THE POWER OF DIGITAL ANALYTICS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

> *"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." - Albert Einstein*

The world in which we live is a complex one.

Businesses know that their audiences are diverse and that they are also tight on time. With businesses operating 24/7 and consumers making purchase decisions globally, there must be a way to track activity and get a feel for when and where these decisions are being made.

Digital analytics offers this and, with audiences being so 'connected', it is a handy way to track not only their search habits, but also things like location, device, time of day and spend.

Information about the effectiveness of your engagements, and how you can turn them into business results, is only possible if you have the correct people who are highly skilled and that those individuals or teams are using the correct technology in the correct way.

Making sure that your processes are in good order ensures that you have a uniformed approach to data capture, retention and analysis and that you are able to build an effective strategy to your business moving forward.

One of the key things here is to be able to understand where all of your information is being stored, the tools that you can use to extract the data and how you will implement it to ensure progression.

What is digital analytics?

In its simplest form, digital analytics is the study of a set of business and technical activities that define, create, collect, verify or transform digital data into reporting, research, analyses, recommendations, optimisations, predictions, and automations.

The data, once collected, can illustrate user behaviour on websites, mobile sites and through mobile applications.

Digital analytics essentially allow a brand or business with a digital presence to better understand user behaviour and to implement this to improve user experience (UX) and therefore increase productivity and profitability.

TYPES OF DATA

> *"Data! Data! Data! I can't make bricks without clay!" -*
> *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*

Firstly, there are two mains types of data that businesses should be focussing on, quantitative data and qualitative data, each of which has different properties. Qualitative data **describes** whereas quantitative data **defines**.

- *Quantitative data*

Quantitative data is defined as the value of data in the form of counts or numbers where each data-set has a unique numerical value associated with it. This data is any quantifiable information that can be used for mathematical calculations and statistical analysis, such that real-life decisions can be made based on these derivations. Quantitative data is used to answer questions such as 'How many?', 'How often?', 'How much?'. This data can be verified and can also be conveniently evaluated using maths.

- *Qualitative data*

Qualitative data is defined as the data that approximates and characterises.

Qualitative data can be observed and recorded.

This data type is non-numerical in nature.

This type of data is collected through methods of observations. Qualitative data in statistics is also known as categorical data. Data that can be arranged categorically based on the attributes and properties of a thing or a phenomenon.

A good example of this would be to say that your female audience can be split into three groups – under 25, 26-49 and 50+.

WHAT SHOULD YOU MONITOR?

Now that you know the difference between quantitative data and qualitative data you will want to know the exact type of data that you should be tracking.

There is no exact science to this as all business models are different, but here are the basics.

Content is a big deal when it comes to optimising your search engine visibility, differentiating your business and engaging with your audience.

But it's also labour and time-intensive to produce and leverage effectively.

This makes it vital to keep tabs on what works (so you can do more of it) and what doesn't (so you can tweak your approach, or ditch it altogether).

Landing page stats allow you to learn a lot about the progress of your strategy, including;

- How your content is developing your traffic (New Users/New Sessions).

- How well your 'similar content' lists or CTAs are working (Bounce rate).

- How well your content is performing against specific goals (Goal Conversions/Goal Conversion Rate).

- How your content is performing across various platforms (Attribution Modelling).

- Whether you're successfully reaching your target market (Demographics tracking allows you to see a breakdown of visitors to your site by gender and age group and interest categories).

To those outside of the search marketing industry, or those that are new to it, content marketing can appear a little woolly – a practice big on ideas, but short of facts – but proof of concept is there for those who look for it, and there should be an immediate distrust of anyone who simply answers "it's hard to measure" when asked for results.

Though there are certainly more metrics and methods of monitoring your content marketing progress than will be shown here, but the following should provide the basics to track the success of your brand's content, allowing you to build on the data gathered for future campaigns.

Sessions ? ↓	% New Sessions ?	New Users ?	Bounce Rate ?	Pages/Session ?	Avg. Session Duration ?	Goal Conversion Rate ?	Goal Completions ?
16,000 % of Total: 17.20% (92,612)	84.06% Avg for View: 79.01% (5.33%)	13,449 % of Total: 18.20% (73,910)	65.52% Avg for View: 61.50% (6.55%)	1.57 Avg for View: 1.90 (-17.11%)	00:00:53 Avg for View: 00:01:07 (-21.22%)	0.15% Avg for View: 0.47% (-67.84%)	24 % of Total: 5.56% (432)

The above, for example, shows some of the best metrics for measuring the success of your content (and included in the standard view of GA if you follow Reporting>Behaviour>Landing Pages) and is an average of all pieces in the selected area of the site for the selected duration of time.

Sessions: – Sessions is total number of visits to the specified subsection of the site. It details the overall number of visits, including returning visitors and has the obvious benefit of indicating your overall traffic – and if tracked in the graph commonly found above this table, it can show how much your traffic improves alongside a content strategy.

% New Sessions: – As above, but this metric excludes returning visitors and so is able to give you an indication as to the new consumers your content is attracting. Clearly it is desirable to retain some repeat traffic as it indicates that your content is developing a following, but this metric can offer a fantastic insight into how your content is developing your traffic.

New Users: – This is the number of new visitors, rather than as a percentage. This metric shows how attractive to new audiences your content is – perhaps revealing how well a piece of 'How to' or instructional content is answering the search query it is aimed at.

Bounce rate: – This is a great metric for measuring how well your content feeds in to other pieces – showing the percentage of users that visit only one page of your site before exiting. It can also show you how well your 'similar content' lists or CTAs are working, as these are the main tools you will use to draw consumers on through the site as part of your path to conversion.

Pages per session (PPS): – This offers an insight into what consumers are doing on your site and potentially how well you're capturing their attention. PPS will generally be much higher for eCommerce sites, but equally a site looking to measure the success of a content strategy will want a high average as it indicates that they are continuing to read past the point of finishing what originally drew them to your site.

Avg Session Duration: – The ideal length of this will depend upon how long your individual pieces of content are and how many pages per visit your consumers are visiting, but again the best result is always longer. If a piece of long form content is only receiving a minute of attention, for example, it may be worth revisiting the page to see if you address any issues with the content or layout.

Goal Conversion Rate & Goal Conversions: – Again, these will depend on what goals you have in place, how you're using CTAs in your blog and other things, but essentially these metrics allow you to assess at a glance how well your content is performing against specific goals – which can, again, be tracked over time to measure progress and identify areas for improvement.

Sessions ↓	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages/Session	Avg. Session Duration	Goal Conversion Rate	Goal Completions
16,164 % of Total. 17.35% (93,140)	84.13% Avg for View. 79.82% (5.40%)	13,598 % of Total. 18.29% (74,340)	64.87% Avg for View. 61.19% (6.02%)	1.58 Avg for View: 1.90 (-16.99%)	00:00:53 Avg for View. 00:01:00 (-21.17%)	0.15% Avg for View: 0.46% (-67.99%)	24 % of Total. 5.56% (432)
7,652 (47.34%)	94.05%	7,197 (52.93%)	67.24%	1.39	00:00:29	0.04%	3 (12.50%)
404 (2.50%)	92.08%	372 (2.74%)	87.62%	1.30	00:00:27	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
365 (2.26%)	89.59%	327 (2.40%)	73.15%	1.42	00:00:53	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
278 (1.72%)	68.71%	191 (1.40%)	80.22%	1.53	00:01:00	1.44%	4 (16.67%)
242 (1.50%)	77.27%	187 (1.38%)	85.12%	1.41	00:00:41	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
228 (1.41%)	77.19%	176 (1.29%)	78.07%	1.66	00:01:40	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
216 (1.34%)	68.06%	147 (1.08%)	76.85%	1.57	00:01:09	0.46%	1 (4.17%)
210 (1.30%)	76.67%	161 (1.18%)	56.67%	1.85	00:01:16	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
210 (1.30%)	75.24%	158 (1.16%)	72.86%	1.75	00:01:40	1.90%	4 (16.67%)
183 (1.13%)	68.31%	125 (0.92%)	53.01%	2.02	00:01:19	0.00%	0 (0.00%)

Another important piece of data that you can use looks at the first and last interactions of a user with your site.

FIRST INTERACTION

The below, is an example of conversions for which the first interaction was a share on various social platforms. Here you can see which platform is serving your present content strategy best with a view to rethinking approaches for platforms which are underperforming, specifically looking to adapt content to the forms of content which perform better on that specific site.

First interaction is indicative of a conversion which began with a specific referral from (in this case) a social referral and, though there may have been many interactions since, the cookie was placed during this particular visit and the conversion took place within a range of time which can be personalised to the brand – so ensure you calculate the standard lifecycle of a conversion to ensure accurate reporting).

% of conversions: 2.80%

First Interaction ▾ vs Select model ▾

Primary Dimension: Source/Medium Other ▾ Channel Groupings ▾

Secondary dimension ▾   🔍 advanced

Source/Medium	Spend (for selected time range)	First Interaction Conversions	First Interaction CPA	First Interaction Conversion Value	First Interaction ROAS
1. facebook.com / referral	—	1,703.00	—	£4,588.85	—
2. m.facebook.com / referral	—	987.00	—	£4,255.02	—
3. t.co / referral	—	813.00	—	£2,309.78	—
4. linkedin.com / referral	—	225.00	—	—	—
5. vk.com / referral	—	146.00	—	—	—
6. twitter.com / social	—	117.00	—	—	—
7. joni-phil.weebly.com / referral	—	71.00	—	£113.70	—
8. lnkd.in / referral	—	62.00	—	—	—
9. l.facebook.com / referral	—	42.00	—	£23.45	—
10. lm.facebook.com / referral	—	26.00	—	£121.64	—

LAST INTERACTION

Similarly, last interaction shows the number of conversions and their value from visits with a last interaction before conversion that have (again we use the social channels here) come from various platforms. Though the value of these conversions is obviously important, the main use of this section of GA is to monitor the performance of and assist with the development of your content strategy. You can draw inference from various performances, and look to capitalise on success and improve on underperforming channels.

% of conversions: 2.80%

Last Interaction ▾ vs Select model ▾

Primary Dimension: Source/Medium Other ▾ Channel Groupings ▾

Secondary dimension ▾   🔍 advanced

Source/Medium	Spend (for selected time range)	Last Interaction Conversions	Last Interaction CPA	Last Interaction Conversion Value	Last Interaction ROAS
1. facebook.com / referral	—	1,271.00	—	£3,254.16	—
2. m.facebook.com / referral	—	523.00	—	£3,611.13	—
3. t.co / referral	—	804.00	—	£2,127.70	—
4. linkedin.com / referral	—	184.00	—	—	—
5. vk.com / referral	—	133.00	—	—	—
6. twitter.com / social	—	114.00	—	—	—
7. lnkd.in / referral	—	68.00	—	—	—
8. joni-phil.weebly.com / referral	—	44.00	—	£78.80	—
9. l.facebook.com / referral	—	34.00	—	£23.45	—
10. pinterest.com / referral	—	27.00	—	£309.43	—

There are, of course, many other ways to monitor the performance of a content marketing strategy not just on GA, but with several other third party tools (and some of the platform specific analytics offerings), but with just these few GA views (and a record of where content is being shared and when) you can learn a lot about the progress of your strategy.

MONITORING YOUR LEADS

A good understanding of analytics allows you to monitor on page performance and lets you get to the core of your business leads.

A lead, despite what you may think, is not a sale – that would be a conversion. The two are different stages of the purchase journey that are often confused with one another. A lead is nothing more than someone who has expressed an interest in your business, digital analytics can help you break your leads down and understand them.

Once you have the data, it's your job to follow up on any interest and turn a lead into a sale. According to Hubspot, there are five stages between the two and this is known as the customer lifecycle.

The stages are:

Lead– Leads are the first step in creating a customer. They've expressed more interest in your business than the average member of your target demographic but aren't anywhere near the purchase decision point.

Marketing Qualified Lead – MQLs are the next stage of the sales funnel. These are the people who raise their hand and say, "This seems like a pretty sweet deal". They're interested and will likely purchase from you one day, but aren't quite ready for it yet.

Sales Qualified Lead – An SQL is an MQL who has demonstrated an interest to purchase because they've got specific questions about what you offer. These are the people who need a one-on-one with your sales team.

Opportunity – Opportunities are the people who have become a real sales opportunity.

Customer – Someone who gives you money for your product or service.

There are many different actions that could lead to a sale for your business and it is important to have a general idea about what the trigger points are. Many businesses use a scoring system that allocates points to a user when they perform one of the following actions:

- Fill in a contact form
- Open an email
- Request a call back
- Book an appointment
- Sign up to a newsletter
- Download your content
- View specific pages of your website
- Enter live chat
- Interact with your social media
- Phone in

If, as an example you were to allocate 1 point to each of these ten possible actions, (note: there are plenty more) and a user opens an email they will receive 1 point.

If the second user opens an email, visits the website, downloads a document and requests a call back they will have performed four actions and therefore have 4 points.

It is fair to assume that they will be further along the sales funnel and are a more 'engaged' user. You would then classify them a 'warmer' lead.

Obviously this example needs some further context in that things like webpage visits are worth far less in terms of points than requesting a call back or a booking an appointment, but you get the idea.

According to Econsultancy: "Within a company you will know how much resource or budget you give to marketing each type of lead, but you'll also want to find out how much you get out of each one, whether they give you a positive return and which might be more or less profitable than you think they are."

UNDERSTANDING THE STATS

> *"Statistics are like bikinis. What they reveal is suggestive, but what they conceal is vital." - Aaron Levenstein*

To track whether your strategy is working and visitors are taking the actions you want them to, for example, conversion rates for ads, form completions, purchases, etc, you need to tell GA what your goals are.

Goals allow you to track the actions that are most important to your business, for example, conversion rates for ads, form completions, sales etc. Without them, you're basically shooting in the dark with your marketing activity.

GA lets you define four different types of goals that users can achieve during a session:

- Destination: the user reaches a specified web page or app screen.

- Duration: the user spends a specified minimum amount of time on your site or app.

- Pages/Screens per session: the user views a specified minimum number of pages or screens.

- Event: the user conducts a specified action, like viewing a video.

By selecting the parent page or the goal set you can break the data down further and look at the actual live stats.

THE FIRST OPTION YOU HAVE IS ON THE MAIN DASHBOARD:

Here you are able to look at four key metrics – Users, Sessions, Bounce Rate and Session Duration. These four things give you an opportunity to understand how many people are looking at you information and the time they are spending with you. The Bounce Rate metric allows you to plan for more engaging and relevant content. If you can draw users in and keep them by answering their quires, the bounce rate will drop and the audience is far more likely to become a lead or a conversion.
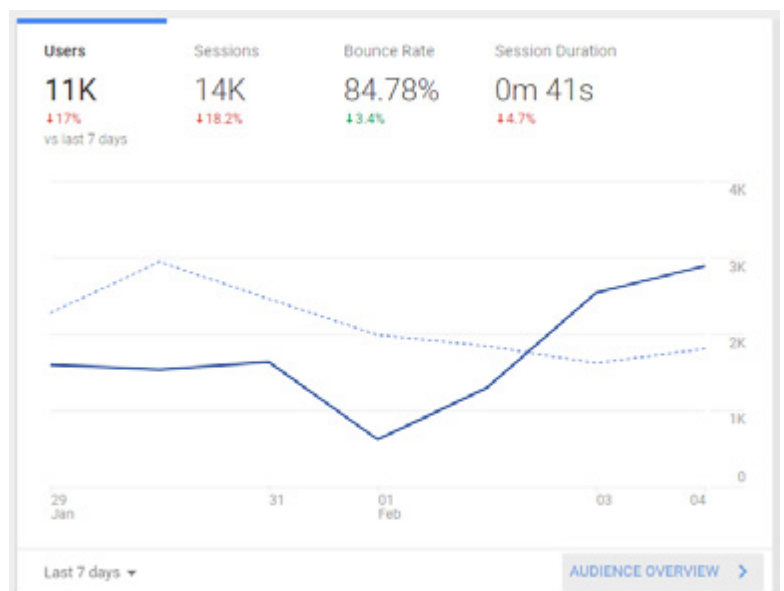
Another thing to look at when it comes to understanding what is triggering the first stage of the customer lifecycle is the time of the day metric.

This shows you the exact moment that your audience are engaging with you.

If you look at the example below you can see that there is strong performance between Tues-Thurs especially between 4pm and 9pm.
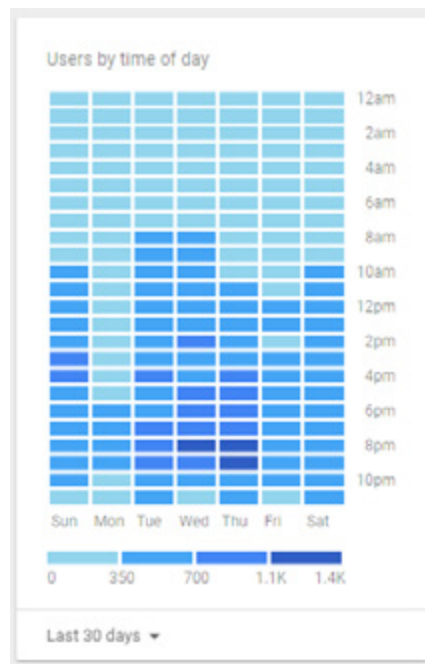

One trap that many businesses fall into here however is that they take these results as sacrosanct. It could be that the reason that these times are busy are not because of the audience but because these are the times that they are sent the information. Test various times or alter the sample size to look over a far greater time period and you will gain a greater insight.

The live users feature is a particularly good tool as you can track activity on the site straight after sending out any form of communication.
One of the other things that you can do is look at the traffic channel and gain valuable insights as to where the breakdown is. Looking at the image below you can see that the traffic channels have been split first by day and then by sector.
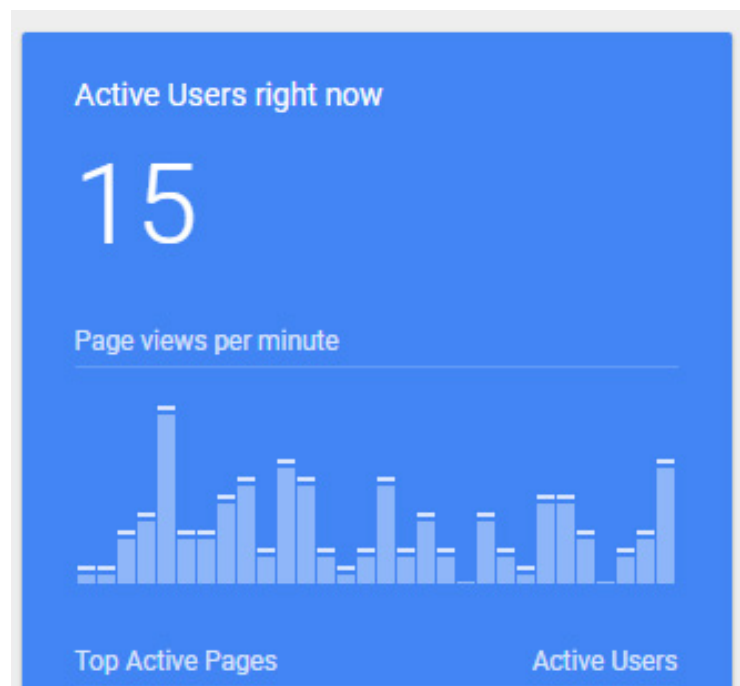
The live users feature is a particularly good tool as you can track activity on the site straight after sending out any form of communication.

One of the other things that you can do is look at the traffic channel and gain valuable insights as to where the breakdown is. Looking at the image below you can see that the traffic channels have been split first by day and then by sector.
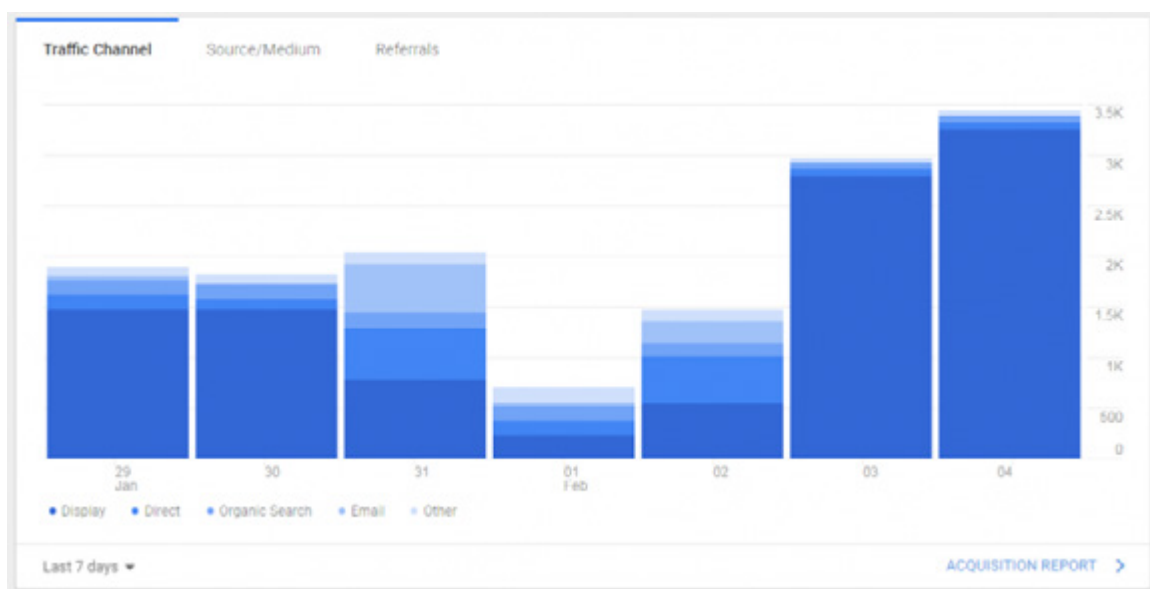
You are able to use these charts to see the percentages and volumes of different traffic sources including:

Display advertising – Display advertising is an online form of advertising that the company's promotional messages appear on third party sites or search engine results pages such as publishers or social networks. The main purpose of display advertising is to support brand awareness and it also helps to increase a purchase intention of consumers.

Direct marketing – Direct marketing is a form of advertising where organisations communicate directly to customers through a variety of media including: text messaging, email, websites calls-to-action (CTA's), online adverts, database marketing, fliers, catalogue distribution, promotional letters and targeted television, newspaper and magazine advertisements as well as outdoor advertising. It is also known as direct response.

Organic search (SEO) – The core of search marketing services, SEO optimisation refers to the methods, markups and technology used to achieve a high position in search engine results pages (SERPs) or to improve rankings across a number of algorithmically driven search engines. The data shown in the above graph in this instance would relate to your website being returned by a search engine to a query and the user clicking on it. In truth this is the best form of marketing as it shows without doubt that you are relevant and appearing in the correct location.

Email – The term usually refers to sending email messages with the purpose of enhancing a merchant's relationship with current or previous customers, encouraging customer loyalty and repeat business, acquiring new customers or convincing current customers to purchase something immediately, and sharing third party ads.

Other – This data could come from the likes of social media or any other channels that you are currently running.

Geographical tools in analytics can help a business to develop their strategy as they can see which countries their leads are coming from.

This allows them to consider new markets and the possibility of using other languages or URLs to target a wider audience.
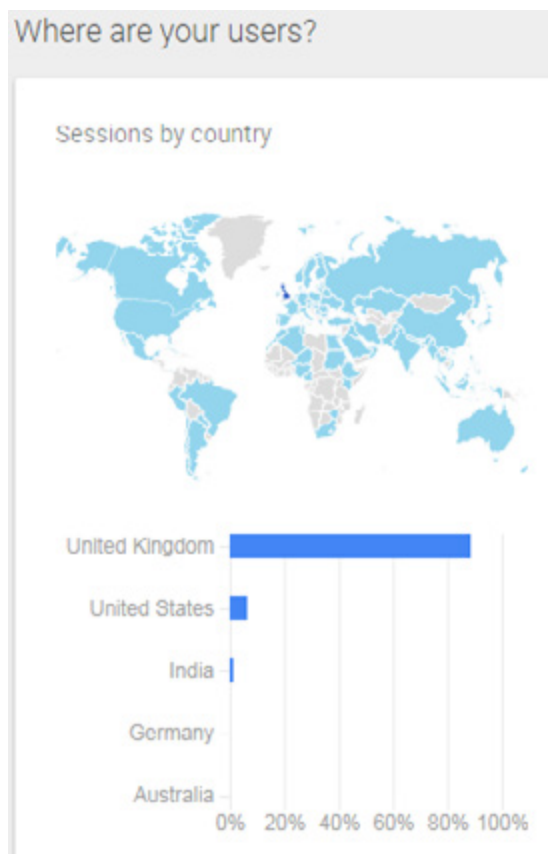
In terms of top-level data the last real metric businesses can use to look at where their leads are coming from is the device split.

Whilst this only gives information based on where somebody is reading a communication it can also be very helpful.

If you have a large proportion of you audience reading communications on mobile, then you may start to think about rolling out an app or some bespoke mobile content.

It goes without saying that you should be 'mobile ready' and have optimised your content and images for the devices but have you considered the type of content.

There is a strong correlation between image led, short, sharp text on mobile as well as content that is easily digestible at lunch and traditional commuting periods.

Think about how you can get your message over if you only have a short window of exposure.

Sessions by device

Mobile	Desktop	Tablet
64.7%	21.7%	13.6%
↑1.8%	↑4.8%	↓6.6%
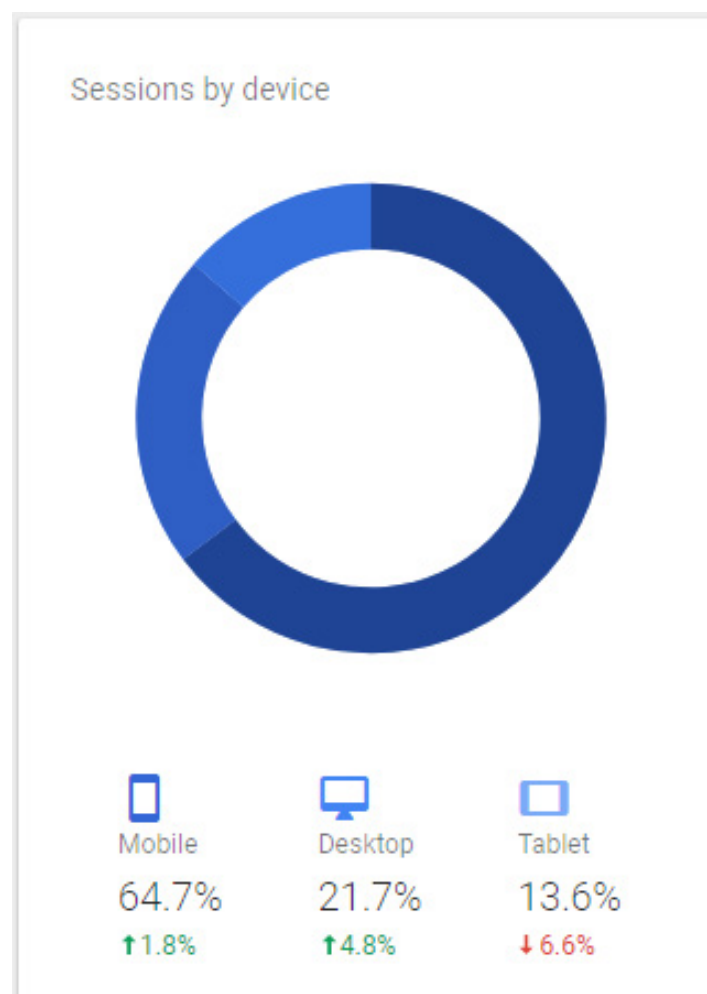
COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

> *"You have competition every day because you set such high standards for yourself that you have to go out every day and live up to that." – Michael Jordan*

Similarly, last interaction shows the number of conversions and their value from visits with a last interaction before conversion that have (again we use the social channels here) come from various platforms.

Though the value of these conversions is obviously important, the main use of this section of GA is to monitor the performance of and assist with the development of your content strategy.

You can draw inference from various performances, and look to capitalise on success and improve on underperforming channels.

If we look at a term such as 'Books' we are able to get direct data from a tool such as Searchmetrics.

This shows the brands and businesses as well as the pages that are ranking for this term.

You can use this to explore the content and design of these pages as well as the technical aspects such as Meta tags and improve your offering as a direct result of the statistical information you harbour.

FINAL THOUGHTS

"War is 90% information." – Napoleon Bonaparte

The statistics don't lie, and if the results that you are seeing for your brand are not quite what you wanted or envisaged then fear not. The key to all digital and search marketing is that you need to create a strategy and that it is adaptable.

Testing is a crucial part of the job and if you are in a position to constantly make small tweaks to your strategy, then you are sure to see results improve.

The statistics and data that you gather and analyse will allow you to see which areas of the strategy are performing well, and which are not. You can use this information to your advantage by amending your outlook to improve performance.

Competitor analysis is vital if you are to stay ahead of the competition so remember to not only look at your data and analytics but that of your rivals.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO): and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named Search Agency of the Year 2018, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

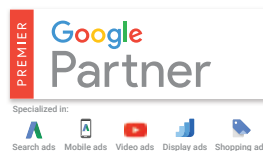## YOUR BESPOKE ORGANIC SEARCH (SEO) ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

REQUEST NOW

Follow us on Google+, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn, or to find out what Click Consult can do for you, call:

0845 205 0292

OUR ACCREDITATIONS

The Drum Recommended

Bing Select Partner

Google Partner
Specialized in:
Search ads   Mobile ads   Video ads   Display ads   Shopping ads

VWO CERTIFIED PARTNER

OUR AWARDS

NORTHERN DIGITAL AWARDS WINNER 2018

PERFORMANCE MARKETING AWARDS

THEDRUM SEARCH AWARDS AWARD WINNER 2017

UK AGENCY AWARDS 2017 WINNER

NORTHERN MARKETING AWARDS 2017 WINNER

NORTHERN eCOMMERCE AWARDS 2017 WINNER

OUR TECHNOLOGIES

monitor TRAX   rank TRAX   feed TRAX   link TRAX   pro TRAX   page TRAX