

*PLEASE NOTE: This is a machine transcription. Some punctuation and spelling weirdness are to be expected.*

You're listening to the Tiny Course Empire Podcast with Cindy Bidar. This is episode number 17, and today I'm going to teach you how to use a free tool from Google to grow your business and protect your online assets. Stick around to find out more about how you can use Google Alerts in your Tiny Course Empire.

Welcome to the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, a weekly show dedicated to helping you launch and grow your digital course business, even if you don't have a big team or a six-figure ads budget. We'll help you design smart systems, take consistent action and achieve massive success on your own terms. Now, here's your host, Cindy Bidar.

Welcome back to the Tiny Course Empire Podcast. Happy Wednesday to you, if you're listening to this on the day it's released, this is a holiday week here in the US, so I'm actually releasing this episode a day early. If you're here in the US, where I am... I wish you a very, very happy Thanksgiving. I'm actually looking forward to having the whole day off, which is not something I do very often, but Thanksgiving is one of the few days a year that I take entirely off work, so I can just hang out and basically eat with my family. I know some people think I'm a little crazy for not taking more time off, but I find that if I work just a few hours every day, that's a better balance for me than trying to work a more traditional Monday through Friday or Monday through Thursday schedule, like some of my friends and colleagues do. But anyway, that's neither here nor there. Happy Thanksgiving to you, wherever you are.

Today, I want to talk to you about Google Alerts. And we're going to start by saying, What the heck is a Google alert anyway? A Google Alert is really just a Google search that you set up and ask Google to run continuously for you and to let you know when they find new results that meet your search criteria. It's essentially an automated search and it happens on a schedule that you set so you can tell Google you want to know about new results that come in as they happen every day or every week, and Google will send you an email whenever they see new results. Now you do have to know that they're not going to send you all of the results, you're not going to get thousands and thousands and thousands of things. It's only what happens after you set up the Google Alerts, so all Google is watching for is new pages that fit those criteria. So you can imagine if Google goes out and crawls the web and they find something new that fits your search criteria, they're going to send you an email about that. They're not going to send you an email about the other 8,495,000 things that are already out there. They're only going to let you know about the new things that happened.

Now let's talk about how you actually set up a Google Alert. It's really simple, and I actually

have a PDF download for you at [TinyCourseEmpire.com/17](https://TinyCourseEmpire.com/17) that's going to walk you through this, but it's really easy to do, it's probably a little more difficult to explain on an audio than it would be in a video, but basically what you're going to do is you're going to sign into your Google account, the email that's associated where this account is where the alerts are going to go, so you want to make sure it's an email that you check frequently, if you have a Gmail account... That's perfect. And then you're going to go to [Google.com/alerts](https://Google.com/alerts), and that's a very simple page, and all you're going to see is like a field where you can enter your search terms and you're going to choose your search term, and I want to make sure that you choose something that's not too broad, because the narrower you can make your search terms, and we'll talk about some ways that you can do this in a few minutes, but the narrower you can make your search terms, the more useful these alerts are going to be to you. So for example, if you're a dog trainer and you set up a Google search for dog training, that's not going to be super useful, that's a very broad search term and you're going to get all kinds of results back that probably aren't going to be very helpful to you. So if you can narrow it down to dog training for young poodles or I don't know, something like that, so that it's just much more narrow, you're going to get much better results, so when you go to [Google.com/alerts](https://Google.com/alerts), you're going to choose your search term and then you're going to click the Show Options link, and that's going to give you all of those options that we just talked about, it's going to ask you how often do you want to receive the alerts. I recommend once a day, unless you find that's too overwhelming, then go for just once a week. I can't see any reason why you would need the results immediately, that's the other option there, I think once a day is probably the best choice. You can choose which sources you want to receive alerts from, I like to leave this on automatic, but if you only want to know about news, maybe in your niche, that's what's most important to you, you only want to know about news or maybe you only want to hear from blogs, you can make those choices as well. Again, I recommend just leaving it on automatic. You can choose the language that you want to get results from, I always choose English unless you have a specific need for another language, I think I would leave it there. And like I said, you can choose how many alerts to receive, I recommend all results, just be aware that you might receive a lot of irrelevant links, so if you do, you can go back and change this setting to say only the best results, and you can always go back and edit your alerts later. All you have to do is go back to [Google.com/alerts](https://Google.com/alerts) and you'll see a list of all of the alerts that you have set up, and next to each one, there's a little pencil icon where you can edit them even if you've already set them up previously.

So once you have this all set up for a new alert, then you just click the blue Create Alert button and you're going to start getting those alerts in your email, and you'll notice as you're going through and you're setting this up below where you're setting up the alert, you're going to see the current results, so you can kind of gauge if you're setting up the alert correctly by what the results are that you see there. You're going to get a preview of the results, and that preview is live so you can even click on them and go through to the web pages and see if that makes sense, given what you're trying to search for, if the alert

that Google is giving you is valid or not, so you can adjust your search terms that way.

So that's how you set up the alert, but what are you actually searching for? I've got a few things that I recommend that you search for when you're setting up your alerts. The first one is your name. Search for your name, your brand, your website name, and your product names, and the reason that you're looking for these is because obviously you want to know when people are talking about you online, but more importantly, you want to find those websites that have talked about you, maybe they reviewed your product, or maybe they mentioned you or they quoted you, maybe they pulled a little snippet from an article that you wrote that curated your article, and for whatever reason, didn't link back to your site, so if you go to these websites and you see that they've, like I said, they've quoted you or they've curated some content that you created and they didn't put a link back to your site, that's a perfect opportunity for you to shoot off a quick email and say, Hey, thanks for the mention on this blog post, I appreciate you quoting me, would you mind linking back to my site. And the reason you want to do that is because it's really good for SEO purposes. Links back to your site is a metric that Google uses to gauge the validity of your content and to gauge your credibility. So the more links that you have back to your site and the better the source of that link, the higher your content will rank in Google, and that's a really oversimplification of it, but just suffice it to say that it's good to have links back to your website, and one way to get those is to find where people have quoted you or mentioned you in some way and not linked back to you.

You can also set up a Google Alert for your competitors. So for your competitor's names for their products, for their brand, and the reason you want to search for them is because if someone else is, for example, reviewing your competitor's products, that's an opportunity for you to maybe get your products reviewed by the same people, or if they are promoting a competitor's product, or if they are interviewing your competitor or maybe they've invited your competitor for a guest posting opportunity, those are all opportunities that you can then reach out to that website owner, to that blogger, to that podcaster, to that YouTuber or whoever it is, and say, Hey, I have a similar product, I notice that you reviewed so and so's course, I have a complementary course that I think would be a really good fit for your audience, I would love to send you a copy for you to review as well, so it's an opportunity for you to reach out... It's an excuse for you to reach out and there's probably a pretty good chance that if they are interested in that topic from your competitor, they'll be interested in that topic from you as well.

And speaking of opportunities, the next thing that you want to set up Google Alerts for are what I like to call opportunity phrases. An opportunity phrase is a specific phrase that... Well, I'll just tell you what they are. So an opportunity phrase is something like call for speakers, write for us, guest post, speaker application, interview opportunity, guest post by, all of these types of phrases are an indication that the website owner or the organization is looking for someone to provide guest posts, they're looking for people to

interview, they're looking for people to speak at their conference or their event. And by setting up a Google Alert, you're going to be the first to know that this is happening, so if you are looking for speaking opportunities or interview opportunities, Google Alerts that are searching for, like I said, things like call for speakers, Write For Us guest post by, speaker application, all of those phrases are going to help you find those opportunities and find them quickly, because Google will let you know as soon as they crawl a page that contains that information, you're going to want to make sure that you kind of combine that with your primary keyword, so you don't want to just look for a general call for speakers with no keyword attached for it, because then you're going to find speaker opportunities for doctors and lawyers, and life coaches, and dog trainers, and all kinds of people that aren't you. So you want to make sure that if you are setting up a Google Alert, for example, for Call for Speakers, that you set it up for your keyword as well, so I might set up a Google Alert for Call for Speakers plus online marketing, or call for speakers plus course creation or call for speakers, plus email marketing, any of those things that I talk about. You would want to use your own keyword phrases, and speaking of keywords, you can set up Google Alerts just for your keywords, and you might want to do that for a variety of reasons, Number one, because you're going to be alerted to breaking news about your industry. A few weeks ago as I'm recording this, Facebook was down for hours and hours and hours, and you would have thought the world was going end, but if you talk about social media, if you teach social media, if you run a social media agency, if you're a social media virtual assistant, if you have a social media platform that you manage, then that is huge news, and you want to be the first to know about that, because then you can let your customers and your clients know about it and you become the expert that they turn to.

So keeping on top of that breaking news by having a Google Alert set up for your keywords, a super easy way to do that, and you'll also be the first to find out about upcoming industry events, maybe there's a bundle coming up that you want to participate in to grow your email list or a give away that you want to participate in, you can find out about that by setting up a Google Alert on your keywords. You can use a Google alert to keep an eye on the content that other people are creating in your industry and use that as inspiration for your own content, you can even find potential partnerships if someone is writing about your industry or about your niche or about your keywords, that's a potential partner, especially if you have an affiliate program, that's a great way to reach out to and to find new potential people who might be interested in promoting your products because they're already talking about your industry, they already have an audience that's interested in your industry, so make sure you set up a Google Alert and you don't have to do it for every single keyword, but your primary keyword phrases, you want to have those Google Alerts set up for so that you're aware when new content comes in or when new content is created around those keywords.

Another great way to use Google Alerts is to do a search for questions that people are asking, and the way that you do that is you use the Intitle Modifier, and you do that by just

typing intitle, all one word intitle, followed by a colon, and then followed by the words Who, what, where, when, why, or how? And your keyword. So what you're searching for is content with a title that asks a question basically, who is doing something or why you're doing something, so I might do a search for intitle and email marketing, and that's going to bring up content that asks a question about email marketing, then what can I do with that? I can use that to generate more content ideas, or if it's a blog post or a question on Quora, I can go and leave a comment, or I can answer the question if it's on Quora or I can submit a quote to be included in the article, if it's a blog post somewhere. And I'm going to include in the PDF download that I have for you at [TinyCourseEmpire.com/17](https://TinyCourseEmpire.com/17). I'm going to include how to use these modifiers in your Google Alerts like intitle, and we're going to talk about a couple of other ones in just a minute as well, but there's another reason why you might want to be using Google Alerts, and that is for reputation management and digital asset protection, and here's what I mean by that.

One of the things that routinely shows up in my Google Alerts for my name and my brand are Black Hat sites that have stolen my content and are using it for their own means, so either they've stole in my courses and they're giving them away or they're selling them, or they've stolen my blog posts and they're re-publishing them, but I routinely find those through a Google Alert on my name and on my brand, so that's one of the things that you're going to want to watch for, and then you can go ahead and send them a Cease and Desist letter or a request to take the content down or whatever is appropriate for your situation, but chances are, you're not ever going to know about it if you don't have those Google Alerts set up in the first place. Another thing that you can do a search for, and I just found this when I was researching this podcast episode, I never thought of this before, but you can set up a Google Alert to catch spam injection in your own website. So the way this works is you set up a Google Alert that is searching your site for common spam terms like insurance or Botox or Viagra terms that you probably wouldn't have on your website, unless of course you sell insurance. If that's the case, then it's probably not spam, but on my site, if the word insurance shows up, it's probably not me and I probably need to know about that because that's a very common website hack where people are inserting links to spammy sites right in existing content, and it's pretty obvious when you see it but most of us don't go back and read our old blog posts all the time, so we wouldn't ever know it unless someone pointed it out, or unless we set up a Google Alert for it, so that's another way that Google Alerts can help you protect your online assets.

You can also make sure that your new content is getting indexed with a Google alert every week. When I release a new podcast episode, I get a Google Alert on Thursday or Friday saying that Google has crawled that page and there's a new piece of content that's got my name attached to it. If I don't see that come in, if I don't see that Google Alert come in, and then I know that Google hasn't crawled that page for whatever reason, and I can go and check on it, you can also make sure that pages that you don't want index are not being indexed. So I recently did a whole new website design and there are some pages there

that I don't want Google to index, so if I see those show up in my Google Alerts, then I can go into my Google Webmaster tools, do they even still call it web master tools, I don't even know, but I can go into my Google account and I can request that Google de-list those pages. So that's how you can use Google Alerts to both grow your business and protect your business, so you can set up Google Alerts for your name, for your brand, for your products, for your primary keywords, for your competitors, for those opportunity phrases for questions that people are asking around your keywords, and you can watch for things like un-linked mentions, opportunities to get reviewed, opportunities for partnerships, opportunities for speaking and guest posting, you can watch for those black hat sites that are doing things they shouldn't be doing, stealing your content. You can watch for spam injection on your own site, and you can make sure that the right content is getting indexed and that the wrong content is not getting indexed by Google, but Google Alerts does not cover everything, they do not cover things like social media, so if you are looking for Twitter mentions or Facebook mentions. You're going to need to use a different tool for that. So just be aware of that.

Now, I did promise you that I was going to talk to you about these search modifiers, these are some more advanced Google Alerts set up tips, you can use things like quotes, for example, if you have a phrase that you want to search for that has to appear in the search results in a specific order, then you're going to want to wrap that phrase in quotes, say, for example, you have a gardening blog and you want to set up a Google alert about heirloom tomatoes to find questions that people are asking about that. You want to wrap heirloom tomatoes in double quotes, because otherwise what's going to happen is you're going to get search results about tomatoes and search results about heirloom China or clothing or any number of other things, so you want to wrap that search result or that search term in double quotes, so that any of the search results that are returned are exactly what you're looking for, so that's the first tip, make sure you're using double quotes when you want that term to appear exactly as you typed it in the search results.

Another trick that you can use is Intitle, we talked about this a little bit earlier intitle, all one word intitle, followed by a colon followed by your search term is going to give you only results where that search term actually appears in the title of the piece of content, so it's not going to matter if it appears in the body of the content anywhere, if it's not in the title, you won't get an alert about it, another search modifier you can use is site followed by a site colon that's going to search in a specific site, so if you are setting up a Google Alert to watch for that spam injection that we talked about a minute ago, you're going to use site colon followed by your domain, so in my case it would be site:CindyBidar.com, and then the search term... So site:CindyBidar.com plus insurance or plus Botox or plus Viagra, and it's the plus symbol, it's not and, it's not or it's the actual plus symbol on your keyboard that you want to use, and in addition to the plus symbol, you can use the minus symbol, so the little dash, a short dash, the minus symbol on your keyboard, if you want to exclude a specific search term, so if I wanted to search for pet treats, for example, and I didn't want to

get results related to cats, I only wanted results related to dogs, I could include minus cats, and then Google wouldn't give me any results that included cats in the search, and lastly, you can also use And, and or in your Google search and guys, you can use these in any Google searches, not just Google Alerts, but they're especially useful in your Google Alerts, you can use the word and to combine search terms, or you can use the word or to search for one thing or the other, it's important to note that those words have to be capitalized, so capital O capital R or capital A capital N capital D in order for them to work. So if you were searching for email marketing or course creation, that would work as long as you capitalize that operator, the end or the OR. So I want to encourage you to go over to [Google.com/alerts](https://www.google.com/alerts) and try setting up a few of these, again, you can play with the search terms right there in the search box, and Google is going to give you a preview of the content that they find right there on the page. So you're going to be able to know if the search term that you are searching for or if the way you've got it written, if the syntax is correct based on what content comes up, so I want to encourage you to play with that, go ahead and download the cheat sheet that I've got for you over at [TinyCourseEmpire.com](https://TinyCourseEmpire.com), that will help get you started.

And I do want to let you know that cheat sheet is actually from a tool kit that I have called the Visibility Tool Kit. So if you are interested in learning more about how to be more visible online, Google Alerts is just one small piece of that. And I want to encourage you to check out that tool kit as well. I'll put a link to it in the show notes, at [TinyCourseEmpire.com/17](https://TinyCourseEmpire.com/17) for you. And I would also love to hear from you. Do you use Google Alerts? What interesting things have you found through Google Alerts that have helped you to grow your business or that have helped protect your online reputation or your digital assets? I'd love to hear... Leave me a comment over at [TinyCourseEmpire.com](https://TinyCourseEmpire.com).

And that is it for me today. Have a terrific day, everyone, and I will talk to you all again next week, if you like what you hear on the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, you're going to love all of the courses you'll find inside my Six-Figure Systems Membership, that's my monthly membership where we dig into online marketing for regular people like you and me, we don't do big launches or have the big headaches and the big expenses that come with them, instead we focus on creating repeatable, sustainable systems that continue to grow over time, and they don't suck up all of our energy or require a 10-person team to manage. You can come see what we're all about at [SixFigureSystems.com](https://SixFigureSystems.com), and I'll see you on the inside.