Introduction to web analytics

Presented by Jennifer Burke, CPS

Overview

- Where do I start?

- Things to consider in your analysis

- Using Google Analytics

- Using Adobe Analytics

- How do I create a dashboard?

- Resources

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Where do I start?

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Web analytics definitions

Session	Also called a visit. The time a visitor spends on a site. By default, this session continues until there is 30 minutes of inactivity.
User	A browser instance identified by a cookie. Not necessarily equivalent to a person!
Pageview	The viewing of a page.
Direct traffic	Traffic that arrived on the site via bookmarks, manual typing of the URL, or email links.
Referrer	A site that sends traffic to your site.
Pages/Session	Average number of pages viewed during a session. This is a key performance indicator (KPI).
Bounce Rate	The percentage of visits that started on a page and then left the site from that page without looking at any other pages. This is a KPI.

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The evolution of web analytics

2002 — "How many **hits** did we get?"

2009 — "How many **visits** did we get?"

Now — "How do we know our website is **supporting our department's goals**?"

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Question

If I say that NRCan's website had 400,000 visits last month, is that good or bad?

Answer

It depends.

But...that's not really the right question.

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The value of web analytics is not the numbers…but what the numbers tell us.

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Which is better?

Analysis 1
Our website had 400,000 visits last month.

Not very useful. There's no context or trend information. This won't help you make a decision and doesn't say anything about the usage of the site.

Analysis 2
Our website had 400,000 visits last month, 80,000 more visits than the previous month. There was a spike in usage on Sept. 20 which coincided with an earthquake in the Quebec region.

Better, but…. This gives some context, but doesn't really tell you if your content is performing adequately. E.g., did the users looking for earthquake info find it?

Analysis 3
The home page bounce rate was 75% last month, a 15% increase from the previous month due to a recent navigation change that has since been reverted. A new iteration will be tested this month to attempt to meet our goal of a 45% home page bounce rate.

Best. This analysis gives context, performance info, mentions goal, identifies opportunity for change and improvement, and makes use of the continuous improvement model.

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Goals are essential

- They help you to:
    - measure the success of your content
    - determine if changes are needed to make your content more effective
- To create a goal:
    1. You need to know why your content exists.
        - Who is your audience? What do they need from you?
        - What do you want your audience to do with your content?
    2. You need to be very specific.
    3. You need to know what success looks like.

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Example goal

- **Content purpose:**
  - To inform our audience of new developments in the energy efficiency housing industry via our newsletter.
- **Background information:**
  - Our audience is roughly 100,000 people who are familiar with our site.
  - We have a email list of 50,000 people.
- **Success/Goal:**
  - A 50% visit rate on the 50,000 emails we send out within the first 3 days after the email is sent.
  - An increase of 30% in the visit rate from partner sites within the first week.

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Goals inform continuous improvement

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Things to consider in your analysis

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Don't depend on volume metrics like sessions and pageviews.

- They tell you nothing about how your content is being used.

- We have very little influence on these broad numbers, so reporting on them gives no direction.

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Always use analytics in context.

- Keep in mind:
  - The purpose of the page
  - Day of the week, month of the year
  - Seasonal usage
- Sometimes usage that looks bad at first glance is actually good!

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Know your content's usage trends.

- Familiarize yourself with:
  - Most popular day of the week
  - Seasonal trends
- Dips and spikes in traffic are easier to identify if you know generally what your traffic pattern looks like.
  - But don't depend solely on this to tell you how your content is performing.

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Don't try to compare your content's usage to that of content with a different audience.

- It's usually comparing apples to oranges.
  - For example, comparing the behaviour of a large audience like OEE's consumer base to that of a small audience, such as people seeking NDT certification, does not give useful intel.

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Analytics are a *representation* of usage

- Unlike Statistics Canada data, there is no accuracy measurement on analytics.

- They give us an ***idea*** of how the site is being used, which is why it's better to look at usage statistics instead of numbers out of context.

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Using Google Analytics

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Sign up for Google Analytics

1. Create a Google account.
   - Please use your Canada.ca email address (option in creating the account to "use my current email").
   - Gmail or personal email accounts will not be given access.
2. Send the Google account name to the GA admin (Jenn Burke).
3. The admin will give your account permissions to view profiles.
4. Use Google Chrome for all analytics activities.
   - Internet Explorer is not compatible.
5. In the uBlock extension, add "google.com" to your whitelist.

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Google Analytics Quick Reference

http://www.google.com/analytics

If you want…

Go to:

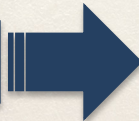|	
➤ Total sessions ➤ Total pageviews ➤ Average time spent on site	➤ Overall bounce rate ➤ Overall pages viewed per session

Audience > Overview

➤ Geographic location of users

Audience > Geo > Location

➤ What site users came from

Acquisition > All Traffic > Channels

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Google Analytics Quick Reference

http://www.google.com/analytics

If you want…

Go to:

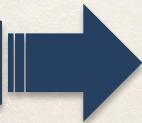> What social media site users came from

Acquisition > Social > Network Referrals

> Which pages were the most popular
> How much time users spent on a page

> How often did a user leave the site after looking at only one page

Behavior > Site Content > All Pages

> Which PDFs or non-HTML files were downloaded

Behavior > Events > Top Events

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Additional functionality: Search

- Allows you to find the usage of specific pages or sections in multiple reports.
  - The most common report to use this in is the Behavior > Site Content > All Pages report.

- **Tips:**
  - When you do a search, use only a part of the URL, not the whole thing.
    - If you want pages in a specific section, use only the folder for that section (e.g., "/gasoline-reports/").
    - If you want a specific page, use the file name (or Drupal node number) for that page (e.g., "/gasoline-reports/12468").
  - Never include "http://" in your search.

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Additional functionality: Shortcut and Export

- Shortcut
  - Allows you to save search configurations for later use.

- Export
  - Allows you to save the report in different file formats.
  - Recommended:
    - Sharing: PDF
    - Analysis: csv

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Additional functionality: Secondary dimensions

- Allows you to drilldown to more specific metrics.

- Secondary dimensions are available on multiple reports.

- Go to Behavior > Site Content > All Pages.

- **Tips:**

  - Good secondary dimensions:
    - **City/Region/Country:** Shows the breakdown of traffic by geographical region.
    - **Source:** Shows the original source of traffic (e.g., search engine, third-party site, etc.). Note that the traffic may not have come directly from the source to the page in question.
    - **Mobile Device Model:** Shows the mobile device used to access the content.

  - You can do an advanced search on both the primary and secondary dimensions if needed.

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Additional functionality: Advanced Segments

- Allows you to break down your traffic by visitor type or behavior, e.g.:
  - Visitors from Alberta
  - Visitors using mobile
  - Visitors who leave after only viewing one page
  - Etc.
- Segments can be applied by users on many reports.
  - Users can also create their own segments and/or download ones from the Google gallery.
- Segments do not change the data within the profile. They're a way for you to "slice and dice" the data available.

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Additional functionality: Advanced Segments

- **Tips:**
  - Suggested advanced segments to use:
    - Users by province
    - Users by state
    - Users by country
    - Highly engaged users (users who spent more than 120 seconds on the site and/or looked at 3 unique pages)
    - Users by mobile device
    - Users who enter the site on a particular campaign
    - Look up more on Google!

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Additional functionality: Campaign tracking

- Why use campaigns?
  - To help measure the effectiveness of initiatives to send traffic to your site that you otherwise wouldn't be able to measure.
  - E.g.: Email newsletters, tweets, banner ads, etc.
- Campaigns are controlled by the content owner.
  - You have to follow the correct format for parameters, but the variables are up to you.
  - The Google Analytics Campaign URL Builder makes this easy.
- Campaigns metrics are located at: **Acquisition > Campaigns**

Example Campaign URL:
http://nrcan.gc.ca/?utm_source=web_analytics_tutorial_2017&utm_medium=slide show&utm_campaign=intro_to_web_analytics

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Using Adobe Analytics

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The future of analytics in the Government of Canada

- Canada.ca uses Adobe Analytics for all content on the canada.ca domain.
  - Applications are not included…yet.
- Administrator: Principle Publisher (Service Canada)
- Very similar to Google Analytics (same general metrics), but more customized for GC needs.
- Once we migrate to Canada.ca we will start to use Adobe Analytics for our website performance measurement (date TBD).
- Google Analytics will still be used for applications and intranet content.

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Adobe Analytics access

- Access to Adobe Analytics is limited to:
  - Departments that have migrated to Canada.ca
  - People who will need access to metrics monthly or more frequently
  - People who have completed the 2-day Adobe Analytics training offered by Service Canada
- Please contact Jenn Burke if you will require access.

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Creating dashboards

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NRCan Web Performance Measurement Dashboards

- Posted quarterly on the Digital Communications blog, Digi-Get-It.

- Created by:
  - Compiling data in a spreadsheet
  - Creating graphs from data
  - Arranging in an MS Word document

- Good for high level information.
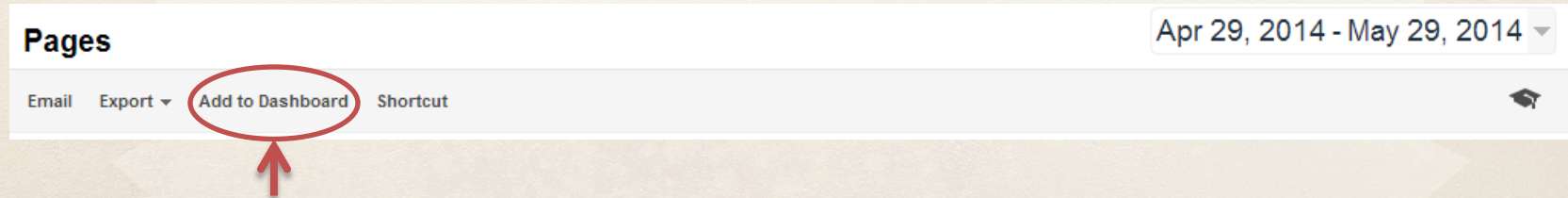
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Google Analytics dashboards

- A dashboard in Google Analytics is a snapshot of graphs or tables.

- You can choose which widgets to feature.

- You can export dashboards in PDF format.

- Almost every report has a button that allows you to "Add to dashboard" or you can add widgets directly on the dashboard itself.

    - Recommended: adding widgets from the reports is much easier.

Pages   Apr 29, 2014 - May 29, 2014 ▾

Email   Export ▾   Add to Dashboard   Shortcut

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Google Analytics dashboards

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Quick • Easy • Customizable • Sharable via PDF	• Can't add text/analysis • Unable to edit how the dashboard appears in PDF format

- Good for sharing with knowledgeable colleagues.

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Google Data Studio

- Free resource: https://datastudio.google.com/

- Allows you to create highly customizable and shareable dashboards using your Google Analytics data.

- Drawbacks:
  - Only in one language.
  - Not exportable or shareable with someone who doesn't have a Google account (this may change in the future).

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When creating your own dashboard…

- Focus on:
  - the purpose of your content
  - the reason your content exists
  - what you want visitors to do
- And answer the questions:
  - Are visitors doing what you want them to do?
  - If not, why not and how will you address it?
  - What decisions can this information help you make?

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Google Resources

- [Google Analytics Help Centre](#)
- Search for help on Google
- Search for Google Analytics tutorials on YouTube
- [Google Analytics Academy](#)

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Internal Resources

- Digi-Get-It: Digital Communications in a Digital World (Digital Communications Division blog)

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Questions?

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[redacted]

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