

Claiming the Web for Acupuncture, Part Two

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In my last article in the January issue, I explained the importance of:

- Delivering our profession's messages via the World Wide Web;
- Getting your local practice noticed on the Web; and
- Knowing how to drive traffic to a Web site.

I also listed the top five Web sites that provide Chinese medicine information for the layperson, and we began to examine the basics of getting Web traffic. So far, we've covered the following:

1. A great name;
2. Lots of links to the site; and
3. Using TITLE and META tags.

Let's continue with how to increase traffic to your Chinese medicine Web site.

4. What's a Keyword?

This feeds in to the META tag concept from the first article. Believe it or not, a keyword can be any number of words. Actually, it's a key phrase, but we call it a keyword. It's the gold that Web searchers are digging for. It's the name tag that tells the search engine what your page is all about.

There are two types of keywords: general and specific. For example, *medicine* is quite general, *alternative medicine* is more specific, and *Chinese medicine* is even more specific. *Acupuncture* is general, *acupuncture points* is more specific, and *acupuncture point chart* is even more specific.

Each Web page should have one specific keyword, and a bunch of related general keywords.

5. Profitable Keywords

We're going to import a real-world concept: supply and demand. The more demand there is for what you have, and the less people supplying it, the better. Once you understand how important this is for Web pages, you'll understand why so many pages never see the light of day.

Let's try an example: Say we want to write a Web page about the tendinomuscular meridians (TMMs), and, of course, we want people to be able to find it.

Supply: go to www.google.com and search for *acupuncture*. I got 1,770,000 results - that's a high supply. There are 10 results on each page. That means there are 177,000 pages of Web sites that mention acupuncture. Generally speaking, most people won't go past the third or fourth page of results - and more often, they choose something on the first page. So, *acupuncture* is too general of a keyword.

How profitable a keyword is *acupuncture*? According to Overture.com (<http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>), there were 60,000 searches for acupuncture in one month, just on their Web sites. That sounds like a lot of demand, but remember there are more than 1.5 million pages in supply - it's virtually impossible to beat that supply-demand ratio unless you're CNN or some other site with mass traffic.

If we focus our Google search to *tendinomuscular meridians*, we get only 55 results. That's a low supply. That's good - but is there a demand? How many people search for *tendinomuscular meridians*? Ahhhh (that's the sound of realizing) ... TMMs are what we want to talk about.

Let's play Jeopardy. What's the question people are already asking? As you read this, people are out there searching for information and have no idea that the answer might be tendinomuscular meridians. If we don't connect their question with our answer, they may never find out! In other words, if we don't think about our audience, it may be years before someone searching specifically for TMMs lands on our Web page. I don't know about you, but I don't want to wait that long! I want six million people to learn about TMMs this year!

Instead of getting tunnel vision about what we want to talk about (TMMs), let's brainstorm about what our future readers might already be searching for. What are TMMs good for? They treat problems of the *joints, tendons and muscles*. They are yang and contain only *wei qi*. *If they are replete, there can be spasms, contracture, edema, and pain, and are sensitive to very light pressure. If they are vacuous, there is lack of skin tone, numbness, muscular atony or atrophy, paralysis or paresis, paleness, and cold, and sensitive to deep pressure.* Does this help us? Yes, because we just found a bunch of potential keywords!

Analyzing the Profitability of Potential Keywords

Now, go through www.google.com and www.overture.com (see the link above in this article), and find the most profitable word of the bunch.

1. Start with Overture, and see what keywords people are actually searching with.
2. Choose the most relevant keywords from each list (that means keywords you think you could write a whole Web page about).
3. Then use Google to find out how much supply there is for these in demand keywords (make sure you search with your entire keyword in quotes, e.g. "joint pain remedy").

This can take some time, but it's worth it: If you want people to find your Web page, *you must do this!*

How do you do it? How do you organize things? I find the best way is to use MS Excel. You can create a table of keywords, demand and supply, and a profitability column. In the profitability column, you create a math formula that calculates the demand and supply to give you a profitability score (demand divided by supply). Then, you can compare the keywords you analyze. For example:

Keyword	Demand	Supply	Profitability
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1. Muscle pain relief	155	5730	0.03
2. Paralysis rehabilitation	37	288	0.13
3. Muscle spasm treatment	138	1740	0.08
4. Edema treatment	234	823	0.28
5. Joint pain remedy	85	116	0.73
6. Home remedy for arthritis	293	260	1.13
7. Arthritis treatment	4793	45,500	0.11
8. Arthritis pain relief	2969	46,700	0.06
9. Arthritis remedy	1006	8200	0.12
10. Natural arthritis remedy	541	1720	0.31

These keywords are listed in the order in which I investigated them. I found the first five by looking through Overture's searches for relevant results. I wasn't satisfied with the profitability of these keywords. I realized that many people are concerned about arthritis, and there's some confusion over what it is, so I conducted a little investigation. I found that people search for *arthritis* about three times more often than pain. I kept analyzing the supply and demand for Overture's arthritis-related searches, and found that *home remedy for arthritis* has the best supply-demand ratio. It also is searched for about four times as often as the next most profitable keyword, *joint pain remedy*.

That's the process. It's tedious, but it's also crucial to traffic-building success

6. Thinking About Your Entire Web Site Ahead of Time

You can see how much brainstorming and analysis goes into one successful Web page, but what about the entire Web site? How do you decide what the best topic for your Web site is?

Domain Name. You can use the same keyword analysis process for your domain name. Just find the most profitable keyword for your topic, and make that your domain name, with hyphens in-between (e.g., herbal-supplement-information.com or natural-home-remedy.com). Why the hyphens? Some search engines are more likely to see the separate words in your domain name that way. As a result, you will score higher for searches on those words, plus that entire keyword phrase.

Hindsight is 20-20. My main website, www.pulsemed.org, is a great example of hitting the glass ceiling as a result of learning web traffic wisdom as I went. First, my site is titled, "The Pulse of Oriental Medicine." Why *Oriental medicine* and not *Chinese medicine*? If you apply the keyword analysis wisdom above in point #5, you'll see that Chinese medicine is more than two times as profitable a keyword than Oriental medicine. I chose Oriental medicine because that was the "proper" phrase, not on the basis of supply and demand. So, I'm technically more accurate, but get fewer visitors. With hindsight, I think it would have been better to choose *Chinese medicine*, and explain the significance of *Oriental medicine* to visitors after they arrived.

Subtopics. If your Web site keyword is general, you can have more specific subtopics within the site. For example, if your website is natural-home-remedy.com, you can have a number of keywords that include home remedy plus something more specific, like *home remedy for arthritis* from our example in point #5. I've employed this structure on a new Web site (www.home-herbal-remedy.com).

7. Keyword Density on Your Entire Web Site

Every page on your Web site is ranked by search engines not only on the basis of the keywords on that page, but also by how often that word shows up on your entire site. *The search engines try to figure*

out what the main topic of your Web site is, so they find the most common words on your site. You have a much better chance of getting a high ranking on a search for a specific keyword if one of those keywords is found throughout your entire site.

For example, if you're trying to get the top spot on Google for *acupuncture weight loss*, it helps if your entire site is about acupuncture, or your entire site is about weight loss. The second-best option would be if you have several pages about weight loss and/or acupuncture.

Conclusion

I've given you seven major keys to getting loads of Web traffic. Of course, there is plenty more to discuss about each point, and we're only scratching the surface, but I have to stop somewhere, and I promised this would only be two parts.

If you have any questions about building traffic to an existing site or designing a Web site meant for huge amounts of traffic from the outset, I'd be happy to answer them in either my talk back forum, or via e-mail (bbcarter at pulsed dot org - that's spelled out to avoid spam harvesters).

In a future column, I'll discuss applying these principles to the local acupuncturist's Web site.

All the best!

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