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Super Quick Content Gap Analysis

Mark Porter

Posted 23 May, 2016 by Mark Porter in SEO

Super Quick Content Gap Analysis

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We haven't been using Sistrix for all that long at **Screaming Frog**, though we're fast becoming one of their biggest fans. We usually approach 'all in one tools' with an air of scepticism, as while they may cover all of the bases, it doesn't always mean they do it well.

The team at Sistrix however are proving that it is possible to become the Swiss army knife of the SEO world, and while it does still have some (charming!) quirks, every time I log in I find a new way to use the vast amounts of data at my disposal.

One such way is quickly exporting your competitor's rankings, and comparing them against your own to highlight areas they're excelling in, that you're not even competing for. It's not a new practise, but with the tools Sistrix provides and with some Excel wizardry it's a super simple task, and can help you spot gaps in your content. It's possible to achieve this using any ranking software, however this is a way of tapping into Sistrix's data and viewing all of the terms a site ranks for, as opposed to using a predefined list.

For this example we're going to be looking at the 'space' niche, where sites are competing for the abundance of search volume around 'facts' related terms and common queries such as 'distance to moon'.

Grabbing The Data

Before starting the process you're going to need an idea of who exactly are your current competitors, which is a feature that Sistrix offers. Simply plug in your own URL and click 'Competitors' on the left hand side.

Disregard the likes of Wikipedia, Amazon, YouTube etc., and pick out 3 or 4 sites you feel are direct competitors, which shouldn't be hard if you're knowledgeable about the niche. For this example we're going to use Space-Facts.com as 'our' site and nineplanets.org, theplanets.org and planetsforkids.org as our competitors.

Once you have your competitors, start off by putting the first one in the domain field and choosing your desired country, and heading once again to 'Competitors' on the left hand site. This time, click 'Compare Keywords', and enter your domain into the appropriate field.

The reason for doing it this way round, is because Sistrix will only show you the keywords the site you're analysing ranks for, and benchmarks competitors against those. Instead of the rankings for our own site, we want to look at the keywords our competitor ranks for and compare those to our own.

Keyword	nineplanets.org	space-facts.com
saturn	1	10
kids 9	1	
about jupiter	1	5
planet the sun	1	20
world planet	1	
nineplanets	1	
names planets	1	96
nine planets	1	
9 planets	1	56
planets earth	1	7
solar system tour	1	
neptune	2	6
planets	2	8
uranus	2	5
planets sun	2	32
about the sun	2	1

Keywords (Showing 1 to 100 of 341) — « 1 2 3 4 »

Export this table by clicking on the small cog icon on the right hand side, and repeat this for each page or as many as you feel necessary. The more you export, the more data you'll have to play with. Unfortunately it's not possible to export the entire table in one go (remember those charming quirks we mentioned?).

Repeat this for all of the competitors, each time comparing your own site against them.

Firing Up The Spreadsheets

Once you have all the exports, it's time to pull the data together in Excel. Firstly, create a table with columns for your Keywords, Search Volume (more on that later), your site and each of the competitors. You can worry about making it look pretty later. Next open up each of your exports for each page of the first competitor's rankings, which are .csv's delimited with semicolons. Combine them into one sheet and do a Ctrl+F for 'keyword' to delete the rows with the extra headings (leaving the top heading!), which gives us one big list of terms and rankings.

Tidy the data up by selecting the entire column, using 'Text to Columns' (under Data tab), selecting 'Delimited', choosing Semicolon as the 'Delimiter' and clicking Finish.
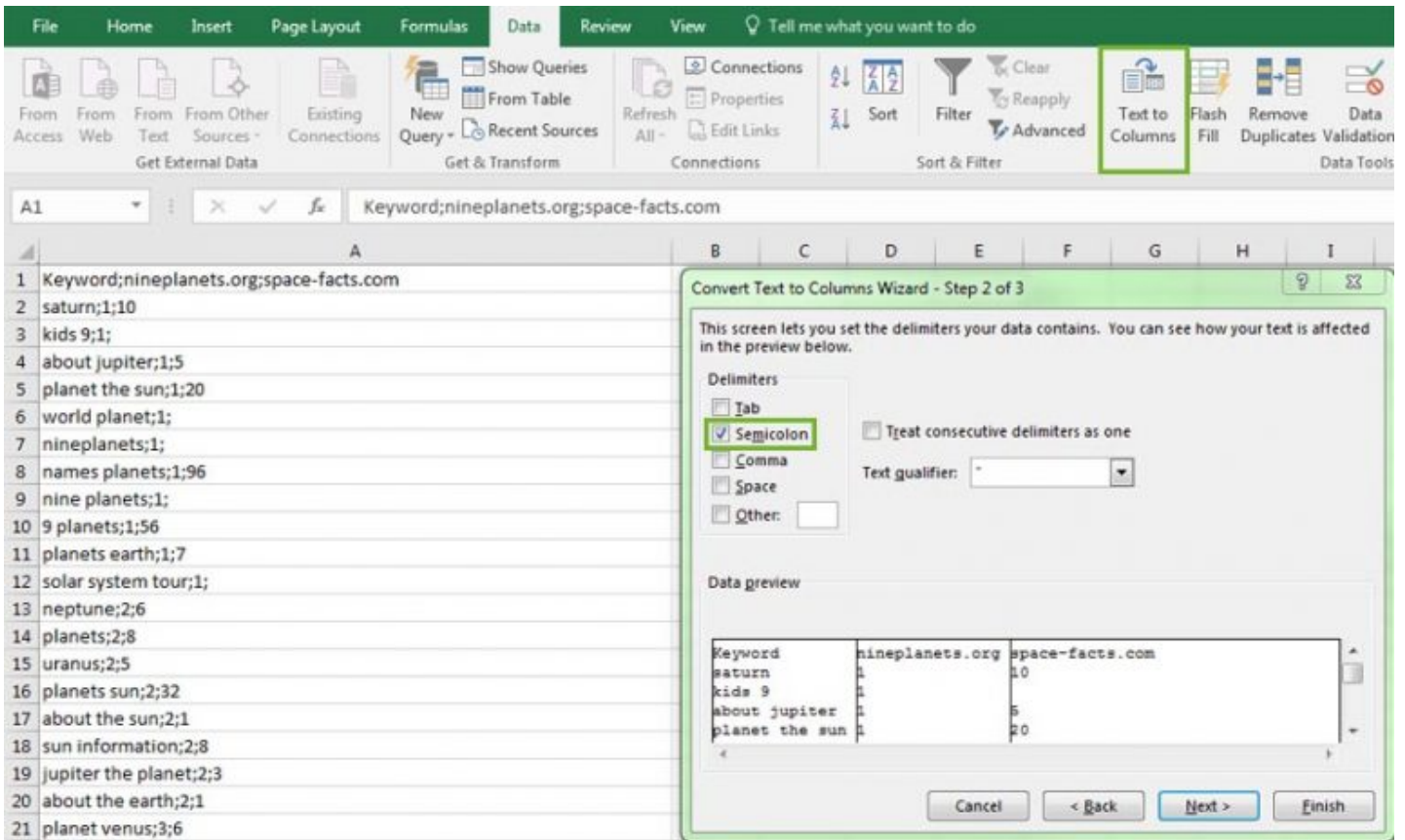
Return to the table you made, and paste the data into the appropriate columns, being sure to keep it all in the same order.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Keyword	Search Volume	Space-Facts.com	Nineplanets.org	ThePlanets.org	PlanetsForKids.org
2	saturn		10	1		
3	kids 9			1		
4	about jupiter		5	1		
5	planet the sun		20	1		
6	world planet			1		
7	nineplanets			1		
8	names planets		96	1		
9	nine planets			1		
10	9 planets		56	1		
11	planets earth		7	1		
12	solar system tour			1		
13	neptune		6	2		
14	planets		8	2		
15	uranus		5	2		
16	planets sun		32	2		
17	about the sun		1	2		
18	sun information		8	2		
19	jupiter the planet		3	2		
20	about the earth		1	2		
21	planet venus		6	3		
22	moon's		7	3		
23	planet jupiter		1	3		
24	sun planets		14	3		
25	earth the moon		6	3		
26	planet		82	3		
27	information sun		8	3		
28	all planet		47	3		

Repeat the process for each of the competitors, by pasting the keywords into one big list in Column A, and the rankings once again in the appropriate columns. Again, execute caution when matching up the keywords and rankings.

Finally, we need to grab the search volume for these terms using Google Keyword Planner. Add a filter to your table and sort the keywords alphabetically, in order to ensure everything matches up. Dump all the keywords into the Keyword Planner and export them, and paste the keywords along with search volume into a separate sheet in columns A and B respectively. The reason we do this is because Keyword Planner removes duplicate terms, which we don't want to do, so some simple VLOOKUP is required to pull the volume next to the corresponding term.

Assuming your spreadsheet is set up the same as this example, and assuming the search volume is in Sheet2 (Keywords in colum

A, volume in column B) the formula is as follows:

=VLOOKUP(A:A,Sheet2!$A$1:$B$419,2,FALSE)

Hopefully the end result looks something like this:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Keyword	Search Volume	Space-Facts.com	Nineplanets.org	ThePlanets.org	PlanetsForKids.org
2	27 moons	90	22	27		
3	4 gas	20			97	
4	4 planet	20			72	
5	4 planet	20				81
6	9 planets	2900	56	1		
7	about day	10				18
8	about earth	390	3	5		
9	about earth	390	3		11	
10	about earth	390	3			4
11	about for kids	10				88
12	about interesting facts	10	22		75	
13	about jupiter	260	5	1		
14	about jupiter	260	5		7	
15	about jupiter	260	5			10
16	about planet	20	2	9		
17	about planet	20	2		6	
18	about planet	20	2			20
19	about solar system	50	7	19		
20	about solar system	50	7		22	
21	about solar system	50	7			35
22	about sun	70	5	4		
23	about sun	70	5		6	
24	about sun	70	5			7

Mind The (Content) Gap

You're now able to sift though the data as you see fit, sorting by the highest volume terms and filtering your own rankings to display just the blanks, using this to inform your content strategy. For example, you can add a column to indicate areas of content you wish to pursue:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Keyword	Search Volume	Space-Facts.com	Nineplanets.org	ThePlanets.org	PlanetsForKids.org	Pursue?
40	nebula	60500			7		Yes
42	halley's comet	49500			22		Yes
46	hyperion	40500			70		Yes
93	nebulae	12100			6		Yes
94	our solar system	12100			8		Yes
135	moons of jupiter	6600				53	Yes
158	solar system for kids	5400			18		Yes
181	distance to moon	3600				75	Yes
209	distance to the sun	2400				85	Yes
222	moon distance from earth	1900			19		Yes

There are some things to consider before trying this out for yourself. It's important to pick direct competitors where possible, as if you choose a competitor that covers many niches there won't be much opportunity revealed. Along a similar vein, if your competitors are large brands they will rank for lots of branded terms which you of course can't pursue. The workaround for this is to simply Ctrl+F and delete any branded terms of theirs.

This technique is great for highlighting where your competitors are getting their organic visibility from. Your domain may be more authoritative than the competition, but you may simply lack the content needed to rank. Use this to draft up a content short list and knock your competition off their perch.

Related Posts:

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[Mark Porter](#)

Mark is a self-confessed geek who has always had a love/hate relationship with blogging, coupled with an addiction to buying domain names. Outside of SEO, Mark loves Manchester United, gadgets and games. If anyone can beat him at FIFA he will happily buy them a drink.

2 Comments

-

  [izhak agam](#) 3 months ago

  There is no doubt that the site Sistrix gives very valuable data on the site, an excellent article!

  [Reply](#)

-

  [Maurizio Fumini](#) 3 months ago

  Agree for quality of Sistrix metrics, are great tool, thanks for article!

  [Reply](#)

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Name (required)   Email (required)   Website address   Submit Comment

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About Us

Screaming frog is a search marketing agency drawing on years of experience from within the world of digital marketing.

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