 Digital Business dot gov

Measuring your online success

One advantage online marketing provides is the ability to measure the performance of your website and marketing campaigns.

Before you begin collecting and evaluating web data, it is important to specify what you want to find out about your visitors and why. Consider why your website exists and what the primary business objectives and overall goals are.

For example, a business might run an online advertising campaign using banner ads to promote their e-commerce site. To determine the cost effectiveness of this campaign, the business may want to see how many users visited their site as a result of the ads. Using some of the tools mentioned below, it should be easy for the business to get up-to-date statistic about when their website visitors are coming from.

Keep in mind that site traffic does not necessarily equal success. It is a good idea to set key performance indicators (KPIs) against which to measure your goals and to consider these carefully, as they are unique to each campaign.

Measuring ROI

Consider using your financial records to help track whether you are getting a return on investment from your digital presence.

How to collect website statistics

To measure the success of your online presence and improve its performance, you will need information about your visitors and their response to your campaign. Tracking the number of click-throughs is one way of tracking the success of a new call to action on your website. Using analytics, you may be able to see the return on your investment in online marketing almost immediately.

Your hosting company may provide you with a basic website statistics tool to collect this information, or alternatively there are a range of professional solutions available, either free or at a cost. Some websites that provide more information about these include:

- Google Analytics
- StatCounter
- The Audit Bureau of Australia

- Yahoo! Web Analytics
- WebTrends

Once implemented, a good statistics tool should monitor your website traffic and provide you with detailed information including:

- the number of visitors to your website
- the geographic location of visitors to your site
- what website they came from (known as the referring site)
- the landing page (the web page they enter your site on, which may or may not be your homepage)
- the number of pages they viewed
- the time they spent on your website
- the bounce rate, which tells you how many visitors reach your website and leave it again without clicking further into it.

With all this information at hand, you should have a picture of your website's performance and popularity. In particular, you should be able to identify which pages and products are more popular than others and feed this back into your business and online plans.

Testing what works

By testing various features (for example, modifying the designs of calls to action) you can get an idea of what works and what does not.

It is possible to run different combinations of content on your site at the same time—with different visitors seeing different images, headings and body text. One of the most popular methods is called A/B testing. This method involves changing an element of your page to see if it increases conversion. Half your users will see the unchanged version, and the other half will see the changed version. This can help you determine what version of your content should convert best.

Products that may help you with this kind of testing include:

- Google Analytics Content Experiments, a free website optimisation tool that is part of Google Analytics' set of features
- Personyze , a commercial website personalisation tool.
- Test&Target , a commercial website optimisation tool

Consider your website a work in progress and use analytics data to constantly improve your content and calls to action. Continue to test and modify. Over time, you should be able to build knowledge and improve and target your activities to get better results.

More than just traffic

Be wary of using high traffic numbers as the only way you measure success. You will see many websites boasting large visitor rates, but that does not necessarily mean that those visitors become customers, donors or

supporters.

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