

Learn Squidoo!

Step By Step

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Disclaimer

This report has been written to provide information to help you create Squidoo Lenses.

Every effort has been made to make this report as complete and accurate as possible. However, there may be mistakes in typography or content. Also, this report contains information only up to the publishing date. Therefore, this report should be used as a guide – not as the ultimate source of creating Squidoo Lenses.

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[Learn Squidoo Step by Step](#)

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Contents

A Special Invitation!	4
Introduction	5
Learn Squidoo: Squidoo Step by Step	6
Original Content, The Internet, and Squidoo	6
Checklist -- Building Your Lens Step By Step	8
Affiliate Marketing and You	9
Types of Affiliate Programs	10
Lens Promotion	13
Before You Start Promoting Your Lens:	14
Long-Term Lens Promotion	17
How Do You Monitor Trends For The Long Life Of Your Lens?	19
Promotion Strategy: Narrow And Deep vs Far And Wide	20
Keywords	22
Finding Keywords	22
Case Study: AJ's Goldfish Swims Upside Down	24
But how do you choose your Keywords?	27
Another Source For Keywords	28
Where To Place Your Keywords	29
Glossary	34
Appendix A: Sites for Backlinks	35

A Special Invitation!

As someone who wants to create great Squidoo Lenses we invite you to join, free of charge, [Squidlog](#).

Do you want to make lenses that show you care about your reader and didn't make them just for the money? Do you want to really please your visitors and gain a following that respects you and wants to hear what you have to say?

Then join us at [Squidlog](#) - where quality content counts. You'll be in a group of like-minded people supporting each other in building their professional and ethical online presence.

Introduction

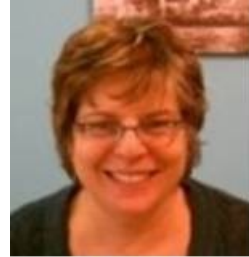
ABP Group is the partnership of three experienced online writers and marketers, AJ, Bev, and Paula, who all started out as Squidoo lensmasters just like you.



[aj2008](#)



[bevspaper](#)



[lakeerie
artists](#)

From our beginner status we have gained a lot of knowledge. We have also made plenty of mistakes along the way, which we hope will help you to avoid through the use of this book and other materials.

The Squidoo Step by Step is now in its fourth revision and we would like to acknowledge and thank the originators of this free book for Squidoo lensmasters: aj2008, bevspaper, CleanerLife, Drifter0658, GrowWear, inkserotica, Joan4, Michey, mukunda22 and pkmcrr plus lakeerieartists for her involvement with the later revisions.



[CleanerLife](#)



[GrowWear](#)



[inkserotica](#)



[Joan4](#)



[Michey](#)



[mukunda22](#)



[pkmcrr](#)

This complete revision is updated with new information relating to changes on the internet through to June 30, 2011 and [TOS on Squidoo](#) in force on the same date.

Learn Squidoo: Squidoo Step by Step

The forerunner of this guide, Squidoo Step by Step, was originally developed as a guide and a checklist for new and experienced lensmasters to use as they learned to build high quality, effective Squidoo lenses.

The internet is a constantly changing and evolving environment, and because of this Squidoo's TOS and rules also change. The idea of this guidebook is to simplify the process you use to make a Squidoo lens, get traffic to your Squidoo lens, and then earn money from the lens for yourself or charity. We will help you streamline your efforts so that your time is used in the most effective manner, and you can cease spinning your wheels in useless exercise.

It is completely possible to make a part time income from Squidoo and there are even people who make a full time income from their Squidoo lenses and related sales. Using the ideas and concepts in Learn Squidoo: Step by Step, you have the potential to start on the pathway to achieve your goals.

Perhaps you would like to earn a real income, one that will support you and your family, pay your bills, and give you the financial freedom to relax from time to time? Maybe buy additional luxuries you would not otherwise be able to afford? Perhaps earn money for charity?

We are not offering a magic pill, and there is a lot of work ahead of you to reach your goals. However, the potential is there for those who follow these steps. OUR goal is to give you simple, easy to follow step by step instructions to give you a better chance of success.

Original Content, The Internet, and Squidoo

You may have heard that "content is king" for writing online. We would like to submit to you that the phrase is not entirely correct, and that it is original content that is truly king. Actually, original content is king, queen, and the entire court. While there will always be content thieves, and duplicate content online, the content that endures, and that will rank well over the long term, no matter how many times Google changes its algorithm, is original content.

Original content is writing in your own words. This is basic writing from back in elementary school. When we all learned to write in school, we were taught to write in our own words. Now we call writing in your own words, "original content." While it is perfectly okay to quote other sources for precise information, or to mention someone else's words, when you do so, you must cite that person.

If you don't properly cite your sources, you are stealing their content. **This is plagiarism.**

(For more information see AJ's page: [Copyright Infringements](#)).

Recently, in an attempt to reduce plagiarism online, Google changed their page-ranking algorithm to devalue sites that allowed duplicate content. For you as a lensmaster, this means that you need to create lenses with your own content for at least 80% of the text, and cite your sources properly for the rest. This also includes citing sources for your pictures.

This is the proper way to write, and while you may get away with lazy practices for a while, sooner or later the teacher will come along, and figure out what you are doing, and you will get an F on your paper. In Squidoo terms, that means your lens will get taken down, and you could potentially get banned from the site.

So learn to write in your own words, express your own voice, and paraphrase other sources. When you do use sources, put their information in quotation marks, and cite them properly.

The more you write, the easier it is to write. Your voice becomes practiced, and you find the words flowing from you more easily. To help you write your lenses, picture your target audience in your mind, and talk directly to them. They are listening, now it is your turn to inform.

Note: For the purposes of this Guidebook, we are assuming you know the basics of how to create a lens – the following page contains a checklist on what to do when you build a lens and this Guidebook focuses on Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and promotion.

Checklist -- Building Your Lens Step By Step

Lens Title: _____ Lens Creation Date: _____

Lens URL: <http://www.squidoo.com/> _____

Notes: _____

The Steps *Click links for further information*

- Choose your topic
- [Research](#) primary keywords/phrases for topic
- Choose URL using your researched primary keyword or phrase
- Research/know your topic
- Begin new lens
- If your chosen URL is taken, re-work the keywords into another URL
- Choose tags
- Choose template
- Write the lens in your own words
- Choose your intro image
- Upload title image into the intro module
- Images: Title using a keyword or two (it helps with searches on Google Images)
- Credit images
- Credit any "quoted" text
- Write a catchy and interesting introduction
- Change Bio to relate to the lens topic and use some keywords
- Remove any modules that do not apply
- Look for and add modules as needed
- Change default module titles as you create and build modules
- Use lots of relevant facts, images and different modules
- Recommend topic-related products in the Squidoo sales modules
- [Recommend](#) products from other companies
- Proofread
- Get someone else to proofread, if you can
- Final once-over and polishing
- Publish
- Ping at Ping.fm or Onlywire
- Submit to your Ning groups that allow new-lens submission
- Submit it for a critique at [SquidU](#) (if you really want a critique)
- Submit to [Lensroll.com](#)
- Submit to [Squidom.com](#)
- Submit to "other" -- Twitter, Facebook, FriendFeed
- Leave link at related-topic online forums where you participate
- Link to a [bookmarking](#) site once every two days or so - not all at once

Affiliate Marketing and You

According to Wikipedia, Affiliate Marketing:

is an Internet-based marketing practice in which a business rewards one or more affiliates for each visitor or customer brought about by the affiliate's marketing efforts.

In short, it is a system of commission earnings. Businesses who offer Affiliate programs offer a percentage of each sale that can be traced back to the affiliate (you) to said advertiser.

The tracking is traced through an affiliate ID that is an embedded link or banner that is placed on the affiliate's published web content (i.e. Squidoo lens, blog, etc.). If a visitor clicks on the embedded link, they are redirected to a site where they can make a purchase. The redirection is recorded for the source so that in the event of a purchase, the correct affiliate can be paid the commission.



Besides revenue sharing, affiliate marketing is the number one way to earn a tangible income at Squidoo.

To help lensmasters gain affiliate sales, Squidoo provides a number of lens modules that are affiliate ready. Amazon is the number one used affiliate in the pre-loaded modules.

But your choices are not limited to the affiliate ready modules. Anywhere blocks of text can be placed, embedded affiliate tracking links can be employed, using HTML.

Types of Affiliate Programs

There are two basic types of affiliate programs available on the Internet:

- Affiliate linking programs where text links and/or clickable banners are offered for use by the affiliates
- Print On Demand programs offering the affiliate a chance to create a design and place it on a standard product (i.e. tee shirt, coffee mug, mouse pad, etc) or publish a book

Affiliate Linking Programs can be applied for at individual businesses, but more often than not are found at liaison sites, or directories, where a large number of sellers are listed in one location. Some popular affiliate linking programs used by Squidoo lensmasters are:

- <http://www.allposters.com/Allposters.com>
- <http://www.art.com/Art.com>
- <http://www.amazon.com/Amazon.com>
- <http://www.cj.com/CommissionJunction.com>
- <http://www.clickbank.com/>
- <http://www.linkshare.com/LinkShare.com>
- <http://www.pepperjam.com/PepperJam.com>

Affiliate Modules can also be used on Squidoo without having to sign up for a separate affiliate account. The difference in using the selling modules provided by Squidoo is that you will share the commission with Squidoo on any sales. Examples of the affiliate modules are:

- Amazon Modules (6 different styles)
- CafePress
- eBay
- Zazzle (but be aware that you will only earn a commission if you are selling your own products via this module, because commission is paid directly to the Zazzle store owner by Zazzle NOT via Squidoo)

Print On Demand Services allow the affiliate to digitally design a product, then apply a mark-up price, from a base price, and acquire a link to that designed product for marketing. Products can range from tee shirts and coffee mugs to books. These services keep a digital copy of the product and produce the item immediately upon receipt of an order. Popular print on demand services used on Squidoo lenses include:

- Zazzle.com
- CafePress.com
- LuLu.com

Note: you do not have to sell your own products to earn affiliate commission from Zazzle

Responsible Affiliate Marketing Tips

Affiliate marketing was conducted in such an abusive manner in the past that the term affiliate marketing automatically throws up SPAM alarms in some people's minds. But, a well conducted marketing effort does not **have** to be abusive if handled in a responsible and genuine fashion.

Here are a few tips that will help you avoid a SPAMMY feel and look on your Squidoo lenses:

Content is and always will be king. Good, honest, and genuine content will gain trust in your readers or potential customers. Explain how the product affected you personally, or how you feel about the solution the product offers.

Give both the positive and negatives about the product, but always be sincere.

Use Allposters.com, Art.com or Zazzle links in the place of images. You'll find very handsome posters and framed offerings at both places.

Use only three links to a product per page. Two text links anchored in the content (one text link near the beginning and one near the end of the lens) and one image or banner link about halfway to three quarters down the page.

Above all, offer genuine solutions to your readers, and strictly adhere to Squidoo's [TOS](#) regarding what products are forbidden.

Amazon and the Non-US Member

It should be noted that members of Squidoo who live outside of the United States should set up their own Amazon Affiliate account. Although any US sales that have resulted from one of your Amazon modules on a lens will earn you a commission, the sales from non-US Amazon sites (such as Amazon.co.uk) will not. There is a relatively easy fix to this peculiarity if you find yourself in this predicament.

Sign up for your own Amazon Affiliate accounts from Amazon, including the non-US Sites. Place your own linked banners and product pictures for at least a few items on your lenses using your Affiliate ID for those non-US sites.

See this lens for an example on how to do it:

[Wii Draw](#)

For this lens a picture was created using Microsoft Publisher (but you can also use any drawing editor such as Paint) and saved as a .jpg. The picture was downloaded to a Text with Big Picture Module on the lens. The link to the picture is the Lensmaster's affiliate link to the product page on Amazon UK – and yes, this link HAS made sales.

Happy Marketing!

Lens Promotion

The following sections will explain methods of promotion that work well in both the short and long term for your Squidoo lenses. We are also providing the links to sites where you can bookmark, promote, and get quality backlinks. We do advise that you not try to use all of the sites at once, as you will find that you are spending all of your time promoting instead of creating new lenses.

We suggest that you check these sites out and then choose your favorites to work with. We have found that focusing on a few sites works best in lens promotion and causes much less confusion. Using sites such as Twitter and Facebook to promote your lenses is a proven method.

Blogging is also a very good way to promote your work. Joining small group networks such as [Squidlog](#) or [Writing Online](#) is beneficial to promoting your lenses using the social features of the group to interact with fellow lensmasters and members such as the groups and forums unique to each site. These networks are also helpful in forming friendships but are not necessarily beneficial for significant additional traffic to your lenses.

Writing on a blog to create backlinks will not necessarily result in more traffic; however, it does assist in adding value to your authority on your topic with Google and the other Search Engines. Writing with the intent of creating backlinks to your Squidoo lenses also helps get your content on the first few pages of search returns.

There are some sites where you can link to your content and also earn some extra income. A couple of sites that you could start with are [RedGage](#) and [She Told Me](#). Earnings are usually minimal but are beneficial for a backlink to your content.

So, take a look at the sites that we have listed, narrow your focus down to five to eight sites that you feel good about, and then work on making some new lenses.

Before You Start Promoting Your Lens:

Before you start to promote your new lens there are some factors that you should consider. Let's go through a simple check list of the lens before we begin with our promotion.

Initial Check List:

- Make sure you have changed ALL of the default module titles to be relevant to your topic using keywords that flow naturally when read
- Create only original content or rewrite text that you used, while researching other sites for information, into your own words – remember to cite your sources. You can use the text link module at the end of the lens or link to the source in the module where the content appears
- Choose relevant and good Squidoo tags for your chosen topic
- Give your readers added interest by sharing your personal experience with the subject matter. Use your own voice to tell the story
- Incorporate your own passion for the subject/topic of your lens – if it is for a product you do not own, tell us why you would like to have this specific product
- Add beauty and interest with graphics and colors, but don't overdo it
- Plan to update your lens regularly
- Do not fill your lens with too many videos or HTML – this may slow loading time, which could lead to penalties from Google

After you have checked everything, you are ready to publish that lens. Isn't it exciting? But wait - is there something else you need to do? Is it just a matter of "I built it, therefore they will come"? Well, no, it isn't quite that simple. You will need to do a little work to let the public know about your creation.

To achieve a higher ranking with Google, other search engines, and Squidoo, you will need to create some backlinks to your lens early.

Your promotion strategy can begin with the following steps. We have also provided a list of the Squidoo Directories and bookmarking sites that are recommended for promoting your lens.

Step One

One of the best and quickest ways for both short and long term promotion is to submit articles about your topic to Article Directories like [Pro-Articles](#). Depending on the TOS of each site, you can usually write a short article about your lens topic with 200 to 300 words. Include a backlink to your lens within the content of the article.

Writing a post on one of your blogs that points back to your lens will also serve as a long and short term promotion technique.

Be aware that traffic exchanges are against the TOS of Squidoo and they do not lead to converting sales.

Submit your lens to niche or general web directories.

Submit your lens to Squidoo directories.

Download the [Submit It toolbar](#) (if you run IE, Mozilla Firefox or Safari) for an easy way to submit your lens.

You can learn to make your own [Firefox Bookmarking Toolbar](#) by following AJ's Step by Step instructions.

A Few Tips To Increase Traffic From These Sources:

- Make it a habit to visit other lenses at Squidoo leaving comments and likes (but do not depend on this for big traffic)
- Write an alternative description when submitting your lens to a directory. Avoid cutting and pasting from your original intro paragraph. It is best to create an original blurb or at least 3 or 4 different ones to alternate what you submit to each new directory or bookmarking site

We have provided a list of article, blog and social bookmarking sites that allow Squidoo lenses later in this Guidebook. For your convenience here is a quick link to it:

[Sites for Backlinks](#)

Helpful tools for bookmarking to a variety of sites are:

- Onlywire.com
- Ping.fm
- Addthis

You also have the ability to bookmark to Addthis and Lensroll.com from the [SquidUtils](#) dashboard.

Step Two

Keywords (see [Glossary](#) for definition)

Your Lens Dashboard will give you the search terms (keywords) that are bringing traffic from Google, other search engines, and referrals. You can see the list of search terms used if you go to the Stats of your lens and look at the traffic tab. Be sure to include the most used terms in your lens.

Backlinks (see [Glossary](#) for definition)

It is a good idea to check the status of backlinks to your Squidoo lens every once in a while. You may want to increase them if they are low in number. You can scroll down to the bottom of your lens health page to get the link to [Squidaholic](#). You can click on the link to be taken to the report associated with your lens.

It will give information about you, your lenses, the traffic ranking, and the lens rank. More importantly you will see who has an eye on you. You will see a list of the backlinks that your Squidoo lens currently has. If that number is low, you will want to increase it by creating some new backlinks on your own. However, a few Quality Backlinks (see [Glossary](#)) are better than several backlinks that have no quality.

Squidoo Lens Health:

You should check on the health of your lens occasionally by using the SquidUtils Health Check Tool. It is available as a part of the Firefox add-on. It is easy to check your lens health by going into the edit mode, scroll down to the right hand column and find the SquidUtils Box.

Click on the Health Check link. You will be given a check list of things that may help your lens. Make the appropriate changes to your lens – but *ONLY* if you think they make sense. *Sometimes they do not, so don't get hung up over it!*

Long-Term Lens Promotion

You should refresh the content to keep your lens up to date on a regular basis. Squidoo provides modules that help with this ([see next section](#) for a list). Squidoo rewards refreshed content in the Lensrank Algorithm.

It is also very important to redo your keyword research from time to time, particularly if you notice regular traffic dropping off. The phrases that potential visitors use to find your information may change and you may need to introduce new keywords. However, be careful of deleting content that contains keywords that visitors are searching for.

Keep an eye out for evolving trends in your intended market. Add keywords that apply to these new trends and concentrate on long-tail keywords. The life of your content, what you are trying to sell, and the longevity of your lens are greatly impacted by those long-tail phrases.

Create a series of lenses on a general topic with each one being very specific to a part of the topic. This is often referred to as "narrowing the niche". The main topic can be broad with your lenses narrowing the topic down to small parts of the topic.

Perhaps you are passionate about raising rabbits? Make five (10 is better) lenses on the topic of rabbits - diseases associated with, what to feed a rabbit, the best rabbit hutches, etc.

Now make a lensography to showcase those lenses. A lensography is a way to group your lenses that are on the same topic in one place. A compilation of what you have written about the general subject. Use the "featured lens" module to showcase your other lenses. You can add new lenses as you create them.

Here's some examples:

[Book Reviews and Authors](#)
[Keeping Rabbits](#)

A general lensography showcasing all of your lenses that also tells something about yourself is a recommended method, too (an "About Me" lens is also a requirement if you want to apply for Giant Squid Status). It helps a reader know WHO YOU ARE and what you like to write about. It is also a quality backlink to your growing list of lenses.

More examples:

[AJ2008 - a lensography](#)
[Lensography of Bev's Paper](#)
[Finding My Way: Lakeerieartists Lensography](#)

Modules that help keep a Lens updated with fresh content

Squidoo provides various modules that automatically grab content from other sites. You can set filters so that the information that appears on the lens is relevant to your topic. These are legitimate methods of adding content to your lenses by using RSS Feeds, as opposed to using "scraping" software, which steals content without permission.

These modules include:

- RSS: Add Your Blog (but it does not have to be your blog, it can be someone else's)
- Twitter Search
- Twttrstrm
- Google News

Once set, these modules automatically update, keeping the modules (and your lens) automatically refreshed.

You still need to do your own updates from time to time, but there's no doubt that these modules help with Squidoo Lensrank.

Recommended Article Directory Links

[Ezine Articles](#)

[Go Articles](#)

[ISnare Free Articles](#)

[ProArticles](#) (Created, owned, and operated by AJ, Bev and Paula)

Join sites such as [Amplify](#), [RedGage](#) and [Posterous](#) where you can feature your lenses. You can also streamline your new lenses automatically to your blogs or FaceBook account (if you have one).

Use Twitter to tweet your updates to a lens and then have it to feed automatically to your FaceBook account. Make sure you use something original when you tweet instead of the default "*I am reading*" or "*I just updated*" text. Your followers are more apt to read a 140 character post that has some excitement to it.

Caution: Do not just use Twitter to promote your lenses – cultivate a following by engaging with other Twitter Users who have similar interests.

Paula Atwell has also published a lens that may help: [Adding an RSS Feed to Twitter Using Twitterfeed](#)

How Do You Monitor Trends For The Long Life Of Your Lens?

Pay attention to the trends of your industry or subject. You can find trends from blogs that you read that pertain to your favorite subject.

Suggested Services to monitor trends:

[Google Alerts](#) – Google will send you an email with updates of the latest relevant results based on your topic or query that you enter.

[Subscribed Links](#) – Allows you to create custom search results. Learning of news, changes, and stories related to your market is important. You will want to know if there are new products coming out or possibly scandals within the industry. Being on top of these trends will provide huge opportunities to provide new content and get easy, free, and valuable traffic. You will find that the trends you are watching will not show up in the search engines until weeks or months later. You will be ahead of the curve.

Other Recommended Tips to follow for Lens Promotion:

- Comment on other blogs and or lenses
- Add your URL to your email signature
- Add your URL to your forum signatures (if allowed)
- Join social networks and forums geared to your subject
- Add your URLs to Link plexos on related lenses that you find
- Submit your lens feed to Feed Directories: [FEEDCAT](#), [Feedage](#), [FeedAgg & Yahoo Buzz](#)
- Join [WikiAnswers](#) or similar websites, answer questions, leaving links to your lens. (Do make sure to follow the rules about adding links.)
- Submit to special groups that you might belong to i.e. communities like Squidlog. Sharing your new lens in their Activity stream, links section, or in a special forum. RocketMoms and Senior Squids are a couple of other groups to join if you qualify.
- Include your latest Squidoo lens (if it is relevant) in your newsletter or email course

See [Appendix A](#) for a full list of Article Directories and Bookmarking Sites that allow links to Squidoo Lenses.

Promotion Strategy: Narrow And Deep vs Far And Wide

We do feel that it is important for you to realize that you should not try to belong to all of the bookmarking sites, social media, and groups that we have mentioned here in the Guidebook. These are suggestions for you to look at and determine which ones fit your needs the best. The latest statistics show somewhere around 600 different social bookmarking and networking sites available. No one has the time to belong to all of them.

Look over several and decide which formats you like working with and join those. The internet has changed considerably since its inception with the current trend being to form relationships with your readers. These relationships are much better achieved in small groups of people who have the same interests as you.

Another new trend is the multi-user (MU) communities that are developing across the web. These communities are a wonderful way to start to form relationships and attract followers to your work on Squidoo. This will not necessarily generate sales for you, however.

There really isn't a magical number to pull out of the hat as far as knowing how many sites to submit to or belong to. You will have to determine how much time you have to devote to using the bookmarking sites and working within those sites to establish some strong relationships with the other members as a part of your long term promotion strategy.

Perhaps you feel best with five places to work with and that probably is a good number for most. It would, in the long run, be much better to build a strong and faithful following from five sites than to gain little or no traffic from 50 websites.

Multi-User Communities

As mentioned previously, one current trend is the use of Multi-user Communities which are also known as MUs. The basic concept is a website that is managed by one or two administrators with a program that allows for multiple users to blog, belong to groups, and communicate with each other. There are usually Activity Streams for the members to be able to quickly see what the community has been up to on any given day.

These MUs are extraordinarily good for building relationships with people with built in traffic from the community to your work. Think of them as "virtual" neighborhoods.

WordPress has developed a wonderful program for this purpose that many admins are using for their communities. Called WPMU the program

allows for some pretty exciting and fun things to enable a community to interact.

We highly recommend this community that uses the WPMU format:

[Squidlog](#).

Quick Checklist for Lens Promotion

Action	Check
Update and check keywords	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blog about the lens	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write an article	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitor trends	<input type="checkbox"/>
Add to the series of lenses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send a press release	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publish a Lensography	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create business cards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Add your lens' URL to email and forum signatures	<input type="checkbox"/>
Join Social Networks and Bookmarking Sites	<input type="checkbox"/>

Keywords

How to research Keywords and optimize your lenses to be found by Google and the other Search Engines

So you have an idea for a Squidoo lens. It is a topic you are knowledgeable about and one you may be passionate about. But how do you get traffic? How do you persuade Google and the other Search Engines to promote your lens above all the other web pages about your chosen topic?

You may be the best writer in the world. You may have a great story to tell. You may have a great product to sell. But that on its own will not persuade Google or the other Search Engines, like Bing and Yahoo, to recommend your page in search results.

Keywords and phrases really are the key to being found on Google and this chapter will show you how to research them and how to add them to your lens to give you the best chance of being found.

Finding Keywords

There's keyword research tools you can buy and there's free keyword research tools.

For this exercise we used the free [Google Adwords keyword research tool](#)

The screenshot shows the Google AdWords Keyword Research tool interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Home' and 'External tools'. The main content area is titled 'Find keywords' and is based on one or both of the following: 'Word or phrase (one per line)' and 'Website'. There are input fields for these, along with checkboxes for 'Only show ideas closely related to my search terms' and 'Advanced Options and Filters'. Below these are sections for 'Locations and languages' (with a list including United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, Brazil) and 'All Languages' (with a list including English, Japanese, German, Portuguese). There are also options for 'Include specific content' (with a checkbox for 'Include adult ideas') and 'Show Ideas and Statistics for' (with a dropdown for 'Desktop and laptop devices'). A 'Filter keywords' section has a dropdown for 'Local Monthly Searches' and a 'Remove' button. A 'Search' button is located below the filters. At the bottom, there is a table with columns for 'Keyword', 'Competition', 'Global Monthly Searches', and 'Local Monthly Searches'. The table currently shows 'Keyword ideas (0)'. A message at the bottom states 'No search results were found. Please try again.'

All you have to do is enter phrases and words relating to your proposed topic and the tool will come up with suggested key phrases. Narrow the focus so that you can target the phrases that have high search volume but have less than a million pages on Google. The smaller this number the better.

On the next page you will find a Case Study that shows how AJ researched keywords for a lens she was planning about her goldfish, who had a habit of swimming upside down.

The reason why AJ decided to make that lens is because when the goldfish first started to behave in this very strange un-goldfish-like way, it took a lot of searching on the internet to find the solution to the problem. From her surfing she could see that a lot of goldfish owners had the same problem and they were struggling to find the solution too!

So once AJ had discovered the solution, she felt it would make a good topic for a lens, but before she even grabbed the Squidoo URL, she did some keyword research.

Since the lens was published it has remained at least in Tier 2, but much of the time in Tier 1.

Please note: The Google Keyword Research Tool now has a new interface, but the stats for this Case Study are so valuable, that the old screenshots are being used.

You can see how to use the new Keyword Research Interface on [How to Research Keywords](#)

Case Study: AJ's Goldfish Swims Upside Down

A summary of what I did to research the keywords to use, once I decided to make a lens about our sick goldfish.

First of all I checked out phrases like: "sick goldfish", "goldfish care" and "goldfish diseases".

The screenshot shows the Google AdWords Keyword Planner interface. At the top, there are input fields for "Word or phrase (one per line)" containing "sick goldfish", "goldfish care", and "goldfish diseases", and a "Website" field. Below these are "Advanced options" for "Locations: United States" and "Languages: English", and a "Search" button. On the left, there is a sidebar with "All categories" including Apparel, Beauty & Personal Care, Computers, Consumer Electronics, Family & Community, Finance, Food, Gifts & Occasions, Health, Hobbies & Leisure, Home & Garden, and Law & Government. The main area displays "Keyword ideas" with a "Download" button and a table of results. The table has columns for "Keyword", "Competition", and "Global Monthly Searches".

Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches
goldfish diseases	High	14,800
goldfish care	High	40,500
sick goldfish	High	6,600
pond goldfish diseases	Low	260
sick goldfish treatment	Low	170
sick goldfish floating	Low	73

Although the Global Monthly Searches for these phrases is high, I could see from the competition column that the number of pages on Google featuring these search phrases would also be very high and would not normally bother to check out the exact numbers, but for the purpose of this exercise I did.

sick goldfish = 487,000
goldfish care = 1,840,000
goldfish diseases = 253,000

Therefore looking at these figures, I knew it would be very difficult to rank high enough in Google to get any decent traffic.

Time to narrow the focus!

Lots of goldfish get sick but what was it about my poor goldfish that would make him stand out (or should that be swim out?) from the crowd. What was it about his illness that made him different?

And of course it was the fact that he was swimming upside down and still alive. Time for a new search!

Word or phrase (one per line)

Website

[Advanced options](#) Locations:United States Languages:English

All categories

- Apparel
- Beauty & Personal Care
- Computers
- Consumer Electronics
- Family & Community
- Finance
- Food
- Gifts & Occasions
- Health**
- Hobbies & Leisure
- Home & Garden
- Law & Government Products
- Media & Events

Keyword ideas [Sign in with your AdWords login information to see the full set of ideas for this search.](#)

Download ▾

<input type="checkbox"/> Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches
<input type="checkbox"/> goldfish swimming upside down		1,600
<input type="checkbox"/> goldfish swim upside down		480
<input type="checkbox"/> goldfish swims upside down	-	210
<input type="checkbox"/> goldfish ich		1,900
<input type="checkbox"/> goldfish ick		1,900
<input type="checkbox"/> fancy goldfish swimming upside down	-	58
<input type="checkbox"/> why do goldfish swim upside down	-	110
<input type="checkbox"/> upside down goldfish		4,400

Contains

Not only was I interested in particular phrases, the results gave me some pointers towards other phrases I should check out. In this example "goldfish swim upside down" was not a phrase I may have searched for, but it could certainly be worked into the lens.

The trick is to remember that it is not necessarily the phrases that YOU would use for a search that will get you traffic; you have to look for the phrases that OTHER PEOPLE use.

Not only did the research help identify key phrases for the lens but it also identified the key phrases to use in any blogs or articles about the lens that would be used to promote it.

So what was the competition like? How many pages on Google featured the phrases I was looking at?

<input type="text" value="upside down goldfish"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>	About 34,200 result
<input type="text" value="goldfish swimming upside down"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>	About 65,400 result
<input type="text" value="goldfish swims upside down"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>	About 65,400 result

I researched a few more keywords and came up with a list of phrases that I could use in the lens and it was published on May 04, 2009.

On July 06, 2010, here is how the lens ranked in the Google Searches for three of the key phrases:

Google "upside down goldfish" Search

Advanced search

Everything
Videos
More

The web
Pages from the UK
More search tools

[Our goldfish swims upside down](#)
Jump to [The treatment I used to help our upside down goldfish](#): Frozen peas. Yes, frozen peas! We always have a supply of those as it is one of the few ...
[www.squidoo.com/goldfish-swims-upside-down](#) - Cached - Similar

[Why is My Goldfish Floating Upside Down? - Associated Content ...](#)
1 Oct 2007 ... More: Swim Bladder Upside Floating Brine Shrimp **Upside Down Goldfish**. Goldfish are supposed to be very easy to care for. ...
[www.associatedcontent.com/.../why_is_my_goldfish_floating_upside.html](#) - Cached - Similar

[GoldFish Emergency 911](#)
7 May 2010... Goldfish is swimming **upside down**; Goldfish is bobbing; Goldfish is bloated; Goldfish is swollen; Goldfish is **upside down**; Goldfish is ...
[www.goldfish-emergency.com/](#) - Cached - Similar

#1 in Google!

Google "goldfish swims upside down" Search

Advanced search

Everything
Videos
More

The web
Pages from the UK
More search tools

[Our goldfish swims upside down](#)
One of our **goldfish swims upside down**! The first time I knew of it I heard a little voice ask "Mummy, why is the goldfish swimming upside down?" Oh-oh.
[www.squidoo.com/goldfish-swims-upside-down](#) - Cached - Similar

[My goldfish swims upside down constantly. We thought it was dying ...](#)
29 Mar 2004 ... your fish has a disease called dropsy ... Could be a nutty fish, but sounds more like "Swim Bladder Disease" - for more information: ...
[www.answerbag.com/q_view/4149](#) - Cached - Similar

[WikiAnswers - Why do fish swim upside down](#)
My fan tail **goldfish swims upside down** or wedges itself under the filter when it's constipated. I feed her the inside of a frozen.
[wiki.answers.com/Q/Why_do_fish_swim_upside_down](#) - Cached

#1 in Google!

Google "goldfish swimming upside down" Search

Advanced search

Everything
More

The web
Pages from the UK
More search tools

[Our goldfish swims upside down](#)
The first time I knew of it I heard a little voice ask "Mummy, why is the **goldfish swimming upside down**?" Oh-oh. That doesn't sound good. Is it going to be ...
[www.squidoo.com/goldfish-swims-upside-down](#) - Cached - Similar

[Why is my goldfish swimming upside down? - Yahoo! UK & Ireland Answers](#)
25 Apr 2006 ... i got a new goldfish on sunday and its swimming upside down. ... HE IS NOT GOING TO DIE!!! Goldfish get a very common problem called swimbladder ...
[uk.answers.yahoo.com > Pets > Fish](#) - Cached - Similar

[HELP!!! Goldfish floating upside down!!!?](#) - 13 Jul 2009
[Fancy goldfish swimming upside down?](#) - 27 Mar 2009
[Why are a couple of my goldfish swimming upside down in my garden ...](#) - 3 Nov 2007
[Why does my goldfish swim upside down?](#) - 19 Oct 2007
[More results from uk.answers.yahoo.com >](#)

[Why Your Goldfish are Swimming Upside Down - Associated Content ...](#)
23 Oct 2007 ... Most **goldfish swimming upside down** are actually suffering from too much water pressure; this condition is often blamed on constipation. ...
[www.associatedcontent.com/.../why_your_goldfish_are_swimming_upside.html](#) - Cached - Similar

#1 in Google!

Update: May 18, 2011

Google searches WITHOUT using the "" shows that:
upside down goldfish is #1 out of 1,030,000 results
goldfish swims upside down is #1 out of 906,000 results
goldfish swimming upside down is #1 out of 615,000 results

But how do you choose your Keywords?

When you research your keywords you are looking for High Search Volume (using the Google Keyword Research Tool) and Low Competition, by comparing them to the number of pages on Google that are trying to rank for that keyword.

You will see from the screenshots on the previous page how to search Google for the competition. Simply enter the into the search box and enclose in quote marks, as in "upside down goldfish". This will tell you roughly how many pages use that phrase in their content.

Obviously the more searches and the less competition, the better. However, here's a trick to help you decide which phrases to use, if you have a few phrases that you cannot choose between.

Simply divide the number of pages that compete with the number of searches, the lower the resulting number, the better. And anything less than 1 (set it to return to 2 decimal points), is something definitely worth looking at!

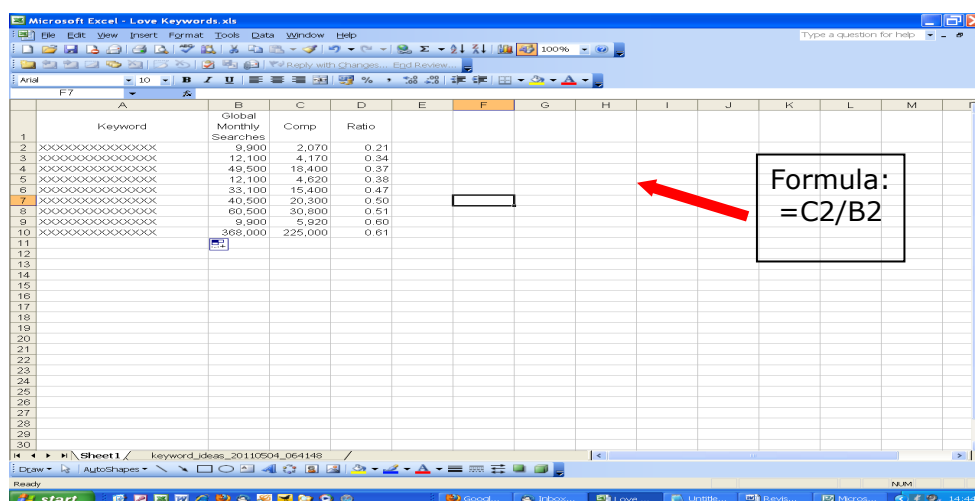
You can export your Google Keyword research results into a CSV file for Excel. Select the key phrases you are interested in, export to an Excel spreadsheet – you need to save as an .xls file onto your hard drive.

Add a couple of columns: Competition and Ratio.

Set up the Search results and Competition columns as numbers, without decimal places.

Set up the ratio column to calculate the Competition Column divided by the Global Monthly Searches column.

Then check the Competition and add the figures to the spreadsheet, the Ratio will be automatically calculated.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
	Keyword	Global Monthly Searches	Comp	Ratio									
1													
2	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	9,900	2,070	0.21									
3	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	12,100	4,170	0.34									
4	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	49,500	18,400	0.37									
5	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	12,100	4,620	0.38									
6	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	33,100	15,400	0.47									
7	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	40,500	20,300	0.50									
8	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	60,500	30,800	0.51									
9	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	9,900	5,920	0.60									
10	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	368,000	225,000	0.61									
11													
12													
13													
14													
15													
16													
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29													
30													

You can see from the screenshot, that although it may be off-putting to have high numbers in the competition column, providing there's enough searches, you may still be able to compete. This is because Squidoo has a high Google Page Rank and providing your lenses are properly optimized you stand a good chance of featuring high in the search engine results.

Other factors will also influence your success, but this example gives a basic outline of what can work.

Another Source For Keywords

It is important to keep an eye on what phrases are being "Googled" that result in traffic to the lens. This may identify popular search terms that are not featured on your lens. Because no matter what research you do, it can be amazing what phrases people use when searching on Google and other search engines

<u>Keywords</u>	<u>Number</u>
goldfish swimming upside down	189
fish swimming upside down	39
goldfish floating upside down ±	26
goldfish upside down	24
upside down goldfish	20
my goldfish is swimming upside down ±	19
fish floating upside down	18
why is my fish swimming upside down ±	18
goldfish swims upside down	16
why is my goldfish swimming upside down ±	15
sick goldfish	13
my fish is swimming upside down ±	12
goldfish swim upside down ±	8
sick fish swimming upside down ±	7
why does my goldfish swim upside down ±	7
goldfish ±	7
why do goldfish swim upside down ±	7
floating upside down goldfish ±	6
gold fish swimming upside down	5
why ±	5
my goldfish is upside down ±	5

This screenshot from my Squidoo Dashboard shows what phrases people were searching for, which led them to my lens.

I was using a lot of the search phrases but I knew there were others that were not in the content of the lens.

These and some of the others were well worth working into the content of the lens. However, you must be careful not to edit out any of the phrases that are getting you traffic.

It is useful to check this part of your Squidoo Dashboard regularly – it can be found on the traffic tab

Note: Be very careful you do not confuse keywords with tags for your Squidoo lens!

An explanation is at the end of this Chapter.

Where To Place Your Keywords

It is crucial to make the placement of your keywords natural, so that they flow with the text and the headings. You should also be careful of "over optimising" your lens by keyword stuffing or the Search Engine Spiders may think the lens is spam.

Make sure your top key phrase is in:

- the URL
- the lens title
- the intro title
- the first two sentences of your introduction
- the module titles and sub-titles
- the lens bio
- anchor text on the lens
- the end of the lens

BUT DON'T OVERDO IT - MAKE EVERYTHING APPEAR NATURAL

The URL

This can be hard. Someone may have grabbed your ideal URL, so you may need to be creative. The URL for "*goldfish-swims-upside-down*" was free, I got lucky!! But had I not been able to grab that URL, I would have tried "*goldfish_swims_upside_down*" and other variations that did not take me too far away from my key phrase.

While having an exact key phrase is ideal, don't let it put you off making the lens, if you know you have identified a potentially "hot" niche. You may have to try variations of the key phrase.

If you cannot use your key phrase, it is crucial to pick a phrase that is VERY relevant to the topic.

At this point it is also important to say DON'T use a "cute" lens name, title, or intro title - it will put people off!

The lens title

Many lenses do not include that crucial key phrase in the Lens Title. The Lensmaster may have used a clever play on words, the title may be very witty, but they have missed a big opportunity to attract the attention of the Search Engine spiders by using their key phrase.

The intro title

This needs some thought. I tend to make my lens title as close to the URL as possible, as long as it makes sense. However, you need to vary the key phrase for the intro module title, so "Our goldfish swims upside down" became "What to do when you find your goldfish swimming upside down" – "goldfish swimming upside down" is another key phrase.

The first two sentences of the intro

"One of our goldfish swims upside down! The first time I knew of it I heard a little voice ask "Mummy, why is the **goldfish swimming upside down?**".

The general advice used to be that highlighting the key phrase in some fashion is beneficial and that bold and italic work well too. However, there is a growing school of thought that believes this no longer matters and providing the phrases are there the Search Engine Spiders will find them, no matter what the formatting.

The first 160 characters of the intro is what searchers on Google will see. Not only should you be using your key phrases in as natural way as possible, but it is your sales pitch. You only have only a few words in which to capture your potential audience's attention.

Think of people who are surfing the net for information as shoppers in the Mall. They stop at the shop window and see what is on offer, then depending on what they see, they make a decision, open the door and walk in or walk on by.

Your Lens intro is your shop window, the threshold of the shop is the link to your lens in the search returns. Will they open the door by clicking the link or will they continue scrolling and walk on by?

Starting your intro with: "I have made this lens because....." is wasting valuable space and a lot of the people searching on Google and elsewhere, will not know what a lens is!

Think about your audience – most of your potential traffic is from Google NOT Squidoo.

The module titles and sub-titles

Sprinkle the keywords, and variations of the key phrase plus other key phrases, throughout the module titles, without overdoing it. Make sure that they all make sense and do not look like spam.

The same goes for the sub-titles. Use these to include a phrase you have not used in the module heading.

The bio box

It's tempting to use this box to tell people about you. BUT... they have come to read a lens about a specific topic. You can add stuff about you in the "About Me" module at the end of the lens. Use the lens bio, in the top right hand corner of the lens to add a key phrase:



Anchor text in the lens

Use your key phrases in links to other sites.

To bold or not to bold

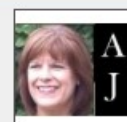
Some lensmasters bold their keywords and others do not. I tend not to do it these days.

To summarise

Remember when you create a lens that you are providing information. A lot of the time you are providing a solution to someone's problem:

- they are looking for information about something
- they may be looking for products
- they may be looking for both

In the case of the Goldfish lens, I wanted to provide some information in what is potentially a huge topic – goldfish care. When I tried the search phrase "sick goldfish" on Google, it returned 487,000 pages. When I narrowed it down to "goldfish swims upside down", the number reduced to 85,400.



You need to think about:

- Who wants this information?
- Why do they want it?
- What problem am I potentially solving by offering this information?
- How can I focus the topic?
- How can I narrow it down?

One of the biggest problems in getting traffic is caused by lensmasters publishing on too broad a topic and not being able to stand out from the crowd.

Get specific. Get focused. And you **will** get traffic!

Note: Do Not Confuse Keywords with Squidoo Tags

The keywords you use in the Content and Headings on your lens should not be confused with the Tags you enter in the right sidebar when creating your lens.

The simplest explanation of the difference between keywords and tags is that Keywords are there to attract Google Traffic and Tags are there to attract Squidoo traffic. Therefore, when choosing your Tags you may need to give priority to different words and phrases, than the keywords you are using.

Squidoo helps you promote your lens within Squidoo via the Discovery Module and searches. You can nominate up to six of your own lenses to appear in the Discovery Module on each of your lenses – and it makes sense to choose *relevant* lenses. It is through the tags on a lens that Squidoo automatically chooses the other lenses that will appear, if you do not nominate all six lenses (you can choose to feature other people's lenses if you wish).

Squidoo chooses what other lenses to feature, by looking through the Primary Tags on related lenses, to find the best match. So, although "upside down goldfish" is one of my best keywords, not many other lenses will use that as a primary tag, so it would be a mistake for me to do that.

Instead I use "goldfish" as my Primary Tag to give me a better chance of appearing on other related lenses and in the search results within Squidoo.

Further Reading about Keyword Research:

[How to research keywords](#)

[Keyword Research 1: An Introduction to Keyword Research](#)

[Keyword Research 2: How to do Keyword Research](#)

[Keyword Research 3: Where to Use your Keywords](#)

[Keyword Research 4: Market Samurai Takes Keyword Research to the Next Level](#)

[Keyword placement for better SEO - a specific Squidoo lens example](#)

[More on Keyword placement for better SEO](#)

[SEO for squidoo - getting found in google: search engine optimization](#)

[Google keyword research tool](#)

[Free key word tracker](#)

[SEO Tools Keyword Suggestion Tool](#)

[SpyFu](#)

[Apogee Competitors keyword tool](#)

[Free keyword software](#)

[Google Sets \(Find phrases\)](#)

[Submit Express Keyword Suggestion Tool](#)

[Trellian Keyword Discovery](#)

[Webmaster Toolkit Keyword Research](#)

We hope that this Squidoo Guidebook has helped you, but if you have any questions then please visit this thread on the [Squidlog Forum](#), where we will do our best to answer your questions.

Glossary

Keywords

Keywords are **essential** to getting your online content found by people looking for the information you are offering on your Squidoo Lenses, Blogs and Websites. They are the words that searchers use in the Search Boxes on Google, Yahoo and other Search Engines to surf the net.

Backlinks

Backlinks are links that are on other web pages, either belonging to you or others, that link to your Squidoo Lenses and other online content. The more links you have pointing to your content, then the more the Search Engines may believe that you are an authority on the topic about which you are writing. This in turn can lead to your featuring more highly on the Search Returns.

Quality Backlinks

Quality Backlinks are Backlinks pointing to your site from other well-ranked web pages that are RELEVANT to your topic. These links should be "DoFollow".

DoFollow links tell the Google (and other Search Engine) Spiders that the site linking to you is acknowledging that you are a trustworthy and quality site.

However, some sites do not allow DoFollow links to reduce the number of Spam links left in comments. Zazzle and Twitter are two sites that do not allow DoFollow links.

See this Squidlog Post for [How to check if a site is NoFollow or DoFollow](#)

Appendix A: Sites for Backlinks

As we published, these bookmarking and blogging sites allowed DoFollow links to Squidoo Lenses.

Site	URL	Google Page Rank for Site's Home Page
3StepAds	http://www.3stepads.com/	2
Amplify	http://amplify.com/	6
Bebo	http://www.bebo.com/	7
BlinkList	http://blinklist.com/	7
Buddymarks	http://buddymarks.com/	5
Digg	http://digg.com/news	8
Diigo	http://www.diigo.com/	6
Ezine	http://ezinearticles.com	6
Faves	https://secure.faves.com/	5
folkd	http://www.folkd.com/	7
foodloversweb.com	http://www.foodloversweb.com	2
friendster	http://www.friendster.com/	7
Gather	http://www.gather.com/	6
Go articles	http://www.goarticles.com/	4
Hubpages	http://hubpages.com/	6
info barrel	http://www.infobarrel.com/	4
Jamesspot	http://www.jamesspot.com/	5
Linka go go	http://www.linkagogo.com/	5
Live Journal	http://www.livejournal.com/	8
Live Journal	http://www.livejournal.com/	8
Multiply	http://multiply.com/	7
MySpace	http://www.myspace.com/	9
Posterous	http://posterous.com/	7
Quondio	http://www.qondio.com/	6
Redgage	http://www.redgage.com/	4
She told me.com	http://shetoldme.com/	5
Snipsly	http://snipsly.com/	3
Sonico	http://www.sonico.com/	5
Spotback	http://spotback.com/	5
Spurl	http://www.spurl.net/	6
Squidtop	http://squidtop.com/	2
Stumbleupon	http://www.stumbleupon.com/	8
Stumpedia	http://www.stumpedia.com/	3
Tumblr	http://www.tumblr.com/	8
wiki.answers.com	http://wiki.answers.com/	6
Yahoo Bookmarks	http://bookmarks.yahoo.com/	4
zimbio	http://www.zimbio.com/	4