Strategic Planning for the real world

How to harness the wealth of information, inspiration and insight on the Internet for more resonant, relevant and effective communications

Nicholine Hayward
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"Perhaps you will seek out some trove of data and sift through it, balancing your intelligence and intuition to arrive at a glimmering new idea."

Steven D Levitt and Stephen J Dubner

Freakonomics

Introduction

The problem with Planning is that we need to know what people want.   This means asking them questions, which immediately creates a dilemma. Every group, every, omnibus, survey or depth interview, however carefully planned and objectively moderated, engenders a sense of self-consciousness in the respondents that can skew the results. We've all been to Groups where someone was afraid to speak while another liked the sound of his own voice a bit too much. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to see what was in people's heads without having to ask? Would it be good to have data from a larger proportion of the population than the base sizes we normally have?

With the research methodology I'm about to describe, we can. By looking at what millions of people are asking for and talking about online, we have access to the largest, most honest and unself-conscious focus group in the world.

We can apply the results of this methodology to every stage of a business and marketing strategy, from developing the products that people are looking for and improving the ones they are already buying, to devising communications campaigns that really strike a chord. We can use it to see market and category dynamics reflected in consumer awareness and demand, to find out what people think about a brand, create rounded and realistic pen portraits and a resonant tone of voice or to gain insights into consumer behaviour – and how best to reach them.

What this methodology gives us is both a snapshot of the collective psyche of millions of people and the personal thoughts of one person at a time. It's a goldmine. And now it can be yours.

Some background

In 1998, as the Marketing Director of an Internet company, Weboptimiser, (which, incidentally, is still alive and well and one of the leaders in its field) I came across some very interesting information. It was the raw data from the search engine GoTo's server logs. The data showed how many people made a particular search in the last month.

To my technical colleagues, that wasn't very exciting beyond its application for meta tags. But it told me, a marketer and former copywriter, what people were looking for, how many of them wanted it and how they were asking for it. We could see what the online public was asking for, in their own time, in their own words and sitting at their own PC! We could use this information for more insightful new product development, more relevant communications strategies and better creative executions. We could talk to consumers in their own language, to meet the needs they were telling us they had. Just think of the insights we'd have, for R & D, marketing and PR. It really was a Eureka moment.

Eureka!

This initial discovery has evolved into a unique research and planning methodology that, because it's in permanent Beta, is getting better all the time. I've put a lot of thinking into how it can be applied, both strategically and tactically. And the sources of insight are much bigger and better than ever before. GoTo is long gone and Yahoo! isn't the online force it once was but we have Google. Message boards and user groups , once a rich source of user generated data, have declined, but in their place we have blogs, review sites and online communities. There are also new ways to target and track down data too, such as Google Alerts and RSS, which restlessly prowl the Internet on your behalf. Everyone who uses it changes it, too. Once you start to use this methodology for yourself, you'll start tweaking and tailoring it around the brands you work on and find new ways to get value from it.

In this Paper, I've tried to provide a complete introduction to the methodology, what it is, how it works and what it can do for you . In the first section, I look at the tools and techniques themselves, in Section Two I look at how they can be applied to a communications strategy and in Section Three,

I have taken a sample business challenge and looked at how the methodology could be used to help solve it.

The Get Out Clause

There are some caveats. You don't get a 360 degree view of one consumer, and you can't dig deeper to ask more questions to clarify a point. Sometimes the data can be quite hard to read, so you often need to look at it from several perspectives in order to make sense of it. Rather than relying wholly on the insights, I use them as a way of setting the agenda for further exploration and validation via the usual research channels, a catalyst for ideas or a sounding board for existing strategies.

But it's fresh, free and fast.   The Internet is a living repository of data, you can watch what's happening right now. It's also freely available. There are paid online research tools and services and many of them are excellent. An honourable mention is due here to MotiveQuest and their superb online anthropology service, but in this paper I have concentrated on what you can find for nothing.

And lastly, it's fast. If you need a quick point of view, or want to test a theory or an idea, this methodology will give you instant results, making it ideal for chemistry meetings and pitches as well as longer term planning and strategy.

If you've got any niggles with this paper, don't complain. I never said it was perfect. But if you've got ideas and feedback, or suggestions to improve it, then drop me a line on nicholine@gmail.com or call me on 07767 320687.

Executive summary

The Internet, from search engines to social media, offers a vast and easily accessible repository of fresh, free and authentic insight and intelligence. The insights come, not from people sitting in a focus group, filling out a questionnaire or standing on a street corner talking to a researcher with a clipboard, but from unguarded conversations on forums, social networks and blogs and searches on Google. I call it the 'largest, most honest and unselfconscious focus group in the world' and it can help us at every stage of the Strategic Planning process:

1. **Where are we now and how did we get here?**

We can uncover insights into current and historic market and category drivers and segmentations, competitors and consumer perceptions. We can identify, anticipate and address market and societal trends and create rounded and realistic pen portraits and typologies.

2. **Where do we want to be?**

We can scope out the opportunities for a brand in terms of market and mindshare, to postulate what success might look like, identify potential territories and the challenges that need to be overcome in order to achieve these ambitions.

3. **How will we get there?**

We can identify how, when and where to best engage and inspire our audience, from resonant and relevant messaging and proposition to targeting and tone of voice.

4. **How will we know when we have succeeded?**

We can evaluate the impact and effectiveness of communications campaigns, both in terms of reach and engagement but also attitudinal and behavioural change, competitor activity and overall category dynamics.

So, if you need a snapshot of whether a market is growing or declining *in consumers' minds*, an instant point of view on a brand positioning, an outline agenda for a focus group, or an idea of how a creative campaign has been received, this methodology is the perfect catalyst, sounding board and complement to traditional, conventional research.

It can transform the way you work.

Section One: Tools and Techniques

Let's start with a look at the base we are working from, namely, Google's customer base. According to the Office for National Statistics, 65% of UK households have access to the web. That's 16.46m households and an increase of 1.23m on last year. And this is just people at home – many more have access to the web at work, school and via their mobiles. If you also consider that Google has approximately 80% of the search market, at least in the UK, and after email, search is the most popular online activity, this gives us a very big base to work from. In fact, we can assume that the hopes, dreams, fears and needs of the population, minus the very young, the very old and the socially excluded – are reflected via the tools and techniques in this paper.

To find out what people are looking for

[Google Insights for Search](#)

Google Insights for Search is a more detailed version of Google Trends and is always the best tool to start your investigation with. It shows you the level of search demand, plus news coverage, for any word or phrase you choose. The news stories that the tool lists can sometimes be a bit misleading as Google randomly selects them from its archive, so they're often from obscure US news sites like the Wichita Herald, where the last big event was Houdini's attempt to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel.

You can search by word or phrase, geography and time, so for example, you can compare, as shown here, searches for Porsche compared to those for new and used cars in the UK, since 2004. Later in the paper, we'll take a look at some of the insights we can learn from this data.
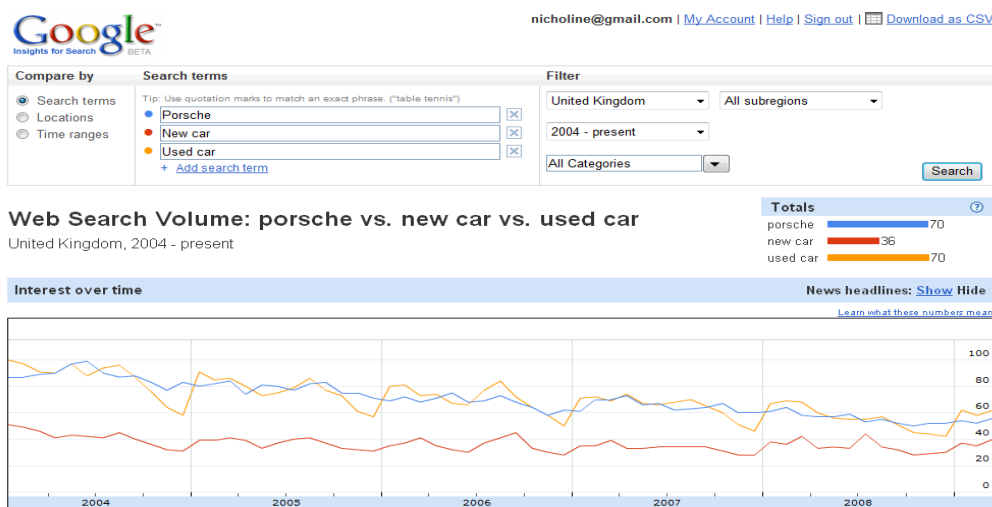
You can also look at the top and fastest growing searches. This tells you what the most popular searches were, around the term and timescale you've selected. The rising searches are the fastest-growing, so you can identify surges in demand within a given timeframe.

Google Insights for Search also gives levels of regional interest, but this seems a lot more 'beta' than the other functions and the data is a bit skewed by the small base sizes of some of the online populations, such as the Isle of Man.

The Google Keyword Tool

The Google Keyword tool was originally developed to help online marketers identify the best keywords and phrases for their AdWords pay-per-click advertising campaigns. It tells you how many people (approximately) made a particular search last month, and the monthly average for the previous year. You can compare search terms broadly, to identify the key trends, or by the exact phrase.   So you can see, for example, what the most popular searches are for a phrase, in this case, mobile phones:

Keywords	Advertiser Competition ⑦	▼Approx Search Volume: February ⑦	Approx Avg Search Volume ⑦	Search Volume Trends ⑦	Highest Volume Occurred In	Match Type: ⑦ Broad ▾
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sort by relevance ⑦						
mobile phones		823,000	16,600,000		Nov	Add ⌄
pay as you go mobile phones		246,000	246,000		Nov	Add ⌄
samsung mobile phones		246,000	1,000,000		Nov	Add ⌄
mobile phone		201,000	5,000,000		Nov	Add ⌄
mobile phone accessories		110,000	673,000		Oct	Add ⌄
free mobile phones		90,500	135,000		Nov	Add ⌄
lg mobile phones		90,500	368,000		Nov	Add ⌄
motorola mobile phones		74,000	246,000		Oct	Add ⌄
mobile phone deals		60,500	90,500		Nov	Add ⌄
cheap mobile phones		49,500	74,000		Nov	Add ⌄
pink mobile phones		49,500	135,000		Nov	Add ⌄
mobile phone reviews		40,500	49,500		Nov	Add ⌄
mobile phones orange		27,100	74,000		May	Add ⌄
latest mobile phones		22,200	27,100		Oct	Add ⌄
new mobile phones		22,200	110,000		May	Add ⌄
sony ericsson mobile phone		22,200	368,000		Nov	Add ⌄
mobile phone cases		18,100	301,000		Nov	Add ⌄
orange mobile phone		18,100	90,500		Nov	Add ⌄
3g mobile phones		14,800	165,000		Nov	Add ⌄
mobile phone insurance		14,800	22,200		Nov	Add ⌄
mobile phone review		14,800	22,200		Nov	Add ⌄
samsung mobile phone		14,800	368,000		Nov	Add ⌄
best mobile phone		12,100	49,500		Nov	Add ⌄
best mobile phone		12,100	14,800		Nov	Add ⌄

As you can see, you can quantify relative demand for particular brands, see what the most popular buying criteria are and get an insight into broad market and category dynamics. I'll explain all this in more depth later in this paper.

Google Trends for Websites

Google Trends for Websites is a useful tool for gauging the approximate level of web traffic to one or more websites and for seeing what else they searched for and where else they went, either before or afterwards.

Here, for example, is the chart for Moonpig, the greetings card site, and you can see seasonal trends, as well as useful insights into the audience and their overall online behaviour. You can see which web sites they visited, and what the searched for, in order to understand the type of consumers visiting the site and what their motivation might be, which is also handy for media strategy. Again, I'll cover this in more depth later.
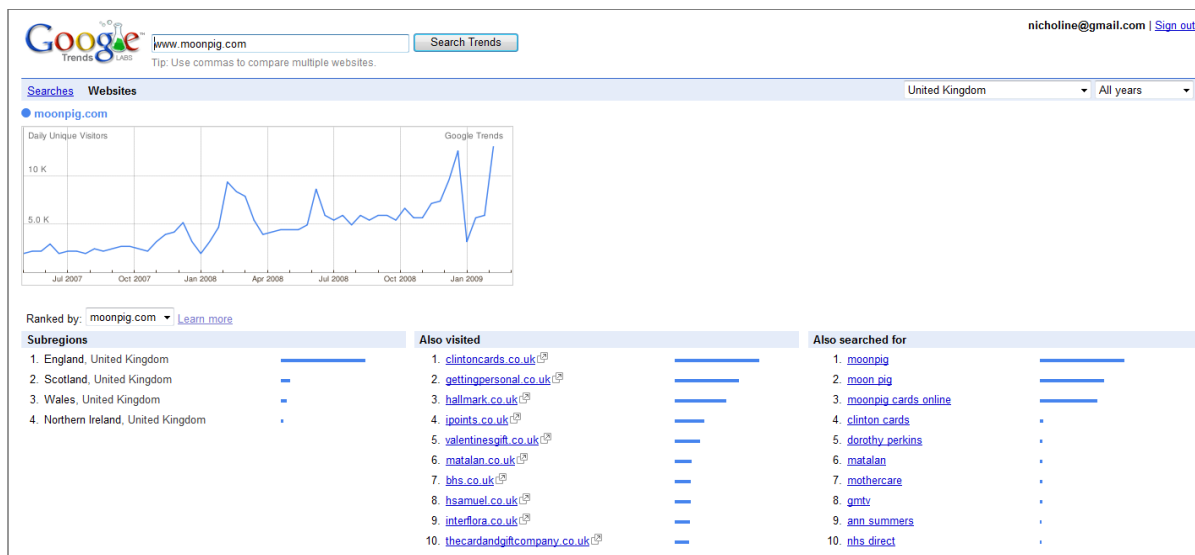
As with the other Google tools, you can search by country and by time period. In fact, it can be an interesting exercise to compare the data for a longer period against a shorter one, to identify the most recent trends.

To find out what people are talking about:

There are so many tools and techniques out there to monitor online buzz and sentiment, I won't list them all here. New ones come along all the time, but for now, here are the main ones that I use. You'll find yourself adding new ones to your portfolio as you go along, particularly those which are specific to your clients or category.

Online news services

If you want to look up or track news on a particular brand or issue, the online news services, such as Google News, are very quick and easy. You simply enter the company, brand or whatever you're tracking, do a search and can sort the results.

If you'd rather the news came to you, than having to go looking for it, use the RSS feed for instant updates. Moreover and Yahoo also offer RSS feeds for aggregated industry news.

Google Alerts

One of the first things to look at when you want to know what both consumers and press are saying about a brand, issue or event, or, when they display a particular attitude or need state, is to set up Google Alerts. Simply go to Google News and click on the 'Alerts' button in the left hand column, choose the word or phrase you wish to monitor, what kind of alerts you want and how often. You can edit and add new ones whenever you like but remember to use speech marks to designate an "exact search" if you are monitoring a phrase rather than a single word or you'll get a lot of irrelevant results.

As well as monitoring brand names, you can get some very interesting insights when you set up alerts for attitudes or need states, such as 'my heart attack' or 'I love butter'. This one for 'Fighting a cold', would be very useful if you were marketing a cold and flu remedy and wanted some insight into how people feel about fighting a cold and how it affects their behaviour:

Blog monitoring

Google Alerts are great for a regular supply of insights over time, and can bring you results very quickly and frequently. However, you also need to see the bigger picture, as reflected in the blogosphere, and identify the most influential bloggers – and hence brand advocates or detractors in relation to your brand or category . Technorati is one, Google Blog Search is another.

Another useful service is provided by Neilsen's Blogpulse conversation tracker which tracks who is linking to blog stories. If you want to track whether a brand or issue is getting increasingly talked-about in blogs, say, before a product launch or after an advertising campaign, try Blogpulse trends.

Micro-blog monitoring

An easy way to see what people are talking about right this minute is through Twitter and its search facility. I have better things to do than Twitter myself and would rather listen to sheep bleating than follow anyone else, but as a research tool it's great for a quick insight into the hot topics of the moment and what's being said about a particular brand, event or issue. You can subscribe to its RSS feed, for updates, or choose email alerts.

Blog comment tracking

BackType is a blog comment tracker, and you can not only search blog comments that mention your brand, or show a particular attitude, but you can track comments left by a particular person so you can gain a greater understanding of your advocates and detractors. co.mments.com also lets you track comments and you can subscribe to the RSS feed for instant updates. With Keotag.com you can see who is using a brand or issue as a tag, over several sites.

Board monitoring tools

 BoardTracker and BoardReader are both good for monitoring forum posts, topics, and actual forum names, so you can see if there are any dedicated to your brand – positive or negative.

Social bookmark tracking

Social bookmarking networks, such as Digg, del.icio.us and Reddit will let you search for submitted stories and offer RSS, so you can see which stories have gained traction.

Social Mention

Another useful tool for taking a snapshot of conversations around your brand is Social Mention. You can choose from blogs, twitter, bookmarks, comments, events and images.

Social network buzz

Facebook Lexicon

With Facebook Lexicon, (which you'll need to log in to use) you can see how often a keyword is discussed on Facebook users' walls. Here's the data for 'the flu', for example:
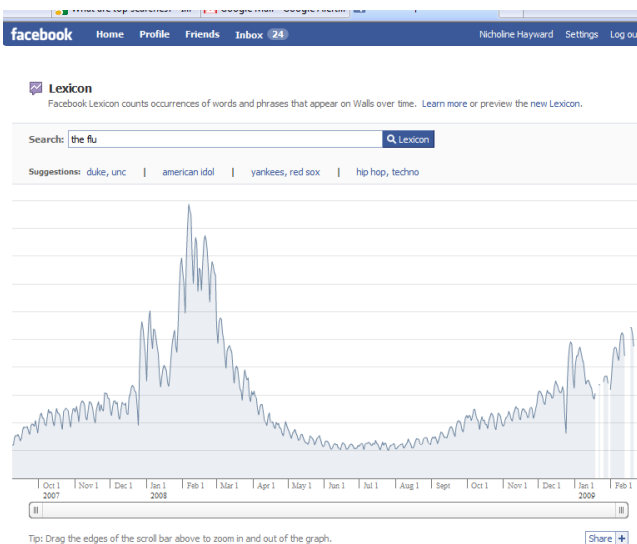
With the 'new' Lexicon, you can also see demographic and sentiment data for the most popular terms.

Photo and video sharing sites

 Flickr offers an RSS subscription that will update you on any new image that matches your word or phrase.   Likewise Google Video can help you track videos from many online hosting sites (such as YouTube and MetaCafe).

Wikis

If you'd like to keep track of how a Wikipedia page is changing, you can track change history for any Wikipedia page.

Q & A forums

Question and answer sites such as Yahoo Answers and the Answerbank are a good way to find out consumers views on particular topics, issues, or brands, or to see what people are asking about right now, to get a feel for the mood of the moment.
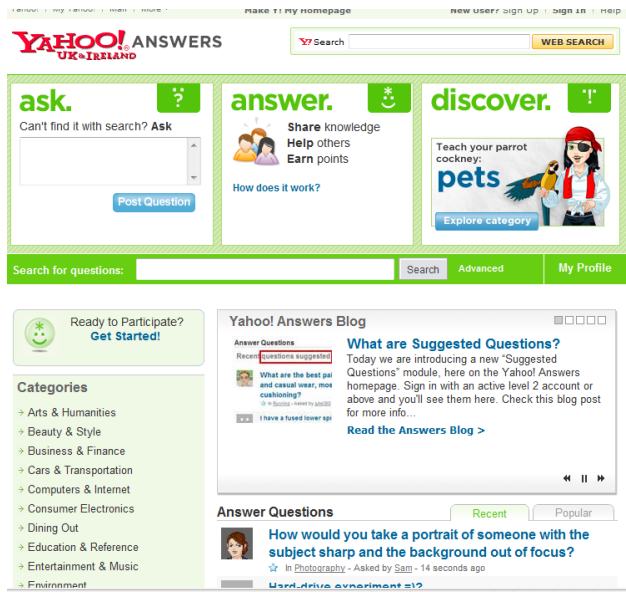
To read what people are saying about brands and companies

 The review sites, such as Doyoo, Kelkoo and Ciao are a great source of insight into what people are looking for, what they need and what they think of your brand. You can use the insight to identify problems with your product or service, highlight potential NPD opportunities and see what kind of language consumers use to talk about you.

 It's true that thanks to word of mouth marketing, some of these people are being paid to review products, but don't let that put you off. They take their responsibilities to the online public seriously, enjoy the opportunity to speak out and tend to be honest in their feedback.

To find people who feel a certain way

This technique is a gem and almost comically simple. Just make an exact search (i.e. in speech marks) of an attitude or statement, couched in the words in which you'd like to find the information. You can leave it open in order to get a wider range of results. You can use it to identify motivations, behaviours, need states and use case scenarios.   For example:

  "I love parties because"

"My favourite after dinner snack is"

" I wish my bank would"

"I hate it when my bank"

"My home is my"

"Our holiday at Butlins was"

I think we all know the answer to the last one, but it's worth asking anyway...

Section Two

From insight to strategy

If we take a typical strategy flow, we can apply the online research methodology at every stage, to give us insights that will help us understand the market, the category and the consumer, the problems that the brand is facing, and how communications might be best deployed, and later, evaluated, to meet the brief and measure the results.

Where are we now and how did we get here?

Where do we want to be? And why?

How will we get there? And how will we know when we have succeeded?

1. Where are we now and how did we get here?

To help us understand the context, the environment, the market forces and competitive pressures, online research can give us a wealth of insight into:

- **The market/category**

- **The consumer**

- **The brand**

i)   The market/category

What shape and size is it? Is it growing or declining? What's happening? Where might it be going? And where could it potentially end up?

We can start with Google Insights for Search to give us a snapshot of awareness and demand, and see which issues and events might be driving the market dynamics. For example, if we take a search term that denotes purchasing intent, say, for 'stamp duty' as a marker of growth or decline in the property market, we can see that demand basically fell off a cliff, starting in late 2007 and is currently at its lowest level in years. We can also see the events that drove consumer interest – in this case, the annual Budget and changes in Government policy.
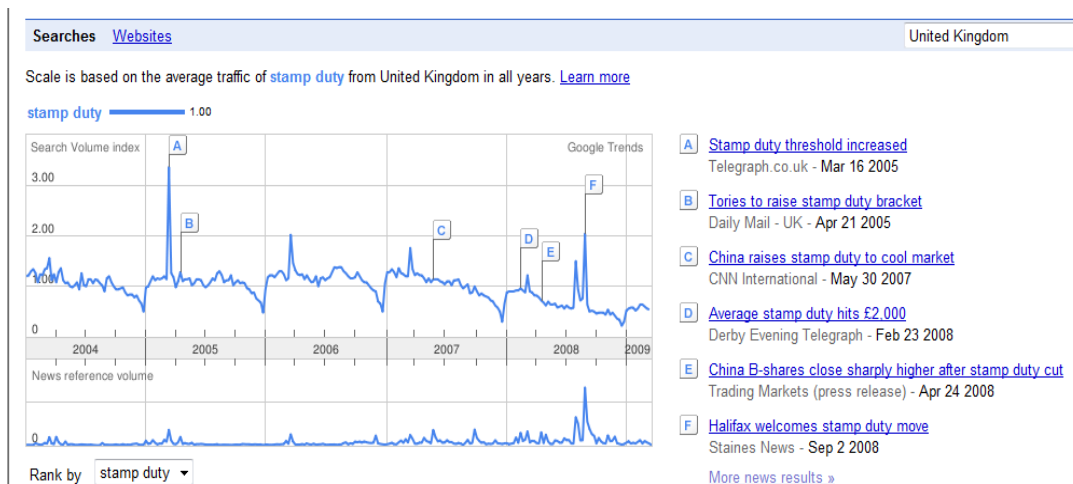
If we compare 2006, 2007 and 208, side by side, for the search term 'house removals' we can see it even more clearly.
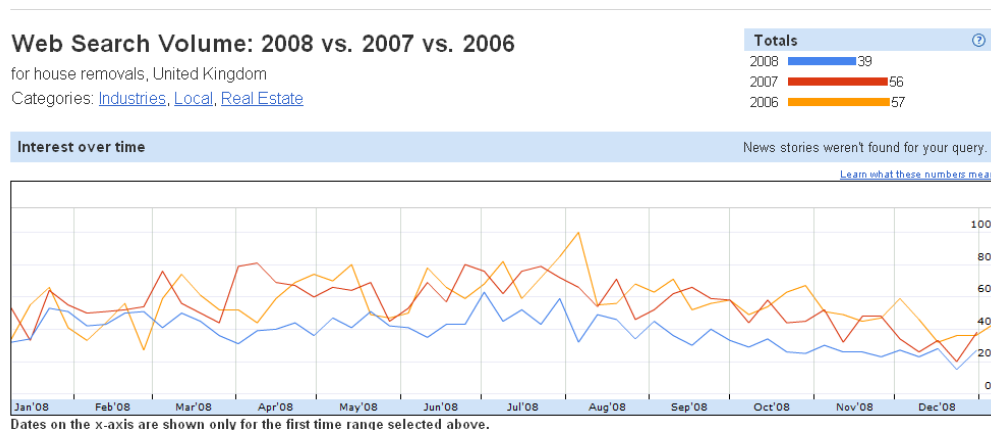
Although 2008 has followed the same overall annual pattern, with a peak in the summer, demand for the service is considerably lower. People are staying put.

Identifying key players in a market

To help us understand the competitive landscape in a market, we can use the Google Keyword tool to identify the brands with the biggest mindshare and quantify that demand to some extent.

For example, if we take the searches for laptop brands during February 2009 and convert it into a bar chart, we get this:
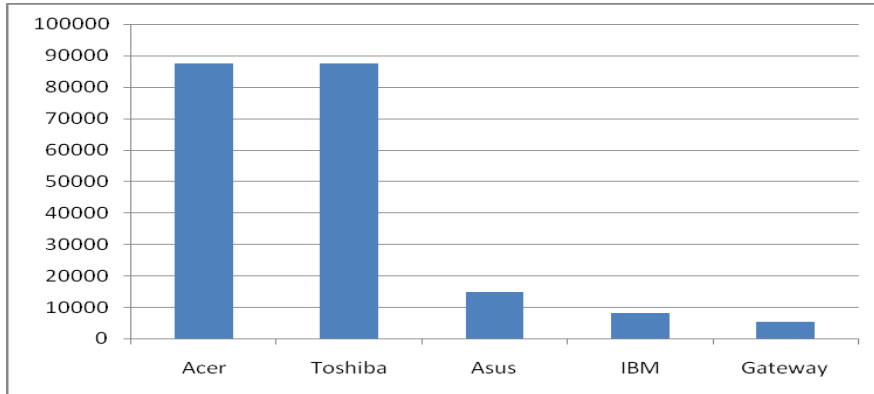
And as a pie chart, the relative measure of mindshare for the brands looks like this:
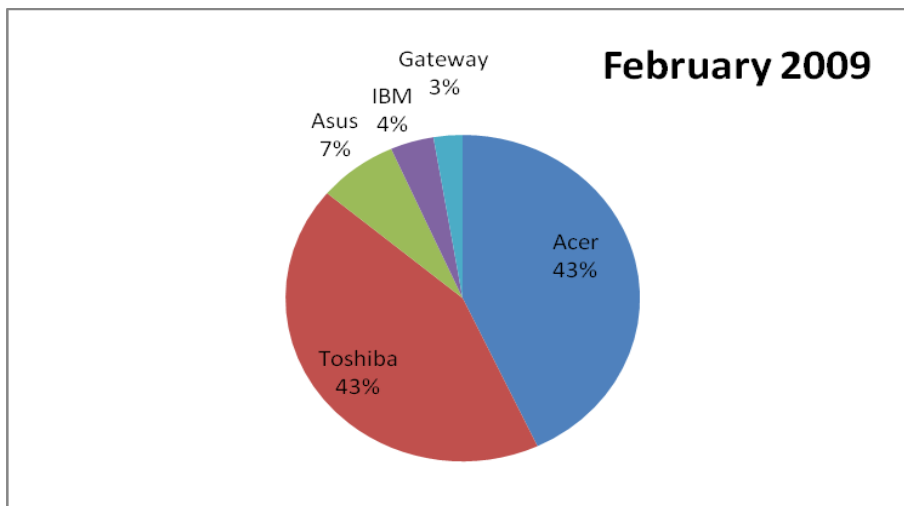
Once we've identified the key players, we can use Google Insights for Search to look at relative demand over time. So when we examine the most popular laptop brands over time, we can see that 2008 and early 2009, despite the economic climate, is actually quite a healthy time in terms of consumer interest.
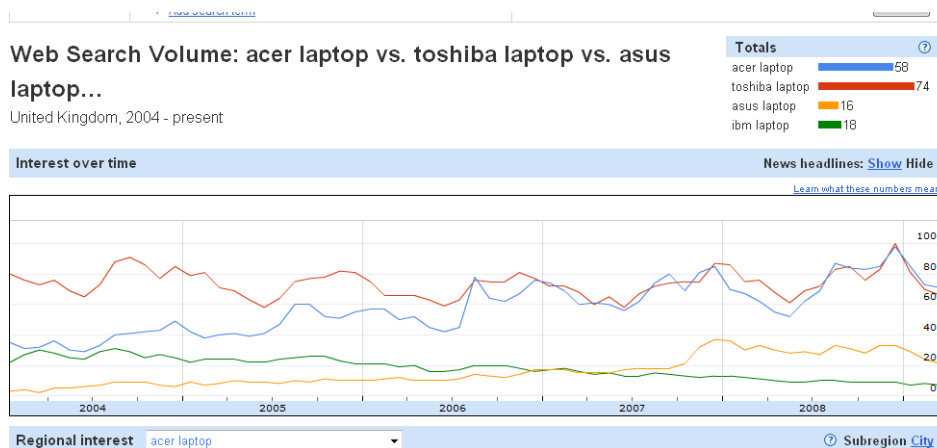
Last Christmas was the best ever year for Acer, Toshiba and challenger brand Asus, but poor old IBM seems to be continuing a gentle slide into oblivion. It's also interesting to note the dynamics between Acer and Toshiba. For the last two years or so, search demand for the two brands has grown closer together, which could imply that their product and marketing strategies have become more closely aligned, or that laptop demand is market, rather than brand driven.

We can see another good example of the relationship between brand demand and market dynamics if we compare searches for the three banks, Barclays, NatWest and HSBC:
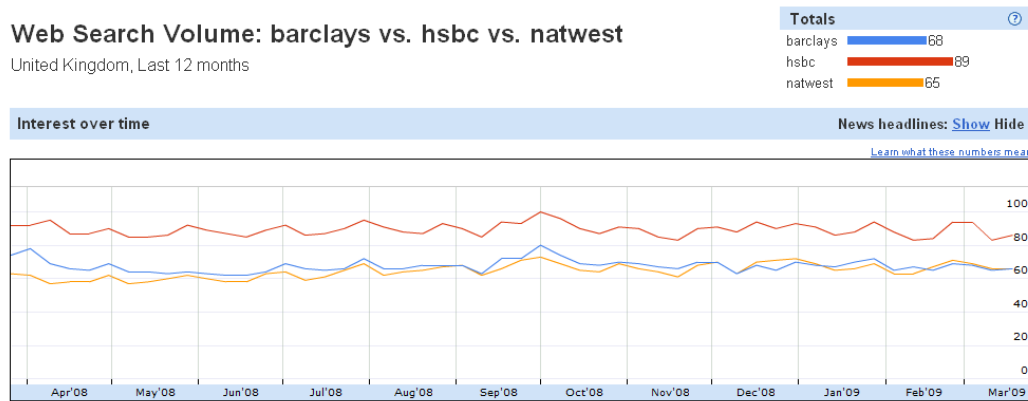
We can see that firstly, HSBC generates the most search demand and that NatWest and Barclays enjoy almost exactly the same as each other. We can also see that all three brands follow a similar pattern throughout the year, which indicates the search demand is to a large extent market, rather than brand driven. In other words, people are being prompted to search on a particular bank in response to news and events in the overall banking category, such as a change in interest rates, and how it might affect their mortgages and savings.

Segmenting the market

We can also use online tools to look at market segmentations. If we take a lively, multi-faceted market such as Fairtrade, we can compare relative demand for a wide range of Fairtrade events, products and issues:

Keywords	Advertiser Competition ?	▼Approx Search Volume: February ?	Approx Avg Search Volume ?	Search Volume Trends (Mar 2008 - Feb 2009) ?	Highest Volume Occurred In	Broad ▼
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sort by relevance ?						
fair trade		74,000	165,000		Mar	Add ≫
fairtrade		74,000	90,500		Mar	Add ≫
fair trade products		9,900	6,600		Mar	Add ≫
fair trade chocolate		8,100	6,600		Mar	Add ≫
fairtrade fortnight		8,100	1,900		Feb	Add ≫
fair trade logo		6,600	2,900		Feb	Add ≫
fairtrade logo		6,600	1,900		Feb	Add ≫
fairtrade foundation		5,400	2,900		Feb	Add ≫
fair trade coffee		4,400	6,600		Oct	Add ≫
fair trade clothing		2,900	5,400		May	Add ≫
fair trade food		2,900	2,400		Mar	Add ≫
fair trade fortnight		2,900	720		Feb	Add ≫
fairtrade chocolate		2,900	2,400		Mar	Add ≫
fairtrade products		2,900	2,400		Mar	Add ≫
fair trade clothes		1,900	3,600		May	Add ≫
fairtrade coffee		1,600	2,900		Oct	Add ≫
fair trade foundation		1,300	880		Feb	Add ≫
fairtrade food		1,300	880		Mar	Add ≫
fair trade tea		1,000	1,300		Mar	Add ≫
fairtrade clothing		1,000	2,400		May	Add ≫
fair trade farmers		880	880		May	Add ≫
fair trade gifts		880	2,400		Nov	Add ≫
fair trading		880	22,200		Apr	Add ≫
fairtrade org uk		720	880		Mar	Add ≫
fairtrade tea		720	880		Oct	Add ≫
fair trade cocoa		480	480		Mar	Add ≫
fair trade companies		480	720		Nov	Add ≫
fair trade goods		480	720		Mar	Add ≫
fair trade items		480	480		Mar	Add ≫

The first observation is that you can see that the term 'fair trade' and 'fairtrade' have about the same level of mindshare at the moment, but 'fair trade' gets the most searches over the year , so that's the phrase that defines the issue most in consumers' minds.

Next, let's focus on Fairtrade products – chocolate and suchlike. If we export the data to Excel (there is a facility to do this), we can create a chart to show how the Fairtrade product market is segmented in terms of search demand:
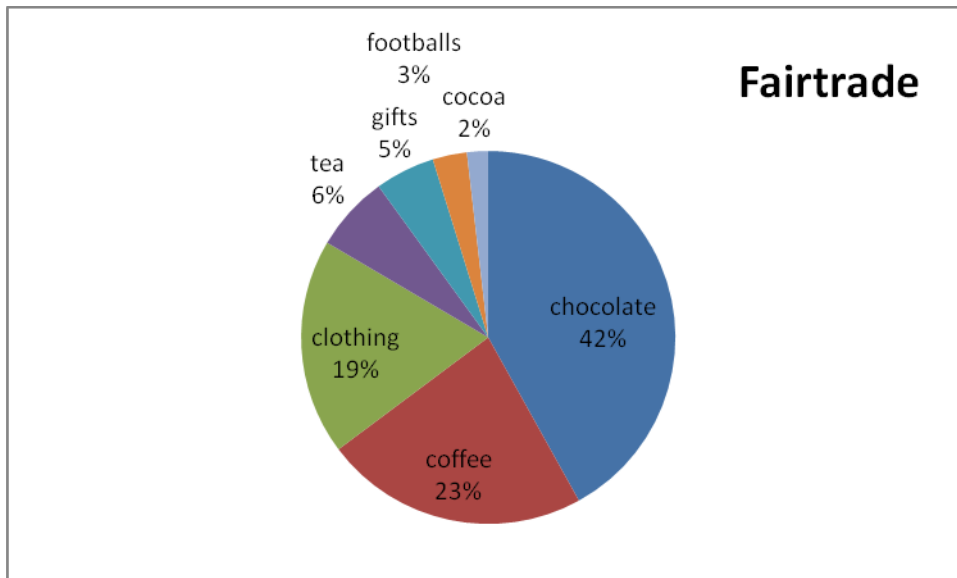
So if you're wondering whether to add tea or coffee to your Fair trade portfolio, there is greater demand for coffee, and, if we look at the search trends on the keyword data chart, demand peaks for it in October, presumably as people are bedding in for a long, cold winter.

What else is out there?

You can sense-check this data by cross referencing it with information that has been gathered by more traditional means. A good way to find out market information that is in the public domain, such as reports, industry news and research findings is via exact searches on Goole. For example:

"The greetings card market is worth"

"In 2008, the construction sector declined by *%"

Make it an advanced search, and in the preferences you can narrow it down to only the most recent entries. If you use the wildcard function, Google will fill in the gap for you. This technique is also a good way of identifying the most visible and influential news and community sites in the category and bookmarking them for later.

ii)   **The consumer**

Who are they? What are they like? And why are we talking to them? We can use our online tools to create detailed pen portraits of our audience.   We can find out about their age, gender, lifestage, social dynamics, preferences, attitudes and behaviour.

The first thing to do is set up some Google alerts on an attitude or behaviour that defines your audience. The next is to do an exact search. Both of these will lead you to the online communities and individual web spaces where your audience lives, and where you can get to know them better. For example, here are the results for "I've just had a baby":

As you'll see if you scroll through the search results, you'll find the personal stories of women who
have just had a baby, who they are, how they think and feel, the language they use and, importantly,
the places where they are having these conversations.

For example, in this instance, something that comes through very clearly, and which brands aimed at
new parents might like to tap into, is the pride and sense of achievement that women feel after
having a baby and their need to be recognised, praised and rewarded for it. It's not all about the
baby.

You can also do an exact search on Boardreader:

Lastly, you can look at Twitter Search, in this case for the slightly broader term 'just had a baby', to get the stories of people connected to, or with a personal interest in the subject, but not necessarily the parents themselves:

You can also go directly to the online communities that house your consumer, either defined by demographic or by interest. For example, if your audience is the over 50s, a community like Saga Zone will show you what they're like, how they talk, their interests and motivations and what's hot in their world at the moment.

In this instance, we can see that the hot topics in the senior online community are Jade Goody, human rights, Israel, religious extremism and hospitals. Not, as some might assume, the shocking price of petunias these days.

If you come across a rich source of insight, such as a forum or a blog, join up, sign up and subscribe. I'm not a big fan of initiating conversations, because this can upset the group dynamic if you're not careful and the insights won't be as authentic. But if you do, make sure you're clear on who you are and why you need to know.

The brand

Profiling and segmenting a brand's equities

A good place to start finding the issues associated with a brand, and what consumers want from it, is the Google keyword tool. For example, here is the data for Cadbury's, and there are several interesting observations. Firstly, the biggest thing that people want from Cadbury's at the moment is the advert, and this, combined with Valentine's Day and Easter, has helped increase demand for Cadbury's chocolate and Cadbury World, too. Note also the demand for Cadbury Schweppes, which is surely a search made by the trade, the press, analysts and investors – who comprise a small but important audience for Cadbury.

Keywords	▼Approx Search Volume: February ⑦	Approx Avg Search Volume ⑦	Search Volume Trends ⑦	Highest Volume Occurred In	Match Type: ⑦ Exact ▾
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sort by relevance ⑦					
[cadburys advert]	246,000	33,100		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury]	74,000	40,500		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadburys]	74,000	33,100		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadburys chocolate]	22,200	6,600		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadburys world]	22,200	14,800		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury chocolate]	9,900	4,400		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury's]	5,400	2,900		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury dairy milk]	2,900	1,000		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury schweppes]	2,400	3,600		Mar	Add Exact ⌄
[cadburys dairy milk]	2,400	880		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury cream egg]	1,600	480		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadburys cream egg]	1,600	590		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury roses]	880	720		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[cadburys flake]	880	590		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadburys roses]	880	880		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury bournville]	720	320		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury co uk]	720	480		Jan	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury wispa]	590	720		Aug	Add Exact ⌄
[www cadbury co uk]	590	590		Jan	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury chocolates]	480	480		Nov	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury products]	480	390		Jan	Add Exact ⌄
[cadbury shares]	480	390		Oct	Add Exact ⌄

So if we were to look at this information another way, here's what people want from Cadbury at the moment:
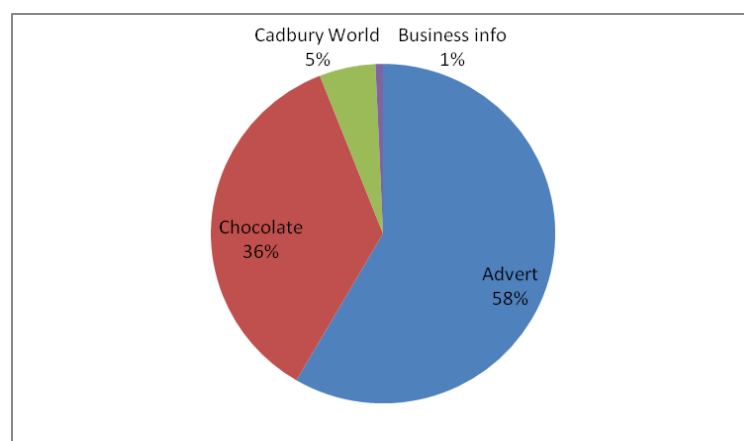
Finding – and listening to - customers

You can also do an exact search on a buying behaviour to find the people who use your product. For example, here's what you get when you search for 'I drive a Skoda'.

As you can see, it's a rich source of demographic and attitudinal information. When you scroll through a few pages, you'll see patterns and commonalities start to emerge. From studying the people who say they drive a Skoda we can see that they tend to be:

- Rational

- Practical

- Careful

- Comfortable

From looking at the conversations they are having on forums and the kind of reviews they are writing , we can see that Skoda drivers feel as though they have got a great deal: a lot of car for not a lot of money. Sensible types, they carefully weighed up the features and benefits and came to the decision that Skoda made perfect sense. They're not given to boasting, but they are quietly delighted at the bargain they've made.

We can also see the effect of Skoda's renaissance at work. Skoda owners are determined to 'own the joke', as was the original intention, and are secure enough in their purchase to often get in first, with jokes of their own.

For an example of unconditional love in a user base, let's look at the iphone, in a webspace where apple users are perfectly at home: Flickr. Here are the results for the search "I love my iphone".   As you can see when you look through the results, people who love their iphone do so with an evangelical passion, ...
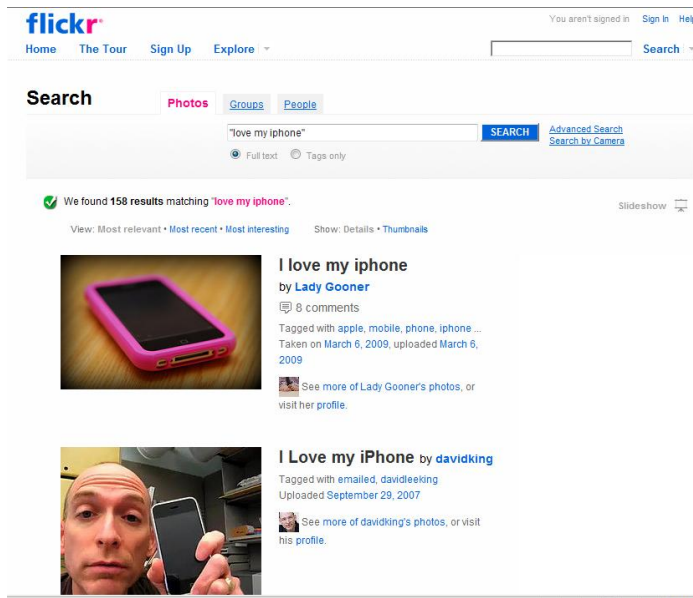
If we dig a bit deeper and look at the profile and photostream of the person who took the picture of the pink iphone, we can see that what defines this particular iphone user is:
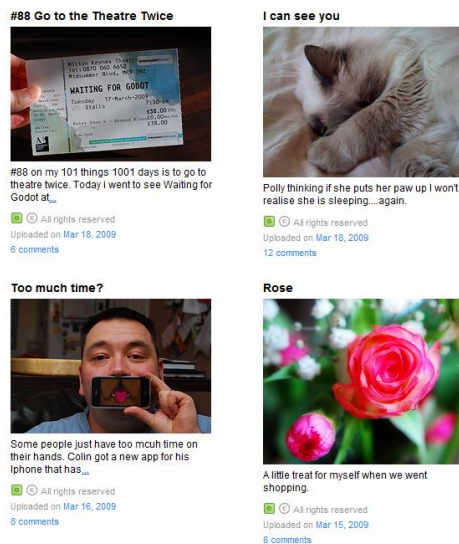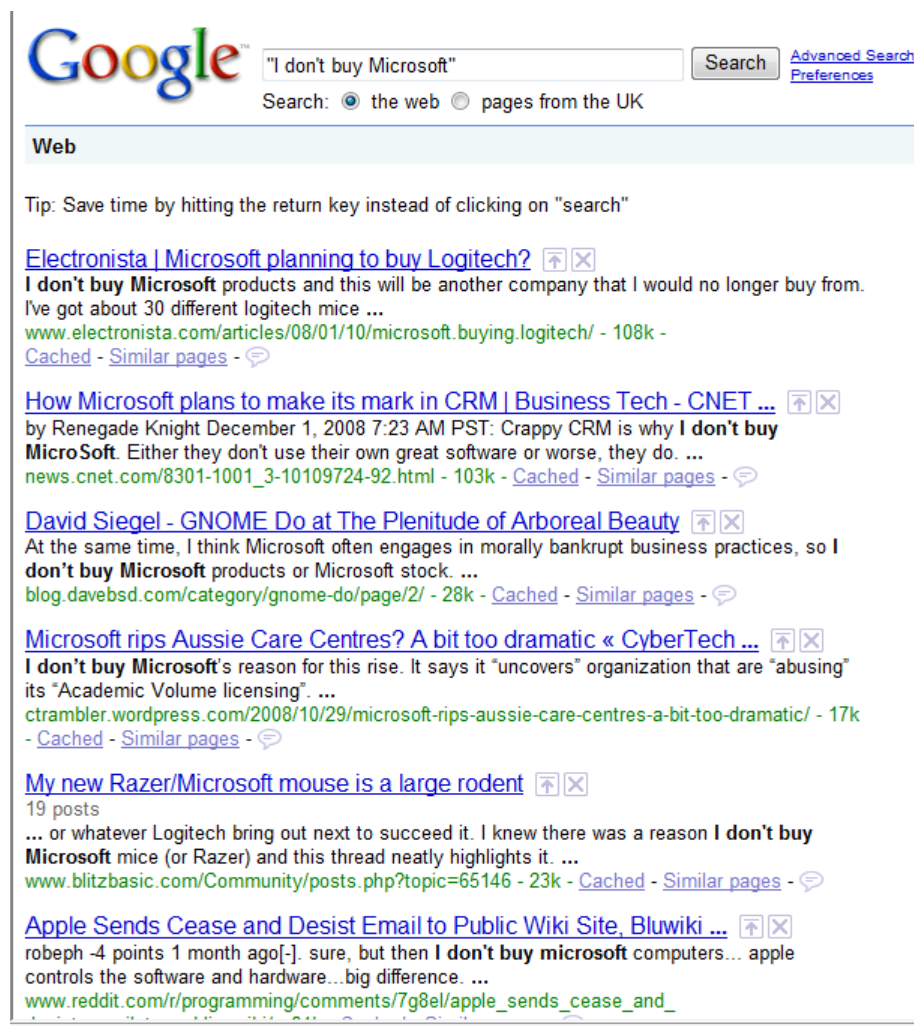
The three attributes that seem to define this iphone lover, and many others like her, are:

- Culture

- Colour

- Creativity

Identifying brand rejectors

You can do the same in reverse, by looking at the people who say they don't buy the product. For example, here's a search for "I don't buy Microsoft".

What comes across very clearly when you read through the list, is that as many people don't like the company, its ethics, positioning and purpose, as much as they don't like the products. Microsoft is seen as distant, cold and controlling and its products are tarred with the same values in consumers' minds

Measuring sentiment for a brand

A quick and easy way to measure consumer's affection, or dislike, for a brand, is to look at the level of searches on Google Insights. Here is a comparison of search demand for 'love Microsoft' and 'hate Microsoft'.

It might seem odd that people are making these searches, but I've found that it seems to be popular with people seeking out like-minded consumers and communities online.

Web Search Volume: love microsoft vs. hate microsoft
United Kingdom, 2004 - present
Categories: Computers & Electronics, Entertainment, Internet, Online Communities , more...

Totals
love microsoft 54
hate microsoft 26

Interest over time   News stories weren't found for your query.
                                      Learn what these numbers mean
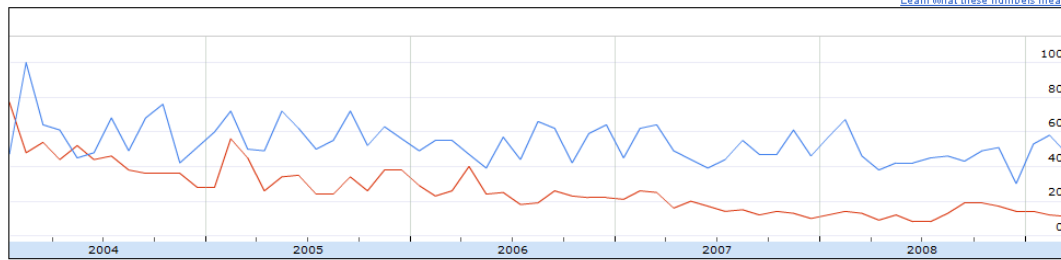
Regional interest love microsoft   ? Subregion City

As we can see here, Microsoft inspired a lot less 'love' in 2008 and early 2009 and there was a surge in 'hate' in the second half of last year, but overall, we're not seeing the spikes of emotion as in previous years, inspired, presumably by new Microsoft products and services.

Brand communities

You can also go straight to the brand's online community, such as friends on Facebook . Here, for example, is a selection of the friends of Look magazine, the UK's best-selling fashion weekly.

What strikes me immediately is how many of the profile pictures show girls with their friends. Social dynamics, it would appear, might be an interesting place to start when researching the readers of a weekly fashion magazine.

Buying criteria and shopping behaviour

For insights into what kind of people are visiting a brand web site, and what their motivation and intent might be, have a look at Google Trends for Websites. For example, let's go back to the data for Moonpig, the online card company.

Also visited		Also searched for	
1. moonpig.co.uk	————	1. moonpig	————
2. clintoncards.co.uk	———	2. moon pig	———
3. gettingpersonal.co.uk	———	3. moonpig cards online	———
4. hallmark.co.uk	———	4. dorothy perkins	·
5. yoodoo.com	———	5. gmtv	·
6. ipoints.co.uk	———	6. mothercare	·
7. moonpig.com.au	———	7. matalan	·
8. thecardandgiftcompany.co.uk	—	8. monsoon	·
9. interflora.co.uk	—	9. ann summers	·
10. hsamuel.co.uk	—	10. nhs direct	·

If we look at the search terms they used and the other sites they visited, we can see that Moonpig is popular with younger women who shop on the high street, like to organise their lives online and are on a gift and card buying mission.

What a brand doesn't say about itself

Lastly, it can be just as useful, in understanding the category, the brand and the market dynamics n order to identify the problem, to look at what a brand isn't saying about itself, as what it is. For example, here are the results for a search on Google for 'fake Viagra risks'.

The first thing to note is that there are 14,300 search results for the phrase, but can you see Pfizer anywhere? Me neither. Most of these results are from news, education and healthcare sites, but Pfizer has got nothing to say on the risks of fake Viagra – clearly an important issue to consumers and health professionals alike. One of Viagra's problems isn't just that the market is flooded with fake products, but that Pfizer isn't speaking up against the issue, to protect consumers – and its brand equity and market share into the bargain.

By comparison, let's look at what Primark has got to say for itself on the subject of ethics. Note the sponsored link at the top of the search results (which helps to ensure steady visibility for the search term) and the open, straightforward tone of voice.

So what's the problem we need to solve?

Depending on what we've found so far, we should have a new understanding of the challenges we need to overcome with the communications strategy. We should now have greater insights into the problems we're facing and the events and issues behind them, such as:

- A depressed, declining or unstable market

- Low brand awareness or consumer demand

- Negative publicity or perceptions

- Competitive threats

Having gained some insight into what the problem is, we can now start thinking about the solution.

2. Where do we want to be?

As well as understanding the problem better, we will also have a greater understanding of the opportunities for our brand. We'll know more about its strengths and weaknesses compared to its competition, its current positioning and perception and its mindshare.

So now we know where we are and how we got there, where do we want to be? What is the ambition for this brand?

What does success look like?

A good place to start is by looking at what success has looked like in the past. As we can see from this chart from Google Trends, Agent Provocateur's most successful campaign – and the benchmark against which future campaigns would be measured - was with Kate Moss in July 2006.

Subsequent campaigns with Kylie Minogue, Maggie Gyllenhall, Lily Allen and Peaches Geldof have had nothing like the public reaction, despite the high powered PR machine we can see at work in the news coverage section of the chart. Kate is clearly more desirable than the others and desire is what Agent Provocateur is all about.

Of course, search demand doesn't necessarily mean sales. Quite a few of these searches would have been made by schoolboys with neither the means nor the opportunity to buy expensive lingerie. But that doesn't matter. The idea that Agent Provocateur is a shortcut to sex has been permanently imprinted in their impressionable young minds.

Another good technique to postulate what success might look like is to take the desired attitude or behaviour and consider how that might manifest itself online – and what we might look for.

For example, if our ambition is to be the babyfood of choice for eco-minded parents, we would expect to see the achievement of that ambition reflected in increased reviews of the product, increased brand advocacy on blogs and in forums, a growing brand community, such as friends on Facebook and in increased searches for our brand in conjunction with the issues with which we wish it to be associated.

To explore the latter, let's take premium brand, Plum Baby and look at how demand for it compares with demand for organic baby food overall:

Web Search Volume: plum baby vs. organic baby food

United Kingdom, 2004 - present

Categories: Food & Drink, Lifestyles, Industries

Totals

plum baby — 33
organic baby food — 61
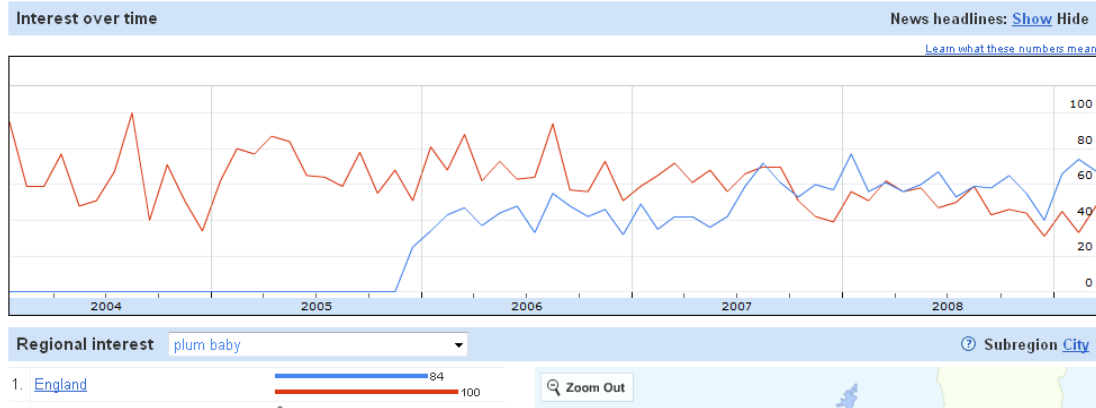
We can see that from the spring of 2008 onwards, there is more demand for Plum than for the generic term, which has started to level off, now that organic brands are well known and, significantly, that the leading brands are organic, or at least offer an organic variant.

But if we add competitive brand Hipp into the equation, and compare both brands with the generic term, we can see that Plum still has a long way to go. To quantify the relative demand for both brands, according to the keyword tool, there is an average of 22,000 searches each month for Hipp compared to 2,000 for Plum.

Web Search Volume: plum baby vs. organic baby food vs. hipp

United Kingdom, 2004 - present

Categories: Food & Drink, Lifestyles, Health, Entertainment, Local, Industries

Totals

plum baby — 7
organic baby food — 13
hipp — 55
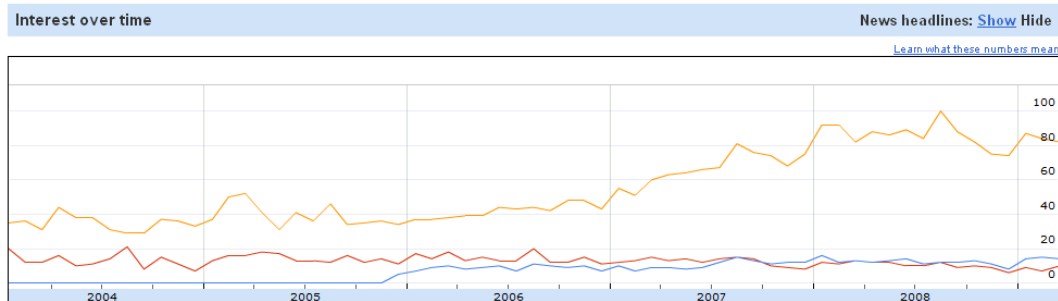
As a challenger brand, if Plum's ambition is to take market share from the leaders, this will be a massive task – but the opportunity is equally large.

Just as an aside, isn't it interesting that there is a New Year peak for Hipp almost every year, although markedly lower in 2009? It's as if mothers are making a resolution to feed their babies, as well as themselves, better, after the Christmas excesses. If your ambition is to be the babyfood that enables consumers to make a fresh start in their parenting, the demand and the market are there.

What territory should our brand own?

What does our brand stand for? What can we say about it that nobody else can? A brand can stand for many things, an occasion, an emotion, an attitude and there are ways we can use the online tools to help determine what these might be.

Occasion-based territories

If we use Google Insights for Search to compare chocolate brands Lindt and Godiva, on a global basis, we can see immediately that despite being a smaller brand, in terms of revenues, ($2.7 billion and $500 million respectively) Godiva has a greater online mindshare than Lindt. It inspires interest and engagement – if not actual purchases. In other words, it's a more aspirational brand. We can also see the territories that each brand owns, in the consumers' minds.
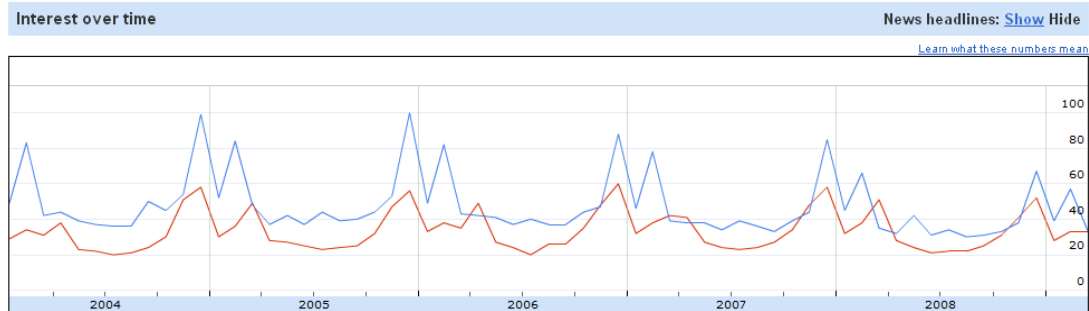
While both brands do well at Christmas, Godiva owns Valentine's Day and, judging from the little jump each summer, wedding anniversaries, Lindt on the other hand has Easter all sewn up. But Godiva's Christmas Peak of 2008 and Lindt's Easter peak of 2009 aren't as high as in previous years. Demand hasn't followed the same trajectory as before, which shows how both brands are suffering from the recession, despite Lindt being significantly cheaper than Godiva .

What this data also shows us is that Lindt needs to decide whether it wants to attack Godiva's romance territory, or the single female/family territory it already has. Is it worth repositioning itself as dark and sensual or sticking with its approachable continental chic? Likewise, Godiva has an opportunity to extend its romantic territory to a wider audience, or target single Lindt consumers.

In fact, if we look at demand for 'Lindor', a more 'adult' Lindt product, we can see that there is, in fact, a tiny blip in search demand in February. So Lindt does already have a toe-hold in the romance territory, which it could potentially build on in the future.
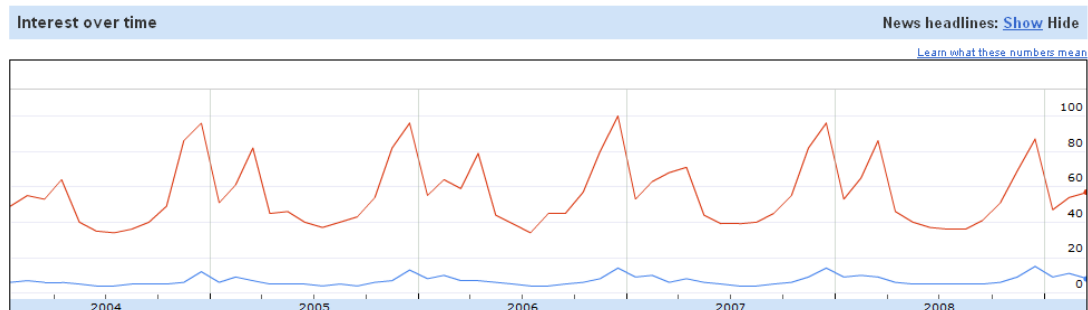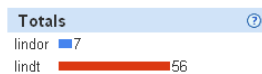
 Weekday and weekend territories

We can also look at this occasion-based demand on a more micro-level by examining search peaks and troughs on a day by day basis and look at which emotions or attitudes might be driving that demand.

I've found that people search for completely different things during the week, compared to the weekend. During the early part of the week people face up to reality, including bad news. For example, note the peaks and troughs for searches on redundancy, recession and house prices:
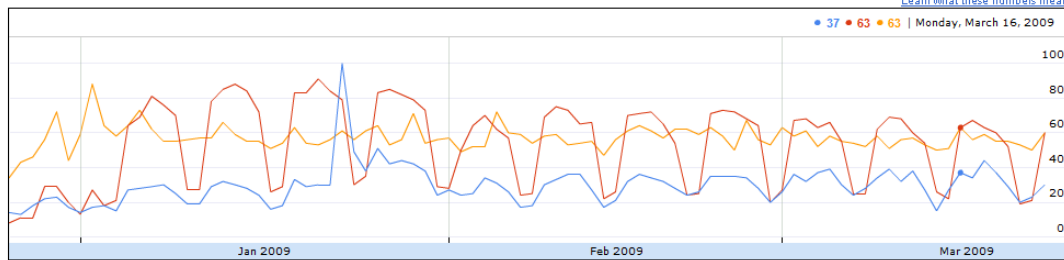
We also see this pattern on searches such as 'Plumber', when people realise that they can't 'do it themselves' and look for a tradesman to sort it out. Likewise, the early part of the week is for worrying about that cancer, or heart disease, looking for a job and wanting to do the right thing by the community and wider world:
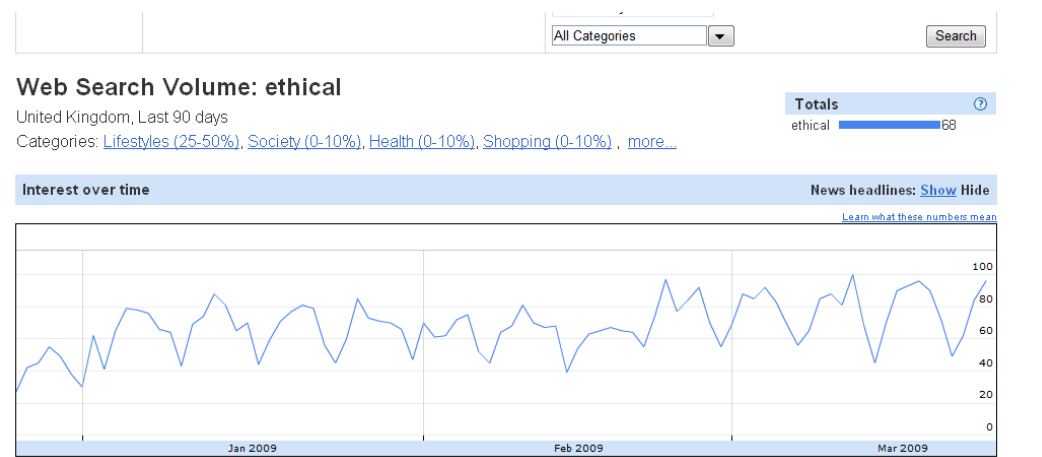
By comparison, weekends are no time for dieting and doing homework but for fun and relaxation, pleasure, and self-fulfilment. People search for luxury, entertainment and learning new skills. We don't let anything negative spoil our weekends, but wait until Monday.

And some searches have a twin-peak pattern, mid-week and at the weekend, such as baby names, or 'hairstyle':
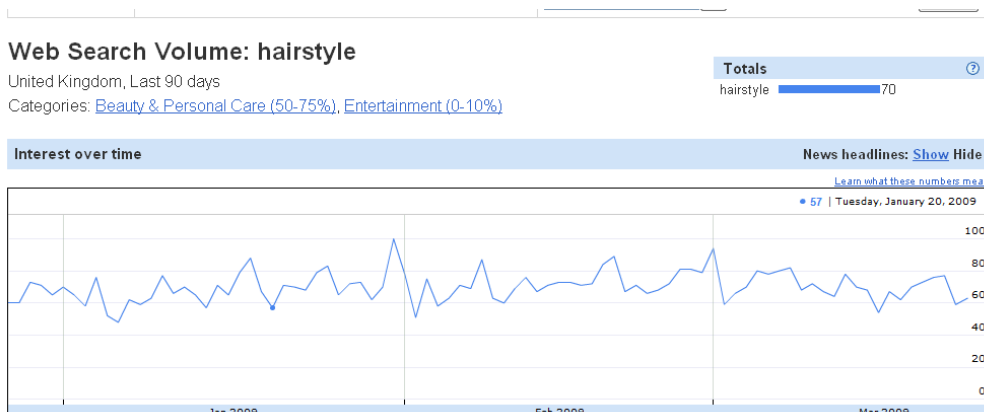
The exception that proves the rule...

On Monday 2nd of February, we were more interested in building a snowman than in losing our jobs:
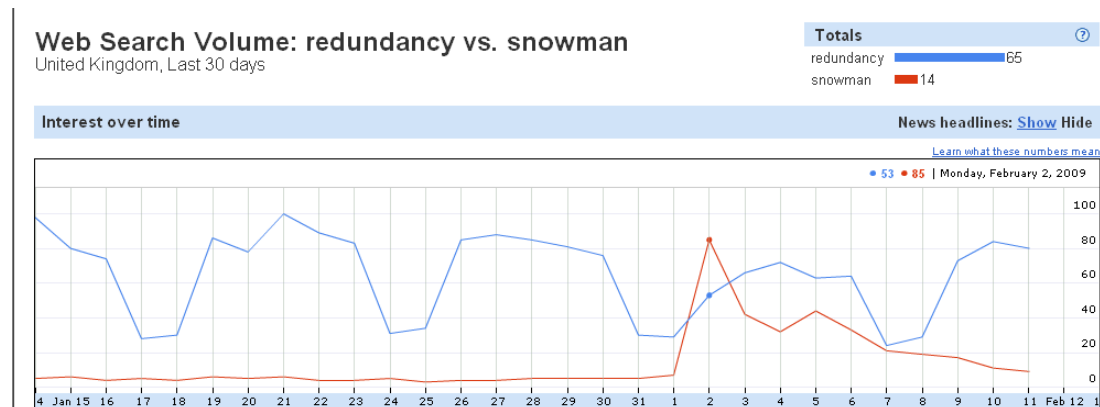
In short:

- **if we expect to enjoy doing or learning something, we search for it at the weekend.**

- **if we don't, but need to sort it out, we search for it in the first half of the week**

- **if we need to know or do something, but it might be fun, we search for it in the second half of the week**

So, in other words, the early part of the week stands for:

- **Information**

- **Reality**

- **Responsibility**

and the weekend stands for :

- **Inspiration**

- **Fantasy**

- **Personal fulfilment**

This means we can help a brand define its territory based on when consumers want it, and what their emotional and practical needs are at that time. So, a brand that offers a rational solution should do so in the early part of the week, a brand that offers escape and pleasure should do so at the weekend, and a brand that offers both should have separate strategies for both.

So a stop smoking campaign, for example, could deliver a factual, straight talking message to support and advise consumers during the week, yet be more inspirational at the weekend: life with nicotine patches from Monday to Wednesday, life without the drag of smoking on a Saturday and Sunday.

3. How will we get there?

What do we need to do and say that gives us title to this territory? What do people need to think and do in order to achieve our ambition? Using the online research, we can look at the three core elements of this stage of the communications strategy to look at ways we can own the territory we want the brand to occupy:

1. **Positioning** – what the brand needs to say about itself, which issues it is associated with, what people say about it.

2. **Personality** – what attributes and equities the brand – and its consumers and a prospective brand spokesperson – embody

3. **Proposition** – how, when and where we can engage with our audience to achieve the desired outcome

1. Positioning

A good place when looking for an effective proposition to engage its audience to start is on the forums to see what people say about a product and how they are positioning it to their own community.

For example, if you look at what people say about the cold and flu rememdy [Lemsip](#), we can see a number of recurrent themes emerging. There is a sense of emotional surrender, people give themselves up to the Lemsip experience and become almost childlike. Yet, on a rational level, they don't really expect it to work. They trivialise and demean the product, saying how they could make it themselves with some paracetamol and hot lemon squash.

This gives us an interesting picture of :

- the dynamics between the brand and the consumer – **mother/child**

- the problem that needs to be overcome – **credibility**

- and the area that Lemsip might now need to focus on - **efficacy**

We can see from Lemsip's attempts to move away from the historic Nurturer archetype to the Heroic 'Lemmy' character of recent campaigns that they are aware of this problem, but as consumers still think and say the same things about Lemsip as they have always done, these efforts have been largely ineffective.

2. Personality

If you've followed the methodology so far, you'll have a good idea of the brand personality you have, and a picture of the one you want. For example, if we go back to the Skoda research in which we explored the attitudes and emotions of the drivers, we can see that drivers seem to be applying these same attributes to their car. They describe it as capable, hard-working and reliable, whilst demonstrating these qualities themselves. They can't necessarily see the parallels themselves, but Skoda drivers aren't much given to introspection. They're not the type.

So when it comes to choosing and evaluating a **brand spokesperson** to act as the literal embodiment of those brand attributes and equities, you can use online research to compare the relative visibility, popularity and advocacy for your celebrity shortlist to see which one would serve your purpose best. Start by having a look at the Google keyword tool, and see how many searches there were and what people searched for in association with your shortlist of names.

Here, for example, is the data comparing Britney Spears with Paris Hilton. As we can see, not only does Britney have twice the online equity of Paris, but her rehabilitation is complete. The public wants her music, her photographs and her perfume. Searches for her without her underwear have totally subsided.

By comparison you can see for yourself what they want from Paris and it's not what you'd want a family-friendly brand to be associated with:

Keywords	▼Approx Search Volume: February ⑦	Approx Avg Search Volume ⑦	Search Volume Trends ⑦	Highest Volume Occurred In	Match Type: ⑦ Exact ▾
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sort by relevance ⑦					
[britney spears]	673,000	673,000		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[paris hilton]	301,000	201,000		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[britney]	90,500	90,500		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[paris hilton video]	14,800	14,800		Mar	Add Exact ⌄
[britney spears lyrics]	6,600	8,100		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[paris hilton movie]	4,400	3,600		Mar	Add Exact ⌄
[britneyspears]	3,600	4,400		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[britny spears]	3,600	2,900		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[paris hilton perfume]	3,600	3,600		Nov	Add Exact ⌄
[brittney spears]	2,900	2,400		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[paris hilton pussy]	2,900	1,900		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[britney everytime]	1,900	1,300		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[britney spears pics]	1,600	1,900		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[britny]	1,600	1,300		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[britney perfume]	1,300	1,300		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[britney spears toxic lyrics]	1,300	880		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[britney spers]	1,300	880		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[brittney]	1,300	1,000		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[paris hilton pics]	1,300	1,000		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[britney speares]	1,000	880		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[paris hilton exposed]	1,000	720		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[paris hilton pictures]	1,000	1,600		Aug	Add Exact ⌄
[paris hilton videos]	1,000	1,600		Mar	Add Exact ⌄
[britney fantasy]	880	720		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[britney interview]	880	880		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[britnet spears]	720	720		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[britney spears wallpapers]	720	480		Feb	Add Exact ⌄
[spear britney]	720	880		Dec	Add Exact ⌄
[toxic britney]	720	480		Dec	Add Exact ⌄

So, if you were to chart what comprises Britney's online equity, it would be like this:
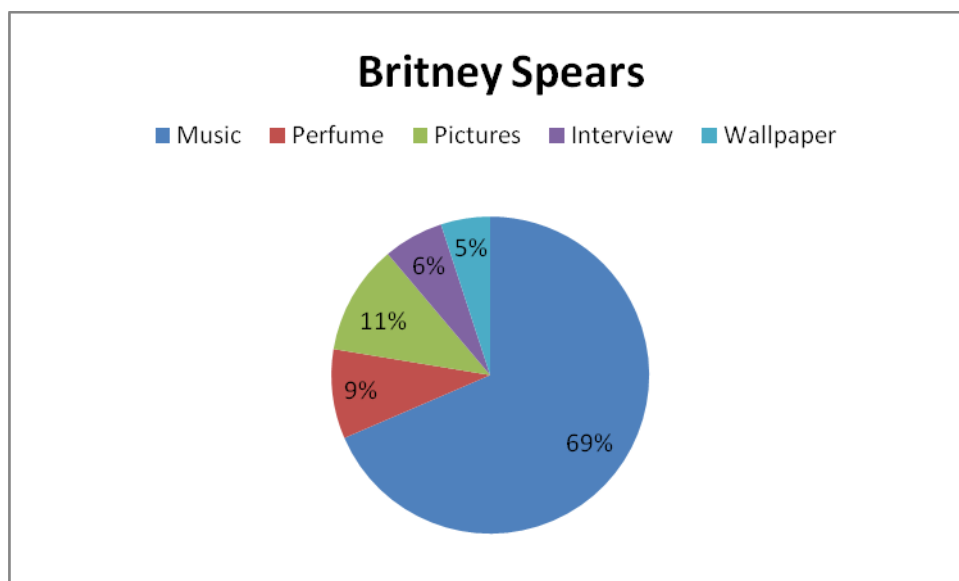
I won't show you Paris's. It wouldn't be nice.

3. Proposition

How, when and where can we best engage people?   This is about finding where your audience lives and talking to them in their own language, with a message and an offer that will resonate with them.

What to say

One of the easiest ways to find the message that will resonate best is to compare them on Google Insights for Search. For example, here is a comparison of various terms for stopping smoking and we can see immediately that 'stop' smoking has the greater currency. Of course, it's still worth including the other terms in your communications, to engage with the people who use them (as they may well be the same people), but to lead with the one that has the biggest mindshare.
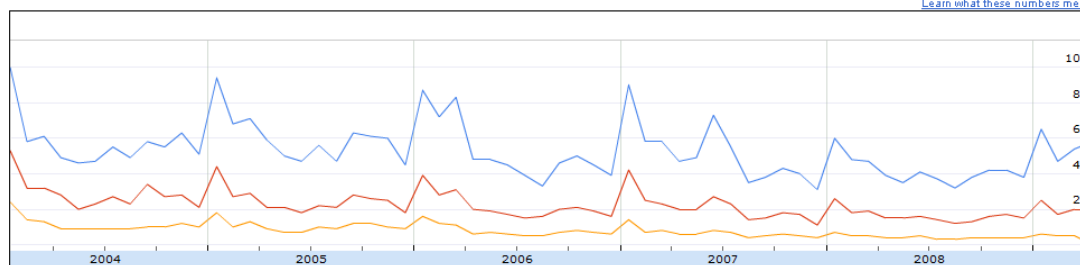
Testing your creative

There are several ways you can see whether a particular creative approach will have traction, or is already in the public domain. For example, the campaign line for Beechams, the cold and flu brand, is 'Fight back with Beechams'. So, if you go to Google and do a wildcard search on 'Fight back with *', we can see whether any other brands are using this line, or any variations on it.

As we can see, only one other brand, SeSDERMA professional skincare products, uses the line in the meta tag copy that appears in the Google search results, yet, when we go and look at their web site, the line doesn't seem to appear in their messaging. So consumers are unlikely to get confused and Beechams can use the 'Fight back' line freely.

What to offer

If you're wondering what to offer your audience, say as a promotion, or as the call to action, you can use Google Insights for search to compare demand, and therefore, the potential desirability of the offer and the expected response to it.

Here, for example, is a comparison between mobile ringtones and mobile games. We can see that although the demand for mobile games has declined slightly in the last six months, they are still considerably more popular than ringtones, which had their heyday back in early 2006 and have been slowly declining ever since.
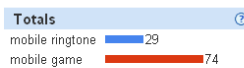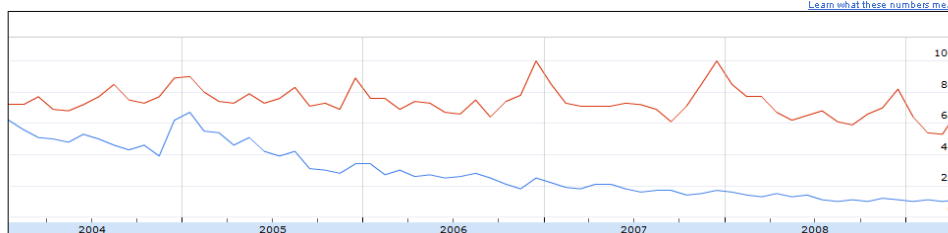
If we go back to the smoking example, we can use Google Insights for Search to see how people want to engage with an issue, which can give us some ideas on how to position and promote it to them.   As we can see, there has been a big increase in searches for the NHS stop smoking services, thanks to their publicity campaigns, so this is a potential way to connect with our audience, in this instance, by way of referencing the NHS in any campaigns or collateral, or, if that's not possible, by offering a structured, authoritative and proven solution to help people stop smoking.

Web Search Volume: stop smoking help vs. stop smoking service vs. stop smoking nhs
United Kingdom, Last 12 months
Categories: Health, Local, Shopping

Totals
stop smoking help 16
stop smoking service 11
stop smoking nhs 47
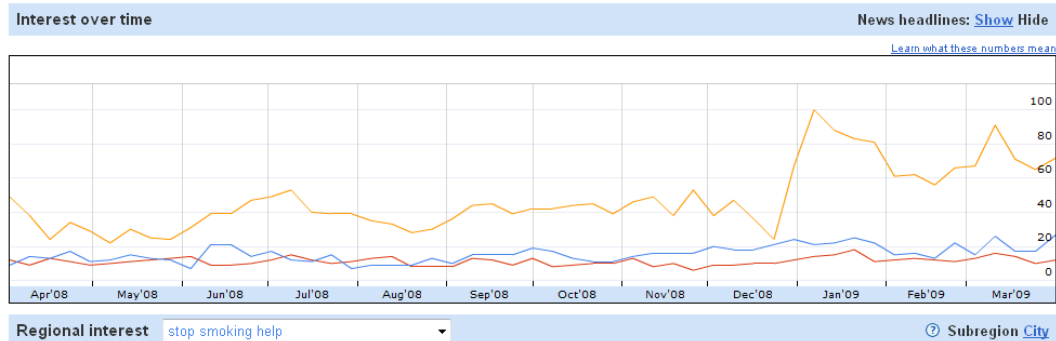
When to engage

For example, if we take a brand that owns a definite time-based territory, such as Tchibo, the coffee and home shop, we can see that **Wednesdays** when its weekly stock changes, is Tchibo day:

Web Search Volume: tchibo
United Kingdom, Last 90 days
Categories: Shopping (25-50%), Local (0-10%)

Totals
tchibo 59
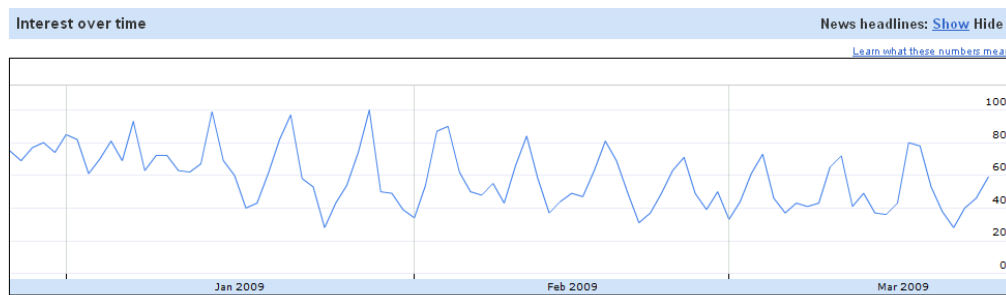
So, Monday and Tuesdays would be the logical time to promote the new week's range and special offers . For another example, let's take a DIY brand. As we've seen from looking at the difference between weekday and weekend searches, consumers clearly want to enjoy their weekends, they want to relax, improve themselves and be happy, the brand should focus its message on the pleasure and satisfaction of DIY as the emotional driver. At the same time, as the majority of searches for tradespeople are on a Monday and Tuesday and that, therefore is when the plumbers, electricians and tilers are going to be getting their calls from prospective customers, that's when the trade marketing strategy, to drive them to the store with special offers and incentives, should focus.

Where to catch them

If we look at the 'Also visited' and 'Also searched for data on Google Insights for search, we can get some useful insights into the values and behaviour of a brand's consumers.

For example, here's what we get for Ocado, the Waitrose home delivery service. These are clearly people who enjoy the finer things in life, who buy premium groceries, clothes and homewares online and who rely on a portfolio of trusted authorities, such as the Royal Mail and the Met Office, for the information by which they plan and organise their lives. These are people who like their information directly from the source and who value credibility. On a practical level, we've immediately got a starter list for media selection, cross-promotion and sponsorship:

Also visited
1. ocadomail.com
2. ocado.co.uk
3. waitrosedeliver.com
4. waitrose.com
5. abelandcole.co.uk
6. thewhitecompany.com
7. sainsburys.com
8. boden.co.uk
9. gltc.co.uk
10. lakeland.co.uk

Also searched for
1. ocado
2. ocado shop
3. waitrose
4. john lewis
5. sainsburys
6. white company
7. transport london
8. boden
9. royal mail
10. met office

If you would like to explore the possibilities of a particular channel or medium, check out the online communities such as Yahoo Answers, where you can see (or initiate) discussions around the subject, in this case, for email:

Likewise, you can look at sites you know your target audience visits and this will give you an idea of the channels and devices popular with this demographic. For example, if you look at Monkeyslum, the site for teenage boys, you can see what kind of Virals are the most popular with this audience and how to position them for maximum traction:
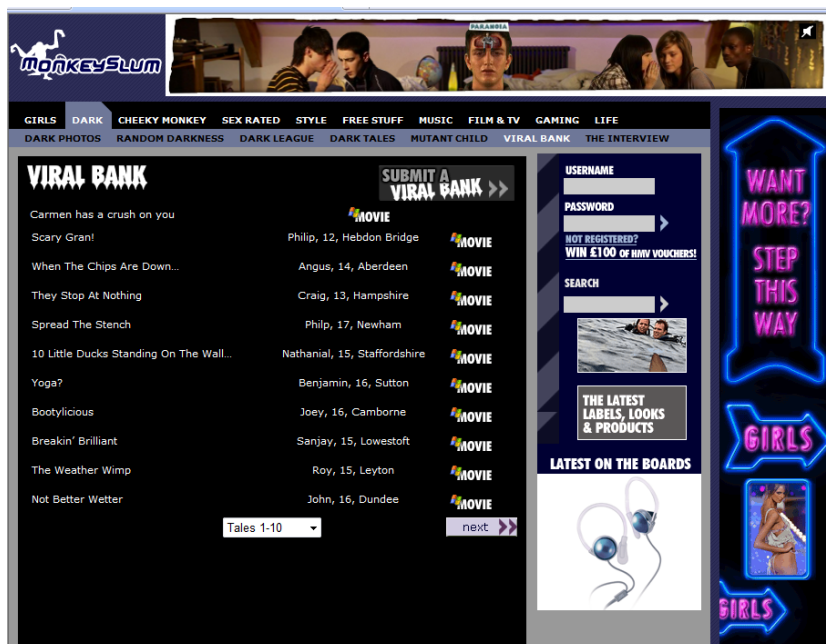
Tone of voice

A very simple way to define the tone of voice is to look at the way that audience talks amongst themselves, particularly in relation to your brand. For example, here's what they say, verbatim, about Frijj milkshake:

- Yum Yum Frijj is awesome

- Frijj is Great. Its defining feature is its yummy thickness

- Frijj is a thick, fresh & tasty milkshake that comes in a groovy, cowy, bottle

- I love frijj, I used to be obsessed with them. Whenever they're half price in Tesco I go on a frijj-binging session

- I love Frijj! yeah I lurvee the chocolate!

- I luv frijj. frijj makes me hyper. people say frijj is my enemy but really its my frend! i have an imaginery friend calld frijj! lol!!!

And here's the 2008 Limited Edition flavour name that came out of this research:

4. How will we know when we have succeeded?

Lastly, we can assess the success of an actual or potential campaign, by looking at increases in search demand, in conversations or other forms of online engagement.

Campaign vs. brand visibility

If we compare demand for a campaign strapline and the product it is advertising such as in this example, for the 'Four Ridges' campaign for Frijj milkshake, as we can see, the brand enjoyed an increase in demand that was higher than the interest in the campaign device.

We can also look at Google Insights for Search to see what effect a campaign has had on consumers, the category and the competition. Here is the data for a variety of insurance comparison search terms and there are lots of interesting observations regarding Compare the Market's ambitions for its recent 'Compare the Meerkat' campaign.
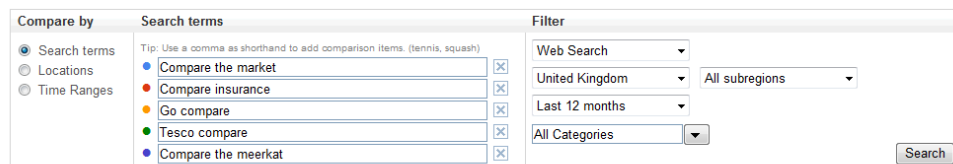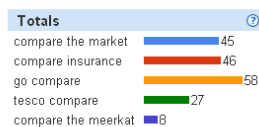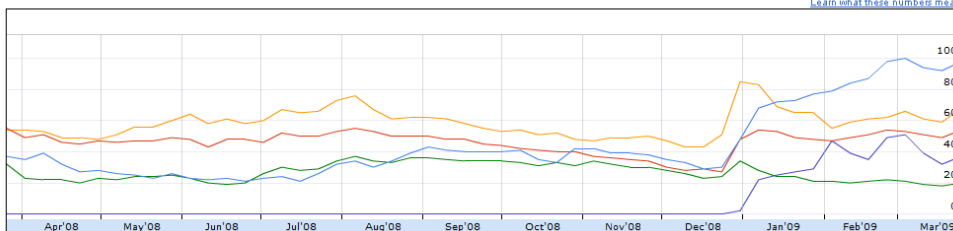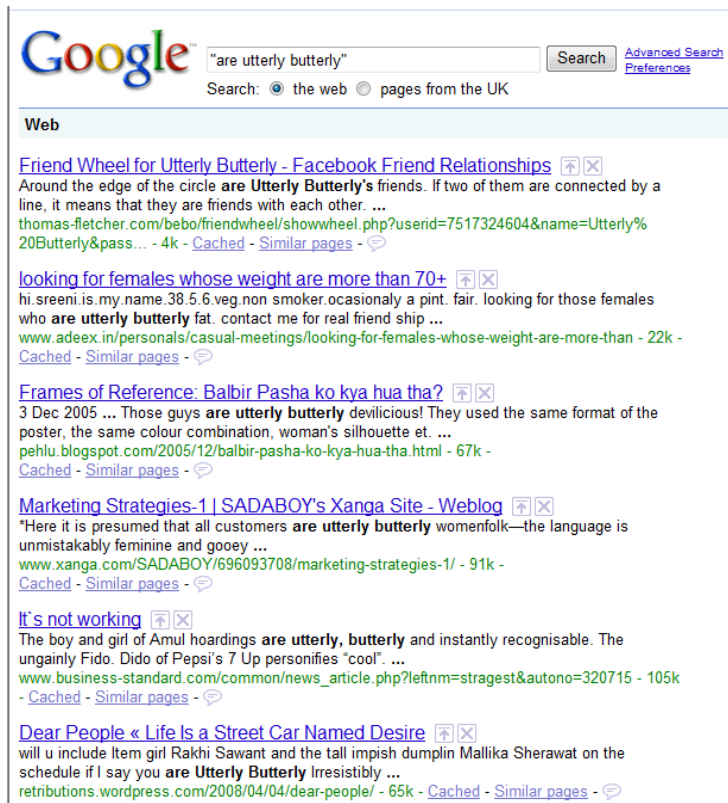
Firstly, we can see there was an increase at the end of the year right across the category, for the generic 'compare insurance', for the three brands and for the Compare the Meerkat campaign. However, Go Compare, which doesn't have a TV campaign running at the moment, doesn't seem to have enjoyed the same increase in demand as Compare the Market. Nor has Tesco Compare's campaign with Paul Daniels had much of an effect either. What is also interesting is that demand for Compare the Meerkat is more spiky – presumably driven by media visibility, yet demand for Compare the Market has risen steadily, which might mean that more robust and long term demand for the brand is growing – a good outcome.

Lastly, if we look at searches for the generic 'compare insurance' we can see that demand hasn't increased beyond the New Year rises that all the brands received, so Compare the Market's campaign has served to boost its own brand and not the category as a whole.

Social currency analysis

We can also do an exact search on Google to see the extent to which a product or campaign line has entered the vernacular, as in this case for Utterly Butterly, the spread. As we can see, it's a metaphor for 'totally, completely' and seems to be a popular phrase with exuberant people who don't take life, or themselves, too seriously. Just as Utterly Butterly intended.

Google
"are utterly butterly"   Search   Advanced Search
Search: ⦿ the web ○ pages from the UK   Preferences

Web

Friend Wheel for Utterly Butterly - Facebook Friend Relationships
Around the edge of the circle **are Utterly Butterly's** friends. If two of them are connected by a line, it means that they are friends with each other. ...
thomas-fletcher.com/bebo/friendwheel/showwheel.php?userid=7517324604&name=Utterly% 20Butterly&pass... - 4k - Cached - Similar pages -

looking for females whose weight are more than 70+
hi.sreeni.is.my.name.38.5.6.veg.non smoker.ocasionaly a pint. fair. looking for those females who **are utterly butterly** fat. contact me for real friend ship ...
www.adeex.in/personals/casual-meetings/looking-for-females-whose-weight-are-more-than - 22k -
Cached - Similar pages -

Frames of Reference: Balbir Pasha ko kya hua tha?
3 Dec 2005 ... Those guys **are utterly butterly** devilicious! They used the same format of the poster, the same colour combination, woman's silhouette et. ...
pehlu.blogspot.com/2005/12/balbir-pasha-ko-kya-hua.html - 67k -
Cached - Similar pages -

Marketing Strategies-1 | SADABOY's Xanga Site - Weblog
*Here it is presumed that all customers **are utterly butterly** womenfolk—the language is unmistakably feminine and gooey ...
www.xanga.com/SADABOY/696093708/marketing-strategies-1/ - 91k -
Cached - Similar pages -

It`s not working
The boy and girl of Amul hoardings **are utterly, butterly** and instantly recognisable. The ungainly Fido. Dido of Pepsi's 7 Up personifies "cool". ...
www.business-standard.com/common/news_article.php?leftnm=stragest&autono=320715 - 105k
- Cached - Similar pages -

Dear People « Life Is a Street Car Named Desire
will u include Item girl Rakhi Sawant and the tall impish dumplin Mallika Sherawat on the schedule if I say you **are Utterly Butterly** Irresistibly ...
retributions.wordpress.com/2008/04/04/dear-people/ - 65k - Cached - Similar pages -
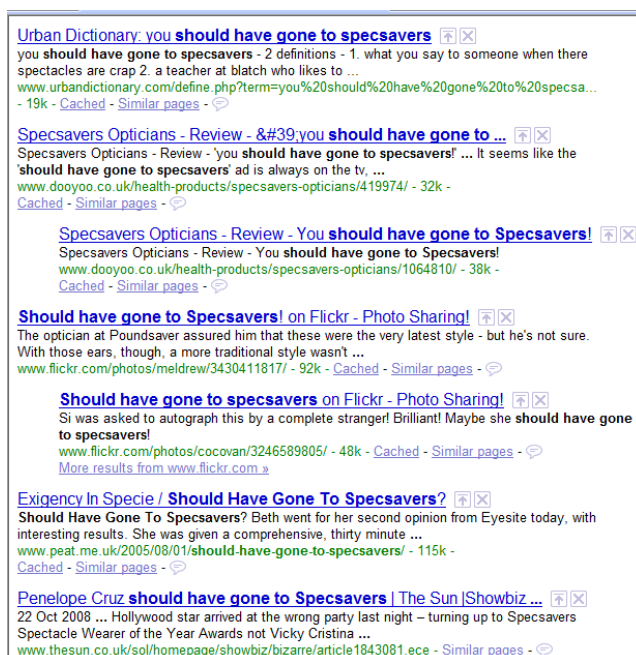
We can also look at the effect a campaign has in terms of a brand's role in a category and the wider world. For example, if we look at the phrase 'should have gone to Specsavers' :

Urban Dictionary: you should have gone to specsavers
you **should have gone to specsavers** - 2 definitions - 1. what you say to someone when there spectacles are crap 2. a teacher at blatch who likes to ...
www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=you%20should%20have%20gone%20to%20specsa...
- 19k - Cached - Similar pages -

Specsavers Opticians - Review - 'you should have gone to ...
Specsavers Opticians - Review - 'you **should have gone to specsavers**! ... It seems like the '**should have gone to specsavers**' ad is always on the tv, ...
www.dooyoo.co.uk/health-products/specsavers-opticians/419974/ - 32k -
Cached - Similar pages -

Specsavers Opticians - Review - You should have gone to Specsavers!
Specsavers Opticians - Review - You **should have gone to Specsavers**!
www.dooyoo.co.uk/health-products/specsavers-opticians/1064810/ - 38k -
Cached - Similar pages -

Should have gone to Specsavers! on Flickr - Photo Sharing!
The optician at Poundsaver assured him that these were the very latest style - but he's not sure. With those ears, though, a more traditional style wasn't ...
www.flickr.com/photos/meldrew/3430411817/ - 92k - Cached - Similar pages -

Should have gone to specsavers on Flickr - Photo Sharing!
Si was asked to autograph this by a complete stranger! Brilliant! Maybe she **should have gone to specsavers**!
www.flickr.com/photos/cocovan/3246589805/ - 48k - Cached - Similar pages -
More results from www.flickr.com »

Exigency In Specie / Should Have Gone To Specsavers?
Should Have Gone To Specsavers? Beth went for her second opinion from Eyesite today, with interesting results. She was given a comprehensive, thirty minute ...
www.peat.me.uk/2005/08/01/should-have-gone-to-specsavers/ - 115k -
Cached - Similar pages -

Penelope Cruz should have gone to Specsavers | The Sun |Showbiz ...
22 Oct 2008 ... Hollywood star arrived at the wrong party last night – turning up to Specsavers Spectacle Wearer of the Year Awards not Vicky Cristina ...
www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/showbiz/bizarre/article1843081.ece - Similar pages -

We can see the extent to which it has become an everyday expression and a kind of verbal shorthand for short-sightedness. Specsavers' strategy to become the first port of call for consumers with either bad eyesight or bad glasses and the hero of the category, appears at first glance to have been a success.

Engagement and advocacy

It's also interesting to look at the social networks, not only to measure the extent to which a campaign has driven engagement and advocacy, but to find out what people think of the campaign, the language they use and the kind of people they are. In the case of the online card company Moonpig, there is a clear divide between Moonpig customers who love the TV campaign and people who hate the campaign and vow never to use the service, no matter how cheap and easy it is.
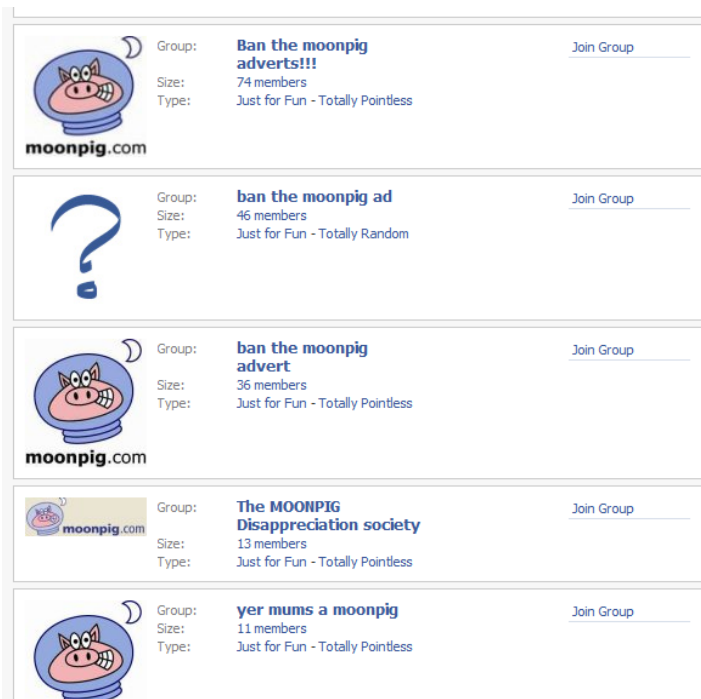

An illustration

Here's an example of this methodology at work and how you can integrate it with your existing planning process. Say you're a supermarket or a food brand and you read a report of some research recently carried out by Oxfam which showed that 60% of consumers say they will buy more organic food in 2009. Terrific. But the actual sales figures tell a different story. According to TNS, after several years of robust growth, sales of organic goods fell by almost 20% in 2008 and have continued to decline into 2009.

So, while consumers are saying one thing, the figures are saying another. What it immediately implies is that even in the relative anonymity of the research environment, even in a general climate of belt-tightening, people feel compelled to say they are going to buy more organic food than they actually do. You can hardly blame them. It's not easy to admit, even in private, that your ethics have been beaten by your economics, but that also means we can't trust the data, either.

Most online data, on the other hand, is untainted by social pressures. When people are online, making searches in particular, but also chatting on their blogs or writing reviews, they are much more themselves. So, if we look at the interest in organic food, as reflected via searches on Google Trends, we can get a new perspective on the current and potential market for organic food and what we can do with the information.

As we can see from the chart below, taken from Google Trends, there was a significant decline in searches for 'organic food' during 2008. In particular, the pre-school term and pre-Christmas peaks of previous years were much lower. Nor was there the sharp New Year rise in 2009 that we have seen before, so the market is the most depressed it has ever been, as per the TNS figures.
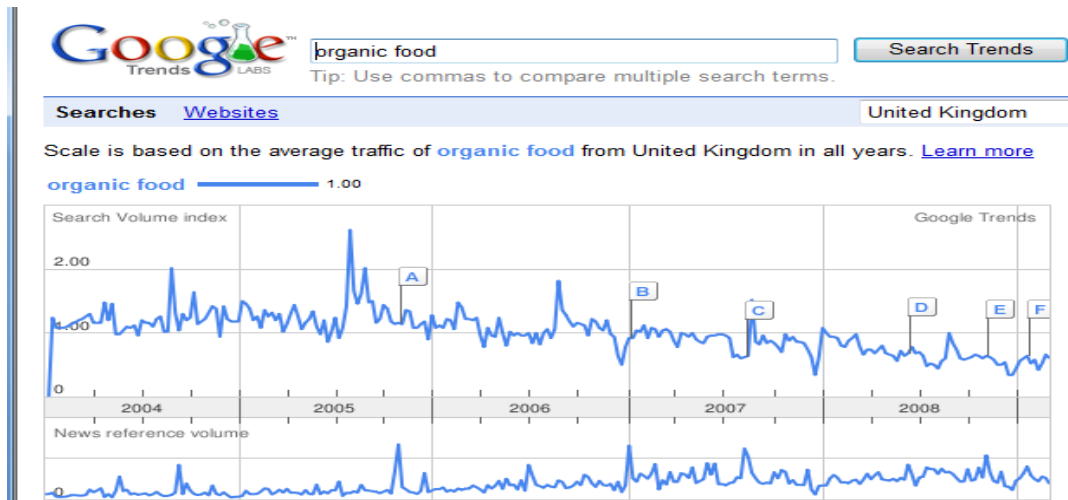
We can see the data from another angle, by comparing time periods on Google Insights for search, which shows that organic food's online mindshare for the last 12 months was significantly less than that of 2007.

Before we start forming any conclusions, we first need to think about what else might have caused this decline. For example, could it be that consumers are saturated with information about organic food and don't need to find out more? If that was the case, the news services, which are particularly sensitive to the demands of their readership, would have already stopped covering the issue in their editorial. But as we can see from the Google Trends graph, news coverage is at least as high in 2008 and 2009 than at any previous time. Nor has online buzz around the issue slowed down in the last 6 months, as this graph from Nielsen's BlogPulse online conversation monitoring tool shows.

Generated by BlogPulse Copyright 2008 Nielsen BuzzMetrics.
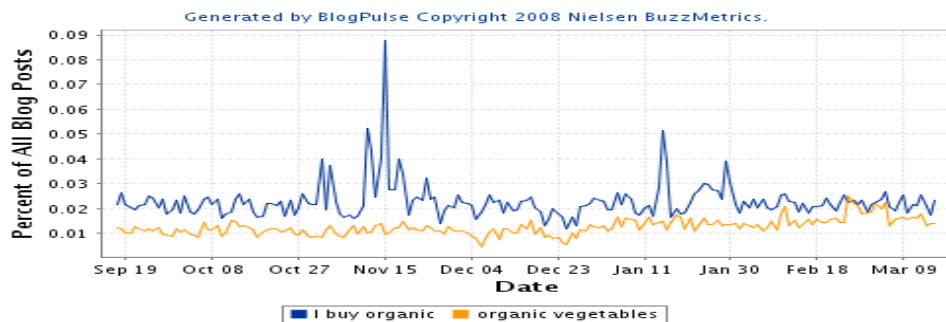
Further evidence that our desire to engage with the issue hasn't declined can be seen in levels of demand for the search 'what is organic?' From the graph below, we can see that people are still as interested this year in buying learning about the issues surrounding organic food than they were last year.

In fact, if it wasn't still an important issue to people, the respondents in the Oxfam research wouldn't have felt under so much pressure to say they were going to buy more organic food in the first place.

And yet, if we look at searches for 'organic chocolate', which is a premium purchase, we can see that demand was decidedly subdued in 2008 and early 2009. In fact, this last Christmas and Valentine's Day must have been a disaster.

So this gives us a further clue as to why people aren't buying as much organic as they said they would. Might it be because consumers don't want to pay the premium?

Likewise, if we look at the most popular and fastest rising searches for the last year, we can get our final clue into the mystery of the disappearing organic food sales.

The fastest rising search is 'organic food prices', which shows that price has become the biggest recent issue around organic food.   In other words, we still want to know about it, but we simply can't buy as much as we'd like.

If we dig even deeper and look at what people are saying in their blogs and on online forums and communities, by using some exact searches on Google such as 'I buy organic" or "I don't buy organic", we can see that people are taking a keen interest in the organic farming process and the reputed health benefits and are using that knowledge to take a selective approach to optimise their shopping. They are finding out, for example, which types of produce absorb the most pesticides, and those which simply need to be washed or peeled, or which produce has the greatest environmental or ethical impact when intensively farmed, and are buying organic (or not) accordingly.   Again, this gives us some useful insights into consumers' behaviour and attitudes.

For a supermarket or food brand, this research has identified these key issues:

- Consumers are very interested in organic food – what it is and where to buy it

- But they just can't afford to buy much at the moment – even though they'd like to

- So they mitigate their guilt by embracing the organic issue and 'pick and mixing' the foods that are effectively the 'most' organic they can afford

This gives us a number of avenues a brand could explore using more conventional research. For example, is there a potential territory in capitalising on organic's premium status. By trying to make organic an everyday, accessible product, maybe it alienates people who can only buy it as a luxury and who are treating themselves with more glamorous products instead? Champagne sales are healthy, after all.   If organic food was positioned as a celebration of life and an investment in ourselves it might find more of a market at the moment?   This could be our territory.

At the same time, brands can help alleviate consumers' guilt by encouraging them to engage with the organic issue on their own terms, without making them feel that they have to buy everything organic every time they shop.   By giving them access to the information we know they are looking for, such as the provenance of the goods, and by encouraging open conversation, a brand gives consumers the content they need to tell and share their brand stories. Brands could also actively encourage consumers to pick and mix, as they are already doing it. We might as well make it easy for them.

So, in summary, what we now have, which we didn't have before we looked at the online data, is a more rounded insight into the consumers and their conflicting desires and pressures, through real data. It hasn't been filtered through a complex web of social anxieties. It's this honesty and authenticity that makes the methodology so powerful.

What do you think? Drop me a line at Nicholine@gmail.com or visit my blog at www.nicholine.com.