

Who's coming to your Website?

Congratulations on building your website, but is anyone visiting it? It is a good idea to learn how to analyze the traffic on your site. By reviewing software generated traffic reports you can measure visitors coming to your site and gain valuable information about your site. This data can be used to improve the effectiveness and profitability of your online business.

There are software programs, sometimes called web analytic software, which are designed to monitor and track activities on websites. This software runs on the web server that hosts a business' website. The data generated by the software will help business owners learn a lot about how your site is structured, how it functions, and the products and information that you offer. It's important to know whether your Web site is boosting your bottom line by bringing in new customers and visitors and retaining loyal ones.

Regardless of the type of business you operate, this software is a useful management tool. A company with a content-heavy Web site that relies on ad revenue should focus on how many people visit and how many pages each visitor views. Those with an e-commerce (online selling of products) site will want to know which products visitors view and how far along each customer advances in the purchasing process. In many cases, you can combine the two metrics. A good content strategy results in higher sales, and a successful sales experience encourages visitors to spend more time at your site.

For a informational site looking to optimize navigation, improve layout and design, and enhance content in order to retain visitors, the software should measure unique visitors, page views, visitor navigation paths, and the amount of time readers spent on the site. Then you can develop more targeted and relevant content for your customers. Analyzing reports that measure the clickstream (the record of a user's activity on the Internet) patterns can help you re-organize your site so readers can find information quickly.

The objective of using Web metrics for an e-commerce site is determining how effective the site is at converting visits into sales (i.e. conversion rate). In this situation, you should use website tracking software to answer: How effective are e-mail marketing campaigns? What percentage of site visitors buy something? Are visitors abandoning their shopping carts, and if so, at which point? How much of the business consists of repeat customers? Is it easy for customers to find what they're looking for?

For both kinds of sites, you'll want to know referring addresses of sites that sent visitors to you, or how visitors are finding your site. Knowing this can help you identify who links to your site and why, so you can approach similar sites and offer to trade links. Keywords are another important source. By knowing which keywords people use to find your site, you can increase your rankings on search engines, a process known as search engine optimization.

In order to access the website traffic software, you will need to contact your web host company. Usually the web host firm is responsible to install the traffic software on their server. While there are various brands of traffic software available, and the quality of the software will vary. You should review the quality of reports generated by the software used by your web host company. You will want to ensure that the reports contain the information you want to manage your site. If the software used by your hosting firm doesn't deliver the desired information, you can request that the hosting firm make the information available or you may decide to select another web hosting firm that offers a more comprehensive tracking solution.

If you are serious about online business, then get serious about what is happening on your site. Find a software package that delivers the information necessary to reach your online business goals.