



App store optimization (ASO) is a popular topic. It is all about keywords and how to get discovered in the App Store search. This lesson teaches you the theory and strategy behind keywords and ASO – what keywords are about, why they are important, what they do for your app, the characteristics of a great keyword, how to select a great keyword, what the process looks like, and what the difference is between Apple and Google Play.

## Overview

What exactly are keywords? They are the words and phrases that describe an app. They create passive income without using your marketing budget, and by minimally using your maintenance and testing budget. Your main cost initially is only your setup time, which you will have plenty of during the startup phase of your company.

In Apple, you add keywords in iTunes Connect. Google does not use keywords per se; instead, it pulls your title and repetitive words in your description, depending upon how well they fit the search. It is more of a gray science.

Over 65% of apps are discovered through direct search rather than browsing, and discovery is dictated by the search algorithm of your platform. The keywords in your app information will match what people search for. If you use many keywords and if your app matches the functionality of the app being searched, then it will appear higher in the search algorithm, and increase downloads.

How can you appeal to different audiences? Long tail traffic is low volume and highly specific, which may seem counterintuitive to a marketing campaign; however, niche audiences do increase your profit margin. Use their colloquial vocabulary. Use tools such as Sensor Tower to enter keywords, apply them to your app, and follow their rankings. Replace them one at a time to review your analytics reports and determine their impact.



## Characteristics of a Great Keyword

- **Download Relevance** : If you attempt to rank for a keyword that has little to do with your app, it will not do well. Instead, match your keywords specifically to the type of people seeking an app like yours. Remember that multi-word keywords allow relevance to a long tail download. Avoid generic keywords.
- **Ranking Difficulty** : Ranking difficulty is a factor used in Sensor Tower, but we will discuss it here in general terms. Lack of download relevance will create ranking difficulty regardless of traffic volume. If you find that one keyword does not rank well, then move on to one that is more specific. Your rank really depends on overall strength of your app listing – icons, screenshots, keywords, and the app itself. The point of all this is that it is better to rank high for a low volume or low competition keyword than it is to rank in the middle for a high competition keyword.
- **Sheer Traffic** : In Sensor Tower you will see how keywords are ranked. If certain keywords' relevance and difficulty are similar, then use a keyword with greater traffic. If the score that comes up for the keyword that you're using is similar, then go for the keyword that has the more traffic. The biggest mistake would be to review traffic first. Ensure initially that your keyword is highly relevant and then find the best traffic solution for it.
- **Secrets to Success** : The secrets to keyword success are relevance, difficulty, and traffic – in that order. Remember, it is not about quantity of users; it is about quality of users. With highly relevant keywords and apps you gain people who spend and engage more, which will make your business infinitely more powerful. If it is to get traffic using a certain keyword, use keywords that land where natural traffic already exists. Your goal is to rank in the top 10 for each keyword that you have. This is not always easy, and it is part of the process of testing. Keep at it until you get there.



## Next Steps

Sign up for Sensor Tower and take their tutorial. Then, as you research keywords, rank them. Look for relevant keywords first, then review difficulty, and then traffic. Once you do that, you are on your way.

## Researching Keywords

There are different ways to research keywords using Sensor Tower. Take these initial steps:

- Open the keyword tracking spreadsheet included with this lesson.
- Download the top ten apps that come up for your first keyword idea.
- Use tools such as Google Keyword Planner, a thesaurus, WordPot, etc. to come up with some initial keywords.
- Enter the search term in the spreadsheet.
- From Sensor Tower, enter your search term and review its general ranking.
- Enter about 10 apps that are your competition to review their ranking keywords. There, you will find more keyword ideas, and their data ready-calculated for you.
- Enter your new ideas and their data into your spreadsheet.

## Examine Ranking Difficulty

From Sensor Tower, review each keyword idea's ranking difficulty score. Look for the lowest score possible, which means that the keyword will be the easiest to rank high. Later, when your app has improved, you can rank for higher difficulty. iPhone, iPad, and Android difficulty rates should be within the sweet spot. Focus on search terms that are in the one, two, or three range, and avoid those at seven, eight, or nine.



## Examine Traffic

To be statistically significant, a keyword's traffic must be greater than zero.

## Measure Results

As you measure results, track rankings often. Some people do this every day, some every hour, some every few days. Often, some will hire a virtual assistant to do it for them. Sensor Tower is an unbelievable tool for pulling a snapshot of results within a second. Test long enough to get a feel for your ranking range. If your download volume is ten per day, hold back to only weekly readings. At twenty-five thousand downloads per day, test every couple hours, and update as necessary, to see its effects

## Apple and Google Keywords

Next you will learn the differences between Apple and Google Play, and how to choose search terms for each store.

## Apple Store

In the Apple App Store, the title is most important for keywords. It dictates what people assume your app is all about. The title is most important, and the keyword field is secondary. Make the title as long as you need in order to make it describe your app well. That can be 10 words, or it can be 3 words. Avoid running a string of keywords; instead, make the concept clear. In the keyword field, you get 100 characters, and you must separate them by commas. The Description field is not a factor in the algorithm; however it can help your conversion rate.

## Google Play Store

Google Play is different. While the app title is also most important, you may enter only 30 characters for the app title there. Keywords for Google Play are entered in the description,



and it is about writing great copy. Use keyword density , which is frequency of keyword occurrence in what you write. Make it look natural, without simply dumping each keyword more than five times.

### Similarities

Apple and Google stores do have similarities. Keywords are important, and your title is most important. Research for both is exactly the same.

### Differences

There are also differences between the two stores:

- In iTunes, you have a keyword field, and in Google Play you have description .
- In iTunes, you submit the new app and go through a review process; in Google Play, you update the description or title without a review.
- In iTunes you must upload a new version of your posting for the new test to go live, and in Google Play the keywords do not get locked down.
- iTunes has limited parameters – 100 slots – while Google Play is more like a free-form web search – maybe a 4,000 or 5,000 character limit on the description.

### Next Steps

- Download your documents and sheets, and get them ready to go.
- Sign up for a free Sensor Tower account, then learn as much of the information and terms as possible.
- Go to Apptopia for data, and research new apps.