



Competitive Inventory
Guidelines

Kevin Cornwall
09 January 2015



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Discussion

Competitive analysis allows us to gauge where we fall short or come out ahead of our competitors. It will vary along two dimensions — competitors and criteria. The specific nature of those differences will vary depending on the criteria selected. This requires some mechanism for showing two or more sites side-by-side with the differences highlighted (usually tables or a two-by-two matrix). At the same time, these documents can also vary by quantity — some are larger than others because they show more contexts or more competitors.

Reference: http://www.digital-web.com/articles/competitive_analysis/

Audience: *Stakeholder.* Provided to help qualify and prioritize new projects.
Internal. Used to inform scope and content of a project.

Format: *PowerPoint.*

Executive Summary

The *Executive Summary* comes before the table of contents and is intended to summarize the entire study in one detailed paragraph. The idea is to provide the most pertinent information for stakeholders who do not have time to read the entire report. It is important to come right out and provide one or two major findings, such as, “the majority of the sites we reviewed offered faceted search from the search results page” That way the reader does not have to dig for the most important information.

Should include a sentence or two for each of the following:

- Goal of the study – what was compared and why.
- Name of the most important items evaluated with brief description (i.e. functionality, keywords, number available, etc.). No more than 5.
- Key findings. No more than 5.

Competitive Matrix

This section presents the specific elements compared for each competitor. Use a table format. Data should be concise, limited to yes/no and/or number, with optional type in parenthesis.

Should include:

- BMC data in the first column with row highlight
- Optional row highlight of most important competitor

Screenshots by Company (or A/B)

This section lets the reader see what was reviewed and draws attention to the important elements. May be presented as A/B comparison of competitor screen with BMC (appropriate for small number of compared items on a single page) Add screenshots captured from the site or application that was researched. Then add balloons or other appropriate callouts (circles, arrows) pointing to the reviewed item with your comments. Note the facts, but you may add relevant heuristic comments.

Should include:



-
- Positive as well as negative findings

Discussion by Company

This page follows the high-level screenshot review with an in-depth analysis of the findings.

Should include:

- Overall (high-level finding)
- Pros
- Cons
- Reference URL with link to live site, if available

Conclusion and Recommendations

Here you present your findings and with select heuristic recommendations as a user experience expert. Restate the most important findings from the Executive Summary. Recommendations should be clearly related to the items reviewed and the findings. Keep each recommendation brief, reinforcing only a few main takeaway points you wish your reader to remember.

Recommendations should include:

- Specific, actionable proposals (“offering user reviews for our products will put us ahead of most of our competitors”)
- Avoid generalizations (“the navigation area needs to look better”)
- Possible next steps for the design team

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