

Chapter 23

The Use of Google Analytics for Measuring Website Performance of Non-Formal Education Institution

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to measure the performance of a non-formal educational institution's website using Google Analytics data and data obtained in a separate research on specific non-formal educational institution's users. The goal was to determine the best performing acquisition channel for non-formal educational institutions and the average user profile of this kind of educational programs by means of user acquisition and behavior data. Key parameters used to measure the performance of different acquisition channels were conversion rate, average session duration, and bounce rate. User gender data and age group data were used on a side of user specific data. The findings presented in this research may be applicable to other non-formal educational institutions as well.

INTRODUCTION

Non-formal educational programs are experiencing tremendous growth worldwide. Numerous reasons can be identified as being important in this regards. The fact that non-formal educational programs are more flexible and adaptive in terms of modern business environment, needs can be observed as one of the leading reasons. As a direct consequence of a growing popularity of non-formal education in global terms, non-formal education institutions, which organize and conduct different non-formal educational

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programs, are also witnessing the intensive growth. Non-formal educational programs are facing many challenges and changed learning environment, which should enhance students' satisfaction and strong motivation (Simović, Radović-Marković, 2018).

Some of those educational institutions are focused exclusively on domestic markets whilst others are targeting international markets as well. Some of those institutions are performing their educational programs exclusively in traditional settings, others are exclusively using e-learning, as a tool for their educational content delivery, whilst some are combining those two approaches.

Regardless of their strategic approach in terms of educational content delivery channel and their targeted markets, all of those educational institutions are investing lots of efforts and resources to reach to their targeted audience. Nowadays all of them are focusing on using their websites for promoting their activities and educational programs. The websites have become their leading mechanism in attracting new customers and retaining the existing ones. In other words, their websites have become a hub for all of their digital traffic. Therefore, it has become essential for them to measure the performance of their websites in terms of aforementioned goals.

There are many different methods and tools the organizations can use in order to measure the performance of their websites. One of them is especially efficient and well known, and widespread. It is the Google Analytics. Google Analytics represents one of the leading industry solutions specialized in analyzing the website traffic, the effects of different marketing campaigns and the overall performance. The tool launched in 2005 represents a response of a company Google to a growing need for a website performance measurement. It enables the website administrators to simply copy the line of tracking code into the XML code of their website, and thereby track the website's performance on several levels:

- **User Level:** Which refers to an actions of an individual user.
- **Session Level:** Which relates to each individual visit.
- **Page View Level:** Which refers to visited pages.
- **Event Level:** Which relates to actions undertaken by individual visitor.

In its core essence, the Google Analytics helps the companies to collect two categories of data relevant for measurement and evaluation purposes:

1. User acquisition data, which refers to user demographic characteristics such as age, gender, interests etc, on one side, and user acquisition channel data (referrals, organic, paid etc.), on the other side.
2. The user behavior data, which refers to the behavior of the users who reached the targeted website (the landing page data, average session duration data, bounce rate data, user pathway etc).

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Non-formal education was the subject of interest and research by many authors, including Eshach, 2007, who focused on cognitive and affective aspects of non-formal learning, as well as on defining the different types of out-of-school learning such as formal, informal and non-formal learning. The author focuses on different models of learning and identifies the clear distinction between them, since the terms informal and non-formal learning are often misused and misunderstood. For exactly the same reason, Malcolm et al. (2003) focus on identifying the clear distinction between the aforementioned types of education.

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