Here you can enter the URLs of your competitors and read off the keywords that they use.

List all of the keywords and keyphrases you find on your competitors' sites, one after another, in Column A of your spreadsheet. Don't read me wrong here. This kind of metadata (data about data, in this case a categorization of common terms), particularly in isolation, is not the route to high search engine rankings (as you will see later). However, sites in the top five on Google have generally undertaken SEO campaigns and have already developed a good idea of what the more popular keywords are for their (and your) niche. As such, their metadata is likely to reflect quality keyword analysis, repeated throughout the site in other ways. This effectively represents a shortcut that gets your campaign off to a flying start.

Search engines provide the modern information scientist with a hugely rich data set of search terms commonly used by people to retrieve the web pages they are looking for. I have coined some terms to help describe these that I use in my business.

CUSPs – commonly used search phrases – are phrases that people tend to use when searching for something and, more importantly, narrowing down the search results returned. There are normally two parts to a CUSP, a "stem phrase" and a "qualifying phrase."

For example, a stem for Brad might be "business cards" and a qualifier "full color." Additional qualifiers might be "cheap," "luxury," "do it yourself," and a whole host of other terms.

Sometimes qualifiers are strung together, in terms such as "cheap Caribbean cruises." And often people will use different synonyms or otherwise semantically similar words to describe the same qualifying phrase.

For example, "discounted" and "inexpensive" are synonyms of "cheap." However, searchers have learnt that phrases like "last minute" and "special offer" might return similar results. As such, searchers are just as likely to search for "last minute cruises" or "special offer cruises" as "cheap cruises." I use the acronym SEP (semantically equivalent