

Millions of candidates starting job search on Google

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New statistics showing that millions of job-related Google searches were performed in Australia in June alone indicate the importance of search engine marketing and optimisation, and illustrate the growing influence of search engines as a primary step in the job search process.

Google last week changed its keyword tool to allow users to see approximately how many searches were carried out on a particular word or phrase in the previous calendar month. According to the Australian Google statistics, approximately 1.5 million people searched "jobs" during June. Some 1 million searched "employment", and 246,000 people searched "employment opportunities".

In terms of specific job areas, "finance jobs" was searched by about 3,600 people, "temp jobs" by 1,900, "sales jobs" by 5,400 and executive jobs by 2,900.

The keyword tool listed a total 200 common search phrases, but Google Australia spokesperson Rob Shilkin said the real number of searches was probably higher, as it was impossible to capture all the possible phrases jobseekers might use. "People might search for 'finance jobs' or 'financial jobs' or 'banking jobs', so when you add all those up there are a lot of keywords," Shilkin told *Shortlist*.

He said recruitment companies and employers could drive more traffic to their own websites through search engine marketing - bidding to appear as a sponsored link at the top of specific searches, and search engine optimisation - gathering as many links from other sites as possible by staying up-to-date and relevant.

Many people used Google as their first point of contact when using the internet, Shilkin said, so the higher a website's Google ranking, the better.

"It's fair to say that... those businesses who do rank well and who do have sponsored links for particular searches, that are relevant to the people they're trying to reach, are getting an advantage.

"We've found that a lot of recruitment agencies and a lot of the aggregators and the big job boards are bidding for [search] keywords, because they realise people are coming to Google and using it as a springboard to start their job search."

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