz, one of the most influential copywriters in the history of the craft. It's a piece of the following, much longer quote from the 1960s:

*"One hour a day, read. Read everything in the world except your business. Read junk. Very much junk. Read so that anything that interests you will stick in your memory. Just read, just read, just read..."*

*"There is your audience. There is the language. There are the words that they use."*

He's referring to studying your audience. Before writing a single word of their sales letter, top copywriters spend weeks or months talking to prospects, reading their favorite magazines, and studying sales letters that have worked (or even failed) with that audience in the past.

Why? To find the right words.

At the deepest level, keyword optimization has nothing to do with SEO. It's about knowing your audience so well that you learn which words will grab their attention, earn their trust, and persuade them to buy your products or services in the future. You have to "optimize" your writing for maximum effect.

Sound like work? It is...but not nearly as much as it used to be. Where Eugene Schwartz and his colleagues spent months analyzing a niche, you can do your research in a matter of minutes using the latest keyword research tools.

## How to Build a Popular Blog with Keyword Research

If you're thinking about starting your first blog or enhancing your existing one, "keyword research" can sound technical and intimidating to the uninitiated. Really though, it's pretty straightforward.

Keyword research tools like Wordze, Keyword Discovery, and Wordtracker estimate the number of times people search for different phrases. For instance, according to Wordze, approximately 11,222 people search for the term "blogging" each month.

Estimations from keyword research tools are rarely accurate, so you shouldn't expect to receive 11,222 visitors per month if you show up first when someone types "blogging" into Google. It might be significantly less or more (ask Darren Rowse of Pro Blogger).

You *can* gauge the popularity of a topic relative to other topics. For instance, the general term "blogging" is more popular than the more specific term "business blogging," which only has an estimated 3,319 searches per month.

But keyword research is about more than traffic. It's about understanding your niche from the inside out. You can use it to help you choose:

- A popular (or profitable) niche for your blog
- Post topics that people want to read about
- Related markets to tap into
- Products and services to promote (for a fee) on your blog
- Ads that will bring you the highest cost per click (CPC)

Now, let's go through each part, step by step...

## How to Choose a Profitable Niche

*Will anyone read the online content I produce?*

It's a terrifying question, but an important one. If you're committed to building a popular and profitable site, you'll have to write, read, and talk about your topic almost every day for the next several years. You'll invest thousands of hours, quite literally gambling with your time.

The question is, how will you approach it? Will you start writing and hope someone notices you? Or will you carefully research your niche, looking for the precise angle that will make your content irresistible?

I've tried both, and I recommend the latter.

It's never possible to know for sure whether people will like your content before you create it, but keyword research sure helps. You can see how many people are searching for your topic in the search engines, and you can use it to compare different topics to each other and gauge their popularity.

## A Real World Example—A Mixed Martial Arts Blog

A friend of mine is thinking about starting a blog on Mixed Martial Arts (sometimes called ultimate fighting). He’s an expert in the niche, and while the sport is certainly growing, he was wondering whether anyone is looking for information online.

So I decided to look it up for him using [Wordtracker](#). Using their Keyword Researcher tool, I searched for “mixed martial arts” and here were the first few results:

<b>mixed martial arts</b>	222	352
<b>mixed martial arts seminar</b>	22	34
<b>mixed martial arts gear</b>	22	34
<b>mixed martial arts marietta</b>	21	33
<b>mixed martial arts training</b>	20	31
<b>mixed martial arts clothing</b>	20	31
<b>mixed martial arts atlanta</b>	16	25
<b>new york mixed martial arts schools</b>	15	23
<b>mixed martial arts schools</b>	15	23
<b>mixed martial arts merchandise</b>	13	20
<b>michigan mixed martial arts</b>	13	20
<b>mixed martial arts equipment australia</b>	13	20

I was a little surprised:

Considering all of the mainstream news and television coverage they're getting now, I expected more than 352 searches per day.

Out of the next most popular keywords, people were looking for "gear" and "seminars," meaning the searchers want to participate in the sport, not just watch it.

With people searching for information about Atlanta, New York, and Australia, it shows that there's strong interest in local training and other events

## Finding Related Keywords to Target

All of that information is useful, but I know next to nothing about mixed martial arts, so I suspected I was missing something. I decided to "dig" a little further with Wordtracker's Keyword Universe tool—a nifty little program that searches the web for related keywords. After a few minutes, it spit out the following results:

### Related keywords for mixed martial arts

Why do I need related keywords? [Click here](#)

1. [mixed martial arts](#)
2. [MMA](#)
3. [Mixed Martial Arts](#)
4. [UFC](#)
5. [mma](#)
6. [ufc](#)

Both "MMA" and "mma" are in the search results. I'm guessing they're an abbreviation for Mixed Martial Arts, so let's take a look at them:

Keyword (?)	Count (?)	Predict (?)	Dig (?)
<a href="#">mma</a>	422	670	
<a href="#">MMA</a>	128	203	

Now we're getting somewhere! If we combine their daily search totals, nearly three times as many people search for "MMA" as "mixed martial arts."

With more people using the abbreviation than the full term, we might also infer that this audience is already very familiar with the niche.

Still, let's back away from that for a moment and look at the sixth related keyword from above: UFC.

## Researching Related Markets

As it turns out, UFC stands for Ultimate Fighting Championship. It's the name of the main mixed martial arts league, kind of like NFL for football or NBA for basketball. Let's take a look at the traffic it receives, once again looking at both the uppercase and lowercase keywords:

[Click here to add all keywords to your basket!](#)

Keyword (?)	Count (?)	Predict (?)	Dig (?)
<a href="#">ufc</a>	3668	5822	
<a href="#">UFC</a>	804	1276	
<a href="#">ufc 79</a>	546	867	
<a href="#">ufc.com</a>	536	851	
<a href="#">ufc 81</a>	278	441	
<a href="#">ufc all access</a>	241	383	
<a href="#">ufc 80</a>	210	333	
<a href="#">Ufc</a>	169	268	
<a href="#">ufc 78</a>	160	254	

Wow! If we combine the predicted daily traffic, "UFC" is receiving 7,098 searches per day—more than seven times the traffic of "MMA." Even longer terms with "ufc" in them, such as "ufc 79," "ufc 81," and so on receive significant traffic.

Having no idea what 79 and 81 mean, I searched for them both in Google, and it looks like the numbers represent individual UFC events, kind of like boxing matches. People are looking for more information on great fights from the past.

## Interpreting Your Keyword Research Results

I didn't include the full list, but some of the other popular keywords for "UFC" are "ufc knockouts," "ufc fighters," and "ufc videos." Unlike the results for "mma," we don't see nearly as many searches for different types of gear and training.

What does that mean? Well, here's what I think:

- The people who search for "MMA" are either interested in becoming an MMA fighter, or they already are one
- The people who search for "UFC" are fans, mostly just interested in watching the events and following the fighters
- Because there are obviously more fans than fighters, a website targeting the fans and the "UFC" keywords would probably get more traffic

- Because of the searches for different types of gear with “MMA,” you might be able to make more money targeting people directly involved in the sport
- Each set of keywords represents a completely different niche with its own advantages and disadvantages

Is this useful information? You betcha.

In marketing, one of the most important steps you can take is to segment your audience. If you can divide them by their interests, then you can craft a message that’s perfectly targeted at the group you want to pursue. It makes it much, much easier to grab their attention.

In my friend’s case, he only wants to target fighters. He has no desire whatsoever to become just another reporter on the individual events. The purpose of starting the blog is to build his authority as a mixed martial arts expert and eventually make a living from training fighters.

Obviously, he should focus on the “MMA” keyword set. All of the keywords within that category are distinctly related to his audience. Not only does the data allow him to narrow his focus down to a

specific niche, but it shows him which topics to write about, as well as several ways to make money.

Want to find out how? Keep reading, and I'll show you how to turn your keyword research into traffic and a long-term revenue stream ...

## **How to Find Content Topics That Score Big Using Keyword Research**

Once you've picked a popular niche, the next question is: how do you get noticed?

The problem with young or poorly targeted content sites is they don't have an audience. You can't just write a brilliant article and expect people to find it and subscribe. Instead, you need to proactively target people that might be interested in your topic.

How? Keyword research. Let's go back to our mixed martial arts example and come up with some topics to get your content marketing going strong.

## Researching Your Main Keywords for Post Ideas

In the last section, my friend decided to target the MMA niche—people that want to train and eventually participate in mixed martial arts. Now he needs to choose post topics that will attract their attention.

The easiest place to start is with the main keyword: MMA. In this section, I'm going to use the keyword research tool that's part of Scribe (the SEO solution that is part of Synthesis managed WordPress hosting and the Rainmaker Platform), as it performs this kind of work exceptionally well. Here are the results for "MMA":

<a href="#">mma</a>	2436	19624
<a href="#">mma news</a>	721	5808
<a href="#">mma michigan</a>	516	4157
<a href="#">mma clothing</a>	457	3682
<a href="#">mma gear</a>	442	3561
<a href="#">mma gloves</a>	409	3295

*Note: The numbers in the far right column represent the predicted traffic within a 30-day period.*

Looking through the results, we see that a lot of people are looking for:

- Different types of gear, such as gloves and clothes
- Information on different fighters
- Videos about mixed martial arts
- Training tips

Skipping the gear keywords for a moment, it looks like the following post topics might be popular:

- Interviews with different fighters about being successful in mixed martial arts
- A series of posts on the strengths and weaknesses of different fighters
- A detailed analysis of fight clips from YouTube
- A huge resource post linking to all of the training videos on YouTube

- A series of posts about training for the MMA

It's useful information, but it's all pretty general, right? To really come up with targeted post ideas, we need more specific information. For instance, which fighters should you interview? Are there specific training routines that you can write about in detail? Which fighting styles should you explore?

Also, you could exhaust the above topics within a few weeks or months. If you're going to start a blog on MMA, you need a larger repertoire of post ideas.

Fortunately for us, Scribe provides another function that does the trick beautifully. Every time you create a piece of relevant content, Scribe tells you what to write about next.

## Using Alternate Keywords for Article Ideas

Using Scribe to analyze and optimize my content, the software also tells me which words are semantically related and gives you a long list of other keywords to consider.

Below, I've included just a small section of the results from a dig on "mixed martial arts."

<a href="#">karate</a>	3364	27100
<a href="#">boxing</a>	8756	70537
<a href="#">wrestling</a>	9459	76201
<a href="#">arts</a>	3800	30612
<a href="#">kung fu</a>	4967	40014
<a href="#">sports</a>	48904	393965
<a href="#">news</a>	72557	584510
<a href="#">fitness</a>	17403	140196
<a href="#">aikido</a>	3358	27052
<a href="#">training</a>	7898	63625
<a href="#">video</a>	35650	287192
<a href="#">tai chi</a>	2969	23918

*Note: The numbers in the far right column represent the predicted traffic within a 30-day period.*

Out of this selection, the majority of the related keywords are different fighting styles. Some of them also seem to get a lot of traffic, like boxing and wrestling. You might think that they're unrelated topics, but really, these are related markets that you can tap into for readers.

For instance, lots of people who are interested in becoming

professional fighters aren't familiar with the intricacies of mixed martial arts. They're only familiar with one fighting style. You could target these people with your posts to bring them to your blog and "convert" them into MMA fanatics. For instance, consider the following post titles:

- Here's Why Boxers Are Scared of Mixed Martial Arts
- Kickboxing Champion Retires to Join UFC
- Grappling 101: How to Manhandle Your Opponent
- UFC vs. Pride: A Side-By-Side Comparison
- Shocking! The Secret History of Karate

Each headline is designed for a different audience. If you're a boxing fan, could you resist clicking to find out why boxers are supposedly scared of mixed martial arts? Or if you're a karate newbie, wouldn't you like to know the secret history (which is directly tied to mixed martial arts)?

These kinds of posts would probably do well on social networking and news sites, bringing you thousands of visitors that might only be vaguely aware of mixed martial arts. If you write an interesting enough article though, you might be able to convert some of them into subscribers.

## Researching Related Websites to Market Your Post

By now, we have lots of ideas for popular posts ... but who is going to link to them? It's an obvious question, but lots of bloggers miss it.

Once you've settled on a post, you should do some research into which websites might be interested in linking to it. Let's say we are writing the "UFC vs. Pride: A Side-By-Side Comparison" post. Who should we contact for links?

The websites that rank in the search engines for "UFC" and "Pride" would be a good start. In the front page listings for "UFC," all of the sites in purple would be perfect:

**UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) sports news and results | Sun ...**

PAUL HEYMAN says ex-WWE star Brock Lesnar can reach the top of the UFC ranks ..  
ANTONIO NOGUEIRA came back from the brink to defeat Tim Sylvia at UFC 81 ...  
[www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/sport/ufc/](http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/sport/ufc/) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)



**New UFC Game Trailer E3 2007**

UFC video game. It is being made by THQ for the PS3, Xbox360 ...  
1 min 2 sec - ★★★★★  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhN1YLFS4qA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhN1YLFS4qA)

**UFC blog for UFC news, results, videos, rumors, fights, pics and ...**

MMA mania provides the most up-to-the-minute Ultimate Fighting Championship® news, details and fight analysis. The blog also lets you — UFC fans ...  
[mmamania.com/](http://mmamania.com/) - 149k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

**UFC® : Ultimate Fighting Championship®**

Anderson 'The Spider' Silva tries to make it 3 straight wins in Pride as he takes on UFC® Pride® veteran Carlos Newton. ...  
[video.ufc.com/](http://video.ufc.com/) - 55k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

**Sherdog.com - Serving up Heaping Fistfuls of Mixed Martial Arts**

Chuck Liddell UFC 79 T-Shirt! Order Toll Free 888-SHERDOG ... The UFC's purchase of Fighting Championships was met by great expectations when it was ...  
[www.sherdog.com/](http://www.sherdog.com/) - 65k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

**UFC News, UFC Rumors, and UFC Event Coverage at UFCDaily.com**

UFC news, MMA news, UFC rumors, breaking news, and UFC event coverage - UFCDaily.com.  
[www.ufcdaily.com/](http://www.ufcdaily.com/) - 31k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

The search results for "Pride" are mixed with unrelated sites, so I searched for "pride fighting" instead and came up with better results. Based on the traffic counts, you'd still be better off focusing on the UFC sites, but it's still worth emailing the Pride sites.

I won't go into the details of it, but I also did searches for "UFC blog" and "Pride blog" for websites to target. Without even working at it, my friend could email two dozen blogs about the post, probably scoring a handful of links.

## Is Traffic Enough?

If you do everything we've talked about so far, you should have a decent shot at getting lots of traffic. You'll get links from authority sites, you'll have thousands of daily visitors, and you'll actually be writing about stuff that people want to read.

But is that all you want?

Traffic is great for the ego, but it doesn't do much for paying the bills. At some point, you'll be in the middle of writing a post when the power turns off. Then, sitting in the dark, a new question will hit you: "How can I make money from this?"

Once again, keyword research can help. Read the next chapter to find out how.

# Keyword Research Can Help You Make Money

Now we get to the good part. Actually making money from your site.

Your blog might not propel you to the cover of Forbes, but almost anyone can make a healthy income. You just have to approach it with the same diligence and work ethic as everything else.

It also helped to start thinking about it in the beginning, instead of two years later when you realize that you picked an unprofitable niche. If you're already in that boat, don't worry—this section will help you squeeze a few extra dollars out of your blog.

Once again, it all starts with keyword research.

## Researching Products and Services to Review

One of the best ways to make money from a website is to review or recommend products and services that are relevant to your audience. Not only will your readers be predisposed toward trusting your recommendations, but search engines like Google also tend to rank reviews from authority blogs highly.

The result? You earn a constant stream of affiliate commissions from the products and services that you review.

In the long run, promoting products and services for a commission is probably the best way to build a sustainable income from creating online content. Instead of just taking a nominal fee for letting someone advertise on your blog, you can take a cut of the profits for yourself. The difference can be huge, especially if you stick with it for several years.

For my friend's mixed martial arts blog, we have lots of opportunities to sell related products. Several of the top keyword results for "mma" are related to gear that all fighters have to buy, including gloves, shorts, and other apparel.

Using [Keyword Discovery's research tool](#), let's take a look at the first few "mma gloves" keyword:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Query</u>	<u>Searches</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	mma gloves ✓	1,948  
<input type="checkbox"/>	mma grappling gloves	43  
<input type="checkbox"/>	mma training gloves	37  
<input type="checkbox"/>	century mma gloves	37  
<input type="checkbox"/>	mma fight gloves	34  
<input type="checkbox"/>	mma fighting gloves	30  
<input type="checkbox"/>	mma cage style gloves	29  
<input type="checkbox"/>	quick strike mma gloves	24  
<input type="checkbox"/>	fairtex mma gloves	21  

*Do you see the opportunity here?*

Just from this one keyword, we have a list of different types of gloves that MMA fighters want to buy. My friend could review and promote these products as an affiliate, collecting a small commission each time one of his readers bought the product.

I'm not sure if it would be the best affiliate program, but after doing a quick search on Amazon for "mma gloves," it appears that we could make some money by promoting them through its affiliate program:



**Everlast Mixed Martial Arts Grappling Gloves by E**

Buy new: ~~\$30.00~~ **\$20.67**

★★★★☆ (3) 

**Sports & Outdoors:** See all 99 items



**Everlast MMA Pro Leather Thumbless Fight Gloves**

Buy new: **\$39.99**

**Sports & Outdoors:** See all 99 items



**Harbinger 320 Bag Glove WristWrap (Black) by Ha**

Buy new: **\$44.99 - \$59.99** 3 Used & new from \$44

★★★★☆ (13)

**Sports & Outdoors:** See all 99 items

From what I understand, Amazon pays a maximum of 8% on such items, depending on your sales volume. So if my friend was able to sell a lot of different merchandise, he could earn about \$1-\$4 per sale, just on the gloves. Add in all of the other products, and he'd have quite a few sources of income.

In time, it would also be fairly steady. Every time my friend reviews a new MMA product, he'll probably receive a nice little boost in sales, but search engines might also begin to rank his reviews. If the above numbers are correct, I'm guessing he would get somewhere around 2000 visitors a month on all of the glove reviews combined. If he converts 10% (which is possible for targeted traffic), that's 200 sales a month.

At an average of two dollars per sale, that's \$400 per month of income from just one product category. Add in all of the other products that fighters need, including consumables like nutritional supplements, and he could easily build an income of a few thousand dollars a month.

## Researching Keywords with a High CPC

But there's also another approach.

If you put ads on your site, programs like Google's AdSense will pay you every time someone clicks on one of them. The trick is making sure they show ads that:

- Are relevant and interesting to your audience
- Have a high cost per click (CPC), earning you a respectable profit for every click

It's a complicated subject, but you can maximize both the relevance of the ads and the CPC by targeting certain keywords with your content. Google even has a feature called "Selection Targeting" that allows you to focus it on a certain set of keywords.

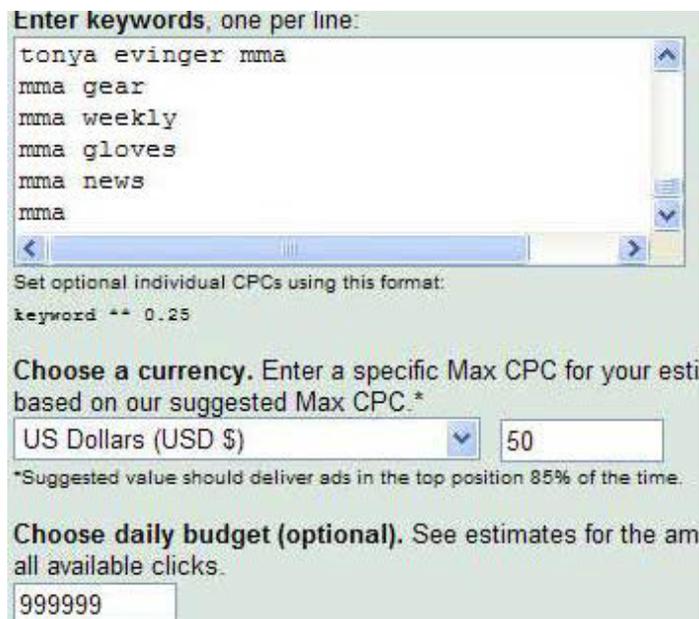
Of course, to do that, you'll need to know which keywords are profitable... which brings us right back to keyword research.

Unfortunately, figuring out the profitability of a term is pretty tough. At best, all you can do is research a series of terms and make an educated guess on which ones you should target with your posts. Then you can fine-tune as you start receiving results.

For our mixed martial arts blog, AdSense ads probably aren't the best way to monetize, but I'll run through an example anyway. Using Keyword Discovery's research tool, I pulled up the top 100 terms containing "mma," "ufc," "boxing," "karate," and "kickboxing," and I added them into a single list, totaling 500 keywords.



Next, I copied and pasted them into a test Google Adwords campaign, pretending like I wanted to become the highest bidder for all 500 terms.



Then I plugged those terms into the traffic estimator, bringing up the estimated CPC for each word. By sorting according to the CPC, we can see which terms might be the most appropriate to target with our AdSense ads.

Keywords	Search Volume	Estimated Avg. CPC ▼
<b>Search Network Total</b>		<b>\$0.76 - \$0.95</b>
ufc tickets		\$2.97 - \$3.72
orange county kickboxing		\$2.79 - \$3.49
kickboxing equipment		\$2.67 - \$3.33
kickboxing gloves		\$1.97 - \$2.46
boxing bags		\$1.91 - \$2.39
boxing results		\$1.81 - \$2.26
kickboxing clothes		\$1.72 - \$2.15
kickboxing gear		\$1.72 - \$2.15
boxing tickets		\$1.59 - \$1.98
kickboxing pads		\$1.51 - \$1.89
karate sparring gear		\$1.48 - \$1.86
latest boxing news		\$1.47 - \$1.84
kickboxing certification		\$1.43 - \$1.79
boxing odds		\$1.39 - \$1.74
karate uniforms		\$1.37 - \$1.72
boxing heavy bag		\$1.34 - \$1.68
boxing matches		\$1.33 - \$1.67
karate equipment		\$1.31 - \$1.63

As you can see, most of the profitable keywords like “kickboxing gloves,” “karate uniforms,” and other types of gear are the most profitable. You can optimize reviews for those keywords, or you

could just become an affiliate yourself, which is why I said AdSense is probably not the best strategy for this niche.

There are a few terms that might work very well, though. For instance, you might not be able to become an affiliate for “ufc tickets” or “orange county kickboxing.” You could, however, write posts about both of those topics and select those keywords for your ads.

## Keyword Research Tools Are Essential

What’s the bottom line?

If you’re planning to make money from your blog, keyword research tools are essential. They help you determine how to best monetize your traffic, as well as how to optimize your posts to help you bring in the most revenue.

You may have noticed that I’ve used several different keyword research tools in this series. That’s because each has different strengths. You can get the same data from all of them, but some are a little better at some things than others.

Many of the top affiliate marketers and AdSense experts subscribe to all of them, just to make sure they have the best data possible. Over the long term, small differences in the quality of your research can have huge impacts on your traffic and revenue.

If you'd like to learn more, I've prepared a primer that goes through some of the most important questions about keyword research tools. And it's all in the next chapter ...

# A Primer on Keyword Research Tools

What Is a “Keyword Research Tool?”

Keyword research tools allow you to see what people are searching for on the web, guess what else they might search for, and then optimize for those keywords.

That’s a bit technical, so let’s break it down.

If you go to Google.com and do a search for blogging, you’ll be taken to a new page where it lists different web pages that talk about blogging. What you might not realize is that your search was recorded. Search engines keep track of how many people search for different terms. It’s valuable information.

Keyword research tools collect this information from several search engines to guess how many times people search for that keyword. It’s not completely accurate, as these tools don’t have the records from all search engines.

Generally though, they do make a pretty good guess. When they’re inaccurate, it’s also fairly consistent, meaning all of the terms you’re

researching are off by a certain percentage. So, you might not be able to trust the individual counts, but you can compare terms with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

The best keyword research tools charge a small monthly fee for access. Why? Because they spend a considerable amount of money pulling together the best data and making it possible for you interpret it. If you're planning on using keyword research as a part of your website strategy, then it's easily worth the investment.

## Which Keyword Research Tool Is Best?

Do a search for "keyword research tools" and you'll come up with dozens of websites, software packages, and Internet marketing products. Each claims to be the best, featuring glowing reviews and pointing out their superiority over competing products.

But which keyword research tool is really the best?

It's hard to tell. Unless you're a keyword research expert, it's hard to know which tool is the most accurate and useful. You'll have to spend hours searching the web for reviews, and you'll still come up with conflicting information about which keyword research tool is best.

I should know. I've spent 100 or more hours tinkering with different products, digging through forums for truthful reviews, and comparing everything to see which tools are worth buying. It's been a nightmare, but I've come to two conclusions.

- Most keyword research tools are a scam, selling you data that you can find elsewhere for free
- All of the good tools provide the same basic service with only a few differences

In other words, there isn't a best product. Choosing between the top keyword research tools is like deciding whether you'll go to Sam's Club or Costco. For their price, they each give good value, and the advantages and disadvantages of each are relatively minor.

## Are Keyword Research Tools Worth the Monthly Fee?

It depends.

If your blog is just a creative outlet, a place to express yourself on the web, then it doesn't matter how many people read it. You're probably not expecting to make thousands of dollars a month from

it, either. So in this case, the keyword research tools we are using in this series are overkill. You don't need them.

I'd suspect the majority of Copyblogger readers are in a different category, though. If you're learning about copywriting and want to use your blog as a better sales tool, then you can look at keyword research tools from a business perspective. You can ask, "Are they worth the return on investment?"

Absolutely.

From a traffic perspective, targeting a post at the right keywords can bring you 10,000 visitors, where one that you write off the top of your head might bring you 100. How much is each visitor worth? Or each subscriber? If only 1% subscribe to your blog, that's an extra 99 subscribers a month.

Then there's revenue. If you are selling your own information product or promoting affiliate products, a correctly targeted post can bring you revenue for years. Some of the big information products give a \$500 or more commission—enough to pay for an entire year of access to keyword research tools.

We're not talking about a huge amount of money here. These tools range from between \$35 and \$70 a month. If your blog is really important to you, that's a small price to pay for a better chance at success.

Besides, you can always cancel. If you decide it's not worth it, you've only lost one month's fee.

We hope you've gotten a basic (and very solid) education in keyword research from this ebook.

Thanks for reading, and just one more thing ...