

Website traffic data monitoring, statistics and performance analysis

Every company, be it small or big, gets priceless benefits from access to **statistics** about its own reference market and from its **commercial data analysis**.

A business which makes decisions based on market studies, sales statistics, competition analysis and so on, has much **more chances to succeed** than an enterprise which acts in the dark, totally concentrated in its own activities with no regard to innovation.



Nowadays internet provides the opportunity to collect and analyse data in detail like nothing else in the past. Firms, besides market investigations and sector studies, can collect and process directly **data related to their websites and social media users**. Information obtained can be leveraged to adjust business communication, refine online marketing strategies, adapt offer to customers preferences, improve post-sale relationship management and much more.

Implementing **website tracking and monitoring systems**, at least for small-medium sized businesses, requires modest budgets. Certainly it is needed someone who can help the company with the task to **extract useful information from the whole data set**.

This web traffic data and statistics mining stems from **three main needs**:

- **Monitor and analyse website visits** (web analytics);
 1. **On-site analysis**. Measure visitors number and behaviour, analyse interactions with brand, interpret digital marketing strategies results;
 2. **Off-site analysis**. It focuses on off-site web traffic. It measures potential audience and opportunities offered by the online market.

- **Analyse traffic generated by social media** (social analytics);
- **Carrying out online reputation audit and sentiment analysis** (market sentiment and brand reputation).

Web analytics: website monitoring and statistics analysis

Prior to setting up the website's data monitoring system the company, assisted by the online marketing consultant, should identify precisely at least 4 elements:

- [Macro-objectives](#)
- [Micro-objectives](#)
- [Key Performance Indicators](#)
- [Target](#)

They are the **business objectives**, finish lines the whole online marketing strategy tends to: revenue growth, more web generated contacts, more users engagement and so on.

They are the **halfway objectives** necessary for the realization of business objectives: increase in sales number, website visitors growth, increase in newsletter sign-ups, more downloads of commercial material, etc.

KPI or Key Performance Indicators: are metrics, numbers that measure if business goals are reached. Every micro-objective is associated to several metrics that reflect its realization degree.

In order to evaluate web marketing success it is needed to set measurable and attainable goals. The identification of challenging yet realistic objectives is perhaps the most difficult operation.



Analysing trends and results of the online marketing strategy means identifying **key performance indicators** (KPI) that measure what is happening on the website and the other company's social channels. Web analytics tools like Google Analytics allow to collect this data and rely on useful **metrics**. Among the most useful ones we find:

- **Number of visits or sessions.** A visit to a website is generally considered ended when the user does not click for more than half an hour;
- **Number of visitors or users.** Each user can visit a website more than once; this metric takes into account only unique visitors regardless to how many visits or sessions he has done;
- **Number of visited pages.** Total number of web pages seen in a time lapse by visitors;
- **Visits per page.** How many times a single page has been visited in a time lapse;
- **Bounce rate.** Percentage of visits ended with a single page visited;
- **Number of pages per visit.** How many pages are seen on average by visitors;
- **Average time per visit.** Calculated from the entire amount of visits to the website in a time lapse;
- **Events.** They are user interactions with website's elements previously identified as relevant to reach business objectives;
- **Conversions.** They are the all acts of converting visitors in valuable users. They drive to achieve the online marketing campaign goals. Each type of conversion can be associated to a numerical value, thus the whole value can be measured.

These are only few of the metrics that contribute to **measure digital marketing success** and draw from website traffic data crucial information for the improvement of online marketing strategies.

Based on data interpretation is possible to **identify improvement spaces** in at least three areas:

- [Graphic and Design](#)
- [Website Usability](#)
- [Contents and Communication](#)

A low value for the average time on site can depend on the use of fonts and colours that strain the eyes reading. A web page with a bounce rate much higher than the average might have design or pagination problems. [Follow-up on the topic [graphic and design](#)]

Some website's sections may be receiving few visits for being too hidden and hard to be reached. Contacts might be too little because of an inadequate distribution of baits across the site. [Follow-up on the topic [accessibility and usability](#)]

Find out that most of the times users stop their purchase procedure in a given step that shows a discouraging detail or presents unclear information. Conversion data studies show that beautiful photos influence positively users' buying attitude.



[Online advertisements](#) as well can be tracked to obtain performance statistics. Some of the **metrics at disposal** are:

- **Impressions.** Number of ads appearances;
- **CTR (Click Through Rate).** Number of clicks on impressions;
- **Conversions.** Completion of valuable actions by website users in order to achieve business objectives;
- **CR (Conversion Rate).** Number of conversions on paid clicks.

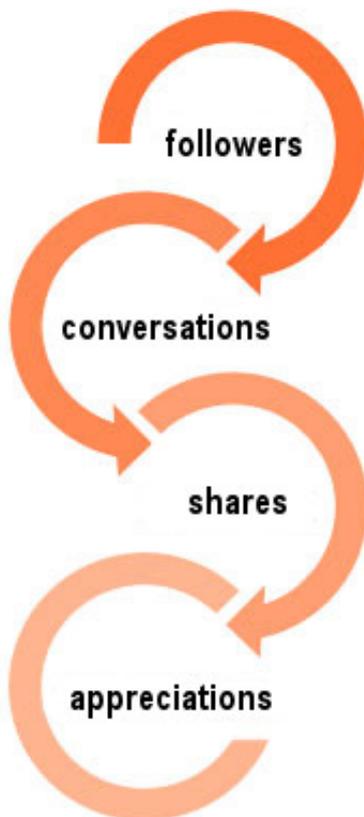
These data can constitute a basis for **A/B and multivariate tests**, that are experiments with two or more versions of a web page shown alternatively to a sample of visitors in order to compare performances and choose the most effective version.

Besides data on website accesses, visits and user interactions, web analytics softwares allow to **examine the client life cycle observing the funnel marketing**, be it a buying path or another group of actions that produce value for the company. The information obtained become hints to improve the website, adjust the [SEO strategy](#) or modify a google adwords campaign.

Social Analytics: analyse traffic generated by blogs and social media

The most popular social networks provide statistics on the traffic to social profiles and native tools for user activity monitoring and analysis. From Facebook to GooglePlus, from Twitter to Pinterest or Youtube we have at disposal instruments to understand how users are engaging with our published contents and how are interacting with the brand.

Companies' profiles on social networks can be assessed by metrics that measure volumes of interactions generated by posts and number of registered users. Data provided



by different social media vary according to their own activities and functions, but we can list four relevant metrics provided by almost every social channel:

- **Followers.** Number of users registered in the business' social pages;
- **Conversations.** Number of messages and replies to company's posts;
- **Shares.** Amount of shares on published posts;
- **Appreciations.** "Likes" expressed differently based on social channel.

Be it a "like" or a "+1", a "retweet" or "repin", is always possible quantify the effect produced by published contents on the brand's audience.

The type of data described tell us what happens within social media; in order to relate them to visits to the company's website we have to get back to the website's data monitoring system and query it on **traffic sources and referrals**, social networks are among them.

Google Analytics, for instance, identifies all referrals that bring traffic to the website. Likewise, it allows us to monitor website accesses coming from [ad banners on social media](#).

Market sentiment e Web Reputation: carrying out a sentiment analysis and online reputation audit

Sentiment refers to the level of appreciation shown by internet users for a brand, product or service. **Sentiment analysis**, carried out manually or by software, consists in collecting and analysing stories, opinions and judgements expressed by people so as to use these information to improve the marketing strategy.

Similarly, the **online reputation audit** consists in identifying and interpreting the conversations about companies and services. Monitoring opinions on blogs, forums and online communities has become especially important for b2c firms with much exposure on the web.

The clients/customers audit provides critical data for **identifying optimisation areas in the online communication**. Reputation analysis, through the evaluation of internet users' judgements and statements, allows to verify the existing distance between projected and perceived image.

Also small companies very dynamic on the web scene should **allocate a budget to control the net**. When there is no need for an ongoing monitoring is beneficial to plan periodic sentiment and reputation check-ups.

Ecommerce websites data collection and analysis

Online shops have access to a series of useful data thanks to eCommerce platforms (Magento and PrestaShop for example) that guide the online purchasing process. In any case, it is needed a web analytics tool to **associate sales data to website users behaviour**.



Google Analytics, once configured so that to communicate correctly with the eCommerce platform, permits to collect **online shopping data** and **information about visits** putting them in relation to each other. Also in this case we have at disposal lots of metrics and statistics, among the most critical **key performance indicators (KPI)** we see:

- **Conversions.** Number of visits that have produced at least one purchase;
- **Conversion Rate (CR).** Percentage of visits converted into sales;
- **Average Order Value (AOV).** Average value of online sales;
- **Value per Visit.** The average value for each website visit, calculated by dividing revenue by number of visits;
- **Cart Abandon Rate** during the buying procedure;
- **Traffic Sources.**

The overall set of data provide **crucial information to improve online shop effectiveness**, understand what are the most profitable sources of visits, why customers abandon the shopping cart without completing the purchase process or do not make multiple purchases, what is the relationship between graphical elements and buying inclination.

Web analytics software offers the chance to enhance electronic commerce performing a continuous improvement cycle clearly measurable.

Google Analytics consulting and monitoring with Google

WebMaster Tools

There exist several excellent **website analytics tools**: *Omniure SiteCatalyst*, *WebTrends*, *CoreMetrics*, *KISSmetrics*, each one with its own features. Compared to them **Google Analytics has two advantages** that make it preferable especially for small-medium companies: it is free and can be perfectly integrated with Google Adwords and other tools of the google galaxy.



Being free the only costs to be considered are related to its implementation and setting up, **costs within the reach of any company or professional**. Once the system is installed there is need of internal or external professional in charge, ongoing or periodically according to the needs, to analyse data and turn them into strategic recommendations.

If the tracking system to be implemented is significantly complex, can be necessary the intervention of a developer able to customise the setting. Nothing of highly expensive in any case. When it comes to big websites or online shops **developers work with digital marketing specialists** on a regular basis to make customisations every time it is needed.

In lacking of the immediate capacity to allocate a **budget for traffic data analysis** and interpretation, it is always recommended to start with their collection so as to have them at hand when there will be the conditions to turn them into expendable information.

Google Webmaster Tools provides website data monitoring tools with detailed reports about how search engine sees your website, besides it provides useful data for search engine optimisation activities and diagnostic tools for web pages indexation.

It should always be implemented together with Google Analytics since the two complete each other and provide the **informational basis to develop online marketing campaigns**.

[Tweet "For many companies the road to success is web data monitoring and handling."]