

Chapter 2 - Tracking Traffic Volumes B3C2-1

Five basic metrics = basic ingredients of traffic

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1. Sessions (visits)
 2. Unique visitors
 3. Pageviews
 4. Time on site
 5. Referrers
- } need to understand these
+ how to interpret them,
if going to do advanced analysis
+ learn to use that data
to improve your site

I. Seeing Why Hits are a Lousy Metric

Hits = almost meaningless for ^{measuring} marketing performance
≠ measure audience

≠ measure marketing performance

Hit = any 1 file downloaded from Website at 1 Time

Every image, script + stylesheet = a hit

One page can contain 1-1000 files

But, hits are a valuable measure

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1. Great for measuring server overload
2. Good way to figure how to speed page load times

II. Understanding the Five Basic Traffic Metrics

A. Tracking sessions (visits)

session = any 1 person visiting Website any 1 Time

= good general measure of site use + load

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Dont use sessions to measure

1. Audience size - 1 person can generate many sessions! Sessions > visits!
2. Ad Performance - sessions ≠ differentiate bet. new + repeat visitors
Unique visitors = much better

Do use sessions to see

1. How busy your site is, in the broadest terms
2. Conversion rate based on foot traffic to your site
3. General interest in your site
4. Peak Times of day, month, year

Some experts skip analytics of sessions, but they do provide valuable info!

B. Tracking unique visitors

= good measure of audience size, ad performance, + effects of blog mentions, news reports

Don't use unique visitors to measure

1. Per-visitor interest: tells you how many came to site, $\neq$ tell you how many liked site

Combine info with pageviews + time-on-site

2. Overall site activity - $100 \text{ visitors} \times 100 \text{ visits} = 10,000 \text{ sessions}$

Use sessions to track site activity

Do use unique visitors to measure

1. Audience size - great absolute measure
2. Overall ad performance - watch it, but dig deeper with pageviews + referrers
3. Changes over time - watch effects after events
4. Comparison with sessions - how many return

high ratio of sessions/unique visits = visitor loyalty

Log analysis tools + older versions of Urchin, WebTrends, require additional set up to report U.V.
= a must have metric!

285 C. Tracking pageviews - any 1 visitor viewing 1 page
 = measure of interest in specific areas of site
 Many/most tools give you diff. ways to view pageviews
 1. Overall pageview count for entire site
 2. Page-by-page view at which pages $\leftarrow$ most attention
 Don't use pageviews to measure audience size
Do use pageviews to measure

286 1. Visitor interest, esp. pageview/visit
 2. Content performance - tells you what audience wants to hear
 3. Ad performance - most tools show pageviews per visit generated by specific referrers

287 D. Tracking time on site - useful when combined with pageviews, visits, sessions, + average time
 1. Balancing pageviews with time on site
 Pageviews can be inaccurate, so compare time on site with pageview to make sure = accurate measure of visitor interest
 2. Weighing sessions + unique visitors with time on site
 to assess how valuable a traffic surge is
 a. If average time on site plunged + long term benefit
 b. If average time on site stayed consistent, even when # of visitors jumped - shows you added more quality members to your audience

289 E. Tracking Referrers
 Referrer = Web page that points to your website
 could be traditional web page, email, SE result

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Combine referrer with sales + conversion data
- good measure of ROI - return on investment/
from your online marketing efforts
Next chapter is dedicated to referrers -
they're that important!