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How To Analyze Your Visitors To Improve Your Website

By Michael Rock

This article is a detailed description on how to interpret your web hosting statistics software. Typically, the web hosting you have comes with its own web statistics program such as Webalizer or AW Stats. There are also free traffic monitors such as servustats, web stats, and others. And for a nominal subscription of around \$15-\$35 a month you can get a more detailed analysis of your visitors with a paid program.

Why is it important to monitor your visitors?

You could gain a lot of traffic to your web site by simply looking at the number of visitors per month, but what do they do when they reach your site? Do they visit the pages you want? Do they leave shortly after arriving? What pages are they interested in? Etc. Armed with this important information you can tweak your web site to help achieve your goals. What good is it to have hundreds of visitors go to your site if all they do is leave right away or look at pages that are not important?

The Statistics Report

Since most statistics software don't have the same options I will use my paid subscription I use and go over the details provided by it. You will find that the free stat reports are limited to the information that you have, and after reading this article it will also help you decide whether you want an upgraded version of the statistics report. So let's begin!

Traffic

- **Page Views**

Page views are the number of times HTML pages are loaded in your visitors' browsers.

Page views measure the whole pages that are displayed to a viewer and do not include the supporting image files. Every time a complete page displays, it counts as one page view, even when the visitor just refreshes the page, or leaves it for a second and then comes back.

This determines whether your web site is interesting enough to look further into it and explore more pages.

- **Repeat Visits**

Users who browsed your site more than once during the selected time period.

In other words, these are all visits minus the first visits (or unique visitors) in the selected period. The percentage of repeat visits to all visits will give you a good picture of how appealing the content of your Web site is.

Do you give your visitors a reason to return to your site? Is your site updated frequently with articles and content?

Activity

- **By Time Zone**
This report shows you what hour of the day they visited your site according to their time zone.
- **By Local Time**
This report shows you what hour of the day they visited your site according to your time zone.
- **Day of the Week**
What day of the week they visited. Was it during a weekend or weekday? You can determine the best days to update your site or send out important information to your customers with this report.
- **Work/Leisure Time**
Do people view your web site during typical business hours or do they visit after they have gone home?

What type of people visit your web site can be determined from this. Should you concentrate on business people or not.

Navigation

- **Navigation Paths**
A navigation path is a sequence of pages that the visitor viewed from the moment he/she enters the site to the moment he/she leaves.

"From the marketing view, it is important to know the most common paths your visitors follow to get to the landing pages (that is the pages where the target events take place such as ordering, file downloading, form filling and submission, etc.). You will learn which of the navigation paths are the most effective."

The frequent exit patterns will show where your site is under-performing. You will see where to improve the content of your site to make your visitors' experience perfect.
- **Entry Pages**
The page that a visitor goes to when first visiting your web site.

By setting your links to go to specific pages of your web site you can determine which referral links are working and which are not.
- **Exit Pages**
The page that a visitor leaves your web site from.

Do your exit pages match your entry pages? If so, then see what you can do to fix your entry page to keep visitors on your site. Is it a navigation problem? Content not good enough?
- **Pages Viewed After Home Page**
The success of your web site depends on how short the way from your home page to your target page is.

This also helps uncover any navigation problems or lack of interest in your web site.

- **Site Stickiness**
These are visits grouped by the time that visitors stay.

It is a sign of how well a site's content captures the visitor's attention. Do they leave a few seconds after entering? Or are they thoroughly interested in what you have to say on your web site?

Visitors

- **Unique Visitors**
Another measure of Visitor activity that counts only the first action of a visitor in a selected period of time.

This measures what a visitor does on the first visit only in a selected period of time. The software will grab specifically where they came from so you can tell the actions of one person visiting your site. In other words if you have three unique visitors visit your site ten times each instead of having a counter of 30 visitors you'll see 3 visitors and what pages they visited.

The number of unique visitors versus page views is an important indication of site performance. If you have a high unique visitor count, but relatively low page view count, this is a sign of low site attractiveness to visitors, so you should rewrite the site content. On the other hand, if you have a low visitor count and very high page view count, this shows that your site is stimulating people, however it needs more promotion.

- **New Visitors**
This is a brand-new visitor, arriving at your site for the first time.

New visitors are always unique, although they are not the same as unique visitors. The number of new visitors will always be smaller than the number of unique visitors, because a unique visitor is one arriving for the first time in the selected period (so the system may identify the visitor as unique in the current period but it also knows that he/she has been before). A new visitor is one on his first visit.

This will tell you if your web site is attracting new customers.

- **Frequent Visitors**
This report tells you how many times a certain visitor visits your site. Do they only visit your web site once? A few times a day? Once a week? Several times a week?

This analysis is important to find out if people view your site as something to come back to and let you know if you need to make changes to keep people coming back.

- **Motivated Visitors**
If two or more pages are browsed during a visit, this will be counted in the Motivated Visits report.

The ratio of visits when more than one page is viewed to all visits is a

good sign of your site's attractiveness.

- **New Visitors' Second Visits**
This report lets you know how many of the new visitors returned to your site. Not to be confused with repeat visitors, because this one monitors only the new ones.
- **Visit Frequency**
The number of return visits all of your visitors take.

Do the highest percentage of all of your visitors visit only once? 2-4 visits? 5-10 visits? Or as much as 300 visits?

Referrers

The reports here show you where your visitors came from.

- **Bookmarked Pages and Direct Typing**
Do people bookmark your web site to visit later?
- **Search Engines**
What search engine did they use?
What keyword did they type in?
Which keywords are the most popular? Adjust your web site to the popular keywords.
- **Referring Pages (Links)**
What other web sites did your visitors come from? Concentrate on the higher traffic links.
Do they come from directories that pay off or not?

Pages

- **Popular Pages**
What area of the site are people most interested in?
- **Unpopular Pages**
Are these pages to fix or delete?
- **Views Per Visit**

How many pages are viewed during their visit?
- **Views Per First Visit**

How many pages do first time visitors view?
- **Page Stickiness**

How long do they stay on different pages. Should you fix or delete the pages people don't spend much time on?

Systems

- **Browsers and Browser Versions**
It is a good idea to see what a majority of your visitors view your web site in. What does your web site look like in their browser? Try it, you may be surprised to find out that some content is not readable or supported. Or it

may make your web site look awful.

- **Operating Systems**
Are your visitors using Windows, Macintosh, Linux, or WebTV?
- **Windows Versions**
Are your visitors up to date, or are they still using Windows 95?
- **Screen Resolutions**
What screen resolution do people view your site on? If a majority of people use 800 x 600 pixels do they have to scroll right and left to read the content on your site?
- **Color Palettes**
What capability does your visitors computer have? Should you concentrate more on using 'web safe colors' in your design?
- **Cookie and Java Support**
Do you use these scripts on your web site? If your visitors have these turned off they may not be able to view important parts of your web site. If a strong number of people have this support turned off consider using other options.

Demographics

- **Countries**
What countries are your visitors from? Does this pose as a problem?
- **Languages**
What language do they use? If you see a growing number of a foreign language, consider making your site bi-lingual.
- **Time Zones**
What time zone are they coming from?

Until the next article, have a great day!

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About the Author:

The owner of this registered company has over twenty years experience with DOS, windows business applications, numerous programming languages, artistic development, and web design. Other areas of interest include web marketing, web promoting, and business marketing and development. After the persuasion of those praising his work, he decided to go into business himself and highly suggests everyone else to do the same. Visit Internet Presence:

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