

# Ask the Experts!

## Analytics 101

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### Web Analytics Defined

- The measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of Internet data for the purposes of understanding & optimizing Web usage.
- In real life – it is tracking the movement of visitors on your website to draw logical and behavioral conclusions and measure the % of times your established goals are being met.

### Components of Web Analytics

- Site action measurement (web logs and log analyzer like WebTrends or Google Analytics)
- Site Goals
- KPI's to measure the goals (Key Performance Indicators)
- Behavioral understanding of web users actions (habits by demographics, established personas, etc...)

### Process

#### A. Establish site goals (Target Action)

##### Examples of common website goals:

- Make a donation / buy a product
- Sign up for a newsletter
- Request more information
- Establish your site as a resource
- User understands what you do
- User gains knowledge about a topic or issue

##### General Tips:

1. What are your organizations goals?
2. What role does your website play in achieving these goals?
  3. From this – establish the goals of your website.
    - a. What actions does the user need to take on the site to achieve your goals?
    - b. What actions are your site visitors taking now?
    - c. What motivates your user?
    - d. Merge your goals with your user's current wants, needs and habits.
    - e. Much like anything else, you cannot change a behavior simply because you will it.

**B. Once goals are established – determine the KPI's that would measure the goals. If you identify it as a goal, it has to be measurable. If it is not measurable – it's not a goal.**

**Common Key Performance Indicators**

1. Conversion events – Those events that show definitive action has been taken by the user – the percentage of users who successfully convert. Eg. make a donation, submit a form, download a paper, sign up for your newsletter.  
**To calculate:** Take the number of conversions as a percentage of the number of visits for a specified period. This will give you're your conversion %. The average conversion % is about 2.2% with sites like Amazon self-reporting up to 9%.  
*See Also:* Prospect Rate, Abandonment Rate
2. Percent of new visitors – If one of your goals is to drive more traffic to your site (perhaps to increase conversions) this KPI will measure this. Increasing visits to the site generally is initiated by an online or off-line marketing, PR or advertising campaign.  
**To calculate as a result of a specific campaign:** the % of increased visits during the campaign compared to a representative non-campaign period.  
**To calculate as site popularity over time:** calculate the percentage of increase over 6 month period or one year to the next.
3. Length of Visit – this is a great KPI to use to measure the likelihood that users are gaining understanding or knowledge through your site. While we cannot measure comprehension, we can determine is the amount of time (set at some threshold) would be sufficient for the typical user to read and digest materials presented.  
**To calculate:** this is a metric provided directly by your analytics program. No calculations are necessary.  
*See Also:* Average page views, average time on pages.
4. Percent Return Visitors – This could give an indication of if your site is being used as a reference.  
**To calculate:** Differs by analytics programs. Visitors who visited more than once /total visitors.
5. Cost per visitor – can vary greatly
6. Average order Value

**Other Helpful Metrics**

Entry Pages – this will tell the first page that users are seeing when they get to your site.

Exit pages – What is the last thing they see before they leave you...

Top Pages- what pages are getting the most traffic?

Bounce Rate (sometimes called 1 page visits) – What is your loss percentage after just one page?

Top referring words or phrases – what the most common words / phrases users are finding your site with.

Referring Sites – Sites that visitors are coming from when arriving at your site.

## Definitions

### Abandonment Rate

The number of customers who drop off during the process of conversion, like a half filled form or incomplete purchase.

### Average page views

The total number of page views divided by the total number of visits during the same timeframe.

### Average time viewed (by page)

The average length of time the specified page was viewed.

### Bounce Rate

The instances of visitors entering and leaving the same page.

### Conversion

An activity which fulfills the intended purpose of a website like buying a product, filling up a form or subscribing to a newsletter. Conversion rate is the percentage of visitors who successfully convert.

### Entry Page

The first page viewed by a visitor while browsing through a website.

### Exit Page

The last page viewed, rather the page from which the visitor exited.

### Hit

An often confused term, hits are any request by the browser to the web server. A web page is a collection of different components like HTML, Images and CSS, each registering as a separate hit with every single request for the page.

### Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

The crucial parameters showing the health of the website and success of marketing strategies.

### Page View

Each rendering of the web page by the server is counted as a page view.

### Path Analysis

Analysis on how visitors traverse through the website. Gives valuable information to check if they follow the intended site navigation, etc.

### Prospect Rate

The % of users who get to any part of the conversion event. For instance, if your conversion event is a user completing a form, the % of visitors that visit that page are your prospects.

### Referrer

Websites, Search Engines or Directories or any others identifiable as the origin of the visitor.

### Return Visitor

A visitor who can be identified with multiple visits, either through cookies or authentication.

### Visit

A series of requests from the same uniquely identified client with a set timeout, often 30 minutes. A visit contains one or more page views.

### Visitor

An individual visiting the website over a specified period of time. A visit is understood as two consecutive actions by a visitor within a span of 30 minutes.

