Web Sites For Advocacy and Community Organizing: Basics, Essentials, and Best Practices

Web Site Traffic Analysis

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Community Technology Foundation of California
Aspiration
Learning Goals

► Appreciate the importance of analyzing website traffic
► Understand what information is available
► Learn tricks for advanced tracking
► Know what tools are available to use
► Consider privacy issues
Web Site Traffic Analysis

- To increase traffic and provide the most useful, effective site, you must review and analyze traffic to your site
  - Responding to trends in your site traffic lets you deliver the most effective content to users
- "Log files" are kept by almost all web hosts
- Most web hosts provide traffic analysis tools
Web Site Traffic Analysis

Site traffic tools can tell you:

- How many people come to your site
  - Understand “unique visitors” vs “page views” vs “hits”
- Length of each visitor's stay
- “Entry” and “Exit” pages for each visitor
- Most (and least) popular pages
- Referrer – page a visitor clicked on to get to you
- Search keywords: which queries led to you
Web Site Traffic Analysis

Site traffic tools can tell you:

- Duration of visit
  - Decision made in first few seconds
  - Good gauge of the effectiveness of your homepage
  - Good to keep for longer than a minute
  - Even simple browsing keeps browser open for a while

- Traffic patterns
  - Can be correlated to campaign events
  - Times of day/week/month
  - Peaks and valleys
Web Site Traffic Analysis

Advanced tracking

- Giving each page different URLs for print materials or links from various sites
  - www.mysite.org/issue/org1
  - www.mysite.org/issue/org2
  - www.mysite.org/issue/printurl

- I want to know how many people clicked onto my site from ...
Statistics for: forestethics.org

Last Update: 22 Sep 2006 - 00:47
Reported period: Sep 2006

Summary

Reported period: Month Sep 2006
First visit: 01 Sep 2006 - 00:06
Last visit: 21 Sep 2006 - 23:54

Viewed traffic *
Unique visitors: 7689
Number of visits: 12322
Pages: 50085
Hits: 363520
Bandwidth: 9.85 GB
(1.6 visits/visitor)
(4.06 pages/visit)
(29.5 hits/visit)
(838.42 KB/visit)

Not viewed traffic *
Unique visitors: 54709
Number of visits: 57839
Pages: 363520
Hits: 9.85 GB

* Not viewed traffic includes traffic generated by robots, worms, or replies with special HTTP status codes.

Monthly history

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Web Site Traffic Analysis

► If your provider does not have a tool offering, you still have options:
  ▪ Google analytics - www.google.com/analytics
  ▪ Alexa.com
  ▪ Sitemeter.com
  ▪ Crazyegg.com
  ▪ Install your own (assembly required!)
Web Site Traffic Analysis

Privacy considerations

- Your log files can be subpoenaed or snooped
- Don’t retain information that allows identification of individual visitors
  - Aggregate data is adequate for analysis

Resources

- EFF Guide: http://www.eff.org/osp/
- Riseup.net Apache logging patch: http://dev.riseup.net/privacy/apache/
End Of Section

► Questions?
► Comments?

Thank You!

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