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What to Do with Web Analytics

Source: [IT Business Edge](#) | Priority: [Optimizing Infrastructure](#) | Topic: [Web Traffic Analysis and Reporting](#)
 Date Published: 3/23/2006

With Pedro Sostre, Sostre and Associates, a Web consulting firm. Sostre's book, "Sell Now: How Conversion Design Turns Online Traffic into Online Sales," is due out this fall.

Question: Research from Jupiter and other firms suggests that businesses both large and small are ignoring Web analytics even as advertising and e-commerce activity are increasing. What's causing this and why should companies start ramping up their Web analytics capabilities now?

Sostre: I think it's been kind of a slow progression, but it's going the right way in terms of companies starting to move toward embracing analytics and what it can do for them. I think what was happening was that companies were looking at the wrong metrics for what they could get out of analytics. The original buzz words were "stickiness" and "eyeballs passed" and "page views." They weren't the kinds of numbers that, at the end of the day, affected business as much as they felt it should. It was misinformation for the first few years. The numbers weren't really translating into usable business figures.

Now, I see the trend going back to finding the relevant metrics for business models, whether it's e-commerce or portal activity. We're focusing on what the numbers mean. Real interactive companies are now looking at analytics to learn who the customer is and discover new applications for market and product development.

Question: Google recently launched a free WA service called Google Analytics, which has some people wondering if search results will continue to be unbiased. Is there any way for Google to ensure that search and analytics will be properly separated?

Sostre: Personally, it's kind of hard to lie and not get caught. I think if Google were foolish enough to try and skew the numbers or do anything that's not on the level, they would be caught very quickly. Whether you love them or hate them, you have to admit that Google can get away with quite a bit. But they are starting to realize that they are accountable to everyone. It's just way too easy to get caught to risk jeopardizing their analytics service. And most companies are using more than one provider anyway.

Question: So what can we expect to see in the future for WA? Data gathering techniques are fairly advanced, but what about the actual analysis side?

Sostre: One of the huge gray areas as the Web matures in the next couple of years is increasing convergence. It started that you could throw anything online and it was so new that people bought it. Then advertising and brand building started to take hold. Now, we're getting to the point where there are enough companies out there and Internet consumers are savvy enough that companies are optimizing the entire process to make sure they are closing sales and not hurting business. A good way to start is to analyze how people interact with a site and see where the weaknesses are and where sales could be increased. Conversion rates are going from 40 percent to 400 percent. The first step in finding out where a site is in terms of

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conversion is to see where it is losing customers. You can flag whether a particular marketing campaign is good or a waste of money. Maybe users get pretty far, but are leaving at the shopping cart. You can make intelligent business decisions because maybe the sticker is too high or the process is too complicated. You can refine the entire sales process.

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Google Exec Touts Communities, Content over APIs

TAKEAWAY: Though it doesn't get into open source too much, this overview of comments from Google VP Adam Bosworth shows how much the company is thinking about the shift away from proprietary Microsoft APIs and toward tools like the LAMP stack. At the Zend/PHP Conference & Expo, Bosworth said Google is also highly interested in the way that online communities are changing the methods of creating content and disseminating it. Health care could be transformed by this paradigm shift, he says. (Free Registration Required)

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Source: [Promotion World](#) | Priority: [Maximizing IT Investments](#) | Topic: [Search](#)
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[Compliance \(1954\)](#)

[Audits \(84\)](#), [BASEL II \(26\)](#), [Board of Directors \(14\)](#), [Compliance Costs \(71\)](#), [Compliance Software Packages \(49\)](#), [Customer Privacy \(10\)](#), [Enterprise Content Management \(17\)](#), [Financial Services \(165\)](#), [Fraud \(3\)](#), [Government Agencies \(166\)](#), [Health Care \(29\)](#), [HIPAA \(61\)](#), [International Law \(72\)](#), [Legislation \(259\)](#), [Message Archiving \(65\)](#), [Network Security \(60\)](#), [Penalties \(35\)](#), [Public Reporting \(3\)](#), [Regulation \(10\)](#), [Exchange \(20\)](#), [User Monitoring \(34\)](#)

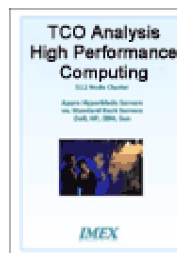
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Infrastructure Management (2465)

Access Control (9), Application Hosting (13), Application Management (30), Application Service Providers (85), Architectures (63), Planning (10), Change Management (23), Contingency Planning (2), Deployment Planning/Testing (26), Disaster Recovery (89), Distributed/Utility Computing (59), Hardware (774), Help Desk Management (9), Electrical Systems (1), Network Modeling and Analysis (1), Provisioning (2), Purchasing Strategies (23), QoS (17), RFID (57), Service Level Management (7), Statistical Analysis (1), System Management (28), Wi-Fi (211), Wireless (440)

IT/Business Alignment (4028)

Asset Management (12), Best Practices (169), Board of Directors (46), Business Communications (185), Business Continuity (26), Business Intelligence (45), Business Logistics (1), Business Models (155), Business Performance Management (61), Business Process Management (57), End Users (79), Entrepreneurship (6), Globalization (61), Governance (156), Government Agencies (428), Internet Knowledge Management (17), Management Philosophies (7), Marketing (86), Mergers and Acquisitions (87), Metrics (177), Outsourcing (15), Standards Organizations (15), Start-ups (13), Strategic Planning (320), Telecommuting (8)

Mobile Solutions (1079)

Bluetooth (54), Cell Phone Networks (27), Cell Phones (196), GPS (29), Memory/Storage (74), Metropolitan Wireless Networks (2), Sources (87), Presence-aware Applications (12), Smartphones (115), Wi-Fi (71)

Networking (1783)

Active Directory (1), Adapter Cards (13), Bandwidth Management (57), Communications Carriers (78), Ethernet (75), Fault-Tolerant (22), Response (IVR/CTI) (22), Internet Access (41), Interoperability-Connectivity (193), Intranet (7), LAN (32), Legacy Networks (6), Management (31), Network Monitoring (4), Network Protocols (109), Network Troubleshooting (4), PAN (1), Peer to Peer (58), Policy-Based Management (43), Technologies (31), Routers (34), Small Office/Home Office (SOHO) (7), Smart Cards (13), Switches (62), Telecom Auditing and Expense Management (43), Wireless (92), WLAN (48)

Open Source (1469)

BSD (7), Open Source Databases (82), Open Source Enterprise Applications (297), Open Source General Productivity (91), Heterogeneous (184), Linux Desktops (43), Linux Distributions (137), Network Management (7), Open Source ROI (13), Open Source Software Development (49), Standards Organizations (49), Open Source Strategies (89), Open Source Support (44), Open Source TCO (14), OS Virtualization (11)

Operating Systems (444)

BSD (8), Embedded Systems (2), Linux (145), Vista (107), Macintosh (25), OS Virtualization (11), Palm (2), Sun (26), UNIX (8), Windows (69)

Security (3758)

Access Control (64), Anti-Spyware (92), Anti-Virus Solutions (87), Application Security (62), Security Auditing (58), Authentication (40), Data Privacy (288), Denial of Service Attacks (54), E-mail Security (267), Encryption and Key Management (85), Identity Management/User Provisioning (69), Instant Messaging Security (63), Intrusion Detection/Forensics (54), Intrusion Prevention Systems (24), Mobile Devices (131), Network Security (368), Operating System Patches (32), Passwords (112), Physical Security (83), Security Policies (159), SSL Certificates (8), Standards Organizations (16), Terrorism (29), Usage Management and Monitoring (54), User Policies (29), Vulnerability Assessment (159), Web Transaction Control Gateways (21), Zombie Networks (39)

Servers (758)

Application Servers (49), Blade Servers (50), Broadband Power Solutions (93), Clusters (15), Consolidation (37), Cooling Systems (17), DC Power Solutions (8), Enterprise Servers (15), Entry Level Servers (5), Mainframe/High-end Servers (61), Management Software (4), Midframe/Midrange Servers (8), Monitoring (125), Print Servers (1), Power Distribution (26), Racks and Enclosures (14), Remote Control (5), Search Servers (5), Storage (34), UPS Systems (7), Virtualization (12)

Software Development (613)

.NET (46), APIs (12), Application Development (120), Application Planning and Implementation (75), Architectures (18), Change Management (1), Development Solutions (90), Grid/Utility Computing (13), J2EE (19), Java (55), Open source (104), Project Management (19)

Staffing (2364)

C-Level Executives (98), Career Path/Promotion (82), Certifications (15), Compensation (85), H1-B visa (22), Insourcing (8), IT Workforce (263), Outsourcing (7), Recruiting (93), Retention (54), Staff Diversity (1), Staff Management Skills (29), Telecommuting (50), Training (1)

Storage (544)

Backup Software (10), Backups (38), Contingency Planning (3), Data Replication and Mirroring (39), Data Security (132), Data Warehouses (11), E-mail Archiving (21), Information Lifecycle Management (37), IP-Based Storage (29), NAS (11), Networking (44), Optical Drives (4), RAID (3), SAN (48), Storage Management (1), Hybrid Systems (1)

Vendors (3733)

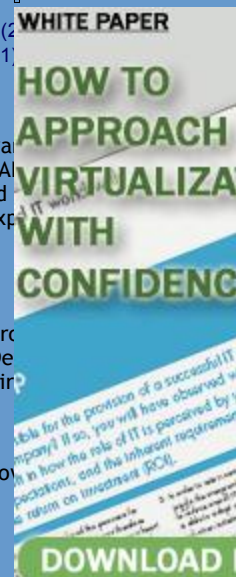
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Analysts (365), Cell Phone Vendors (179), Collaboration (3), Consolidation (19), CRM Vendors (77), Database Software Vendors (93), Desktop Vendors (74), Enterprise Software Vendors (1065), ERP Vendors (37), Infrastructure Vendors (194), Internet Service Providers (14), Laptop Vendors (59), Mobile Device Vendors (5), Mobile Gear Vendors (5), Mobile Services Vendors (165), Networking Gear Vendors (45), Open Source Vendors (154), Operating System Vendors (122), Peripherals (163), Purchasing System Vendors (9), Server Vendors (102), Services Vendors (92), Storage Vendors (49), Telecommunications

Voice & Data Networks (1604)

Broadband over Powerline (40), Cable Modem Services (43), Cell/Mobile Networks (354), Convergence (233), DSL (74), Fiber-to-the-Premises (53), Internet Service Providers (14), Servers (25), IP Telephony (154), IP Video (25), IPTV (52), Multimedia Frameworks (12), Passive Optical Networks (3), Regulation (26), Standards Organizations (14), Telecommunications Services (200), Ultra-Wide Band (19), Wi-Fi Networks (120), WiMax (93)

Web Development (162)

APIs (2), Search (40), Site Management (13), Web Development Tools (9), Web Page Authoring (4), Web Site Hosting (18), Web Site Search Agents (26), Website Design (26)