

WEB ANALYTICS: TURNING WEBSITES AND BUSINESSES TO GOLD

Being both a content generator and research aggregator with the capability of tapping into a pier powered network of 3,500+ top marketing professionals from 72 countries, the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Council's experience and take on Web Analytics is both insightful as well as interesting.

Zooming in on the definition first, Scott Jaworski, senior director, Interactive Marketing and Creative Services shares, "Web analytics is the act of garnering and analyzing traffic to your website. Because all website visitors have different navigation patterns and objectives, their success, lack of there and everything in between is vital information. Analyzing and acting on data such as: the main entry and exit pages, the most popular products viewed, keywords submitted to the search engine, typical click paths, etc. allow marketers the opportunity to test pages, buttons, colors to increase transaction conversion rates, traffic and visit durations."

As with many other areas in business, when it comes to Web analytics, Jaworski points to the fact that there is a great need to have a clear and sound strategy in place. Elaborating on this, he says, "I would like everyone to understand that all data is not 100% accurate and changing companies can present inconsistencies when combining data due to variations in capture techniques. It is therefore crucial to take your time and have a clear strategy prior to selecting a provider.

Once your strategy has been formulated, you want to ask your potential provider what types of data capture mechanisms they use. It is also vital to find out what (if any) shortcomings exist based on your strategy."



A Web analytics strategy should go hand-in-hand with establishing actionable insights and goals. Jaworski advises, "Situating your web analytics team as a liaison between marketing and the web developers to bridge any technological gaps while accommodating all business goals." This is especially sound advice for companies' that are just getting started in Web analytics.

Emphasizing the fact that Web analytics are not 100% accurate, he stresses the importance in consistency and in formulating comparison trends. After all, establishing a benchmark will help assist in analysis and will more importantly determine the success of your website.

Jaworski feels that one of the major challenges to Web analysis is the "necessary change of mindset."

Explaining this in further detail he says, "Web 2.0 and rich media present increasing challenges as the click loses its value and the use of multiple tools for measurement of RSS and Event Logging takes precedence. Web 3.0 is the next evolution of the World Wide Web. With the advent of Web 3.0 on the horizon, we can only speculate the future advances and the implementation of a "smart" web - machine learning and intuitive system capabilities."

Web 2.0 and rich media present increasing challenges to the industry as well as users. This will be precipitated as the click loses its value and the use of multiple tools for measurement of RSS and Event Logging takes precedence. There is however a silver lining - Web 3.0 is the next evolution of the World Wide Web and there is no telling where it will take the Internet and our websites, and therefore, Web analytics too. And if you think that all this is only happening on the shores of faraway lands, Jaworski begs to differ. "While the Asian Web analytics market still lags behind the West, it will continue edging forward as more marketers, especially those with more technical backgrounds and expertise, embed themselves within organizations, thereby requiring even more competitive analysis of their Websites," he states. Bearing all this in mind, there's no doubt then that Web analytics is definitely worth its weight in gold

By Shanti Anne Morais

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