

Introduction to Web Analytics

Meaning of Web Analytics

Web Analytics is the measurement, collection, analysis, and reporting of Internet data for the purposes of understanding and optimizing Web usage.

The focus of web analytics is to understand the users of a site, their behavior, and activities. The study of online user behavior and activities generate valuable marketing intelligence and provides –

- Performance measures of the website against targets.
- Insight on user behaviors and needs, and how the site meets those needs.
- Optimization ability to make modifications to improve the website based on the results.

Types of web analytics

The complex field of web analytics can be put in just two categories:

1. **On-site web analytics** refers to measuring data flow on a given website. The following data are being measured: hits, page views, visits, visitors (including first visitors, repeating visitors, new visitors etc.), impressions, bounce rate, duration of the session, clicks and so on. Many factors are included in this complex calculation and the main goal is to tell whether the website is working as planned or it requires changes and adapting to its visitors.

Advantages

- Real visitors and their interests measured
- Tracks campaigns, engagements, sales, repeat sales etc.
- Available for any web site – large and small traffic sizes
- Inexpensive (Google Analytics is free to use!)

Disadvantages

- Limited demographic information (Google Analytics can use Double Click data)
 - Cannot track competitors, or related sites
 - Visitors can block, loose or delete cookies i.e. prevent tracking, though considered low (of the order 1-3%)
- 2. Off-site web analytics** uses the data that can be found all over the internet, on various websites, social media etc. This type of web analytics is often done as part of market research, in order to see if there is potential market for a certain product or service.

Advantages

- Demographic information readily available
- Can track competitors and related sites. e.g. visitors first went to competitor A, then your site, then onto competitor B
- No website required – can track trends irrespective of your web presence

Disadvantages

- A lot of Inferred data – i.e. sample sizes are scaled up (see next bullets)
- Suitable only for high traffic sites e.g. typically more than 1 million visits per month as low traffic sites by definition have small sample sizes and limit accuracy
- Extrapolation errors – analogous to polling
- Very US-centric data
- Expensive

Key Metrics of Web Analytics

You need to find a few key metrics for your business. You have a website and it has a tracking code in it. Now, you need to make sure what are you going to measure. Analyzing may help you retain your customer and hold them. **What to Measure -**

1. Audience

- **Pageviews** – Pageviews is the number of views of a page. Multiple pageviews are possible in a single session. If pageviews is improved, it will directly influence AdSense revenue and average time on website.
- **Bounce rate** – Bounce rate reflects the percentage of visitors returning back only after visiting one page of your website. It helps you to know how many visitors do so. If the bounce rate of a website increases, its webmaster should be worried.
- **Pages per session** – Pages/session is the number of pages surfed in a single session. For example, a user landed on your website and surfed 3 pages, then the website pages/session is 3.
- **Demographic info** – Demographic data shows Age and Gender. With the help of Demographic Info, you can find the percentage of Male/Female visitors coming to your website. Analyzing the ratio of this data, you can make a strategy according to genders. Age group data help you find what percentage of age group visiting your website. So, you can make a strategy for highest percentage of age group visitors.
- **Devices** – This data shows the devices info. In devices info, you can easily find how many percentage of visitors come from mobile, how many come from desktop, how many come from tablets, etc. If mobile traffic is high, then you need to make your website responsive.

2. Acquisition

Traffic sources – In the acquisition, you have to check all your sources of the traffic. Major sources of the traffic are –

- **Organic traffic** is the traffic coming through all search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing....)
- **Social traffic** is the traffic coming through all social media platforms (like – Facebook, Twitter, Google+, ...)
- **Referral traffic** is the traffic coming through where your website is linked.

- **Direct traffic** is the traffic coming directly to your website. For example, typing the url of your website, clicking on the link of your website given in emails, etc.



- **Source/Medium** – This metrics gives you an idea of the sources from where you are getting traffic (Google, Yahoo, Bing, Direct, Facebook...).

3. Site Content

- **Landing pages** – Landing pages are the pages where the visitors land first (normally, home pages of the websites are the landing pages). With the help of this metrics, you can find the top pages of the website. Using this metrics, you can analyze how many pages are getting 50% or more traffic of the website. So, you can easily find which type of content is working for you. Further, based on this analysis, you can plan the next content strategy.
- **Site speed** – Site speed is the metrics used for checking page timing (average page load time). Using this metrics, you can find which page is taking more time to load, how many pages have high load time, etc.

Web Analytics Tools

1. Google Analytics

Google Analytics is one of the best free tools that any website owner can use to track and analyze data about Web traffic. You get to see what keywords are bringing the most visitors to your pages and what aspects of your designs are turning them off. This tool will generate a report for your website that includes information about visitors, traffic sources, goals, content and e-commerce. The downside of Google Analytics is that it can take time to update. (The real-time version is still in beta testing.) There are other tools that offer real-time updates of your data now.

2. Spring Metrics

Spring Metrics has taken the analytics tool and made it simpler. You don't have to be a professional data-miner to get the answers to your questions. You get real-time conversion analytics, top converting sources, keyword analytics, landing-page analysis, e-mail performance reports and simple point-and-click configuration. Unlike Google Analytics, Spring Metrics tracks a visitor's path through your website from the time he landed to the time he left. All of this is included in Spring Metrics' Standard Plan for \$49 a month. When you first sign up, you get to try it free for 14 days. The simplicity of this tool has a lot of website owners switching over from Google Analytics.

3. Clicky

Clicky also offers a free service if you have only one website and a Pro account for a monthly fee. You get real-time analytics, including Spy View, which lets you observe what current visitors are doing on your site. Clicky's dashboard is simple to use and presents all the information you want to see clearly. They also have a mobile version that makes it easy for you to check your stats anywhere.

4. Woopra

Woopra is another tool that offers real-time analytics tracking, whereas Google Analytics can take hours to update. It is a desktop application that feeds you live visitor stats, including where

they live, what pages they are on now, where they've been on your site and their Web browser. You also have the ability to chat live with individual site visitors. This can be a great feature for your e-commerce site to interact with customers. Woopra offers a limited freebie plan as well as several paid options.

5. Chartbeat

Chartbeat lets users get the most from their data with instant information. They keep constant watch on your visitors and what they are doing on your website. This gives you the information you need in order to make the adjustments necessary to your content or design. You get a free month when you sign up and after that plans start at \$9.95 per month.

6. Mint

Mint is an analytics tool that is self-hosted and costs \$30 per website. You get the benefit of real-time stats, which you don't get with the free Google Analytics. You can track site visitors, where they are coming from and what pages they are viewing. And Peppermill, a part of Mint, lets you make any adjustments to make it more compatible for your use with tons of free add-ons.

7. Crazy Egg

Crazy Egg uses the power of Heatmap technology to give you a visual picture of what site visitors are doing on your Web pages. It shows you where people are moving their mouse on the page and where they click. There is a link between where people put the mouse and where they are moving their eyes. So, this kind of tracking helps you see what areas are catching the most attention and interaction from users. There is a free one-month trial with this service, and prices start at \$9 month for 10 Heatmaps.