Google Analytics

How valuable is your site?
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Some would have you run a valuation on your Domain Name. According to valuate.com, the client site that we used in our example is worth $200.
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Analytics tells us a different story.
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I first rebuilt this client site in 1999. The owner then bounced around to different webmasters (what we used to call Web Designers) for about 10 years. In 2009, I convinced him to at least install Google Analytics and to let me take over the management of the site again. It took him 2 full years to follow my lead.

In February, 2011, I was able to release a newly redesigned site and get him showing again in the Search Results Pages. We’ve enjoyed “upward-to-the-right” metrics ever since.

Evaluating the period of Jan - June of 2010 against Jan - June of 2013, we’re seeing a 24 times increase in unique visitors (from 184 in a 6 month period to 4363), a 17 times increase in page views (from 855 in a six month period to 14276), and a 45 times increase in mobile traffic (from 13 in a 6 month period to 587).

This site currently gets three times more mobile traffic per month than what it received in total monthly visitors in early 2010.
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How can we use this data to answer the question, “How valuable is your site?” Before we tackle that, let’s go look at Analytics in more detail.
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You need an Analytics account. You need the Tracking ID tied to every page. On hand built sites, that means “every page”. On a dynamic site (i.e. hand built in .PHP, or using something like Wordpress), you can install the tracking ID into the header or footer code. Today, the header is the preferred location.
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When I’m analyzing this data for customers, here’s the baseline road map of what I look at and why. I end up doing a custom analysis as well, but this baseline is pretty constant.
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**Audience Overview**
How many visits, Page Views, Pages Per Visit, Average Visit Duration, Bounce Rate and Percentage Of New Visits.

**Traffic Sources - All Traffic**
I like to view this using the Pie Chart view. This gives me an overview of Direct, Organic, Pay Per Click, and Referrals
I then look directly at the Referrals. I want to see which sources are the largest referral source.

Next, **Search Engine Optimization - Queries**
This only works if the account has been established with Google Webmaster Tools and properly linked to the account. I like to use the Performance view because I can change between Impressions, Clicks, Average Position, and CTR.

Now off to **Content - All Pages**
This tells me which pages are the most/least popular. If I’m seeing a page that’s important to the customer that’s not getting enough traffic, we'll develop a plan to strengthen that position. I also look for specific pages; in this case the contact page and contact thank you page. The quote page and the quote thank you page.

The last thing I look at is **Audience - Mobile - Devices**
I’m looking to see how much traffic is arriving from mobile devices. This helps us determine whether to adopt a mobile strategy and when.

As you can see from the left hand men, there are way more options available in Analytics than most of us will utilize on an on-going basis. Explore, test, try things out. You’ll settle on what becomes meaningful to you and your customers.

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Ah! Back to our original question. How valuable is your site? One answer to that might be (in the case of our example site - July 20 - August 19):

841 Unique Visitors with an average page duration of 2 minutes. That’s 1,682 minutes, or 28 hours.

At a fully burdened employee rate of $50 per hour, that’s $1,400 per month. In other words, this client is not spending $1,400 per month answering questions that their website is answering - each month.

Extended over a year, this is $16,820 in productivity gained.

We had an engaging and lively discussion about whether this was the right measurement and that, depending on your specific situation, not all of these visitors would have produced a phone call had the web page not existed.

** If my numbers are off by as much as 75%, this client is still realizing a potential $4,000 value from his web site. **A 40 times increase from the $100 annual hosting fee!**

The take away for you should be to really look at your clients business and using Analytics data - determine something that you can adequately measure that proves the value of not just the website, but of your services.