Understanding Your Competition
Paid Search & Social

Holly Kelly

April 2022

Introductions

Holly Kelly

POD Lead & Senior Paid Strategist

About Anicca

2007
Est

27
Crew

45+
Clients

Supporting your digital ambitions.

No Ego and No Bull, we invest in relationships with businesses and brands to drive growth and succeed in what we do.

Our multi award winning agency in the heart of Leicester speaks for itself.

We're on a mission

…well 4 actually, and to celebrate our 15th birthday, we want to support your digital ambitions.

Our specialism spans from B2B for construction to trade with eCommerce and we want to work with you to help us on our mission.

From SEO to Social Media, how can we help your digital presence and engagement?
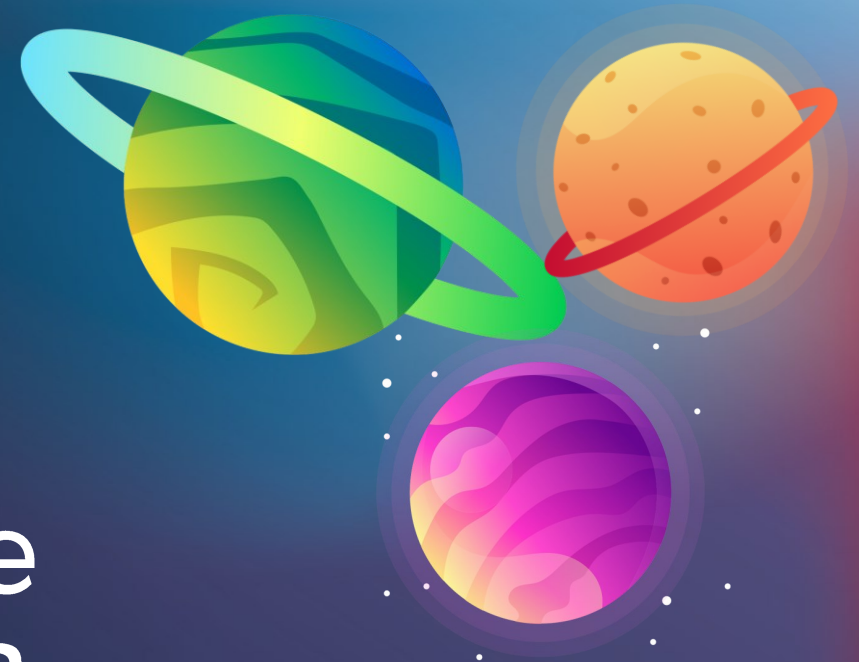
Agenda

- Why competitor analysis is important
- What competitor analysis isn't
- Understanding your competitors' presence
- Competition in Google Ads
- Competition in Facebook
- Competition in LinkedIn
- How to make sense of your analysis

Why Analyse Competitors?

Why Competitor Analysis Is Important

- Monitor impacts on your own performance

- Understand competitors benefits and messaging

- Find openings in the market and discover new keyword and channel opportunities

- Understand where you are losing market share

- Make your own campaigns more effective

Why now?

- Post-pandemic **drops in ecommerce traffic** from all-time-highs during lockdown (~50% drop in traffic since last March)

- Panicked and **cash-strapped consumers** due to economic climate, inflation and cost of living crisis

- Businesses have been **cautious (fearing recession)** due to wage increases, supply chain issues, Ukraine

- **Increased competitors** – many new entrants to market in the last 2 years

- **Increased cost of getting traffic** – higher cost per clicks due to supply outstripping demand

- **Lower conversion rates** on websites as buyers search for a deal or have little brand loyalty

- Other **organic/free channels are less effective** – as platforms push their ad solutions to drive their revenue
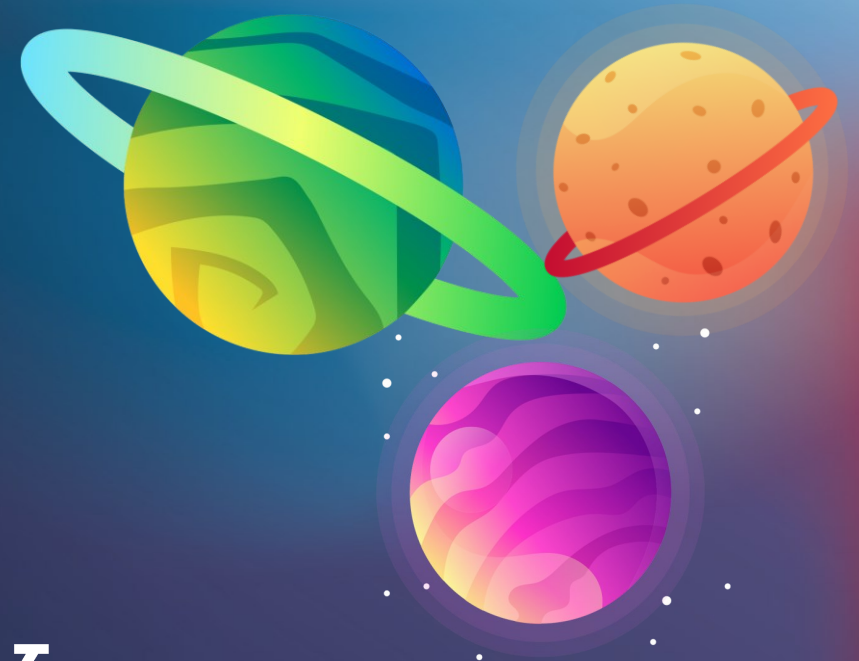
What Competitor Analysis Is Not

- A view to adopt the same strategy as a competitor

- Confirmation what a competitor is doing is right or working for them
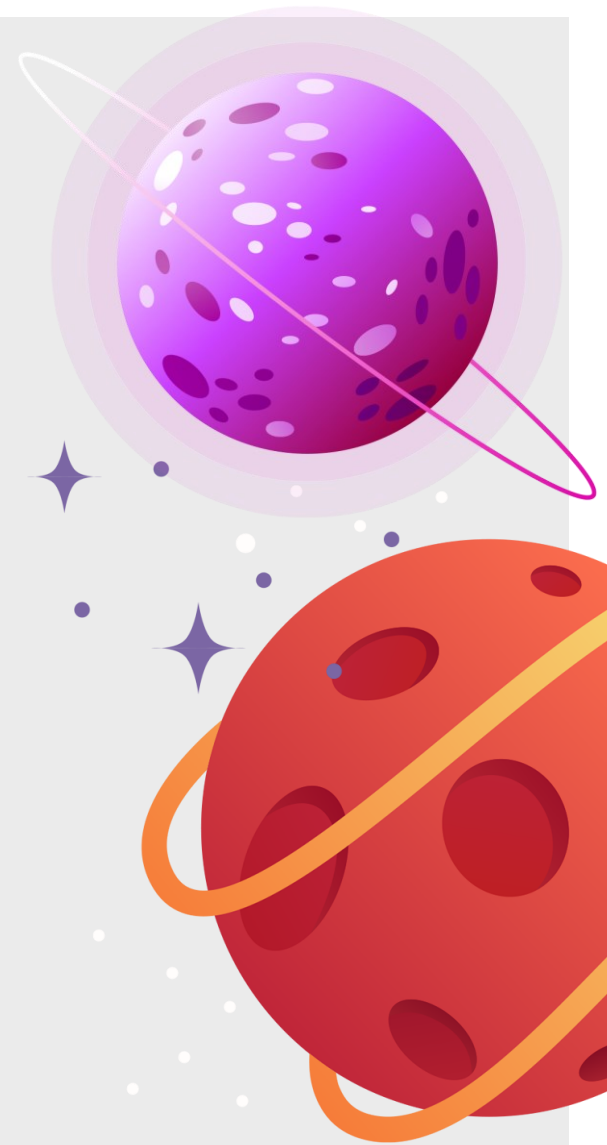
Steps To Understanding Your Competitors

Questions You Need To Be Asking

When it comes to understanding your competitors there are certain questions that you should pose:

1. Who are your competitors?
2. What is their organic presence?
3. What paid channels are they using?
4. How does each competitor position themselves and how are they differentiated?
5. Frequency of ad rotation and testing
6. What learnings can you take?

1 – Who Are Your Competitors?

- Before you start your research you should define who your direct and indirect competitors are.

- Your indirect competitors can also share and take up the same ad space

- When it comes to paid search and social, indirect competitors are brands and businesses who share an overlapping target audience or keywords, an example could include

    - Comparison sites and insurance sites

    - B2B vs B2C

1 – Who Are Your Competitors?

You can use a simple table to plot out competitors for each scenario

	DIRECT	
EMERGING	TikTok, clubhouse	Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter, twitch	**LEGACY**
	Pinterest	reddit, YouTube, WhatsApp, Messenger	
	INDIRECT	

2 – Organic Presence - Gap Analysis

- Understanding how competitors are **performing organically** and where you are potentially missing out, can help to shape your paid media strategy

- By analysing where you are losing organic visibility to competitors, you can develop a keyword strategy through Google Ads to try and capture some of the market share

- You can use tools such as **SEOmonitor** and **Semrush** to help track and analyse this, alongside **Google Search Console**

	Keyword	● hillarys.c...	● blinds-2g...	Volume	KD%	CPC (GBP)
☐	⊕ blinds to go ▼	21	1	246,000	68 ●	0.71
☐	⊕ blinds ▼	7	2	165,000	69 ●	2.50
☐	⊕ roller blinds ▼	6	4	74,000	62 ●	1.82
☐	⊕ roman blinds ▼	4	5	74,000	54 ●	1.61
☐	⊕ venetian blinds ▼	5	3	74,000	55 ●	2.11
☐	⊕ vertical blinds ▼	7	2	60,500	56 ●	2.15
☐	⊕ blackout blinds ▼	8	2	49,500	47 ●	1.40
☐	⊕ window blinds ▼	4	1	40,500	66 ●	1.50

3 – What Paid Channels Are They Using?

- You will have to turn detective to dig in and investigate the channels each of your competitors are using

- There are in platform tools such as the **Facebook Ads Library**, and premium tools such as **Similarweb** that you can use

- You will want to build a map of each channel and competitor
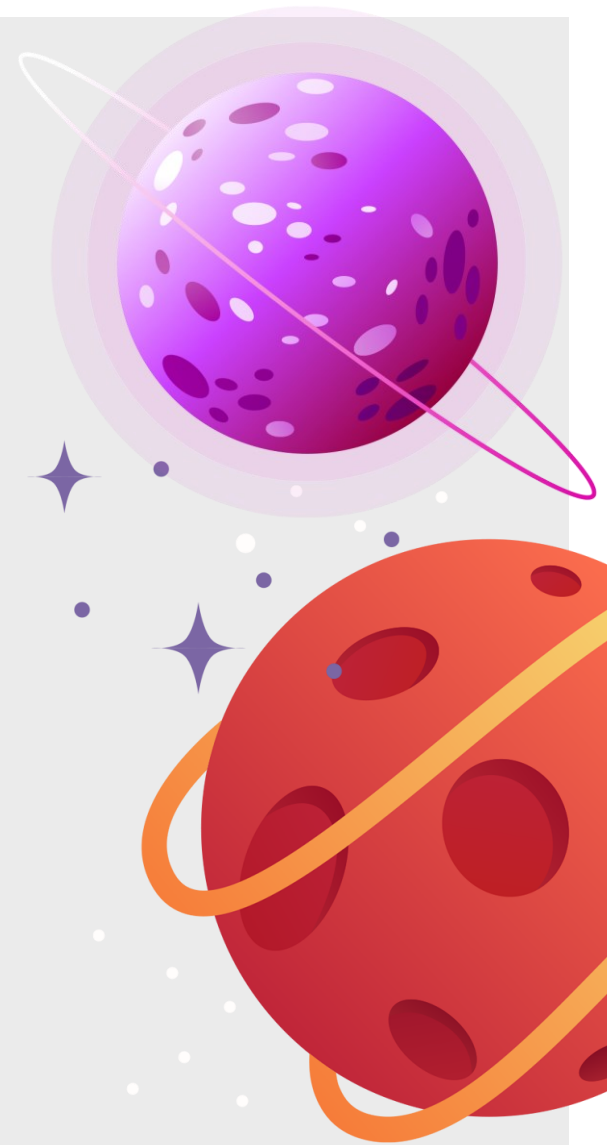
4 – Positioning & Messaging

If you are going to win impressions (ad views) ahead of your competitors, you need to ensure you are capitalising on this opportunity.

There is no point winning impressions if your message is not effective in gaining the click.

Understanding what messaging your competitors are using can help you to identify

- What **benefits** they are positioning
- What **offers** do they have running
- What **products** or services they are promoting
- What **actions** they are requesting of the user

You also want to consider how their messaging differs across different platforms, for example between Facebook Ads and Google Search Ads
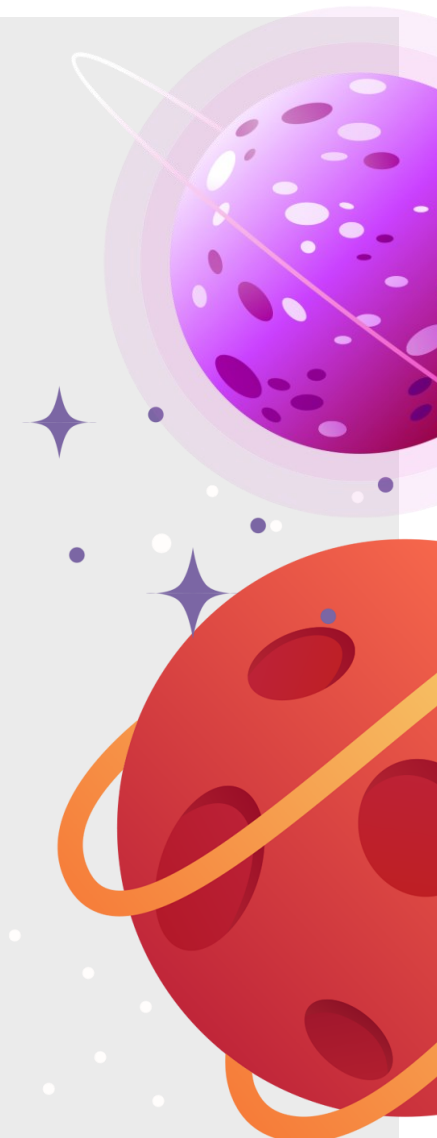
5 – Frequency Of Ad Rotation & Testing

Using some platform insights and data tools you can establish the frequency of ad rotation

- How long do competitors leave ads running?
  - Do they refresh ads each month, quarter or less frequently?
  - How does this compare to your own ad rotation?
  - Do they introduce seasonal ads

- What type of creative is used? Is it consistent or does it vary?

6 – Establishing Your Learnings

- Once you have compiled your research, you need to start making your deductions
    - How do competitors channel mixes differ from your own?
    - Is there scope to increase your own presence and gain more market share?
    - How do competitors messages differentiate from your own?

- The best approach is to roll out testing. It is recommended for all marketing activity to allocate between 10-20% to testing

Paid Search
Google Ads & Microsoft Ads

# *Measuring Keyword Wins, Losses & Opportunities*

To understand where you are successful or where you may be missing out on potential market share, you can use a number of **metrics** and **platform tools**:

- **Impression share**
- **Absolute Top Impr. Share**
- **Click share**
- **Auction Insights tool**
- **Competition level (within Keyword Planner tool)**

Auction Insights

- **Auction insights** can help you to see **which businesses are competing for the same searches** (keywords) as you
  - Keep an eye out for new competitors and changes over time
  - *note it does not display every business and may sometimes differ to what you see if you conduct a search

- You can see metrics that can help you to **determine the impact these businesses are having on your own ads**
  - It can help you to understand if competitors are more aggressive with their bids and budgets

- You need active Google or Microsoft ads campaigns to see this data, and you can see it across search and shopping campaigns
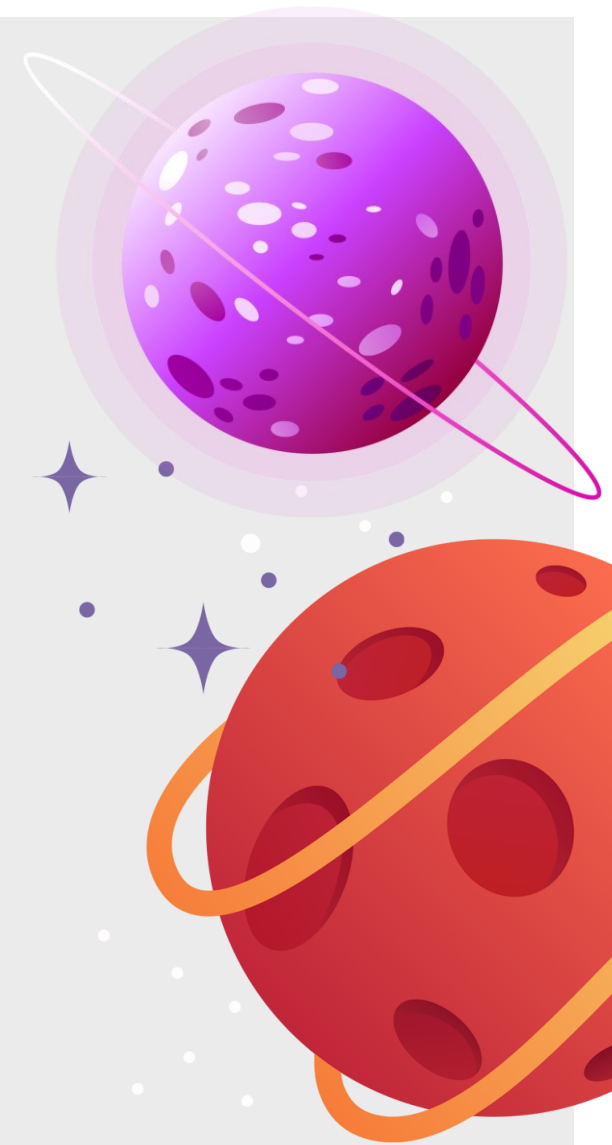
Auction Insights - Example

- You can access auction insights at campaign, ad group and keyword level

- You can segment the data by time to see how advertisers change over time

- You can also segment by device to see how your performance differs between mobile, desktop and tablet

▽ Add filter

Display URL domain ↓	Impression share	Overlap rate	Position above rate	Top of page rate	Abs. Top of page rate	Outranking share
avery.co.uk	24.66%	24.35%	50.20%	77.18%	28.49%	19.53%
You	22.25%	—	—	74.79%	33.54%	—
amazon.co.uk	19.80%	18.95%	25.28%	54.02%	13.03%	21.18%
onlinelabels.com	12.81%	15.99%	52.15%	82.87%	37.24%	20.40%
vistaprint.co.uk	12.29%	8.61%	42.95%	61.63%	13.82%	21.43%

Top Metrics to Review

- **Impression share** – What % of eligible impressions yours or your competitors ad showed for

- **Impr. (Top) % or Impr. (Abs. Top) %** - Which % of impressions that you were eligible to appear in in a top position for did you actually

- **Search top IS** – the % of your impressions delivered above organic listings

- **Click Share** – the % of all potential clicks you actually received

- What the information means
  - Shows you how many potential **searches or clicks you are missing out on**
  - If this is low you should review bids, budgets and quality scores if you wish to increase market share and positioning

Search impr. share	Search lost IS (rank)	Click share	Search top IS	Search abs. top IS	Impr. (Abs. Top) %	Impr. (Top) %
72.83%	27.11%	90.20%	70.66%	69.00%	94.50%	96.68%
59.11%	40.89%	71.97%	53.74%	37.30%	62.83%	90.54%
33.50%	66.50%	31.34%	27.14%	17.72%	52.34%	80.64%
24.84%	75.16%	24.13%	20.79%	12.03%	47.97%	83.47%
15.97%	84.03%	17.45%	10.45%	< 10%	36.34%	65.65%
46.37%	53.63%	50.67%	43.49%	26.83%	57.26%	93.27%

Top Metrics to Review

- **Overlap rate**
  - Shows how often another advertisers ad shows at the same time as your own

- **Position above rate**
  - How often another advertisers ad appears above your own in the ad auction

- **Outranking Share**
  - How often your ad ranked higher in the auction than the other advertisers

- **What the information tells you:**
  - Identify which competitors are winning clicks
  - Identify changes in how aggressively competitors are bidding
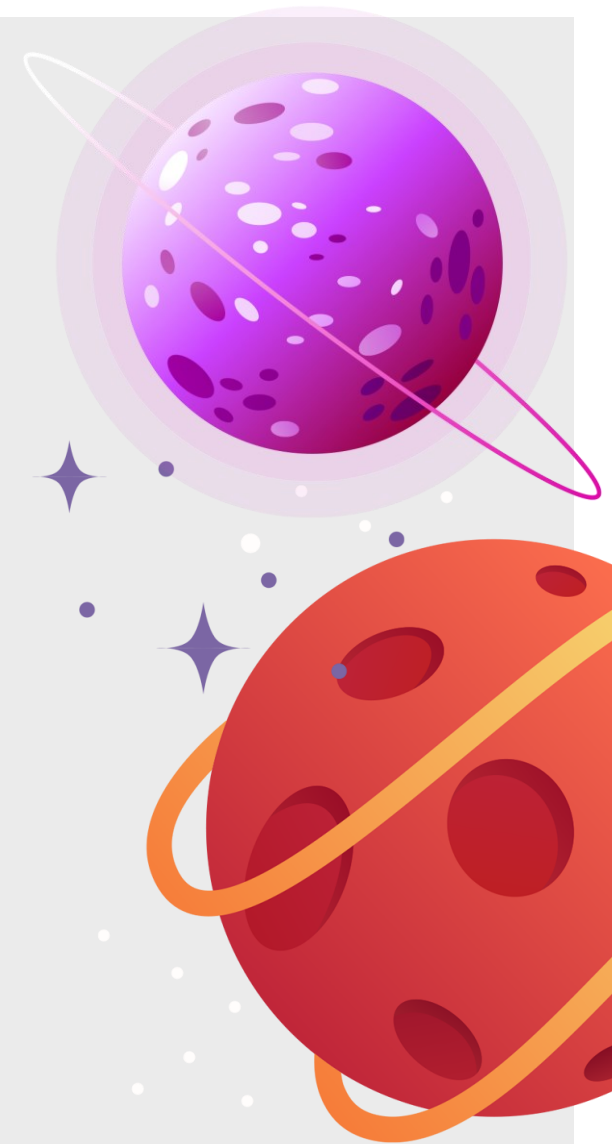
Visualising the Data

- You can use Data Studio to plot and visualise changes to data over time

UK Google Ads - Competitor Movement - **13 Months** - Non Brand

Impression Share

Legend: avery.co.uk — amazon.co.uk — You — vistaprint.co.uk — onlinelabels.com — a4labels.com — printedeasy.com — moo.com — flexilabels.co.uk — fastlabels.co.uk
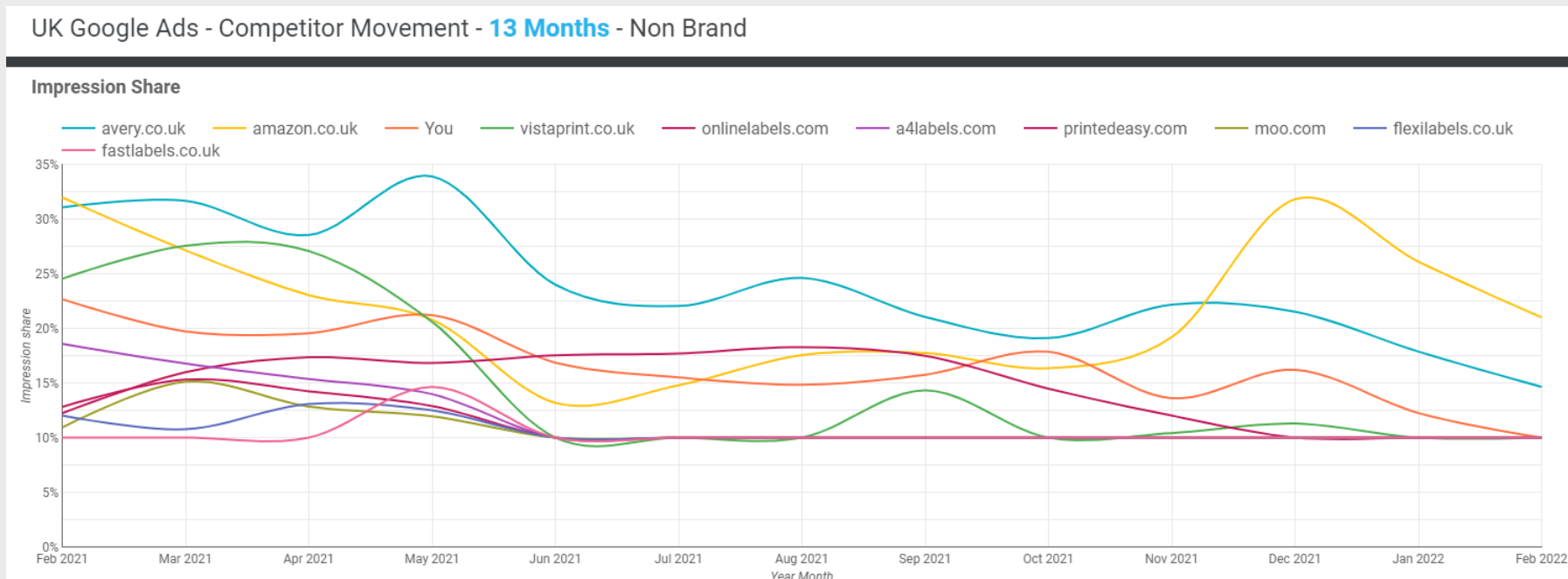
Ad Preview & Diagnostics - Example

- The **ad preview tool** allows you to run mock searches, with the results appearing as they would if you were to search live in Google

- The benefit is it does not skew impression and CTR data, but you can still see if your ad is triggering, which competitors are present and what messaging they are using

Assessing Keyword Wins & Losses

Impression Share

- An impression share above 80% can be considered good

- An impression share below 50% is considered low

Top IS

- If you want to increase your search visibility, then you want to aim for 50%+

Click Share

- A click share below 50% could indicate that your ad messaging is not resonating with a users search, and therefore you are losing clicks to competitors

Keyword	Impr. (Abs. Top) %	Impr. (Top) %	Search impr. share	Search top IS	Search abs. top IS	Click share
...ed keywords ❓	28.59%	71.86%	21.15%	15.56%	–	14.77%
"frozen rats"	39.50%	82.22%	73.58%	63.02%	30.04%	49.58%
"basking lamp"	36.99%	78.04%	30.25%	24.02%	11.56%	21.16%
"arcadia pro t5"	60.83%	89.01%	73.13%	71.13%	48.76%	43.46%
[tortoise food]	33.55%	70.63%	40.57%	29.43%	14.14%	23.78%
"frozen mice"	35.09%	79.90%	56.08%	46.67%	20.72%	41.73%
"reptile supplies"	33.99%	74.59%	42.52%	32.18%	14.50%	31.93%
[frozen mice]	47.13%	89.38%	82.22%	76.45%	40.52%	45.65%

Keyword Planner Tool

- Yes the tool is typically for keyword research, but you can use your competitors domain in a different way
  - Find new opportunities
  - Understand what keywords and phrases a competitor is optimising for

- It shows you how Google reads the pages

- You will get the most insight by using and analysing individual page URLs

Organic Vs Paid

- The report shows performance for when both an organic listing and an ad appeared, or just one of them

- You can use the report to **understand where you can bolster your ad activity** to boost your market share

- You can drill down to campaign, ad group or keyword level

*To use the report search console needs to be linked to the ad account

Paid and organic ✏
Unsaved

↶ UNDO   ↷ REDO

Custom
1 Jan 2022 - 31 Dec 2032

Search Result Type ▼	↓ Clicks ▼	Impr. ▼	CTR ▼	Avg. ▼ CPC	Cost ▼	Organic ▼ Clicks	Organic ▼ Queries	Organic ▼ Clicks/Query	Organic ▼ Average Position	Combined ▼ Clicks	Combined ▼ Queries	Combined ▼ Clicks/Query
Both shown	3,041	12,667	24.01%	£0.39	£1,185.23	269	12,667	0.02	16.14	3,310.00	12,667	0.26
Ad shown only	925	4,207	21.99%	£0.43	£397.67	0	0	0.00	0.00	925.00	4,207	0.22
Organic shown only	0	0	0.00%	£0.00	£0.00	17,729	184,425	0.10	28.71	17,729.00	184,425	0.10

YouTube

- Whilst there is no definitive way to see what video ads a competitor is running, one thing you can do is visit their YouTube channel

- Once there, you want to look at the view levels for each video, alongside their publish date

- Few videos attract high view counts from just organic activity, particularly in a short space of time
  - The exception to that rule is usually around popular tutorials
  - If their view count is in the 10,000's the likelihood is they are or have been using such videos in a YouTube ad campaign

- You can also review the types of video that are being used and the frequency they are posted

Social Media
Facebook & LinkedIn

Facebook (Meta) Ads Library

- You can use Facebook Ads Library to search for competitor ads that are currently running across the platform

- You do not need to have a Facebook account or be logged in to view ads currently being run

- You can filter by country and ad category (if your business falls within one of these)

Facebook (Meta) Ads Library – What You See

- Details about the page (likes, followers, creation date)
- Each active ad
  - When the ad was first launched
  - Which platforms the ads are live on
  - The ad itself (messaging & creative)
  - Versions of the ad (dynamic content)
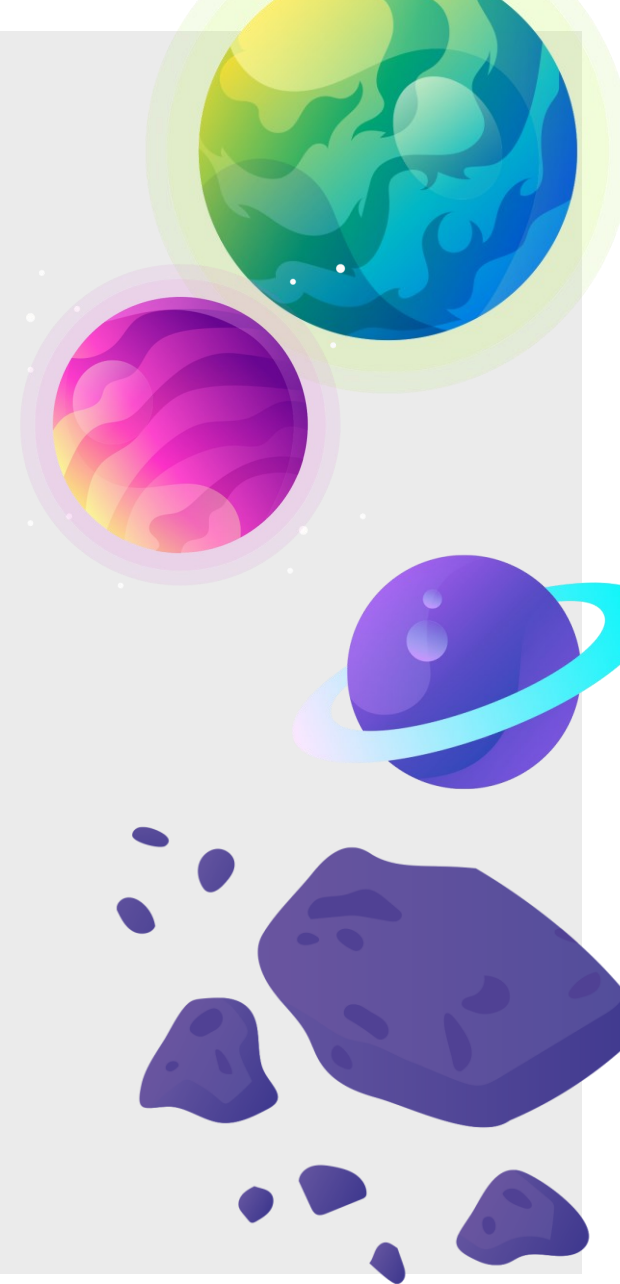
Facebook (Meta) Ads Library - Example

LinkedIn Posts & Ads

You can visit any company page on a desktop device on LinkedIn and view ads that the company is running, or has been running

From this you can determine:

- Messaging

- Call to action

- Landing page

- Ad creative
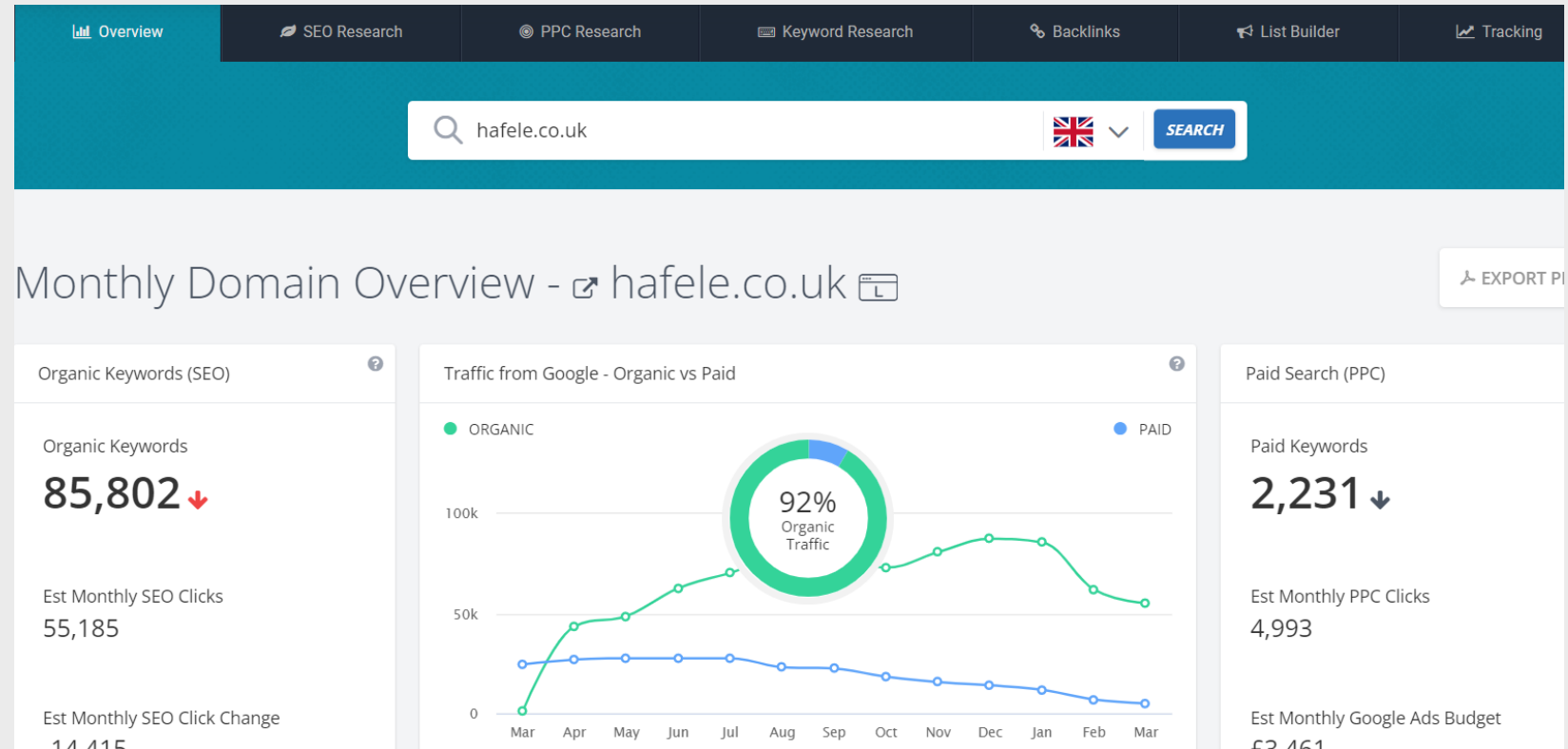
- Ad Type

Tools
Free & Premium

SpyFu

Pricing

- You can access limited data for free
- Starts at $9/month* (limited offer)

Top Features

- Competitor keywords
- Competitor traffic levels
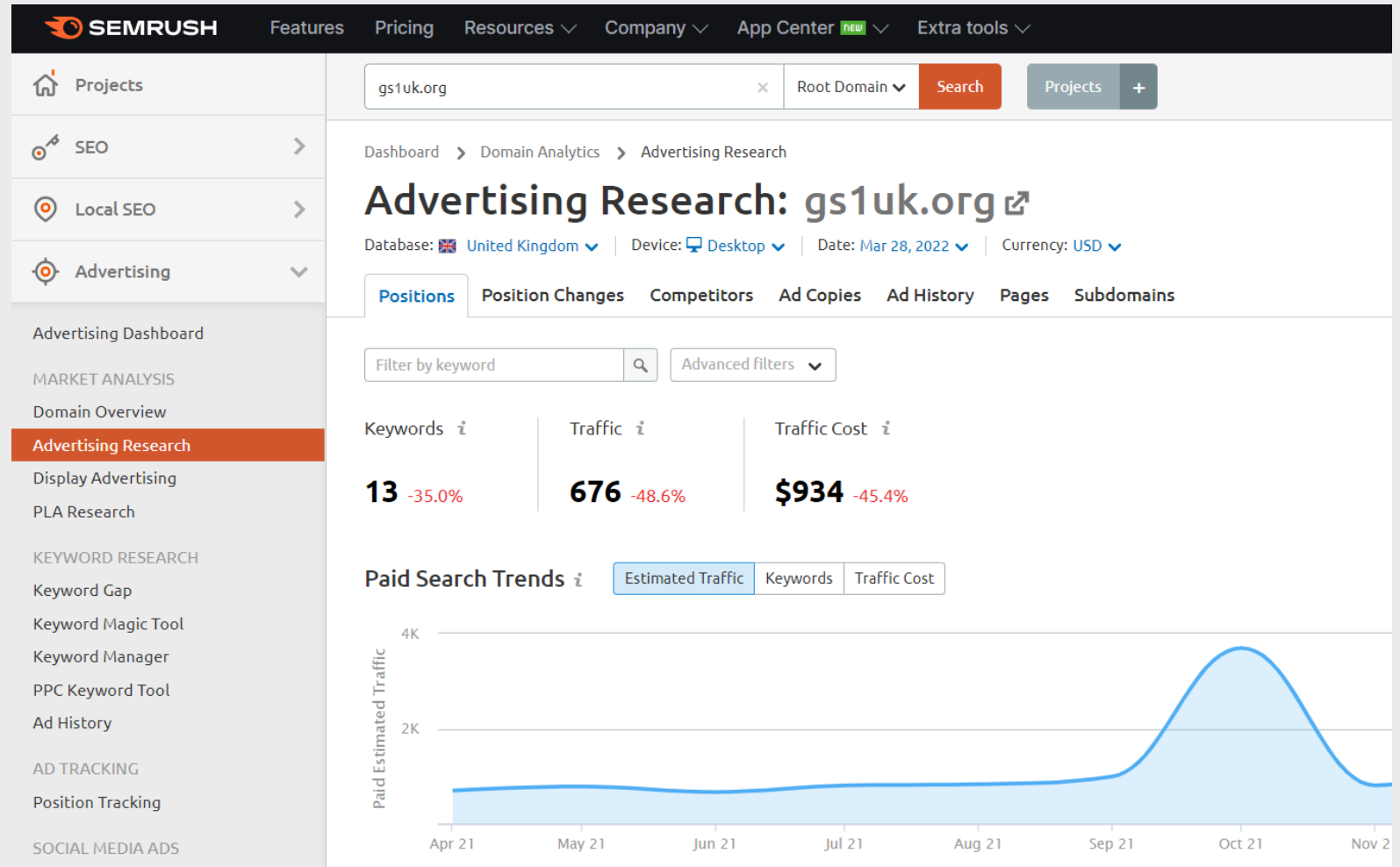- Ads messaging
- Est. Ad budgets

Semrush

Pricing

- You can access limited data for free
- Starts at $119.95/month* (limited offer)

Top Features

- Gap analysis
- Rankings
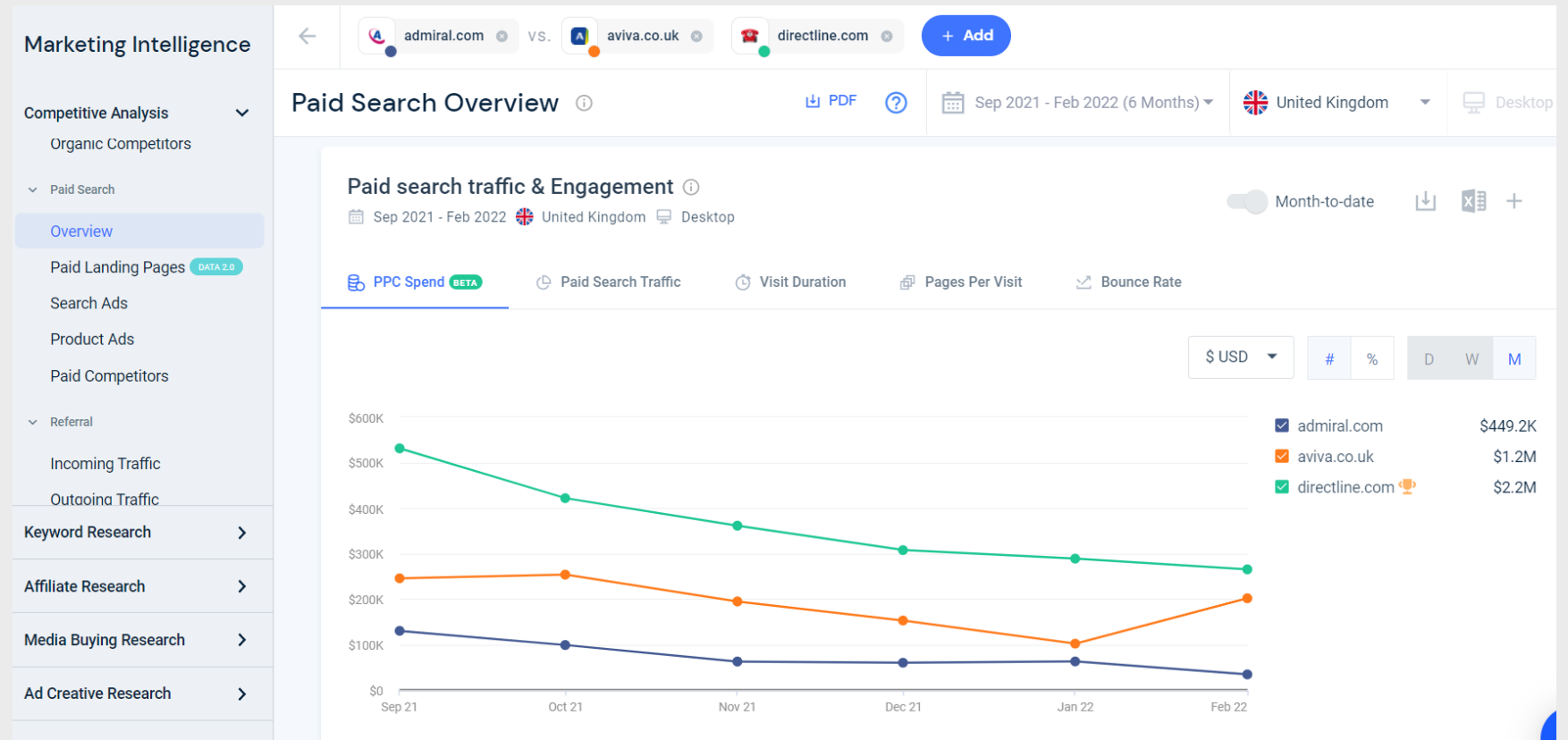- Messaging
- Traffic levels
- Shopping ads

Similarweb

Pricing

- Free trial
- Request quote (~£1k/month)

Top Features

- Channel usage
- Market intelligence
- Ad messaging
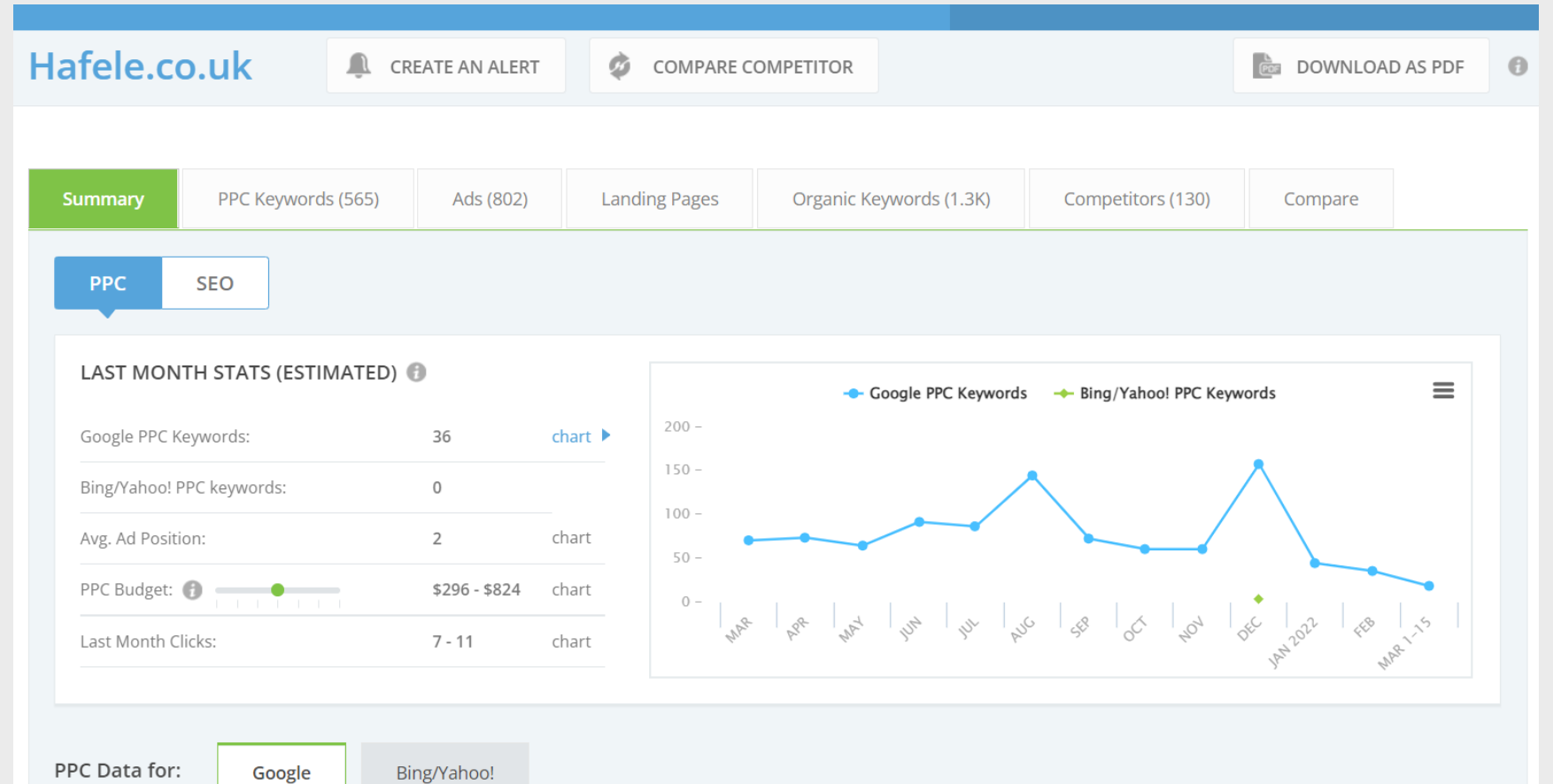- Gap analysis
- Est. Ad budgets

Ispoinage

Pricing

- Free trial
- Starts at $59/month

Top Features
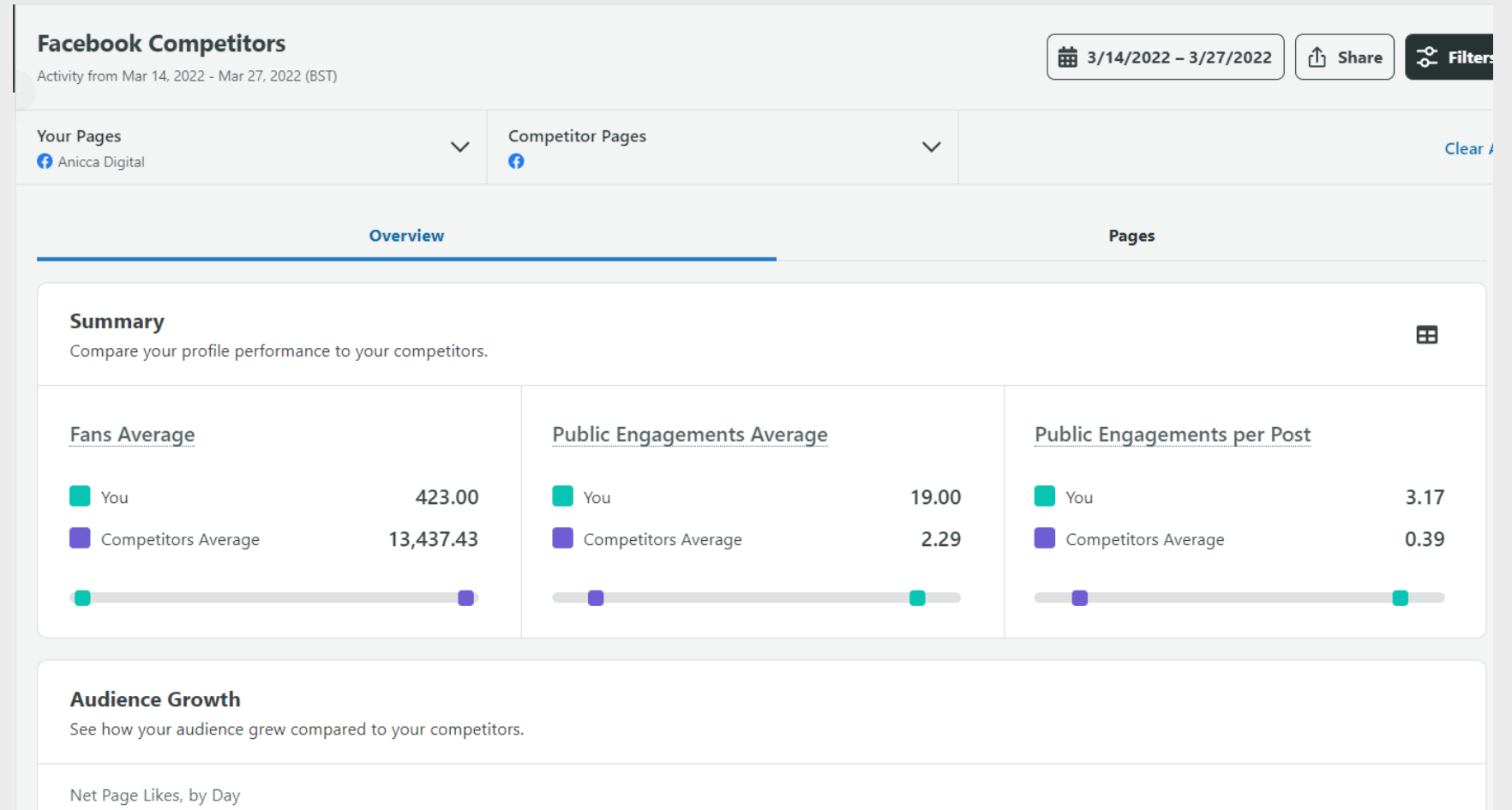
- Keyword targets
- Ad messaging
- Landing pages
- Est. Ad Budgets

Sprout Social

**Pricing**

- Free trial
- Starting from $89/month

Top Features

- Benchmark growth
- Check posts
- Listening tools

Facebook Competitors
Activity from Mar 14, 2022 - Mar 27, 2022 (BST)

3/14/2022 – 3/27/2022 | Share | Filters

Your Pages
Anicca Digital

Competitor Pages

Clear A

Overview | Pages

Summary
Compare your profile performance to your competitors.

Fans Average
You — 423.00
Competitors Average — 13,437.43

Public Engagements Average
You — 19.00
Competitors Average — 2.29

Public Engagements per Post
You — 3.17
Competitors Average — 0.39

Audience Growth
See how your audience grew compared to your competitors.

Net Page Likes, by Day

The Wayback Machine

- The WayBack Machine gives you an opportunity to track changes to competitors websites

- Not only can you track when changes happen, you can view the archive of the pages to establish what those changes were

- It is a free tool that you can use to track multiple domains and page URLs

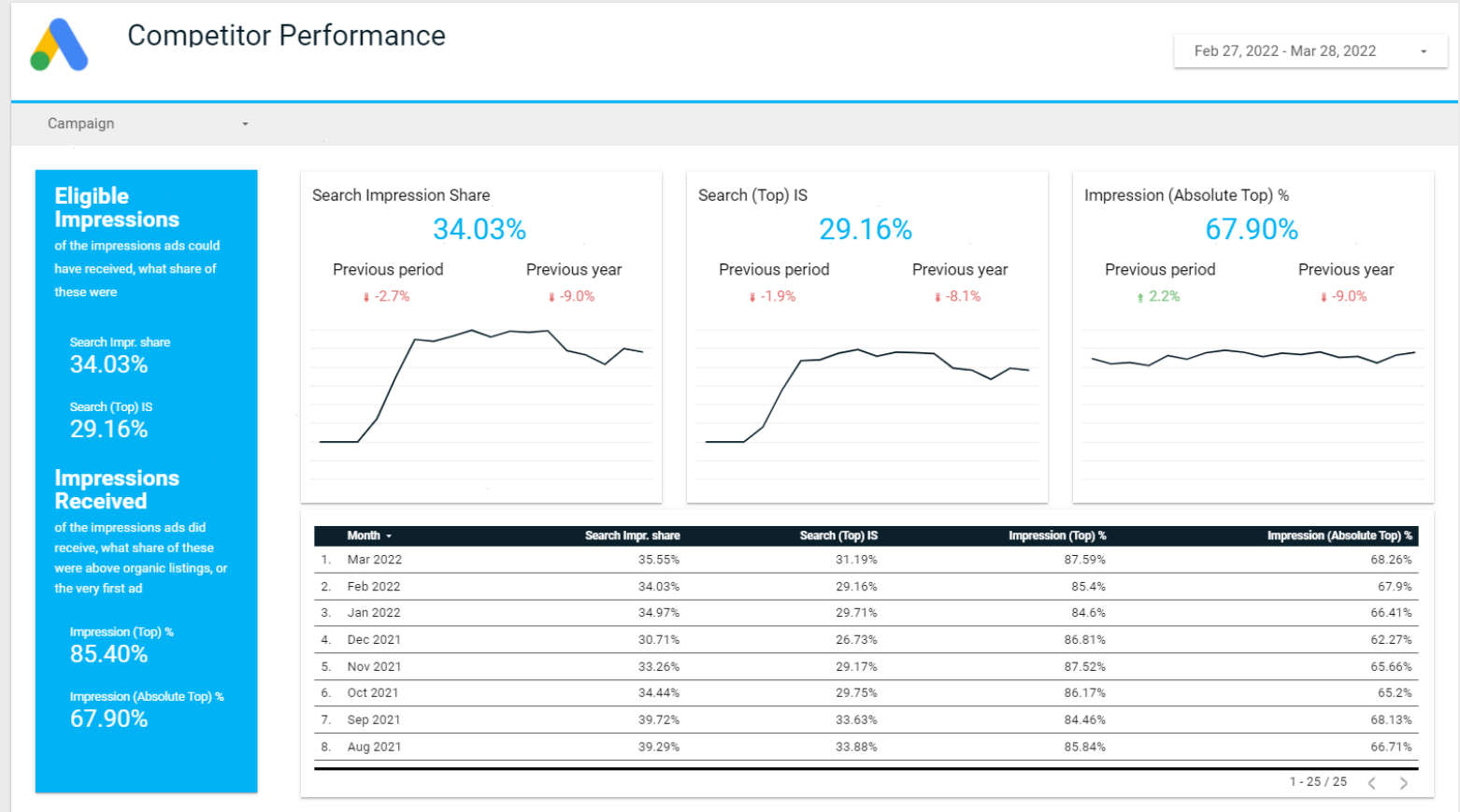- It highlights both small and large changes to pages
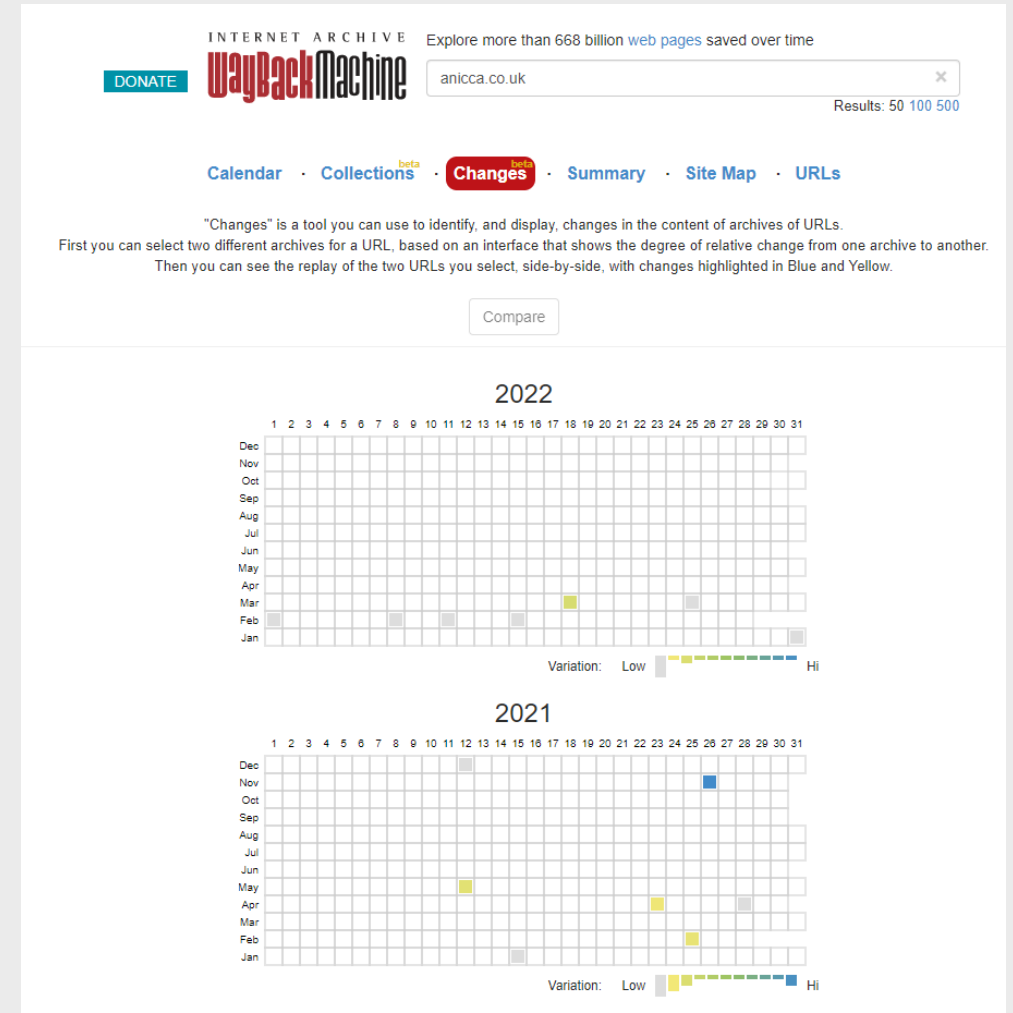
Takeaways & Tips

Track Impacts on Your Own Performance

- We recommend that you use Data Studio, with a combination of built-in data sources and imports from Google Sheet

- This pulls all of your data into one location

Combine Data Sources to track competitors

- Whilst there are many tools out there for analysing your competition, each of these tools use forecasting and public data to compile their data.

- As a result the data can vary, as none of these tools have access to the actual account data.

- We recommend to review, combine and average data from multiple data sources to obtain the most reflective view.

- You should also use your own data as benchmark reference for how out the tools are

Act on this insight - What Does This Mean For Your Marketing?

- How can you adjust and test your ad messaging to better position your product or service?
  - Are there gaps you can fill?
  - Are there pain points you can address?
- Do you need to adjust your bidding strategy to gain more impressions?
- Are there new channels/platforms you could explore?

Make it a habit to conduct competitor analysis regularly

If you aren't doing it frequently, it is hard to keep track of the changing landscape and understand the impacts this can have
on your own activity

Get in touch to discuss our competitor audits, and get your business ahead of your competitors

Thank you

enquiries@anicca.co.uk

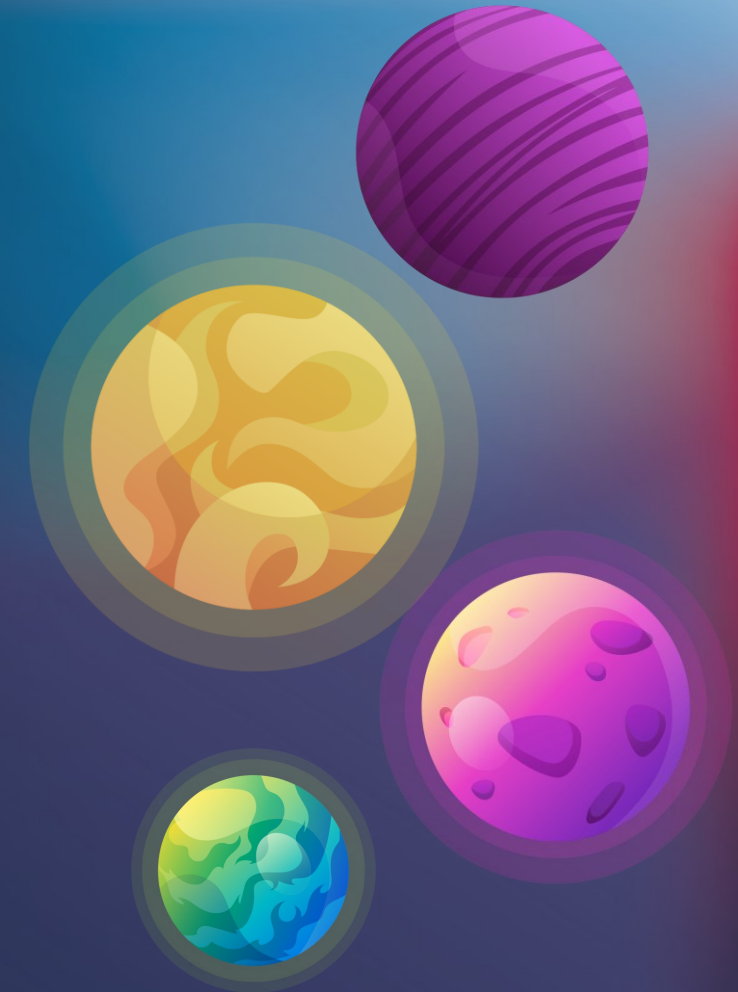# *Important Analytics announcement*

- Google to sunset Universal Analytics by June 2023

- GA4 implementations jump to the top of everyone's to-do list!

15% Off — Limited Time Offer — Google Analytics 4 Setup

How we can help you?

15% discount on GA4 services (booked before end of April)

- **GA4 Training:**

  - **Bespoke GA4 training** (in person training for your team - learn how to do GA4 set-ups yourself) - reduced from £1,125+vat to £955+vat

  - **Group Training** – in-person (in Leicester) or join online - £600+vat reduced to £500+vat per person)

- **GA4 set-ups by Anicca team:**

  - **Standard set-up** - reduced from £1,000+vat to £850+vat

  - We can provide a quote for **large and more complex GA4 set-ups** – you will stil receive a 15% discount

New digital skills bootcamp in May

The course consists of a total of **130 hours of guided learning,**
This is equivalent to about **10 hours per week** and includes:

- **10 weeks of lessons** – 1-day live lesson, 1-2 hours of live webinars, plus self-service webinars and access other Anicca and DMI resources.
- **Ongoing communication** (via Slack), enabling communications with other learners and the trainers
- At the end of the course there are **optional vocational sessions** – 1-day guided exam revision, 2 days of guest speakers' sessions/workshops, plus 2-hours of 1-2-1 mentoring etc.
- A **certification of attendance** (after learners have completed the 130 hours)
- Online multi-choice **DMI exam**
- Learners will get **membership to the DMI** & access to DMI resources

anicca 15

Waiting list for May's digital bootcamp

- We are waiting for confirmation from D2N2 for the funding for our next digital bootcamp, which is due to start at the beginning of May

- There are free places for priority groups, such as unemployed, under 24 and over 50

- If you are an employer or employed full-time (and not in a priority group) - you will be required to make a small contribution

- You can ifnd out more at **https://anicca.co.uk/grant-funded-digital-skills-bootcamps/**

- **You can join the waiting list by signing up here https://bit.ly/grant-funded-bootcamp2**