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Know your customers and their misspellings by Tony Vass

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According to Google, around 10% of all terms searched for online are spelled incorrectly. Thank goodness typing a word in that little search box isnâ€™t like getting a tattoo, where any spelling errors are stamped on us for life. No, Google is a savvy machine and will do its best to right the situation to keep us looking good.

Despite its smarts, Google doesnâ€™t correct every misspelled search term. And unfortunately not everyone has the spelling aptitude of a dictionary, or the typing touch of a personal assistant. The English language is fraught with minefields and tricky spelling rules. Therefore one could be forgiven for searching for a term such as underware, instead of underwear.

Australiaâ€™s leading airline Qantas experience a similar predicament. Qantas is quite possibly the only example where the letter U doesnâ€™t follow the letter Q. As a result, the second highest search term driving traffic to its site is the mispelled â€œQuantasâ€•.

Now big companies such as Qantas, Woolworths and Australia Post have gone so far as to register domain addresses for their frequently misspelled names, redirecting clumsy typists to the companyâ€™s official homepage.

Bruce Tonkin, chief strategy officer at Melbourne IT, a highly reputable domain name registrar, said the main reason big companies secure domain names with similar spellings is to stop "traffic leakage".

Many SEO experts recognise the danger when consumers misspell names, products or key search terms related to a specific brand. A prospective customer is likely to end up on a page filled with this brandâ€™s competitors - potentially losing the customer for good.

Given that around one third of purchases in Australia are now made online, itâ€™s important that companies are up to speed on the keywords people use to find the business, its products or its services. With more people turning to the web, competition for good ranking spots in search engines grows fiercer. More searches equals more room for spelling errors like underware. The old adage â€˜know your customerâ€™ has never been more important in the race to the top of Google.

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Grundies was established in May 2009 by founder Tony Vass. Tony has had more than 20 years experience in a underwear management roles across the Retail, Buying and Wholesale sectors. He has worked for Pacific Brands, David Jones and Davenport Industries.

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