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# USING GOOGLE ANALYTICS TO UNDERSTAND YOUR **web traffic** AND OPTIMIZE YOUR CONTENT

**page** **content reports** **bounce** **views** **search ranking**  
**load time** **homepage** **tagged press campaigns** **tracker** **acquisition reports**  
**site speed** **behavior flow** **social channels** **content drilldown** **navigation structure** **evaluate** **exit rate** **land**

You may have seen my article in the Fall 2013 issue of “ie” about using social media to improve your festival’s rankings in search, and a brief overview of Google Analytics. Analytics is the most valuable Google tool you may not be using. And it’s free, so what’s not to love?

In this issue, I’ll discuss using Google Analytics to track and understand traffic (which we hate on the road but love on the web!) and the most useful content reports to help you improve your page content and navigation structure.

## Getting Started

It’s simple to get going with Google Analytics. First, create an account at the Google Analytics homepage and set up on your website. Festivals who work with Ticketfly and have Ticketfly-powered websites are already set up with Google Analytics by default, and can track actual ticket sales conversions back to different traffic sources.

When you click into the Analytics site for reporting, Google drops you into the “Audience Overview” for the past month. You can use the left-hand navigation to move through the different reporting options. If you adjust the reporting date range, it will carry over to each report you visit.

There is a detailed Google Analytics Help page that answers questions about everything from basic to advanced features such as adding in dimensions and adding custom segments of visitors to your report. It’s easy to get caught up in the rabbit hole of data that Google provides, but if you start off simple and follow these guidelines you’ll be amazed how much impact it can have on your

festival’s marketing tactics and success. Now let’s hit the road and dive into the wonderful world of website traffic!

## ACQUISITION REPORTS Keyword > Paid and Organic

Why It’s Important: Keyword reports let you explore your total web traffic grouped by paid SEM campaign keywords and organic keywords. Reviewing organic keywords may help you learn how people find you.

**Sample Insight:** Analyzing the data for tagged campaigns can reveal which marketing effort (a paid ad, a link from your blog, your email newsletter, etc.) was most effective at delivering traffic.

**Next Steps:** You can mine this information to use with your paid search engine marketing (SEM) efforts or to edit your site content to include these words as part of search engine optimization (SEO). One thing to keep in mind is that Keyword reporting will often show “(not provided)” in the list. This is in response to consumer privacy settings, as Google has adapted their policies to suit users’ requests.

### All Traffic

**Why It’s Important:** This report provides the information you need to evaluate the value of traffic sources. You can dig into traffic referred from links on other websites and in tagged press campaigns you may create to track impact. Key metrics to consider for insights about customer engagement from sources are visits, # of pages per visit, visit duration, and bounce rate.

**Sample Insight:** You may find that your site has a high bounce rate, which measures the percentage of visitors who enter your site and “bounce” (leave) rather than continue viewing other pages on your site. Don’t automatically assume that this means your site isn’t performing well.

**Next Steps:** Depending on the content of each page, a high bounce rate could be reflective of how easy your site makes it for the consumer to find that “Buy Tickets” button for an event and click through to your ticketing provider to make a purchase! If you see unexpected sources, do research on that source. You may have found a new site to partner with for press releases and promotions.

### Social

**Why It’s Important:** Social reports give you the lowdown on social network referral and trackbacks will show you other websites that are linking to your site. Getting the scoop on social networks may yield some surprises.

**Sample Insight:** You might discover that your forgotten Yelp profile is actually driving a significant amount of traffic to your site. Social network optimization does have an impact on website search rankings, as we mentioned in the Fall 2013 issue. Social reports remind you that it’s time to tend that garden and make sure your profiles are up to date.

**Next Steps:** Using Trackbacks, you may discover websites with articles about your events. If you like them, share the article on your site or social channels to help strengthen the relationship. Everyone wants traffic – at least online!

## BEHAVIOR REPORTS

### Behavior Flow

**Why It’s Important:** Behavior Flow reveals the pathways your customers travel

when they navigate your website. Understanding what is popular helps you identify content that needs improvement. In some cases, you may decide to remove a page from your site. After all, would a restaurant keep a dish on its menu if no one ever bought it?

**Sample Insight:** There is a page on your site that you believe is vital to your business, yet receives very little traffic.

**Next Steps:** Think like a consumer. Is the intended audience not seeing the link to that page? Update your navigation or put a photo on the homepage that links to it. Are people exiting the page a few seconds after landing? Experiment with your page content layout! Make one change at a time, and then re-visit the report to check for improvement.

### Site Content: Content Drilldown

**Why It’s important:** Content Drilldown displays information related to page views, time spent on the page, bounce rate, and exit rate. Your main website goal is likely to be selling tickets. For any e-commerce web site, the amount of time spent on a page may be secondary to moving customers effectively into the purchase process. With that in mind, the collection of pages where you feature Ticketfly purchase links is where you hope to see the most action.

*Bounce rate = percentage of visitors that both landed and exited from the reported page.*

*Exit rate = percentage of visitors leaving your website from the reported page.*

**Sample Insight:** The majority of users land, then bounce, and exit from event pages. A slightly smaller group lands on your homepage, and has much lower bounce and exit rates. The homepage is where you have upcoming and just announced event lists prominently displayed.

**Next Steps:** Ask “Why?” and think through the possible answers. Customers who have first seen the event page link via search or on social media have a specific goal before coming to your site. In this case, the high bounce rate may indicate either getting information like ticket price and show time and quickly exiting, or clicking the “Buy Tickets” link and moving to your ticketing provider’s to make their purchase. In contrast, your homepage lends itself to event discovery and has lower bounce and exits because you’ve made it simple for customers to find new events they want to explore, so they move deeper into the website.

### Site Speed: Page Timings

**Why It’s Important:** Page Timings helps you identify factors that affect the loading

speed of critical pages like your home and calendar page, so that you can solve performance problems. For example, you may want to look for performance issues based on differences between web browsers.

**Sample Insight:** The homepage takes much longer to load on a mobile device when compared to the overall total load time for the page.

**Next Steps:** Review related data in the report to determine the cause. Is it because your website redirects to a mobile-optimized version? Are there differences if you look at the original source of the traffic? Once you’ve identified the potential cause, you may decide if it is critical to take steps to improve the page load time for the mobile user.

**To recap, here are some simple steps to help you get started:**

1. Open up Google Analytics and take a tour of the help content.
2. Check your Acquisition and Behavior reports to see which marketing channels bring you the most traffic and how customers spend time on your site.
3. Look for unexpected sources to find new marketing channels to develop.
4. Check your Social report to see which social networks are most active for you and focus efforts on those that are driving unexpected traffic.

**Ticketfly** is an integrated ticketing and marketing platform for event promoters of any size, from standing-room-only clubs to festival grounds and arenas with reserved seating. The Ticketfly platform provides a full suite of integrated ticketing, mobile and social marketing, email and analytics tools that streamline operations and increase ticket sales. Prominent Ticketfly festival clients in the U.S. and Canada include Camp Bisco (NY), Life is good™ festival (MA), the Original Renaissance Pleasure Faire, the Pitchfork Music Festival (Chicago), Southern Ground Music & Food Festival (Nashville and Charleston), Noise Pop (San Francisco), Riot Fest (Chicago, Denver, and Toronto), the Preakness Stakes and InfieldFest (Baltimore), and Virgin Mobile FreeFest (DC).

To find events near you, visit [ticketfly.com](http://ticketfly.com). For more information about Ticketfly, visit [start.ticketfly.com](http://start.ticketfly.com), connect on Facebook at [facebook.com/ticketfly](http://facebook.com/ticketfly), or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/ticketfly](http://twitter.com/ticketfly).