

A Word on the Search Continuum

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Dr. Sharon Livingston: Hi Glenn, what are we talking about today?

Dr. Glenn Livingston: I'm getting a lot of questions about the search continuum concept.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Isn't that something in *Star Trek*

Dr. Glenn Livingston: {chuckles} Yeah, that's not what the search continuum's about.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Oh well good. People will feel very relieved.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: So ask me what is the search continuum?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Well, I really do want to know what that is, please.
{chuckles} I'm clueless.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: {chuckles}

Dr. Sharon Livingston: What do you mean by the search continuum.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: It's something that I started to develop for myself when I noticed two things about keywords.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Mhmm.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: The first thing was, I was really bad at keyword research. There were all these sophisticated tools coming out and it seemed like it was getting more and more complicated and I was really bad at it. I wanted to develop a method for winning without having to do such a comprehensive competition aware keyword search. So what was happening was, everybody was coming up with these tools for finding keywords that no one else had. There's lack of competitive keywords and besides being hard to find them, I also thought to myself. Well, who wants a business that's based on the fact that nobody knows that these keywords are around? Because as soon as the other people figure out that these keywords are around, then they are going to get more expensive.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right. I have to interrupt for just a second. I think that your dedication to work is really incredible. I don't know if you know it folks, but Glenn doesn't normally sound like this.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: I kind of like it that it makes my voice deeper when I don't feel well. Luke, I am your father. {chuckles}

Dr. Sharon Livingston: {chuckles}

Dr. Glenn Livingston: So the first thing was that I wanted to figure out how to structure businesses in such a way that, they weren't dependant upon keywords that just were lesser known.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Rare.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Because it seemed like that was incredibly vulnerable.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: The second thing was, that the keywords that were lesser known would occur in much less volume.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Like if you...

Dr. Sharon Livingston: It's more limiting.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Right. So if you wanted to build a business around sleep solutions. You could find keywords that were less competitive like...

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Narcolepsy.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Well, yeah. {chuckles}

Dr. Sharon Livingston: {chuckles}

Dr. Glenn Livingston: But even that's a fairly high volume search. I'm talking about something like insomnia in restless legs syndromes. Or...

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Oh, that's probably even common.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Yeah, or insomnia light solutions or something like that.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: How about insomnia among those with anorexia and pimples.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: {laughter}

Dr. Sharon Livingston: That would be harder, right?

Dr. Glenn Livingston: That would be harder. The other problem with looking for the keywords, if you're looking on an organic search business, where you are just going to develop search engine optimization and look for free traffic.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Organic?

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Organic is the term in vogue for free traffic. The thing is just the left hand side of the search engine, not the paid ads.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Gotcha.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: I also didn't really want to develop a heavy-duty organic business, because that's vulnerable to whatever *Google* decides to do, jumble their algorithm. Then you could be number one on the first days and then all of a sudden you're in the fifth page and your business is just vulnerable to whatever they decide to do there. I was really wanting to develop businesses that were related to paid advertising, because I have control.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Gotcha.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Make sense?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Mmhmm.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: The last thing was, if you were going to use paid advertising, you would find that these multiword, multi-phrase keywords are usually more expensive because someone is typing in insomnia restless leg solution is much closer to a buying decision.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Yeah. Whereas, maybe you can get the word insomnia for ten of fifteen cents a click, per visitor.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Mmhmm.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Probably insomnia restless leg solutions is going to be like a dollar or two dollars and in some markets this could be the difference between a five cent click and a five dollar click. But like for example, *Perry Marshall* in the interview we did with him. He talks about the headache market and says; you know, the word headache is probably a ten or fifteen cent keyword. The word migraine is probably a dollar or two dollar keyword and the word *Imitrex*, which is a specific migraine solution,

someone types in the word *Imitrex* they are ready to buy these pills that are incredibly expensive. They are kind of like a miracle cure.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Mmhmm.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: That's now a five-dollar keyword. So it's incredibly difficult to compete and finding the five dollar keywords, not only because they are so expensive, and we have to make sales to a higher proportion to people if it's going to work. But, there's also a lot less volume of them, because people as they are entering the market, like if you've got a migraine headache, the first thing that you're going to type in is headache. There will be a lot more volume of people typing in headache, trying to get a sense of what vocabulary is on different results pages for the word headache.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Mmhmm.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Then maybe they'll pick up that they should be typing in more specifically about migraine headaches and then as they learn more they see some solutions, maybe they'll type in *Imitrex*. So they proceed down a continuum. What I wanted to do was figure out; how do I just make money on the word headache? Why do I have to spend so much time at the expensive end of the continuum? Of course, I want to know what's on people's minds there also, but if I could figure out how to make money on the word headache, I would get a lot more volume of leads, a lot more people coming through for a lot less money. I started to focus on really understanding how people move from word to word to word in the search continuum for any given market. What the conversations were in their head as they were going through that progression. I found some ways that you could do that with surveys by categorizing people's responses to surveys based upon what keyword they type in. Then looking at the statistical relationships between those answers, so you can see which words are really sticking together and which are getting further apart.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Mmhmm.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Then as you see that pattern, you go and you search yourself, you can actually reconstruct what the search continuum looks like. Now as the survey also tells you what's on peoples mind, behind every single keyword. Well, you learn how to intercept them at the very beginning, where they're talking about headache and walk them through the various steps or headaches and the different types of solutions available and specifically what to do for a migraine. What is the place to find *Imitrex* is that is what you're trying to sell. See, there's another impact on what you do. Not only do you get them in more volume and for cheaper at the beginning, but you take them off the market because they feel like you've got the information that they want. People are going to go through an educational process in the market, no matter what. If someone has a headache and they don't know what words to search for. They're going to type in headache and if there's a site that makes it clear to them, that they know, they can almost foretell physically the different conversations that might be on their mind.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Let people go down different paths within the site.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: If they have done their research like that, well, that persons not going to click the back button to go back to *Google*. They are going to be more willing to give you their email address. Or they are going to be more willing to give you their phone number. They are going to trust you to do that education for them. It's less work for them. It's less frustration for them. So you've taken them out of the competitive environment and if you don't have this information, marketers that don't really this information about what the whole continuum looks like and how people progress down it and how to lead them step by step through it. If you don't really know that, then you're vulnerable because you're going to try to intercept people at one part or another of the continuum and kind of guess at what they want at that point. It's going to be more expensive and you're going to have to deal with all the competition. So, I think the search continuum is a very, very powerful concept and something in which I am relying on more and more these days. Does that make sense?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: It did and what it reminded me of was, as you know, in our family we have a bunch of people who are gluten intolerant. We have a family member that's wrestling with *Candida*, which is yeast. So, I looked up *Candida* and yeast treatment on the internet and I saw this interesting thing called *ThreeLac*. It was a yeast cure and that got me to colostrum, which is mothers milk and it's supposed to have all the immune factors and everything. Then I got really intrigued about searching for colostrum. What was particularly interesting to me was there are a couple different facts on colostrum and I must have spent an hour looking up colostrum. You know I had a sagacious root to it, but what was fascinating to me was one of the things I learned was that and this is to your point, as I got more educated, first it was colostrum, then it was colostrum and nose bleeds, then it was colostrum and first six hours. There was one site that talked about liquid colostrum, lozenges and powder, and how liquid could be used for nosebleeds, where if you had a nose bleed it wouldn't create scabbing or anything and it stopped it right away. Also, it talked about how to use it, the importance of the first six hours. It had all the information in one site and you could buy all the products right there. That's our dog shaking off God knows what. So, it was the only site that had all the information right there. Every single thing I wanted to read was right there and I could buy products there, all in one place.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: That's what you're trying to accomplish.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: So they did it, they did it effectively.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Right and the way they got there most likely is by studying all those different pathways.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: I think you're right because there were other ones that had a little bit of this or a little bit of that and I didn't trust it. I only trusted it when it has, like you said, it was reading my mind. When it had all of it together in one place.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: I'll tell you something else that's really important about this in terms of the way that the internet is constructed. No one really knows exactly what *Google* is doing to the rank sites. Nobody knows exactly what *Yahoo* is doing but for the best of our knowledge, the way that things are evolving is, we are moving from the early search engine optimization algorithms. We're looking for keyword density and the appropriate keywords in the tags and things like that to something called linking semantic indexing. What that means is that if you type in yeast infection, *Google* know that there is a relationship between yeast infection and colostrum.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: And between colostrum and nose bleeds.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: And good colostrum verses so-so colostrum.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Right and the reason that we know that is because, I mean, they've got billions and billions, if not trillions literally, of searches to analyze. So they really have a sense of any given theme of what the relevancy to do other themes in the keywords. So why is this important to what we are talking about? If you do your research on the search continuum you will understand how all of those ancillary themes are related to your main theme. You'll be able to construct an authoritative website that not only gives people, like you Sharon, the experience of; oh my God this site has everything that I need.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: But it also tells the search engines that this is an authoritative site that you would index highly.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: So it's got a double whammy.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right, makes perfect sense.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Well that's all I have to say.

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