

Using Long Tail Keywords to Your Advantage

A keyword is a simple word or phrase that is typed into the search engine by a user looking for information. For example if a searcher was looking for information on family photography tips, they might use some of the following common search terms.

"family photography photography tips taking photos"

If you used a keyword research tool like Wordtracker, you would discover that these phrases are very popular search terms. In fact, if you built a web page that focused on any of the keywords above, you would have a very difficult time ranking in the top 10 on Google's search results page?

Why? Because the competition for general keywords can be fierce. Keyword competition is defined using the term Supply. If a keyword phrase has a high supply, it means that there are many web pages out there that are using this keyword. The higher the supply, the more the competition.

Long Tail Keywords are simply the longer and more targeted phrases that people type into the search engines. In our photography keyword example above, we looked at a few very general competitive keywords. Here are some long tail keywords relating to photography.

"night time photography tips eliminate blinking from photos removing red eye from photos"

Do you see the difference? Long tail keywords are much more targeted to a specific sub topic. The nice thing about discovering long tail keywords in your particular niche is that they typically have a much lower level of competition, so it is easier to rank in the top ten in the search engine results.

Another advantage is that long tail keywords bring in much more targeted traffic. While the keyword 'family photography' may be a very competitive keyword for photography sites, the traffic brought in by such a keyword will be pretty broad.

By comparison, someone finding your site through the long tail keyword 'eliminate blinking from photos' is looking for specific information. If you can provide that information, you stand a much better chance of building trust and confidence with this visitor and converting them to a newsletter signup, registration or purchase.

Someone that gets to your site via a long tail keyword is typically ready to pull the trigger on some type of purchase or action. We say that they are "late" in their buying cycle. In addition, you'll find it easier to achieve a top ten ranking at the search engines for long tail keywords.

By sprinkling them into your page copy, you are more likely to pull in traffic that converts at a higher rate. The downside is that long tail phrases will typically not generate the high traffic numbers of more general keywords. But remember, the more general keywords are much more competitive.

If you use an analytics package like Google Analytics, you'll actually be able to see the types of long tail keywords that people typed in to get to your site. While long tail keywords can make up 50% or more of your traffic, many of them will only be one-time traffic generators.

So then, is it possible to research and target long tail keywords when writing your web pages? The answer is 'yes' and 'no.'

First off, if you write good original content that is genuinely helpful to your target market, you'll automatically weave in long tail keywords without even trying. As your page content grows, visitors will get to your site through more and more of these long tail phrases. In other words, the tail will grow longer and longer. In fact, you'll find visitors getting to your site using search phrases that you would have never thought of yourself. This is the value of focusing each of your content pages on a specific topic that provides valuable information to a narrow target audience.

Read [Long Tail Keywords](#) for additional tips on using the long tail to rank higher in the search engines and generate targeted traffic.

All hail the long tail!