

Actionable Analytics

Putting Your Web Site Data to Work

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Before You Start

Why does your website exist?

The goal of your website is to ...

- target relevant visitor intent, and
- facilitate visitor action.

What *intent* are you targeting?

What *action* do you want visitors to take?

Define Your Goals

What are your website goals?

- **Page views**
- **E-mail alert signups**
- **Forum or community registration**
- **Purchases**

Stay Focused

Don't be distracted by statistics that don't relate to your goals.

For example, "total page views" is relevant if you sell ads, but maybe not so relevant for sites that don't sell ads.

The reason for web analytics is to help you fine-tune your site to achieve your goals.

Total Unique Visits

Know the difference between ...

- Hits (useless)
- Visitors (better)
- Unique visitors

Focus on unique visitors. Separate them into categories and see how your other metrics (like bounce rate) vary.

Compare organic vs. paid, new vs. returning, and visitors from different sources (text vs. display ads, e-mails).

Conversion Tracking

Set up goals in your analytics package to track conversions.

Compare them with your results in Adwords and in your back-end system.

Don't expect them to match too closely!

Top Landing (Entrance) Pages

- **How are visitors coming to each of your landing pages?** (What keywords, links)
- **What is your visitors' likely expectation coming to your page?**
- **How does your site structure / navigation help the user achieve his goal?** (Remember, you don't control the flow of traffic to or within your website.)
- **How does your page help achieve your goal?**

Exercise 1: Targeting

Step 1

Find the top 100 search terms that bring traffic to your site and sort them by bounce rate, from lowest to highest.

The top terms should describe your site / coverage / expertise. "Yes, these are the people who should be coming to my site."

The terms on the bottom should get progressively further away from your coverage. If you find some of your key terms towards the bottom, you've found a problem to solve.

Exercise 1: Targeting (cont)

Step 2

Group your search terms conceptually and see which group makes up the highest percentage of traffic.

Example: On Kiplinger.com, a group of budget-related search terms had a high bounce rate and low time on site.

Exercise 1: Targeting (cont)

Step 3

Find the landing page(s) associated with that group of keywords.

Exercise 1: Targeting (cont)

Step 4

Review those landing pages to see how they can be optimized for people searching on those terms.

For example, you might add links to related content on your site. If you have any related products, be sure to add links from the landing page to the product page(s). If you don't have any related products, consider an affiliate relationship with someone who does.

Exercise 2: Search Keywords

If you're able to track conversions in your analytics program, ...

Step 1: Sort your top 500 non-paid keywords by conversions.

Step 2: See if you're advertising on the keywords that are converting.

Step 3: Use a keyword tool to find similar words.

Bounce Rate

Pages with a high bounce rate are not delivering on whatever promise brought the visitor to your site.

- Is the *page* wrong,
- Is the *promise* wrong,
- Is the *persuasion* wrong.

Look at specific bounce rates by page and by traffic source.

Does the page have a clear call to action? Does it have links to “similar stories” or “related items.”

Site Usage

Goal Conversion

Ecommerce

Views:     

Visits
443,145

% of Site Total: 33.85%

Pages/Visit
2.97

Site Avg: 3.26 (-8.99%)

Avg. Time on Site
00:03:39

Site Avg: 00:04:39 (-21.29%)

% New Visits
75.67%

Site Avg: 70.53% (7.30%)

Bounce Rate
63.59%

Site Avg: 57.05% (11.46%)

	Keyword 	None 	Visits 	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1.	kiplinger		18,411	6.30	00:10:45	42.25%	27.03%
2.	best cars for 2009		6,327	2.45	00:02:09	93.36%	63.02%
3.	kiplinger.com		5,269	7.70	00:14:08	57.13%	24.63%
4.	kiplingers		5,103	6.46	00:11:18	45.35%	23.03%
5.	stocks to buy now		4,956	1.86	00:01:39	88.84%	65.46%
6.	best stocks to buy		2,775	2.07	00:02:44	89.59%	79.57%
7.	kiplinger.com magazine		2,546	6.51	00:08:02	45.29%	23.57%
8.	budget worksheet		2,152	1.20	00:00:31	90.20%	91.54%
9.	household budget		1,999	1.69	00:01:54	89.49%	86.34%
10.	best mutual funds		1,921	3.82	00:03:50	76.11%	19.63%

Filter Keyword: containing 

Go

[Advanced Filter](#)

Go to:

Show rows: 

1 - 10 of 163,212

Exercise 3: Bouncing Terms

Step 1: Go back to your list of your top 100 search terms. Pull out the terms on that list that identify your primary market. Look at the bounce rate for those terms.

Step 2: Find the landing pages for the terms with a high bounce rate and compare them to the landing pages for the terms with a low bounce rate. See if that gives you any ideas on how to improve the poorly performing pages (e.g., the relevance of the page to the keyword, the call to action, different navigation, other elements on the page).

Step 3: Use Google's website optimizer to improve poor pages.

Exercise 4: Internal Search

Monitor the terms people are entering into your internal search.

- **Why can't people find those topics?**
- **Do you need to update your navigation?**
- **Is this an unexpected opportunity?**

Bounce Rate: Rule of thumb?

Bounce rate will vary ...

- **by type of site,**
- **by type of page, and**
- **by how you send traffic to that page**

Don't worry about an absolute number. The important thing is to steadily improve your bounce rate.

Bounce Rate: What is the rule?

Microsites with traffic from banner ads

-- 85 to 90%

Landing pages from search marketing

-- 25 to 40%

Landing pages from targeted direct marketing

-- 20 to 30%

Source: Chinalytics Longmarch Blog

Pages per Visit

Pages / visit measures if your site is engaging users.

Measure pages / visit for different segments of your site.

Are some topics or content areas getting more page views? Why?

Does it matter?

Note: this statistic is not as applicable to blogs.

New vs. Returning Visitors

Are repeat visitors more likely to convert or spend time on your site?

Remember your website goals. You don't care about new vs. returning visitors in the abstract.

Note: Your percent of new vs. returning visitors can change based on promotional activity.

Note: If you want a benchmark, Google Analytics allows you to submit your site data anonymously and compare it with other sites in your market.

Exercise 5: Refresh Rate

Compare how often your visitors return with how often your site content is refreshed. Does this tell you anything about your content cycle?

For example, if you refresh your content every day, but visitors only return every week, are you working too hard?

Registered Users

Are you wasting space on your page with a sign-up form for people who are already registered?

Paid vs. Organic Traffic

Sort your visitors into paid and organic (natural search) traffic.

Compare your main statistics for these groups, ...

- bounce rates,
- pages/visit and
- conversion %.

Direct URL traffic

Direct URL traffic may be a measure of your branding efforts – i.e., people know you well enough to type in the URL.

Referring Sites

Find your top referring sites and look at their links to your pages. You might want to ask them to change the link so that the words in the link correspond with the keywords you want to optimize.

Are there ways you can improve your relationship with the sites that link to you?

Are there similar sites you can get a link on? (Google their site and click the “similar” link on the results page.)

Google vs. Yahoo?

What are the implications of referring traffic from different search engines? If you get more (or less) traffic from a specific search engine than average, what does that tell you?

I don't know. If anybody knows, please tell me.

Exercise 6: Referring Sites

Step 1 - Find your referring sites and enter them into a spreadsheet.

Step 2 - Go to those sites and see where and how they are linking to you. Add a note in your spreadsheet. Get the “page rank” of each referring site.

Step 3 - Type each site into Google and click on the “similar” link. Add all those sites (and their page ranks) into a second spreadsheet.

Exercise 6: Referring Sites (cont)

Step 4 - Make all the text in your first spreadsheet red.

Step 5 - Paste all the sites from your second spreadsheet into your first spreadsheet, and sort alphabetically.

Step 6 - Delete duplicates and identify new sites that might be willing to link to you, focusing on those with a high page rank.

Keywords

Look at your top keywords and see how well you do at converting each of them. If you're getting lots of traffic on a keyword and don't have anything to sell them, consider making a partnership deal.

Run your top keywords through a keyword tool (like <http://www.google.com/sktool>) **and see if you can incorporate similar terms onto your page, or make your traffic even more ultra-targeted by picking a narrower term.**

Note: You can also use the "Wonder Wheel" for this.

Exercise 7: Get Ultraspecific

Step 1 - Find your top keywords

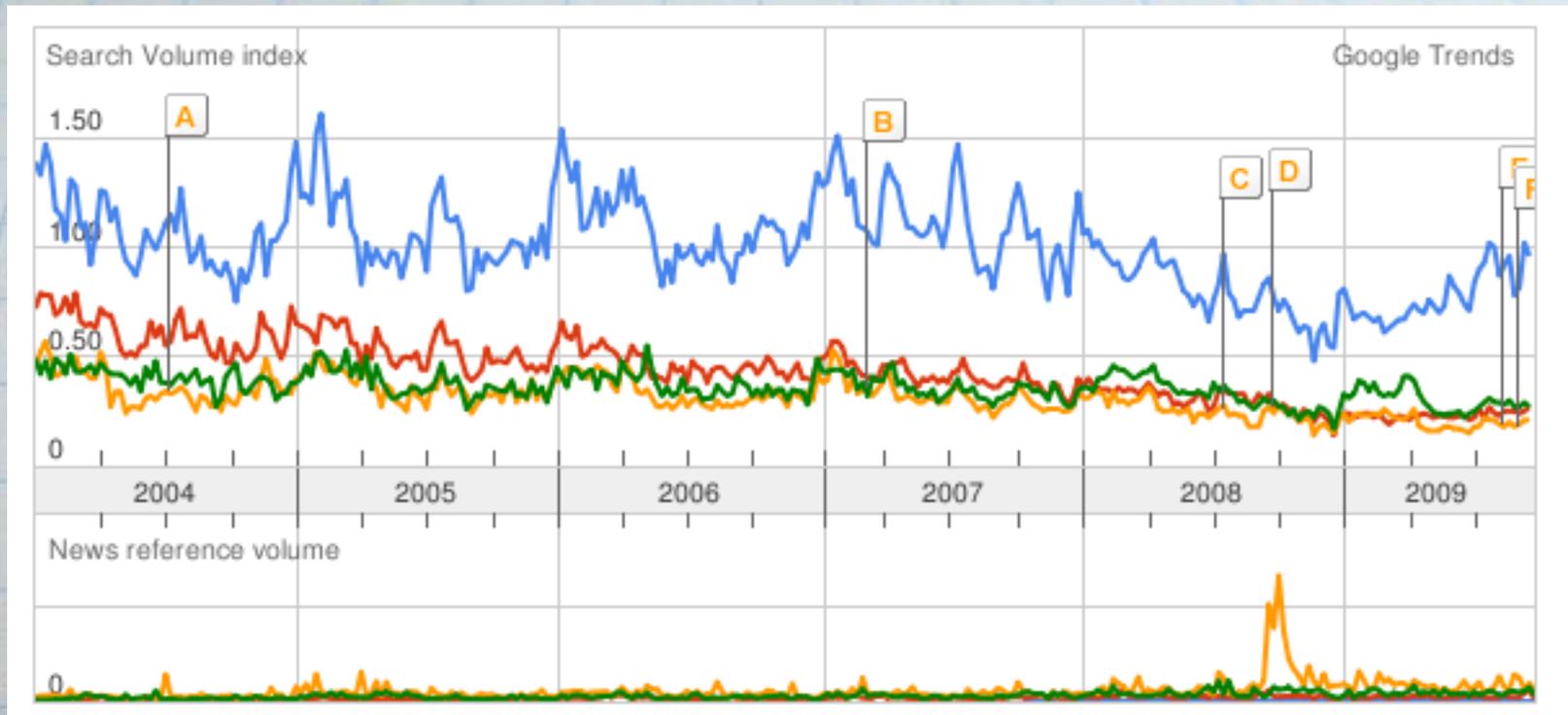
Step 2 - Run them through a keyword tool and find synonyms, or use Google's Wonder Wheel.

Step 3 - Run the synonyms against your top keywords in Google Trends to see which one gets more traffic. If another phrase works better, change your page to use that one.

Exercise 7: Examples

“Retirement savings calculator.”

We had a page with that name. I wanted to see what the best name for this page would be so I ran retirement calculator, retirement planning, retirement savings, retirement income, through Google Trends and got the graph on the next page. "Retirement calculator" -- the clear winner.



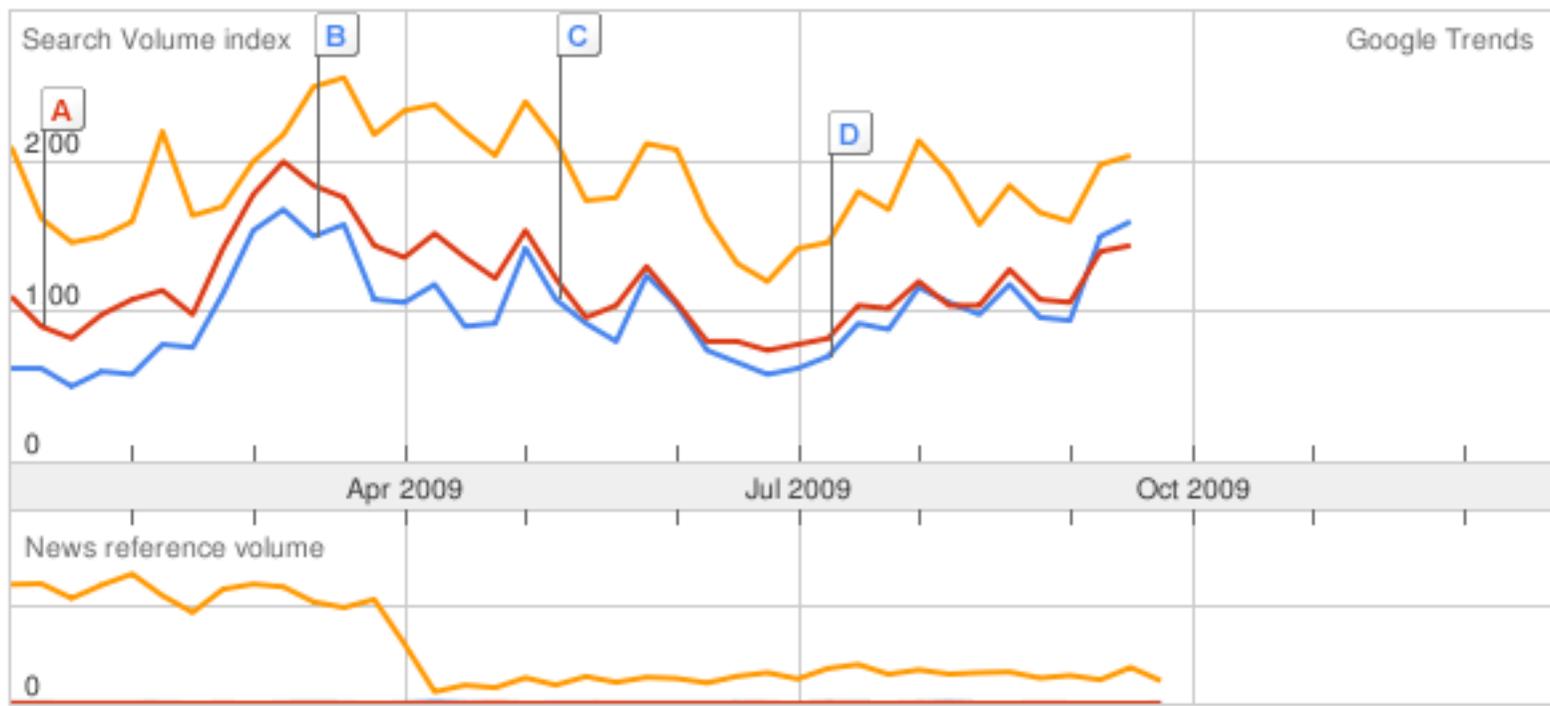
"Retirement Calculator" is blue

Let Google Choose Headlines

Google Trends is a good tool to decide what to call a page. E.g., should you call it “stocks to buy now” or “best stocks to buy” or “stock picks”?

If there's no compelling editorial reason to prefer one, allow Google Trends to decide. You'll get more traffic.

stocks to buy now 1.00 best stocks to buy 1.20 stock picks 1.88



Exercise 8: Keywords -> Pages

Google your top keywords and analyze the search results page.

- **What does your listing look like?**
- **Do you have any ads on this keyword?**
- **What do other sites' listings (natural and paid) look like?**
- **Follow all the links on the first page of the search results (including the ads) and review them with that search term in mind. Does it give you any ideas for improving the content on your page?**

Browser Capabilities

Check your bounce rate by browser. Is your site not performing well in some browsers?

Is your site optimized for mobile users? Is the percent of mobile users changing?

Opportunity: What screen settings are most of your customers using? Do you have more page landscape than you're currently using?

Top Exit Pages

Are these pages inviting people to leave your site?

Exit pages are not all the same. If the page is step 2 of a 3-part process, that's very significant. Use funnel analysis and landing page optimization to increase conversions.

Is the exit page also a top entrance page? Perhaps you're simply getting a lot of poorly qualified traffic, which isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Does your exit page have a clear next step that keeps people on your site? Can you find a way to capture these visitors through a sale or sign-up?

Site Overlay

The site overlay shows you which links people are clicking on. It's a very useful tool to see how people are actually using your site.

Note: All the links on your page that go to the same URL will get the same statistics in the site overlay because your analytics package has no way to distinguish them. So give it a way – either with a query parameter or by using this code.

```
<a href="URL.html" name="&lid=main_menu" >
```

Time Spent on Site

Does more time spent on your site mean engagement with your content or does it mean bad navigation that confuses people?

See if more time spent on a page corresponds to exit pages.

See if more time spent on the page corresponds to the length of the content on that page.

Exercise 9: Overlap Timelines

Compare weeks and months on the same graph to see if a certain day or time of the month is better for you.

Prepare a special promotion for that day.

Note: Google Analytics has a “compare to past” feature in the date box, but it only works with two time periods.

Time of Day, Day of Week ...

Check this to see if you should focus special content or offers on specific days or at different times of the year.

Exercise 10: Bad Navigation?

Check your bounce rate by screen resolution. This might tell you if there's something wrong with your site navigation.

Questions for IT

Is the analytics code on every page?

- **404 page**
- **Search results pages**
- **Every page in the cart and sign-up process**
- **All response pages from internal scripts**

Do you have a custom 404 page?

Are you excluding internal traffic from your analytics?

Resources

Get this presentation at ...

<http://gregkrehbiel.com/presentation.pdf>

Books

Web Analytics: An Hour a Day, by Avinash Kaushik

Blogs

Occam's Razor

-- kaushik.net

Google Solutions for Southeast Asia

-- cse-sea.blogspot.com/

Actionable Analytics

-- actionable-analytics.com/