

Business Technology Program

How-To Guide: How to Use Web Analytics

Web analytics means reporting, collecting, measuring and analyzing Web data. Understanding and using Web analytics can help you understand who your customers are, what they want and how well your website is meeting their needs.

Here are some companies that offer Web analytics solutions:

Company	Price	Website
Google Analytics	Free	www.google.com/analytics
AWStats	Free	http://awstats.sourceforge.net
Optimizely	Starting at \$19/mo.	https://optimizely.appspot.com
Omniiture	Varies	www.omniiture.com
Coremetrics	Varies	www.coremetrics.com
Compete	Free	www.compete.com
Quantcast	Free	www.quantcast.com
ClickTale	Starting at \$99/mo.	www.clicktale.com

Google Analytics is perhaps the most widely used analytics platform on the Web. It offers nearly all the data a growing business needs. **AWStats** is preinstalled on most servers and provides a very basic log of your Web traffic. **Optimizely** offers analytics on A/B testing. **Omniiture** and **Coremetrics** are extremely robust platforms for data-crunching professionals. **Compete** compares your basic traffic numbers with your competitors. **Quantcast** gathers demographic data of your visitors. **ClickTale** tracks and records visitor sessions on your site and build reports and heat maps based on those experiences.

Just about all these analytic tools require you to visit their Web site and sign up. You can test many of them before committing. Once you're signed up, most will require you to copy a snippet of code and paste it on the Web pages you wish to monitor. That's it!

Important Measurements

Here are some key measurements you'll want to keep tabs on.

- Unique Visitors
- New Visitors
- Visits
- Pageviews
- Pages Per Visit
- Average Time on Site
- Bounce Rate
- Exit Percentage
- Traffic Sources
- Keywords



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There are many, many other data points your business can monitor, from your most popular pages to the cities and states your visitors are coming from. An important rule to remember is that the numbers that work for one business may not define success for another.

For example, suppose analytics show that your Web site has a high bounce rate (meaning lots of visitors land on your site and leave without visiting a second page). This would be bad news if you were attempting to sell them something.

However, if your site is simply an information source requiring visitors to scroll for information rather than clicking through multiple pages, it's understandable that visitors would leave after just one page. For this type of site, more important measures might be the amount of time per visit and the percentage of repeat visitors. As you view more information, you'll gain a more complete picture of how well your site is performing.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How are visitors finding my Web site?

A. Look at your traffic sources. There are three main sources: Direct Traffic, Referring Sites and Search Engines.

Q. What's the difference between Bounce and Exit?

A. The Bounce Rate refers to a session where the visitor leaves without viewing a second page. Exit also refers to a visitor leaving, but not necessarily after just one page view.

Q. Does my number of Hits reflect the number of Unique Visitors?

A. No. Hits refer to a request for a file from your Web server. If a Web page has many files associated with it, a single visitor on a single page can generate a dozen Hits.

Q. How many Pages Per Visit is considered good?

A. It all depends on your website, how it's set up and what your goals are. One Page Per Visit, however, is not typically good.

Q. How do I find out what search terms are driving traffic to my site?

A. Within your Search Engine traffic numbers should be a list of Keywords. These can be single words or phrases. Keywords can also be sorted and viewed by the search engines delivering them.

