

Keyword Density Update – From James Martell

Private & Confidential Update To **James Martell's Affiliate Marketers Handbook - 2002**

November 29th, 2004.

On page 122 of the manual you'll find instructions on page optimization. I've copied that page below and highlighted in grey the ONLY area you need to concern yourself with.

Further down on this page you'll find the new rules highlighted in yellow.

And – for your convenience – I'll wrap up these changes with some clarifications, examples and advice.

Page 122 currently says:

Page optimization – Your attempts to alert the search engine spiders as to the main topic of each page of your site by strategic placement of pre-determined words and phrases (keywords) into both the hidden "HTML view" and the "text view" seen by visitors. In addition to embedding your keywords into the HTML, as described later, -- you will more fully optimize each page by doing the following also:

- a. Bolding and hyperlinking each pages Primary keyword once to a related product page or merchant, -- preferably near the top.
- b. Italicizing each pages Primary keyword once somewhere near the top of the page, preferably in your headline or sub-headline.
- c. Optimizing each page for keyword density by including your Primary and Tier-1 Secondary keywords:
 - Once in your headline with your Primary keyword appearing first

- Twice in the first paragraph with your Primary keyword appearing first
 - Once in each subsequent paragraph with your Primary keyword appearing first
 - Once in a sub-headline or second headline with your Primary keyword appearing first
- d. Randomly included your Tier-2 Secondary keywords throughout the text in no particular density, but added only as they would naturally appear editorially.

New Rules In Yellow – ALL else remains unchanged:

Page optimization – Your attempts to alert the search engine spiders as to the main topic of each page of your site by strategic placement of pre-determined words and phrases (keywords) into both the hidden “HTML view” and the “text view” seen by visitors. In addition to embedding your keywords into the HTML, as described later, -- you will more fully optimize each page by doing the following also:

- a. Bolding and hyperlinking each pages Primary keyword once to a related product page or merchant, -- preferably near the top.
- b. Italicizing each pages Primary keyword once somewhere near the top of the page, preferably in your headline or sub-headline.

c. Optimizing each page for keyword density by including your Primary and Tier-1 Secondary keywords:

- Primary Keyword: Once in your headline. Once in the first paragraph. Used nowhere else on the page.
- Tier-1 Secondary Keywords: Once in the first or second paragraph. Used nowhere else on the page.
- Use Keyword Variations: These are individual words that are *based on* your Primary & Secondary keywords. (further explanation and examples to follow) They should be used repeatedly in the following density.

- i. 300 word article: no less than 24 times – no more than 36 times
 - ii. Extrapolate the above ratio on longer articles
- d. Randomly included your Tier-2 Secondary keywords throughout the text in no particular density, but added only as they would naturally appear editorially.

Clarifications & Advice:

1) Keyword Variations Explained: The first thing you probably noticed is that I've added a new twist – something called keyword *variations*.

These are important because Google now uses “stemming” technology, as they explain at: <http://www.google.com/help/basics.html> (excerpt below)

Google now uses stemming technology. Thus, when appropriate, it will search not only for your search terms, but also for words that are **similar** to some or all of those terms. If you search for "pet lemur dietary needs", Google will also search for "pet lemur diet needs", and **other related variations of your terms**.

I'll admit, choosing “variations” can be a challenge at times because in certain instances it's not always obvious what variations to use.

I'll help you a bit here by revealing some rules I use to develop a short list of variations for my Primary & Tier-1 Secondary keywords.

But, essentially you are on your own with this, for very often, two people will come up with TWO different – but perfectly applicable -- sets of variations.

It's all a matter of proficiency with English, as well as a subjective feel for your industry. So PLEASE don't email with questions about HOW to choose variations for your own keywords.

But, I think I can point you in the right direction by first providing a definition of **stem: noun – language, the base of a word, to which affixes are added. (also called a “theme”). Or, Intransitive Verb: to derive from.**

Of course “dictionary” definitions only go so far.

So please consider using the three main ways I come up with variations that stem from both my Primary Keyword and Tier-1 Secondary Keyword:

1. Use the single words of Keyword *phrases* as variations of the longer phrase. Examples Below.
2. Think of words that are *similar*.
3. Use singular versions of *plurals* and vice versa.

Example:

Let's say you're building a page for a cell phone site.

You've identified your keywords as follows:

1. **Primary Keyword:** prepaid cell phones
2. **Tier-1 Secondary Keyword:** prepaid cell phone (no "s")

Can you see how the **single words** that make up the phrase "prepaid cell phones" provide three variations?

- prepaid
- cell
- phones

Can you also see how to take the same phrase and come up with **similar words**, such as?

- cellular
- telephone

Now, can you see how I can add another word to my list of variations by using the **singular** of "phones"?

- phone

That's the general idea.

Now here is a list of 9 important things to consider when compiling and using variations:

One: My guess is that use of variations gives you a fantastic edge against competing pages that simply repeat keywords. My guess is that Google spiders are on the lookout for repeated use. I say this because my rankings improved dramatically -- even though I now use my Primary Keyword *less* than before. Why? Well, probably because Google views these "variations" as meaning the same thing as the initial search term. (see stemming explanation on the Google site: <http://www.google.com/help/basics.html>)

Two: Based on several months of internal testing on my own sites I have found the optimum density for these variations. And the suggested density is this: try to use them no less than 24 times per page – and no more than 36 times per page – on a 300 page article. (Simply adjust these numbers on longer articles)

Heads Up: I like to come up with at least 8 variations because that allows the flexibility of using each 3 times to meet my suggested minimum usage ($3 \times 8 = 24$). However, this is only a guideline. Some words can be used more. Some can be used less. And you don't HAVE to use all your variations.

Three: I use both my Primary Keyword AND my Tier-1 Secondary as roots for coming up with my list of variations – usually 8 words.

Four: If my keyword is a SINGLE word I often find difficulty in developing variations. My suggestion is to use these "single word" keywords to develop a *longer* phrase of at least three words. I often add the word "best" and/or "reviews" to make longer Primary and Secondary keywords from which to develop variations. Use common sense and the knowledge of your industry to do the same.

Five: Yes – you do this for every page on your site.

Six: Yes – you'll need to count your variations to keep within the suggested density. (see sample article below)

Seven: Should you re-write your articles? Rewriting your articles could be a lengthy task if you've got *thousands* of pages. And remember, the old rules STILL work – although not nearly as well as the new rules. But it's your call. Personally, I'd leave things as they are – and just start applying these new rules to your *ongoing* content.

But, -- if you're up for the task, it should take about 5 minutes per page to re-work them once you get the hang of it.

Eight: Remember – these new Keyword Density rules apply only to Google. It's another reason to leave your current pages alone – for not only will they still rank okay at Google, -- but they are probably still doing quite well at the other Search Engines under the former Keyword Density rules.

Nine: Yes – I still use my Primary Keyword in the upper right corner of the page – *in addition* – to the suggested use *within* your articles. The reason this is done is so the spider finds that word first, -- as explained elsewhere in the manual.

Recap:

So now -- before writing articles -- you build a keyword list for each page divided into four types of keywords (instead of three). I suggest you just scribble another heading on the keyword charts provided with your manual or develop your own chart in Word.

1. Primary Keyword
2. Tier-1 Secondary Keywords
3. Tier-2 Secondary Keywords (NOTE: I now find that a single Tier-1 Secondary Keyword is enough. I used to use two)
4. Keyword Variations

And, as the manual says, -- you **STILL** use your Tier-**2** keywords *editorially*, with no attempt to optimize them. They are simply on your list – ready to be used as you – or your writer – would naturally use them in writing about any particular topic.

What follows is an example of a *proprietary* article.

PLEASE don't go copying this for your own site. It's only here as a graphical example of how to use your chosen keywords in a typical article.

You'll first see my keyword list. I've color coded them so you can easily find them in my article below. Notice I had a list of 9 variations, but didn't need all of them. And if you count them you'll see how they fall into my suggested densities.

Chosen Keywords For A Typical Page On A Cell Phone Site

Primary Keyword: cell phone comparisons

Tier-1 Keyword: cell phone comparison

Variations: cell, phone, comparisons, comparison, cellular, phones, telephones, compare, comparing

Tier-2 Keywords: Nextel, ALLTEL Wireless, Voicestream, MCI Worldcom, Verizon Wireless, plans, rates

Cell Phone Comparisons — More Ways to Stay Connected

When it comes to *cell phone comparisons*, today's wireless devices have more in common with computers than with the rotary **phone** that Grandma used. But before you buy a **phone** with all the bells and whistles, be sure your **cell phone comparison** evaluates services between carriers. Both **Nextel** and **ALLTEL Wireless** offer state-of-the-art **cellular phones** and great rate **plans**.

Do A Little Comparison Shopping

How do **Voicestream phones compare** to **MCI Worldcom** or **Verizon Wireless**? Finding the right plan depends upon how you will use your **cell phone**. Make an evaluation of cost **comparisons** as well as your **cellular phone** needs so that you can **compare** the features and service between different companies. Check the coverage area, **plans**, **rates** and prices.

When you review and **compare cell phones** for options be sure to think ahead. You might not need SMS text messaging right now but you might want it in the near future when a friend or relative gets a **phone** with that option.

Also be sure to do cost **comparisons** of each company's special rate **plans**, promotional deals and specials. A super deal on a full-featured **cell phone** that gets great reviews can mean additional savings. Ask about and **compare** the warranty and maintenance options and see if the carrier offers **cell phone** insurance at reasonable **rates**.

When your **comparison** shopping expedition through the maze of new **telephones** finally uncovers a bargain that you can't pass up, be sure to familiarize yourself with all the advantages of your new **phone** and calling plan. You'll be able to stay connected in ways you never imagined possible.

A Final Word About My Support Desk: As a reminder to long time readers, -- my support staff are not trained to provide ongoing, personal coaching and training. And I simply don't have the time.

I suspect that some readers will struggle a bit with "keyword variations" because it's a very subjective area – and totally new.

My advice is to simply start practicing on paper with any keyword on your list. Use the dictionary. Use common sense. Think of related words. Use the Thesaurus. Follow my three suggestions.

In time, I'll bet you'll get really good at it.

And it's worth it because I doubt that writers of competing pages wouldn't put in the effort – even if they *knew* about it!

I wish you well.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.