



# Overview of Web Analytics

## A Quick Guide to Analytic Software

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## Introduction

There are several tools available to help business owners track how their websites truly affect their businesses. Some of these tools are free (other than the install by a web developer) and others are not. It is also important that businesses factor in time – the time to review the data, but also understand what the data means.

***Analytics helps you make more effective sites and increase ROI on virtually any advertising/marketing campaign. Web analytic software can help you;***

- Make informed decisions about a website
- Increase conversion rates
- Track performance metrics

***Properly installed Analytics can help answer questions such as;***

- "How are visitors moving through my website?"*
- "Where are users entering and leaving my website?"*
- "Is my content engaging and effective?"*
- "How do I improve user interaction?"*

## Interpreting Analytic Reports

**Create Context for your Data** – Do not focus on a single metric, knowing how many people visit your site simply does not help you make decisions later. By comparing two or more metrics, it makes the data easier to understand and act upon.

**Create Context for Visuals** – When comparing 2 different metrics, be sure to utilize the visualization tools. This will show you how these different metrics compare to the site average.

**Create Context for Trends** - When looking at how data has changed, be sure to analyze the trends over time. These trends may provide clues to what is working and what isn't.

**Use the Data to Drive Decision-making** – The data created by analytic systems shows you how your website performs against specific metrics. Use these metrics and trends to make decisions.



## Common Website Metrics / Dimensions

Below is a list of very common Metrics and dimensions found in most Web Analytics solutions. While reviewing the data, it's crucial to understand what each measurement means.

**Page view** – every time a page loads on a website.

**Visit (Session)** – Is a period of interaction between a browser and website. Closing the browser or staying inactive for 30 minutes ends the visit. This can be adjusted.

**Visitor** – Uniquely identified by an Analytics cookie.

**Average Time on Page** – This figure shows the average of how long each page was viewed.

**Average Time on Site** – This figure shows the average times visitors spend on the whole site.

*Note: Most analytics systems also calculate **New vs. Returning Visitors**. A high number of new visits suggest that you are successful at driving traffic, while a high number of returning visits suggest that your content is engaging.*

### Traffic Sources

Most analytic software will show you where your traffic is coming from, and also which traffic sources send the highest quality traffic. Web analytic software makes it very easy to compare different traffic sources to determine the highest effectiveness.

**Direct Traffic** – Visitor arrives from typing in URL

**Referral Traffic** – Visitor arrives from other site

**Search Traffic** – Traffic came from a search engines; such as Google or Yahoo.

*Again it's important to look at traffic in context with other metrics. For example, if you get a lot of Search Traffic, but the search traffic has a high bounce rate, it may not be sending quality traffic.*



## Content Reports

Most Web Analytic Software provides some sort of Content Report. These reports give you insight to things such as; *most popular pages, bounce rates per page and top entrance and exit pages.*

Content Reports provide great insight into the effectiveness of your web pages. It is important to compare metrics to each other to create context for the data. An example, high bounce rates on top entrance pages suggest that visitors are not finding what they were looking for.

## Navigation Analysis

Web analytics software often provides insight into how visitors are moving throughout the web pages. By using navigation analysis, you are able to determine how visitors find your content. This information can help guide you to “Steer” your visitors to the content that’s most important to your business.

## Demographic Information

Most Web Analytic systems provide data about where each visitor is coming from. This dimension is particularly important for Local Marketing – since it can help you segment visitors who help the organization achieve its goals.

## Measuring Other Form of Marketing

With analytics software, you are easily able to measure the performance of Banner Advertising, Search Marketing, Email Marketing and even offline advertising.

By analyzing these marketing campaigns, you are easily able to determine what type of marketing works best for your organization.

## Advanced Analytics Tactics

**Manually Tagging Links** – An easy way to measure the performance of paid online advertising or even offline advertising is creating separate URL’s for each marketing campaign – such as direct mail

An example of this would be a mailer or TV ad that displayed [www.YOURWEBSITE.com/Ad](http://www.YOURWEBSITE.com/Ad) versus [www.YOURWEBSITE.com](http://www.YOURWEBSITE.com) . This allows you to segment the data to under which advertising method delivered the most ROI.

**Syncing Analytics with Paid Online Advertising** – Many providers of Analytic software allow you to include your paid advertising in the Analytic Reports.