



Content Marketing

Week 3: Understand your competitors

Erika Varangouli

Competitive analysis

Identifying the competition

- **Competitive analysis**

If you have no access to paid tools

- a. Search on Google with the 4 keywords you picked for their main products/services
- b. Search on Google with “best” + keyword (and “best” + keyword + “provider” or “products”)
- c. Search on social media with the 4 keywords you picked for their main products/services
- d. Depending on the type of business, you may want to search on other platforms (e.g. if your client sells office supplies, check on Amazon to discover top sellers and check their websites; if your client sells handmade jewelry check on Etsy to discover top sellers; if your client sells an app check on Google Play Store or App Store to find similar apps; G2 for software and so on)

Write down the names and domains of 4-5 competitors

Identifying the competition

- **Competitive analysis**

If you have access to a paid tool (e.g. Semrush > you can set up a free account too!)

- ❖ Add your client's domain in Organic Research
- ❖ Go to "Competitors" tab
- ❖ Export your competitors' list
- ❖ Go to Domain Overview
- ❖ Scroll down to "Advertising research" > "Main paid competitors" & "Competitive positioning map"
- ❖ Export the list of Paid competitors
- ❖ Cross-reference the results between the two lists and create a list of top competitors, from most relevant and biggest to least relevant and weakest.

Let's log in, I'll show you!

Identifying the competition

- **Competitive analysis**

Don't forget to: Ask your client (they should always be able to share their top 3-4 competitors)

These can often be “direct” competitors vs “search” competitors. Find the ones that overlap and prioritize them.

Analyzing your competitors

4 main insights you want to get from your competitors

1. How much content they have on their site
2. What keywords they're targeting
3. How they perform for these keywords in Search
4. Other channels they're using

1. How much content they have on their site

(Their content index)

1. Do a “site:www.example.com” search on Google
 2. Put the domain + /sitemap.xml on your browser (e.g. <https://www.semrush.com/sitemap.xml>)
 3. Manually check their website (and identify patterns in URLs)
 4. Set up a Site Audit on Semrush
 5. Use a free website crawler (e.g. Screaming Frog offers up to 500 pages free)
-

2. What keywords they're targeting

1. Use a free Chrome extension to find title tags (+meta descriptions is a bonus) > My favourites are SEOQuake and SEO Pro extension by Kristina Azarenko but there are loads
 2. Identify keywords from main site navigation and core pages' content
 3. Use a paid tool like Semrush (Organic Research > Positions > Export)
-

3. How they perform

(This is hard to do without a paid tool)

1. Use a free website checker to get an overview (e.g. Semrush has [this page](#) where you can get some information even if you don't have an account)
2. Use Semrush's Organic Research to:
 - a. Find their top performing pages (Pages report)
 - b. Export all their rankings and ranking URLs (Positions report)

If you don't have access to a paid tool:

- Use your free Semrush account to get an idea about their performance (use your account limits)
 - Manual checks on Google with the target keyword to see who ranks for each term (and where your competitors are ranking)
-

4. Where else are they active outside their website?

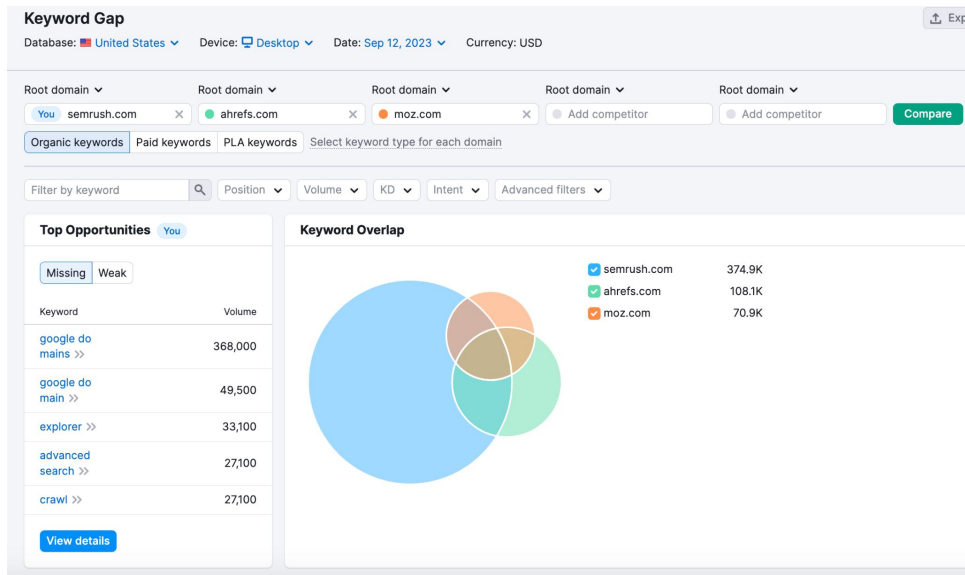
1. Visit their social media profiles and map the content they're publishing (identify tone of voice, publishing cadence, topics, how they interact with their audience)
 2. Search for "competitor name" -site:competitordomain.com on Google (e.g. "semrush" -site:semrush.com) > You'll get a mix of content they publish + content that's published about them
-

**Finding opportunities
for content**

Keyword gap analysis (workflow)

1. Go to Keyword Gap in Semrush
2. Add your client's domain and up to 4 competitors' domains
3. *The magic starts (I'll show you on screen!)*

Note: if you have to do this manually, you can only rely on identifying the top ranking pages for target terms and making notes on their content...



Add ideas from

- Social media they're most active on > Identify their top performing posts
- Third party sites they're active on (e.g. a review platform)
- Gated content they have on the site (e.g. ebooks, webinars)

Now over to you.

(Assignment for next week.)

Time to start your content marketing strategy!

Claude wants to get an idea of how he's doing against his competitors.

He asks that you send him an initial document identifying:

- His main competitors in Search
- How they are performing compared to his website
- An initial list of terms you suggest he focuses on to improve his performance

He is happy to receive this document in word, excel, pptx formats.

He would appreciate having this document by Tuesday, September 19.

Remember.

Ground rules

(Very few but important!)

- **Only smart people ask questions.** You NEED to ask questions during our sessions.
 - You can contact me at any point between sessions via email or Slack.
 - You can use AI (e.g. ChatGPT) for any assignment (or part of it). As long as you disclose it when you do.
 - If you don't complete an assignment on time for the next session, please make every effort to complete it together with the next one.
-

Let's go!

Claude is excited to get your collaboration going! 🚀

