

UX

USER EXPERIENCE



Who are your real visitors?

Websites are only as successful as their visitors believe they are.

So how do you find out who your real visitors are, how they found you, and if your site really is of benefit to them?

First, let's find out who they are. If you host with us we can provide you with all of these statistics, however if you host with someone else there are various products out there that allow you to track your visitors, what they look at, where they go, when they leave, and so on. The most highly recommended is [Google Analytics](#) – a free and very interactive program.

Once you determine who is visiting your site it's crucial to know how they found you. Did they search for you? If so, which terms did they enter? Did they come from another site? If so, which one? These statistics help you determine if your site is relevant to the sites linking to it and if you should be linking back thereby encouraging more visits.

Finally, is your site of benefit to your visitors? Look at which page they are leaving on, issue a survey and ask them what they like about your site, what you can do better, and what they want more of – then follow through for happy visitors.

Who aren't your visitors?

As important as it is to know who your visitors really are – it's just as important to know who they aren't.

Design for the actual end user.

Unless your site is an intranet – your employees probably aren't your visitors.

Your CEO and Board are very likely not regular visitors.

Your family are likely not regular visitors to your business' site.

You aren't a regular visitor. Think about it – when was the last time you went to your own business website – and really explored?



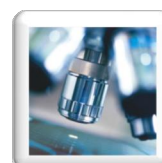
2. Usability

How do you design for your visitors? What's important to them?



3. Listening

How can you listen to your visitors and act on their suggestions?



4. Researching

What's the best way to research what is best for your business?

Help Your Visitors Help You:

Your visitors want your site to work for them. To help them, install Google Analytics on your site (or call us and

we can do it for you) and then as the months go by you can watch where your visitors are clicking. If they are constantly scrolling down the page to click on something ¾ of the way down,

move it up to make it more accessible. Your visitors never need to know you are monitoring their patterns but they will notice how much easier your website is to use.



POLL YOUR VISITORS

People often underestimate the value of asking their customers, clients, and visitors what they think about the products, services, and media being presented to them.

Polls are a quick way to gauge the satisfaction level of your clientele.

Though quick, a fair amount of thought needs to be put into the question(s) you ask and the answers you provide.

First determine what question you want answered. Do you want to know if your new color scheme is working? Or what about your new ‘specials’ box on the front page? Or do you want to know if your users would be interested in a new feature like a blog?

Once you have your question, your answers may range from a simple yes/no, to a scale of 1-5, or a variety of options where users choose one.

And that’s it – now you have a poll!



Usability

How usable is your site?

There are a lot of really amazing techniques and types of software and ‘wow factor’ website add-ons these days. However, as neat as they may be, they may also put your site – and ultimately your visitors – at a disadvantage.

This could result in loss of sales, loss of current clientele, and loss of credibility.

Here are the top six reasons websites end up unusable.

1. Not Knowing the User

If you don’t know who is using your website and why, how can you design for them? Find out who your audience is, then find out what they do at your website and make it as easy as possible for them to achieve that goal. Whenever possible, bring your end-users in to test your product and work with your developer.

2. Choosing Looks over Function

A website can be as pretty as it wants but if it doesn’t work, it’s useless. Ensure everything at your site works, and if it doesn’t – fix it.

3. Too High Standards

Not every user, in fact very few of your users, will be high end geeks. You must develop your site for the lowest common denominator. Proper usability testing will ensure your site works for all users.

4. Succumbing to Fads and Fashion

Flash is great, don’t get me wrong, but it’s made to accent a website.

A pretty website does not a functional website make.

When your website is cluttered with widgets and useless ‘wow’ it

becomes useless to the user. When in doubt, keep it simple.

5. Ignoring Standards

If you’re at a website and you want to search where is the first place you look? Usually search boxes are located in the top right corner of a site – move it on yours and you’ve slowed down your user. Stick with standards, they work for a reason.

6. Designing for the CEO

This is the most common problem we encounter. The CEO wants the site to look and function a certain way, but the CEO never actually uses the site. Design for your user – not your CEO.



5 TYPICAL VISITOR TYPES

1 Virgin: for lack of a better term, this is a first time visitor. They have to learn your site from scratch.

2 Novice: this user has been to several similar sites but never to yours, there is still a learning curve.

3 Repeat: this user has been to your site and knows their way around, but can still get lost.

4 Techie: This user has the highest expectations of your site and is generally not very forgiving.

5 Intimate: these are the people that are too intimate with the site and create unrealistic user expectations.

Listen

What are your visitors saying with their browsing habits?

If you collected all of your online browsing history and categorized every page you have ever visited you could create a rather impressive image of your online self. What if you could do that with your visitors' history?

It may not be possible to open your visitors' history up and analyze it but you can get a good feel for the places your users have been and the things they've done at those sites by observing how they use and interact with your website.

But how can you do this?

As mentioned earlier Google Analytics allows you to view where your users are clicking on your screen, how often, and your links should tell you where they go from there. But, there's more.

With behind-the-scenes tracking software you can also see what words your users searched for to arrive at your site, which page they came in on, which site they came from or if they typed the address in directly, and even where they go after they leave your site.

Once you understand how your users are interacting with your site you can make it easier for them to use, thereby improving their experience – and your sales and visits – all by silently listening

Google Analytics

Google Analytics allows you to take control of your website. You can isolate and analyze subsets of your traffic, create motion charts, create and review custom reports, view keyword and campaign comparison information, create custom dashboards you can share, integrate adwords, create an internal site search and see the results of user searches, benchmark, track trends, create

ecommerce tracking, view a site overlay (shows you where users go after they click and if they leave), e-mail reports, monitor geo tracking (where your users are), view 'click maps' (shows where your users are clicking), and more.

Call us today to have us install Google Analytics on your site and set you up for some amazing analysis.

MARKET RESEARCH:

Market research is an essential part of business. When you want to properly target your products and services market research is what will provide you the confidence to move ahead with your decision knowing your clients will accept your offering.

Business decisions that are based on good intelligence and good market research have minimized risk and pay dividends in both dollars and consumer trust. By making market research a part of the business process, and conducting research throughout the lifecycle of a product or service you will be ensured that your new venture is well received and successful.

Market research allows you to better communicate with your clientele. Your clients' experiences are a valuable source of information. Not only can they allow you to gauge how well you currently meet their expectations, they can also tell you where you are doing well but more importantly where you are falling behind.

By asking the customer you not only show them that you care but you also take the guess work out of customer services.

Market research also helps you identify opportunities. If you are planning to provide a new service and want to know the preconceived attitudes people have then market research can help, not only in evaluating the potential for a new idea, but also by identify the areas where a marketing message needs to honed. Research in early phases can also produce additional ideas and potentially marketable ideas backed by your clients' requirements and desires.

Market research's biggest coup is that it minimizes risk. It helps identify what is needed and ensures that the development of a product or service is highly focused towards the appropriate and requested demand.

How does all of this apply to your business and your website? To ensure that your website works in the best way for your clients you need to offer them an initial option, then ask their opinion. Find out what they like and what they don't and alter your site accordingly. This is a never ending process, but when done at appropriate times during the lifecycle of development you can save thousands of dollars and more quickly earn the trust and respect of your users when they realize you really are paying attention to what they need.

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