

## Web Analytics

**Web analytics** is the study of online behavior in order to improve it. There are two categories; *off-site* and *on-site* web analytics.

**Off-site** web analytics refers to web measurement and analysis irrespective of whether you own or maintain a website. It includes the measurement of a website's *potential* audience (opportunity), share of voice (visibility), and buzz (comments) that is happening on the Internet as a whole.

**On-site** web analytics measure a visitor's journey once *on your website*. This includes its drivers and conversions; for example, which landing pages encourage people to make a purchase. On-site web analytics measures the performance of your website in a commercial context. This data is typically compared against key performance indicators for performance, and used to improve a web site or marketing campaign's audience response.

Historically, web analytics has referred to on-site visitor measurement. However in recent years this has blurred, mainly because vendors are producing tools that span both categories.

Many different vendors provide on-site web analytics software and services. There are two main technological approaches to collecting the data. The first method, *logfile analysis*, reads the logfiles in which the web server records all its transactions. The second method, *page tagging*, uses JavaScript on each page to notify a third-party server when a page is rendered by a web browser. Both collect data that can be processed to produce web traffic reports.

In addition other data sources may also be added to augment the data. For example; e-mail response rates, direct mail campaign data, sales and lead information, user performance data such as click heat mapping, or other custom metrics as needed.

### Key Definitions

**Hit** - A request for a file from the web server. Available only in log analysis. The number of hits received by a website is frequently cited to assert its popularity, but this number is extremely misleading and dramatically over-estimates popularity. A single web-page typically consists of multiple (often dozens) of discrete files, each of which is counted as a hit as the page is downloaded, so the number of hits is really an arbitrary number more reflective of the complexity of individual pages on the website than the website's actual popularity. The total number of visitors or page views provides a more realistic and accurate assessment of popularity.

**Page View** - A request for a file whose type is defined as a page in log analysis. An occurrence of the 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 the web server.

**Visit / Session** - A series of requests from the same uniquely identified client with a set timeout. A visit is expected to contain multiple hits (in log analysis) and page views.

**First Visit / First Session** - A visit from a visitor who has not made any previous visits.

**Visitor / Unique Visitor / Unique User** - The uniquely identified client generating requests on the web server (log analysis) or viewing pages (page tagging) within a defined time period (i.e. day, week or

month). A Unique Visitor counts once within the timescale. A visitor can make multiple visits. The Unique User is now the only mandatory metric for an ABCE.

**Repeat Visitor** - A visitor that has made at least one previous visit. The period between the last and current visit is called visitor recency and is measured in days.

**New Visitor** - A visitor that has not made any previous visits. This definition creates a certain amount of confusion (see common confusions below), and is sometimes substituted with analysis of first visits.

**Impression** - An impression is each time an advertisement loads on a user's screen. Anytime you see a banner that is an impression.

**Singletons** - The number of visits where only a single page is viewed. While not a useful metric in and of itself the number of singletons is indicative of various forms of "Click Fraud" as well as being used to calculate bounce rate and in some cases to identify automatons ("bots").

**Bounce Rate / % Exit** - The percentage of visits where the visitor enters and exits at the same page without visiting any other pages on the site in between.

**Visibility time** - The time a single page (or a blog, Ad Banner...) is viewed.

**Session Duration** - Average amount of time that visitors spend on the site each time they visit. This metric can be complicated by the fact that analytics programs cannot measure the length of the final page view. Also, if a visit comes back to the site within a short period of time, that can be measured as a continuation of the first session.

**Page View Duration** - Average amount of time that visitors spend on each page of the site. As with Session Duration, this metric is complicated by the fact that analytics programs cannot measure the length of the final page view.

**Depth / Page Views per Session** - Depth is the average number of page views a visitor consumes before ending their session. It is calculated by dividing total number of page views by total number of sessions and is also called Page Views per Session or PV/Session.

**Frequency / Session per Unique** - Frequency measures how often visitors come to a website. It is calculated by dividing the total number of sessions (or visits) by the total number of unique visitors. Sometimes it is used to measure the loyalty of your audience.

## Good Luck!

Many things have changed - especially the mediums - but universal truths of communication tend to survive. **Please feel free to contact us at <http://www.4CInteractive.com>**

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_analytics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_analytics)