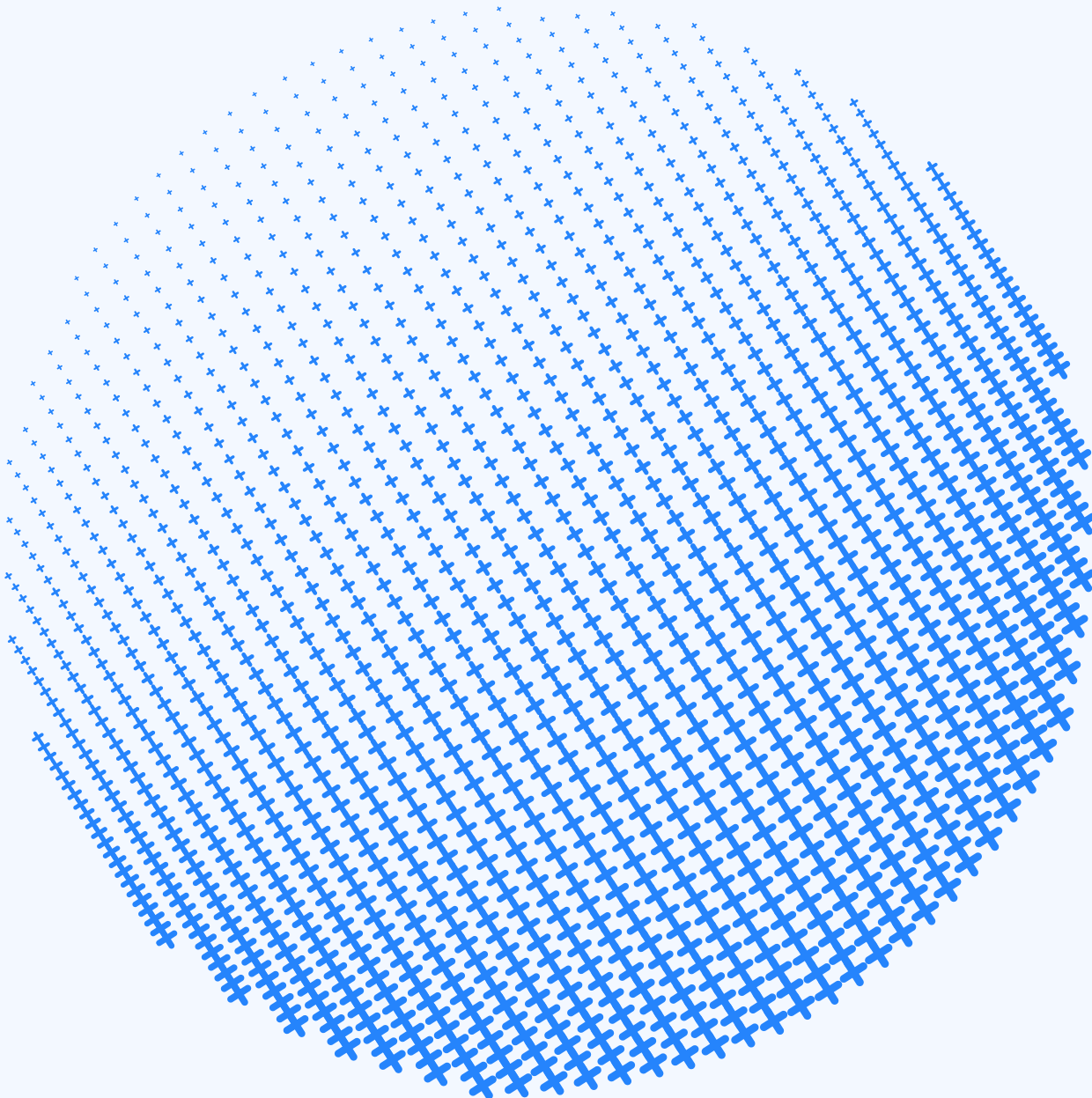# Rank Tracker Accuracy Report: Why You Should Test Your Tool's Accuracy

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Rank Tracker Accuracy Report: Why You Should Test Your Tool's Accuracy

Overview

Keyword.com conducted a study comparing its rank tracking tool's accuracy against other popular rank trackers by manually verifying Google searches for 318 keywords across multiple languages, regions and devices.

Key Findings

- Keyword.com **achieved 96.86% accuracy** in rank tracking, outperforming other tools tested by nearly 20%.
- The study emphasizes the importance of testing accuracy before committing to a rank tracking solution. All data can be accessed **here**.
- Study limitations include small sample size, focus on keyword rankings, and inability to track zip code level rankings. Access all data breakdown at the end of the report under "Additional information".

Results

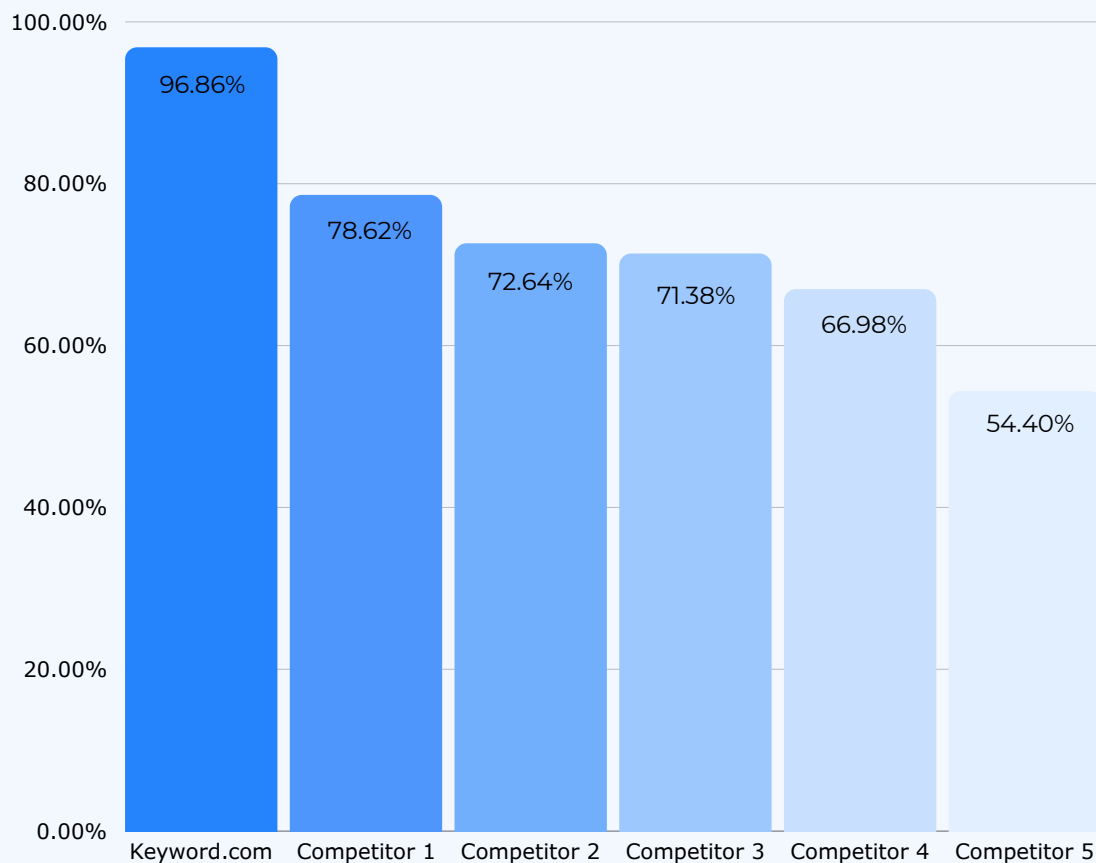### Rank tracking accuracy comparison: Keyword.com vs. competitors

Keyword.com	96.86%
Competitor 1	78.62%
Competitor 2	72.64%
Competitor 3	71.38%
Competitor 4	66.98%
Competitor 5	54.40%

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Introduction

Accuracy is the most crucial factor to consider when choosing a keyword rank tracking tool. Inaccurate keyword rankings can lead to a loss of trust and credibility with stakeholders, as well as misguided SEO decisions based on incorrect data.

> ❞
>
> If your rank tracking isn't accurate, you will end up wasting precious time and energy when executing and measuring the success of your SEO campaigns. In today's fast paced, highly competitive search landscape, it's vital to have an accurate rank tracker that will provide you with the SERP data as fast as possible in order for you to make campaign decisions quicky and effectively.
>
> Ane Wiese, SEO Lead at saas.group

Many tools promise near-perfect accuracy without verifiable data. For instance, you may have seen the popular "99.9%" accuracy plastered on many rank tracker websites. Making claims like this is not a problem; the problem is there's no standardized method of measuring rank-tracking accuracy, meaning there's no way to know if these rank trackers are telling the truth.

This absence of standardization means that in-house companies and SEO agencies interested in investing in a keyword monitoring system must navigate uncertain waters. They often have to rely on the assurances provided by these tools, which are not always substantiated by tangible evidence. As a result, businesses depend on empty promises, making it risky to choose the right rank-tracking system.

To solve this problem, we have developed an internal method for measuring rank tracker accuracy and tested our tool against it. While our process is by no means exhaustive, we hope it kicks off a much-needed conversation about proving rank tracker accuracy in our industry.

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Terminologies

1. **Rank tracker accuracy:** the accuracy of a rank tracker refers to how closely the reported rankings match the actual positions of a website or webpage in the search engine results pages (SERPs) for a given keyword, location, language, and device type.

An accurate rank tracker should provide rankings that are as close as possible to what a real user would see when searching for the keyword under the relevant conditions while controlling for personalization factors, such as IP address or search history.

2. **Real position:** the real observed position of the URL's rank in the Google SERPs, determined by manually searching for the keyword and noting the actual position. See exact methodology below.

3. **Position difference:** the difference between the tool's reported position and the real position observed in the SERPs.

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03 Methodology
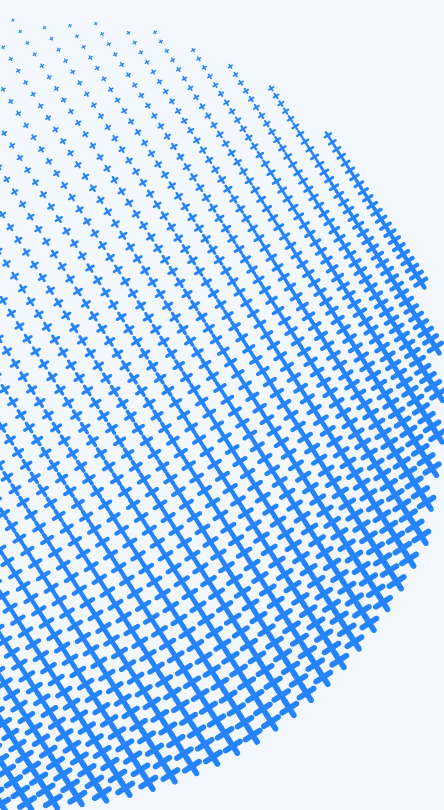
The study compared the keyword rankings provided by each platform against manual search results.

We used a VPN to anonymize search results and remove any personalization markers like search history and geolocation tagging. We applied the following parameters to determine ranking accuracy:

- If the "real" position is between 1 and 5, a 1-position difference is allowed for the ranking to be considered accurate.
- If the "real" position is between 6 and 10, a 2-position difference is allowed.
- If the "real" position is between 11 and 20, a 4-position difference is allowed.
- If the "real" position is 21 or higher, a 6-position difference is allowed.

These parameters account for fluctuations in search engine rankings, which can change from one hour to the next. We checked the rank tracker's result versus the "real" result obtained through manual search, and provided a reasonable margin of error for assessing accuracy

We used a higher margin of error for lower rankings as the SERP results fluctuate more frequently for positions further down, and we consider it more important that rank trackers get the positions right in top positions.

How to Manually Search Real Ranking Positions in Google

For keywords *without* a set location:

- Using NordVPN, we set the connection to the country of the Google region. i.e., if the Google region was google.com.hk we set the VPN location to Hong Kong.
- We used the browser in private or incognito mode.
- We accessed the relevant Google region's URL (e.g google.com.hk) and entered the corresponding keyword and chose the relevant language (e.g. zh-hk).
- In the SERP results, the tracked URL was found, and the rank was noted down.
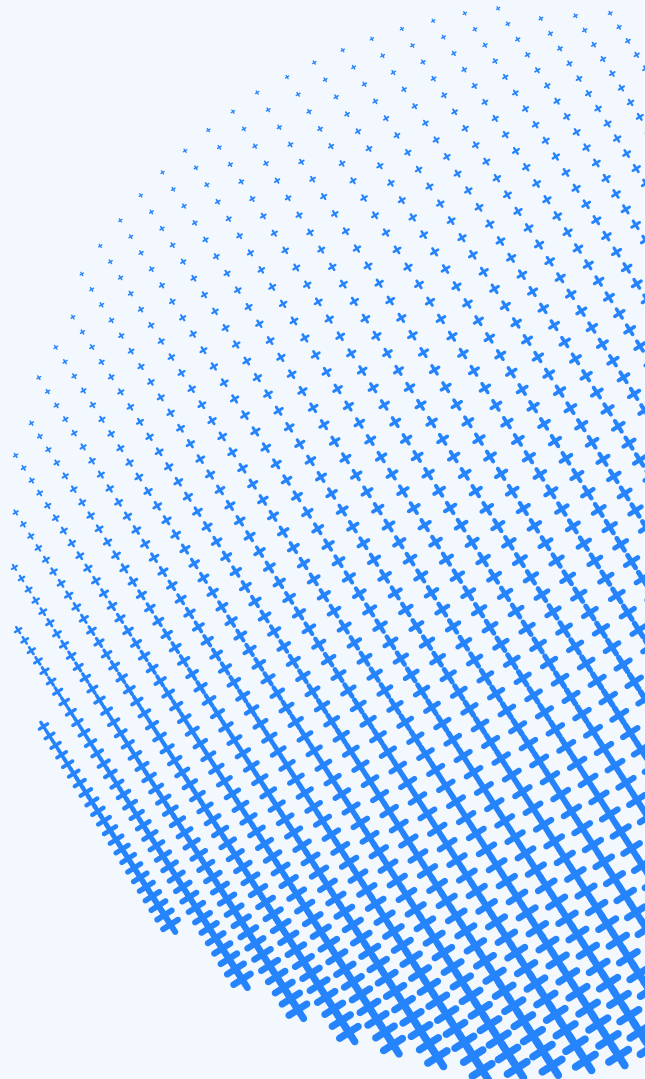
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Methodology

**For keywords *with* a set location:**

- Using NordVPN, we set the connection to the country of the Google region. i.e., if the Google region was google.co.uk, we set the VPN location to the United Kingdom.
- We used the browser in private or incognito mode.
- The keyword.com/spyglass page was accessed, which simulates the actual Google search result pages in real-time.
- We entered the keywords, regions, language, and location.
- In the SERP results, the tracked URL was found, and the rank was noted down.

The same process applies to both desktop and mobile keywords.

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Results

We found that Keyword.com had the highest level of accuracy compared to the other rank trackers tested in our study. Specifically, there was nearly a 20% difference in accuracy between Keyword.com and the second-ranking tool.

**Rank tracking accuracy comparison:
Keyword.com vs. competitors**
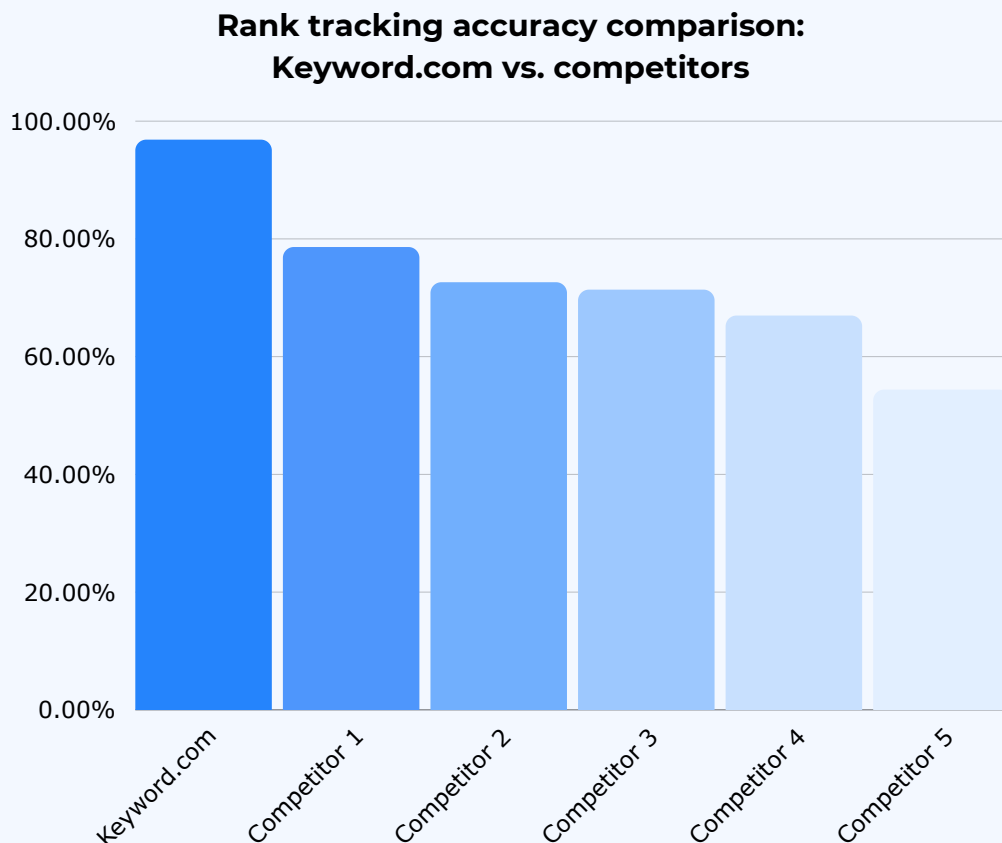
You can view the spreadsheet comparing ranking data for each tool vs. manual Google search results **here**.
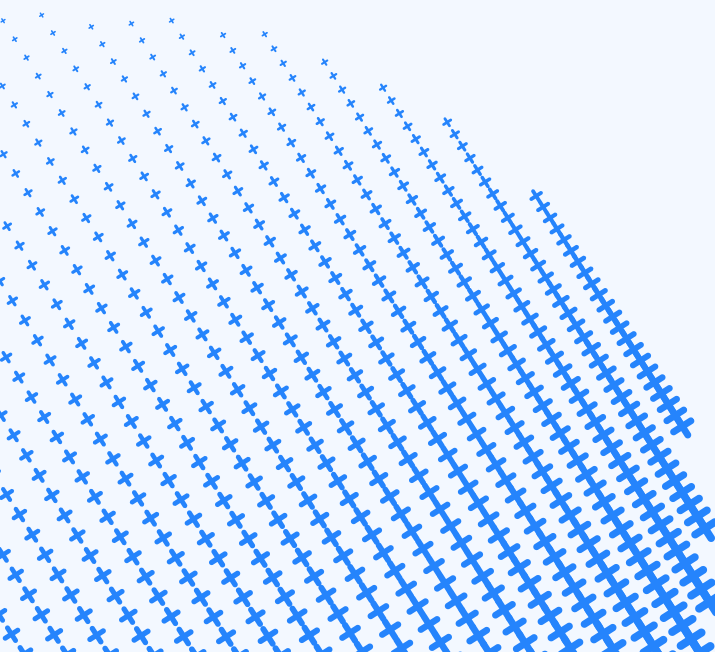
Additional Information
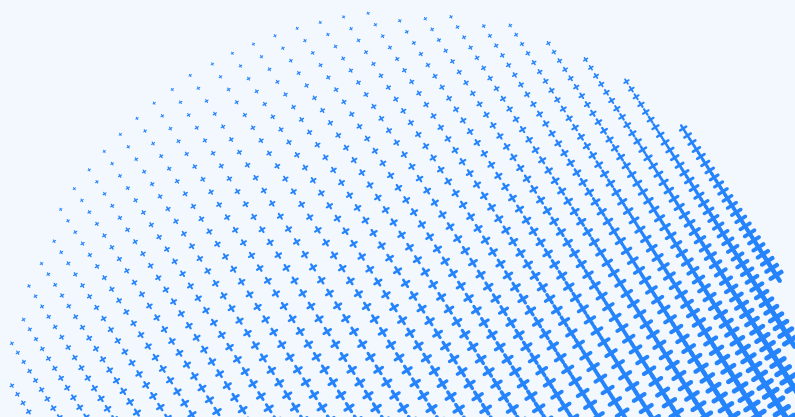
Here is a detailed breakdown of our study limitations and data collection process.

i. Study Limitations

Sample size: we used a limited sample size due to the manual effort required to check rankings and compare them against multiple tools' results. While our sample provides valuable insights, a larger sample could offer a more comprehensive view of rank tracking accuracy.

Zip code level granularity: the study could not compare the accuracy of rankings down to the zip code level, as some of the evaluated solutions do not offer this level of granularity. This limitation may be relevant for businesses targeting highly localized search results.

Focus on keyword rankings: the study's primary focus was on the accuracy of keyword rankings, and it did not take into account other SEO metrics (e.g. Search volume). While keyword rankings are a key aspect of SEO performance, a more comprehensive evaluation of a rank-tracking platform could also consider its ability to provide accurate data on these metrics.
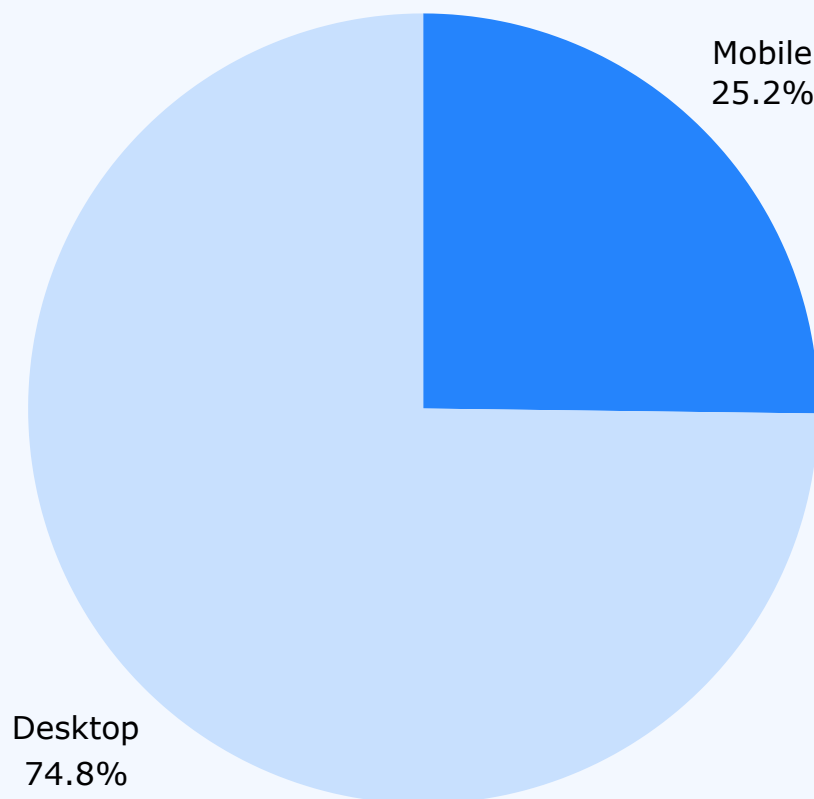
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Additional Information

ii. Data Collection

We selected a random sample of 318 keywords from our clients' databases. The keywords were distributed as follows:

1. **Device:** we had 238 desktop and 80 mobile keywords, which equals **74.8%** and **25.2%**, respectively.

Mobile
25.2%

Desktop
74.8%

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Additional Information

2. Language: we tested keywords from 11 languages so that the results are not skewed to one language. However, more than 50% of the keywords were English.

Language	Keywords by language %
English (en)	55.03%
Chinese - Hong Kong (zh-hk)	27.99%
Chinese - Taiwan (zh-tw)	8.49%
English - Great Britain (en-gb)	3.14%
Spain (es)	1.89%
Indonesia (id)	1.57%
French (fr)	0.63%
Vietnamese (vi)	0.31%
Chinese (zh-cn)	0.31%
Chinese - Singapore (zh-sg)	0.31%
Arabic - UAE (ar-ae)	0.31%

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Additional Information

3. Google regions: we also tracked the keywords across 12 Google regions. In some cases, we tracked different languages for the same Google region.

Google region	Keywords by region %
google.com.hk	47.80%
google.com	29.56%
google.com.tw	8.49%
google.com.my	5.03%
google.co.uk	3.46%
google.es	1.89%
google.co.id	1.57%
google.ae	0.63%
google.fr	0.63%
google.com.vn	0.31%
google.se	0.31%
googe.com.sg	0.31%

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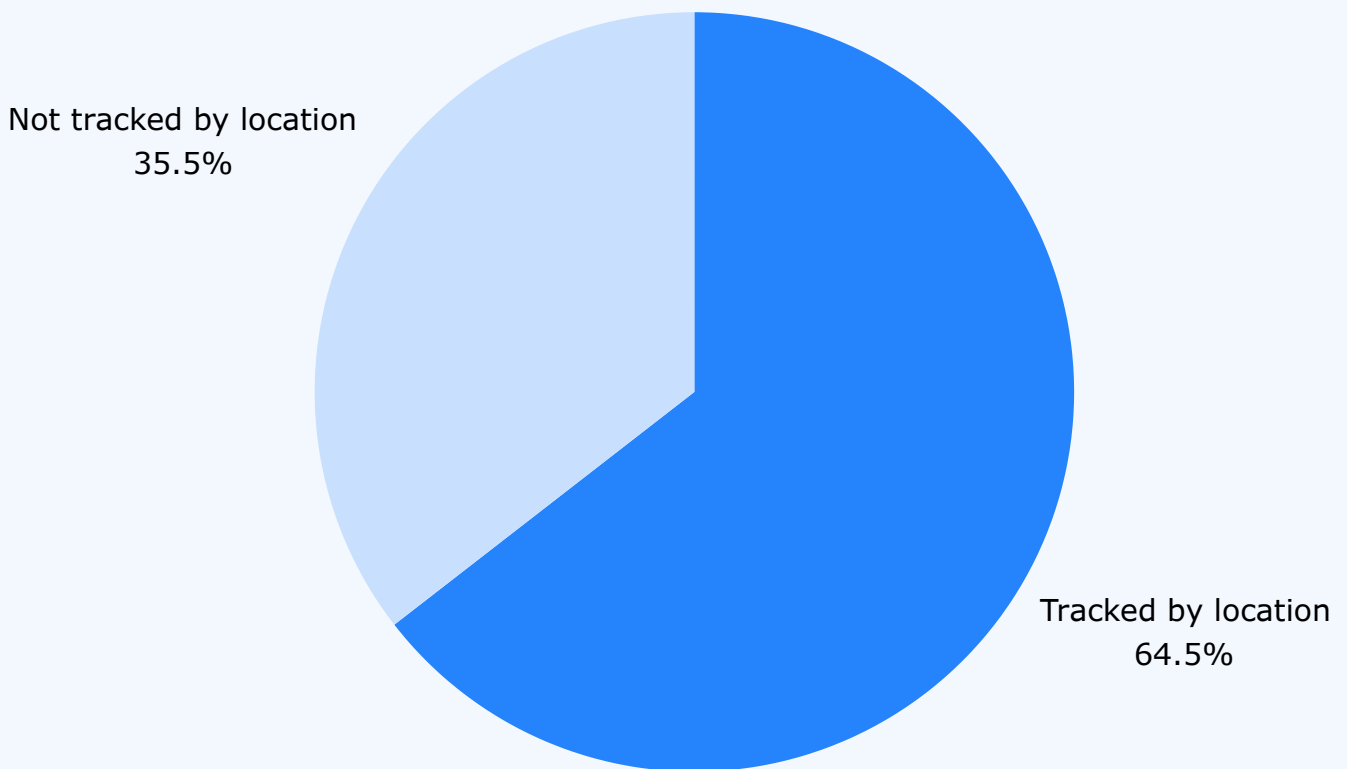
4. Locations: in addition to tracking keywords per Google region, we also implemented local rank-tracking for some keywords.

Keywords tracked by location	205
Keywords not tracked by location	113

Not tracked by location
35.5%

Tracked by location
64.5%

We tracked 42 locations in total. **Access our report with original data** to view all tracked locations.

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Conclusion

Test Rank Tracker Accuracy Before Investing In Any Tool

Our method, though objective, is not exhaustive. So, we encourage other keyword ranking software to develop and share different methods for measuring accuracy and put their tools to the test, too. It all leads to much-needed transparency in our industry.

Don't believe empty claims. Take time to test the tool's accuracy before locking your business into a long-term contract with any rank tracker software. **Our team is happy to walk you through tutorials** for implementing this process for your SEO rank tracker.

Now that you know how accurate Keyword.com is, why not put it to the test with our **14-day free trial**? And if you're not ready to try it out, check out the **Keyword.com blog** for more resources about rank tracking and other SEO processes.

> **"**
>
> In a landscape where search algorithms are constantly evolving, having access to accurate keyword ranking data is crucial. Keyword.com's commitment to staying on the cutting edge ensures I always have the most up-to-date insights at my fingertips.
>
> Matt Ross, Director of Operations at Hozio Digital Agency