

Google Analytics Cheat Sheet

Demystifying important terms and what they mean to your marketing

Google Analytics can be VERY overwhelming. So many metrics. So many words you don't understand.

The following are some of the most relevant terms and marketing considerations for small business owners. Keep this document handy when you're diving into your Analytics and never feel overwhelmed again!

Unique visitors vs. visits

Unique visitors refers to the number of visitors to your site. This number is not duplicated. So if Sally visits your site 100 times, she will only count as 1 unique visitor.

Visits are the number of visits. So in the example above, Sally's activity would count as 100 visits.

Marketing consideration: These metrics will let you know the extent to which your website visitors return. If you hope to be a consistent source of relevant information, you would want to see visitors returning.

Pageviews vs. Unique Pageviews

Pageviews refer to the number of times a page is viewed.

Unique pageviews refers to the number of times a page is viewed in one session.

So let's say that Sally is reading a blog post. She then clicks on a link you've given to another post. She then hits the back button to return to the original post. This counts as 2 pageviews and 1 unique pageview for this post. If she closes her browser, and then returns to your post the next day, she will be counted again.

Marketing consideration: To get a better understanding of how much reach your content is actually getting, look at the unique pageviews number.

Bounce rate

Bounce rate refers to the percentage of people that leave your site from the page they landed on. In other words, they don't dig deeper into any of your content. They arrive, and then they leave.

Marketing consideration: If your website is based around a blog, and your blog posts are on your homepage, your bounce rate will be VERY high (around 80%), and that's fine. Visitors come to read the latest post, and then leave.

If your website is not based on a blog, and your bounce rate is high, something is going on. Are you not delivering the content they want? Is your outdated design or vague copy throwing them off?

Bounce rates vary quite dramatically from industry to industry, and will also vary from page to page. One major alarm bell is a dramatic shift in bounce rate over time. Such a change should be looked into to.

Avg. Time on Site

The average time, in minutes that visitors spend on your site.

Marketing consideration:

If your site is light on content and is used by visitors to quickly grab contact information for example, your time on site will not be very long.

If you have created a site chock full of content that you want your visitors to peruse, you will want to see more time spent.

Frequency (or Count of Visits)

Looking at the frequency of visits to your site can be a little confusing. The “count of visits” column refers to the number of visits to your site. The “visits” column refers to the number of visitors that visited that many times.

This is how Google explains it:

- Visitor 1 visited the site 1 time during the time frame.
- Visitor 2 visited the site 2 times during the time frame.
- Visitor 3 visited the site 3 times during the time frame.
- The first row of the report (1 under “Count of Visits”) has a count of 3 “Visits” (one each for visitors 1, 2, and 3).
- The second row of the report (2 under “Count of Visits”) has a count of 2 “Visits” (one each for visitors 2 and 3).
- The third row of the report (3 under “Count of Visits”) has a count of 1 “Visits” (one for visitor 3).

Source: [Google Analytics Help Centre](#)

Marketing consideration: When you compare the count of visits to your number of visits, you can see how many of your visitors actually come back for more and how much content they take in (pageviews).

Search traffic

This refers to the amount of traffic that you get from search engines.

Marketing consideration: This helps you understand the extent to which your business depends on search engine traffic.

If you’re working on your search engine marketing, this metric lets you see whether your efforts are actually doing anything. If they are, you should see your search traffic increasing.

Referral traffic

Here you can see which websites sent you traffic and how engaged visitors from these sites are. Remember that thousands of hits from a site with a very high bounce rate and low number of pages per visit, is not necessarily success. You might get less hits, but tons of engagement from other sites. Get that thinking cap on!

Marketing consideration: If any of your marketing efforts revolve around getting traffic from other sites, you can see if it's working and where you should focus your efforts.

For example, you now know...

- which social media channel drives the most traffic.
- whether that online ad you bought actually sent you any traffic.
- what words people are using to search for your business (this can be really fascinating!) and can adjust your content to reflect that.
- whether that guest post you wrote sent you visitors truly interested in your offering.

Direct traffic

This refers to visitors coming directly to your site. Either by:

- Typing in your URL
- Via autocompletion in your address bar (when you start to type a web address, and you are prompted with options)
- Via bookmark (when your site is saved for future reference).

Marketing consideration: This gives you an indication of how many visitors already have considerable knowledge about what you do and are coming back for more!

Keyword

This refers to the specific search terms that people used to get to your site.

Marketing consideration: This is a really valuable area. If you're trying to optimize for certain keywords as part of your search marketing strategy, you can see whether it's working. You can also learn how people are finding your site, which can be really interesting! It might not be in the way that you think.

Landing page

This refers to the page that your visitors arrive at first.

Marketing consideration: The homepage is the most obvious, and usual landing page.

It can be interesting though to see other pages where people enter your site. Are you making it easy for them to get to the content they need from there? So many businesses focus on the homepage, forgetting that visitors can arrive deeper within the site. It's very important to make sure that your crucial information is on each and every page.

This is also an important metric if you have any sort of campaign or promotion where you are not sending people to your homepage but to a page deeper within the content. This metric allows you to see how these visitors are interacting with your site.

In-Page Analytics

This might be my favourite area in Analytics. Oooh it's fun! You get to see little bubbles that show the percentage of visitors that clicked on specific elements (navigation tabs, links in post, links in the sidebar).

Marketing consideration: You can really get into the brain of your visitors here. You can see what they are interested in. What information they need. What catches their interest. Whether they actually read certain information.

A couple of important things to note:

- This is by no means the be-all, end-all of Analytics. There are professionals out there who do nothing but scour website stats for a living. These are simply the metrics that I find are the most relevant to small business owners.
- If you are engaged in online Pay per Click advertising, your Analytics efforts will have to be more involved. Many businesses make the mistake of setting up ads, but then not taking the step of tracking conversions to see whether revenue generated outweighs the cost of the ads. Or setting up the ads and then not monitoring them to maximize their effectiveness.
- Different businesses will have different stats and different measures of success. You must get your thinking cap on when looking at your settings and deciding which metrics are relevant to your business.

Don't hesitate to reach out over [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) if you have any questions. And if you'd like to find out about getting professional help with your web analytics, [get in touch with me](#).

If you want to dive a little deeper, there are tons of resources over at the [Analytics Help Centre](#).

Happy analyzing!



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