displays a table displaying the relative popularity of keywords. This much technology brought to bear on simple keywords might seem like overkill, but keywords are too important to treat casually. In addition to choosing keywords (which, by itself, is not necessarily easy), you should assess their competitive value — and that's exactly what Wordtracker does.

Evaluating keywords means assessing two factors: *popularity,* or the frequency with which they appear, and *competition,* or the number of sites using them. (By "using them," I mean using the keywords in any fashion and any context, not just in the site's `meta` tags.)

Wordtracker covers both bases by suggesting keywords related to your core terms and by evaluating the suggested keywords you select. (In Wordtracker, a *keyword* means either a word or a phrase.) Wordtracker is a paid service, charging by the day, the week, the month, a 3-month period, or a year. You can concentrate your keyword research into a 1-day or 7-day blitz, without committing to an ongoing subscription.

Wordtracker offers a free trial of 15 keyword suggestions, using just one search engine (Alta Vista as of this writing) instead of the multiple search engines that paying customers get. The free trial is a good opportunity to walk through Wordtracker's screens and tools. Start here:

```
www.wordtracker.com
```

Click the icon for the free trial and surf through whatever opening screens Wordtracker throws at you before getting down to business. The Wordtracker process comprises four steps:

- ✔ **Enter keywords.** On the Step 1 page, enter one or more keywords. Keep your list short for now. One word works well because it gives Wordtracker a relatively open field to find related words. As you can see in Figure 4-1, you can opt in and out of two settings: Lateral and Thesaurus. I find the Lateral search more helpful because it investigates hundreds of Web pages related to the keyword topic. The Thesaurus just finds synonyms, which doesn't turn up much with new terms such as *mp3.* You may choose both types of search, but because the free trial delivers truncated results, I'd stick with Lateral. Click the Proceed button.

- ✔ **Select keywords.** Step 2 displays a preliminary list of related keywords, with your original at the top. Click a keyword for more detail. When you do, the right side of the screen displays a table containing the selected word and a list of related words. (See Figure 4-2.) On this screen, any clicked keyword from the left-hand list is added to a basket in which Wordtracker performs its keyword analysis and comparison in Step 4.