

Blogging for Marketing 101

Blogging Advice
for Publishers
Who Want to Learn
How to Monetize a Blog

Don Nicholas
Amanda MacArthur

MEQUODA DAILY
Helping Publishers Make Money Online

Mequoda Team

Don Nicholas
Managing Partner

Kim Mateus
Senior Partner

Aimee Graeber
Senior Partner

Laura Pittman
Senior Partner

Amanda MacArthur
Editor & Publisher

Michael Phillips
Senior Information Architect

Roxanne O'Connell
Senior Usability Analyst
Editor-At-Large

Gail Odeneal
Senior Editor

Terri Edmonston
Information Architect
Senior Editor

Lowell Allen
Senior Information Architect

Peter A. Schaible
Senior Copywriter
Editor-At-Large

Julie Ottomano
Consulting Services Manager

Jeanne S. Jennings
Contributing Editor

Jack Edmonston
Executive Editor

Jane E. Zarem
Senior Editor

Robert W. Bly
Copywriter
Contributing Editor

John Clausen
Copywriter
Contributing Editor

Peter J. Fogel
Copywriter
Contributing Editor

Laura Logan
Copywriter

Larry Kerstein
Usability Analyst
Contributing Editor

Roger C. Parker
Contributing Editor

Advisory Board

Phil Ash
National Institute of Business
Management

David Baum
Golf Odyssey

Matthew Bennett
First Class Flyer

Alan Bergstein
RCR Wireless News

Ed Coburn
Harvard Health Publishing

Bill Dugan
The Pohly Company

Helmut P. Graf
Verlag für die Deutsche
Wirtschaft AG

Susan Hackley
The Program on Negotiation
at Harvard Law School

Bill Haight
Magna Publications

Clay Hall
Aspire Media

Stuart Hochwert
Prime Publishing, LLC

Gregory S. Jones
Granite Bay Media

Stuart Jordan
University Health Publishing

Carl Kravetz
Cultural Assets

Pat McKeough
The Successful Investor, Inc.

Nancy McMeekin
Oakstone Publishing

Stephen Meyer
Business 21 Publishing

Robert Michel
Dark Intelligence Group

Steve Sachs
Real Simple

Charlie Spahr
American Ceramics Society

Bryan Welch
Ogden Publications

Copyright © 2009 Mequoda Group LLC

Terms of Use

All rights reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, faxing, emailing, posting online or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the Publisher.

All trademarks and brands referred to herein are the property of their respective owners. All references to Mequoda™ and the seven Mequoda Website Publishing Models™ are trademarks of the Mequoda Group, LLC.

Legal Notices

While all attempts have been made to verify information provided in this publication, neither the author nor the publisher assumes any responsibility for error, omissions or contrary interpretations of the subject matter contained herein.

The purchaser or reader of this publication assumes responsibility for the use of these materials and information. Adherence to all applicable laws and regulations, both referral and state and local, governing professional licensing, business practices, advertising and all other aspects of doing business in the United States or any other jurisdiction, is the sole responsibility of the purchaser or reader. The author and publisher assume no responsibility or liability whatsoever on the behalf of any purchaser or reader of these materials. Any perceived slights of specific people or organizations are unintentional.

For More Free White Papers

<http://www.MequodaFree.com>

Contact Information

Mequoda Group, LLC

Customer Service

(866) 713-1005

530 Wood Street Unit B

Bristol, RI 02809

Introduction: Establishing a 2.0 Blog

The average blog reader views 77% more pages than an average user, and believe it or not, those blog readers are likely to have an average income of \$75,000 or more according to Clickz (<http://www.clickz.com/showPage.html?page=3526591>). Well that sounds like a great target audience, but with over 50 million blogs out there, how do you get your blog to stand out of the woodwork and get noticed?

We've been doing some research of our own in an effort to redesign the new *Mequoda Daily* 2.0 and here's some fun stuff that research has shown us.

1. Get Involved: The best way to get your blog viewed and subscribed to is to join the community.

- Go to other people's blogs, comment, and link back to your own blog.
- Get yourself *very* familiar with Trackback (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trackback>) and make sure your blog has the functionality to support it.
- Track and interact with your loyal users using the site/widget MyBlogLog.com, which creates a community of users based on which sites they frequent.
- Participate in Yahoo! Answers and LinkedIn Answers and drop a link to your blog.

2. Choose Frequency: First of all, make sure all of your entries are dated. Next, pick a frequency and *stick to it*. It's simple: the more you update, the more frequently your users will visit. But don't sacrifice quality for frequency. After all, the reader should trust that you posted something worth their time.

Also, subscribe to a service like Pingomatic.com to make sure your fresh content is always up for the world to see. According to Technorati.com, the most popular times of day for English language bloggers to post is between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. PST, with another spike at 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time.

3. Select Topics: If you've got five or more topics, it's very likely that your users aren't interested in all of them. Blog readers tend to skim looking for keywords. If you write on a variety of topics, it could be very beneficial to the reader to include a list of topics in your navigation. However, you should max out your topic list between 10 and 20.

4. Sharing is Caring: You've got some great things to say, so go ahead and encourage your readers to spread the word. Add the most popular blog buttons from popular sites such as digg.com, del.icio.us, and Technorati.com to the bottom of your post, but also be sure to include an "Email this post" as well as providing bloggers with a permalink to each and every one of your stories. RSS readers will also love an RSS link.

5. Personalize it: When people want to hear news, they go to a news site. When they want a personal opinion or view, they visit blogs. Just like in the real world, when someone can relate to you, or feels like they can be open enough with you to discuss something, they're likely to invest in you, or your product.

The two most important parts of personalization (next to your writing of course) are:

Bio: Unless this is "Cheers", where everybody knows your name, you need a bio, as do any other writers in your blog. It lets people know you're credible and gives them a background sample of where you're coming from and what your experience is in the industry.

Photo: Since people remember faces better than names, you and any other writers in your blog should have an author photo somewhere on your blog page. If you have multiple writers in your blog, each post should be anchored with a photo of the writer. And even better, according to *Designing Websites to Maximize Press Relations* by the Nielsen Norman Group, for PR reasons, it's best to include a link to a high-res version of your photo, probably in that fancy bio you just made.

6. Promote, Promote, Promote: The best way to promote your blog is to make friends with other bloggers. The best way to do this is to find the top 10 blogs in your niche, contact their authors, make friends, and write about each and every one of them. Another way to get your stuff out there is to submit to sites like ezinearticles.com, blogg-buzz.com, digg.com, and blogcarnival.com.

7. Easy Reading: If you have older readers, you may consider implementing what we so affectionately call the "Geezer Feature". This is the option to let people increase the text size on your website and is controlled by your stylesheets. Another "Easy Reading" tip that may be good for international companies is to install a language translator into your blog. According to Technorati, 39% of blog readers read English, but 31% read Japanese and 12% read Chinese.

8. Attract Comments: It should be very easy for your users to leave a comment. After all, it's a great way to see how your blog is doing and an even better way to connect with your audience. At the very least, there should be a comment button at the bottom, and below that, a list of previous comments with a way to respond in a threadlike manner to each of them.

According to Jacob Nielson, 90% of online community users are lurkers (read or observe without contributing) with only 9% of users contributing "a little" and 1% actively contributing. So how do you attract comments?

Ask: People love to give their opinions, so just ask and ye shall receive.

Respond: Let them know you care, respond to their comments and provoke further communication.

Feedback: Provide the user with an "Email me responses to this thread" link. This is a fabulous way to get people to come back to your site and stay interested.

Rewards: Add a ranking feature that allows users to rank comments by helpfulness, or, if you have some seriously devoted users, rank users by number of comments posted.

Once you've established your 2.0 blog, you will be able to take the most advantage of the following *Blogging for Marketing* tips.

Determining a Post Frequency

How often should you blog? In many cases, the answer to this question depends on how much content you have, and the amount of resources you have available to fill the need of your audience.

The New York Times has plenty of resources and content to fill NYTimes.com with dozens of articles per day. As a publisher that is not news-based, you might find it hard to keep up with larger blogs with a seemingly endless editorial team.

The good news is that you don't need to post more than once a day to keep the attention of your audience. Most people filter their favorite blogs through RSS readers. This means that as long as you have an RSS feed, your readers are always updated when you add a new post.

On the other hand, the more you post, the more pages your website has. The more pages you have, the more robust your website looks to search engines. It's not a great reason to burn yourself or your staff out, but it's something to think about.

Susan Gunelius, About.com Guide offers these guidelines:

- **For maximum growth:** post multiple times per day to drive the most traffic (3-5 times or more is considered best for power bloggers).
- **For steady growth:** post at least once per day.
- **For slower growth:** publish at least every 3 days or 2-3 times per week.
- **For very slow growth:** posting less frequently than 2-3 days per week is most appropriate for bloggers who maintain blogs as a hobby with no strategic plans for growth.

Three tips for increasing frequency

One great way to increase frequency is to ask other bloggers to contribute content. Many bloggers are happy to contribute content when you give them the opportunity to promote their own blog, book or magazine using their byline.

A second way to increase frequency is to join affiliate programs with membership website publishers. Many publishers with paid content are willing to let you scrape a little content from their site in exchange for a promotion of the product you took it from.

A third way is to remember that every post does not need to be a novel. It's easy to go on a rant and want to make a post cover every aspect of a particular subject. A better way to spread out your content is to break up any long articles before you post them. For example, if you are writing about how to shop for, plant, and grow Lilies, you might consider turning it into a series. *How to Shop for Great Lilies*, then *How to Plant Lilies*, and finally, *How to Grow Lilies*.

Strategically Choosing Blog Post Topics

Blogging works best when it's done daily, and that takes a lot of information. One endless source of info—the news—is a great way to excite your readers while educating yourself. But how do you know which types of news excite and which types bore?

That is answered, in part, by Google Hot Trends (<http://www.google.com/trends/hottrends?sa=X>), a free service that shows the top 100 fastest-rising Google searches every hour.

If you were torn between writing about UK rock band Radiohead selling digital versions of its album "In Rainbows" on a donation basis, and writing about thousands of imprisoned Burmese monks, Google Hot Trends can help show you which topic people are more interested in.

On the day we wrote this, Hot Trends showed that four different Radiohead-related phrases were on Google's Hot Trends list, while no mention of Burma, Myanmar or monks were listed.

Since more people during that hour searched for Radiohead than for the monks, writing about Radiohead would be more likely to generate website traffic.

So, if you're torn between blog topics for the day, take a look at Google Hot Trends for some inspiration. It could cause a web traffic surge for your site. The key is speed. The faster you can post your blog content, the faster Google can index it and start sending traffic your way.

Google often indexes Mequoda websites in a matter of hours. If you create a post on a topic that many people are searching for and optimize it well, you could leverage huge amounts of traffic.

Be careful, however. You do not want to deviate from your publication's topic too much. That would risk diluting your valuable content and losing ground on your site-wide keywords.

Choosing to write for the long tail

Even though hot topics will get you ranked one day, that doesn't mean you can depend on those articles for life. Hot topics aren't what make up an entire blog. When you only write about current happenings, your archive goes stale. So how do you choose blog topics and headlines based on what people will be searching for in the future?

Start by finding the keyword clusters that users are typing, but that also have limited competition. Try tools like Google Suggest

(<http://www.google.com/webhp?complete=1&hl=en>) to gauge the competition and the Google Keyword Tool (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>) to see the keywords' search frequency. The point is to find keywords to target, where you'll eventually be able to achieve first page rankings.

An interesting statistic from the iProspect Search Engine Behavior Study (http://www.iprospect.com/premiumPDFs/WhitePaper_2006_SearchEngineUserBehavior.pdf) is that 82 percent of respondents said they "enter a few more words to better target [their] search" in the same search engine if their first attempt did not reveal good results. That is a huge percentage.

Therefore, even if targeting a keyword like "cooking" is hopeless (150 million Google results), targeting "cooking shrimp gumbo" (294,000 Google results), or other longer keyword phrases, could be beneficial.

Using AdSense to Generate Blog Revenue

One of the easiest ways to make money online is with Google AdSense (<https://www.google.com/adsense/>). Google provides advertiser-paid pay-per-click text advertisements that match the content on your page. You just create great content and drive targeted website traffic in to read it.

In addition to generating revenue for your online publishing efforts, (Google paid out \$780 million (<http://investor.google.com/releases/2006Q3.html>) to its AdSense publishing partners last quarter), Google AdSense becomes the benchmark against which all other uses of your digital advertising inventory must be compared. And since every other use of your advertising inventory requires more effort on your part—any alternative use must produce more revenue per impression—or as we measure it—revenue per thousand impressions (RPM for short).

Put simply, if you can generate \$10 in RPM when you run Google ads on a certain web page, then you must earn more when you move up the Mequoda Media Pyramid and use your online inventory for other forms of advertising (other external ads) or internal ads that promote your own branded information products and services.

If we're making this sound easy, that is not our intention. Deciding how to best use your online advertising inventory requires a great deal of thought, experimentation and a willingness to make changes to your core online business model.

The annual budgeting process is a chance to identify the three to five ways you plan to monetize your online advertising inventory over the coming year. You will make assumptions about how to maximize the RPM for your website, email newsletter and solo email promotions. Then every day you will try to meet or beat those projections by choosing the best way to use your inventory.

Choosing the best way to monetize your online advertising inventory

"It's all advertising inventory," says Harvard Medical School Publishing Director Ed Coburn. "Deciding whether to use it to promote your products or someone else's is just a matter of economics."

As you'll discover in our case study on Harvard Health Publications, Coburn currently chooses to use his entire online advertising inventory to promote Harvard Medical School products and services. Other online publishers like Forbes.com make most of their online publishing revenue selling their advertising inventory to third parties.

Still, other online publishers like AsktheBuilder.com and Fool.com maximize their online publishing revenue by selling most of their website and email newsletter inventory to

others (external advertising) and using their solo email promotions to sell their own branded products (internal advertising).

Some good ad-management sites:

- Google AdSense (<https://www.google.com/adsense/>)
- Yahoo! Publisher Network (<http://publisher.yahoo.com/>)

You can also use Feedburner.com to insert Google ads into your RSS feed.

If you are interested in more targeted ads, and Google AdSense isn't offering the ones you'd like, you can go elsewhere:

- There are various **affiliate networks** such as Adroll.com, Text-Link-Ads.com, CJ.com, Affiliate-Program.Amazon.com, ClickBank.com, or LinkShare.com. All of these programs allow you to choose the companies you want to promote on your website.

So in the end, the path to the biggest online publishing profits will go to those online publishers who do the best job of monetizing each website and email impression—because the online publisher who can generate the most revenue per impression can also afford to spend the most to make more of them.

Choosing Keywords for your Blog Titles

Depending on the status of your website, you may need to find niche terms in order to get a decent rank in search engines. If you're Harvard Law School, you can probably go after broad keywords like "negotiation" (they show up 7th in Google), but if you're not Harvard, you'll have better results going after three to four word keyword phrases.

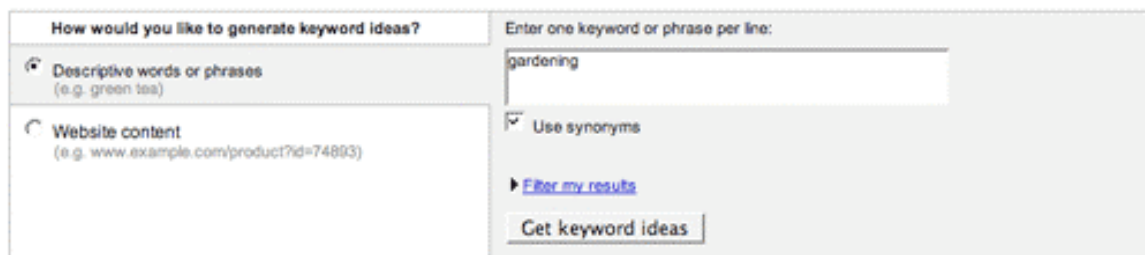
Three to four word keyword phrases are niche terms that may get searched for less in Google, but if you are looking at the long tail, they have plenty of opportunities to drive your site traffic over time, especially when you land on page one with your blog post.

In choosing the name for blog post, you should try the **Google AdWords Keyword Tool** (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>) (which now shows actual numbers for search volume instead of just a picture). The Google Keyword Tool is now the most accurate way to start with a term like "garden" and come up with a list of related, niche keyword phrases like "how to start a flower garden" and "how to start a hydroponic garden". Both, as we discovered, are likely to get you on page one in Google due to the less competitive nature of those exact terms.

How to choose keywords with the Google AdWords Keyword Tool

Say you are a gardening publication and want to write an article on how to plant a garden. "Holy Crap! Gardening Rocks!" might intrigue people who are already reading your blog, but it'd be better to use a title relevant to people who search for your topic. This would increase the chances of your article being found and read more often in the long run, versus using a catchy title that might only get seen the first day you post it on your blog.

Using the Google AdWords Keyword Tool, start with your most basic keyword—then build from it. Let's do a quick test on the word "gardening":

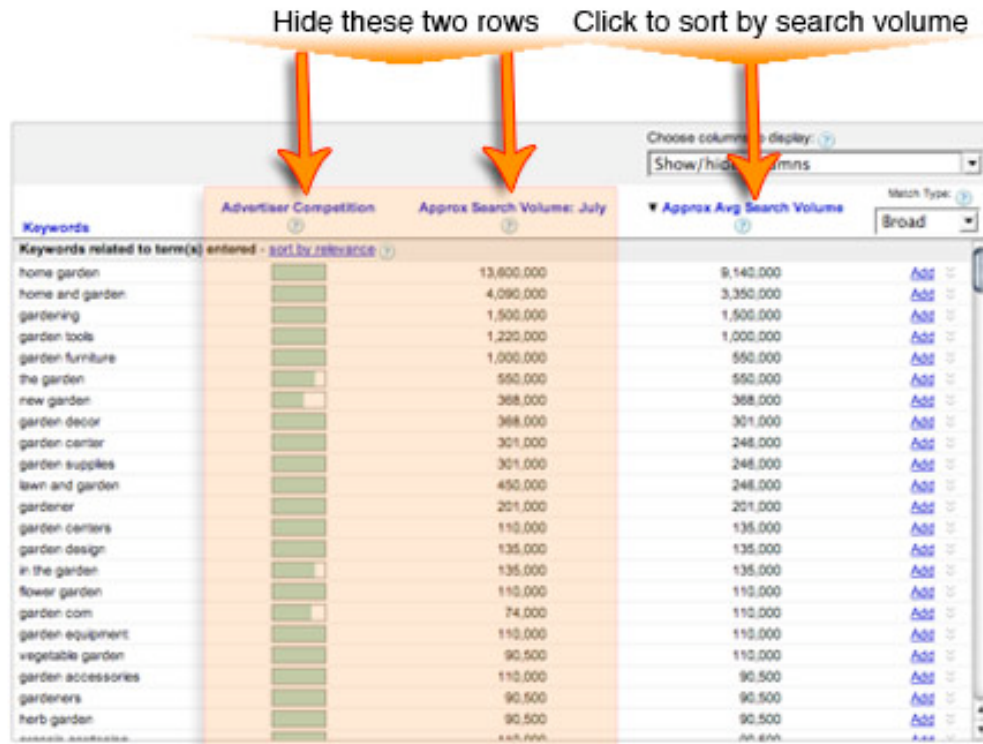


How would you like to generate keyword ideas?	Enter one keyword or phrase per line:
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Descriptive words or phrases (e.g. green tea)	gardening
<input type="radio"/> Website content (e.g. www.example.com/product?id=74893)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use synonyms
	Filter my results
	<input type="button" value="Get keyword ideas"/>

Choosing the right keywords is the next step in this process. The Google AdWords Keyword Tool will always give back 150 results of related keywords, including the approximate average search volume (that's the line you want to look at).

Sort your list of suggested keywords by clicking on "Approximate Average Search Volume" which should give you a keyword list in order of searches. You can choose to hide "Advertiser Competition" and "Approximate Search Volume for the month" inside

the tool, as it can get confusing to have all three visible.



You can pick the keyword phrases that sound niche enough for your article, then Google them with “quotes” around the term.

By doing this, you will find out how many other, competing web pages are already using that exact keyword phrase. This will tell you what your chances are of getting onto page one using the phrase.

In this case, these were the keywords we chose to compare:

Planting a Garden : 8,100 searches in Google (per month) and 83,700 pages in Google

Starting a Garden : 4,400 searches in Google (per month) and 26,300 pages in Google

Choose columns to display: ?
 Show/hide columns

Match Type: ?
 Broad

Keywords	Approx Avg Search Volume ?	
herb gardening	8,100	Add
landscape gardening	8,100	Add
planting a garden	8,100	Add
cactus garden	6,600	Add
fine gardening	6,600	Add
gardening club	6,600	Add
gardening guide	6,600	Add
gardening ideas	6,600	Add
gardening tip	6,600	Add
kids gardening	6,600	Add
lotus garden	6,600	Add
direct gardening	5,400	Add
garden claw	5,400	Add
gardening zones	5,400	Add
garden weeds	4,400	Add
gardening by the yard	4,400	Add
gardening magazines	4,400	Add
starting a garden	4,400	Add
stein garden	4,400	Add
gardening forum	3,600	Add
www gardeners com	3,600	Add
garden zones	2,900	Add
gardening store	2,900	Add

These are both pretty broad keyword phrases, but if you wanted to end your search here and you were fairly confident in your status, you would choose “starting a garden” because it has much fewer competing pages in Google.

If you wanted to get even more niche, you could then enter “starting a garden” into the Google AdWords Keyword Tool which will give you even more keyword suggestions. In this case, we chose:

How to Start a Garden: 3,600 searches in Google (per month) and 28,700 pages in Google

How to Start a Vegetable Garden : 720 searches in Google (per month) and 6,530 pages in Google

How to Start a Flower Garden: 140 searches in Google (per month) and 863 pages in Google

Starting a Small Garden: 91 searches in Google (per month) and 86 pages in Google

Choose columns to display: [?](#)
 Show/hide columns

Match Type: [?](#)
 Broad

Keywords ▼ Approx Avg Search Volume [?](#)

Keywords related to term(s) entered - [sort by relevance](#) [?](#)

Keywords	Approx Avg Search Volume	
starting a garden	4,400	Add ↔
how to start a garden	3,600	Add ↔
starting a vegetable garden	880	Add ↔
how to start a vegetable garden	720	Add ↔
starting a garden in	320	Add ↔
how to start a hydroponic garden	210	Add ↔
starting a flower garden	170	Add ↔
starting a garden business	170	Add ↔
how to start a flower garden	140	Add ↔
starting a community garden	140	Add ↔
starting a herb garden	140	Add ↔
starting a new garden	140	Add ↔
how to start a herb garden	110	Add ↔
starting a garden from	110	Add ↔
how to start a community garden	91	Add ↔
on starting a garden	91	Add ↔
starting a small garden	91	Add ↔
starting a vegetable garden in	91	Add ↔
for starting a garden	73	Add ↔
how to start a veggie garden	73	Add ↔
starting a garden center	73	Add ↔
starting a garden from scratch	73	Add ↔

After going through two rounds of searches, we'd have stuck with "starting a garden" for the blog title since it has a fairly good ratio of searches to pages on Google. "Starting a small garden" would also be a good target in the long tail based on how few competitors it has, and especially if you are a small site with little search engine exposure to date.

With this new list, you would not only name your blog post effectively, you would now start building a keyword list and strategizing your editorial calendar.

Don't just discard the rest of your results though, because now you've started to find niche keyword phrases like "how to start a flower garden" and "how to start a vegetable garden". There are plenty of others too, like "how to start a hydroponic garden" (210 searches, 250 pages).

While clever headlines might momentarily shock and amuse readers for the moment, titling your blogs and articles with phrases that your users are searching for is better in the long run.

Search Engine Optimizing Blogs and Online Articles

In the days of old, magazine editors had one primary responsibility: writing great content. Getting people to subscribe to, buy and read that content was someone else's job. In the online world, things are much different. If an editor wants their content to be found and read online, they must learn to partner with Google. They need to understand what people are searching for that is related to the content they offer, and must write and produce content specifically to those search terms. It's not easy, but it is necessary for online success.

Article landing pages with **good conversion architecture** (see: <http://www.mequoda.com/articles/internet-marketing/6-ways-to-improve-your-website-conversion-rates/>) see a 6-8% email newsletter conversion rate. If you want to see more sales or more page views, you must optimize your articles and blog posts for search engines.

Before you even start writing, you should already **know your keywords** (see: <http://www.mequoda.com/articles/landing-pages/seo-copywriting-secrets-2/>). Using free keyword tools like the **Google Keyword Tool** (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>), you can determine the most popular keyword phrases people are using to find your main topics.

Once you know the keywords you plan to use in your post, you need to strategically spread them out across the article, both on the front end and on the back end.

Before you post your next article, make sure you've followed these eight rules for search engine optimizing an article:

- 1. Put primary keywords in the title.** If your keyword is “organic gardening”, your article title should be something like “10 Organic Gardening Tips” or “How Organic Gardening Helped Me Lose 10 lbs”.
- 2. Don't leave your meta title blank.** In your blogging system, there should be a field for a meta title. This is the title that everyone sees when they find you on a search engine results page. This is also the field that tells the search engine what your primary keywords are.
- 3. Put secondary keywords in the subhead.** Put your secondary keyword in the subhead. You can also include the primary keyword for greater visibility in the search engine, as you should be using the subhead as your meta description too.
- 4. Use your subhead as your meta description.** Your meta description (also found in your blogging software) can easily be the same as your subhead. Since you've already optimized your subhead, this makes posting a meta description easy. Your meta description should ideally be optimized for under 70 characters (including spaces). You can make it longer, but incase it gets truncated, make sure your keywords are found at the

beginning.

5. Include keywords in your URL. Both dashes and underscores are acceptable to Google now, so use either, but make sure that you are using your keyword in your URL. This should be easy if you've already used it in your article title. If your keyword is organic gardening, your URL might be <http://www.site.com/10-organic-gardening-tips.com>.

6. Optimize your tags and meta keywords. Most search engines use up to 18 of your meta keywords, so choose up to 18 meta keywords that you want to use for your article. Your meta keywords and tags should include your primary, secondary and any other keywords you included in your article.

7. Use keywords 10% of the time. A keyword density of 10% is a good density to be in. Still, 8%-15% is a good range, but 10% may be the easiest to calculate on the go. The more content you have, the more times you can use your keyword, just don't overuse it. The quality of your content is always top priority.

8. Use titles or keywords in every hyperlink. If you are linking to another article, you should link to either the name of the article or your keywords. By saying "good gardening" and linking to an article on gardening, you are telling search engines that your article has something to do with "good gardening". Linking the phrase "click here" tells them nothing.

Getting Listed in Google News

The important thing to know is that not everyone can get into Google News. At a minimum, a site looking for inclusion in Google News needs to:

- Contain original content
- Involve multiple authors
- Use proper attribution
- Have top-notch response times

Original content and proper attribution are the easiest of these to take care of. Unfortunately, as you have seen with your weightlifting blog, the second point is where most potential sites run into problems. If your site is a one-person operation it's very unlikely to be listed in Google News.

A minimum of three authors and an editor or two is generally required to get listed. Consider creating a few more author profiles and display them prominently on your blog. Google has even said that great, original content from a single talented writer isn't enough to get a site in; forging relationships with other writers or adding more guest commentary to a site will help improve long-term chances of inclusion.

The final point above deals with the potential server response time. Google's news bots are looking for pages they can index swiftly and load quickly for readers. If you have a custom management system, make sure to review it frequently to ensure the added code doesn't bloat or slow down the serving of your content. Also ensure that your systems are able to handle the increased traffic results from inclusion in Google News.

Finally, it's important to note that potential sites for inclusion in Google News are human-reviewed. If you want to get in, you need to make a good impression on the individual reviewing your site. When submitting a potential site to Google News through this link make your case with the following:

- Tell them about your editors and authors
- Show them any awards your site has won
- Provide a historical overview of your site
- Highlight the stats of your site
- List your high-value backlinks
- Emphasize the newsworthy aspects of your site
- State in detail that you satisfy all technical requirements

So, what does being included in Google News mean for you? Increased traffic, tons of high visibility exposure, a wider audience for your news and services and the potential for higher ad sales, are all among a few of the benefits. Again, not every site can get into Google News, but with some attention to the recommendations laid out above, you can greatly increase your chances of success.

[Search News Help](#)[Search the Web](#)

News Help

[Google News](#)[Google Help](#) > [Google News Help](#) > [Contacting Support](#) > [Contact Us](#)[Google News Help](#)Source URL: [Help for Publishers](#)Your Name: [About Google News](#)Your Email Address: [News Blog](#)Subject: [Contacting Support](#)Message:

If you have everything in place, go ahead and **get listed in Google News** (http://www.google.com/support/news/bin/request.py?contact_type=recommend&submit=Continue).

Attracting Inbound Links to your Blog

If you want people to organically link to your site (as in, without you suggesting a link exchange or barter) here are a few things you should do:

Get found. Research highly searched phrases and SEO your articles using that phrase, so that reporters and researchers will find YOU when they are looking for references in their own articles.

Stay current. Whatever your target audience is, report with news-worthy articles and stay up to date on all the latest related gossip. Again, this is for outside references.

Promote shamelessly. Encourage readers to digg and del.icio.us your articles. This puts links to your site on some very credible news feeds.

Let users generate content. Allow comments on articles and blogs, make your site the water cooler for search engines.

Make lists. There's nothing more link-able than a good list.

Start controversy. That's right, don't be afraid to be controversial. Like they say... "any press is good press".

Getting other bloggers to write about your blog

In the last few years, this technique has become the epitome of link building. It might seem like bloggers have their own clique when it comes to cross-linking, but much like any social gathering, it's all about taking a sip of wine and getting out there. If your list of blogger prospects isn't large enough, do some target shooting in Technorati, Google Blog Search (<http://blogsearch.google.com/>) and Ask.com's blog search engine (<http://www.ask.com/#subject:bls%7Cpg:1>).

Here are a few ways that you can get bloggers to notice you and link to your articles:

Contact the blogger. This is a bold move, but if you really think that something you've written will be of interest to the writer, then by all means, put yourself out there. Contact details can almost always be found on a blogger's site or contact page.

Comment on blogs. This has multiple benefits. First, if you are writing genuinely interesting comments, people will feel inclined to learn more about you. Most blogs link to your website via your comment name. The other benefit of this is that you immediately have a backlink to your site. However, steer clear of leaving obvious promotional comments, as they are likely to be frowned upon and removed.

Ask for a review. If you are product-based, offer relevant bloggers a chance to receive a

free product in exchange for their review. The risk is that they will not be an immediate fan, but that doesn't mean that the backlink is any less valuable, especially if a user follows it and finds a different product they prefer.

With all that said, keep in mind that most bloggers don't get paid nearly enough, or at all, to do your profitable company a favor without getting something out of the deal. So you may want to remember this when you email them.

If you plan on emailing the blogger, start your email with a compliment. Talk about how much you enjoy their blog, and do your research beforehand. Make sure you provide them with all of the details they'll need to link to your site or article. For more tips, check out **Ogilvy's Blogger Outreach Code of Ethics** (<http://blog.ogilvypr.com/?p=238>).

Getting your competitors to write about your blog

This is good old-fashioned business. Your competitors are not going to give you traffic without something in exchange, so you need to think of something good.

Exchange links. A non-threatening place to suggest a link-exchange would be in a blogroll or "partners" area of your competitor's site. It doesn't distract their readers but it's still a valuable placement.

Fill a void. It is also likely that you have a complimentary article or product in your arsenal that they do not cover and may find valuable to their readers. If this is the case, it might be the sort of exchange you should be looking for and focusing on. Many bloggers rely on other bloggers to fulfill their editorial needs by cutting and pasting, or speed-linking (a post composed completely of links to interesting articles and sites) to fill some white space. Fill that space.

However, if your site mostly consists of a blog, and is hardly product-driven, I would use the term "competitor" very lightly because your "competition" in this realm is likely your biggest ally, since you can help each other out the most when it comes to link-building.

Getting other inbound links to you blog

This is the fun part. Remember all those user-generated sites you've been hearing about? Well... go get 'em tiger! This is the easiest way to create your own external inbound links. Forums, online communities, social bookmarks, online reviews—these are all places where you have the opportunity to create a live link to your content, with the least amount of effort.

Social networks. We're going to make this part simple by pointing you to an article we wrote about being a social networking evangelist (see: <http://www.mequoda.com/articles/internet-marketing/how-to-drive-traffic-as-a-social-network-evangelist/>), back in April 2008. It includes a link to our "evangelist toolbox" which shows you multiple places to set up shop and create links to your site from

multiple domains, including Digg, MySpace, LinkedIn, Technorati and more.

Online Press Releases. Online press releases will automatically generate multiple links to your site from all over the web. Not only from the PR sites themselves, but also from any browsing blogger looking to pick up a story (score!).

Letting Readers Define Their Own Content with Custom Tags

Tagging started out as something used internally by companies to help employees find and share files easier. Nowadays, it goes hand and hand with Web 2.0 and user-generated content, as people are actually able to put their own vocabulary and interpretation into something that they didn't create—blogs, articles, podcasts, videos, etc.

This isn't to say that every site needs tagging. As with any of the neat Web 2.0 trends, you need to pick and choose what's appropriate for your overall goal. However, there's a good chance that, as publishers, you've got a whole lot of content and only one or two ways to organize it. Tagging reflects the human thought process and behavior, so what's the harm in giving your users a little control, and in return, getting to know them a little better?

What are tags, again?

In a session called “Tagging that Works,” at the Web 2.0 Expo in San Francisco, Thomas Vander Wal from InfoCloud Solutions, Inc., laid out what a tag really is:

- Simple data/metadata externally applied to an object
- Used for sorting (categories, dates, prices, etc.)
- A hook from aggregating (easily identifiable information)
- Provides an identifier and/or description (more than metadata)
- Personal markers for your users

The “F” word: folksonomy

Folksonomy is a lot like Taxonomy (the art of classification), except it's much classier because it's about user-generated classification. Folksonomy is the result of people's need to add their own perspective, and business' willingness to let go of the reins and give users control.

“The beauty of tagging is that it taps into an existing cognitive process without adding much cognitive cost.” – Rashmi Sinha

The value of Folksonomy is that you're allowing users to add their own vocabulary and explicit meaning to your content, creating a more valuable product and giving you a better view of how others are interpreting you and/or your products.

If you care about your audience, you care about tagging

Building tagging into your website doesn't have to mean allowing users to take complete control over your content. Leave up your primary navigation, but make sure you push a few ads down to make room for users to make their own interpretations.

But what are the gains (if you aren't convinced yet) of enabling tagging?

A better understanding of your customers - getting to know how your customers think and process your information.

Current terminology - gaining an inside look at the current business jargon through your customers' comments.

Market segmentation - finding new ways to market your product by discovering the additional categories users put it into.

A new perspective - finding out things you never realized about your product by looking at it through the user's eye.

The ability to follow the customer - now that you know what they're thinking, you also know where they're going and what they're looking for.

Every person is an expert in his or her own tags

According to a survey by Vander Wal, 28% of Americans have tagged, but where are they doing it? They're doing in all genres of media, not just blogs! See how these fascinating sites are incorporating it, in sometimes surprising new ways.

Social Bookmarking: del.icio.us.com RawSugar.com ma.gnolia.com Blogmarks.net

Media: Flickr, Dabble, last.fm, Viddler.com

Fun: Listible.com, 43Things.com

Shopping: Amazon.com

Museums: Steve.museum, PowerHouseMuseum.com

Dating: Consummating.com, MatchTag.com

Enhancing, Promoting and Monetizing Your RSS Feed

Many publishers view their RSS feed as a self-sustaining journal, a part of their blog that is great because of the low-key and hands-off approach that it was designed for. We're not sure if they've noticed, but there's a whole lot more to online publishing than recycled content. Recycled content—with class!

Luckily, monetizing your RSS feed doesn't mean diving into the nitty-gritty. It's pretty easy, and surprisingly exciting, to find your content in niches that were once unexplored territory. Here's a list of six things you can do, today, that will attract new visitors, create an open revenue stream, retain your email newsletter un-subscribers, and provide you (or your webmaster) something to brag about at the next new media conference.

Validate your feed. Having a feed with errors is the best way to lose inclusion in feed readers. FeedValidator.org will make sure your feed is valid (especially important for Podcast feeds if you want a chance of being accepted into the iTunes collection). It will give you a line-by-line error report for an easy fix.

Create chicklets. No, not the square-shaped gum. We're talking about those little RSS icons you see on almost every blogger website used to recruit readers that prefer RSS to email. iFeedReaders.com has a simple “chicklet creator” tool for making them in seconds. They give you the code, and all you need to do is drop it into your website template. You can also create your own chicklets at FeedForAll.com.

Subscribe to feedburner. Feedburner.com is the best thing since sliced bread. With an extremely user-friendly interface, Feedburner provides you with a number of free services. It'll keep tabs on your feed, letting you know how many active subscribers you have, what they're using to read it, ping RSS readers, create chicklets, enable it for podcasting, incorporate tagging and comments, and we honestly wouldn't be surprised if it calls your mom on her birthday for you.

Especially helpful for your users, Feedburner provides them with an “add to feed” page where they are able to select their RSS reader, read the latest entries, and view what your feed has to offer. If you're feeling ambitious, they've also recently gotten into the email business, all for free, courtesy of their acquisition by Google.

Feed-vertise! This works whether you're ad-based or product-based. If you're product-based, start inserting text ads for your products. You can manually do it through your RSS feed code, or you can simply make it a part of your blog, which is what we'd recommend. If you are ad-based, you have a plethora of (mostly) free feed advertising agencies willing to help out:

- **Category-based feed advertising:** Feedburner Ad Network (<http://www.feedburner.com/fb/a/advertising>), Feedvertising (<http://www.text-link-ads.com/feedvertising/>), Pheedo.com
- **Contextual feed advertising:** FeedDirect

- (<http://www.feaddirect.com/rssads.html>), Google AdSense for Feeds (http://services.google.com/ads_inquiry/aff), Kanoodle.com, Publisher.Yahoo.com
- **Keyword-based advertising:** MediaFed.com, QAds.Qumana.com
 - **Interstitial feed advertising:** ThankYouPages (<http://www.thankyoupages.com/publishers/rss.mpl>)

Use it as a second chance. Adding a link to subscribe to your RSS feed on the “unsubscribe” page for your email newsletter is a great way to retain subscribers who feel they are receiving too much email, but would still like to read your content. Combine this with feed-vertising and you’ve got a potential revenue stream out of an unsubcriber.

Promote it! Your blog isn’t the only place where people will see and find your feed. Try adding your feed to some of the big databases, such as the Yahoo! Publisher Network (http://publisher.yahoo.com/rss_guide/submit.php), Google Blog Search (<http://blogsearch.google.com/ping>), and Technorati.com. In addition to this, it’s advisable to use an all-purpose ping-er like Pingoat.com to get your site indexed in all of the small feed readers as well.

For more free white papers, visit:

<http://www.MequodaFree.com>