



Using Web Analytics for Website Optimization

Presented to the
Webmaster's Guild
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Topics for Discussion

- What are Web Analytics and How have they Evolved
- The Access Log
- Visitors and Visits
- Pages
- Visitor Life Cycle
- SEO and Website Metrics
- Identifying Design Flaws
- Users of Analytical Data
- Optimizing Your Website

Web Analytics

- Study of Activity occurring within and around a Website
- Means to Continuously Verify and Improve Overall Website Performance
- Report on Many Dimensions of Website Health
- Allow for the Identification, Measurement and Strategic Use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)



Evolution of Web Analytics

- **IN THE BEGINNING** there was only the Web Page and the Web Page was Composed of Only Text
 - Single Hit in Access Log = Request for Web Page
- **TODAY** Web Page has Multiple Elements
 - Multiple Hits per Web Page



The Access Log

- Web Analytic Tools only Report on Data Contained in the Access Log
- Basic File
 - IP Address of User
 - URI Stem of the File Request
 - Time of Request
 - Status Code
- Additional Options
 - Referrer
 - User Agent
 - Cookie (If Website sets a Cookie)
 - Server Name Reporting if Website Operates on Multiple URL's



Visitors and Visits

IN THE BEGINNING every User on the Internet had a Unique IP Address

Today ISPs and Proxy Servers Require more Advanced Analytics

- Unique Visitor – IP Address, OS and User Agent
- Visitor – Individual Unique Visitor whose Activity is Tracked Over Time
- Visit – Uninterrupted Session on a Website of a Certain Minimum Length

Timeout Appropriate to Nature of the Site

Pages

- Pages vs. Hits

To understand Traffic Patterns, you really need to look at Page Views

How Many Pages were Served?

Important to Determine the Reason for Change

Referrer – What Page a User was on Immediately before Reaching your Website

Analyze Referrers and Specific Page Referrers

Visitor Life Cycle

- Reach – Likelihood of Getting Someone's Attention
 - Easy and Difficult to Measure
 - Ultimately Correlated to Acquisition
- Acquisition – Likelihood of Someone Going to Your Website
 - How They get to Your Website
 - Focuses on Source of Traffic

Visitor Life Cycle II

- Conversion – Successful Completion of Specific Activities by Your Site Visitors that Result in Your Visitor taking a Desired Action
 - Metrics Result in Increase or Desired Decrease in Your Websites KPIs Over Time
- Retention – Measures the Activities of Your Repeat Visitors
 - An Existing Visitor is Worth More Than a New One
 - Visitor Segmentation Tools



SEO and Web Analytics

Web Analytics:

- Verify that Search Engines are finding your Website's Pages
- Find out which Search Engines are Sending you Traffic
- See which Keywords are being Used to Bring Visitors to your Website



Search Engine Generated Traffic

- Web Analytic Tools maintain a list of Search Engine Domains
- Good Report includes Name of Search Engine and also Phrases entered to Find your Website
- Split Organic Search Engine Traffic from Paid Traffic

SEO

- Tools to Measure Improvements on SERPs
Does Improvement Affect Traffic and/or KPI Results?
- Segmented traffic
 - SEM www.website.com/target-page.html?sem=1234
 - Offline Marketing www.website.com/promo1
 - SEO $\text{Total traffic} - \text{Paid traffic} = \text{SEO effectiveness}$
 - Measured Conversion
 - Set URL parameter and persistent cookie
 - Add tracking code to final page of conversion
 - Tool attributes conversion to referrer URL



Identifying Design Flaws

- 404 Errors – Files not Found
- Path Analysis
- Scenario Analysis
- Measuring Impact of design Changes vs. Other Activity



Users of Web Analytics Data

- Web product managers
- Designers
- Management Team
- Developers/IT
- Merchandisers
- E-Marketers
- Sales/Business Developers
- Information Architects



Commercial Website Archetypes

Website Type

- E-commerce Sites
- Content Sites
- Lead-Generation Sites
- Self-Service Sites

Objective

- Increase Sales and
Decrease Marketing
Expenses
- Increase Readership
- Increase and Segment Lead
Generation
- Increase Customer
Satisfaction and
Decrease Customer
Support Inquiries



Optimizing Your Website

- Determine Needs
- Identify Goals
- Define Metrics
- Collect Data
- Record Data
- Test Improvement Strategies
- Implement Improvements
- Measure Results
- Repeat Prior Steps

Conclusions

- Good Websites are Dynamic and Evolutionary
- Consistent and Creative use of Web Analytics are Important in Optimizing Your Website Goals
- Software Alone will not allow you to fully benefit from your Web Metrics