

## **What You Don't Know About Web Analytics Can Hurt Your Website**

by

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Web analytics. Don't worry, it is not as boring as it sounds. You may know the concept by another name, such as Web analysis, site traffic statistics, visitor statistics, site hit reporting, Web tracking, Website metrics or various other terms. Web analytics is basically a technical term for methods to monitor your site traffic and usage, ranging from simple hit counters to advanced Web site traffic reporting. I like the term, Web analytics, because it sounds important. And with good reason -- it is extremely important to the survival of any Website.

Before we go any further into our subject, I first need to ask a few critical questions that I wish I had been asked a few years ago ... Do you know how many visitors your site had yesterday, or last week? Not generic "hits" but actual page views? Do you know what keywords are used by your site visitors to find you? Are you aware of which search engines visitors use to find your site? I hope your answer is yes. If not, you are missing out on vital information needed for your Website to perform.

A Website does not do much good if others do not see it. You need site traffic ("visits") to sell your product, convey your message, offer your support, etc. It is a fundamental truth that without visits to your site you might as well not have it online. The entire purpose of a Website is to be viewed!

Site owners spend countless hours with search engine optimization (SEO) and various site marketing strategies. Many of us invest important dollars to pay for advertising; others spend priceless time rather than money to boost traffic numbers, seeking to increase their ROI (return on investment). But, do you know whether your efforts are getting results? This is where Web analytics steps up to the plate and bats a homerun. By using a good, real-time site tracking service or tool, you will be able to see what strategies actually pull visitors to your site, what pages are viewed, whether your content calls your visitors to action and how effective your efforts are.

To get all the vital statistics, you want an analytics site that offers more than "hits." You need more comprehensive information to really get an advantage and to truly track your marketing efforts. If you want to avoid software hassle or set up headaches, look for a hosted analytics service. I have found many advantages of hosted analytics over log-based versions. Log analyzers are not typically real-time and require access to server logs and software downloads (time, expense and headaches I don't need). I want a click-and-read system, and this is where hosted solutions appeal to me. I log-in and all my reports are immediately available, allowing me to adjust my marketing or content in real time.

When you are looking for a good hosted analytics service there are a few minimum features you want to be sure are included, such as visitor traffic numbers, per hour, day and month; referral links, which show you the link someone used to get to your site (this is great when you do link exchanges and shows you what search engines have you ranked); and page popularity, to allow you to see what pages in your site are visited most. There are many other features available, but these are the important basics.

The beauty of Web analytics is that there are many incredible tools that offer invaluable information such as Clickstream (Click Path) reports, page Visit Duration, and if you can find a site that offers search engine statistics, you have found a potential marketing "goldmine," especially when using "pay per click" advertising.

With this type of real-time statistical data available on demand, you will no longer waste time -- you will clearly see your effective site marketing efforts, increase your ROI and have what you need to see solid results. Without accurate and timely visitor statistics, your marketing and SEO efforts are working blind. A solid hosted Web analytics report solution, such as VisiStat.com, removes the blinders and gives you a clear path for optimizing your site marketing time and efforts. Can you really afford to miss out on such a vital tool?

*Author's note:* I have used VisiStat.com ([www.visistat.com](http://www.visistat.com)) for SuitableWords.com's traffic stats since the beginning, and I wouldn't change services. The reports are very easy to read and they send out daily reports to my e-mail. I haven't found a better service. I highly recommend giving their free 30-day trial a try.

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