

KEYWORD LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS:

Methods & Results

BACKLINKO

KEYWORD LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS: METHODS & RESULTS

The goal of this study was twofold: First, to better understand the current Google search keyword landscape. Specifically, get a sense of the types of keywords that people search for. And how different types of searches relate to one another (for example, how keyword length correlates with keyword difficulty).

Second, we wanted to measure various SERP features in Google's organic results. And whether or not there was a relationship between SERP features and specific types of keywords.

Clearly, this is far from the first research of its kind. In fact, many of our data points came from [this classic keyword landscape analysis](#) published in 2009.

Our hope is that our findings will help digital marketers and publishers make data-driven decisions about keyword research and keyword targeting. We also hope that the data provides insights into modern-day search behavior.

WHAT WE DID – STUDY METHODOLOGY

To conduct this analysis, we used a sample of 306M keywords from the [DataForSEO](#) keyword database. We also enriched a subset (approximately 2.5M) of terms with data found in the [Ahrefs Keyword Explorer](#) tool.

All keywords are English language terms. And had at least 1 search/month according to DataForSEO data. 51% of the searches in the dataset had missing search volume and were excluded.

Across all keywords, the total search volume was ~303 billion searches.

Most of the data (for example, "Top searches" was raw data that came directly from DataForSEO.

"Search volume" was based on monthly search volume. And was pulled from DataforSEO.

"Keyword Difficulty", "SERP Features", searches per country and "Return Rate" were derived from Ahrefs Keyword Explorer Tool. Again, we enriched a subset of terms with Ahrefs. Only keywords with search volume <100 were included in this analysis.

SERP Feature analysis was based on searching from a US location.

FACTOR-BY-FACTOR BREAKDOWN



TOP SEARCHES

A simple percentage that each popular keyword makes up among all keywords in the dataset.

Here is a full list:

SEARCH	PROPORTION
youtube	22.5%
facebook	5.6%
amazon	4.9%
google	4.0%
weather	1.5%
translate	1.0%
com	1.0%
instagram	0.9%
walmart	0.9%
ebay	0.8%
yahoo	0.7%
youtubecom	0.5%
you	0.5%
netflix	0.5%
news	0.4%
craigslist	0.4%
mail	0.3%

SEARCH	PROPORTION
roblox	0.3%
gmail	0.3%
trump	0.2%
twitter	0.2%
map	0.2%
fox	0.2%
target	0.2%
123movies	0.2%
coronavirus	0.2%
nfl	0.2%
the youtube	0.2%
maps	0.2%
pinterest	0.2%
calculator	0.2%
ups	0.2%
espn	0.2%
classroom	0.1%

SEARCH	PROPORTION
hotmail	0.1%
macy's	0.1%
bitcoin	0.1%
linkedin	0.1%
nba	0.1%
msn	0.1%
usps	0.1%
food	0.1%
near	0.1%
tiktok	0.1%
login	0.1%
covid	0.1%
fox news	0.1%
tv	0.1%
games	0.1%
on	0.1%

Note that in the data set, a lot of the top searches are listed as misspellings of popular websites. For example, in the table below are listed 10 of the highest searches by volume, if we do not group intended spelling. We can see that they are all attempts to go to Youtube. Note that for some of them the intended spelling was not recognized, so the percentages in the above table are an underestimate.



QUESTIONS IN SEARCHES

We considered “question keywords” any search query containing “who”, “what”, “where”, “why” or “how”.



KEYWORD LENGTH

Keyword length was measured in terms of word count and character count. Stop words (ie “the”) were included in the analysis.



KEYWORD INFO CATEGORIES

These search terms were automatically categorized by topic by DataForSEO.



KEYWORD DIFFICULTY

Measured using Ahrefs Keyword Explorer. A breakdown of how this metric is calculated can be found [here](#).



SERP FEATURES

This data also came from Ahrefs. Ahrefs measures a number of SERP features, including People Also Ask, Image Boxes, Video Results and Featured Snippets.



CPC

Cost per click data came from DataForSEO.



INTERNATIONAL SEARCHES

Country-level data came from Ahrefs Keyword Explorer.

RESULTS

Most of the results from this study are outlined and described in the report published on the Backlinko blog.

Full results can be found [here](#).