Web Analytics
How to reach your goals
Welcome!

What I’ll cover today:

0 The basics of reading analytics
0 How to use analytics to improve your website
0 How to set website goals that align with your KPIs
0 The basics of usability testing
Lightning Review Round!

*Before* you started this web project…

- Outlined your goals and objectives
- Knew your expected ROI
Common Digital Strategies

- Ecommerce: Selling products or services
- Lead generation: Collecting potential leads
- Content publisher: Engagement & frequent visitation
- Online information: Help customers find information
- Branding: Awareness, engagement & loyalty

Source: Google Analytics Academy
**Different strategies for different goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I want to know</th>
<th>How to measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What people are looking at on my website.</td>
<td>Google Analytics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How people are using my website</td>
<td>Usability testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What people think about my website.</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Measurement Cycle

Source: Google Analytics Academy
Measurement: Collecting the data needed to answer your questions.

Reporting: Put the information in a readable format.

Analysis: Identifying trends. Developing a hypothesis.

Testing: Try different solutions to the problems you identified during analytics.

…repeat and improve!
What Google Analytics can do for you

- Provides data on how many people your site is reaching
- You can use this to improve user experience
Custom date range
Traffic over time
What pages are most popular and least popular
Pageviews

- Commonly used metric
- Every hit that goes to Analytics is a pageview, with a bit of info associated with it
### Unique pageviews

- An *estimate* of the # of people who viewed your site in the time period.
- Doesn’t catch people accessing from different computers or browsers, but Google is working on this.
Pageviews vs UP Example

Example:
A => B => C => A => C (exit)
5 pageviews, 3 unique pageviews, 1 visit
### Average Time on Page

The average time users spent on this page.

- Attempts to show how long users spend on this page
- Longer is not always better
- Google can’t track time for only one pageview
Entrances

The number of times users entered through this page.

- Can be problematic at McGill because of the way “sub-sites” are set up
Bounce rate

The number of times users entered through this page.

- Can be problematic at McGill because of the way “sub-sites” are set up
Bounces!

- A ‘bounce’ is any visit that has just one pageview.
- Somebody coming to your site and leaving, closing the browser window, etc. without going to another page on the site.
- Because of the way Analytics tracks people - it has no idea how long they’re actually sticking around for.
- Bounces are counted as a visit duration of 0s – but are (confusingly) *not* counted in avg. time on page – so that’s how avg. time on page for an entire site can exceed avg. visit duration.
Exit percentage

How often people are exiting through that page.

• This can be important.
• Lets you know where people are ending up – the last page they visited before leaving your site
• Either people are finding what they’re looking for on an exit page OR they’ve given up
• This takes some interpretation (and several grains of salt)
Who are these people?
Broken link reports

- where the users were trying to get to (under mcgill.ca)
- where the users clicked on the link (full URL)
- how many times the “Page not Found” page was viewed

• we can get you set up with a broken link report that will show broken links coming from your site – just get in touch!
GA requires many grains of salt

- Not an exact science
- Depends on your content
- Metrics aren’t “good” or “bad” — but they can indicate problems and hint at possible solutions
GA requires many grains of salt

- For example, having a relatively high bounce rate is usually seen as bad.
- Pages that prominently link off to external sites should be expected to have a higher bounce rate.
- Bottom line: If your user is getting what they want, it’s not a bad thing.
A few things to look for

**Bounce rate**
- High bounce rate on pages that should be retaining visitors
- Can be a result of confusing navigation
- People want to go somewhere else, but end up on your page

**High avg. visit duration**
- Can be good if you have content you want your users to engage with
- ...or bad if it means users are having trouble finding information they need
- Look at which pages users are sticking around on – are they functional, or content-heavy?
A few things to look for

- Popular (exit) pages that are relatively difficult to get to
  - depending on the nature of the content, you might want to add a prominent link to an appropriate landing page
- Popular exit pages that shouldn’t be
  - people might be getting lost!
What is the **objective** or goal of your website?

*Hint*: Start with your departmental/business goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An example goal</th>
<th>How your website can help you</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce strain on support staff</td>
<td>• Provide information on FAQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Forms that aid transactions (be careful not to add red tape)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contact information to help route people to the correct person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interpretation isn’t straightforward (but we can help!)

While there are some specific things you can look for, there isn’t much in the way of hard-and-fast rules to interpreting Analytics data

0 Ask questions based on your ‘business needs’
0 Then fit analytics goals into this
Usability Testing

- Are people finding the right information, or just *think* they’re finding the right information?
- Google Analytics doesn’t track *where* people click or *why* they clicked there.
Loop 11

Average task completion rate

48%

- Success: 48%
- Fail: 46%
- Abandon: 6%

- Dow Jones close: 45% Success, 54% Fail, 2% Abandon
- Return to home page: 66% Success, 30% Fail, 4% Abandon
- Apple iPad Price: 7% Success, 84% Fail, 9% Abandon
- Holiday deals: 75% Success, 16% Fail, 9% Abandon
Loop 11

Pros:
0 Can be “task-oriented”
0 Gives you more information than Google Analytics
0 Can include survey feedback elements

Cons:
0 More time consuming to set up
0 You need to find people to take the test
Sometimes you just have to ask…

- Analytics involves some guesswork/inferring
- Surveys can tell you what people want to see that doesn’t currently exist
- Surveys can help you measure external metrics like brand recognition
To get Google Analytics for your McGill.ca website

googloanalytics@mcgill.ca

google.com/analytics
answers many questions.
Questions?

What are your goals?