eBook

Track and measure:

A guide to improving your digital performance through actionable analytics

Contents

Introduction

We're living in an increasingly digital world—from working and studying to shopping and entertainment, the majority of our day-to-day activities have moved online. As COVID-19 continues to impact the way we live, work, and connect with one another, we've seen internet usage go up by as much as **50-70% over the last year**. We've also seen an increase in active internet users, with a current estimate of 4.66 billion—**a 321 million year-over-year increase** compared to the end of 2019.

So, what does this mean? As the digital world becomes the center of our professional and social lives, proper tracking and measurement of your digital properties and campaigns has never been more important.

While gathering analytics data is relatively easy, connecting that analytics data to your digital strategy and organizational goals has proved difficult for many teams. In a **2020 study by Gartner**, unactionable results and lack of clear recommendations were found to be amongst the top reasons for not using analytics to make decisions.

It's time to take a step back and break down how marketing teams can use their website analytics to learn more about our buyers and how they interact with us. We can then use this data to make more strategic judgments about our content, campaigns, website structure, SEO strategy, and even our overall go-to-market approach.

Over the next few pages, you'll learn about three key areas to obtain actionable analytics, explore insider insights from Siteimprove's own marketing team, and uncover what different roles in your department should be tracking and measuring to drive results.

Gain actionable insights: 3 key areas you need to track and measure

Your website metrics are one of the most powerful insights you have into your buyers' behaviour. If you have a strong understanding of how to effectively track and measure your website data, you're able to piece together a powerful story that tells you where your visitors are coming from, how they're interacting with your business online, how those actions are feeding into your overarching goals, and how you can better your results in relation to those goals.

In this section, we've highlighted the key areas you'll want to keep an eye on so that you can start leveraging your analytics data to start making more informed marketing decisions.

① Behaviour

Knowing how your website visitors navigate your pages gives you valuable insight into what they're looking for and the paths they're taking to find it. Although, piles of data can be overwhelming to interpret and even more difficult to take back to your team. Let's look at how you'd track this data and what you'd do with those insights.

● Where to start

To get an idea of exactly how buyers are clicking around your website, we suggest looking at behaviour maps based on click coordinates and scrolling patterns. This provides tangible representations of the actions visitors are taking on your site and allows you to visually analyze how visitors are engaging with your content.

A Heat Map is a great way to aggregate the click coordinates of all visitors to a specific page. It maps the visitor's attention by marking the page with coloured spots ranging from dark (cold; little attention) to bright (warm; much attention).
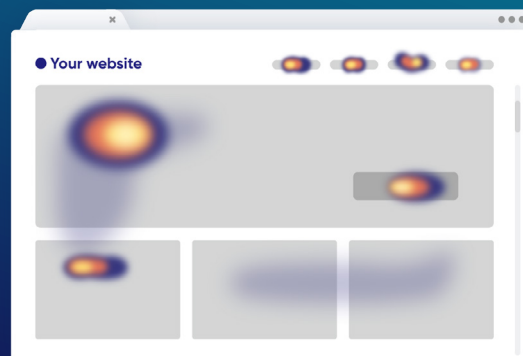
It can also be valuable to not just look at how visitors are interacting with your pages on an individual level, but analyzing how they're getting from page to page as well. To do this, you'll want to look at the paths users are taking to get from a starting point (your homepage, for example) and look at the various routes that lead them to key pages—like your pricing information or demo request page.

● How to action on what you find

Having a better understanding of the way visitors navigate your pages will allow you to make more data-driven decisions about the layout of your site. So the first thing you need to do is set up benchmarks that relate to your business' bottom line and track your website's performance against them. Whether you set up reports in your analytics tool or do this manually in a document on your own, it's important to be able to aggregate and evaluate data over time.

Once you have a clearer idea of how visitors are behaving on your site in relation to your end goals, it opens the door for more testing and optimization against those goals—which will ultimately lead to more effective digital user journeys and website as a whole.

Actioning on behaviour insights typically looks like this:

1. Evaluate how visitors interact with your website when it comes to your end goals, then target distinct visitor groups based on behaviour and goal trends.

2. By rooting content and design in data, you can build your site's structure based on how visitors navigate between key pages and remove any guesswork.

3. Verify that visitors navigate your site as you intend them to, and continue to monitor and optimize accordingly through automated reporting.

② Key metrics

The challenging thing about website analytics is that there's no one-size-fits all performance report—every business has unique metrics to track based on their goals. While there are some insights that hold weight across the board, at the end of the day, it's up to you to define what you need to measure in order to connect your website reporting to your bottom line.

You know better than anyone which reports will help you to stay on track. Keep reading to find out how you can determine your own key metrics and attach those to key performance indicators (KPIs) on your website.

● Where to start

To determine your key metrics, you'll want to take a step back and think about the overall purpose of your website. Is the goal to generate leads? To highlight your product offering? To help users find information? All of the above? These questions will help you gauge how exactly your website supports your business. Typically, a business' KPIs include things like lead generation, sales, and self-help.

Next, you'll want to identify your key metrics that will help you achieve those KPIs. This might include things like newsletter signups, demo requests, or views of particular pages. Take a look at the chart below for an example of this exercise in action.

Metrics/KPIs	Lead Generation	Sales	Self-help
Newsletter signup	✔		
Requested an offer	✔	✔	
Downloaded brochure	✔		
Read FAQ page			✔
Organic sale		✔	

What you'll want to do next is determine the triggers for each key metric. This will help you understand and track exactly what users need to do in order to complete an action that feeds into your key metrics. We've provided an example of what that might look like in the next chart.

Metrics	Trigger
Newsletter signup	Page visit /newsletter-thank-you/
Requested an offer	Page visit /request-sent/
Downloaded brochure	Event fired: clicked brochure download button
Read FAQ page	Page visit /faq/
Organic sale	Page visit /order-confirmation/ - and - Referrer is search engines

While it's certainly easier to have an analytics tool that will keep track of all of this automatically, it is still possible to monitor your key metrics and how you're tracking against them using a spreadsheet. You just have to make sure you're consistent with your documentation and updating it at least weekly!

● How to action on what you find

After you define your own key metrics and KPIs and begin tracking them, the next step is to take those insights and measure them against your overall business goals. This will give you an idea of exactly how your website is performing and will highlight any areas where you may be falling short and have an opportunity to improve.

Measuring key metrics and KPIs gives you concrete, quantifiable data that you can easily report on to show the value your website is bringing to your business. This is particularly valuable when it comes to justifying your investment in website optimization to your C-suite.

Page visits and views are great, but they're called vanity metrics for a reason—they don't truly show your website's value. If you had 4,000 visitors on your website last month, how many signed up for your newsletter? How many downloaded your latest eBook? How many requested a free trial of your product? With an established set of KPIs and key metrics in place, you'll be able to clearly show the impact your web activity is having on your bottom line.

(3) Traffic

Traffic is one of the most commonly-tracked website metrics for a reason—it provides a baseline for your overall performance. Digging deeper into your web traffic will reveal insights like the referral sources your visitors are coming from, the most commonly-viewed pages, the days or times your website is busiest—and the list goes on.

But basic traffic metrics can also be very misleading for marketers when it comes to evaluating their investment in acquisition channels and understanding what's driving on-site conversions. That's because pure traffic metrics rarely reflect your true bottom line. So, what should you be doing to ensure you're tracking and measuring your website traffic in the best and most relevant way?

● Where to start

When it comes to traffic, the amount of data points you can look at are endless. That's why you want to make sure you're focusing on the key metrics that you can easily tie to your broader marketing efforts. Below we've outlined a few key areas to monitor.

Campaign traffic: Being able to observe exactly where visitors come from (including what type of link they clicked and what campaign it was attached to), helps you understand which sources are driving the most traffic. But tying those traffic metrics to your end goals (or key metrics) allows you to see which sources drive better quality traffic. It's about quality over quantity, after all!

For example, you have 1000 visitors from a marketing email and 100 visitors from a LinkedIn ad. However, only 10 conversions came from the marketing email while 50 conversions came from that LinkedIn ad. Where would you want to invest more of your marketing resources next time?

This approach also gives you a clear idea of whether or not your marketing efforts are actually working in relation to your bottom line and which acquisition channels are performing best.

Some high-level campaign-specific traffic metrics to avoid include:

- **Visits (and percentage of total visits):** The percentage of all visitors to your site during this period who arrived from a particular campaign
- **Unique visitors:** The number of unique visitors arriving on your site via this campaign

Some high-level campaign-specific traffic metrics our team swears by are:

- **Key metric completions:** This ties into the KPIs and key metrics we mentioned earlier, and refers to the number of key metrics completed by visitors through a particular campaign during the selected period
- **Conversion rate:** This refers to the percentage of all visitors who arrived on your site through a particular campaign who completed a key metric, like filled out a form or requested a demo

How to action on what you find

By getting more granular about how you track and measure your website traffic, you're able to see exactly what drives engagement and conversions, and it allows you to make more strategic choices about the acquisition channels you're investing in. For example, if you notice that you're seeing a lot of conversions coming from LinkedIn, it's probably worth doubling down on your efforts there in order to attract more engaged traffic from that source.

The same goes for channels that are resulting in poor website engagement. Perhaps you're seeing a high bounce rate from traffic that's coming to your landing environments from your display advertising. This could be an indicator that your ad and website experience don't quite match up—and visitors are getting confused and leaving. In this case, you'll want to ensure the webpage you're sending people to mirrors your ad in terms of both branding and messaging. The fix could be as simple as that!

Low traffic from a particular channel can also indicate that your creative, messaging, or calls-to-action are not resonating with your audience. So before you nix a channel for failing to deliver you the traffic and leads you're looking for, do some testing, then keep a close eye on your website metrics to see if you've made improvements to traffic and conversions.

Quick tips from Siteimprove's marketing team

Jennifer Doyle,
Head of Field Marketing, Canada

"Each month I take a look at our top 10 viewed pages. We have multiple products offerings, and I want to know what's trending, what people are drawn to, and **how we can help tweak our strategy to better serve our website visitors**. If your organization is global, it's interesting to see how this varies country by country."

Kyra Kuik,
Content Lead

"The content team uses Siteimprove Analytics to get an overview of how our blog content and resources pages are performing. We look at broad metrics, like pageviews, traffic sources, behaviour maps, and bounce rates to get a general understanding of our content health. We also drill into specific KPIs that we track with key metrics. **Using Analytics is critical for our team**—we use it to see which types of content and topics resonate with our audience and which ones don't.

Arthur Lescarret,
Senior CRO and SEO Manager

I use Siteimprove Analytics daily to track organic traffic acquisition and I keep an eye on our organic conversions across multiple touch-points via key metrics. I also dive regularly in the "Entries and Exits" tab as well as the "Content" tab to have a full overview of how our content is performing."

Maria Eriksen-Jensen,
Director of Digital and Demand Generation

Siteimprove Analytics is my source of truth for the performance of our global digital ecosystem; with more than 10+ sites the executive oversight is key, while it enables me to facilitate a dialogue with the digital organisation and local marketeers on performance and our future strategy."

Melissa Wankiewicz,
Marketing Manager, Canada

Behaviour tracking really helps us to understand how visitors are interacting with our website. Using Siteimprove Analytics, you can select a page and easily see visit information for how visitors reached that page and where they went afterwards. With this information at hand, we can be more strategic about the paths we're creating for potential buyers on our site."

Understand your role: What should you be tracking and measuring?

No matter your job title, in one way or another, we all play a role in the success of our organization's digital performance. But is everyone on your team working together to evaluate the right metrics that feed into your overall business goals? In this section, we'll explore what everyone on your team—from content creators to UX designers—should be tracking and measuring.

Role: Content creator

Goal

Use analytics to make data-driven decisions for content prioritization

1. Evaluate content success

- Which user interactions do you consider to be measures of success? This can include things like video plays, time spent on an article, and scroll depth.

- How are you tracking and reporting these metrics? Are you only tracking high-level metrics like page views and time-on-site? If so, why? Do they relate to your bottom line? If not, what difficulties are you having tracking true conversions?

2. Understand where content fits

- Is the right content placed in the right places?

- What's the first content visitors see?

- What happens after the content has been consumed? Is there a next step?

3. Uncover how visitors discover content

- What do users want to find the most on the site?

- What topics are relevant and trending right now?

- Are people actually finding what they're searching for? Do they use your internal search tool?

4. Use dashboards and reporting for consistent tracking

- Where are we tracking and documenting all of our content metrics?

- In what ways can we make it easier for the content creators on our team to look specifically at the pages and metrics that matter to them?

- How can we use this information to take the guesswork out of content creation in the future?

5. Identify areas to improve

- Where should I focus my content remediation efforts? (Typically pages with high engagement, landing pages, conversion pages, entry pages, and popular exit pages are a good place to start!)

- Where are users getting stuck or having issues finding content?

Role: Web designer and developer

Goal

Use analytics to optimize website design

1. Gather technical data on visitors

- What devices are our visitors using to access our site?

- What browsers are most common amongst our site visitors?

- Are there any page load time bottle necks? What is causing those, and how can we fix it?

2. Understand on-page interaction and engagement

- What on-page events do we want to track? (This may include clicks on play, pause or stop on embedded audio or video, clicks that open a lightbox or pop-up, clicks that reveal or hide content on the page, clicks that submit forms without loading a new page, etc.)
- How are we going to track engagement?

3. Analyze behaviour maps

- How are specific visitors interacting with key pages? Are you using segmentations and filters to look at behaviour maps with purpose?
- Are people clicking in the places we want them to based on the type of user?
- What can we do to improve the on-page experience based on how users are currently engaging with our site?

4. Design for conversions

- How are users lead to conversion on our existing site? Can we design to improve it and remove inefficiencies?
- What can we do to ensure that our website design allows for effective conversion tracking?

5. Adopt a consistent reporting process

- How we use historical data and comparisons to show improvements?
- What benchmarks make sense for us to measure the impact of our website design?
- How can we track and measure the impact of our site design over time?

Role: SEO specialist

Goal

Use analytics to evaluate the impact of our SEO strategy

1. Measure SEO performance

- How can we use analytics data to set realistic SEO goals to get past "traffic from organic efforts" to "conversions from organic efforts"?
- What are our key landing pages, and do they align with our expectations? What we are optimizing for?
- How much organic traffic are we driving from search? How engaged is that traffic? And most importantly, how much of this traffic is converting, and where?

2. Understand the data

- What content is popular with visitors?
- How do organic users interact with our website and our landing pages?

3. Discover actionable insights

- Are there any trends in our user data?
- What terms are people searching in our internal search bar that we could target in our SEO strategy?
- How do our organic efforts contribute to our overall business goals?

4. Establish reliable reporting

- How and where can we track all analytics data relevant to our SEO efforts?
- In what ways can we track how SEO impacts our business goals automatically and efficiently?

Role:
Campaign manager

Goal

Use analytics to report on campaign performance and conversions

1. Outline analytics focus areas

- How do our metrics reflect our marketing department's mandate?

- How are we tracking conversions?

- Are we focused on the right metrics, or vanity metrics?

- Can any of our key metrics be grouped and aggregated together?

2. Ensure proper UTM setup

- What are the best practices for UTM tracking?

- Do our UTM naming conventions make sense?

- Are we being consistent and specific enough with the UTM naming conventions we're using?

3. Measure campaign performance

- Do our campaigns feed into our overall business goals?

- Is the proper tracking set up to evaluate each campaign's impact? Has this been done across all sources in each campaign to find inefficiencies in some sources?

- Have we created and documented the UTM links we're using?

4. Manage performance data

- What insights can we gather by filtering our campaigns by the UTM parameters used and applying them to behavioural analysis? (Typically, campaign managers use this data to evaluate the performance of particular sources, channels, copy, or other variants, as well as to determine how different types of users interact with funnels and goals on the site)

- How is our campaign traffic interacting with our website? How is it impacting our key metrics?

- How are our campaigns and campaign sources performing against each other?

Conclusion

The truth is, in order to have a truly successful web experience, you have to be tracking and measuring your success. Otherwise, you won't have a clear idea of what's working, what's not, and how you've improved. As people are spending more time online than ever before, there's never been a better time to start benchmarking your website data and actioning on it.

As we explored earlier in this eBook, tracking and measuring user behaviour, key metrics, and traffic are the foundations of a strong analytics strategy, but ultimately, it's up to you to determine which data points matter most for your business and feed into your overarching goals.

Analytics play a part in everyone's job across your marketing organization—from content writers and web designers to SEO specialists and campaign managers. And although everyone has their eye on different success metrics for their individual roles, at the end of the day, everyone on your team is rallied around one common theme: the success of your business. That's why it's vital to ensure that everyone's targets roll up into consistent key objectives company-wide.

With the actionable tips we've outlined in this eBook, it's our hope that you'll be able to more strategically track and measure your marketing initiatives in order to prove the impact of your efforts this year and beyond. That's what we all want, right?

Thank you for reading!

Siteimprove is driven by the desire to help customers make the most of their digital presence. We provide the knowledge and tools they need to help make the internet better and more inclusive for all. As the digital world becomes more complex, it's crucial for organizations to maintain an error-free, consistent, up-to-date, and accessible digital presence. Our intelligent automation software and best-in-class customer support have helped more than 7,500 organizations worldwide manage, maintain and improve their efforts to become digital leaders.

If you liked this guide, here are some other resources you may find helpful:

- **How to apply actionable analytics across your digital user journeys**
- **The three pillars of effective campaign tracking**

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