

# Jumpstart Search Traffic to Your Web Site for Free

Here's a way to pump up your Web traffic and make the most of your money.

By Seth Dotterer

**W**ith online channels becoming more crucial for fundraising and marketing, you must make the most of your online dollar. You can do so by obtaining a Google grant to get your inbound marketing efforts off the ground.

Google's grant program ([www.google.com/grants/](http://www.google.com/grants/)) aims to help nonprofits promote their Web sites via advertising. Google AdWords ads appear when people search on Google. When they click on an ad, they're brought to the site being advertised.

The grant will help you drive targeted search traffic to your Web site. It will also help you determine the keywords that work best to drive that traffic. You can then use those keywords in Search Engine Optimization (SEO) activities such as on-page optimization, link-building, and content creation to drive search traffic. Follow these steps to get started:

## 1. APPLY FOR A GOOGLE GRANT.

Fill out the application for the Google Grant located at <https://google-for-nonprofits.appspot.com/application>.

## 2. SET UP A GOOGLE ADWORDS ACCOUNT, AND CHOOSE KEYWORDS.

Once your grant application has been approved, sign up for an Adwords account at <http://adwords.google.com>. Then do some research to decide on keywords. Potential sources of keywords include:

- **Brainstorming.** The first and sometimes best source of keywords is the one in your head. Set up a brainstorming session with others, and build a list of all the terms you think should be visible in the search engines.
- **Analytics.** If you already have a Web analytics package set up on your Web site, take a look at the keywords that are driving traffic. You may decide to place advertisements even for keywords for which you're not ranking well. As long as they're driving some traffic, it shows that searchers consider your Web site a relevant destination for their query.
- **Soovle.com.** Nearly all modern search engines suggest a search query as the user types in the search box. The suggestions are based on the most common searches users complete, given the keywords entered in the search box. Soovle displays the top search query suggestions from multiple search engines simultaneously. You can then capture and mine the relevant suggestions.
- **Adwords.** With Google's Adwords tool, you can input keyword ideas and get back keyword suggestions and their search volumes. One technique is to enter a keyword idea, extract the most relevant terms from the suggested list, enter those keywords back into the tool, and continue that process until you have a list of keywords you're happy with. You can export keywords to Excel to remove duplicates and sort by largest search volume.



“In a process that would otherwise take months, you can quickly test for the best keywords for your site.”

“The first and sometimes best source of keywords is the one in your head.”

When you have your keyword list, group the keywords by relevancy to each advertisement you plan to place. For each group of keywords, set up an advertisement in Google Adwords (Google recommends five to seven keywords per ad). Determine the ad copy you want searchers to see and the Web page you want to bring them to when they click on your ad. Don't drive everyone to your home page. It's best to have a landing page targeted to your specific keyword group.

### 3. DETERMINE TOP CONVERTING KEYWORDS.

After your ads have been running for at least four weeks, look through Google Adwords to determine the keywords that are converting (resulting in a click through to your site) at the highest rate.

To dive deeper, export your converting keyword list to Excel. Segment keywords into three groups: top-converting keywords as the top third, medium-converting as the middle third, and low-converting as the bottom third. Go down the list by optimizing for top-converting followed by middle-converting keywords to develop your SEO roadmap.


### 4. OPTIMIZE TOP-CONVERTING KEYWORDS FOR NATURAL SEARCH.

A keyword that's converting well on your Web site in "paid search" has shown that your site is tuned well to drive conversions for that keyword. For this reason, once you've determined the paid keywords that convert best on your Web site, start optimizing for them in "natural search" by tuning your on-page elements, developing links, and building content.

Once you've optimized for all your high-converting keywords, expand your zone of search. Repeat the process: Do keyword research and brainstorming, advertise in Adwords, extract high-converting keywords, and optimize in natural search.

As natural search optimization bears fruit, traffic will increase. If you continue your optimization efforts, you'll build a sustainable source of high-converting, free traffic.

#### IN SUMMARY

By obtaining a Google grant for a paid search allocation, you can, in a process that would otherwise take months if done in natural search, quickly test for keywords that convert well. You can then optimize high-converting keywords in natural search, creating a free and steady stream of qualified, converting traffic. 

*Seth Dotterer (sdotterer@conductor.com) is VP of Marketing for Conductor and a member of the Conductor Foundation Steering Committee. Conductor, a leading SEO technology platform provider, has launched the Conductor Foundation and the Conductor Searchlight Grant (foundation@conductor.com).*



## GLOSSARY

**Analytics software:** Software that measures how many people visit a site, how many of those are unique visitors, how they came to the site (i.e., if they followed a link to get to the site or came there directly), what keywords they searched with on the site's search engine, how long they stayed on a given page or on the entire site, what links they clicked on, and when they left the site.

**Convert:** Result in a click through to your Web site. High-converting keywords cause the most people to visit your site.

**Data mining:** Seeking hidden patterns and previously unknown relationships in a group of data that you can use to predict future behavior.

**Keyword search:** A type of search that looks for matching documents that contain one or more words specified by the user.

**Natural (or organic) search:** A search in which results are returned based on the natural indexing of the Web site (as opposed to a search based on paid advertising and editorial changes made by the search engine itself). The SEO field is largely based on making a Web site appear more prominently in organic search results for specific keywords.

**Paid (or sponsored) search:** A type of advertising where Web site owners pay an advertising fee, usually based on click-throughs or ad views, to have their Web site search results shown in top placement on search engine result pages. Some search engines will make it easy for users to determine which search results are "natural" and which are "paid," while others will mix the results, making it more difficult for users to determine which are the paid search results.

**Search engines:** Programs that search documents for specified keywords and return a list of the documents where the keywords were found.

**Search engine optimization (SEO):** The process of increasing the number of visitors to a Web site by obtaining a high-ranking placement in the search results page (SERP) of a search engine. The higher a Web site ranks in the results of a search, the greater the chance that a user will visit that site. It's common for Internet users to not click through pages and pages of search results, so where a site ranks in a search is essential for directing more traffic toward the site. SEO helps to ensure that a site is accessible to a search engine and improves the chances that the site will be found by the search engine.

—based on definitions from Webopedia, webopedia.com