

## WEB SITE ANALYSIS

Eliminate guesswork and measure success – that is what analysing your website visitors' behaviour [or web analytics] is all about. Understanding where they came from, where they land and what people are doing on your site.

Virtually all web-hosting services provide rudimentary analytics that can help you

begin to understand what users are doing on your site. But most hosting services just don't provide more sophisticated tools. Tools such as funnel reports, which show how visitors are progressing through the various stages or levels of your site – hopefully to become a lead / conversion / sale or navigation reports which give you visitor activity such as entry points; where they clicked; where they came from; where they went; how much time they spent on a page and their exit points. Then there are tools such as segmentation reports which track the behaviour of specific groups of visitors such as purchasers, those who came from Google etc. and robot reports which monitor when search engine spiders index your site

There are free packages you can use from ClickTracks or Google but you must apply to Google and it can take weeks for them to set you up whereas ClickTracks Appetizer is free, immediate and includes several of ClickTracks' most popular features like overlay view, path view, page analysis and basic visitor labelling.

But once you have a web analytics tool what do you do with it? To many people statistics can be daunting and interpreting what they mean can be painful; but hey, no pain, no gain.

Setting the scene for analytics is relatively easy and is shown in the diagram below:



[Diagram: Bruce Clay International]

Then the next thing you need to understand is some basic terms:



Top Search Keywords	
<b>All visitors</b>	
persimmon	861
fresh fruits	709
durian	661
fresh fruit	598
pomegranate	526
<a href="#">More rows</a>	
<b>Buyer</b>	
persimmon	61
durian	61
pomegranate	57
banana	35
star fruits	26
<a href="#">More rows</a>	

**Hit:** a request for a file from your web server noted in the log.

**Page view:** a request for a file whose type is defined as a page in log analysis or an occurrence of the page tagging script being run in page tagging. In log analysis, a single page view may generate multiple hits as all the resources required to view the page (images, .js and .css files) are also requested from your web server.

**Visitor session:** a series of requests from the same unique visitor within a single visit. A visit is expected to contain multiple hits (in log analysis) and page views.

**Unique visitor:** the uniquely identified client generating requests on your web server (log analysis) or viewing pages (page tagging). A unique visitor can, of course, make many visits.

**Repeat visitor:** a visitor that has made at least one previous visit.

**New visitor:** a visitor that has not made any previous visits.

**Referring search terms:** the search phrases people are using to find your site.

**Referring URLs:** tell you which web sites are sending you traffic.

**Content popularity:** the list of most popular pages on your site.

**Site overlay:** displays your actual pages with a click level indicator next to each link showing the number of people who click on each link.

**Bounce rate:** reveals the number of visitors who left the site from a particular page.

OK most of those are obvious but they are still worth laying out.

As we said eliminating guesswork and measuring success is what analysing your website visitors' behaviour [or web analytics] is all about.



Understanding where they came from, where they land and what people are doing on your site. Having a great looking website with excellent search engine visibility is not going to take your business to the next level unless you have the proper web site measurement tools in place to know whether you are driving sales.

So, have you ever asked yourself, or have others ever asked you, questions like those below, and others? If you have, did you know how to answer them or what the answers are? If not, shouldn't you be able to? If the answer to that is no, why have you got a website?

- How do I increase revenue from my site?
- Can I increase the number of leads generated on my site?
- How do I optimize keywords for my site?
- Can I decrease my web based customer acquisition cost?
- How do I decrease my online support costs?
- Does "Free Delivery" or a "BOGOF" for web sales increase my margin?

Web analytics provides the foundation for effective online business and marketing decisions about these sorts of question through accurate measurement and analysis of visitors' actual behaviours.

Overall, there are probably four site types.

**Content:** Content sites revolve around advertising, with the goal of repeat visits and thus increased advertising exposure. Analytics is about click tracking the ads by content pages.



**Customer Support:** It is about self-service model and giving customers the answers they need to reduce call centre

or other costs. Analytics is about click tracking the FAQs etc. and marrying the information with other company information to establish what can and cannot be answered effectively this way.

**Lead Generation:** Here your goal is to get visitors to submit their contact information so that they can be contacted. Analytics is focused on lead capture to help understand how to increase lead conversion.

**ECommerce:** The goal is to get customers to fill their shopping cart and buy. Analytics is about purchases and looking at how the customer reached the point of purchase.

Which type of site is yours?

Not only that what is it you want people to do when they get to your site?

What is the 'target action' for your site?

This is what you need to measure.



Once you have decided that you can move on to the next stage and measure what matters. Then you have to decide how to measure what matters and how to interpret it once you have measured it.

How to measure is to find a good package such as Click Tracks or Google Analytics. Then you need to add the page tags to all pages and gather page-level data for at least 6 to 12 months. You need plenty of data because visitor onsite times are often very short and you do not want or need erroneous results. When you interpret the information, all those pretty pie charts and graphs, make sure you know what else was going on in the timeframe. Your own events such as ad campaigns and PR can influence site traffic, as can world events such as 9/11 so you need to put site traffic into context for the period you are analyzing.