Comparison of Popular Search Keywords

[Comparison of Popular Search Keywords](#) **[1]** [Tweet](#) **[2]**

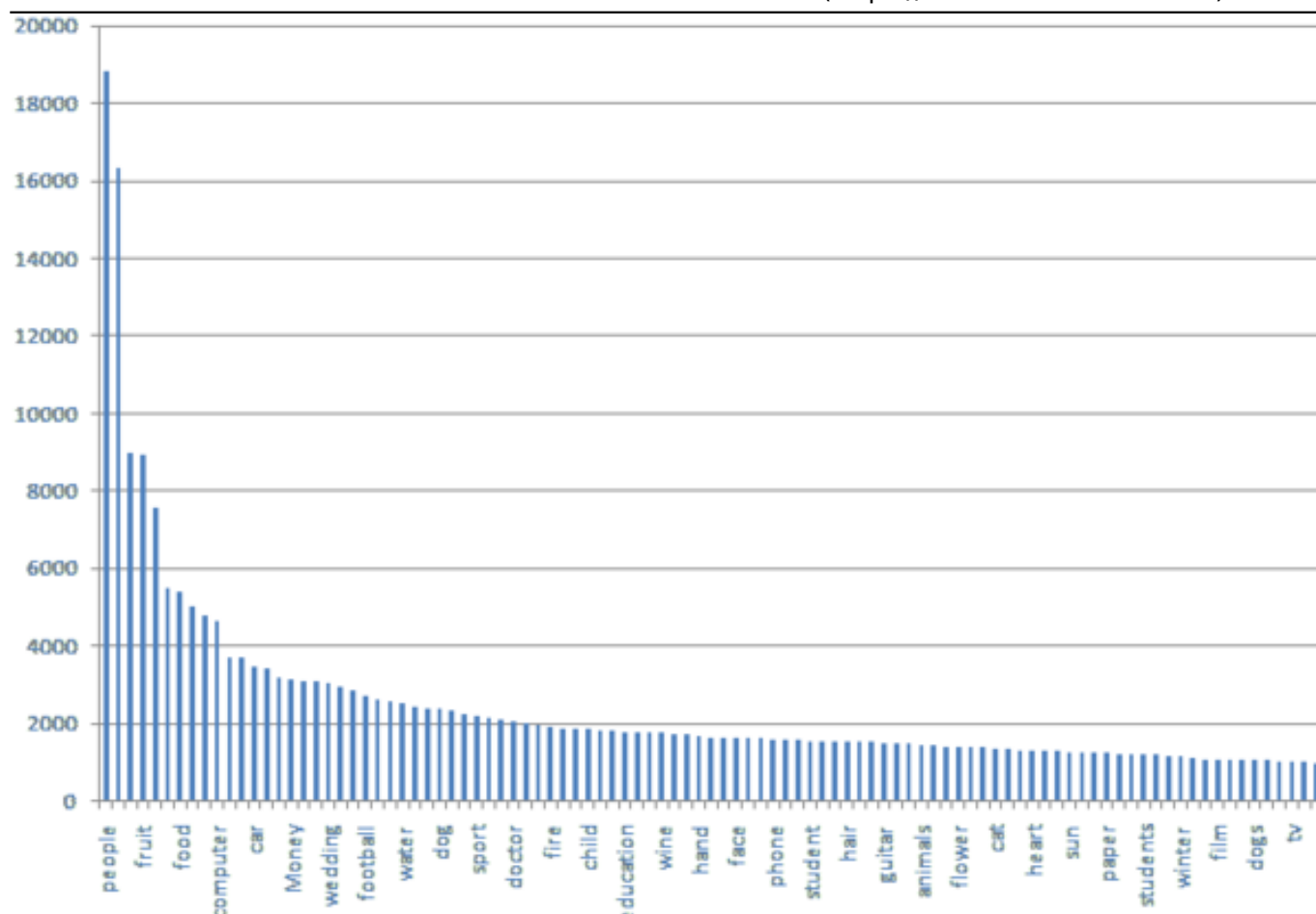 By Steve GibsonTue, 2009-12-01 07:50

A couple of days ago there was a post on the lookstat blog titled top [search keywords for energy](#) [3], it compared search terms in Google in an attempt to estimate popularity of energy images on [microstock](#) [4] sites. Earlier this year I did something similar in a post about [seasonal stock images](#) [5], and at the time I made the point that I wasn't exactly sure how well Google search terms related to searches on microstock sites.

So that set me thinking... (yes, be very afraid) Just exactly how much of a match is google trends/adwords data to what people are searching for at microstock sites? Clearly there will be some relationship, but I'd also guess that there are lots of popular terms that will not have a proportionate number of microstock searches. It's difficult to know how similar the two are. Is it reasonable to assume that popular keywords in Google are more likely to lead to more microstock sales as those keywords make popular subjects hence there will be related businesses in need of such images? As they say "assume makes an ass out of u and me".

Say for example we see that holiday flights is a popular subject in google, we also see that exchange rates is equally popular, for me it's a stretch to say that images representing exchange rates will sell in the same proportions as ones depicting holiday flights, surely there are too many variables?

Another Data Set

I have access to the keywords that people used while browsing a free stock photo site (similar stockxchange but nothing like as big). Of about 1 million searches in 2008 and late 2007 there were some 160,000 unique key phrases searched. The vast majority of them only got one search (just 48k with 2 searches or more). This is just one of the places in microstock we see the 'long tail / exponential decay graph', see my post how [long images continue to sell](#) [6] and more recently microstock dairies revisited [the longtail](#) [7]. A plot of the top 100 is as follows: full table of the data is below, only every 4th keyword would fit on the graph:

Graph of search terms vs search volume for top 100 searches.

The keyphrases were sorted as is, so typos, stemming and things like entering the search "cat." or "cats" have not been grouped along with all the other "cat" searches. Likewise the total for "people" does not include a total of times users searched for terms with people in them like "young people" these are listed separately.

Comparison

Armed with this data (in the slowest pivot table known to man) I decided to do a bit of analysis to see how these matched the results in the lookstat post:

Keyword	Global Monthly Search Volume
solar	1,000,000
renewable	823,000
wind	550,000
alternative	368,000
efficiency	246,000
jobs	246,000
power	246,000
conservation	201,000
green	201,000
geothermal	165,000

Keyword	Searches
solar energy	45
renewable energy	39
wind energy	13
alternative energy	9
energy efficiency	3
energy jobs	0
power energy	1
energy conservation	4
green energy	1
geothermal energy	1

[3]

Left: Google search analysis from the lookstat post and **Right:** results from the free stock photo site data set.

Looks like they match quite well! Anything below 10 could perhaps be considered error and could easily be skewed by some other factor. I was convinced I was going to be able to prove that energy jobs was popular in Google but not a popular stock search, it seems that way but sadly I don't think I have a large enough data set to be certain (?).

What's quite interesting is that only 45 out of a million searches were made for our 'top' energy keywords (there were also 6 similar with one search each - "solar energy farm", "solar energy panel" etc) plus many more for single keywords of solar, energy and their related synonyms).

The Top 100

For extra comparison, the keywords in my data set look a lot like those top 100 keywords searched on Shutterstock [8], although I have a definite English language bias, I also have not removed from the top 100 several keywords like 'nude' and 'sex' that are probably not image buyers. Quite a lot more variability in the ordering and plenty of the keywords Shutterstock have in their top 100 only made it into my top 200.

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Rank	Keyword	Freq...
1	people	18818	34	doctor	2059	67	animals	1455
2	(blank)	16332	35	nude	1998	68	fish	1448
3	music	8971	36	party	1977	69	construction	1422
4	fruit	8922	37	fire	1905	70	flower	1412
5	christmas	7589	38	medical	1887	71	fruits	1410
6	business	5508	39	hands	1880	72	dancing	1379
7	food	5413	40	child	1864	73	cat	1341
8	woman	5008	41	kids	1818	74	rose	1341
9	family	4787	42	tree	1818	75	sky	1327
10	computer	4647	43	education	1798	76	heart	1317
11	children	3731	44	golf	1787	77	home	1306
12	baby	3708	45	sports	1772	78	camera	1284
13	car	3452	46	wine	1758	79	sun	1281
14	dance	3433	47	massage	1745	80	birthday	1254
15	house	3191	48	coffee	1737	81	shopping	1249
16	money	3162	49	hand	1663	82	paper	1243
17	school	3119	50	fashion	1650	83	girls	1235
18	sex	3093	51	earth	1643	84	eye	1217
19	wedding	3058	52	face	1629	85	students	1202
20	book	2977	53	health	1623	86	beauty	1189
21	girl	2845	54	horse	1621	87	world	1177
22	football	2707	55	phone	1597	88	winter	1161
23	women	2611	56	snow	1587	89	pizza	1107
24	beach	2586	57	nature	1587	90	computers	1076
25	water	2510	58	student	1556	91	film	1076

26	apple	2459	59	smile	1549	92	spa	1075
27	love	2406	60	globe	1532	93	law	1066
28	dog	2384	61	hair	1531	94	dogs	1063
29	books	2349	62	fitness	1530	95	chocolate	1049
30	man	2264	63	soccer	1521	96	beer	1027
31	sport	2193	64	guitar	1509	97	tv	1022
32	office	2177	65	flowers	1473	98	space	1020
33	cars	2101	66	sexy	1471	99	cake	995
						100	london	994

Note: "blank" searches are probably either robots, perhaps mistaken users, or users just seeing what an empty search does. Interesting if you run a web site with a photo search then a blank search should most likely not allow you to search, or perhaps return a message with nothing found but ALSO a selection of random or popular images.

Ranked 95 to 99 "*chocolate, beer, tv and space cake*", sounds like a good night in, lol.

Unlucky for some

Heres a few of the 406 terms that had 13 searches each:

baby jesus, voucher, pylon, weed, quebec, ladders, computer chip, emo girl, brussel sprouts, learner driver, woman on phone, lord of the rings, lotto, turf, fashion clothes, sand clock, ghandi, abba, herron, synergy, tofu, hunk, paper plane, miami beach, nylon, andy warhol

Quite an eclectic little bunch and I think this is the first time synergy, tofu and andy warhol have been used in the same sentence. Quite a few of the searches are not what you would call 'traditional stock subjects'.

Conclusion

It seems reasonable that a comparison of relative terms in google trends/adwords will match the relationships between searches on a stock photo site, but I still think that there are a lot of keyphrases for which that is also not the case. I plan to analyse the data some more to see if I can pick out a few obvious "search engine popular" keywords that don't match image searches. **it would be really great if google would let us search their "image search" volume alone.** I did previously look at using the google data by combining keywords of interest with the keyword "photos", "images" or "pictures", it works for very popular single word searches but not for most key phrases. We have thus far ignored which images actually sell! see picniche [9] for more about that.

I should be able to set-up something were you can query this data and my more recent 2009 dataset, if anyone is interested?

Related Links

Best selling images and top search terms at pixmac [10]

Source URL: https://microstockinsider.com/news/comparison-popular-search-keywords

Links:
[1] https://microstockinsider.com/news/comparison-popular-search-keywords
[2] http://twitter.com/share
[3] http://blog.lookstat.com/2009/11/28/top-search-keywords-for-energy/
[4] https://microstockinsider.com/glossary/term/14
[5] http://microstockinsider.com/guides/microstock-submission-calendar
[6] http://microstockinsider.com/guides/how-long-will-my-photos-continue-sell
[7] http://www.microstockdiaries.com/microstock-and-the-long-tail.html
[8] http://microstockinsider.com/guides/most-popular-microstock-keywords
[9] http://microstockinsider.com/news/picnichecom-photo-demand-research-tool
[10] http://www.pixmac.com/best-sellers/last-year#photohome