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The Internet Specialist

Fact sheet - one of a series of no-nonsense fact sheets for business owners.

The basics of Web Analytics: Using Web Analytics effectively

Why read this fact sheet?

Understanding the basics of Web Analytics best practice will help you begin the process of analysing your web pages and making decisions about how to improve your site.

Using Web Analytics effectively

Web analytics can provide so much data that, if you're not careful, you can end up more confused than when you first started.

The key to starting off with using web analytics effectively is to start simple. What you shouldn't do is to plunge headlong into gathering data about absolutely everything that analytics can tell you.

If you do that you'll be overwhelmed with so much information that you won't be able to see the wood for the trees.

What you must do is start at the first level and move on from there.

Starting at the first level means nailing down a short list of key metrics (measurements) that will begin to give you a picture of your web traffic.

Here is a list of typical first level metrics:

1. The number of visitors you receive each day
2. The most visited pages on your web site
3. The average time spent by visitors on your site
4. The number of repeat (as opposed to first time) visitors
5. The geographical spread of your visitors by country and city
6. The 'bounce rate' i.e. how quickly are people 'bouncing' off your pages and going somewhere else
7. If you're selling off your site the revenue online sales are generating
8. Which products are selling better than others

Implement the above metrics and you'll be well on your way to building a picture of how well your site is performing against your web site goals (which you should have clearly defined by the way!).

And don't forget the golden rule of using web analytics effectively. The data you gather is only effective when you use it to make decisions about how to make your web site more efficient at doing what you want it to do!

Gathering data for it's own sake and then doing nothing with it is a complete waste of time.

Key 'takeaway' from this Fact Sheet: Web Analytics data is only worth having if you actually act on it and make improvements to your web site.