How to Analyze Your Competitors Using Mention

Welcome

So you've decided to join the Mention family. Happy to have you. You're probably itching to get started, so we've made this short guide to help you monitor your competitors using our tool.

We're going to start from the very beginning. We'll assume you know your username and password, but that's about it. If you already know the basics, feel free to skip ahead.

*Ready to go? **Log in to Mention,** then turn the page for step 1.*

1. What is Competitive Analysis?

Competitive analysis is studying your competition's strategies, so you can improve your own.

Thanks to the internet, these strategies are more public than ever. Mention makes tracking the competition simple.

We'll show you how to monitor:

- *Their web presence*
- *Their social media accounts*
- *Feedback from their customers*
- *People discussing them on forums*
- *Reviews of their products*
- *Influencers talking about them*

That's just a quick list. You'll know what's said about the competition anywhere online. Nice!

Why it works

Choosing the right business strategy is tricky. You can't know if something will work until you've tried it. But you can learn from the competition's strategy.

By tracking what they do, you can make more informed choices for your own public relations, social media strategy, and product development.

For example, suppose you want to improve your customer service on social media. You can track your competitors' customer interactions and see what's working for them. Take their good ideas to make your own customer service even stronger.

As you build your brand, watch your competitors to find out what they do well, and mistakes they make along the way. Look for trends - things that help the best companies excel.

You'll be better informed, and better prepared to craft your own marketing and growth strategies.

What to monitor

Good monitoring is all about choosing the right keywords. Your tool will show you everything said online about specific topics, so you need to select them wisely.
When it comes to competitors, there are a few key aspects you should keep an eye on:

- Their brand name
- Campaigns they launch
- Key products
- Branded hashtags
- Important team members
- Their website and social profiles

In the next chapter, we'll decide which of these to focus on, and create alerts to track them online.
Onwards!

2. Setting Up Your Alerts

Now we've had our background chat, it's time to get our hands dirty. To collect information about your competitors, you need to create alerts. These monitor every mention of your keywords online. For this reason, you need to choose your keywords carefully. You won't get good data without good keywords.

Here's how to set up your alerts.

The basics

First things first. Click on the blue button to "add a new alert."

Next you need to decide what you're going to monitor. In this case, choose "a competitor."

We won't talk about Boolean alerts in this guide, but there's more information here if you're interested. These are very precise alerts, for hardcore monitors.

Enter the name of your competitor and select it from the drop-down list. Then hit "Next Step."

If they're on the list, we'll automatically add their Twitter and Facebook accounts. If not, you can add them manually on the next page.

You'll also be able to add specific Booking.com, Yelp, TripAdvisor pages, and others. Find out immediately when a new review is written about a competitor, and see what their customers think.
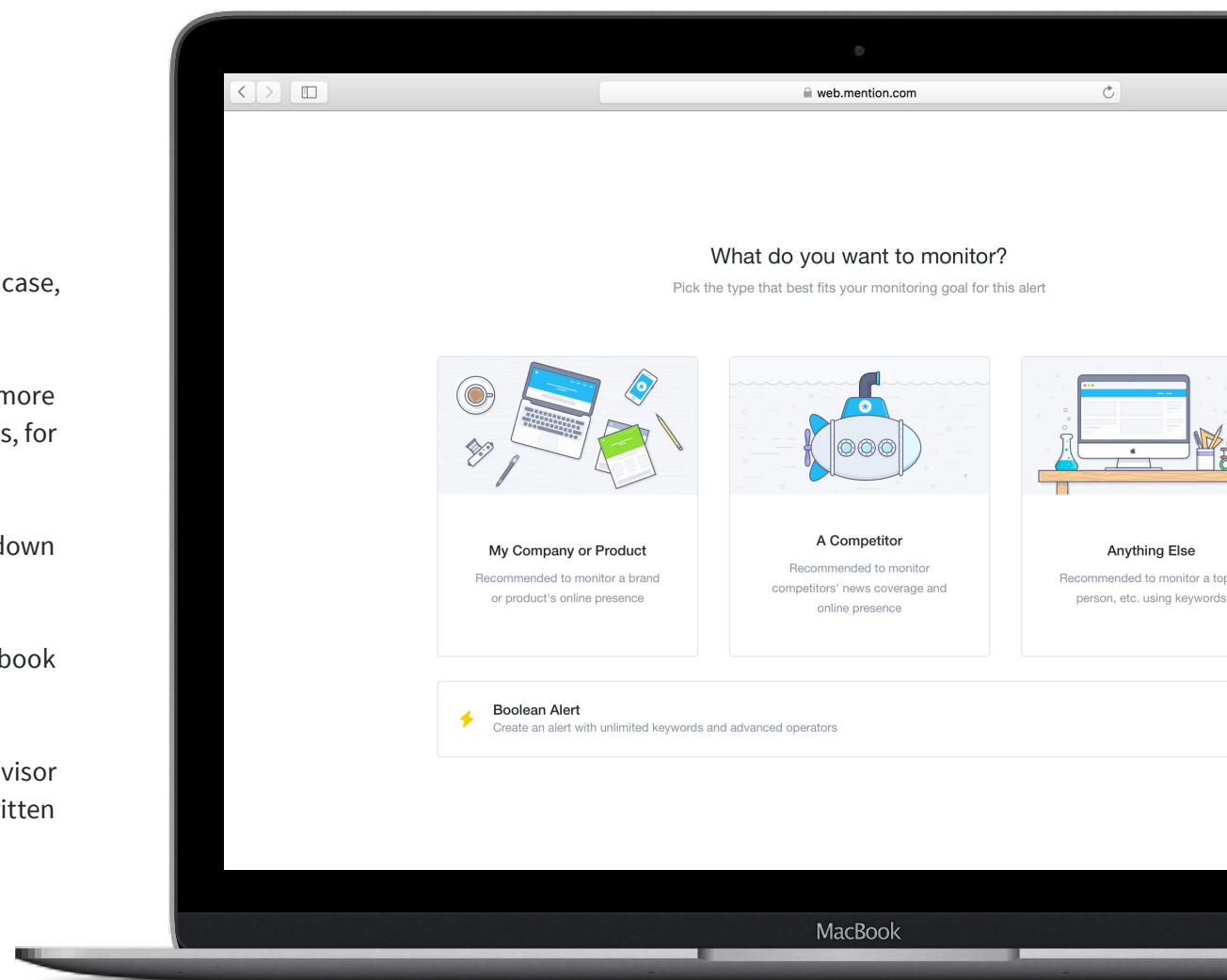
Next, choose your sources and languages. For a complete competitive analysis, you'll want to track all sources. If you're more focused on social media, select Twitter, videos, forums, and images.

Then choose your languages, and you're all set! If people are talking about your competitors, you'll begin receiving mentions immediately.
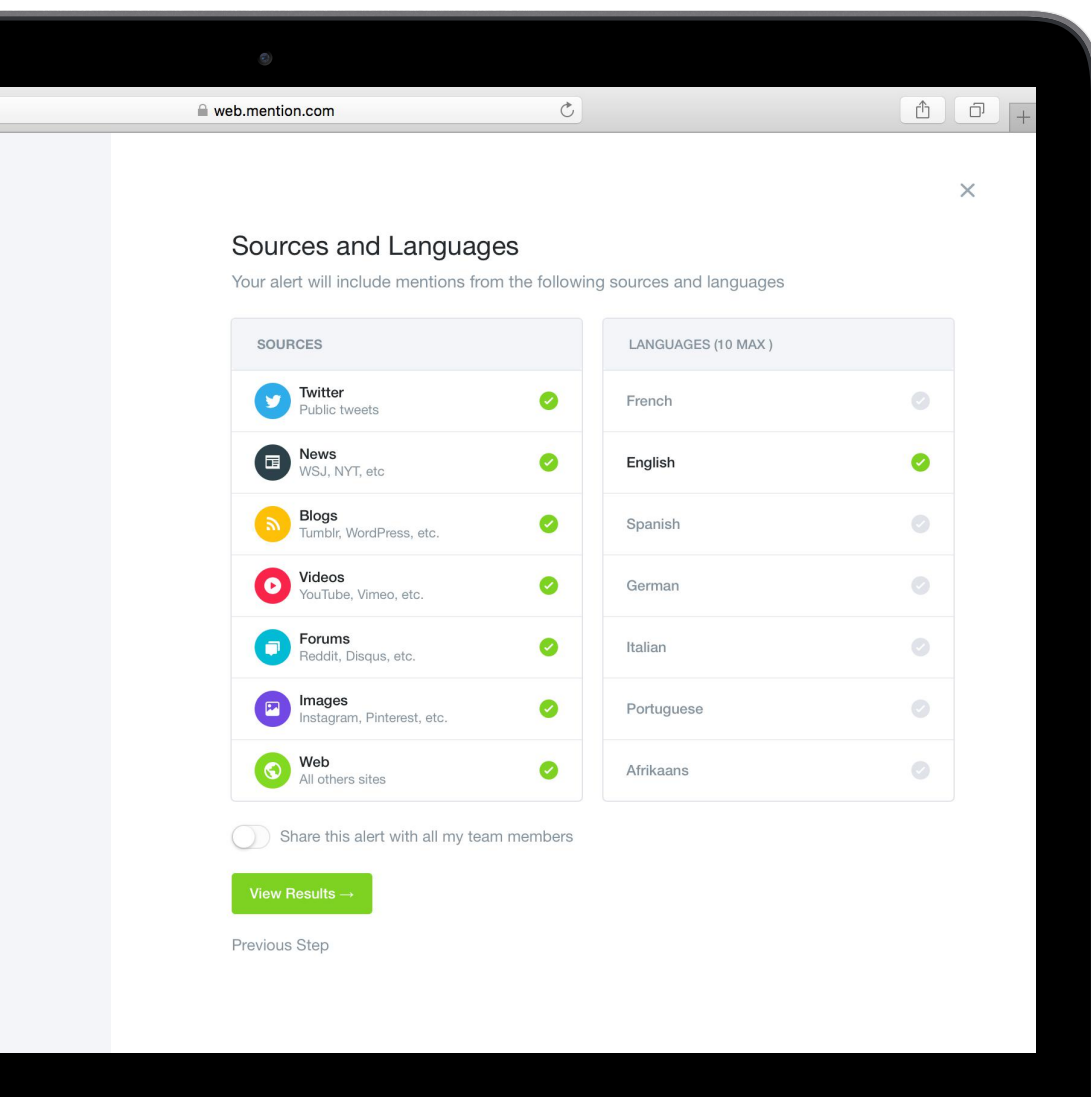
"We tried many tools, compared them, and found that Mention was the simplest to use."

Andrea Fallas
Digital Integration Director, **McCann**
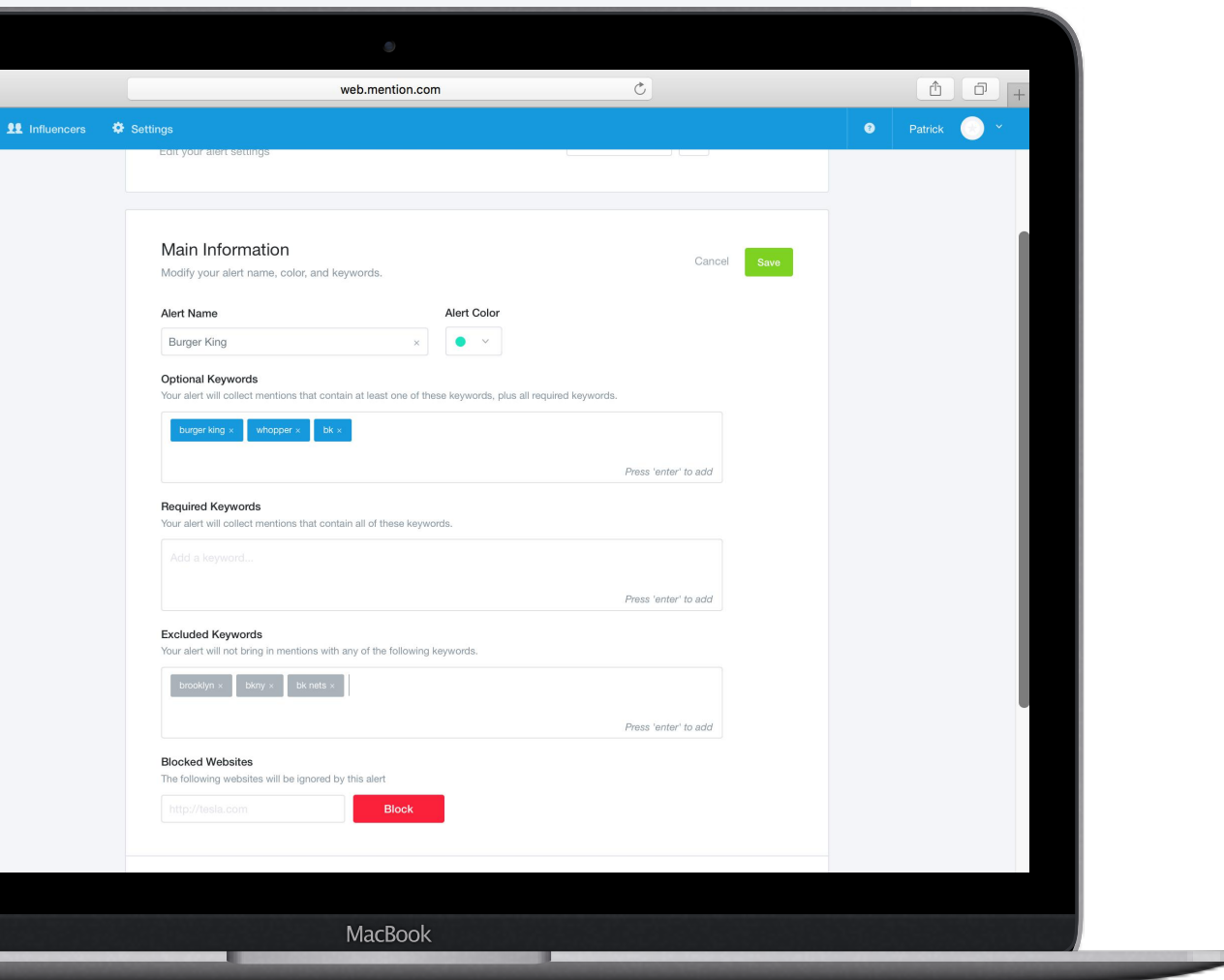
Refining your alerts

At this point, you've already got data to sift through and begin your analysis.

But you're only monitoring one keyword: your competitor's name. What about their CEO or their newest product? To fully analyze your competition, you need to watch more than just their brand name.

It's dead simple to add further terms to your alert. Just choose the alert you want to adjust, and hit "Edit Alert."

Note: If you would rather do this as you set up your alerts, hit "advanced settings" after you enter your competitor's name. This take you directly to the "Edit Alert" screen.

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web.mention.com

Sources and Languages

Your alert will include mentions from the following sources and languages

SOURCES		LANGUAGES (10 MAX)	
Twitter Public tweets	✓	French	○
News WSJ, NYT, etc	✓	English	✓
Blogs Tumblr, WordPress, etc.	✓	Spanish	○
Videos YouTube, Vimeo, etc.	✓	German	○
Forums Reddit, Disqus, etc.	✓	Italian	○
Images Instagram, Pinterest, etc.	✓	Portuguese	○
Web All others sites	✓	Afrikaans	○

Share this alert with all my team members

View Results →

Previous Step

Next, head to "Main Information",
and you'll see the following options:

First, make sure you use your optional and required keywords correctly.

Optional keywords: If any of these keywords is used, you'll receive a mention.
Required keywords: If all of these keywords are used, you'll receive a mention.

Required keywords can make your results too restrictive. If you placed "burger king" and "whopper" in that field, you'd only receive alerts containing both keywords. If you make them optional instead, you'll know anytime someone mentions Burger King or the Whopper.

Most of the time, **you're best to stick to optional keywords to return as many results as possible.**

Exclude any keywords or URLs that you don't want to see, and hit "Save."

Tip: Don't forget about variations of names. If you're tracking "McDonald's," you might also want to track "McDonalds," "McDs," "Maccas" (for Australia), and even "golden arches."

Once you've refined your alerts, it's time to begin your analysis.

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Influencers | **Settings** | Patrick

Edit your alert settings

Main Information
Modify your alert name, color, and keywords.

Cancel | Save

Alert Name
Burger King

Alert Color

Optional Keywords
Your alert will collect mentions that contain at least one of these keywords, plus all required keywords.

burger king × | whopper × | bk ×

Press 'enter' to add

Required Keywords
Your alert will collect mentions that contain all of these keywords.

Add a keyword...

Press 'enter' to add

Excluded Keywords
Your alert will not bring in mentions with any of the following keywords.

brooklyn × | bkny × | bk nets ×

Press 'enter' to add

Blocked Websites
The following websites will be ignored by this alert

http://tesla.com | Block

MacBook

3. Finding Positive Comments

*To learn from your competitors' tactics, you need to what people think about them.*

Monitoring makes it easy to separate good comments from bad, so you won't need to wade through every single mention.

Mention uses "sentiment analysis" to highlight positive and negative comments. This makes it far easier to understand the mentions in your feed.

The next chapter shows you how to use negative feedback to your advantage.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to find positive comments.
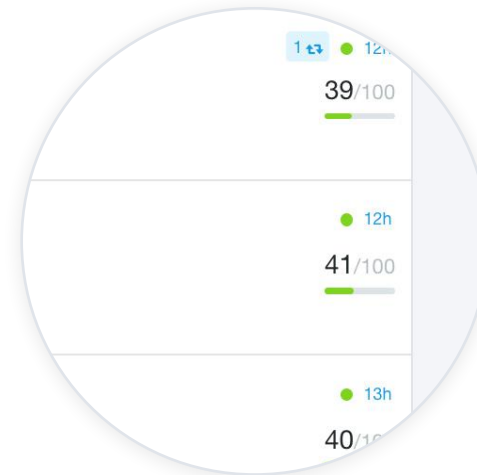
First, open your feed.

The feed shows you every individual mention for each keyword. Use this to see what people think of your competition, comment by comment.

Simply select the competitor you want to monitor, and scroll through their mentions. For positive comments, look for the little green dots. If the comment is negative, the dot will be red.

You can also filter the feed to display only positive comments. First, click on filters in the top right corner:

Then, select positive sentiment and "Apply Filters." Now your feed will only display positive tweets for that alert.

What to monitor

When searching for positive comments, keep an eye out for the following:

- Well-received marketing campaigns
- Good customer service interactions
- Popular features and new products

Find these positive comments and consider whether you can steal some of your competitors' best ideas.

4. Finding Complaints and Critiques

One of the great benefits of competitive monitoring is the ability to see what people think of your competitors. This is even easier thanks to social media.

You can track positive comments to find out what people like about your competitors. You can also identify negative comments, to see the problems people have with them.

*Use this to plan your own business strategy, or respond directly on social media.*

And as we'll see, a quick response can even let you take customers from your competition.

How to watch for complaints

There are two easy ways to monitor your competitors for negative feedback. The first involves sentiment analysis.

Using negative sentiment

Sentiment analysis lets you identify good or bad comments about your competitors. If you're monitoring your competitor's brand name or products, simply look for comments with negative sentiment. These will have a little red dot:
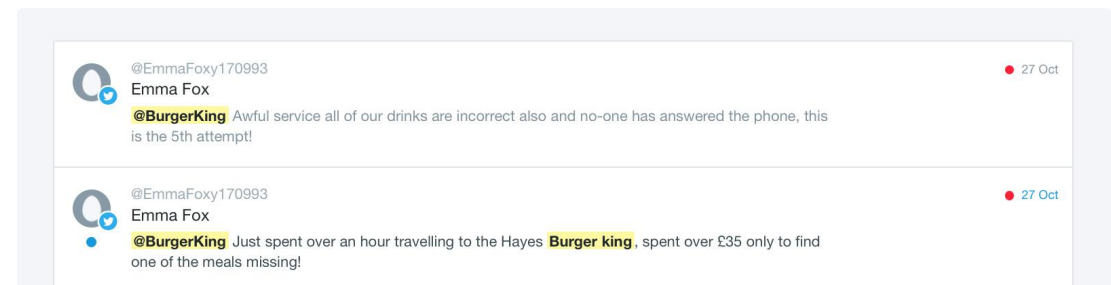
As with positive sentiment, you can filter your feed to only display negative comments. This lets you quickly find complaints that you can either learn from, or respond to (more on this below).

The second method involves setting up a whole new alert.

A unique alert for complaints

To really target your competitors' unhappy customers, create a specific alert. This gives you a whole feed dedicated to complaints for you to pursue.

This alert requires:

- A competitor's brand or product name as the required keyword
- Some negative emotional words as optional keywords

The result would be something like this:
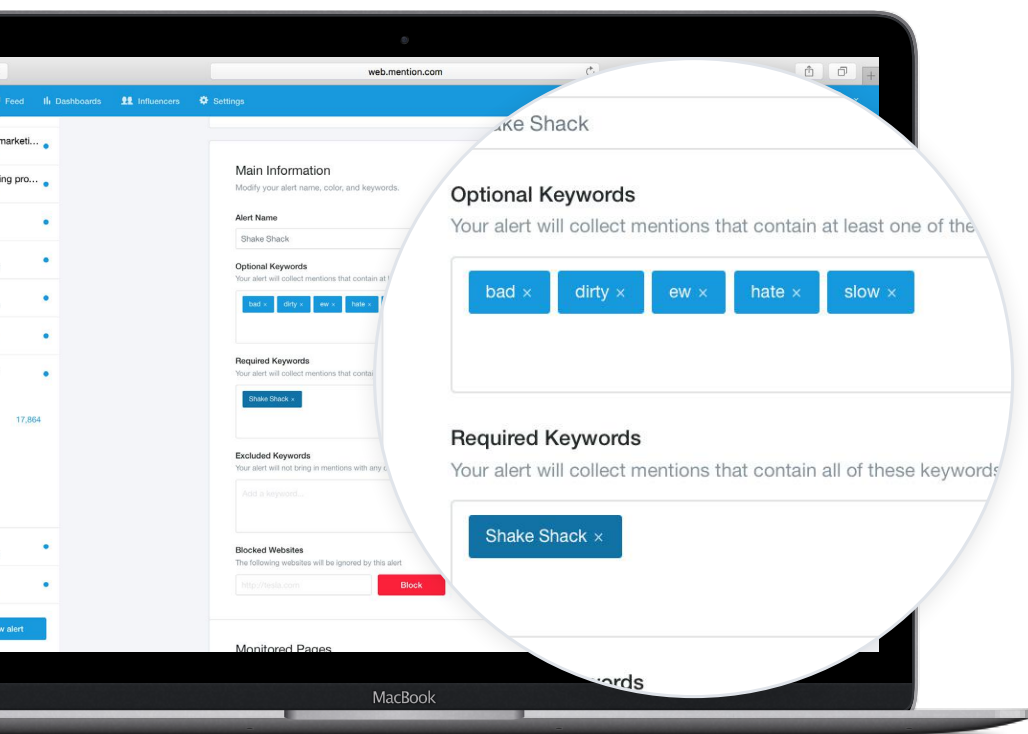
Experiment to find the right optional keywords for their industry. If they're a technology company, you may choose adjectives like "slow" and "expensive" rather than "dirty."

How to respond

Mention integrates with Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Buffer. That makes sharing and replying to mentions a breeze.

When monitoring competitors, a quick response can make a big difference. You can contact competitors' unhappy customers and encourage them to try your service.

To do this well, you need to be the first to respond - preferably before your competitors themselves.

So how do you do this with Mention?

Should you choose to reply to a mention, you have two options:

- **Click the link.** Every mention has a link to the original post. Click the link and respond on Reddit, Tumblr, or in the comments section of a blog post.

- **Hit "reply."** If you've connected your Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook account, you can reply directly from Mention. No need to have all your social accounts open - just one dashboard.

Mention customers already use this strategy with great success.

"We tap in before they're able to delete the negative feedback they get on Facebook, Twitter, forums, and so forth. I can say [to the customer], 'hey, I see you're having problems here. We do this too, by the way."

Gideon Oakes
Director of Business Development

One World Direct

As one of their favorite lead generation techniques, One World Direct watches for their rivals' unhappy customers. These customers need a service like theirs, and are likely ready for a change.

5. Using the Competitive Dashboard

This is where things get interesting. The competitive dashboard takes all those mentions we've been talking about above and looks at them together.

We're not dealing with individual mentions anymore. Instead, we're drawing conclusions from a week, a month, or a year of online activity. We've got graphs, graphs, and more graphs, and all of this data can be exported into reports (but more on that later).

The competitive dashboard is designed to compare your various alerts. See the social performance of up to 10 competitors, or nine plus your own company.

To begin, head to the competitive dashboard and select the alerts to compare.
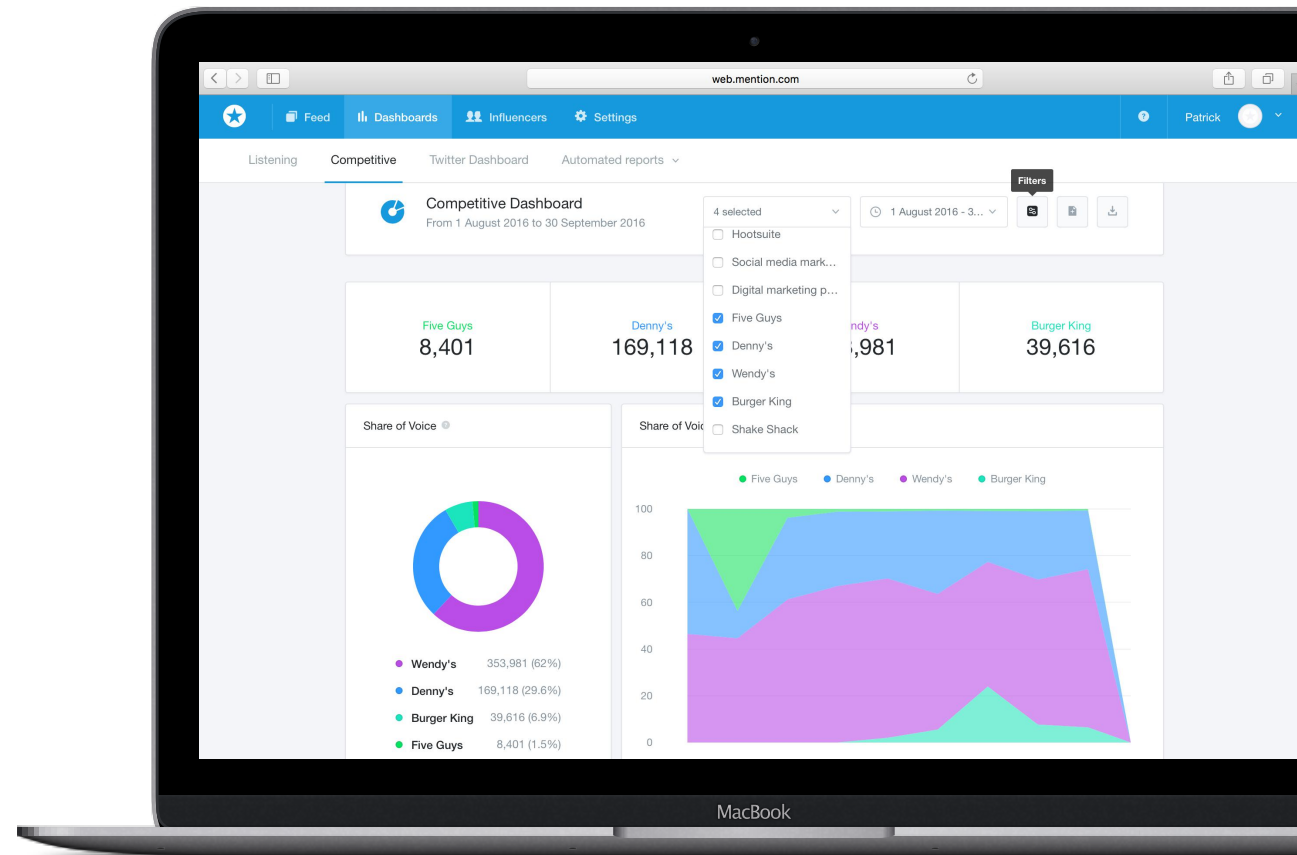
You can also select the time period you're monitoring and apply any filters you like - just like your feed.

Now it's time to look at that sweet, sweet data.

Share of voice

This is an easy way to compare the amount of online conversation about your competitors. You'll see which companies have everyone talking about them, and you can dive deeper to see how they do it.

This graph shows that over 30 days, people talked more about Wendy's than those other three fast food chains put together.

There are a few things to note, however. On September 6, Wendy's had a share of voice of around 50%. This was actually a sudden drop from nearly 80% days earlier.

To see what caused this change, click

on the peak. This takes you to all of the mentions for that day. Search through them quickly to see what might have caused a drop in conversations.

You might also click on Denny's on September 6, to see what caused it to have such a dramatic increase in share of voice. For a very short period of time, Denny's was nearly equal with Wendy's.

The beauty of this graph is that it shows you trends you'd otherwise never see by looking at your feed.
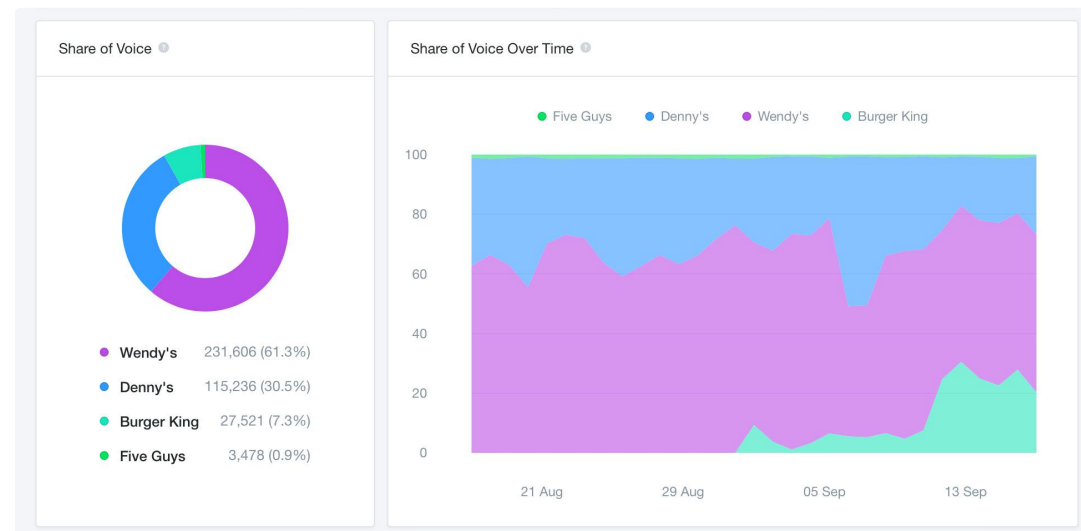
Share of voice by location

This useful piece of data shows you which brand has the biggest online presence in any given location. Think of it as a digital market share:
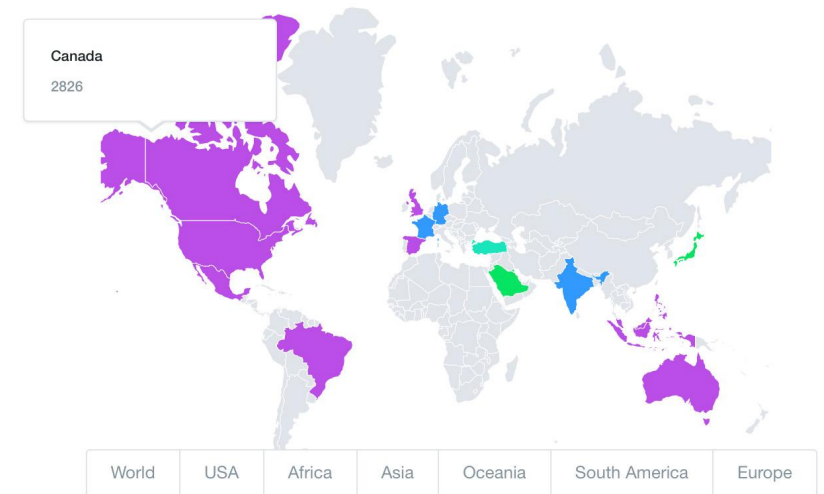
This can be hugely interesting to companies exploring new markets. See where your competitors thrive and consider investing in PR and social efforts there too. After all, their market should be similar to yours.
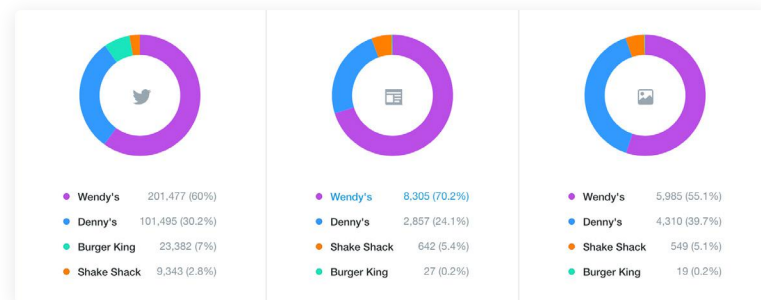
In the above graph, Wendy's is purple and Denny's is blue. So while Wendy's enjoys a strong presence in North America, Denny's looks to be doing well in India and Australia.

To see the specific mentions for each location, simply click on the country. You'll be taken to your feed for that alert, filtered by location.

Share of Voice

- Wendy's — 231,606 (61.3%)
- Denny's — 115,236 (30.5%)
- Burger King — 27,521 (7.3%)
- Five Guys — 3,478 (0.9%)

Share of Voice Over Time

Five Guys • Denny's • Wendy's • Burger King

Popular sources

This is another great way to compare the performance of your competitors across the web.
It shows you how many mentions each company receives from each source, compared to one another.

● Wendy's	201,477 (60%)
● Denny's	101,495 (30.2%)
● Burger King	23,382 (7%)
● Shake Shack	9,343 (2.8%)

● Wendy's	8,305 (70.2%)
● Denny's	2,857 (24.1%)
● Shake Shack	642 (5.4%)
● Burger King	27 (0.2%)

● Wendy's	5,985 (55.1%)
● Denny's	4,310 (39.7%)
● Shake Shack	549 (5.1%)
● Burger King	19 (0.2%)

Wendy's clearly does an excellent job on Twitter. What's surprising is Burger King's dominance on Facebook. It has a higher than 70% share of voice on the platform, while the next highest (Wendy's) only has around 18%. Whatever Burger King is doing on its Facebook page, the others will want to take note.

Perhaps equally impressive is Wendy's share of news sources.

This is either excellent PR work, or something negative has happened to make news. Luckily, you can quickly find the answer. Click on the brand's name under the graph. You'll be taken to a filtered feed showing news results for Wendy's. Scan the results, and see what's caused this spike.

Click on any of the brand names, and you'll see the individual mentions that make up this data. Again, the purpose of these graphs is to show trends, letting you investigate their cause.

Sentiment over time

This chart shows you the changes in sentiment of each brand's mentions. Each mention is deemed either positive, negative, or neutral based on the language used. The chart weighs these against each other to see what the general sentiment is.

On September 8, Denny's had vastly more negative mentions than positive. This improved steadily over the next week, until a sharp drop again on September 15.

Look for trends in your own competitors. If there's a major spike, see what's caused this positive reaction and consider doing the same. If there's a dip, take note of the negative press and don't let it happen to you.

Tip: To see the specific mentions on each day, simply click on the dot.
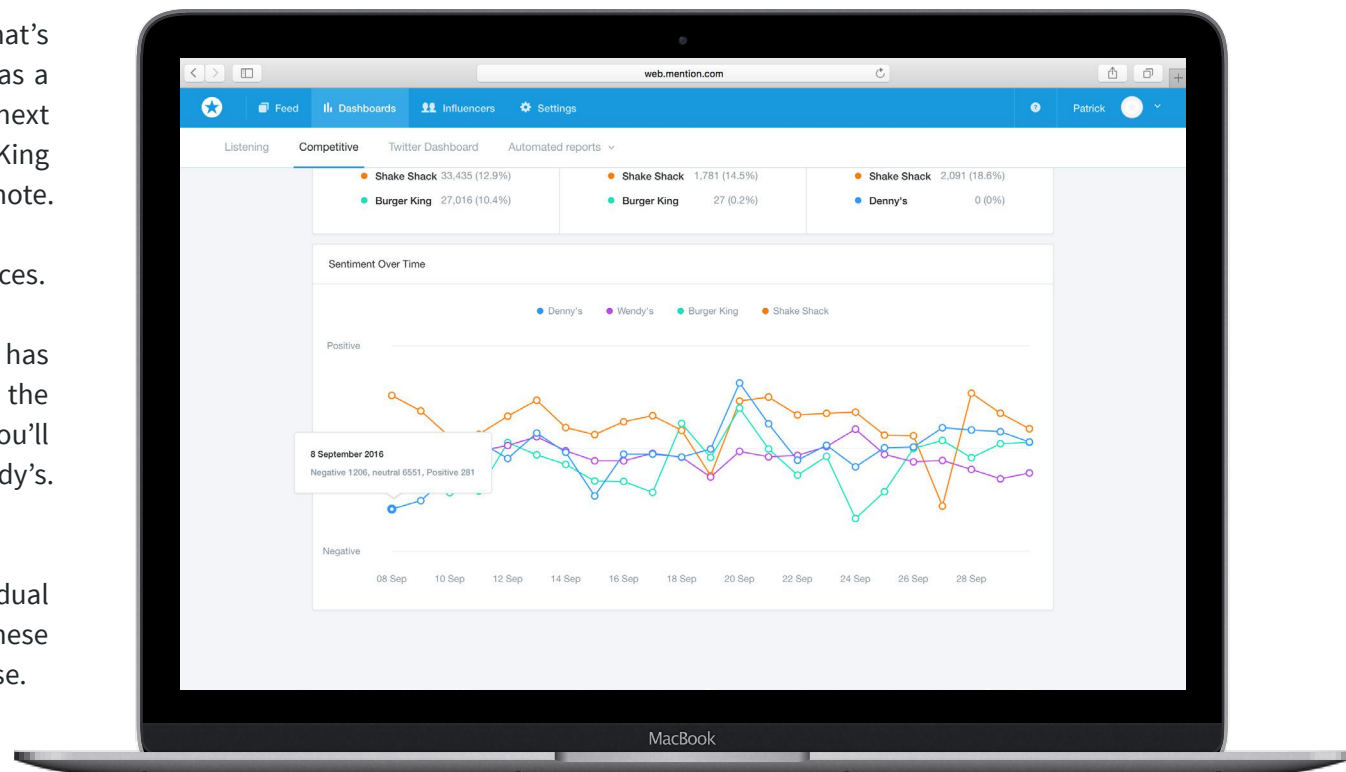
6. Finding Influencers

Influencer marketing is an increasingly popular marketing practice. Even if you're not doing it, your competitors may be. You need to understand their strategy to make sure your's is up to scratch.

Competitor monitoring gives you two advantages:

1. *You'll see what influencers are saying about them. Are they just a fan? Is this a paid endorsement? Get an insight into their strategy, and see whether it'd work for you.*
2. *You can see if they're willing to talk about you too. Unless it's an exclusive partnership, they may be interested in learning about your products too. Especially if they're a journalist covering your industry, or someone offering advice to their followers. Make sure they know what you offer.*

There are other great reasons to monitor what industry VIPs say about these brands. So how do you do it?

What to monitor

If you've set up general alerts for competitors, your feed will show you anybody talking about them. Of course that includes influencers.

Look for big names you already know talking about other companies. These could be journalists, bloggers, or industry trend-setters.

Influencer dashboards

Each dashboard shows you all of your influencers on a given platform in one list. There are dashboards for Twitter, websites, and Instagram.

To see the influencers discussing your competitor, click Influencers and select your competitor alert.

Remember to select the alert you want to monitor, and the timeframe you're interested in.

Every influencer on this list has used the

You can do this easily with Mention's influencer scores. They're right there in the feed:
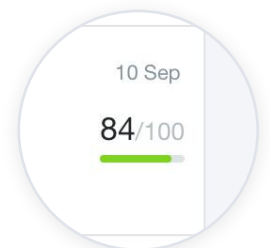
Filter your feed by influence (say, 70% and higher), so you can focus strictly on the power users.

keyword "Wendy's" on Twitter. You'll know precisely what they said about them - good or bad. Reach out directly to see whether they'd work with you too, or find even better influencers of your own.

7. Creating Reports

Once you've collected all this data and analyzed the trends, you'll want to share your results. For agencies, that might be with a client. For marketers, that might mean reporting to a superior, or keeping your team informed.
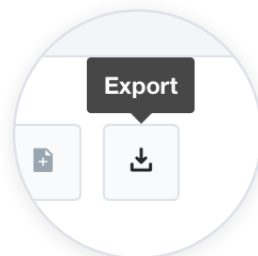
Export your monitoring data with a click, or send automated reports to clients without doing a thing.

Here's how to do both.

Exports

To export any mention dashboard, simply hit "Export" at the top right:

You'll immediately download a PDF version of that dashboard.

If you want a list of all the influencers talking about a competitor, just head to your prefered Influencers Dashboard, select the Alert and the timeframe, and hit "Export." You can also export a complete list of your mentions. Go to your feed, set the filters you prefer, and hit the "Export" button once again. The list will be emailed to your connected address.

Automated reports

To make life even easier, customers on a company plan or above can automate the export process. Daily, weekly, or monthly, they'll receive a copy of their dashboard or mentions list in their inbox.

Setting them up is also very simple. Just select the dashboard you want to export (including any filters and the time period), and hit this button:
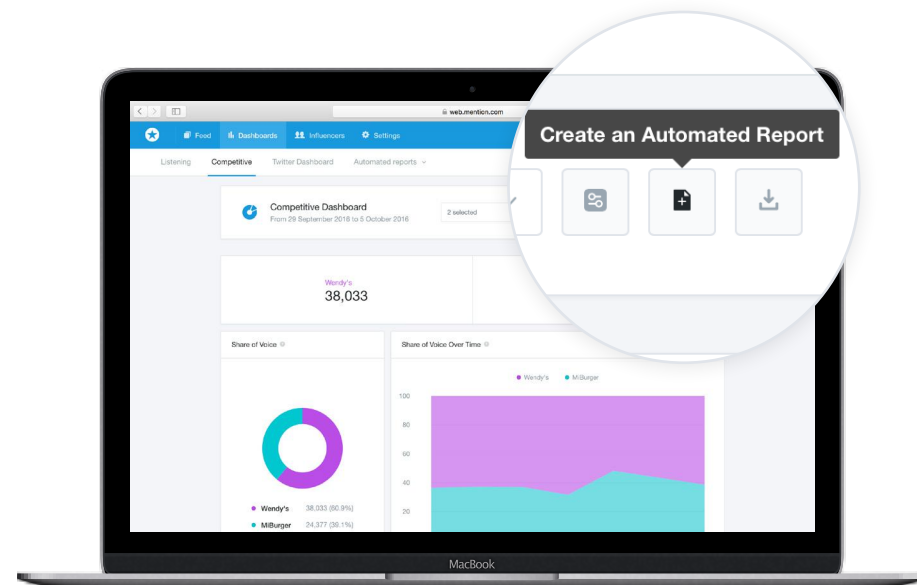
Next, give the report a name and choose how often you want to receive it.

Note: If you would rather do this as you set up your alerts, hit "advanced settings" after you enter your competitor's name. This take you directly to the "Edit Alert" screen.

You can also upload your own logo to attach to the report.

Finally, select the email addresses you'd like to deliver the report to. They can be sent straight to any email you like. That means clients, colleagues, or stakeholders.

If you're happy, click "Create Report."

If you'd like to see what it looks like first, try "Send me a test" (just below the big green button). The test will only be send to the email address associated with your Mention account.
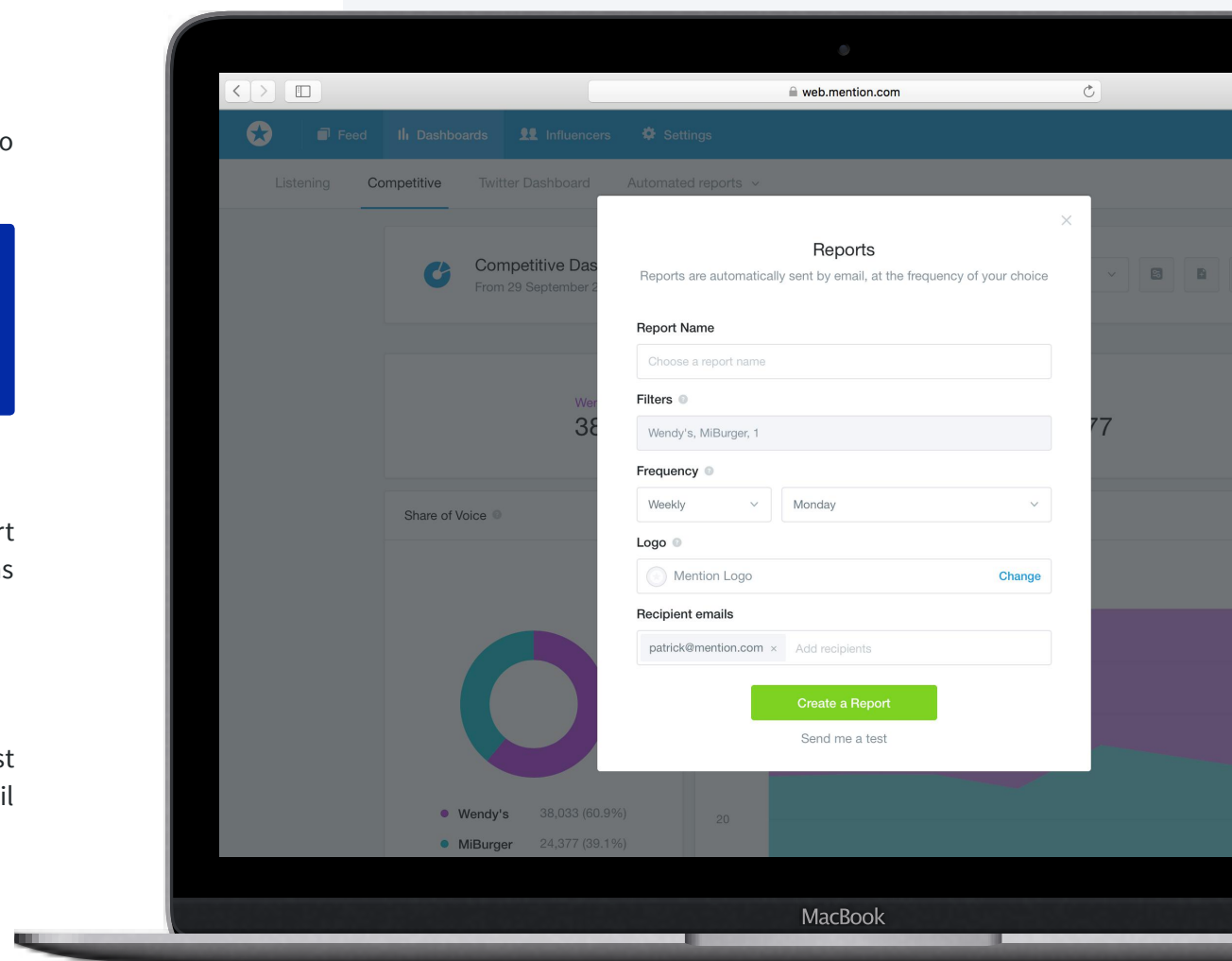
And That's That

You now have everything you need to monitor competitors with Mention, plus a bunch of extra features.

For best results, perform a competitive analysis once a week. You'll not only have intimate knowledge of your competitors' tactics, but you'll also see larger trends over time.

We have plenty of other resources to help make your monitoring stupendous. They're all free to download from our website:

Get the Rest