



Lesson 2 – Analysing Your Online Presence

On completion of this lesson you should be able to:

- Be aware of some website diagnostic tools available on the internet
- Understand how to perform various diagnostic tests on your website
- Understand how diagnostics can give you an insight into your website and online business performance
- Have conducted research on known and unknown competitors online
- Be aware of tools available to assist with ongoing competitor research
- Have conducted a basic SWOT of your main online competitors
- Have identified any features/functionality/design aspects of competitors you see benefit in emulating.
- Set your online business objectives
- Have specified your target markets

Competitive Environment

Depending on the industry your online business/website is involved in, you may or may not be operating within a highly competitive environment. It is important we identify who our competitors are, and conduct a competitor analysis on them. In some cases, this may assist us to determine our online strategy.

So how do you do this?

a) COMPETITOR ANALYSIS 1 - Known quantities

Let's start off with the 'known quantities', that is, any websites or companies you know you are competing with in business.

List some companies you deem to be competitors including their company name, URL (if known) and why you deem them to be a competitor.

b) COMPETITOR ANALYSIS 2 – Unknown quantities

Now let's identify any potential competitors who are 'unknown quantities', that is they don't immediately come to mind and you may not be aware of them, particularly online, without further investigation.

It is not a very sophisticated research method, however simply going to <http://google.com.au> and searching key words or key phrases you think your potential customers may be searching for online based around a product or service you offer can be a useful exercise to identify unknown competitors.

The theory behind this search is that if your competitors are on the front page of Google for a keyword or key phrase you want, they are someone you need to keep an eye on!

Repeat for all keywords or search terms you want to be found for.

Take a note of all those websites featuring on the front page organically i.e. on the left hand side for any keywords or key phrases you want.

c) SWOT Analysis

Next we are going to conduct a SWOT analysis on each of the websites identified as competitors.

Identify and list what you perceive to be the Strengths, Weaknesses, and any perceived

Opportunities and Threats for each of the identified competitors. Consider noting what features and functionalities the competing website has i.e. does it sell online? What does it sell? Does it have social media integrations? A blog? Is it well designed? Note its key features.

Get your team or friends and family to help you perform this task as they may point out things you hadn't noticed.

What Is Your Website's Score Out Of 100?

Marketing Grader is a free online tool that measures the marketing effectiveness of a website. It provides a score out of 100 that incorporates things like website traffic, SEO, social popularity and other technical factors. It also provides some basic advice on how the website can be improved.

EXERCISE: Complete a Marketing Grader report

a) Complete a Marketing Grader report by going to: <http://marketing.grader.com/> and simply filling in the basic form. Email + website you wish to analyse – that's all you need! If you don't have a website of your own, analyse a competitor site.

b) Note your score and print the recommendations the report gives you in terms of how you can improve your current website. This will be used as a benchmark in future lessons.

Domains

The age of a domain or web address can help it perform better on the search engines. It is therefore a good idea when analysing your online presence, and that of your competitors, to find out how old their domain is, as compared to yours.

If you already have a domain...

EXERCISE:

To view the approximate age of a website on the Internet go: <http://www.webconfs.com/domain-age.php>

Enter in the data field your own domain then the competitors you want to analyse then click on 'submit'.

This tool not only displays the age of a website but also allows you to view how the website looked when it first started by clicking on the hyperlinked year that displays.

You can run this exercise for your website, and for your competitors.

If you do not already have a domain...you need one!

As part of getting online you will need to select a web address, or domain name. It is worth spending some time considering this, as your domain name is an important promotional tool. If your business is new, it is

important you select a domain name that will also be in line with social media usernames you can secure, names you can trademark and register.

[Read this short blog post to understand the process of naming a new business in more detail.](#)

Your domain name is your address on the web. It is one of the main ways people will find your organisation online. It also known as a URL (uniform resource locator).

Consider a domain name such as <http://www.mywebsitename.com.au>:



[Read more about selecting a domain name here.](#)

You may want to ask yourself the following when choosing your domain name:

- Does it suit my reputation and branding?
- Is it easy to remember?
- Is it easy to spell?
- Is it easy to say over the phone?
- How easily will users be able to guess my domain name?

More Competitor Analysis Tools

There are many more competitor analysis tools available, which include a mixture of both free and paid tools (with some free trials).

Please find below a list of those you may like to check out to further research your competitive environment. This is not a required component of this lesson, rather a 'value add' for those who would like more advanced tools.

- <http://www.marketsamurai.com>
- <http://www.semrush.com/au>
- <http://www.domaintools.com>
- <http://www.spyfu.com>
- <http://www.keywordspy.com>
- <http://www.seoquake.com>
- <http://www.seomoz.org>

Google Account

In order to access some excellent free tools from Google to further analyse your website, you will need to get a free Google Account (different to a Gmail account). Consider a Google Account your passport to Google World!

A Google Account will allow you to talk, chat, share, schedule, store, organise, collaborate, discover, and create. Use Google products from Gmail to Google+ to YouTube, view your search history, all with one username and password, all backed up all the time and easy to find at (you guessed it) Google.com.

EXERCISE: Create a Google Account.

a) To do this simply go to <https://www.google.com/accounts/NewAccount> and fill in the quick and easy form.

You can use any email address to set up a Google Account but it is recommended that you use a business email that will not change should staff change. We also recommend you note your username (email) and password in a dedicated login/passwords sheet for safe-keeping.

Google+ Local

Google+ Local superseded Google Maps as a Google service offering powerful, user-friendly mapping technology and local business information - including business locations, contact information and driving directions. By listing your business on here, be that home or an actual location (or even multiple

locations) you are increasing your online visibility and hence the chance of people being aware of your business, or better still, making an inquiry with you.

We strongly recommend you list your business on Google Places for Business as it provides an online presence before you even have a website (and it's free!) and it increases your online presence if you already have a website. This will help your website be seen on Google Search, Maps, Google+, and mobile devices.

EXERCISE: List your business on Google Places for Business

Go to <http://www.google.com.au/business/placesforbusiness/>. Search for your business. Is your business already listed?

YES? - You are already listed. The next step is to check if your listing is up to date. Even if your listing was good previously, you may find that with the transfer, some information has been lost. [See an article on this here.](#)

NO? - Your business is not listed on Google Places for Business. If you already have a Google Account, sign in with your email and password and commence to list your business.

To find out more about Google Places for Business see: <https://support.google.com/business/>.

Google Analytics

Google Analytics is a free service offered by Google that generates detailed statistics about visitors to your website. Google Analytics can track visitors from all referrers, including search engines, display advertising, pay-per-click networks, social networks, e-mail marketing and digital collateral such as links within PDF documents.

If you integrate Google Analytics with Google Adwords (Google's pay-per-click advertising offering which you will learn about in future lessons), users can review online campaigns by tracking landing page quality and conversions (goals). Goals might include sales, lead generation, viewing a specific page, or downloading a particular file. By using Google Analytics, you can determine which keywords are performing well on which search engines, for your own website, but not others (i.e. not competitors), as accessing the statistics is protected by username and password and requires you to log in and place some tracking code in the back end of your website to render results.

We recommend you ask your web developer if you currently have Google Analytics installed on your website before you proceed with the next step. If they say you do, ask to be granted access to view the

Google Analytics account. If they say this is not possible, send them this link: <https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1011397?hl=en>

The Google Analytics tracking code collects visitor data for your web property, and returns that data to Analytics where you can see it in reports. When you add a new web property to your Analytics account, Analytics generates the tracking code snippet that you need to add to the pages whose data you want to collect. The tracking code snippet contains a unique ID for the web property that lets you identify that property's data in your reports. You can use just the snippet that Analytics generates for you, or you can customise the tracking code to collect additional data like transactions and product purchases (ecommerce) or visitor behaviour across primary and sub-domains (cross-domain tracking).

Provide them with this link with more information if you encounter difficulties:

<http://www.google.com/analytics/support/index.html>

EXERCISE: Install Google Analytics on your website

If you have ascertained that your website does not currently have Google Analytics installed, proceed with the following:

- a) Go to: <http://www.google.com/analytics/>
- b) For more information on how to create a user profile and install Google Analytics on your website go to https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1008015?hl=en&ref_topic=1727146

If you'd like a more detailed explanation of how Google Analytics works watch the video THIS from Google - <http://youtu.be/l9joLoZOjK4>

EXERCISE: Locate key Google Analytics statistics

Once you have successfully implemented Google Analytics (or if you already have it installed) log in and locate the following statistics for the past month period and note down the following:

- Number of unique users
- Number of pages per visit
- Average time on site
- Percentage of new visits
- Top performing keywords
- Top performing key phrases

- Top performing 5 pages
- Links from an Internet Search Engine
- Number of people accessing the site from mobile

Webmaster Tools

Google Webmaster is a one-stop shop for webmaster resources that will help you identify if there are any issues with your website being crawled or indexed by search engines which could hinder its performance. It will also introduce you to offerings that can enhance and increase traffic to your site and connect you with your visitors.

Like Google Analytics, you will first need a Google Account to use it.

Watch the short video to understand what Google Webmaster is and can help you and your business.

<http://youtu.be/COcl6ax38IY>

EXERCISE: Set up and install Google Webmaster on your website:

a) Go to www.google.com/webmasters and click the blue 'Sign in to Webmaster tools' button

b) Log into your Google Account

c) Click on 'add a site' button' and enter your website.

d) It will give a set of instructions and some code that will look like this:

```
<meta name="google-siteverification"content="oL7wOBZiTXR95WqGvh7qDowCrnsCxsUzq5zkTVEQ8uU" />
```

e) You will be required to deposit into the html code of your website in the <head> section, before the first <body> section so it can verify your site i.e. confirm it is indeed your site. If you do not know how to access this part of your website, speak to your web developer.

f) Once the code is inserted, return to Webmaster Tools and click on the verify site button. If it returns a tick, it has successfully verified, and your stats will start logging in Google Webmaster.

To utilise the full benefits of Google Webmaster, you will also need to submit your site map.

See the help files here for instructions on how to do this: <http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/>. The help files will also provide you with a range of other tips and information related to managing your website.

You may require assistance from your web developer to perform the above exercise.

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW!