

Your Web Traffic and Your Bottom Line

By Scott Buresh

Your Web Traffic and Your Bottom Line

Scott Buresh
scott@mediumblue.com

Medium Blue <http://www.mediumblue.com>

Most companies that have websites have access to traffic statistics, usually provided by their web host. Those that don't look at these files (or use a bargain basement web hosting company that doesn't provide them) don't know what they are missing—there is a wealth of information to be found, and reacting to this information can have a positive impact on a company's bottom line. What follows are some of the most basic stats that are typically available, followed by brief suggestions on how to use the information.

The Myth of "Hits"

Most web surfers have come across sites that boast about "20,000 hits per day" or something similar. But what does this mean? To an internet marketer, unfortunately, not much. "Hits" actually refers to the number of requests for information the web server receives. To use an oversimplified example, if your company homepage has 20 separate graphics on it, each visitor to that page will account for 20 hits. If you were boasting of 20,000 hits per day, you would really only be talking about 1000 visitors. Obviously, this statistic is not a fair indication of actual site visitors, and shouldn't be figured into your traffic analysis.

Average Visitors (Daily, Weekly, Monthly)

This is the true measure of website activity. Of course, more traffic is desirable in most circumstances (provided it is at least somewhat targeted). Without access to this data and the ability to look at visitor history, it is impossible to tell if your traffic building initiatives, whether online or offline, are working. It should be noted that the more your traffic increases, the more accurate the rest of your data becomes. This is simply because trends in a larger sample are more telling than trends in a smaller sample where a small number of atypical users can skew the results.

Average Time Spent On Site and Average Page Views Per Visitor

This data can be very useful in determining how your site is

connecting with visitors. If the average time that people spend on the site is small (for example less than a minute), or the average visitor only visits one or two pages, it may indicate some sort of problem. Perhaps your site is attracting the wrong traffic, with visitors abandoning the site quickly when they realize it isn't what they were seeking. Perhaps visitors are confused by the navigation and decide to look elsewhere. Maybe your site, even though you love it, gives off an inexplicable bad vibe. Whatever the case, an awareness of the time people spend on your site and the number of pages they view can bring a potential problem to your attention, and help you gauge how effective your solution is.

Most/Least Requested Pages

This information is helpful in determining the "hot" and "cold" areas of your website. If you notice that a page that you think is important is not getting any attention, perhaps the link to this page should be made more prominent or enticing. On the other hand, if there are areas of the site that you deem less important that are attracting a great deal of your traffic, you can shift some of your sales/marketing focus to those pages. Whatever you find in these stats, you can bet that it will give you valuable insight into the interests and motivations of your visitors.

Top Exit Pages

There are probably certain pages of your site where you don't mind visitors leaving (after all, they can't stay forever). A confirmation page after they fill out a request for more information might be one example of a reasonable exit point. A contact page that tells visitors how to get in touch with your company might also be acceptable. Unfortunately, it is unrealistic to assume that each of your visitors is going to find exactly what they are looking for on your company site, so it is normal to see a wide range of exit pages. However, if a high percentage of visitors are leaving on any particular page, it bears some close scrutiny. Sometimes minor modifications in content can have a positive impact on visitor retention.

Top Search Phrases

This data can be very useful in understanding what type of traffic is coming to your site. If you see relevant phrases that bring you consistent traffic, you can assume that you are getting some targeted traffic. On the other hand, if there are predominant phrases people are using to find your site that are unrelated to your business, you know that at least some of your traffic is of a lesser quality. In addition, if you notice that people find your site by typing in the name of your company, you should be pleased to know that you have achieved some level of brand awareness. By examining the search phrases that your visitors are using, you gain a better understanding of your visitor.

Conclusion

Some people are intimidated by these reports

(mostly because of the sheer volume of data available), but they shouldn't be. While there are many highly specialized statistics that can be used for more in-depth analysis of site traffic, the above areas alone can provide invaluable information on site visitors and website performance. Remember- this data is available for a reason. It's up to your company to use it!

Scott Buresh is co-founder and principal of Medium Blue Internet Marketing (www.mediumblue.com <http://www.mediumblue.com>). For monthly tips on how to get the most out of your internet presence, sign up for the Medium Blue Internet Marketing Newsletter at <http://www.mediumblue.com/newsletters>

[Get-Articles.com](http://www.get-articles.com) : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)