



Article Cannon



How to Fire Hordes of
Free Traffic at Your Site!

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. What can I promote with articles?
3. How to write a good article
4. The main problems people encounter (& how to beat them)
5. Where to submit to
6. The two types of articles you can write
7. Getting free search engine traffic
8. Resource box magic
9. Should I spin my articles?
10. Web 2.0 heaven
11. When to outsource
12. Final Thoughts



Introduction

Welcome to this guide on how to get massive traffic from articles!

So first off - why articles?

Well I love articles, they are easy to write, easy to submit, they give you links to your site which help with SEO, and they drive targeted, free traffic to your site as well! Information makes the internet work, everyone is searching for information online, and articles are one way to convey that information. Combine that with the power of the article directories to rank well in the search engines and you have yourself a winner!

Oh sure videos are taking off, and a lot of what we are going to discuss can be translated directly into video marketing as well, but people still like to see text, if I am looking up something quickly then I don't want to see a 5 minute video where people waffle on about stuff, I want to find a page with text on, then scan it till I find my answer.

You don't need to be a rocket scientist to make it work either, unlike something like PPC, and unless you are spending money outsourcing the articles then if you write one and it doesn't work out like you planned... the only thing you lost was a bit of time.

So in this guide we are going to discuss how to write about things you know nothing about, how to write articles super fast so they are no longer a chore, the best places to submit your articles to depending on what you want to use them for and the two different types of articles you can write which will get traffic in different ways.

Then we'll get into how to get your articles ranked in the search engines so you can get long term traffic for your efforts, then how to get people to click through at the end of your article (so many people neglect this and it is the most important part!). Then I'll wrap up with whether spinning articles is good or bad, and how to do it properly. Then how to outsource everything when you are making money, and how to add web 2.0 properties into the mix.

After all that you should be ready to get some serious traffic with articles!

Let's get started.



Article Cannon

How to Fire Hordes of [Free Traffic](#) at Your Site!



What Can I Promote With Articles?

Articles are versatile, you can use them to promote so many different things, but really they are only an avenue to get traffic to one of your own website pages. Most article directories will not let you use straight affiliate links in the resource box on your article so you have to build your own site (or you could use a squidoo lens etc) and then have links on there to funnel people through to an affiliate offer.

This might sound like more work, but it is actually better for you. If you had affiliate links in your articles and the affiliate link structure changed, or a program closed down etc, then all your links would be useless! If you have your own site then you can just replace the offers you have on there with new ones and the traffic will still be happily coming in from your articles.

Of course if you really want to get the most benefit from the traffic your articles send you then you can build an email list, this means you can profit from the traffic for years to come hopefully. The person who read your article before coming to your site has already read something of yours, so if your article was high quality then hopefully they will come to your site already warmed up to you as an expert on the subject they are searching about and will be more likely to buy from your site or your emails.

Now what you promote on your site... that is up to you, there are so many different ways of promoting things and different offers you can find, try things out, find something that works and then milk that as much as you can while you move into new niches and build up your existing sites.

Now let's find out where you'll be submitting your articles to.



How to Write a Good Article

Article writing does not have to be hard, and your article does not have to be a masterpiece, I'll give you some shortcuts in the next chapter to help speed up your writing and get you writing about topics you know nothing about, but for now then know your article does not have to be magazine quality.

I have hired writers who have written things which were just incredible, they really knew how to write and I'd love to be able to write like them. But I am just an average person, with average writing skills, I write this guide like I write my articles, friendly and down to earth, it conveys what I want it to but it is no Shakespeare.

In fact I encourage you to write just like you speak, when I read articles that are all pumped up and grammatically perfect and journalistic, then unless it is on a news site it is a big turnoff. I think most people online prefer down to earth writing as they know it comes from someone like them (of course if your niche is journalism or something like that then ignore everything in this chapter!).

So research your article like I will discuss in the next chapter, then just start writing, write an introduction, a body, and then close off the article, let's look at each part in more detail.

Introduction: This is the first paragraph where you need to grab their attention, and let them know you are speaking to them, if they were searching for information on how to housetrain their dog then you need to make sure they know in the first sentence or two that that is what you are going to be talking about.

Try to make it interesting and engaging, and lead into what you are going to talk about or what you have to offer them. Talk about their problem and empathise with them so they know that you are there to help, so you might start off with:

'Isn't house training a puppy a nightmare? You try to get them to hold it in and give you a sign that they need to go out, but when you turn your back for just one minute then you hear that dreaded sound of running water... There are things you can do to drastically speed up the process though, let's go through my top 5 tips on how to housetrain your puppy.'



You can see how I have let them know I am on their side and that I have a possible solution to help them.

The body: This is just the main part of the article where you give them all the information you promised them, keep paragraphs short and snappy and break up the content if you can, so if you have 5 tips then number them, or use one paragraph per tip with a short header in bold for each etc, just so it is not an expanse of writing *cough* see *how I did that with the headings for this bit...* *cough*

Closing it off: Here is where you finish off the article and provide them with information how to move forward, summarise what you just told them briefly or maybe just reiterate the main point or top tip, then give them some action steps so they can go and get the results they want.

Finally put in your resource box which entices them to your website and offers, I have a whole chapter on that later on because that is incredibly important.

So there you go, to summarise... no I'm kidding, this is not an article so let's just move straight onto the main problems people encounter with articles.



The Main Problems People Encounter

There are basically two problems people complain about when they come to use articles in their marketing strategy, the first is that they know nothing about the subject (if you are creating a niche website for instance) and the second is that writing articles takes too long, let's blow both of those problems out of the water right now:

Writing about topics you know nothing about

I have written on all sorts of topics, from Forex to rose gardening, to women's exercises and dog food recipes. Yet I know nothing about most of them.

For most subjects, then all you need to do is go out and find articles talking about the subject you want to write about. Say you are looking at problems rose gardeners have, then use Google to find a few pages which talk about the top problems they face, maybe head over to EzineArticles.com and find some articles people have written.

Then read through them all until you are happy you get the gist of what they are saying, then close them down (so you aren't tempted to copy anything from them) and just start to write, don't stop or think too much about anything until the end or you'll stop and start and ruin your flow.

If you need to go back and check out a name etc or go through them again then do that, but you should have studied the research materials enough at the start so you can just churn out a 500 word article from what you read.

Make sure you don't copy any of it! Using other material as research then forming your own article based on that should be ok, but using actual content from another site is of course illegal.

Now for harder subjects like Forex you may have to do some more work, either get together some research material and then spend some more time looking up the concepts discussed in it until you are happy you understand it all, and then write your article. Or if you plan to be in that niche for awhile then buy the top book off Amazon on the subject and read through that!

Either one of those methods will teach you a lot about the subject so the next time you come to write an article it will be 10x easier, and if you read the top



book on the subject then you will understand your target market much better and your product/website/forum or whatever you are developing has a much better chance of success!

Writing articles takes too long

Nonsense! I can churn out articles in under 10 minutes if I don't have to research them, 15 minutes if I do!

First of all, I gave you a great method above for writing articles quickly. Another way you can write articles really quickly is to buy high quality PLR articles and then just literally rewrite them. You don't have to worry about plagiarism (as long as you trust the person you bought them off not to have ripped off the article they sold you from someone else!) so you can literally just read through a paragraph, then rewrite that in your own words, read the next and so on...

The reason this cuts down the time it takes to write an article is because you don't need to think of an angle like '3 Steps to do..' or '10 Things You Shouldn't do When...' etc, you can just blindly copy their angle into your own words, and then as long as it was high quality to start with then you have a high quality, unique article ready to use!

How to increase your productivity by 50%

Even with all these tips so far then article writing can be time consuming, which is why you need to make sure you squeeze every last bit of wasted time out of the process.

If you need to have articles to submit, but also articles for a website, then the quickest way I know of to increase your productivity massively is when you write a unique article, then straight away rewrite that to make another one saying the same thing.

All the research material or the content of the PLR article will be fresh in your mind, so it is a lot quicker to churn out another article right then than to have to go and start a fresh one, this gives you two unique articles that say exactly the same thing. If you are putting one on your site and submitting the other to



directories or using it on web 2.0 sites then it doesn't matter that they both say the same thing as they will be in two totally different places!

Try it, you'll find the second article goes much faster and smoother!



Where to Submit to

This is always a tricky subject, people have different luck with different article directories and everyone has their favourites. EzineArticles.com always comes up as a firm favourite, but I also know others who swear GoArticles.com ranks better in the search engines for them. Buzzle.com is powerful but they require totally unique content so you shouldn't submit it anywhere else. SearchWarp.com were quite good but now they have far too many rules so submitting articles is a nightmare!

It depends on what you want to submit your articles for, traffic is the main aim of this course, but submitting articles is also a great way to get links to your site for SEO purposes (we'll discuss links later) in which case it doesn't matter if you get any traffic, as long as you get a link. So stick to the main article directories for traffic, but don't dismiss the others as in the future they are a convenient place to get links from.

So here are my top 3 choices in terms of the traffic they can get you:

EzineArticles.com

GoArticles.com

Buzzle.com (unique articles only)

But for a list of 400+ directories then head over here:

www.MasonWorld.com/masonworld-article-directory-rank/

Lots of people think that submitting an article to hundreds of article directories will get them a hundred times as much traffic, in my experience that is just not true. There are basically two ways to get traffic from article directories, getting your article to rank in the search engines, or from the directory themselves or webmasters who pick up your article from the directories.

The problem with the smaller directories is that most of the traffic they get is from people who want to submit articles, not people actually reading the articles.



Plus most people submit to sites like EzineArticles.com first and then submit the same article to the smaller directories. Google filters out duplicate content and should only allow one copy to rank for a search term, usually the page with the most authority (the one with the most links or just authority from being on a powerful site)...

Guess what? EzineArticles.com is going to win that battle almost every time, so you can rule out ranking in the search engines with the smaller directories if you also submit to the larger ones.

I believe that your time is best served in writing more articles for the top directories and looking after the ones you have already submitted, rather than submitting the same articles all over the place.

But article marketing is a fiercely debated topic, I am sure others will disagree with me!

Let's dig deeper into the two ways to get traffic from your articles.

The Two Types of Articles You Can Write

We discussed this briefly in the last chapter, but basically there are two ways to get traffic from the article directories, and each requires a different type of article.

For consistent long term traffic then getting your article ranked in the search engines is a great strategy. Every time people type the search phrase into Google your article will show up, people will click through to it and a percentage of those reading your article will also click through to your site. You create little funnels leading to your site!

For a quick surge of traffic and the chance to possibly get some traffic for a few months then what you can do is leech off other articles that are already getting traffic from the search engines. To do this you need to grab their attention with a catchy title - when you appear in the 'recently submitted' list below other articles you can grab people who have finished reading the other article on the page and are attracted by your title.

This works best for a quick surge of traffic and I'll reveal a sneaky trick for this shortly, but if you can get enough of a surge of traffic at the start then you might make it onto the 'Most viewed' list which you can then get traffic from for a lot longer as you'll drop off the 'Recently submitted' list quite quickly. Please note the leeching method only really works on sites like EzineArticles.com which have the 'Recently submitted' or 'Related Articles' links at the bottom of each article.

So why do you have to create different articles to capitalise on one of these methods? Well it mostly revolves around the title. You see in search engine optimisation then the title of a page, and the title ON a page are important. For most article directories then they take the title you give your article and also use that to name the page where your article will reside, so this title is a big factor in your chances of ranking in the search engines (along with some other factors which we'll discuss in detail in the next chapter).

For SEO then you want to include the keyword phrase you are targeting in the title, and if possible then try not to dilute the title by putting in much else, of course if it doesn't make sense or is too boring then you might have to, but targeting the phrase 'Dog training tips' then you might have a title like this:



'5 Top Dog Training Tips'

That includes the keyword phrase but not too much else, and it is enticing enough to get people to click through it if you get it to rank in the search engines. You would then make sure you included that keyword phrase in the article a few times too so Google knows your article is about that keyword phrase and will consider ranking it for that term.

Now with the leeching method then you don't have to worry about getting a keyword phrase into the title, but you do have to worry about making it as 'clickable' as possible. You want people magnetically drawn to your article in the 'Recently submitted' list based on its title, so make it grab them by the eyeballs!

Make it controversial, make it funny, just make it something! Negative headlines work quite well so maybe something like:

'5 Shocking Reasons Why You'll Never be Able to Train Your Dog'

Or you can just use curiosity:

'5 Powerful Dog Training Tips That Professional Trainers Don't Want You to Know'

'Discover a Startling Secret Which Can Make Your Dog Live Longer'

'10 Simple Household Items That Could be Slowly Killing Your Faithful Dog'

You can see these are dramatically different to the title created for SEO purposes, the length is less of an issue, but the impact and interest they generate is more important. If you are using the leeching method then you also don't need to worry about putting any keywords into the body of the article, just write a good article with a great resource box and that is it!

I mentioned at the start of this chapter I had a sneaky trick for you... well here it is, you see the problem with the leeching method is that it only works for as long as you are in that 'Recently submitted' list (unless you get enough views to be in the 'most viewed' articles list which doesn't usually happen), so the longer you can be in there then the longer you siphon off visitors...



The trick is to submit your article so it is approved and in that list when all the editors go home for the weekend! If you can get that to happen then there won't be any other articles being approved to knock you off the list until the next week!

Now it is easier said than done, you need to figure out how long it takes you to get your articles approved on average and submit accordingly, but even if you just roughly aim your articles to get this to happen then you don't lose anything if they don't get approved at the right time, you just get the normal traffic that everyone else gets, but the ones that do stick over the weekend will be well worth it.

Another sneaky trick is to see when your niche gets the most traffic, most niches I have sites in seem to have a best day of the week to get traffic. Some seem to peak on Sunday, Monday's traffic is then half that of Sunday's and it slowly builds over the week. Others might peak just before the weekend and then have the traffic tail off dramatically over the weekend as your target audience are out doing whatever it is they were searching about.

You need tracking on your website to find this out (get [Google Analytics](#) for free) but once you start to get some traffic from the search engines then you can start to watch the patterns. Make sure you don't make judgements based on the traffic from your articles as every time you submit a new one you are going to skew your traffic figures by hopefully getting some new people to click through to your site no matter what day of the week it is.

If you just look at the pattern to the free search engine or if you haven't submitted some articles in a while then maybe look for the overall pattern, you will be able to see which day it makes most sense to have your articles approved on when you are trying the leeching method (it might not be the weekend so don't waste your time getting them approved just before the weekend if people in your niche don't search much at that time!).

Those are the two different kinds of article you can create, now let's discuss the process of getting an article to rank for the long term in more detail.

Getting Free Search Engine Traffic

You know all about leeching now, and you understand the importance of the title in getting an article to rank in the search engines, but now let's look at the 3 step process to getting your articles ranked:

1. Research
2. Construction
3. Back links

Research

The first thing you need to do is research the terms that you want to target, so first of all head over to the Google keyword tool at:

<https://adwords.google.co.uk/select/KeywordToolExternal>

Change the country at the top to 'All countries and territories' and then type a word or two into the search box to do with your niche (enter different phrases on different lines), enter the captcha characters and click 'Get keyword ideas'. So for the acne niche then it would look like this:

Results are tailored to the languages and countries you choose below:

English	All Countries and Territories
Chinese (simplified)	-----
Chinese (traditional)	United Kingdom
Danish	Australia
Dutch	Austria
Finnish	Belgium

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

The results that come up show the monthly searches made in Google for the past month, and the second column is the average monthly volume. Search volume is not always a sign of how competitive a phrase is going to be to rank

for, but it is a good start because the higher search volume terms will be competed for by the people with big sites and big budgets, the much smaller search volume keywords should be easier to beat the competition on.

Sort the data into descending order by search volume by clicking once on the header for the second column of figures:



Keywords	Advertiser Competition ?	Local Search Volume: June ?	▼Global Monthly Search Volume ?
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sort by relevance ?			
acne	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	6,120,000	5,000,000
acne treatment	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	823,000	550,000
care acne	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	165,000	165,000
best acne	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	201,000	135,000
treatments acne	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	165,000	135,000

Now look down the list until you get to phrases with 3 or more words in them, typically the longer the phrase then the more focussed the searcher is on getting an answer, the less competition there is, and the fewer searches there are.

I start looking around the 1000 searches per month range, and I use the average volume column, the 'Global Monthly Search Volume' column as it is called now. Go down the list and you are trying to find keywords that you can write about but which also gel with what you are trying to promote (that is important!). So there is no point in trying to rank for 'best acne pill' if your site promotes an affiliate offer for an ebook on acne, you might get some conversions, but the searcher already has it in their head that they want a pill not an ebook.

So make a list of phrases that you like the look of in Excel or Notepad, and if you are struggling to get many with smaller search volumes then dig deeper. So in the search results I have above then two of the top phrases are 'cure acne' and 'care acne' - type them in as your search phrases instead and you'll dig deeper into those phrases and hopefully get some different low volume phrases you can use.

Now you have a small list then let's head over to Google and do some spying...

Before we start this though then understand it is far from an exact science, some articles will get to the top position easily, others will never even get a whiff of the



front page or appear in the results at all. Concentrate on the winners and let the losers fall away.

Now we are looking at how much competition that keyword actually has, there are a few things that go into this:

1. The title tag, do the sites on the front page have the keyword in their title?
2. The description, do the sites on the front page have the keyword in their description?
3. Authority sites, are the top results filled with sites like Wikipedia and About.com?
4. Back links, how many back links do the top sites have?

If we look at all of this then we can start to have a rough idea of what we are up against, again this is not an exact science and I'd much prefer to quickly get out 3 or 4 articles than spend all night analysing the competition and trying to find one perfect keyword, because even if things look perfect then sometimes it just doesn't work like it is supposed to! (unless someone can reveal Google's algorithm then we will always be guessing).

So to start with then type one of the keywords you chose into Google, make sure if you are not from the US that you go to the US Google otherwise the results will be skewed to your country. I have taken 'treating adult acne' with 880 searches, let's have a look at the results:

[Adult Acne: Causes and Cures](#)

Fact #4: Don't **treat adult acne** like the teen kind The products you used as a teenager won't work on **adult** skin. Here's a 2-step program for cleansing and ...
[beauty.about.com/od/skinflaws/a/adultacne.htm](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Adult Acne: Why You Get It, How to Treat It](#)

Adult acne is more common than you think – and fairly easy to **treat**.
[www.webmd.com/...treatments/acne/.../adult-acne-why-you-get-it-how-fight-it](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Adult Acne](#)

Just when you thought your "bad skin" days were over, **adult acne** strikes. ... **Adult acne** and teen **acne** are caused by a combination of several factors: hormones leading to Smarter Eating - **Treating Depression** - Triglyceride Risks ...
[www.webmd.com/skin-problems...treatments/acne/.../adult-acne](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Treating Adult Acne](#)

Find out what's involved in **treating adult acne**. ... But there's more than medicine to **treating adult acne**. A multifaceted approach of treatments, ...
[www.yourplasticsurgeryguide.com/facial.../adult-acne.htm](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Millions of Women Facing Adult Acne](#)

1 Aug 2004 ... "When **adult** women experience **acne** outbreaks, hormones are usually the primary ... While OCPs are effective in **treating hormonal acne**, ...
[www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/11514.php](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Adult Acne - Adult Acne Treatments](#)

But Accutane isn't the only oral medication used to **treat acne** breakouts. Oral antibiotics are also helpful in clearing some cases of **adult acne**, ...
[acne.about.com/od/adultsacne/a/adulttreatments.htm](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Tips For Treating Adult Acne](#)

Tips For **Treating Adult Acne**. ... Tips For **Treating Adult Acne** By Morgan Hamilton Platinum Quality Author. Article Word Count: 472 [View Summary] Comments ...
[ezinearticles.com/?Tips-For-Treating-Adult-Acne&id...](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)



You can see there are some interesting results here, in position number 7 there is already an EzineArticles.com article which shows that the site can hit the front page, but then above that you will see about.com twice and webmd.com twice, both authority sites, I am thinking I could probably take spot #4, but I might look at other terms first as the top 2 -3 spots get most of the traffic.

So let's look at 'homeopathic acne cure' with 880 searches, for that we get:

[Acne Pimples Symptoms, Cure, Cause, Treatment, Homeopathy Remedies ...](#)

3 Apr 2009 ... **Acne**: Information on Signs, Symptoms, Cause, Treatment and **Cure** of **Acne**.

How it is diagnosed? Natural **Cure**, Alternative Medicine ...

www.hpathy.com/diseases/acne-symptoms-treatment-cure.asp - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Homeopathic Treatment for Acne](#)

Article on **homeopathic** treatment of **acne** with additional information about how to prevent **acne** by using our 100% Natural **acne** treatment product.

www.quickacneready.com/acne.../homeopathic-treatment-for-acne.html - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Acne cure? - ABC Homeopathy Forum](#)

4 posts - Last post: 7 Jul 2008

Is **acne** curable through **homeopathy**? Is this normal after using topical creams for many years?

Any info would be helpful. Re: **Acne cure?** ...

abchomeopathy.com/forum2.php/23094/ - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Homeopathic Remedies for Acne Vulgaris, Pimples](#)

See also "Using **Homeopathy** With Professional Guidance" in What Is **Homeopathy**?

Antimonium tartaricum: This remedy may be helpful for **acne** with large pustules ...

votedowngoodale.com/Notes/2192001.html - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Homeopathy Treatment For Acne](#)

Homeopathy treatment is emerging as a new way to **cure acne**.

www.acnetalks.com/.../Acne.../Homeopathy-Treatment-For-Acne.htm - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Homeopathic Acne Treatment Article](#)

Homeopathic acne treatment is the use of alternative medications and products to treat breakouts.

www.christianet.com/acne/homeopathicacnetreatment.htm - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Acne Cures Secret – The ONLY Path to a LASTING Cure for Acne](#)

It isn't to take a drug or **acne** anti-biotic. And it isn't endlessly ingesting an herbal or **homeopathic acne** remedy... What will **cure** your **acne** is to take that ...

www.natural-acne-treatments.com/acne_cures.html - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

Now that's more like it - I don't see any major authority sites in that list (you'll start to recognise which are authority sites as you dig because they are large sites which rank again and again for loads of different terms). Finding a web 2.0 site on the front page is usually a good sign too, like Squidoo.com, Weebly.com, Hubpages.com etc, as you then know those sites are capable of reaching the front page so you can use the same site with your article and try to beat the one there already, or try a different site and see if that gets higher up.

Now the next step is to search for the amount of sites that have that exact phrase in the title or description of their page. That gives us a rough figure as a

further idea of the level of competition. We have discussed how important the title tag can be in SEO, so any page without the exact phrase in it is probably not specifically aiming to rank for it.

To do this then search for the term again, but enclose it in speech marks this time so Google only finds pages with that term in either the title or description of the page, like this:

[Advanced Search](#)
[Preferences](#)

Web [+ Show options...](#)

[Top 5 Acne Cures Exposed](#)

www.AcneTreatmentGuide.org Acne Treatment That Actually Works? Learn Truth About Acne Treatments

[Revolutionary Acne Cure](#)

www.b5clearskin.com 100% effective in a medical study Safe, guaranteed, really works!

[2009's Top Acne Products](#)

www.researchacnetreatments.com/ What Will Clear Your Skin For Good? Consumer Reviews, Research & More

Tip: Save time by hitting the return key instead of clicking on "search"

[Homeopathic Acne Cure - People - Wellsphere](#)

Learn about **Homeopathic Acne Cure** and meet health experts and people like you.

www.wellsphere.com/people/homeopathic-acne-cure - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Homeopathic Acne Cure](#)

As teenagers (or adults!), acne can be the bane of our existence. It can ruin a day with one look in the mirror. How many times have you gotten up for an ...

www.squidoo.com/homeopathicacnecure - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

These results are not relevant to anything other than the level of competition, nobody will really search for the term in speech marks so don't get excited if it changes so all the pages on the front page are easy to beat. While some of the other pages you saw on the front page for the last search may not have the term in their title or description tags, then if they are on the front page they are doing something Google likes and are still the pages you need to beat.

Now the figure you are looking for is in the top right of the search area:

Results 1 - 10 of about 1,300 for "[homeopathic acne cure](#)" (0.17 seconds)



You can see there are 1,300 results when you search in speech marks, this is a rough idea of your competition. Some people say anything with less than 50,000 results can be beaten by EzineArticles.com with a bit of work, and anything below 20,000 should be even easier, but again you'll get some keywords with just 5,000 results you can't seem to rank for and others with 50,000 you'll rank for in a heartbeat, this is just a rough idea.

So you can see this has very little competition and if I was an affiliate for anything related to this keyword, any kind of natural acne cure, then I'd keep this keyword as one to use.

If you find that the level of competition is creeping up around the 20,000+ mark then I'd probably take another factor into account - the number of back links the page has.

Back links are the lifeblood of SEO, Google treats them as votes for your page and they tell Google how relevant and popular you are for any keyword phrase based on the text that is used to link to you (known as anchor text).

In broad terms then the person with the most relevant page (title tag, keyword density for the keyword etc) with the most links pointing to them with that keyword phrase in, will rank for the term in the top spot. There are a whole Pandora's box of other things that need to be taken into consideration, but for now that explanation is a good overview.

So I'd check the back links of the top 2 results for that term, that gives you a rough idea of the level of back links that you need to get to beat them. It is only a rough idea though, first of all you are using a page on a high authority site, sites like GoArticles.com and EzineArticles.com are big and trusted sites in Google, so that should give you a head start already. Second of all then they might have some of their links with the anchor text 'click here' or something which are not really anything to worry about as they don't have the keyword term in.

It provides just another rough measure of competition, if one keyword has pages with 1000 links at the top and another has pages with 10 links at the top then I know which one I am going to be spending my time trying to rank for!

To check how many links a page has then in the search results right-click on the link to one of the search results and go to 'Copy shortcut':



Then head over to yahoo.com and type in 'link:' then paste in the link you just copied afterwards and hit search.



This will bring up the Yahoo Site Explorer which will then tell you how many links they have found:



You can see for that page then it has 31 back links to it which is easily beatable.

Now go through your list of keywords and repeat this procedure for each one until you have a shortlist of ones you can write articles on.

If you want to find more keywords to write articles about and you find the Google tool too time consuming then try something like [Micro Niche Finder](#), or you can sign up for a [Wordtracker](#) subscription.



Construction

Now it is time to write the articles, we discussed earlier how to write a good article so now let's talk about an important SEO concept, keyword density. This is a measure of how many times your keyword appears in the text per 100 words.

This is another fiercely debated issue and everyone has their own 'magic number' which they swear works for them. The problem is that number is coming down all the time. It used to be anything up to 5% which to be honest makes your pages sound awful! But thankfully Google has recognised that as trying to spam the search engines and now most people use 1 - 2%.

If you have your own site then you can use whatever percentage you want, but when submitting to article directories then your article will be reviewed by a human editor so it needs to sound right. I typically use about 1%, but I might throw in a few variations of the keyword as well just to help things out.

Which brings me to the next point, if you can get the keyword in exactly as it is then by all means do it, but only if it sounds natural. Some keywords might sound strange to put them in an article like, 'house train dog fast' - some people will just shoehorn that into their sentences to get their density up, but it is obvious to the editors what you are doing, and your reader thinks you are a bit strange but doesn't know why you are doing it!

You need to write for both the reader and the search engines, so while some may disagree with me, then if I encounter a phrase like that I will add a word or two to it in order to make it sound right. So you could have something like, 'If you really want to know how to **house train** your **dog fast** then you need...' which sounds perfectly normal but you get almost the exact phrase in there.

So typically I write 400 word articles, I have found that to work well for me, it is a lot easier for me to write for some reason (500 words always seems like I have to stretch things out), costs less when you outsource, and provides a good amount of information at the same time.

That means I'd have the keyword phrase in there about 4 times, maybe with some instances of the words repeated but not together, so I'd get the terms 'house train', 'dog' and 'fast' in there a few times as well during the article but not near each other. You want to get one instance of the keyword phrase in as



soon as possible, one as late as possible, then the other two in the middle somewhere.

That is pretty much it for the construction of the article, remember what I told you about writing a good article and just get stuck in!

Back links

This is the time to build some back links to your article, you don't always need to in order to rank on the first page, but I really do advise you to build at least some to every article. Some of the ones you have identified as being for a more competitive keyword then you might need to build a lot more.

One word of warning though, don't build all the links with the same anchor text, Google likes to see variety, as a rule of thumb then only about 60% of your links should be for that exact phrase, for the others then mix it up, use variations of the phrase, add words to it, or use 'click here', 'this article' - all the sort of things people would naturally use to link to a page.

There are so many ways to build back links, but for articles then the two ways I recommend are social bookmarking and using a paid service.

Social bookmarking is where people 'bookmark' sites they like and that gives the page a link then from the account of the person doing the bookmarking. You can use a free service like SocialMarker.com to help with the process of going in and bookmarking your articles, or you can sign up to OnlyWire.com which allows you to automatically bookmark a page to multiple sites, you can even outsource it for about \$4 per 30 bookmarks to WLMarketing.com.

Make sure you bookmark other things you like online as well though, an account that just bookmarks articles leading to your site might get flagged for spam... (you can open a new one but you'll lose the links in the old one).

How you do it is personal preference, I like Onlywire.com as it is easy to setup and then you can do a submission in just a few clicks whereas SocialMarker.com will probably take you an hour or so to go through each submission.

Then there are linking services, places like MyArticleNetwork.com, Linkvana.com and 1WayLinks.net which for a monthly fee allows you access to a wide range of sites which you can get links from, I've used them all at one time or another.



Linkvana is probably best for when you have lots of sites you need to use SEO on, the other two offer better value if you are trying to get links just to your articles.

The way those two work is you write a short article or blog post and then you 'spin' it so that each submission is unique, make sure your link is in there somewhere (you can spin the anchor text on that as well so it rotates every time it is used!) and submit it and their system distributes copies out to their network of sites.

Each time they send the post out to a site they use variations of words/sentences which you provided in the spinning phase (we'll discuss this more later on), so that each post is not identical to the last and Google hopefully counts each link.

Now you don't need to submit one post to these systems for every article you create, if you are smart about it then when you submit it you spin not only the anchor text, but the link that is submitted, so it randomly picks a link each time it posts your content and you have links being built to multiple articles at the same time! I have had links to probably 20 - 30 pages being rotated through on some submissions!

After a week or so then check to see where your articles are in the Google, you can use a free service like this to find out where your article is:

<http://www.searchenginegenie.com/google-rank-checker.html>

If your article is in the first 2 - 3 pages then build some more links! If it is further out than that then consider how much traffic it is supposed to have and think if it is worth the extra effort. Any article on the front page but not in spot #1 then build some more links to as well until it gets to the top!

Drop any articles that don't seem to make much progress and concentrate on the ones that do as well as writing more of course! Now let's move onto the resource box, the most important part of the article...



Resource Box Magic

Some people find the perfect keywords, they craft exquisite articles, then they dump a resource box on it and try to get it to rank... hang on, we're not writing these articles for fun you know! The whole purpose of writing these articles is to get people through to your site, and you can't do that with a half-baked resource box, that is what makes people click through to your site (or not!).

Your resource box needs to give the person reading a clear, compelling and above all relevant reason to click through. By relevant I mean don't have an article on acne and try to get them to click through for weight loss information, or don't talk about the benefits of autoresponders then try to get them to download a free report on Google Adwords, the messages need to match.

You don't need to craft the perfect resource box though, because as you go along you can test your resource boxes on EzineArticles.com as it tells you the visits and clickthroughs. So you can try out different messages and see which ones get the highest clickthrough rate then use that one as your standard one!

I have seen some really bad resource boxes, the worst are the ones where people introduce themselves, tell everyone a bit about them, then give them a link to visit their main site...

You have to think about it from their point of view, sure you may get some people clicking through that link, but you need to give people a reason to visit your site, and you need to tell people what to do so they actually do it. Think about if you would click through if you saw that resource box.

It can be any reason to visit your site, more articles on that topic, a free report, a special offer, a piece of news in that niche, whatever, as long as it draws people in. So you might use:

'If you really want to cure the misery of acne then visit our blog where we bust open the secrets
on one of the top acne products on the market today - [click here to read more](#)'

or

'We discovered 3 common household items you can use to cure your acne in just 3 days, [click here now](#) to get your free report'



They are not great but you can build on them every time you write an article to polish them, just don't make your resource box boring if you want people to click through!

You also need to consider putting in links with good anchor text so you can get some SEO benefit from your articles, to do that you can work a second link into your resource box early on which goes to a page on your site you want to get ranked, hopefully people will then keep reading past that link and click the one you tell them to at the end. So if you wanted to get some links for a page you thought could rank on the term 'natural acne cure' then you might have it like this:

'If you really want to discover a [natural acne cure](#) then visit our blog where we bust open the secrets on one of the top natural acne products on the market today - [click here to read more](#)'

Then you get two benefits, click through and back links!



Should I Spin My Articles?

Spinning articles is the process of using one 'seed' article to produce hundreds of variations by replacing certain words or sentences with options you have given the software. This has been given a bad name because most spinners encourage you to replace just certain words, so you might have the sentence:

"Dog training can be very hard but if you stick with it then after a few months the rewards will be well worth it"

Then you select words and give the software alternatives that it could use, so replace 'hard' with difficult, frustrating, infuriating, time consuming etc etc.

The problem with this is that while it looks innocent enough as you do it, the end results when you put all the words together is just mismatched junk. You can tell it was not written by hand because all the words just don't 'fit' right.

There is a way to do it properly though... If you replace whole sentences rather than just single words then the whole thing should sound normal, as long as you don't drag it out and try to force too many variations in or you will struggle for things to write and then it will start to sound odd.

I aim for 2 - 3 variations of each sentence, which is more than enough to produce tens if not hundreds of variations you can submit around the net.

So what are they used for?

Well mostly link building really, as you are submitting an article that pretty much says the same thing each time, then you won't get each to rank in the search engines for drastically different things, so instead you can use it to get back links, and maybe leech some traffic off high profile web 2.0 sites - which funnily enough we are going to talk about now!



Web 2.0 Heaven

Web 2.0 sites to me mean sites that use mostly user generated content, so Facebook, Squidoo, Weebly, even Wikipedia is a web 2.0 site. Some you can't use to market, like Wikipedia and Facebook, others you can like Squidoo, Weebly, Hubpages and ClearBlogs.

You have to be wary of the rules of these sites (but then you have to be wary of the rules on places like EzineArticles too) as unlike EzineArticles.com your pages do not have to be approved before they are visible (for most sites). This means you don't get an article rejected and told why so you can correct it, often your page will just disappear, and then if they find you have multiple pages violating some part of their TOS they'll probably just shut your account down and delete all your pages... harsh but true.

So go in knowing what to expect so you don't inadvertently break any of the rules and then everyone is happy. Web 2.0 sites are great because you can link to your site or your offers, and you can use them to get ranked in the search engines too because they are often authority sites with lots of ranking power too.

In fact sometimes you will find Squidoo lenses and Hubpages ranking above articles from EzineArticles.com so over time you will learn which gets you the most traffic and the best rankings and you can then stick to that one and master it.

As sleazy as it sounds though I would recommend creating multiple accounts and distributing your work between those accounts, even if you do everything right then sometimes a competitor might report your pages or something, and if all your work is in one account when it gets closed...

Here are some web 2.0 sites that you might like to try:

Squidoo.com

Wordpress.com

HubPages.com

WetPaint.com



ClearBlogs.com

Blogger.com

Zimbio.com

When to Outsource

Writing and distributing articles is a great way to get traffic and back links - but at what point do you start to outsource it?

Well first off you have to be making enough money from it to afford outsourcing, a good quality 400 word article will set you back \$8 or so on Elance.com, but second of all you have to know how much your visitors are worth to you, and preferably to be building a list of email addresses too.

If you know that on average each person who joins your email list makes you \$5 a year say (most people think it would be closer to \$12 so I am going on the low side here) then you would only need 2 signups from an article to be in profit. You can then compare that with how much traffic you currently get from articles and what the sign up rate is from that, and see if the numbers look good or not.

Or you can just free up your time and outsource article creation for back links. You can even get someone to spin articles for you like we spoke about earlier, that way you have hundreds of variations to use to get back links!

So articles are a great way to start getting targeted traffic, but you need to make sure you ramp things up when you can and start outsourcing parts of your work so you can work ON your business not in it, you should be choosing new projects and directing the old ones rather than doing the actual work.



Final Thoughts

I love articles, and so do lots of others marketers. They are quick, easy and cheap to produce, yet they can provide a windfall of traffic if done right (I have had articles stay ranked for years funnelling me thousands and thousands of visitors a year from just one article!).

They are also something you get better and better at over time, submitting them gets quicker, writing them gets easier, and the amount you can get to stick in the search results improves as you tweak your methods. Plus the fact they sometimes ranks for things you don't know about! I have articles sending me traffic that definitely don't rank for the term I targeted them for, but hey traffic is traffic!

Take the time to write solid articles, don't try and shortcut the system, especially when submitting to the directories which approve every article by hand, and you can reap the rewards for years to come. Using articles to get traffic is a method I can see sticking round for years and years to come!

Once you have mastered getting traffic with articles then you need to master converting the traffic you get so you squeeze the most amount of money possible out of every bit of traffic!