

the art of
KEYWORD|SELECTION
for campaigns



Are you localizing your keywords correctly?

I ask because many times we assume everyone searches online the same way we do. We think that because we do something one-way, surely everyone else does it too, right? That is not always the case, especially when we are trying to market to a specific location. To take this a step further, most marketers are remote in relation to the locations they are targeting.

As a result, we have to understand how our own local bias can sometimes get in the way of our overall marketing success. We all have our localization tilts. The trick to successful marketing is to be able to tilt our marketing toward the specific areas we target. This can be difficult, so let's do a quick keyword exercise.

We will look at self-storage in Denver, Houston, and New York. These three cities are far enough apart that I believe we will see some significant differences.

keyword selectio|





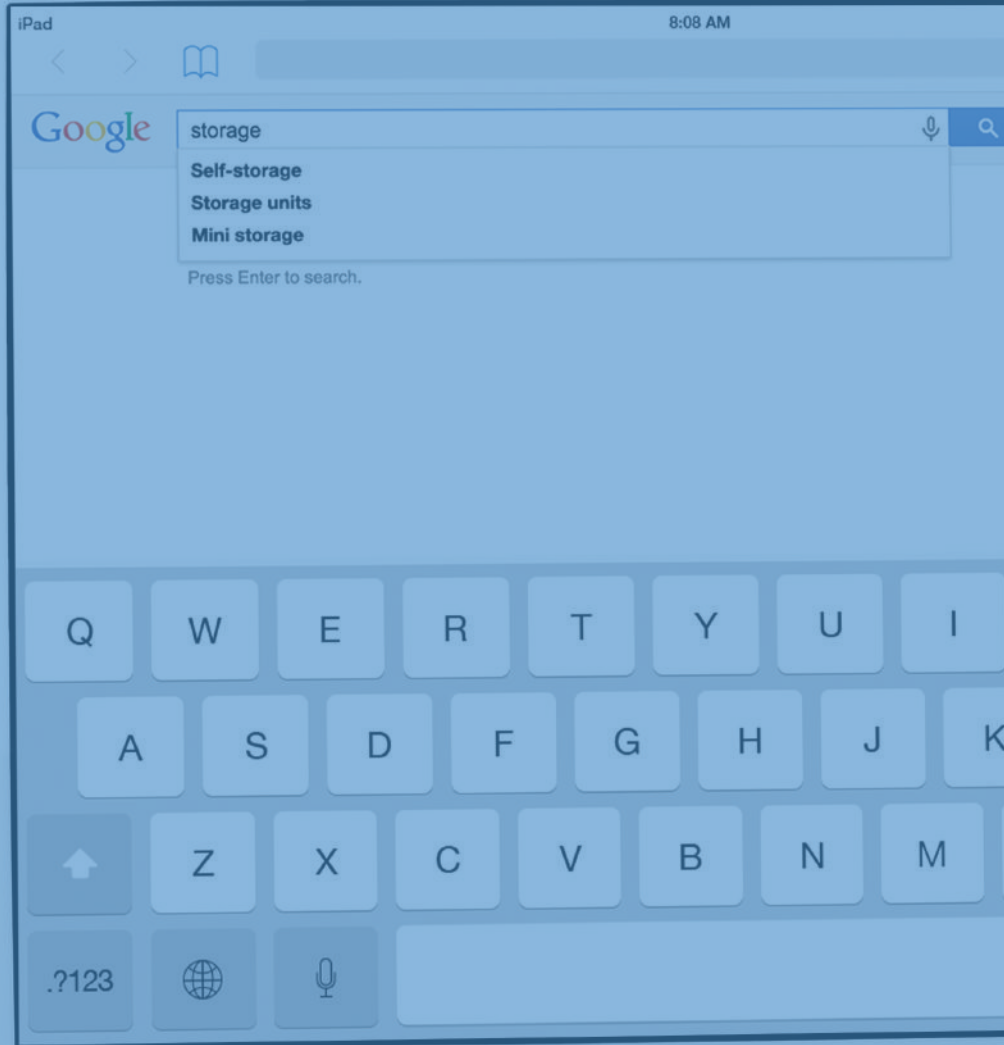
First we compile a list of potential keywords. This is called a keyword seed list.

Here is an example:

- Storage
- Self-storage
- Storage units
- Mini storage

We will also compare how consumers are searching locally using the following variations:

- City + Keyword
(Denver Storage)
- Keyword + City
(Storage Denver)





Storage Type	Value
Storage	165,000
Storage Units	135,000
Self Storage	49,500
Mini Storage	6,600

165,000

Storage

135,000

Storage Units

49,500

Self Storage

6,600

Mini Storage

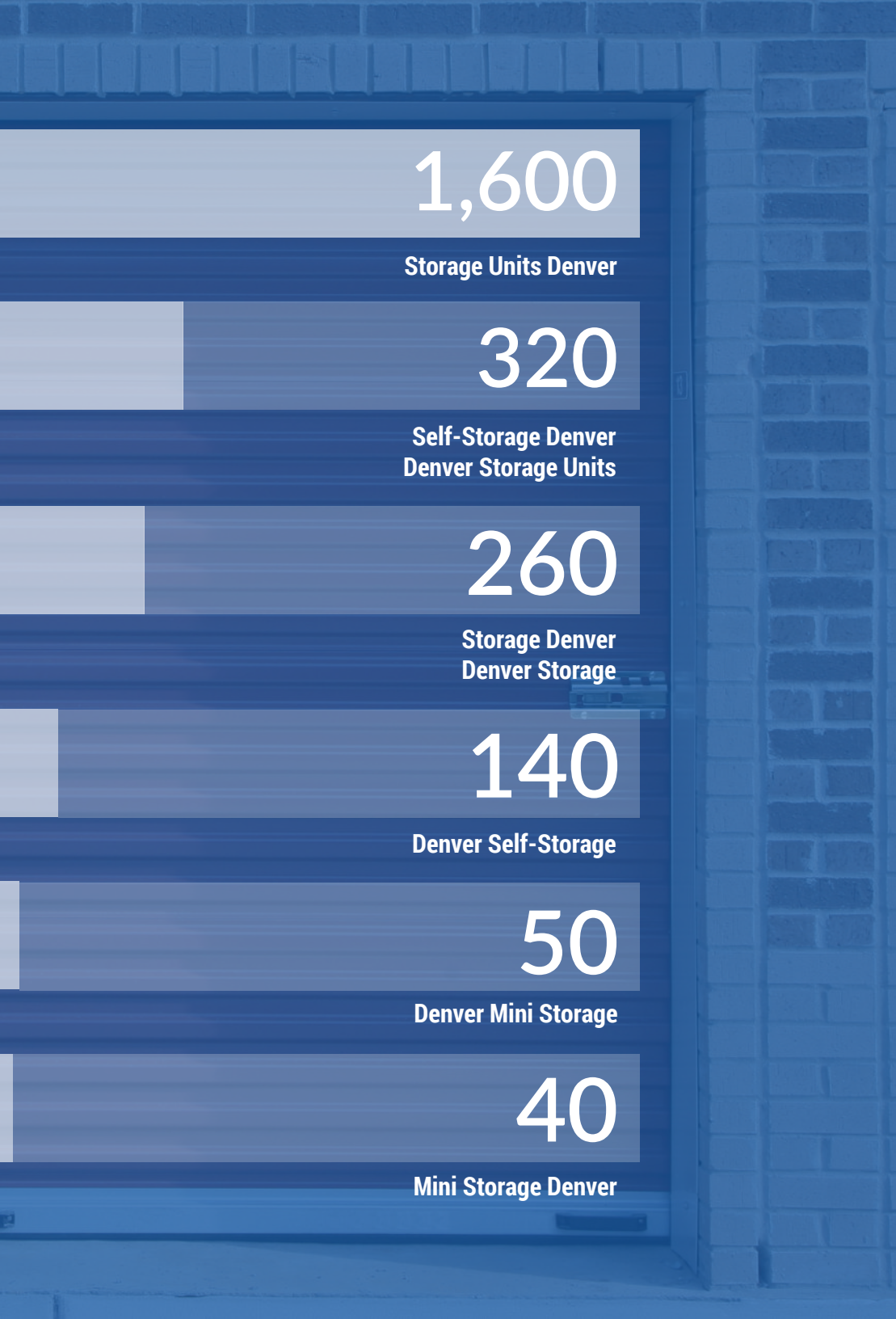


Nationwide Keyword Demand
Monthly Search Volume

Take a look at the keyword list to the left. Using Google's keyword planner, this represents monthly search volume at the national level.

Is this the way you would have ordered the keyword preferences across the U.S.?

NATIONWIDE



Denver Keyword Demand Monthly Search Volume

Now let's look at Denver. You will see the same keywords to the left, but with the addition of the city before and after the keyword. Here is what we found:

Based on this data, “Keyword + City” appear to be the preferred method of search.

You will also notice “storage units Denver” takes the cake, even though national demand shows that it should be “storage” before “storage units”. To follow that, “self-storage” outpaces “storage” in the same format. This is why we check.

In many cases marketers would have selected “Denver storage” as their primary term. This would have put you up against 19.5 million other pages in Google vs 1.13 million pages for the more heavily trafficked “storage units Denver”.

Why not target the less competitive keyword with six times more traffic?

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Storage Units Denver

Self-Storage Denver Denver Storage Units

Storage Denver Denver Storage

Denver Self-Storage

Denver Mini Storage

Mini Storage Denver

In Denver, the terms “Denver storage” and “Storage Denver” are basically negligible in their search activity. We also know that mini storage is not a heavily trafficked term in Denver. It is 4% of the volume of the top term nationally (6,600/165,000), but only 2.5% of the search volume in Denver. Why? That term is simply more popular in other areas of the country.

Before leaving the Denver example, look at the difference between “storage units Denver” and “Denver storage units”. We see five times more search traffic for “storage units Denver” than we see for “Denver storage units”. This simple variation in the order of keywords makes a significant difference in search volume.





Houston Keyword Demand Monthly Search Volume

Now let's review keyword searches in Houston. You will notice that search volume is significantly lower (1,600 for the top term in Denver vs 480 in Houston) which could be a result of:

- People in Houston localizing their searches with more precise accuracy than just the major metro area.
- Denver could simply have a higher demand for storage.

Here are several other observations:

- The most popular term is "self-storage", whereas in Denver, the term "storage units" was significantly more popular than "self-storage".
- Like Denver, the preferred order of the keywords is keyword + city.
- "Mini storage" is a more common term in Houston, representing 23% of the search volume of the top term, 19 points higher than the national average.

480

Self-Storage Houston

390

Storage Houston

260

Houston Storage

210

Storage Units Houston

110

Houston Storage Units
Houston Self-Storage
Mini Storage Houston

70

Houston Mini

NOTES



New York Keyword Demand Monthly Search Volume

Let's review one more example. How do people search for storage in New York City? Several items stand out when looking at the data.

The first is that the volume is the lowest of our three city examples. Like Houston, it is likely due to the city qualifier (New York) being too general. The real search activity is happening with more localized terms. In fact, New York is the most densely populated city in our sample group, which requires intense localization. However, even at this metro level, we can still determine keyword ranking preferences.

Looking at the data we see New York is the first city to show less of a preference with respect to the order of terms. The top term in our list is "keyword + city", like Denver and Houston, but a "city + keyword" is every bit as popular. Both variations of that search show 260 searches per month.

Now take a look at "New York storage units". You will see it outpaces the reverse order as does New York mini storage. This lack of commitment to one order or another proves inconclusive and drives the need for additional data at a finer level of detail.

260

Storage New York
New York Storage

90

Self-Storage New York

70

New York Self-Storage

40

New York Storage Units

30

New York Mini Storage
Storage Units New York

20

Mini Storage New York

NEW YORK



Search Term	Value
Storage New York	260
Self-Storage New York	90
New York Self-Storage	70
New York Storage Units	40
New York Mini Storage	30
Mini Storage New York	20

260

Storage New York
New York Storage

90

Self-Storage New York

70

New York Self-Storage

40

New York Storage Units

30

New York Mini Storage
Storage Units New York

20

Mini Storage New York

In New York, storage is the preferred keyword, with self-storage being the preferred “storage” qualifier. This is the only city in our sample that shows the simple term of storage outdoing a qualified variation of the term (i.e. storage units).

However, we have to be careful with general terms like “storage” because storage can mean so many things in today’s environment (ex. storage on a computer, cloud storage).

Our data set shows a higher level of activity for the simple term “storage”, but it would be smart to stay focused on the qualified variations like “self-storage” and not let those be overlooked.

The demand for mini storage is 11.5% of the demand for the highest searched item in New York, in this case “storage New York”. This is several points higher than what we see for Denver, but lower than Houston. This is significant because even though it is not as high as what we see in Houston, it is still well above the national average for the term.

A term like “mini storage” could be deemed as inconsequential to most marketers, but there is definitely demand for it, even in a place like New York.

NEW YORK

THE TAKEAWAY

ONE

You must localize your keyword research to each market.

TWO

The “one size fits all” attitude of most marketers will not work at the local level.

THREE

Every area of the country is different and individual areas of a city can vary as well.

It all comes down to understanding the habits of the people you are targeting. If you have that covered, then your marketing efforts are more likely to find success.



Written By Jason Barrett

Jason Barrett is CEO of Go Local Interactive, a full-service digital agency that helps large brands acquire new customers through local online marketing solutions. He has over 16 years of experience leading successful online marketing strategies for clients and is responsible



636-696-9434



Tom.Carroll@golocalinteractive.com



golocalinteractive.com



CONTACT US