



## Finding Keywords For Your Website

### Step 1 – Brainstorm phrases

Brainstorm a list of phrases that people might search that will lead them to your blog post or website page. Hopefully, as a mature professional, you know the mindset of your clients, so place yourself in the shoes of someone:

- looking for a service or product like yours; and/or
- seeking solutions to a problem you can solve (because that's the precise moment they hit the search engine, when the problem arises).

Here's a useful exercise – imagine you are a person looking for one of your services or products. Now list the phrases that you might use to search online for that information. Then find 3 or 4 ways to say it.

**Example** – a searcher (a potential client) wants to find an accountant who can advise on the pros and cons of a family trust structure to operate their small



business, including any tax savings that might accrue. What phrases might be used in that search?

- Family trust accountant
- Setting up a family trust by an accountant
- Tax savings of family trusts by accountant
- Family trust for small business accountant

Don't just think in terms of your profession. Think about your own experience to better understand the dynamics of search. Let's say you want to find a plumber to install a "grey water" system to recycle water from the washing machine to the garden:

- Grey water plumber
- Recycling water from washing machine
- Grey water recycling
- Grey water system
- Plumber specialising in grey water recycling
- Green plumber



Try it now using your service or product. First, decide on services and products you offer, especially those you want to highlight (perhaps a new expertise you or your firm has gained):

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Now come up with enough words to cover all the products and services your firm offers – but remember, you want qualified traffic (i.e. potential clients or current ones you want to service):

a. What are the names that could describe your services or product? (e.g. for financial services - accountant, financial advisor, tax consultant, superannuation consultant, retirement planning, estate planning, family trusts, asset planning etc)

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b. Are there variations of this service or product – how else would you describe it (e.g. business accounting, tax accounting, financial planner, retirement strategies, wills lawyer etc.)? Brainstorm it, think about what is on the minds of your clients when they seek your services.



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c. How do clients and customers find you (this is a question you should routinely ask every client/customer)?

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d. Study competitors' websites and blogs, or similar businesses – what are words that keep repeating?

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e. Add your geographic location to the words you have brainstormed

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So now come up with ten terms that include all the above parameters:

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- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....
- 6.....
- 7.....
- 8.....
- 9.....
- 10.....

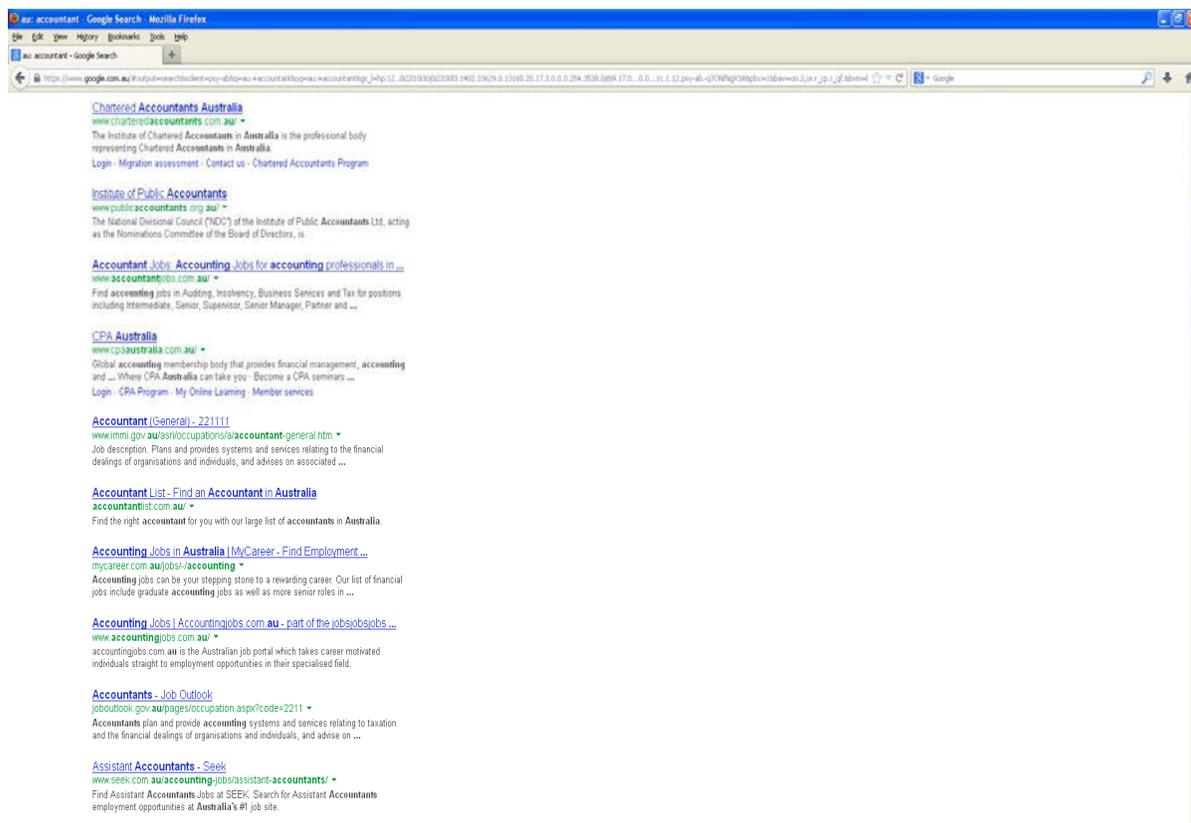
**Step 2 - Create a keyword list**

Look through your list – now choose the words and phrases that target the services you want to highlight, or the terms that match your goal to underscore a particular service you provide. Abandon the words and phrases that don't assist here. But be careful – at this stage you want to choose both targeted and broad words (e.g. "family law financial agreement" is targeted; "family law" is broad).



Think of it this way: you want people to find you because of your general business – a broad description is “accountant” or “family lawyer” or “financial planner”. But that word places you in competition with many (innumerable) others.

Take a look at the first page results for “Accountant”:



What do you notice? The results focus on representative groups (the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Institute of Public Accountants, CPA Australia), an accountants’ search group, accounting jobs agencies. The next pages of results are dominated by Government and large firms. It’s the fifth page before you find a



suburban accountant – if we then search for accountants in the suburb of that first-appearing firm, they rank number one. So by targeting those potential clients who search specifically for services in that suburb, they not only (very) substantially advance their cause, but also sidestep the financial giants with whom they can never compete for search rankings using the same keyword (“accountant”). Interestingly, they also rank on the first page for “financial services” in that suburb.

So what you also want is “qualified traffic” – do you specialise in superannuation, retirement planning, small business accounting services? If you are a family lawyer, do you want more business in financial agreements, mediation? Have you just completed a course in collaborative family law? Is this upgraded skill where you want to capture new clients? Is your insurance brokerage residential, specialist, friendly, long-established etc? What suburbs do you service? Are there suburbs where you are prepared to visit clients in their homes? Remember, most searchers move from the general (accountant, insurance broker, lawyer) to the specific (superannuation advice, insurance broker for home insurance, estate planning).

Ask yourself – how would I describe my services or product? Let’s say you are a financial planner who specialises in self managed superannuation funds (you advise on them, strategise them, and then handle the investments that are placed in them). So your answer might be, “we provide self managed superannuation funds advice and the means to put a superannuation strategy into practice”. Go back top the elevator pitch you developed in the MatureMedia Guide *Your Professional Online Identity* – that should be what you need here.



So breaking that down into component parts:

- Self managed superannuation funds
- Self managed superannuation fund strategy
- Self managed superannuation fund investments

What about aspects of this general business you are *not* interested in? You don't want any part of the establishment of the fund, there's too many services that do it cheaply already and the margins are not sufficiently high. You also don't want to give advice about sophisticated tax shelters using self managed superannuation funds because you would have to refer it out to a tax lawyer, so it's a waste of your marketing effort.

That's all good information. We can now create a hierarchy of lists.

In the first list, take a look at competitors in the area who provide the same core services you want to rank for. What other terms are used to describe these services that may also be relevant for me? For instance, perhaps it is "financial planning for independent retirees", a target term I had not considered for my service? If they rank highly for local services, how often is the name of the suburb mentioned? Make a list of these other terms.

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2.....

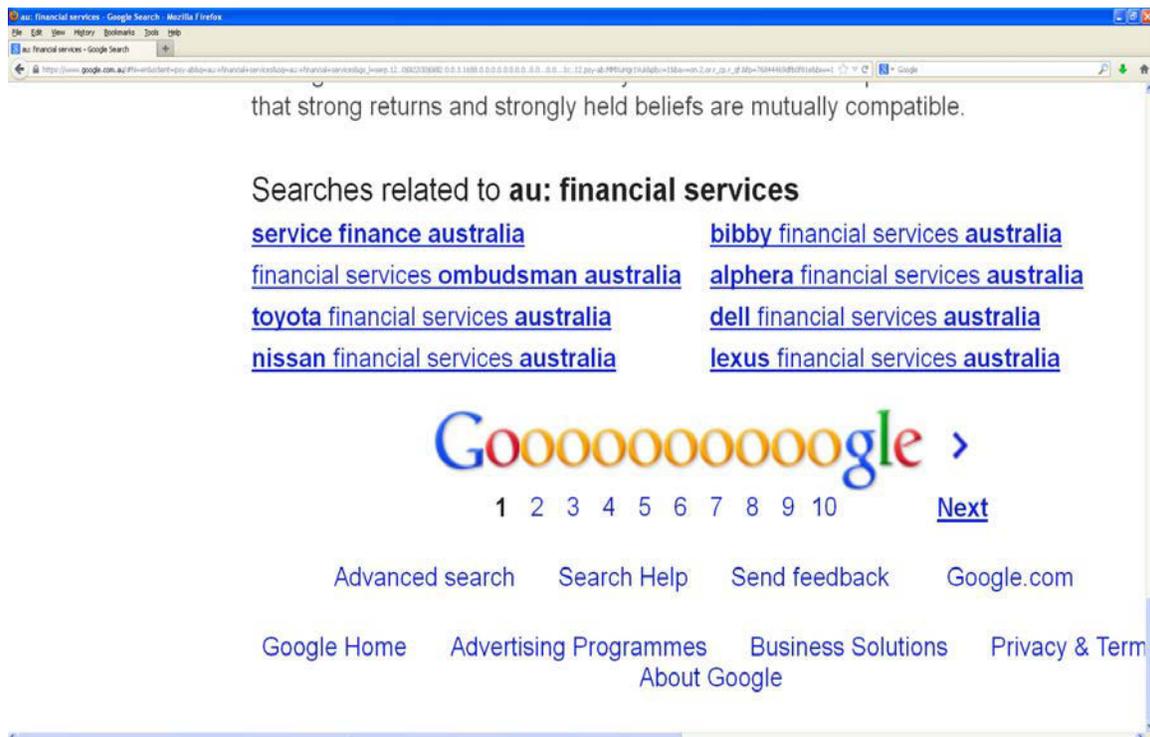
3.....



4.....

5.....

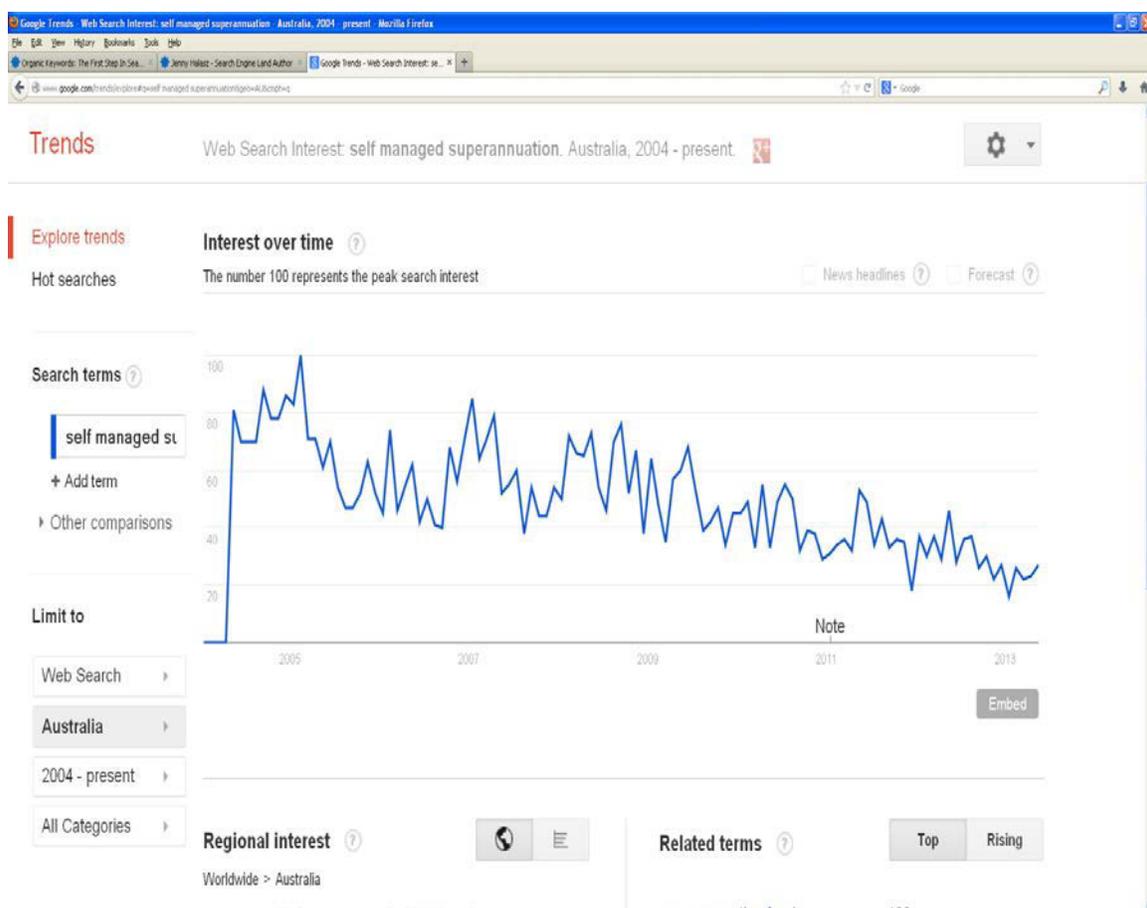
For the second list, I'll look at "related searches" at the bottom of that search engine results page to see what else is being searched "related" to my specific service. This time I'll limit the search to (the still very broad) "financial services".



There's a clear lesson here – many searchers are looking for car and other financing schemes, which has nothing to do with service I am offering. This is another reminder to be specific, and again highlights the benefit of long tail searches.

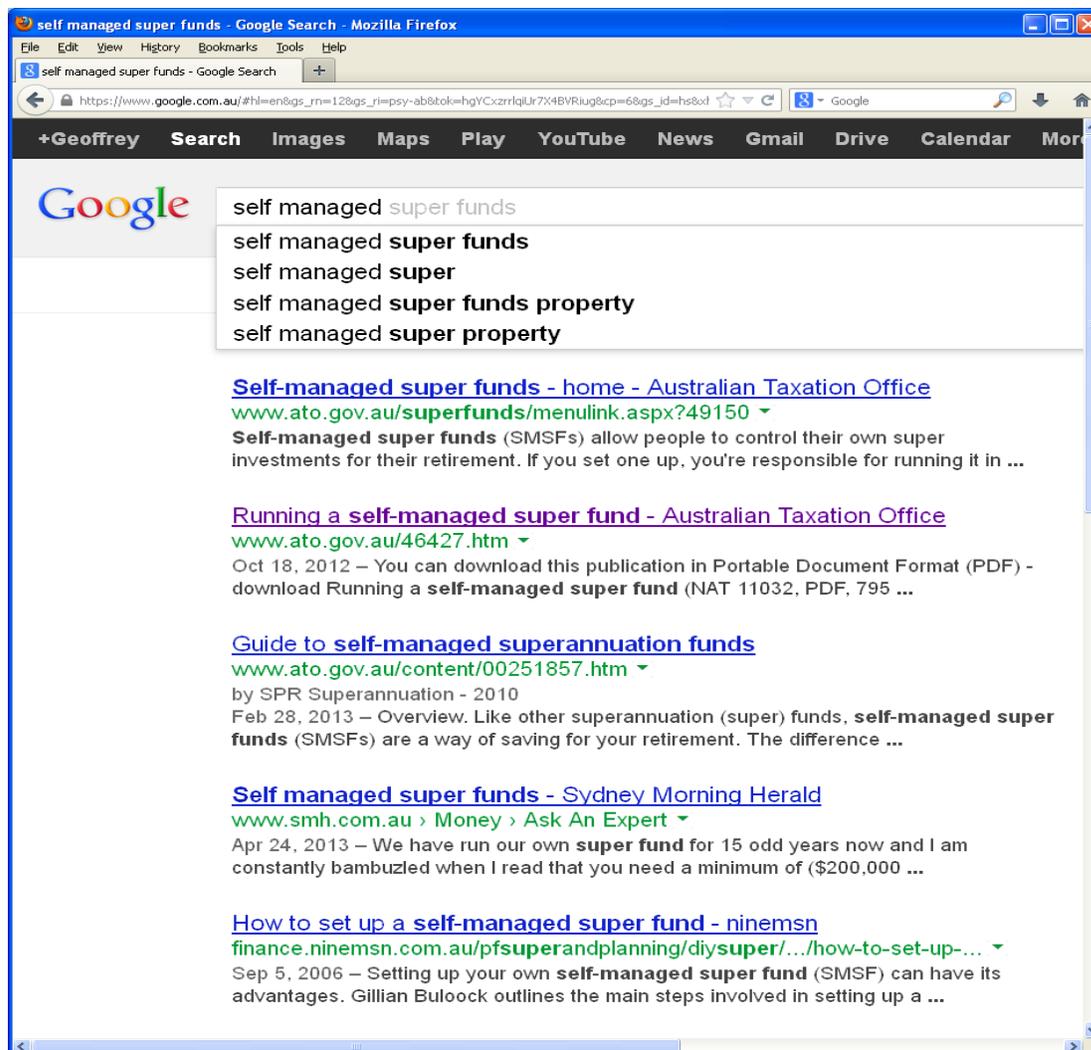


I'll also look at trends for these terms at <http://www.google.com/trends/>. Let's say my preferred keyword includes "self managed superannuation fund". It's easy to match the trend with historical announcements and policy initiatives that relate to self managed superannuation funds.





You can also see the “Google suggests” function of the Google search results which lists other keywords that are searched for which contain your keyword:



I discover that many people want to know how to run a self managed superannuation fund – this is interesting information, because my focus has been about running it on their behalf. What my research suggests, however, is that



many potential users of these funds want to have some knowledge about the “running” of a fund, so I might look to limit my keywords and associated content to reflect the professional expertise our firm can provide in the ongoing accounting, investment and tax obligations. Or it might suggest that potential clients would welcome a FAQ section in my website where they can both learn about self managed superannuation funds and be informed of my professional expertise. Now I can look to see what my competitors in the area are doing – are they offering this information that is being searched for? Can I fill that market demand?

### **Step 3 – Do specific keyword research**

This is the hard part. You need to become familiar with:

- the Google Keyword Tool
- Google Analytics (or another analytics software)
- a search engine (yes, Google again! Or another if you prefer)

Search engines keep a record of search terms typed into their search box. Keyword tools use this information to make estimates of how many times a keyword is searched. It will always be an “estimate”, but if not entirely accurate, it will nevertheless provide a reasonable picture of the usefulness of a keyword.

There are paid and free keyword research tools. The paid tools certainly provide valuable information, often by amalgamating a number of keyword research functions, but the real question is whether you can achieve similar results with free tools. In part it depends on your expectations. If you are a lawyer or

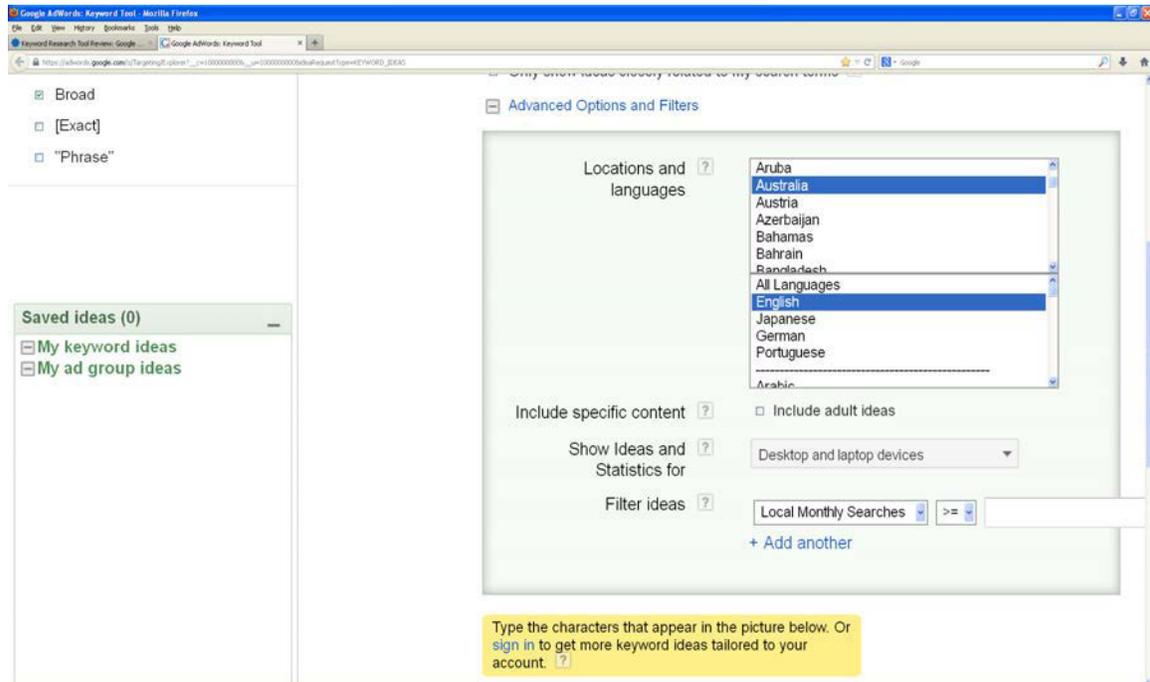


accountant, one extra client generated by using a comprehensive keyword tool might pay for its annual subscription. But in many respects the free tools are more than adequate. At the least, after you master a free tool, you will be better prepared to judge the utility of a paid service.

Play with these tools and you will quickly get a handle on how they work. They indicate not only the numbers of searches for the phrase you have chosen, but also the competitiveness of that phrase. How many other sites are competing for the same keywords? Is it worth the effort to invest in that word or phrase against overwhelming competition?

### **Using the Google AdWords tool to generate keyword ideas**

So let's look more carefully at the [Google AdWords tool](#). This is the one I like, in no small measure because it's free. It uses search frequency from Google – sign in with a Google account (you have one if you have gmail or any other Google utility – if not, sign up for a free Google account now). If you don't sign in, you will have to use the "captcha" each time and that is painful! It will also remember your personal settings, so Australia can be set as the default search (otherwise the default is the United States). This is something to watch for in some paid search tools - are they set by default to the United States, and can it be changed to reflect Australian searches? That's important because you want regional results that are meaningful to your potential clients and customers.



The search volume results are more approximations, but it still offers a generalised look at what keywords are more popular than others.

Here are some of the outcomes you can achieve with the Google tool:

- Match keyword – these can be in the type of a broad, exact, and phrase match.
- Search volume – this tells you the number of visitors globally and locally (we're going to concentrate on "local" returns).
- Competition – what is the keyword competition in the Google search engine?



- Semantic keywords – other semantically related keyword terms. These are words that have mostly the same meaning.
- Long tail keywords – these are closely related search terms that are more obtainable than the most highly competitive keywords.
- Advanced options and filters – this is how you set your preferences.
- CPC – cost-per-click bidding.

First launch the [Google AdWord tool](#).

I keep a database of every keyword I have searched. So, for instance, I have many variations of “make a will” – for each I have recorded the actual monthly local searched and the level of competition (Low, Medium, High). If you add to this list every time you do keyword research, you’ll accumulate a very handy business asset. Eventually (since many of your keywords are themed to your professional expertise) you will not have to refer to the keyword tool as often when you post a new blog or change your web content.

#### **Step 4 – Choose your battles carefully**

You’ll get an assessment of the competitive difficulty from the Google keyword tool. Sometimes this will reiterate the hopelessness of competing against behemoth corporations and the value of more specific or “long tail” words.

For instance, let’s use the Google keyword tool to check out the competition for “Insurance”:



Want to get keyword ideas and traffic estimates at once? Try [Keyword Planner](#).

Find keywords  
Based on one or more of the following:

Word or phrase:

Website:

Category:

Only show ideas closely related to my search terms

[Advanced Options and Filters](#) Locations:  Languages:  Devices:

Keyword ideas Ad group ideas (Beta) [About this data](#)

Add to account Download View as text View in Traffic Estimator Sorted by Relevance Columns

Save all Search terms (1) 1 - 1 of 1

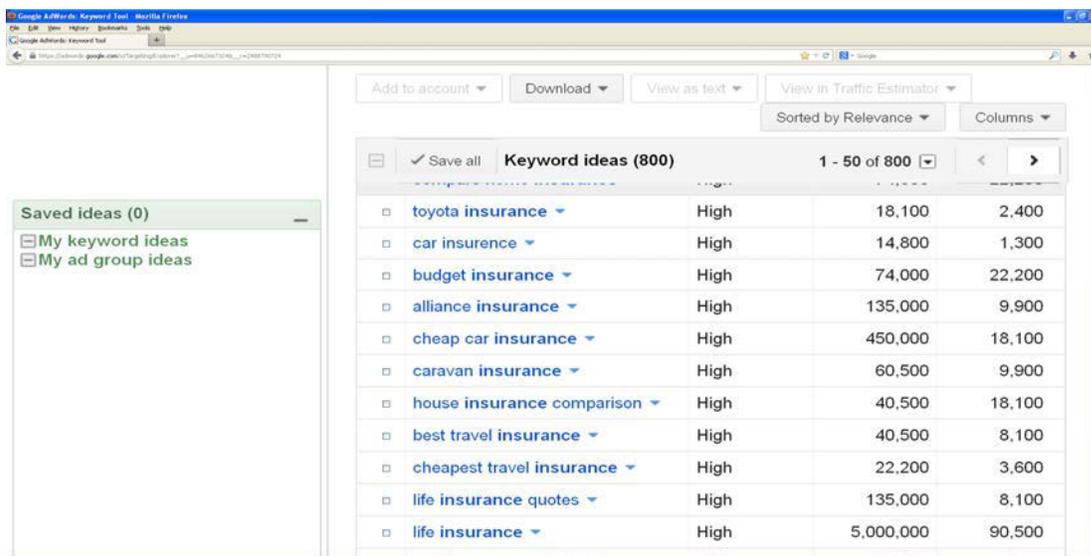
Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches
<input type="checkbox"/> insurance	High	55,600,000	2,740,000

Save all Keyword Ideas (800) 1 - 50 of 800

As you can see, the word “Insurance” has a huge volume of local Australian monthly searches (2,740,000) but the competition is designated “high” by the tool. This is not surprising. If you click on the upside down arrow to the right of the keyword, you get a look at the search results. Sadly, the top pages of search results are well and truly dominated by large insurance companies. There is no guarantee that the volume of searchers is going to click on those first ranked links or pages, but it’s still hotly contested real estate and you are very (very) unlikely to make a dent in those results.

OK, so let’s say you are a suburban financial advisor who advises on life insurance. How about that keyword? Rather than do another search using the Google keyword, first check if “life insurance” has appeared in the list of “Keyword ideas” generated by your search for “Insurance”.

Yes, there it is:



The screenshot shows the Google AdWords Keyword Tool interface. The main table displays 'Keyword ideas (800)' sorted by relevance. The table has columns for keyword ideas, competition level, search volume, and cost per click. The following table represents the data shown in the screenshot:

Keyword	Competition	Search Volume	Cost per Click
toyota insurance	High	18,100	2,400
car insurance	High	14,800	1,300
budget insurance	High	74,000	22,200
alliance insurance	High	135,000	9,900
cheap car insurance	High	450,000	18,100
caravan insurance	High	60,500	9,900
house insurance comparison	High	40,500	18,100
best travel insurance	High	40,500	8,100
cheapest travel insurance	High	22,200	3,600
life insurance quotes	High	135,000	8,100
life insurance	High	5,000,000	90,500

It's a lot lower search volume than the more generalised "insurance", but the competition remains "high", and if you search on the word you will again find a lot of big players.

So let's drill down further. There are two types of life insurance - stand alone and life insurance that is attached to superannuation. The latter is where you specialise. So how about "Superannuation life insurance"? If that research does not produce the longer tail results you want (lower competition for a sufficiently large number of searchers) then drill down further. Are there searchers looking for insurance services in your suburb? What other terms are searches using for insurance services?

Also look to "related searches" at the bottom of the Google search engines results page. Are there acronyms that related to the chosen keywords? For



instance, if you do this you discover that self managed superannuation funds are often shortened to the acronym “smsf”. You know that the related term “smsf” tends to be used by those who are already familiar with these funds, so this appeals to a group that already has a more informed interest.

### **Semantic keywords**

Now think in terms of semantic keywords. This is a way of looking at different meanings and interpretations of the keywords. So if someone searches for the term “Investment”, what are they looking for? Obviously we don’t know – it could be shares, real estate, fixed term, life insurance or whatever. This won’t be very helpful to the searcher as well, so they will likely expand the search, especially if the first results are too broad for what they want. Let’s say the searcher is interested in retirement investments – “investment for retirement”.

What do you find? There is a lot of activity around “pensions”. What this tells me is that people searching for information about retirement investments are concerned about pensions – this may not make sense to a casual observer, but as a professional in the area you know there is anxiety about how retirement investments impact on the ability to get a pension. This is certainly an area you can service, so you will now think of a page (or content added to a page or a blog article) that deals with this issue.



## Deeper keyword research

Ideally you should repeat the process of keyword research for all related words.

Remember, variants of your keywords may not return similar results to the core keywords because *in the language of the searcher* the difference may be significant and be reflected as such in the results. For instance, “power of attorney” returns a highly competitive monthly search volume. What appears to be a very similar (plural) variant, “powers of attorney” attracts a much lower volume but also a significantly lower competition. We also discover that though it may appear intuitively correct, limiting the search to the State in which the searcher lives does not command much attention – apparently searchers don’t narrow their search for Powers Of Attorney in that way enough to justify making it a keyword.

You may believe you are in the business of selling superannuation advice, but what you discover is that you (from the perspective of someone looking for superannuation advice) are more likely to be in the business of “allocated pensions” or “self managed superannuation fund” or the “smsf” business. Is the language you use the same as those searching for your service? This is sometimes difficult for mature professionals to grasp after a lifetime of thinking about their services in a particular way, but it’s just another lesson that content optimisation requires an adjustment in favour of the consumer mindset.

Here we return to the “long tail” concept. These words are less trafficked but more specific to your service, however, you can’t be *too* specific (an exact search



parameter for “get a will this month in downtown Brisbane with a 20% discount” is not going to return a single search).

Ask:

- What is the volume of searches?
- How relevant is the keyword to my service?
- What is the competition?

### **Match types**

Every keyword will have match types. Broad match is the default in the Google keyword tool for all keywords. But this may be too broad – you have extended your reach too far (remember what we said about judging your competition).

You can narrow that broad term by using the “include term” or “exclude term” boxes in the tool. You are interested in self managed superannuation funds, but not “DIY” or “do it yourself”. This is perhaps the most significant matching variant. When you do a initial search using a broader term (“estate litigation”) you will find many results extraneous to your service that will tell you what to exclude. You will want to exclude terms like “corporate” “commercial” “criminal”.

“Phrase match” (click “match types”) tells the tool to look at search queries in the precise form and order of words you have designated (the same way you place a search term inside inverted commas when you search for an exact match in Google). The searcher can still use other words before or after those words, but the phrase must remain intact.



“Exact match” (click “match types”) is the same as phrase match, but that exact match must be the only words the searcher uses (in the same order). So “self managed superannuation fund” will not return keyword ideas for “smsf”, the contraction that many searchers use.

### **Step 5 – Use your list**

There is an art to placing keywords – use them judiciously, otherwise you will create an “artificial” page that detracts from your style (try for 3-4 per page, though this is not an exact science and expert views differ). In other words, look for emphasis but not endless repetition which becomes a crude sales pitch and may be penalised by Google (it also reads badly).

It’s easy enough to create a keyword culture that overwhelms everything else we have learnt about the readability of content. What’s important is to maintain the integrity of the content – everything else should be secondary, still significant but ultimately subservient to the excellence of the content. The tone must be authentic, have a “voice”, and communicate directly with the reader. Self-consciously looking to place keywords causes two problems:

- it detracts from the task, or worse, obscures the important textual issues that require a constant focus;
- it is difficult to seamlessly integrate keywords into the content without a lot of practice.

These concerns can be overcome by the use of a blog. If you know you are going to write 400-600 words a week, then over time you have room to address every keyword, so you can focus on one keyword per blog post. However, if you have a



static website where the content is “set and forget”, then the use of multiple keywords (or your primary keyword and its variations such as synonyms and plurals) is a greater imperative. However, be careful that you are not using keyword variations to stretch content that is inherently thin. In that case you are not going to attract readers, no matter how strong your keyword research.

Obviously this becomes all the more difficult when you want to target a phrase and not just a single word, and more difficult again if you wish to target multiple phrases. If the target phrase for your page is “income tax refund advice”, this will be more difficult to incorporate than “taxation”.

If possible, make sure keywords are:

- included in your title (preferably first two words), and tagged <title> (this refers to the html that is read by the search engine) <sup>1</sup>;
- headings (<h1>)
- included in other headings tags (<h2> – <h6>);
- placed in the first paragraphs of the content, preferably in the first 50 – 100 words (this is recommended of many SEO experts);

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<sup>1</sup> Most websites have control panels that allow you to make changes or insert text that is automatically converted to HTML. Discussed below.



- linked (anchor text) <sup>2</sup> to other pages within your site relevant to that post;
- included as an “alt-tag” in images.

## Step 6 - Add key phrases to a blog post and website

Let’s go back to our advice for writing a blog in the MatureMedia Guide *Write Your Blog In Plain English* – do a first draft and then start editing. You can apply the same procedure when you look to insert keywords into the post, although this is not universally endorsed. Another view is to use the keywords as you draft as a means to shape the content as a marketing tool. For the sake of the example, we’ll do the draft first.

So do your draft, keeping the keywords you have chosen for the topic in mind, but don’t worry about using those actual words. When you’re happy with the content, try to find words that can be changed to incorporate the keywords, especially if the keyword is a fitting metaphor or a brand name.

For example, if the keywords are “Family Court litigation”, “evidence in the Family Court” and “divorce law”, then make the following changes to a post:

**Original sentence:** Be careful or you may be sued

**With Keyword:** Be careful or you may find yourself the target of Family Court litigation.

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<sup>2</sup> Discussed in the next Guide *Search Engine Optimisation For Professionals*



**Original sentence:** Gossip you have heard about your spouse won't be aired in Court.

**With Keyword:** Gossip you have heard about your spouse is not legitimate evidence in the Family Court.

**Original sentence:** Family law is best practiced by lawyers with long experience in the field.

**With Keyword:** Divorce law is best practiced by lawyers with long experience in the field.

### **Is there an optimum number of words?**

I don't know. This seems more an aesthetic than SEO technical question to me, but I am happy enough to defer to an expert, in this case Glenn Murray of Divinewrite consultants <sup>3</sup>, who recommends:

- 100-150 words for your home page (usability studies show that you should not make your reader scroll down on the home page);
- 250-400 words for pages lower in your hierarchy (increase word count as you increase your level of detail);
- 300 -1000 words for blog posts.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.divinewrite.com](http://www.divinewrite.com)



He also recommends that the target keyword or phrase appears on most pages, but not so often that it leads to so-called “keyword stuffing”. He also recommends creating a word cloud from your copy using Wordle <sup>4</sup>, which will give a visual representation of your keyword density.

From a writer’s view, I would have thought 400-700 words is a good sized blog post. In truth you can say in 400 words what can be said in 700, but brevity is a skill that is not easily learnt. If that means you need extra words to make your point, so be it, but look to write more succinctly. It’s a big ask to expect readers to hang in there for 700 words.

### **Begin with small steps**

You have your keywords, and you know the volume they generate. However, you also know that those high volume words are the most competitive in terms of rank. At the beginning, when you begin your blog (before you have a higher rank), it is best to focus on long tail words that are less competitive because you don’t yet have the “authority” in the eyes of Google to achieve a status sufficient to rank the more high volume keywords. As your authority increases, and you get other sites linking to you, your chances improve to be chosen for the higher ranked keywords.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)



### **Series articles are a goof investment**

Google pays more attention to groups of articles on the same subject – known as “clusters”. So try for articles that deliver the same theme and can be internally linked back to each other.

Do this by:

- assign them to a Category;
- apply tags <sup>5</sup>;
- create internal links within the post to the related links in the series.

Ok, that’s keywords. Now let’s look at some basic SEO techniques for your website and blog pages.

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<sup>5</sup> See “Tags and Categories” in the next Guide *Search Engine Optimisation For Professionals*