



savvymarketers

when your small business needs big results

Feature Article : Making Sense of Your Website Stats

Do you check your website stats regularly? Do you understand what it means and how to make the most of the information?

Good website stats (or web analytics) information is very widely available and gives website owners information about who's visiting their website.

Everyone who has an interest in their website needs to know what's happening on it, where those all important visitors are coming from, what's popular on their site and what is and what isn't working so well with their marketing efforts. Having a good web stats package couldn't be more important and one of the best free ones available is Google Analytics. OK, it's yet another way of getting businesses to use Google's products, but so many people use it now, and the information provided is often much more useful than other free web stats packages.

Much of the data provided by [Google Analytics](#) is standard and what you would expect: visitor numbers (unique and returning), page views, popular pages, visitor paths, referring websites, search engines, keywords used to find the site, which countries visitors have come from, etc. Some of this information can be quite confusing, so here's a rundown on what some of it means:

Unique Visitors

A unique visitor is a statistic describing a unit of traffic to a website, counting each visitor only once in the time frame of the report. This statistic is relevant to site publishers and advertisers as a measure of a site's true audience size.

Returning Visitors

The number of visitors who return to a website within a specified time frame.

Page Views

The number of pages of a website viewed within a time frame. You can also see an average number of pages per visitor, which is the number of pages viewed in the time frame divided by the number of visitors within the period. This can give you an idea of whether people are actually finding the information on your site interesting enough to stay and have a browse.

Visitor Paths

The pages a visitor looks at during their visit. Web stats can tell you which page a visitor landed on and then which pages they visited afterwards before leaving a website. This can give you information as to how easy or difficult visitors find navigating your website, or whether they're following the paths you would like them to.

Referring Websites

The websites that send visitors to your site, for example, Google is a referring site as they send search engine traffic, a national newspaper such as The Times, or a link from a directory are all referring websites. You can find out exactly where all visitors to your website came from and which advertising or links you have are actively referring visitors.



savvymarketers

when your small business needs big results

Keywords

Which keywords a visitor typed into a search engine before finding your site and clicking through. This helps you to see how your optimisation is performing as well as finding other keywords that are leading visitors to your site.

This is some of the most basic information you can get from your web stats, and it's well worth checking these regularly to get indications as to how your website is performing in terms of attracting traffic, converting those visitors into sales or enquiries and how easily or difficult visitors find the navigation of your site.

We'll be covering more on web stats in a future newsletter!

Copyright (c) 2009, Savvy Marketers.

[\(This article first appeared in the 'Savvy Marketing Tips' newsletter in May 2009.\)](#)