

Reesenews Metrics Report, Spring 2011

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[The Reese Felts Digital News Project](#), the experimental online-only news organization from UNC's School of Journalism and Mass Communication, concluded its second semester of publishing this spring. This report provides an overview of site and social media metrics for the data collection period 01/10/2011 - 04/23/2011 (except for video data, which was gathered between 01/10/2011 - 04/26/2011). It analyzes data to highlight trends in usage and audience behavior and provides comparisons with the fall 2010 metrics report.

Several parts of this report were crafted to specifically address questions from the North Carolina journalism community. Thank you for your input.

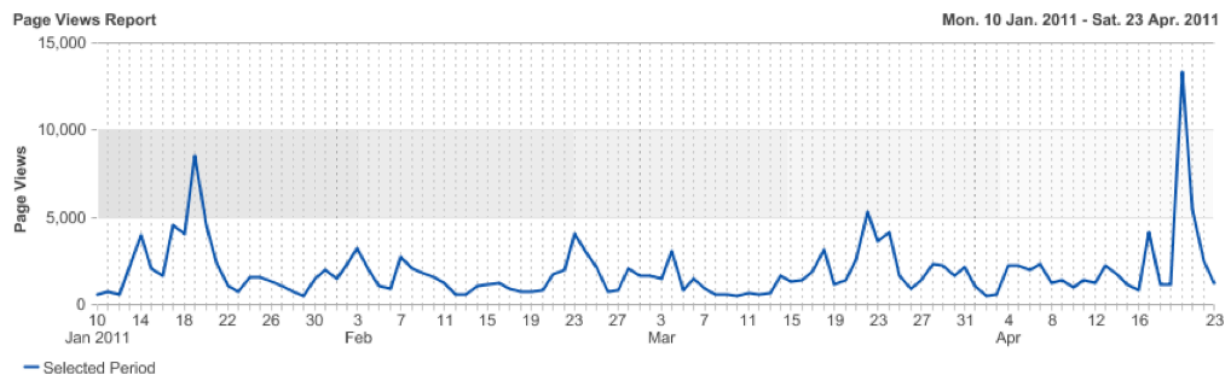
Website metrics were gathered from Adobe SiteCatalyst (powered by Omniture), Facebook metrics from Facebook Insights and video metrics Vimeo and YouTube statistics and Brightcove analytics. Metrics from Reese felts.org were not analyzed.

Reesenews.org

General site profile

- 199,828 total views
 - Average per week: 13,222 page-views (an average of 5,619 more page-views per week than during the fall 2010 period).

Page-views trended over time:



Graph Generated by SiteCatalyst using Report Accelerator at 12:33 PM EDT, 25 Apr 2011

- 101,294 total visits
 - Average per week: 6,753 visits (an average of 3,869 more visits per week than the fall 2010 period).
 - Visitors viewed, on average, 1.97 pages per visit.
- 23,506 unique visitors per month, on average
 - January (starting Jan. 10): 26,454
 - February: 18,037
 - March: 23,542
 - April (ending April 23): 25,990

Top story profiles

Story	Page-views	Page-views as percentage of total Reeseneews.org page views	Single-page views	Single-page views as percentage of total views to page
March Madness flashback	15,968	8.0%	10,059	63.0%
NCAA Probe: Staying in bounds	12,023	6.0%	2,761	23.0%
Critics' corner reviews 767 Lil' B tracks	7,159	3.6%	4,825	67.4%
Update: Rathskeller to reopen in August	4,985	2.5%	2,880	57.8%
Bill could affect broadband access	3,928	2.0%	3,085	78.5%
Courting future tar heels	3,507	1.8%	1,970	56.2%
Interactive: Famous UNC buzzer-beaters	2,507	1.3%	1,607	64.1%

Story	Page-views	Page-views as percentage of total Reesenews.org page views	Single-page views	Single-page views as percentage of total views to page
Visual summary of Carolina basketball	2,382	1.2%	1,249	52.4%
With or without Drew	2,253	1.1%	1,716	76.2%
Shot by shot: A look at Carolina Basketball	2,131	1.1%	373	17.5%

Location of users

Summary: Users located in the geographic region surrounding UNC-Chapel Hill account comprise the largest single group of visitors to the site. However, this group is not the majority; 71.6% of visitors are not from this area, but come from a multitude of other locations. Visitor location has no strong trend between the data collection period and fall 2010:

- 28.4% of Reesenews.org visitors during the collection period came from either Chapel Hill, Raleigh, or Durham, NC (this is 2.8% less than the proportion of visitors from the same area in fall 2010). The next-highest area was Charlotte, NC with 3.6% of visitors (down just 0.2% from Charlotte visitors in fall 2010).
- Interestingly, the city with the next-highest proportion of visitors was not in North Carolina: Atlanta, Georgia accounted for 3.0% of Reesenews.org visitors during the collection period (no change from fall 2010).
- Next-highest cities were Greensboro, NC, and New York, New York; these cities each accounted 2.0% of visitors during the collection period (no change from fall 2010).
- All other cities accounted for less than 2.0% of visitors.

Mobile views

Summary: Most users did not use a mobile device to view Reesenews.org, and the proportion of mobile views to total page views did not change significantly for any mobile device between last fall and this spring. Mobile devices referring significant traffic are broken down as follows:

- iPhone: 5,555 page-views — 2.7% of total page-views (up 0.6% from fall 2010). 40.5% of mobile views came from an iPhone.
- iPad: 2,651 page-views — 1.3% of total page-views (no change from fall 2010). 19.3% of mobile views came from an iPad.
- iPod Touch: 969 page-views — 0.5% of total page-views (up 0.2% fall 2010\). 7.1% of mobile views came from an iPod Touch.
- Motorola DroidX: 630 page-views — 0.3% of total page-views (negligible page-views fall 2010). 3.4% of mobile views came from a Motorola DroidX.

General homepage metrics

Homepage visits

The Reesenews.org homepage received 30,984 visits during the data collection period; these page-views comprised 15.5% of total views to the Reesenews.org domain during that period.

Single-page visits to homepage

15.9% of visitors who enter reesenews.org through the homepage exit without visiting any other pages (up 1.8% from fall 2010).

Traffic to stories

The homepage referred only a small amount of traffic to the site's most popular stories. The home page referred an average of 3.4% of total traffic to Reesenews.org's 10 most popular stories during the data collection period, while external sources referred an average of 82.3% of total traffic to those stories.

Homepage vs. External Breakdown for each of the top 10 stories:

Story	Percentage of total page-views referred from home page	Percentage of total page-views referred from external sources
March Madness flashback	2.7%	94.53%
NCAA Probe: Staying in bounds	2.8%	95.64%
Critics' corner reviews 767 Lil' B tracks	3.0%	94.5%
Update: Rathskeller to reopen in August	4.5%	86.5%
Bill could affect broadband access	1.7%	96.76%
Courting future tar heels	2.1%	78.47%
Interactive: Famous UNC buzzer-beaters	7.6%	77.7%
Visual summary of Carolina basketball	2.6%	36.29%
With or without Drew	1.7%	94.38%
Shot by shot: A look at Carolina Basketball	7.6%	68.03%

Referrals

Links between content (internal links)

Summary: Internal links between Reesenews.org content drove a substantial amount of traffic to story-level pages, often more traffic than the home page referred to those stories. Internal links were particularly effective for sports content:

- 12.7% of traffic to “Shot by shot: A look at Carolina Basketball” was referred by a link from the story “March Madness flashback”.
- 15.3% of traffic to “A visual summary of Carolina basketball” was referred by a link from the story “Courting future tar heels”. In addition, 8.3% of the story’s traffic was referred from “The Carolina legacy,” 5.2% from “A look inside the Dean Dome,” 4.9% from “Interactive: famous unc buzzer beaters,” 4.8% from “Legacy in the rafters,” 3.4% “March Madness flashback,” and 2.5% - 3% from other basketball graphics on the site.
- 5.0% of traffic to “Update: Rathskeller to reopen in August” was referred by a link from “The Return of ‘the Rat.’”
- 5.2% of traffic to “Famous UNC Buzzer Beaters” was referred from “A visual summary of Carolina basketball.”
- 13.2% of traffic to “Courting future Tar Heels” was referred from “A visual summary of Carolina basketball.”

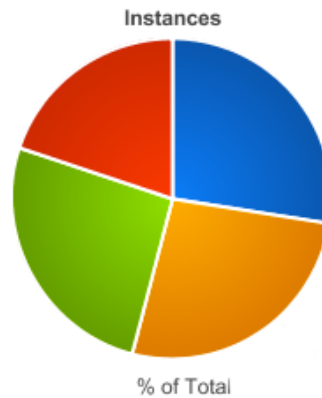
External Referrals

Summary: Social media and search engines referred more traffic to Reesenews.org than in fall 2010; referrals from other sources fell slightly.

Note: Percentages listed here are for external referrals only; they do not include internal referrals from within the reesenews.org domain. 114,152 of reesenews’ 199,828 total page-views were the result of external referrals.

Referrer Type Report Legend

- Other Web Sites
- Typed/Bookmarked
- Social Networks
- Search Engines



Graph Generated by SiteCatalyst using Report Accelerator at 8:55 PM EDT, 26 Apr 2011

- Typed/bookmarked: 26.4% of total external referrals (up 10.8% from fall 2010)

This captures users who simply type "reesenews.org" into their URL bar. However, it also captures some social media data: because referrals from desktop-based social media clients (such as TweetDeck) originate outside the web browser, these are categorized as typed/bookmarked referrals.

- Social network sites: 26.4% of total external referrals (up 6.9% from fall 2010)
 - Facebook: 15.2% of total external referrals (up 2.8% from fall 2010)
 - Twitter: 7.8% of total external referrals (up 2.6% from fall 2010)
 - Reddit: 2.7% of total external referrals (fall 2010 referrals insignificant)
- Search engines: 19.7% of total external referrals (up 8.9% from fall 2010)
 - Google: 18.0% of total external referrals (up 7.8% from fall 2010)
- Referrals from all other web sites: 27.5% of total external referrals (down 5.1% from fall 2010)

Top 10 referring domains

Rank. Site name: Total external referrals

1. Facebook: Statistics above
2. Google: Statistics above
3. Twitter: Statistics above
4. Scout.com: 6.5% (up 4.0% from fall 2010)
5. Tarheeltimes.com: 5.0% (not listed fall 2010)
6. Reddit: Statistics above
7. Midwestsportsfans.com: 1.8% (not listed fall 2010)

8. MGoBlog.com: 1.2% (not listed fall 2010)
9. Rivals.com: 1.2% (down 0.5% from fall 2010)
10. Yahoo.com: 0.7% (not listed fall 2010)

Note: Traffic from Yahoo.com domain consists almost exclusively of email traffic

Video views

Note: All video views and page-views listed here are for the collection period 01/10/11 - 04/26/11 rather than 01/10/11 - 04/21/11. Reesenews was experimenting with different video hosting services this spring, and now posts most videos on the site using Vimeo and YouTube rather than Brightcove. Whereas Brightcove allowed analysis of the amount time viewers spent watching specific videos (including falloff rates), Vimeo and YouTube do not supply this data. For videos that were posted publicly on more than one of these sites, data for multiple sites are listed.

Top 5 videos

Summary: Not all visitors to story pages containing videos actually view those videos. However, the rate at which these visitors view videos does not seem to be affected by the presence of a long-format text piece or stand-alone piece of multimedia content on the page. In the future, content producers should experiment with placing specific references to the video within the story text on story pages (for instance: “See Thorp solve the Rubik’s cube at 1:30”). YouTube offers useful functionality here: the site allows content producers to link to specific spots within the video ([see here](#) for instructions).

Video	Video views (Reesenews.org story page embed only)	Page-views	Percentage page- views that viewed video
March Madness flashback	10,041 (YouTube) Note: This video received 21,341 views total, but the majority of views were not made on the Reesenews.org story page. See next section for detailed analysis.	16,895	59.4%

Video	Video views (Reesenews.org story page embed only)	Page-views	Percentage page- views that viewed video
UNC student withdraws to join revolution in Tunisia	456 (BrightCove)	1,549	29.4%
24 hours for the kids*	722 (Vimeo)	1,257	57.4%
Chancellor's Rubik's Cube rematch	795 (Vimeo)	1,058	75.1%
The Pit Master: Chapel Hill's favorite BBQ*	313 (Vimeo)	811	38.6%
Inside Southern food with local chefs	256 (Brightcove)	804	31.8%

*Includes long-form text piece or additional stand-alone multimedia

“March Madness flashback” analysis

As noted above, the video [March Madness flashback](#) received only 10,041 of its 21,341 total views from the embed on its [Reesenews.org story page](#). Other views came from those watching the video directly on YouTube.com, or from embeds on other sites.

A link to the Reesenews.org story-level page was included in the video's description on the YouTube page; however, this was not a significant source of traffic to the story-level page. Only 77 viewers clicked the link.

The chart below shows which sites (beside Reesenews.org) embedded or referred views directly to the YouTube page, as well as information on mobile views (again, for only for the YouTube page itself). The data is arranged by date to show the video's viral spread across blogs and sports sites:

Date of embed/first referral	Site	Total number of views from source
04/19/2011	First referral from Facebook.com	123
04/19/2011	First view from mobile device	1,524
04/20/2011	First embedded on Seth Curry Saves Duke blog	248
04/20/2011	First referral from Scout.com sports forum (link N/A)	759
04/21/2011	First embedded on Tar Heel Fan Blog	561
04/21/2011	First embedded on CBS Sports "Eye on College Basketball" Blog	2,133

Interactive graphics

Page-views for the site's most popular interactive graphics are broken down in the graph below. Although certain interactive graphics were highly trafficked, interactive graphics were, in general, no more or less popular than other types of site content.

Unfortunately, due to a problem with SiteCatalyst, average length of visit for these graphics could not be analyzed. The service supplied critically incomplete data for this statistic.

Graphic	Page-views
Staying in bounds flash file (includes traffic on Reesenews.org story page and from other webpages)	21,233

Graphic	Page-views
Interactive: Famous UNC buzzer-beaters	2,507
Shot by shot: A look at Carolina basketball graphic only (graphic launched separately from story page; stat is for graphic views only, not views to story page)	1,555
Pushing past the talk with UNC's budget	1,271
Mary, Rick, Ian or Brooklyn?	1,109
Immigrant deportation program could be flawed	874
From coal to wood	829

**Average length of visit not listed because of an error in SiteCatalyst; the service supplied critically incomplete data for this statistic.*

UNC Dance Marathon microsite

In February, Reesenews built a mobile micro-site for a large philanthropy event on campus, UNC Dance Marathon. The site, [“UNC Dance Marathon Live.”](#) was a place for those at the event to share photos and tweets with one another straight from their mobile devices and for those outside the marathon to take a look into what was happening at the event.

The mobile site received 3,127 total views. Most of the views (2,684) were received during the event itself. The remainder was received afterward — by then, the site had become a comprehensive archive of information from the marathon. More than half of site visitors (1,787) used a smartphone of some kind, while the rest used a computer.

Most (2,121) of these visitors weren't referred by an outside Web page; instead, they visited the site directly by typing the URL directly into their phone or computer. This is unsurprising, as Reesenews advertised the micro-site at the event. Of those who

were referred, 28 came from Twitter.com (again, this does not include referrals from third-party Twitter applications like Tweetdeck). The official UNC [Dance Marathon](#) webpage referred 696 visits to the micro-site, and reesenews.org referred 154.

Social media

Twitter

The reesenews Twitter page currently has 769 followers, and gained 368 of these followers during the data collection period.

Facebook

Fan page

The reesenews.org Facebook page currently has 810 “likes”, and gained 193 of these “likes” during the data collection period. More than half (104) of these “likes” came through the “like” box on the homepage of Reesenews.org, while 11.9% (23) of the page’s “likes” were made by those clicking the “like” button on the page itself.

The page has acquired fans at a slow, steady rate throughout the data collection period, a continuation of the trend set near the end of fall 2010 (in the fall, the page gained many new fans when Reesenews.org launched on 01/11/2010; it then entered a phase of slower, but steady, growth about one month after the site’s launch). The page saw only three unsubscribers during the period:



Organic shares

An analysis of Reesenews' Facebook Insights data reveals additional information about the nature of social recommendations on Facebook. Using a new feature in the Facebook Insights dashboard (launched February 2011), the administrator of a web domain may track his or her "organic shares"; that is, the number of times a Facebook user has shared a link from the domain with his or her Facebook friends (through a status update, wall post, etc.) The administrator may also see the number of "impressions" (the number of times the poster's friends, friends of friends, etc. see the link anywhere on the site) and click-throughs driven by these shares. Although organic share data for Reesenews.org is incomplete¹, it shows that a single social recommendation typically leads to many impressions and a generates several click-throughs. Each share registered between 05/02/2011 and 23/04/2011 generated an average of 648.9 impressions and 6.3 click-throughs. This data shows that, in the case of Reesenews.org (and, presumably, for other sites and news organizations) a single social recommendation can be powerful; not only is it typically seen many times, but it is acted upon at a relatively high rate.

When a Facebook users "likes" a story on Reesenews.org, a link to the story is shared with his or her friends. The new Facebook Insights dashboard allows analysis of impressions and click-through rates for these "likes"; data shows that, like organic shares, a single like is seen many times by a user's Facebook friends, and that those friends then check out the "liked" story at a relatively high rate. Between 05/02/2011 and 23/04/2011, Reesenews.org visitors "liked" pieces of site content 570 times. Each of these "likes" led to an average of 366.9 impressions on Facebook and an average of 1.4 click-throughs.

¹ **This data is incomplete for two reasons. First, because the updates to the Insights dashboard were launched in Feb. 2011, only data from 5 Feb. 2011-present is available. Second, all shares using the ShareThis share tools included on every Reesenews.org page are not included in Facebook's organic shares data. This is because the ShareThis share tools convert links to any given story-level page to a custom share.es/ shortlink, which Facebook cannot recognize as originally being a link to the Reesenews.org domain. As a result, about half the data between 02/05/2011-04/23/2011 is not included in Facebook Insights; Facebook Insights lists 5,917 clicks to organically-shared Reesenews.org links, while SiteCatalyst registers 11,482 Facebook referrals to the site for the same date range.*