# Have You Checked Your Website's HEART Health Lately?

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# A Framework for Evaluating Ongoing Website Success.

**What You'll Learn in This Article:**

- What the Google HEART framework is
- Best-practice examples of goals and metrics for higher ed websites
- How best to use the HEART framework, and why it matters

**The only way to truly determine if your website redesign was successful is to measure the impact and learn from it.**

Many of us have sat in on countless design review meetings that turned into heated discussions about various solves and subjective improvements. Attendees say things like, "*I don't like it,*" or "*it probably won't work,*" amongst other opinions, none of them rooted in data. Eventually, someone says, "*let's test it,*" or, "*we can A/B test it.*" This could be the right thing to do—but for it to work in practice, it's critical to use the right metrics.

Gut feelings are good, but making data-driven decisions is better. Using a framework to decide which metrics will best guide your product down the right path, for the right audiences, is the key. That's where the Google HEART framework comes into play.

# The Google HEART Framework: The Five Categories of Metrics

HEART is a metric framework that's designed to measure impact on a large scale. It was popularized by Kerry Rodden, a UX researcher at Google Ventures, and it is a simple way to make sure your team considers every aspect of the user journey and the way a user views your website.

**HEART is an acronym, standing for:**

**Happiness**

H

**Engagement**

E

**Adoption**

A

**Retention**

R

**Task**

T

# Best Practice Examples of Goals & Metrics for a Higher Ed Website

## Happiness

How do our users feel? (Measures of user attitudes or perceptions)

**Popular metrics:**

- **Satisfaction rating:** How satisfied the participant is with the product
- **Ease-of-use:** How easy the participant finds the task or product to use
- **Perceived usability:** How usable the product seems to the participant
- **Subjective success rate:** Whether or not the participant thinks they were successful at their desired task
- **Confidence rating:** How confident the participant is in their task completion
- **Questionnaire scores:** Set of questions resulting in a score, like NPS

## Engagement

How frequently, deeply, or intensely do participants use the product? (Level of user involvement)

**Popular metrics:**

- **Frequency of return:** How often people return (for example: visits per user per week)
- **Average time spent:** Across all users, how much time is spent on average in the product
- **Average number of sessions per user:** Average number of times each user returns to the product
- **Feature usage:** How much participants use a feature (for example, number of searches in the academic program finder)
- **Conversion rate:** What percentage of visitors complete an important goal action (like apply, schedule a visit, request information, or make a donation)
- **Transactions & subscriptions:** Count of completed goal actions

## Adoption

How are we attracting new users? (Initial uptake of a product or feature)

**Popular metrics:**

- **New accounts/visitors:** New users applying or registering for an event
- **Conversion rate:** What percentage of visitors complete an important goal action (like signing up for a visit or requesting information)
- **Transactions & subscriptions:** Count of completed goal actions

## Retention

How are we keeping people around? (How existing users return and remain active in the product)

**Popular metrics:**

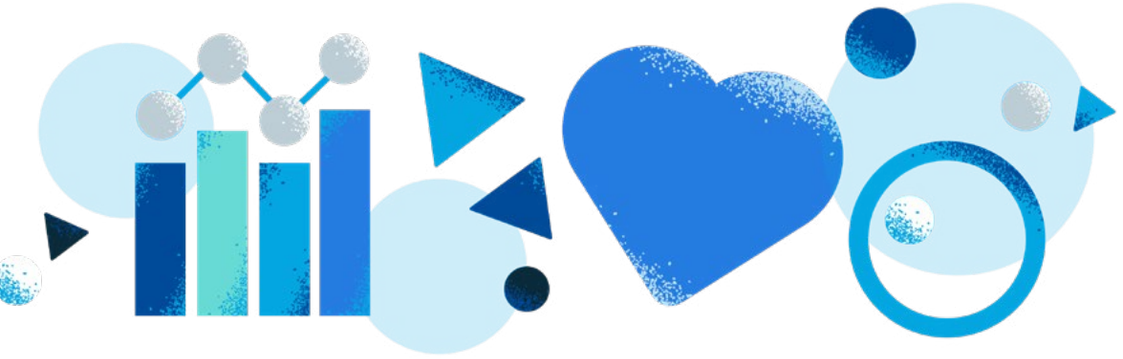
- **Returning users:** People coming back to the website
- **Repeat transactions:** People making more transactions after their first transaction

## Task

Are users able to complete tasks easily and with little effort? (Efficiency, effectiveness, and error management)

**Popular metrics:**

- **Completion rate:** Percentage of people who complete a process they started
- **Success rate:** Percentage of people who successfully complete a task
- **Average time on task:** Average amount of time a user spends attempting a task
- **Average time on page/view:** Average amount of time spent on a page or screen
- **Error counts & error rate:** Mistakes or slips users encounter in the product
- **Help tickets & support contact (calls, chats, emails):** A measure of how much help users need (this could be internal or external users)



## How Best to Use the HEART Framework (And Why it Matters)

There are several high-level ways your digital team can use the HEART framework:

1. Use the HEART metrics framework to measure things big or small: a website, a specific page, or a feature.

2. The HEART metrics framework can be referenced to model analytics and CRO reports; use a tool like Google Data Studio to create a dashboard to display cherry-picked numbers for key stakeholders.

3. Start small. You don't need to use all the metrics from the HEART framework to begin. You can list all relevant metrics, start tracking a couple, then only work on improving a few.

Overall, the HEART framework is a useful and effective tool for navigating design discussions and measuring the success of a website. Using the right UX research metrics will ensure that you're using relevant and data-driven insights in the design process, which will ultimately create the optimal experience for the end user, and a better chance of you hitting your broader marketing goals.

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