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Introduction

The Internet has become a friendly place for digital publishers and online business owners.

With the help of technology like tablets and smartphones, the use of the Internet isn't stationary anymore. Users are accessing on the go, socializing with friends and learning about the information that is most important to them.

Due to this increase of online activity, the opportunity to develop an audience through is great. With the help of targeted writing, search engine optimization, and social media, you can organically grow your audience. The costs associated with these strategies are much less than constantly paying for advertising, and audience members seem to appreciate them more than blatant ads.

Through this 50-page report, you will discover dozens of tips for developing an online audience with the help of organic audience development strategies.

How Can I Find My Top Keywords Using Website Analytics?

Using website analytics to determine your top keywords and then what to do with them

When a client first comes to us, one of the first questions they ask is, "What are my top keywords?" And what they're usually talking about are the keywords they *should* be ranking for, but so many times we forget that there are already hundreds and thousands of top keywords that we're already ranking for.

Our clients use Google Analytics, so let's use them to illustrate this example. Head to your Google Analytics account now to start. Then go to Traffic Sources > Overview.

From there, towards the bottom right, you'll see a short list of keywords. These are your top 10 keywords, and it's not uncommon for *(not provided)* to be your "top keyword". What's in this list can vary greatly.

For some clients, we find the names of their editors to be highly ranked keyword phrases (another great reason to have full editor bio pages). For others, it's a few different versions of the name of their company. And then for even more, they're the names of articles, both old articles and new articles. It's always nice to see some blockbuster posts that bring in traffic years after they were published.

In any case, click the "view full report" link to see a bigger list of your top keywords. From here you can keep clicking from page to page (we have almost 7,000 pages of top keywords).

You can also play with the "secondary dimension" button which allows you to segment keywords by the types of visitor, language and other types of demographics so that you know more about the people most likely to type in a particular keyword. For example, "paper and digital magazines" is a top keyword for Mequoda, but not in the US — rather it's our Portuguese friends who find us through that keyword.

Another interesting thing you can see is what browser they came in on. For a company where we all use Macs, it's a happy surprise to see that most of our visitors that come in from our top keywords like "mequoda" and "mequoda group" are all using Safari. Hello, fellow Apple-lovers!

If you run pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns, you can also sort these keywords by "medium" so that you don't mix up your organic and paid traffic.

So now that you have your list, here are a few things you can do with those top keywords, including find out what you're up against.

An exercise for keyword analysis

If you want to know more about who you're competing against with your top keywords, try this exercise.

To begin, go to Google and enter your top keywords into the search bar. After conducting the search, take note of the following:

• What does your listing(s) look like? Is the correct content in the title, description and meta data?

• Do you have any ads on this keyword? If so, are the ads showing up when the keyword is searched? If not, you'll have to determine why this is happening in your Google Adwords account.

• What do the other sites on the listing page look like? Take a look at the paid and natural listings. Note how they're using the keywords in the listings to determine if you could be using keywords more appropriately in your own listings.

• Follow all of the links on the first page of the search results, including the advertisements, and review them with the specific search term in mind. Do this to potentially formulate new ideas for improving the content on your website.

• If you're feeling bold, leave a comment on any blog posts that show up using your article/page URL as the website URL that links back to you. That's sort of an old-hat trick to help drive inbound links back to your own articles from top-ranking articles on the same keyword phrase. Leave a constructive comment though, don't be a comment spammer.

Another key document for digital success is an Online Market Audit. This process and resulting document alerts you to other websites in your market that are ranking well for your keywords and may help identify partnership opportunities.

Mequoda's Managing Editor Chris Sturk says, "Frankly, if you don't have a keyword universe, you need to build one for the most efficient audience development online. A keyword universe will put all your keywords in one location and help with your SEO process. It will direct all of your organization members to the most important words associated with your online content. All online editors should have a copy of the keyword universe in front of them while planning and writing editorial content." Read Chris's Top 8 Tips for Sizing Up Your SEO Competition.

How to Analyze Your Referring Website Analytics + 7 Steps for Using them

There's a lot to learn in Google Analytics, but unless you're a business analyst or marketing manager, you probably don't need to know all of them.

However, one set of metrics that every user of any capacity should know are your referring website analytics. Referring websites are those who are linking to you and sending you traffic. Referring traffic is comprised of visitors that find those links to your site and click on them.

If you have a lot of spammy sites that you're 100% sure are bringing down your ranking, Google announced a new disavow tool that allows you to mark sites as spam that are linking to you. SEOMoz warns most people from using this tool, however, because most sites don't need it and the drop in links can do more harm than good.

Let's run through a few of the numbers found on the referring traffic part of your analytics package so we can wrap our heads around their value.
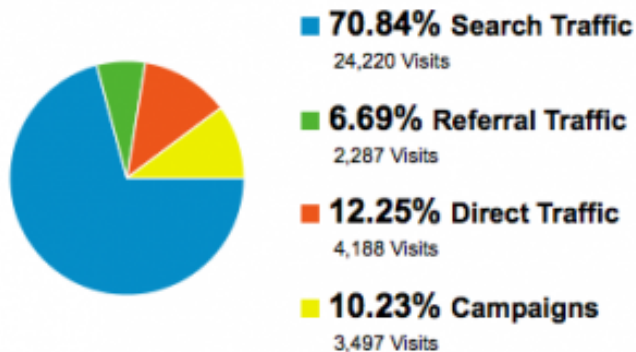
In the latest version of Google Analytics, you can find an overview of your referring traffic sources by visiting **Standard Reporting > Traffic Sources > Overview**

A site that's well optimized will have a substantial amount of traffic that comes from search engines, usually 65% or more.

To find out your referring website analytics, go to **Traffic Sources > Sources > Referrals** on the left-hand side of your dashboard.

If you partake in social media and search engine optimization, your top referring sources are likely to be Google, t.co (Twitter), Facebook and LinkedIn.

If you keep flipping pages of your sources, you'll come across smaller sites that are linking to your website and sending you traffic.

Once you find one of those, you can click on it to find out more about the link and the visitors it's referring. You'll see how many people it's sent to you, how many pages those visitors looked at, their average visit duration, if they're new visitors, and what their bounce rate was.

If you come across an inbound link that has favorable metrics in all of these categories, it might be smart to reach out and try to get another inbound link from the same blog. From this page, you can also open the link to see what article or page linked to you and where.

Numbers for referring traffic

Here's an example of some referring website analytics for one site that links to Mequoda.com, and what these numbers mean.

Visits	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
53	1.28	00:00:19	100.00%	81.13%
% of Total: 0.16% (34,192)	Site Avg: 2.06 (-37.74%)	Site Avg: 00:01:22 (-76.93%)	Site Avg: 78.69% (27.07%)	Site Avg: 76.85% (5.57%)

Visits – The number of impressions you got from this link in the time specified.

Pages/Visits – This is the number of pages the average visitor saw when they visited. The amount of pages visitors go to is important because it builds overall traffic for your site. This is even more valuable if you engage in online advertising because it means more impressions and brings forth the possibility for more clicks.

Average Visitor Duration – The amount of time visitors spend on your website can dictate brand loyalty and sell more products. For instance, if you provide great content that keeps your audience on your website, they will likely remember this trait and continue to return to your site in the future. If you can boast minutes upon minutes of engagement on your website, there is a better chance for you to sell products, be it your own or from advertisers.

% New Visits – This can tell you if the traffic was new, or existing readers. If a site is sending existing readers, they're not adding any value other than credibility,

depending on whether they're a creditable source.

Bounce Rate — This tells you how many people bounced off your site within seconds of landing there. In search queries, this tells search engines like Google that your page didn't answer the question that a user was looking for. It can tell you the same thing as a referring traffic percentage.

Or in other cases, it means that a user didn't dig deeper into your site. They may have found what they were looking for immediately and didn't need to go further into your website.

Overall, this inbound link isn't very valuable to us. Visitors from this link don't go very far from the main page, they only stay 19 seconds or so, and 81% of them bounce back to the original page. Below is a much better example of a link we'd like to get more of.

Visits	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
38	**5.92**	**00:04:42**	**63.16%**	**7.89%**
% of Total: 8.11% (34,192)	Site Avg: 2.06 (187.31%)	Site Avg: 00:01:22 (243.26%)	Site Avg: 78.69% (-19.74%)	Site Avg: 76.85% (-89.73%)

Referring traffic exercise

If you want to know how to use this data to your advantage, follow these seven steps.

Step #1 - Take the referring sites from your analytics data and compile them into a spreadsheet.

Step #2 – Visit the referring websites to see where the links are located on their website.

Step #3 – Get the page rank of each referring website.

Step #4 – Google each referring site and click on the "similar" link. Add all of the similar sites and their page ranks to an additional spreadsheet.

Step #5 – Color-code your first spreadsheet so you can differentiate between your actual referring websites and the websites found from the "similar" links.

Step #6 – Combine all of the content from the two spreadsheets and sort alphabetically.

***Step* #7 –** Identify new sites that may be willing to link to you. Focus on the ones with high page ranks first.

This specific step-by-step process will help you use the numbers from your referring website analytics to find new sites to contact. Since your content is similar, there is a better chance of getting referring links and guest-blogging opportunities, which are the best way to build quality, inbound links.

Google Visibility Math: Six Organic SEO Metrics that Matter

Knowing how much qualified website traffic Google should be sending you is just a matter of doing the numbers

Almost a decade ago, a close colleague told me that it was impossible to figure out how much search traffic a website could or should be receiving from Google and other search engines. He was wrong.

This year I'll personally explain the following math to a few hundred people. For most of them, it will be a revelation. With that in mind, let me explain how to calculate the amount of traffic Google and other search engines could be sending your way.

Google visibility revealed

Google keeps track of every search made by every human being and software program on the World Wide Web. Much of that data is accessible for those who know how to use the Google Keyword Tool (if you don't, download our free report on using the Google Keyword Tool). It takes an experienced analyst 60 to 100 hours to build a comprehensive keyword universe for a content-driven website. The process begins by reviewing the content that will be deployed on the website. The keyword specialist then works with the site's chief content officer or editor-in-chief to discover the best way to organize that content into a three level hierarchy that can include uber keyword phrases, primary keyword phrases, and secondary keyword phrases or tags.

The initial primary keyword phrases are then entered into the Google Keyword Tool one at a time to quantify annual searches for that term and discover what could be hundreds of related keyword phrases. This process is repeated for each primary phrase, and the results are examined for alternate or additional primary phrases that Google may suggest. All the research is then organized and detailed to create a keyword universe for the website that matches its content production schedule. For our website, the keyword universe currently represents 26,843,376 searches per ear.

Mequoda Daily Search Arrivals Report 3/8/12 18:06	Mar-11 Feb-12
Known Universe	26,843,376
Implied Universe	134,216,880
Visibilty Index	1.31%
Organic Search Impressions	1,753,442
Organic Search Arrivals	203,381
Implied CTR	12%

The long tail factor

The Google Keyword Tool does not reveal every keyword phrase that is related to your primary. In fact, the tool will only reveal phrases that have been searched for 120 times during the trailing 12 months. Google does not reveal what author Chris Anderson calls the long tail. Our research has revealed that the long tail for organic search is very close to a standard long tail distribution. The keyword phrases Google reveals represent about 20 percent of total search volume in the US for a given cluster of keyword phrases. This means that 80 percent of the search traffic which will arrive at your website will do so using long tail keyword phrases that are used less than 120 times per year or 10 times per month. Thus, to discover your entire search universe size, you must multiply your known keyword universe by five, a number we call the long tail factor.

Organic search engine visibility

There are many programs on the market to monitor search engine ranking; we use Advanced Web Ranking. This tool looks up your website position for each of the keyword phrases in your known keyword universe. From there, we apply a visibility percentage for each position from 1 to 30. Nobody searches past page three in 2012 except someone looking for him or herself. If we assume 100 percent of searchers see a listing on page one, and 32 percent see a listing on page two, and seven percent see a listing on page three, we can combine the above data to estimate the number of organic search engine impressions our website is receiving during any given period. For us, that comes out to 1,753,442 impressions

over the past 12 months.

Organic search arrivals

This is the easy part. Simply go to your Google Analytics report and set the date range to include the last 12 months. Then go to the report for organic search engine arrivals. For us that number is 203,381. I can further calculate the implied click through from Google listing to website arrival by dividing the arrivals by the impressions. For us the implied CTR is about 12 percent or about 20 percent better than the 10 percent industry average.
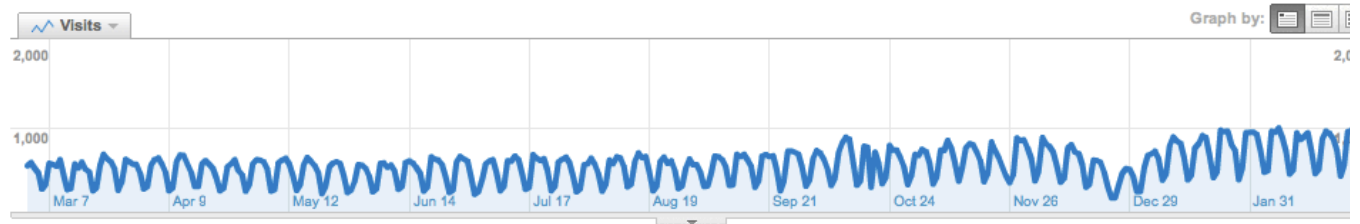
Search sent 203,381 non-paid visits via 22 sources

Predicting your Google Visibility Index (GVI)

With a keyword universe in hand, you can calculate the Google Visibility Index for any website including your own. I have successful clients, and by successful I mean profitable, who have Google Visibility Indexes that range from one percent to 65 percent. Most of my clients have a visibility index of between five percent and 10 percent. Having a high visibility index is controlled by a number of factors including competition, website architecture, and website content. Other factors like inbound links and social media participation also impact the position your website can hold on each individual keyword phrase in your keyword universe, and thus your composite Google Visibility Index.

This data comes in handy for a number of uses. First and foremost, we can use it to size the revenue potential for any online business. Next, we can use it to guide the architecture of our website. And finally, we can use it to guide the day-to-day content development efforts of every content producer on our team.

For Mequoda Group, organic search is currently driving 68 percent of our website traffic which is our largest source of new customers. Astonishingly, a Google Visibility Index of just more than one percent is driving more than 200,000 qualified customers to our website. The power of visibility is an awesome thing.

The Mysterious UTM Code Explained

One UTM code per day keeps the analysts at play

An Urchin Traffic Monitor (UTM) code is the way that businesses track sales from their origination point (like a tweet or a brochure) down the funnel to their conversion page. In Google Analytics, these codes can be tracked under the general "Traffic Sources" area just like any other source.

In **physical media** a business could send a postcard that promotes an easy-to-remember custom URL. The business could then redirect that URL to a new one that includes a UTM code. That UTM code can be tracked in Google Analytics to tell you how many sales came directly from your postcard effort.

In **digital media** it's even easier. You can include UTM codes in Tweets, Facebook posts and email to keep track of where all of your sales originate. It's the best way to discover your most effective sales funnels.

A typical URL with a UTM tracking code looks something like this:

http://www.yourwebsite.com/?utm_**source**=yoursource&utm_**medium**=yourmedium&utm_**campaign**=yourcampaignname

The **source** is where your link is hosted, like search, affiliate website or email campaign name or anywhere else.

The **medium** is how it's delivered, like a postcard, PPC, email or social media.

The **campaign** is typically what you're promoting, or the special way you're promoting it (like a holiday sale).

If you're using this UTM code to monitor PPC, you can add a value for **term,** which can be the keyword you're targeting. If you're A/B testing, the value for **content** would be a variation between the pages you're testing, like "headline" or "image".

Google Analytics can help out with all of this with their Google Analytics URL Builder while you're still getting the hang of it. Google Adwords has the ability to do auto-tagging but when using another network, sending emails or using banner ads, you need to manually tag the links with UTM codes yourself.

Installing UTM tracking codes

Urchin has already provided a pretty basic thousand-foot view of how to install UTM tracking codes and it goes something like this:

- Copy UTM files into the website document root
- Enable Cookies in Logging
- Implement UTM tracking code into your HTML
- Set Urchin 6 Profile to use UTM
- Check for correct implementation

How to use UTM tracking codes

Here's an example of how you might track a promotion from Twitter:

Let's say you have a new ebook about cats that you want to track from a tweet sent at 9am on October 20th, 2012.

Use the Google Analytics URL Builder to add in your destination URL (the landing page).

- Your source might be "twitter"

- Your medium might be "121020-tweet" (that's the year, month, day, then "tweet")

- Your name might be "cat-ebook"

Your new URL would look like this –
http://www.yourwebsite.com/?utm_**source**=twitter&utm_**medium**=121020-tweet&utm_**campaign**=cat-ebook

Or let's try something more traditional, like an email campaign. You're trying to promote an event in your email newsletter.

- Your source might be "promo" (because you're sending from your promotional email template)
- Your medium would be "email" (because you're sending an email)

- Your campaign might be "2012-cat-conference" (because you're promoting your 2012 conference about cats)

The URL you'll use in that email would look like this –
http://www.yourwebsite.com/?utm_**source**=promo&utm_**medium**=email&utm_**c
ampaign**=2012-cat-conference

Some publishers also choose to use a unique UTM code for every link in their
newsletter so that they can track which links get the most clicks.

How to track UTM codes

In Google Analytics, you can find your traffic from UTM codes by looking at
Traffic Sources > Campaigns. Take a look behind the hood of Mequoda to see
what a properly working UTM code dashboard looks like:
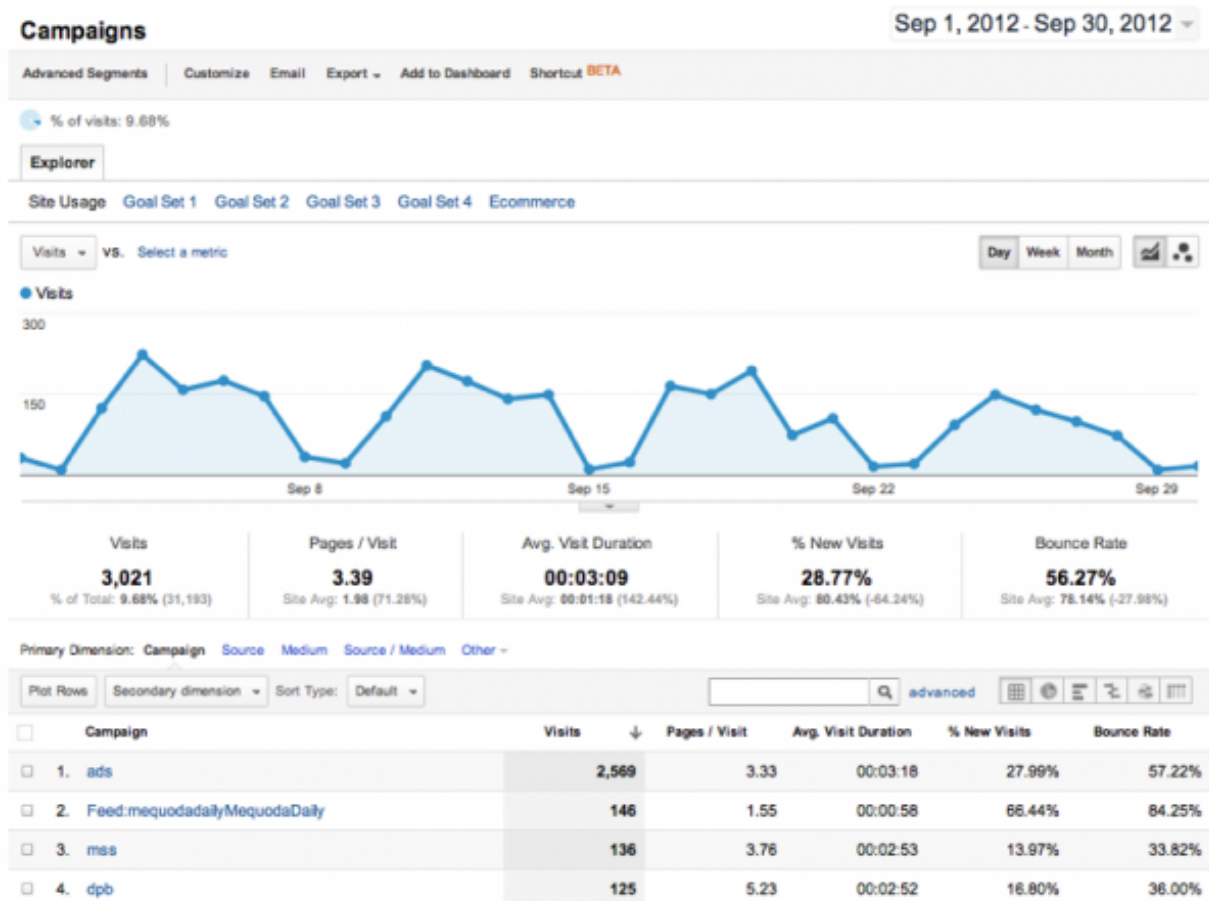
Since Mequoda doesn't use PPC, we know this traffic is from our emails. If we
did use PPC then we could set the Primary Dimension to Source or Medium to see
where the traffic came from.

Publishers with more diverse streams of traffic, like affiliates, partner ads and PPC, have a robust dashboard to filter through. You can use this data from UTM codes to determine your best sources of traffic so that you know you're always spending your ad budget in the right places.

7 Metrics Worth Monitoring

Discover what are believed to be the most important metrics for measuring the performance of your online business

In the digital landscape, Internet marketers have the opportunity to measure many activities.

What metrics are truly worth monitoring though? This is a worthy question to ponder, especially since there is only so much time in a workday…you want to be monitoring the best metrics to properly deduce how well your site is performing, while efficiently managing your time.

A recent article from eMarketer discussed a new book written by eMarketer CEO and co-founder Geoff Ramsey and Vipin Mayar, EVP of McCann Worldgroup. According to eMarketer, the book, entitled *Digital Impact: The Two Secrets to Online Marketing Success* proposes that there "are only seven metrics that are critical to for performance measurement across digital channels." These metrics include:

-Qualified Reach: This metric tracks the number of individuals that come to your site (quantity) and the number visitors that perform an action (quality).

-Clickthrough rates: This metric should still be considered when presenting materials that promote a direct response.

-Brand perception lift: How does your audience respond to the messages you use to communicate? This can be tested against a control group.

-Engagement Score (ES): Is your content truly sticking with your audience? This metric helps you monitor the audience engagement throughout all your digital media efforts.

-End Action Rate: How effective are your campaigns? Are casual visitors converting in the manner you'd like? This statistic helps monitor if end actions are taken. For Mequoda System operators, a casual user converting to an email recipient is the most basic end action we like to see completed; direct sales of Mequoda Pro, webinars or seminars is the more ideal end action.

-Efficiency metrics: Are your promotional methods working properly? Are you spending the right amount of money on them? This metric shows how well your

marketing efforts do, in comparison to the associated cost.

-Return on investment (ROI): Are you seeing a return on your investment? Which activities are returning the most? This metric ultimately helps you determine the director of your marketing efforts and campaigns.

These metrics are surely important to tracking online business performance as they help paint a picture of your successes throughout time. By monitoring how visitors interact with your content, from sharing it with peers to purchasing aligned products, you can see what works, what doesn't and where your time should be spent in the attempts of bettering performance.

Do you agree with *Digital Impact* that these seven metrics are the only critical factors worth monitoring for performance measurement across digital channels?

How To Track Competitors: What They're Selling & How They're Selling It

Discover how to track competitors and the tools that make it a little bit easier

Amazon.com bought IMDB.com simply because they had been a great affiliate that was starting to expand into the Amazon space around 1998. As of late, one of the biggest trends in digital media is to buy your biggest opponent, or whoever makes a product that you should have made yourself. Google does it (YouTube, JotSpot, Motorola Mobility), Twitter is doing it (Tweetdeck, BagCheck, BackType, Tweetie, etc.) and every other "2.0″ web business who is likely to make it through the bubble is doing it.

What ever happened to good old-fashioned competitive intelligence? Luckily, as online competition grows, so do the tools available to us.

AdBeat and SpyFu are both awesome platforms (with a modest price tag and free trials) to find out all of the ads that your competitors are running on different ad networks, including Google Analytics. Want to know just how that competitor is selling those books? Take a look at all of the ads they use to point to that page, including images and copy.

Wordstream's AdWords Performance Grader is also a great new tool that acts as a free report card, comparing your AdWords campaigns to those of your competitors. According to Larry Kim, WordStream Founder and Chief Technology Officer, they "built this free tool to provide advertisers with an easy to digest snapshot of how their ad campaigns are performing and to tutor them on how to make changes that will boost their performance and save money."

OpenSiteExplorer is also a good tool if you're looking to find out who is linking to the landing page of your competitor. If you want to know what kind of partnerships they've built and what quality those partnerships they are, this tool will tell you.

Google Alerts is useful if you want to know when someone has mentioned the landing page/product that you are looking to analyze. With this data you can see what bloggers are willing to sponsor products or write reviews.

TweetBeep offers the same alerts as above, except on Twitter.

Compete Site Analytics is a free service that will reveal a website's monthly unique visitor count. If your competitor's landing page has a unique URL for tracking reasons, this will be easy. If they don't, you'll need to log into Compete to get subdomain stats.

Compete Search Analytics enables you to discover keywords driving traffic to any domain, identify gaps in your search strategy, and track your performance against competitors.

5 Ways to Reduce Bounce Rates on Your Articles

Five simple lessons that we've learned from bounce rates on Mequoda.com

Being the analytics junkie that I am, I frequent Mequoda's Google Analytics dashboard often. Recently, I've been on a personal mission to reduce bounce rates on our articles. When someone "bounces" from your site, it means that they came, they didn't find what they were looking for, and they left quickly.

Google's algorithm pays close attention to bounce rates on the search results that they list. If someone clicks a link in their results and immediately hits the back button and comes back to the results page to click on another article, they take notice. Too many bounces from your listing can cause Google to drop you deeper and deeper into their results. So it's very important that when someone clicks on your article in a search engine, that you keep them on your page for a little while.

Without further ado, here are all the ways I've been successfully lowering the bounce rate on Mequoda Daily articles:

1. Make sure that every external link opens in a new window: This is a general rule in terms of keeping people on your site, but it's especially important for keeping your technical bounce rate low. Even if your article delivers exactly what the user wanted, perhaps a link to another website or a resource, your bounce rate will reflect the fact that they landed on your page and immediately left.

By making sure that every link you post (except ones that link within your own website) open in a new window, you will significantly reduce your bounce rate. In fact, if your website never implemented this practice before and started today, I'd bet that your overall website bounce rate would reduce by half.

In HTML terms, this is the difference between a link that will take a user off your site, and one that will open a new page:

- **Wrong:** Some Other Site

- **Right:** Some Other Site

2. Check the keywords that people use to find your site: If you get a lot of traffic on a keyword, make sure that you have an article that clearly reflects the

keyword. Sometimes we get ranked for keyword phrases that aren't entirely related to what we're being listed for. That means that you may be getting great traffic from it, but you're probably also getting a big bounce rate.

To remedy this, try writing a blog post that *does* target that keyword. If there's only one specific article that shows up for that keyword, you might even consider adding more content to the existing article too, to make sure that the user finds what he's looking for when he shows up. There's nothing wrong with updating old content, in fact I'm just about to encourage it.

3. Update old articles that still get tons of traffic: Just the other day, I updated our 11 Best Free Event Listing Websites article. There were originally only eight websites in the list, and it was published in 2008. This article gets about 1,000 unique page views per month and has almost 30 comments. This article is one of our top traffic-generators.

Unfortunately, the article was getting a little too ripe at a practically ancient three years old, and while we still ranked #1 for our keyword, the bounce rate on this article was beginning to increase.

To remedy this, I went in and updated the article with new statistics and additional resources. I changed the date to reflect the recent update and added "2011 Update" to the title as well.

Even though most of the data hadn't changed, users were still believing that the list must be terribly outdated because of the 2008 stamp on it. After re-writing the article and conducting additional research, it turned out that the resources I'd written about three years ago were still the best ones for the list. I added in a few new sites though, for good measure.

4. List relevant articles: Make sure that your site is set up to move visitors down a path. Most blogs are set up to feature "related articles" below a post, but this area is generally considered a blind spot for many readers. If you can include related articles in your sidebar, even better. In fact, WordPress has a few plugins to make this process even more automated:

- SEO Smart Links: Automatically links phrases in your articles to the posts or pages of your choice. This would be excellent as a glossary function, where your glossary terms are automatically linked to their respective glossary page (which include links to relevant articles). However, you can also set phrases up to link to relevant articles that use the same phrase.

- Search Engine Keywords Related Posts Widget: This sidebar widget for WordPress will pull in posts related to the keyword that the user came in on. Say a user came in using the keyword "blueberry streusel". The related posts widget would feature posts related to blueberry streusel, even if the article is about apple pie. This is great for those times that people find a post that is not technically suited to answer the query that the user typed in Google.

5. Improve load times: This one is simple. If you use a lot of graphics in your articles, make sure they're optimized for the web so that nobody is waiting for your page to load. Three years ago you may have been able to make your website visitors wait thirty seconds, but today people want their information instantly.

3 Ways to Get the Most Accurate Social Media Analytics

The fundamental differences between web analytics, plugin analytics, and social sharing platform analytics

Radio pioneer Lee De Forest once argued that, "while theoretically and technically television may be feasible, commercially and financially it is an impossibility."

Just like the television, and every other new means of communication, social media has seen its "…but where's the money?" days. And ROI may have been the most-hated acronym in the social media circle at one time, but today it's just another way to prove the effectiveness of humanizing your business.

As a business owner, editor, or social media implementer, you require the numbers that tell you what you're doing right and what you're doing wrong. If De Forest could have even imagined Google Analytics back in 1926, his brain probably would have exploded. Luckily, we have a plethora of options to see these numbers that keep our businesses rolling and our eyes on the goals—stay in business, become more profitable, and keep customers happy.

Google Social Analytics

Google Analytics has recently made it incredibly easy to start measuring your social media efforts. Up until this recent June, you were stuck developing your own social media functions within GA, which caused most business owners and managers to put that task on the "things to assign when I get around to learning what the heck I'm assigning" list.

Now Google has launched the beta version of their latest dashboard, which automatically includes social analytics. This is a process that began when they opened up Social Plug-In Analytics in June, and as a bonus, made it even easier by working with WordPress plugin developers like AddThis, ShareThis and AddToAny which meant that you had even less work to do.
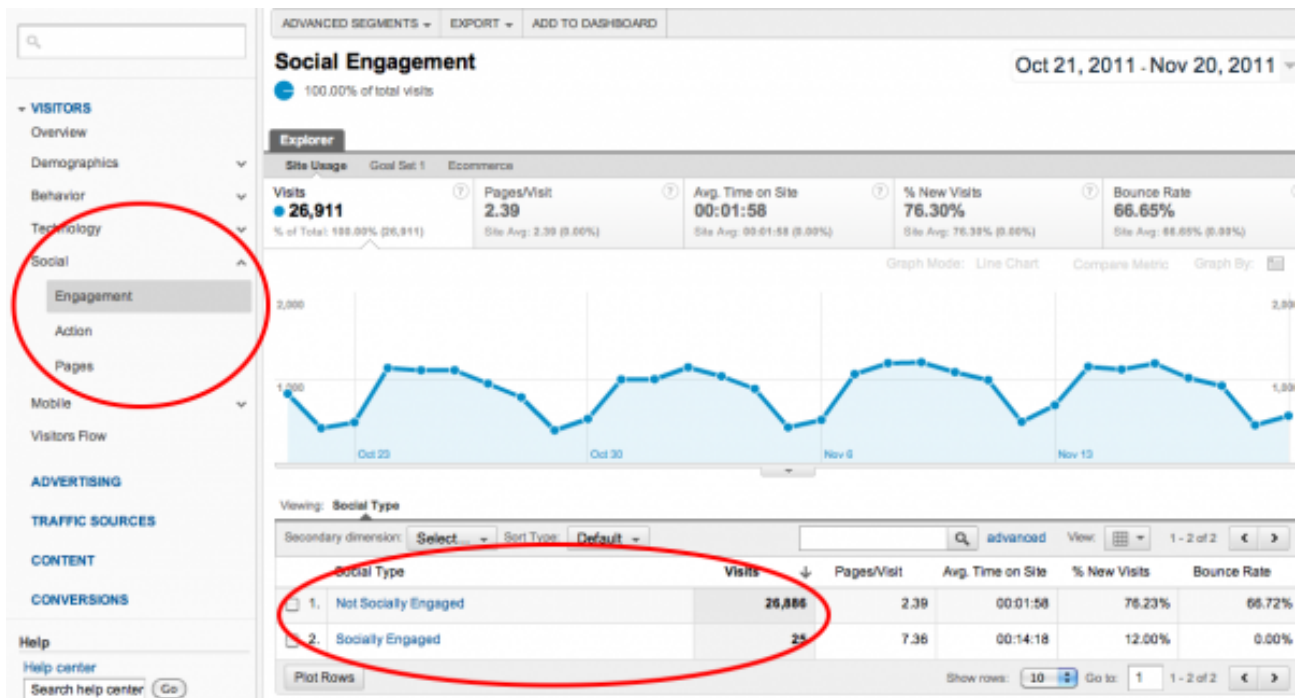
Social analytics with Google went from being exhausting, to a heck of a lot easier, to a no-brainer. Now, it's just a matter of what you want to take from these analytics that will determine if you want to venture into other platforms for your other social media milestones.

Don't worry if your numbers are low to start because they only just started rolling things out, but you can see from this sample one thing that looks promising – "socially engaged" users visited more than double the amount of pages as others. The take-away? Bring in more socially-savvy users!

Social Media Plugins

I might have mentioned back there that Google Analytics is now integrated with plugins like AddThis, but even without that integration you can use plugins like AddThis to get social media analytics. As a bonus, if you're on WordPress, you can get those analytics right in your dashboard.
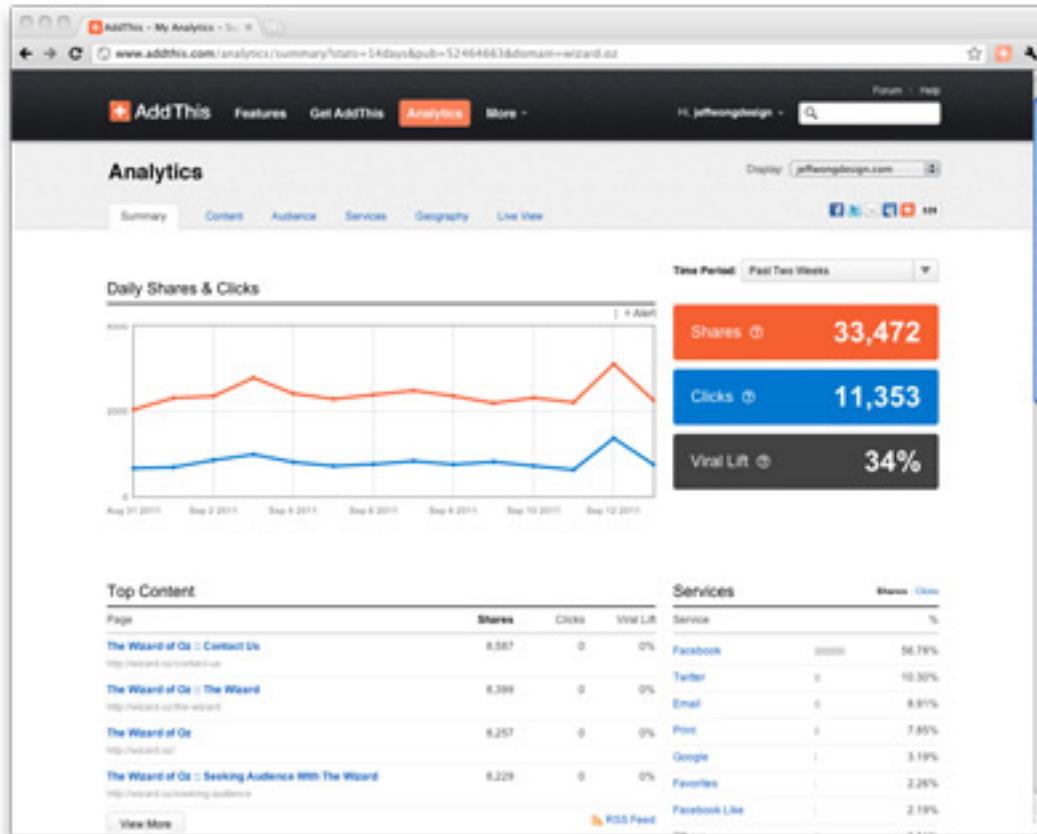
Hootsuite Analytics

Hootsuite is not only the best tool I've found to manage social media accounts, but it also offers a good set of customizable analytics reports. While Hootsuite and their basic reports are both free, you're better off paying their tiny monthly fee to get an account that can be managed by multiple editors, and pay the extra fee for more robust social media reports that are customizable and even printable, which may come in very handy depending how big and old school your company is.
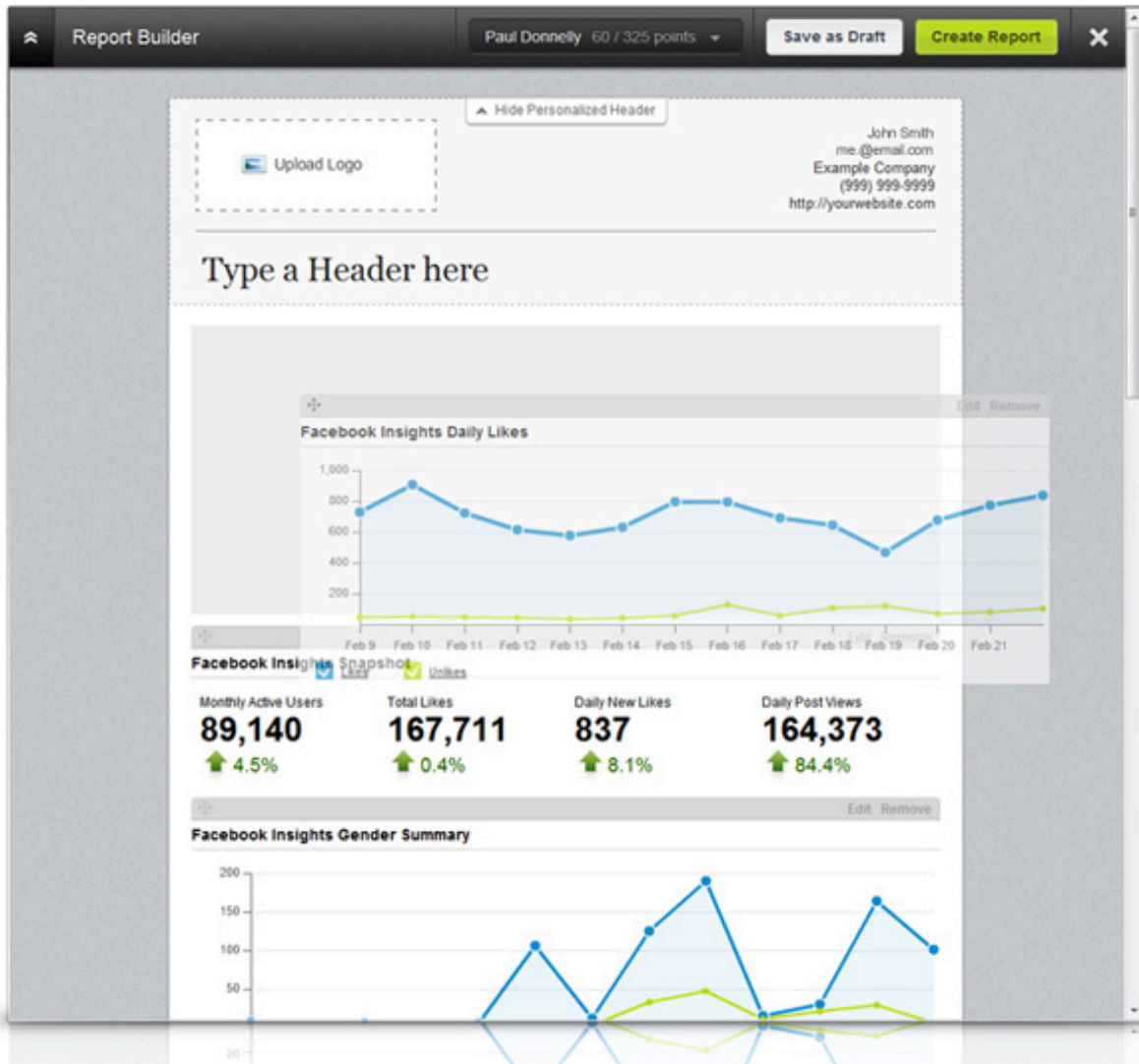
So now I tricked you here by only giving you three ways to get social media analytics, because it's not really easy to say which is best—it all depends on your goal and where your efforts are focused. These three focus on the all-inclusive. While these might be my top choices in that arena, there are plenty of other options like SocialBakers for advanced Facebook analytics, while something like PostRank Analytics is meant to help you build customer loyalty.

The "Pages" for Social Media Analytics

Have you been using Google Analytics to monitor social media activities?

For a while, online marketers were questioning the value behind social media. As time goes on, more analytical tools become available, which make it easier to monitor the impact social media has on your company.

There are certainly many data points that can be tracked and monitored with the help of analytics programs. I've listed three examples of important social media metrics worth tracking.

Three social media metrics

Google Analytics users probably know that they can view social data within the Traffic Sources tabs of the newest Analytics version.

The "Pages" section is the home to a handful of metrics you should pay attention to because it gives you the information on which page brings in the most: visits, pageviews, pages per visit, and how long the visitor stayed on your site.

You can use this data to compare against search traffic if you'd like to get an idea of which works better for specific information. Knowing the pages that are most popular on social media gives you an idea of the content that you should share more often. It's the aligned community that should be targeted with your communications.

How to Check Website Traffic & Increase Visitors

Learn how to check website traffic and compare your print to web ratio

The amount of visitors who come to your website can directly correlate to how much revenue you are getting from all of that traffic. That is, if you have the proper conversion architecture set up on every page of your website.

The chain of events goes something like this…

Someone comes in from a tweet, reads your post, sees that you offer a free white paper on the same topic, joins your email list, downloads your white paper, gets an email from you about a related webinar, purchases the webinar, attends the webinar… and the world continues to turn.

In any case, we often use website traffic as a measurement of how successful a print publisher is in the online space. As a rule of thumb, a print publisher should have more online unique website viewers than they have print subscribers. This is a relatively easy task, considering your web viewers probably don't have to pay for your free blog content.

An indication that a publisher is properly SEOing their posts is the sheer amount of website traffic they are getting from the keywords they target in search engines. Often, these publishers will see a majority of their traffic pour in from content that is months and years old. With proper conversion architecture, they can upsell them to a free report and eventually to a paid product.

The point here is that you want to know how many unique visitors your website is getting, so that you can compare that number to your print circulation. While we can always improve our methods of increasing website traffic, you may want to pay special attention if your ratio is hanging a little low.

Additionally, you also want to check the traffic of your direct competitors, so that you can see how they are performing. If they have a higher ratio than your publication, you might look into seeing how they are driving website traffic, including seeing how active they are in social media and SEO using a tool like SiteTrail. SiteTrail will give you kinds of free analysis on a given website, including their social media presence, the quality of their content, how well they're ranked and even which colors they use most on their website.

Since you can't use your own analytics package to view the unique visitors of a competitor, try using free resources like Compete.com or Quantcast. As you probably already know, you can then use the Audit Bureau of Circulations eCirc tool to find out the current circulation of any consumer magazine, newspaper, business publication or farm publication.

These two numbers are the keys to figuring out your own digital success as well as the lessons you can learn from the competitors in your niche.

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