

# Keyword Search Tool Guide:

## How To Find Low-Competition Keywords

by Eric Giguère

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<http://www.keywordsearchtoolguide.com>

# Keyword Search Tool Guide: How To Find Low-Competition Keywords

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All questions, suggestions and comments about this book should be sent to [ericgiguere@ericgiguere.com](mailto:ericgiguere@ericgiguere.com).

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# Introduction

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Not long ago as I write this, I recommended the purchase of the [Micro Niche AdSense Course](#) to my readers. It's a great course that demonstrates a simple and very doable technique for building simple but profitable (and completely “white hat”) sites monetized via AdSense. The sites work by getting ranked in Google for low-competition keywords. It's not rocket science by any means, but read my full review at <http://www.memwg.com/micro-niche-adsense-course-review/> to see why it works.

But how do you find those keywords? You need the right software tools and some research time. This little book shows you a couple of ways to do it, and I hope you find it useful.

**Not just AdSense:** Although this book is meant to be an add-on for the Micro Niche AdSense Course, you can use the techniques described here for other purposes, such as “bum marketing”.



# 1. The Goal

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Remember, the point of the [Micro Niche AdSense Course](#) is to find product-related keyword phrases of two or more words (three or four is typical) that meet three criteria:

- 1. Low competition from other websites** – In other words, you can build a website that will outrank most other sites for that particular phrase. Your goal is to have the site land in the top 10 on Google for the phrase.
- 2. Searched for by real users** – Enough people are searching for the phrase in Google on a monthly basis that being listed in the top 10 search results will result in real (but not necessarily high volume) traffic to your site.
- 3. Available domain** – A suitable domain name that incorporates the keyword phrase is available.

Phrases that satisfy the first two criteria abound, but they're not obvious to find. You have to do some digging using your smarts and some software tools. Let's see what it takes to do it by hand using free software tools.



## 2. The AdWords Keyword Tool

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The first place to start is with the Google AdWords Keyword Tool, a free keyword tool that Google provides for its AdWords advertisers. You don't need an AdWords account to use it, though, it's available to everyone and anyone who wants to use it.

The AdWords Keyword Tool (AKT for short) is perhaps the most accurate keyword tool out there if you're looking to target traffic from Google and its search partners. Even if you end up using a more automated tool from someone else (such as [Micro Niche Finder](#)), chances are some of the data used by that tool comes from the AdWords Keyword Tool. So it's a good idea to use the tool yourself to discover what's it's capable of doing and why other tools can simplify some of the drudgery.

### Starting the AKT

You access the AKT from your browser. You'll find it at this URL:

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

Bookmark that URL. (If you forget it, just type “adwords keyword tool” into Google and the first link you'll get back is what you want.)

You'll see something similar to this in your browser:




## Keyword Tool

Use the Keyword Tool to get new keyword ideas. Select an option below to enter a few descriptive words or phrases, or type in your website's URL. [Keyword Tool Tips](#)

**Important note:** We cannot guarantee that these keywords will improve your campaign performance. We reserve the right to disapprove any keywords you add. You are responsible for the keywords you select and for ensuring that your use of the keywords does not violate any applicable laws.

**new** Want more keyword ideas? Try the [Search-based Keyword Tool](#), a new tool that will generate ideas matched to your website.

Results are tailored to **English, United States** [Edit](#)

How would you like to generate keyword ideas?	Enter one keyword or phrase per line:	Select
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Descriptive words or phrases (e.g. green tea)	<input type="text"/>	To add on Google AdWords account into your
<input type="radio"/> Website content (e.g. www.example.com/product?id=74893)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use synonyms Type the characters you see in the picture below. <a href="#">?</a>  <input type="text"/> <small>Letters are not case-sensitive</small> <a href="#">Filter my results</a> <input type="button" value="Get keyword ideas"/>	No k

The AKT has two primary modes of operation. The first mode lets you type in one or more phrases, the second lets you type in the URL of a site to analyze. We want to use the first mode, which is what's highlighted by default.

Enter a keyword phrase into the first text box and then enter the “captcha” text you see into the second box. If I wanted information about “microwave ovens”, I'd do this:




## Keyword Tool

Use the Keyword Tool to get new keyword ideas. Select an option below to enter a few descriptive words or phrases, or type in your website's URL. [Keyword Tool Tips](#)

**Important note:** We cannot guarantee that these keywords will improve your campaign performance. We reserve the right to disapprove any keywords you add. You are responsible for the keywords you select and for ensuring that your use of the keywords does not violate any applicable laws.

**new** Want more keyword ideas? Try the [Search-based Keyword Tool](#), a new tool that will generate ideas matched to your website.

Results are tailored to **English, United States** [Edit](#)

How would you like to generate keyword ideas?	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Descriptive words or phrases (e.g. green tea)	Enter one keyword or phrase per line: <input type="text" value="microwave ovens"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use synonyms Type the characters you see in the picture below. <a href="#">?</a>  <input type="text" value="wxbedyi"/> <small>Letters are not case-sensitive</small> <a href="#">Filter my results</a> <input type="button" value="Get keyword ideas"/>
<input type="radio"/> Website content (e.g. www.example.com/product?id=74893)	

I'd then press the **Get keyword ideas** button at the bottom. After a few seconds, my browser screen would show something like this:

Results are tailored to **English, United States** [Edit](#)

<b>How would you like to generate keyword ideas?</b>	Enter one keyword or phrase per line:
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Descriptive words or phrases (e.g. green tea)	<input type="text" value="microwave ovens"/>
<input type="radio"/> Website content (e.g. www.example.com/product?id=74893)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use synonyms <a href="#">▶ Filter my results</a> <input type="button" value="Get keyword ideas"/>

Choose columns to display: [?](#)  
Show/hide columns

Keywords	Advertiser Competition <a href="#">?</a>	Local Search Volume: August <a href="#">?</a>	Global Monthly Search Volume <a href="#">?</a>	Match Type: <a href="#">?</a> Broad <input type="button" value="v"/>
<b>Keywords related to term(s) entered</b> - sorted by relevance <a href="#">?</a>				
microwaves ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	22,200	33,100	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
compact microwave ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	5,400	5,400	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
sharp microwave ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	33,100	40,500	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
panasonic microwave ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	14,800	27,100	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
convection microwave ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	40,500	49,500	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
lg microwave ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	8,100	9,900	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
microwave ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	673,000	673,000	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
microwave oven	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,000,000	823,000	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
commercial microwave ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	3,600	3,600	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
microwave ovens countertop	<input type="checkbox"/>	27,100	22,200	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
combination microwave ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	5,400	12,100	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
over the range microwave ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	12,100	12,100	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
general electric microwave ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	22,200	27,100	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>
small microwave ovens	<input type="checkbox"/>	8,100	12,100	<a href="#">Add</a> <input type="button" value="v"/>

The list on your screen will be much longer and will probably be different in some ways. But before we do anything else, let's make a few changes to the keyword settings.

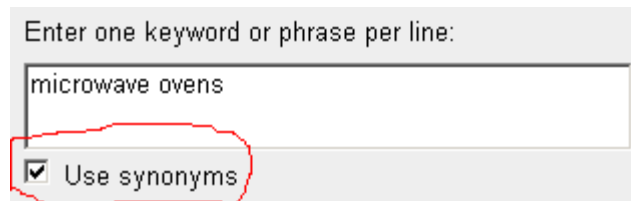
## Geography and Language

At the top of the results page you'll find a description of what geography (country/region) and language the tool is targeting its results for. Most of us want to target **United States** and **English**, but your needs may vary. Change to the appropriate geography and language for your site.

Results are tailored to **English, United States** [Edit](#)

## Synonyms

Under the text box there's a check box labeled "Use synonyms". If this is checked, the AKT will generate a list of keywords that includes synonyms of the phrases you entered. If unchecked, the generated list will be based only on the exact keywords you entered. Normally you start with this checked, as it's a great way to find low-competition alternatives.



Enter one keyword or phrase per line:

microwave ovens

Use synonyms

## Filters

Right under the synonyms check box is a link called "Filter my results". Click this link to expose some options that further control what kinds of keywords are generated.

The obvious use for this is to remove incorrect keywords from the generated list, especially when you're entering in keyword phrases that have multiple meanings.

You can also ask the AKT not to generate a list of related keywords to consider. Again, normally you'd want to consider related keywords, but the suggestions also cut down how many variants of the original keywords get generated, so you'll want to disable related keywords when you're digging deep into a particular topic.

You can also ask for adult keywords to be included, but that's not necessary for our purposes. Remember, you can't show AdSense on any page containing adult material, so it's pointless to enable this option.

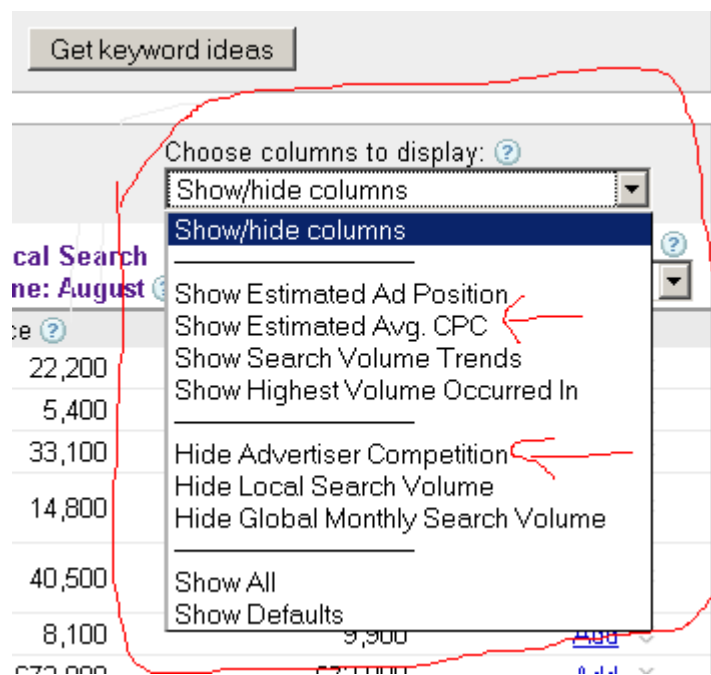
▼ [Close filter options](#)

Don't show results that contain the following words or phrases (enter one per line):

  
 Don't show ideas for new keywords. I only want to see data about the keywords I entered.  
 Include adult content in my keyword results

## Hiding and Showing Columns

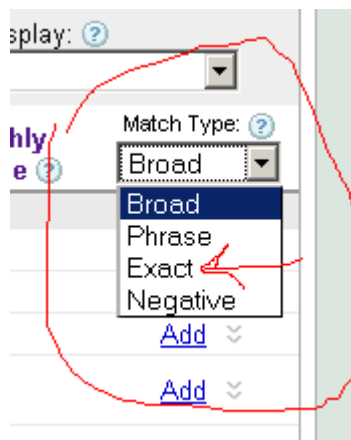
The AKT can show all kinds of data, but we don't care about some of it. There's a drop-down box called “Show/hide columns” to click on to control what gets shown:



You'll want to select “Hide Advertiser Competition” and “Show Estimated Avg. CPC”. We don't care about advertiser competition – what we care about is competition from other sites in the search results. But we're definitely interested in the average cost-per-click (CPC) that advertisers pay for the top 3 positions for a given keyword. (If the top advertisers are paying 5 cents per click, you'll want to move on!)

## Match Type

The next setting to adjust is the “Match Type” setting, which you'll want to set to “Exact”:

























The match type controls what kind of search volume numbers are shown. The default type is “Broad”, which includes searches for synonyms and other related keywords. The “Phrase” type includes searches that include only the actual keyword phrases you're looking for. The “Exact” type is like “Phrase” but excludes searches that don't consist only of the keyword phrases you're looking for.

While the [Micro Niche AdSense Course](#) advocates using exact matching, an argument can be made for using phrase matching because the latter better corresponds with what you see when you look at competition numbers in Google. Try it both ways and see what works for you.

## Search Volume

The final thing you'll want to do is sort by search volume, which you do simply by clicking on either the “Local Search Volume” or “Global Monthly Search Volume” columns. The former is search volume for your targeted geography and language in the last month, the latter is worldwide average search volume in the last 12 months. Normally you'll look at the global volume, so that's what you'll click.

After all these modifications, you'll end up with a keyword list that looks something like this:

Keywords	Estimated Avg. CPC <sup>?</sup>	Local Search Volume: August <sup>?</sup>	▼ Global Monthly Search Volume <sup>?</sup>	Match Type: <sup>?</sup> Exact 
<b>Keywords related to term(s) entered - <a href="#">sort by relevance</a> <sup>?</sup></b>				
[microwave ovens]	\$1.15	201,000	246,000	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[microwave oven]	\$1.05	90,500	110,000	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[microwave ovens countertop]	\$1.55	14,800	8,100	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[convection microwave ovens]	\$1.16	5,400	5,400	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[panasonic microwave oven]	\$1.25	6,600	5,400	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[panasonic microwave ovens]	\$1.30	1,900	3,600	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[sharp microwave ovens]	\$1.12	2,900	3,600	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[combination microwave oven]	\$1.27	880	2,900	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[microwave oven reviews]	\$0.73	2,400	2,900	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[ge microwave oven]	\$1.01	2,400	2,400	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[lg microwave oven]	\$1.11	1,600	2,400	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[small microwave oven]	\$0.95	1,600	2,400	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[built in microwave ovens]	\$1.35	1,600	1,900	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[commercial microwave ovens]	\$2.49	1,900	1,900	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[microwave toaster oven]	\$0.83	2,900	1,900	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[microwaves ovens]	\$1.66	9,900	1,900	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[over the range microwave oven]	\$0.87	1,600	1,900	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[best microwave oven]	\$0.74	880	1,600	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[combination microwave ovens]	\$1.45	720	1,600	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[compact microwave oven]	\$0.84	1,900	1,600	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 
[amazon microwave oven]	\$0.64	2,400	1,600	<a href="#">Add Exact</a> 

## 3. Keyword Analysis

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Learning how to use the AdWords Keyword Tool is easy, but finding the right keywords is a bit of a black art. Here's one way to do it.

### Step 1: Root Keywords

The first step is to make a list of “root” keyword phrases. These are phrases that broadly describe the niche you're exploring. If you're following the [Micro Niche AdSense Course](#), the phrases will be product-related. In the previous chapter, for example, the root phrase was “microwave ovens”.

### Step 2: Keyword Exploration

Once you have your root keywords, it's time to start an exploration with the AKT. Type one keyword phrase at a time into the tool to generate a list of related keywords sorted by search volume, using the settings described in the last chapter.

For each root keyword, carefully look through the list of generated keywords. (Remember to use “Exact” or “Phrase” matching.) Ignore one-word phrases – those will be taken and/or too competitive. You're looking for two-, three- or four-word phrases with decent search volume.

What's decent search volume? Up to you to decide, or use the guidelines in the course. But remember that the values you see in the AKT are monthly, so you should divide by 30 to get a daily value. Thus 6000 searches per month would equate to about 200 searches per day.

Don't go too low with the search volume – or make it up by targeting several different terms on the same site. (The course describes how to do this.)

### Step 3: Keyword Competition

You now have a set of keywords to analyze for competitiveness. Competitiveness

is important because you need to rank as highly as you can in the search results. It's been shown that, for a given search query:

- 40%-50% of searchers will click on the first result
- 10%-20% will click on the second result
- 30%-40% will click on the third to tenth results

These are all approximations, of course (see the [source](#)) and will vary widely from search query to search query. But it's not linear – the first few positions get a lot more clickthroughs than the last positions.

**You need to get your site listed in the top 10** for a given keyword, otherwise there's not much point. You do this by looking at different factors:

- **Number of competing sites.** In Google, type the keyword you're targeting in quotes (do a phrase search, in other words) and see how many sites are listed in the results. You'll find the information at the top of the page, it'll say something like “Results 1-10 of about 1,200,000”. You want a low number of sites.
- **PageRank of the sites currently in the top 10 for phrase search.** Install the free [SEO for Firefox](#) extension (you need to be using Firefox, of course!). It has a cool feature that will optionally show you the PageRank (a rough measure from 0 to 10 of a site's importance/authority, where 10 is the best) of each search result, along with other info like how many links the page has and so on. If all or most of the sites currently in the top 10 results have PageRank of 4 or higher, stay away. If the average PageRank is low, you have a good chance.
- **Use of keywords in titles, URLs and anchor text.** Is the keyword phrase used in most of the page titles listed in the top 10 results for phrase search? Is it in the URLs? You can eyeball these quite easily – Google bolds the matching keywords for you automatically. Anchor text (the text of a link) is harder, you have to do another Google search using the “inanchor:” and “site:” syntax for each site that is a possible competitor.

You'll develop your own criteria, but in general it seems that a competing sites value of 50,000 or less (using phrase search) is good, as is an average PageRank of 2 or less. The other criteria are harder to evaluate, you just want to avoid keyword phrases where most of the sites in the top 10 results are clearly highly optimized for SEO (search engine optimization) purposes.

#### **Step 4: Domain Name Acquisition**

Once you've found some low-competition keywords with decent search volume, you'll want to acquire domain names for each phrase. If you're lucky, you'll be able to find a .com, .org or .net domain that exactly matches the phrase (with no spaces – avoid hyphens). You probably won't, though, so you'll have to try to find a domain that starts with your target phrase.

This part is a bit tedious to do, so you might want to try my [Find Me A Domain](#) tool, which I designed specifically for this purpose.

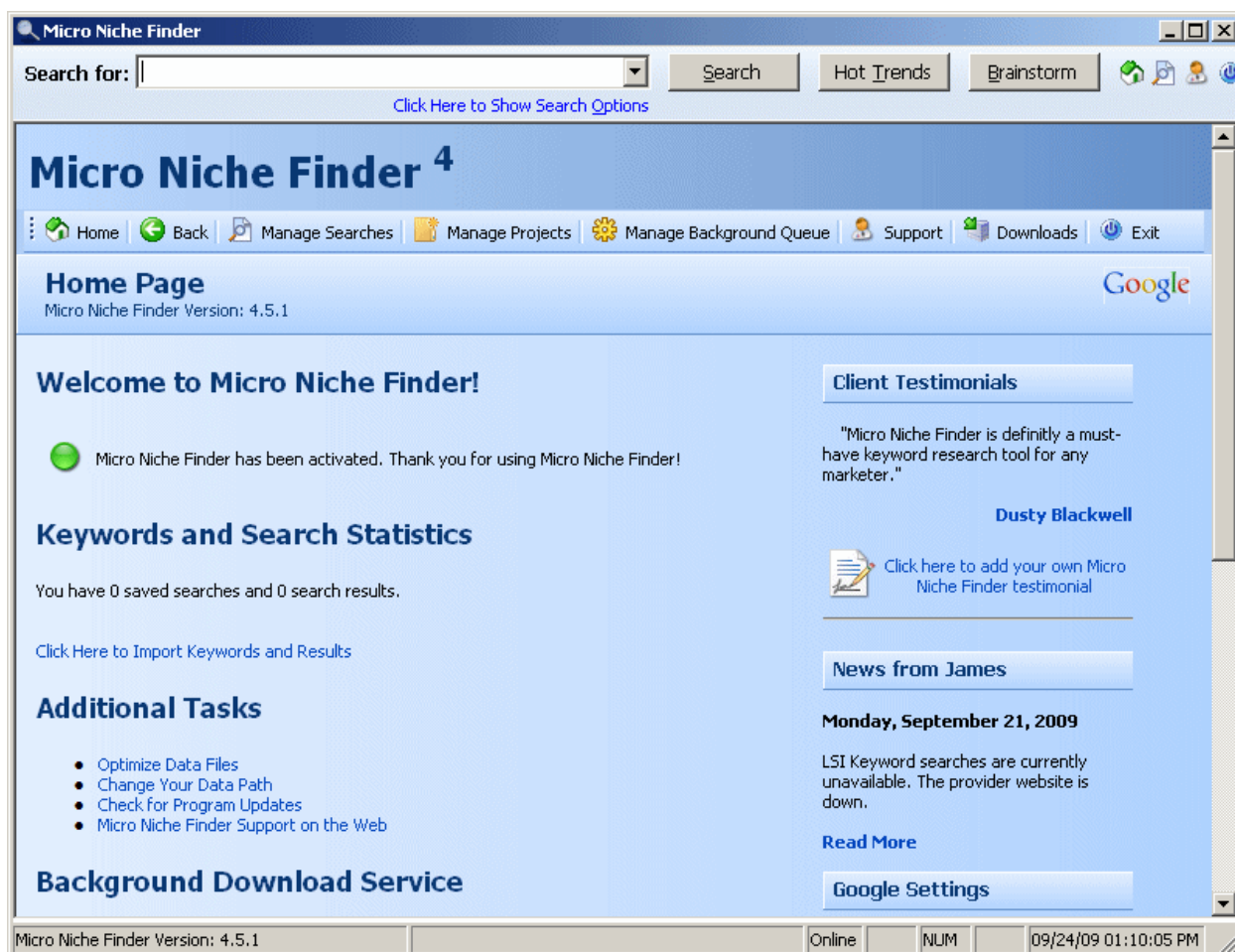
#### **Step 5: Build and Publicize the Sites**

Now continue with the rest of the work. See the [Micro Niche AdSense Course](#) for the details of what to do.



## 4. Micro Niche Finder

As we've seen, it's quite possible to find low-competition keyword phrases using free tools and some elbow grease. You can simplify the process with a good paid tool, however, and for our needs there's one tool of choice: [Micro Niche Finder](#).



Micro Niche Finder (MNF) makes it really easy to find low-competition keywords! For example, let's try our “microwave ovens” example with MNF:

The screenshot shows the Micro Niche Finder application window. The search term is 'microwave ovens'. The interface includes a search bar, a 'Search' button, and a 'Brainstorm' button. Below the search bar, there are several action buttons: 'Get Checked Exact Phrase Counts', 'Get Checked OCI', 'Get Checked SOC', 'Add Checked to Project', and 'Print Results'. There are also links for 'Check All Results', 'Uncheck All Results', 'Reverse Checks', 'Delete Checked Results', 'Check Filtered Results', 'Export Results', and 'Export Checked Results'. The main display area shows a table of search results with columns for 'Phrase', 'Local Search Count', 'Global Search Count', 'Sep 2008 - Aug 2009' (with a bar chart), 'Exact Phrase Count', 'Ad Cost', 'Commercial Intent', and 'SOC'. The table lists various microwave-related phrases and their associated metrics. At the bottom of the window, there is a status bar with 'Micro Niche Finder Version: 4.5.1', 'Online', 'NUM', and the date '09/24/09 01:22:48 PM'.

Phrase (click a phrase for options)	Local Search Count	Global Search Count	Sep 2008 - Aug 2009	Exact Phrase Count	Ad Cost	Commercial Intent	SOC
<input type="checkbox"/> microwave	368,000	368,000		Get Exact Phrase Count	1.02	Get OCI	Get SOC
<input type="checkbox"/> ovens	246,000	301,000		Get Exact Phrase Count	1.34	Get OCI	Get SOC
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>microwave ovens</b>	201,000	246,000		Get Exact Phrase Count	1.15	Get OCI	Get SOC
<input type="checkbox"/> microwaves	201,000	201,000		Get Exact Phrase Count	1.18	Get OCI	Get SOC
<input type="checkbox"/> microwave oven	90,500	110,000		Get Exact Phrase Count	1.05	Get OCI	Get SOC
<input type="checkbox"/> small microwave	5,400	27,100		156,000	0.92	Get OCI	342 ❌
<input type="checkbox"/> panasonic microwave	9,900	27,100		Get Exact Phrase Count	1.23	Get OCI	Get SOC
<input type="checkbox"/> countertop microwave	14,800	14,800		154,000	1.28	Get OCI	5,110 ❌
<input type="checkbox"/> convection microwave	12,100	14,800		337,000	1.06	Get OCI	4,070 ❌
<input type="checkbox"/> lg microwave	6,600	12,100		Get Exact Phrase Count	1.05	Get OCI	1,150 ❌
<input type="checkbox"/> combination microwave	880	9,900		181,000	1.28	Get OCI	2,020 ❌
<input type="checkbox"/> commercial microwaves	4,400	9,900		16,100	2.10	Get OCI	75 ⚠️
<input type="checkbox"/> over the range microwave	9,900	9,900		316,000	0.86	Get OCI	20,800 ❌
<input type="checkbox"/> microwave cooking	5,400	9,900		314,000	0.60	Get OCI	3,780 ❌
<input type="checkbox"/> stainless steel microwave	4,400	8,100		172,000	1.10	Get OCI	9,670 ❌
<input type="checkbox"/> samsung microwave	5,400	8,100		60,700	1.10	Get OCI	993 ❌

Not only does MNF generate a list of keywords for us, it grabs the search volume information from the AKT and lets us easily see competition metrics. In the list above, for example, “commercial microwaves” might be worth exploring because it has a decent search volume (9,900), low competition (16,100) and an OK “strength of competition” (SOC) index. (SOC is a proprietary Micro Niche Finder measure of how good a niche is.)

As you can see, [Micro Niche Finder](#) can cut a lot of the tedious work out of the keyword research phase of the course. (You should still eyeball the possible niches yourself, of course, to confirm that they're valid.)

## Conclusion

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There's not much more to say about low-competition keyword research. The tools you need are out there, whether they're free or paid. Start by purchasing the [Micro Niche AdSense Course](#) and using the Google AdWords Keyword Tool to get started. When you've had enough of the hands-on approach, purchase [Micro Niche Finder](#) and spend your time building sites and writing articles to promote your sites.

If you have any questions or comments about this guide, please feel free to send me a note at [ericgiguere@ericgiguere.com](mailto:ericgiguere@ericgiguere.com).

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