



DATA-DRIVEN SEARCH

CHAPTER 1 - METRICS

Data Series

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INTRODUCTION

Data, without question, is the most powerful tool that businesses have at their disposal. The sheer volume of information that we are presented with and are able to harvest, allows brands to [form future strategies](#) and to tweak existing ones.

If you want to get ahead, and stay ahead of the competition, then it is vital that you look at everything you are presented with and that you are able to plan accordingly based on the behaviour of your audience.

We are forever telling our clients and indeed our readers on our blog that a data-driven search strategy is the best route to success. With that in mind we have launched this eBook and a 'Data Series' which will highlight the benefits of getting behind the numbers and widening your approach to hard data.

In the first part of the data series we'll look at the benefits of search and the metrics that you should be tracking.

There are a number of questions that you should ask when it comes to forming a search marketing strategy. Some of them include:

- *Where are you in terms of your market?*
- *Where do you want to be?*
- *Where is the competition ranking and how are they performing?*
- *What are your long and short term targets?*
- *What is the biggest market opportunity at the moment?*

The answer to all of these can be found in raw numbers.

The final question on the list is of particular importance. In a feature by Search Engine Watch it was revealed that there are over 3.5 billion searches per day being carried out on Google.

Crucially this figure doesn't mention all of the searches conducted on vertical-specific websites like Amazon, YouTube and Pinterest.

This means that there is a huge volume of data available on customer intent which marketers should be taking advantage of.

According to Search Engine Watch tools like Google Trends, Google Insights for Search, Google Keyword Planner and Pi Datametrics, can produce data that gives a view of search trends over time. Using this data, search marketers can:

- *Discover customer trends – Uncover peaks and troughs in when customers search for things*
- *Hone in on commercially valuable keywords – By adding another layer of data using cost per click and competition information, marketers can concentrate on the keywords that have buying intent*
- *Analyse patterns – Go back in time to see how trends have evolved (eg, make-up became a top search for the Beauty industry between 2014 and 2017, when a new market of buyers came online thanks to the popular explosion of beauty Vloggers).*

So, what are the benefits of a data centric search strategy?

Well, the answer is that there are many and here are the main ones:

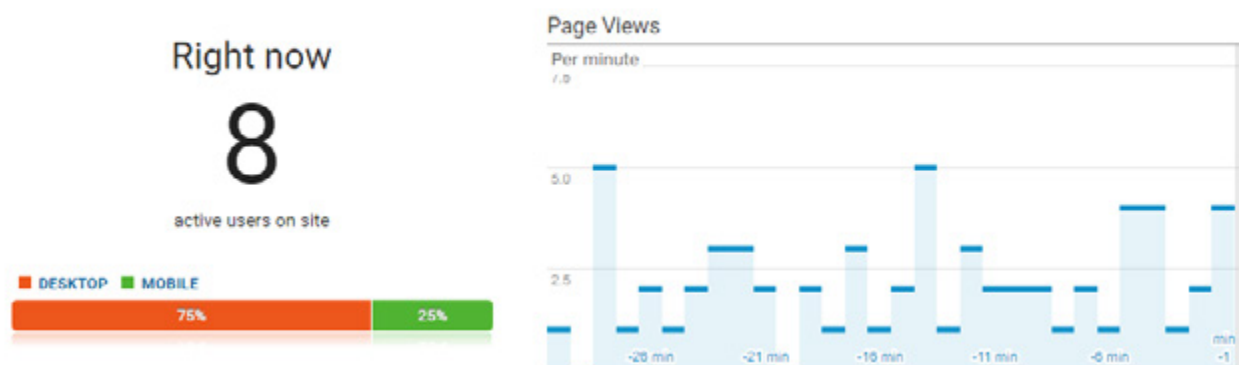
Personalisation – More and more we hear that the key to getting the most from your marketing is to make it personal. Delivering a good user experience (UX) is vital as this combats the potential for customers to exit a page (bounce rate) or to drop out of the sales funnel altogether.

Personalisation allows you create highly targeted campaigns, which, if you get it right, will lead to more conversions and a better return on investment (ROI). The role that data plays here is that you can look at exactly how any users are finding you, the actions they are taking and when they exit your site. By adding in tracking you can build customer profiles and this allows you to nurture them to conversion or to reengage with former customers.

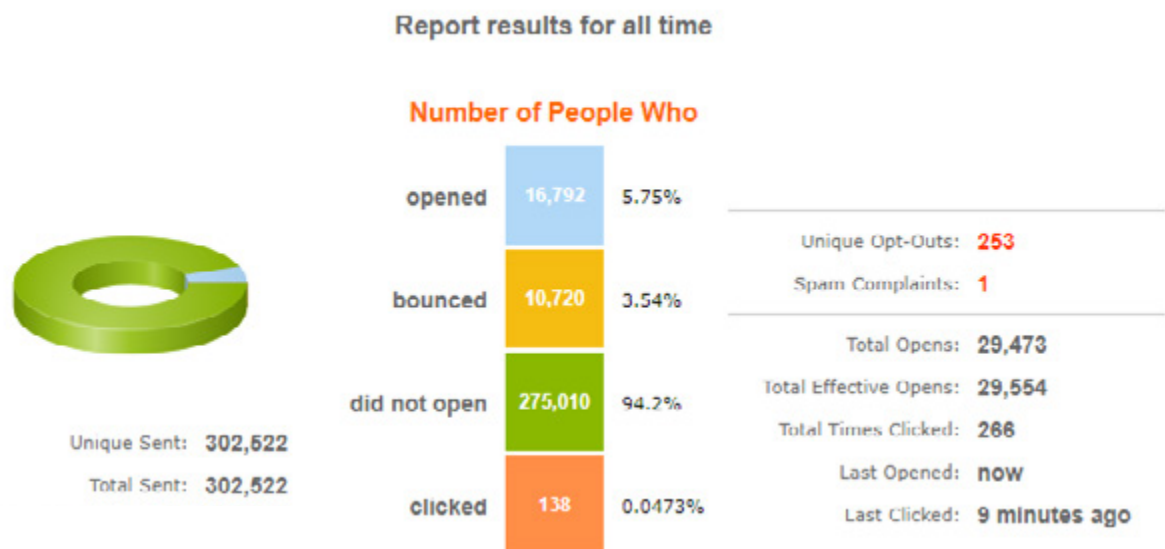
Find out what works - Data-driven marketing helps you to identify specific content that is leading prospects through your sales funnel. This helps you determine exactly where your time and budget should be spent. If you are seeing a large volume of traffic to a specific area of the site you can look at any paid advertising and allocate more resources here.

Real time analysis – One of the key benefits to your forward strategy is that you can use analytics ‘in the moment’ to track real time performance. If you were to use Google Analytics (GA) and look at your site’s performance on the Real-Time Report you might see something similar to the below.

Overview



This overview split by current active users and the number of people on the site minute by minute allows you to monitor the open rate of certain pages and gives an insight into customer navigation. This is especially important following an email campaign as you can see how it resonates with the user. If we stick with the example of an email marketing campaign you should be able to also pull data through your service provider. The below screenshot shows a wide range of information from a client campaign:



These stats allow you to ask questions such as:

- Was the subject line engaging?
- Why is the bounce rate higher or lower than last time?
- Was the campaign launched at the right time of day?

Audience profiling/behaviour - Stats surrounding the audience and their behaviour are important as they allow you to drill down on exactly who is looking at your site. As well as the location in terms of country and the language that your users are searching it, (both of which will be covered later) you can even focus the data to see the city in which your audience are viewing pages of your site. This might be beneficial if you are planning events or are doing regional promotions it could also prove important in retail making sure that if there is demand you can service it.

City	Sessions	% Sessions
1. London	1,547	22.61%
2. (not set)	659	9.63%
3. Slough	424	6.20%
4. Ashburn	145	2.12%
5. Birmingham	124	1.81%
6. Manchester	100	1.46%
7. Liverpool	94	1.37%
8. Leeds	84	1.23%
9. Glasgow	66	0.96%
10. Nottingham	59	0.86%

Acquisition - This is another key benefit of having a statistical approach to the work that you do. If you are spreading all of your marketing activity across several different channels then it is important that you can differentiate performance.

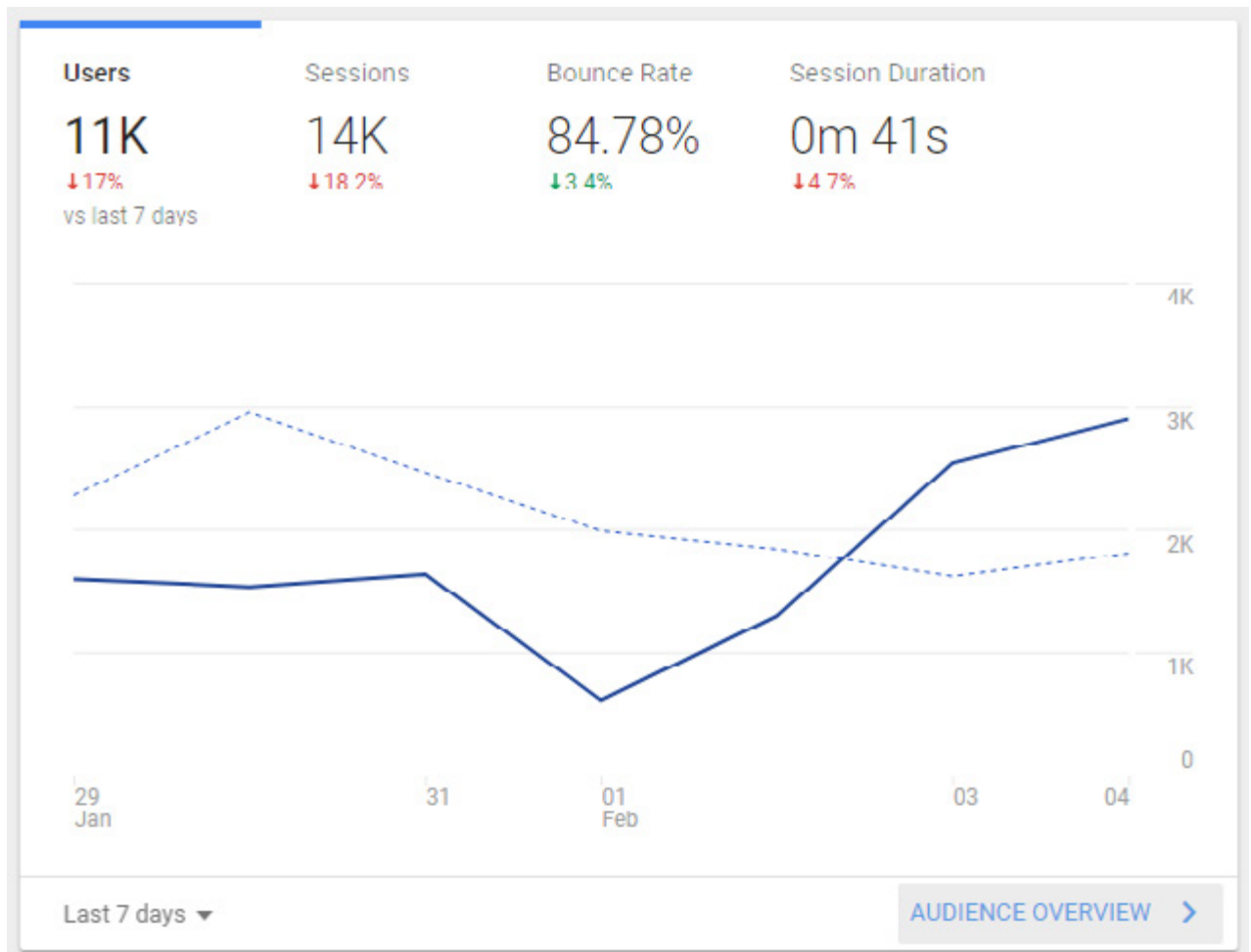
Getting a noticeably bad result from one of your channels isn't necessarily something to worry about. It might be that it means you can scale activity back in this area and focus on another. In organic search marketing the dream is that all of your leads and conversions come organically and that your customers are finding you themselves. Below is a snapshot from GA in terms of the relationship of customer acquisition, behaviour and conversions across multiple channels:

	Acquisition			Behaviour			Conversions		
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages/Session	Avg. Session Duration	E-commerce Conversion Rate	Transactions	Revenue
	1,312,852	1,296,220	2,562,135	52.99%	3.12	00:02:36	1.86%	47,567	£24,265,085.60
1 Organic Search	568,474			43.16%			1.74%		
2 (Other)	310,009			84.96%			0.11%		
3 Direct	261,556			55.88%			4.66%		
4 Generic Paid Search	130,866			54.09%			0.62%		
5 Branded Paid Search	99,620			34.56%			2.56%		



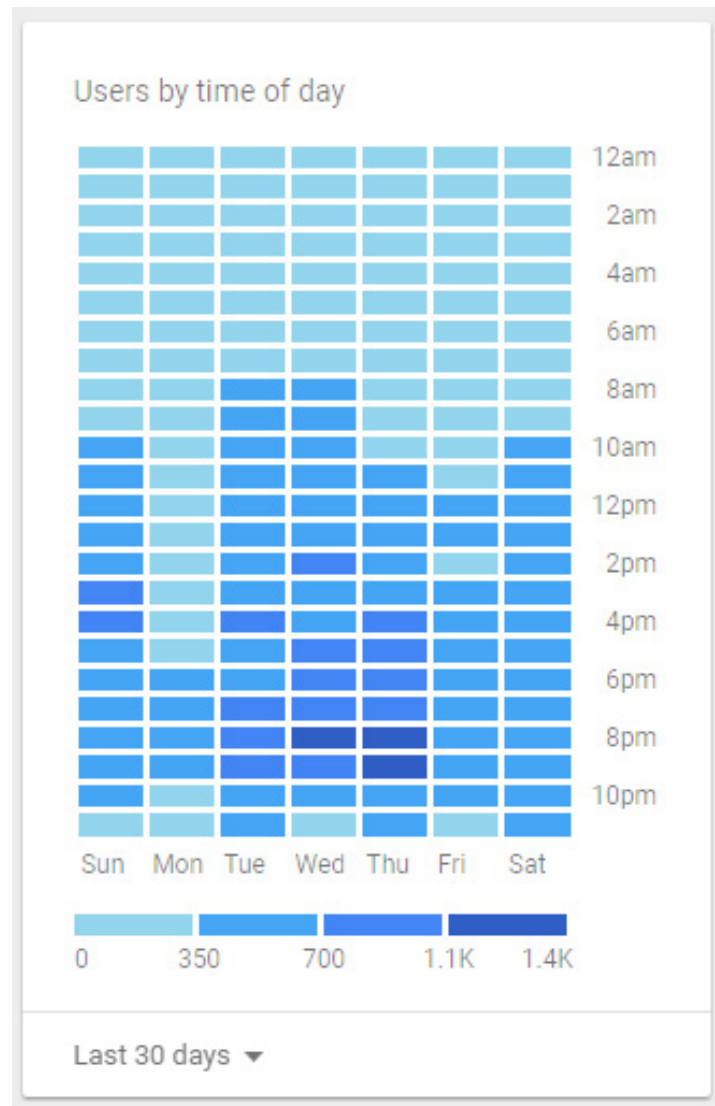
WHAT CAN YOU TRACK?

When it comes to the actual information that you can track through Google Analytics a good place to start is on the main dashboard as it gives you an insight to the single most important piece of data – your leads.



The above allows you 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 your 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 queries, the bounce rate will drop and the audience is far more likely to become a lead or a conversion.

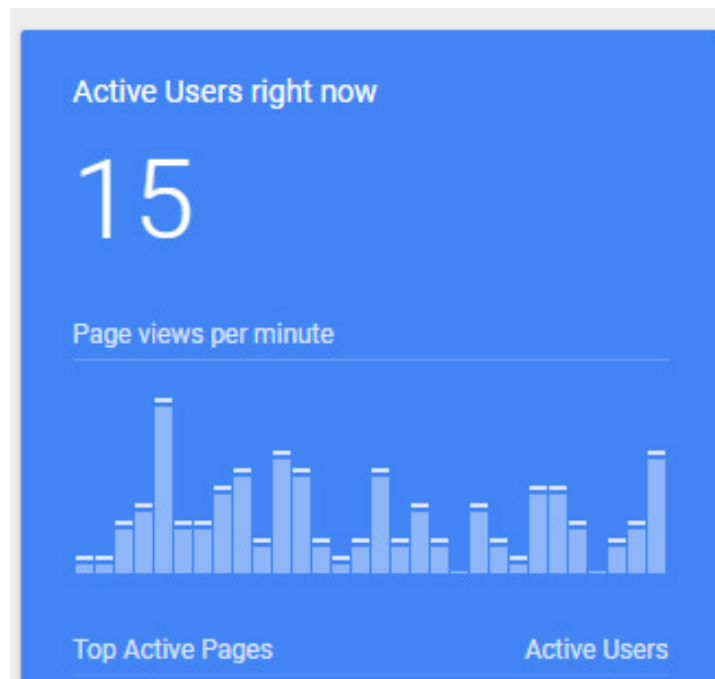
Another thing to look at when it comes to understanding what is triggering the first stage of the customer lifecycle is the time of the day metric. This shows you the exact moment that your audience are engaging with you. If you look at the example below you can see that there is strong performance between 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. Marketing to an audience at a certain time could be the difference between winning a conversion and losing one to a rival. One of the considerations here must also be towards the areas in which you trade.

An international business with an international audience will need to be able to tailor all marketing activity based on the raw data to ensure that there is optimum performance across each location.



GA's Real-Time Report 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 channel/source.



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 CTAs, 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, [organic search \(SEO\)](#) 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



What can you do with the data?

Once you have all of the data, and remember that it will continually flow into GA, you need to come up with a strategy of how you will use it. One of the most important things to do is treat data as facts. It gives you a reflection of how customers are finding you and what they are doing once they land on your site.

You can analyse the content that they are looking at and the way they navigate across your site. This will give you a clear idea of the content that works and any potential gaps that you are missing. If a particular page is working well and leads the customer on a journey to conversion, then it would be wise to point more of your traffic here – this could help increase the ROI.

In a similar way it might be that a certain type of content or a topic resonates well with the audience. You can feed this information back to your content team which will assist them with future topics.

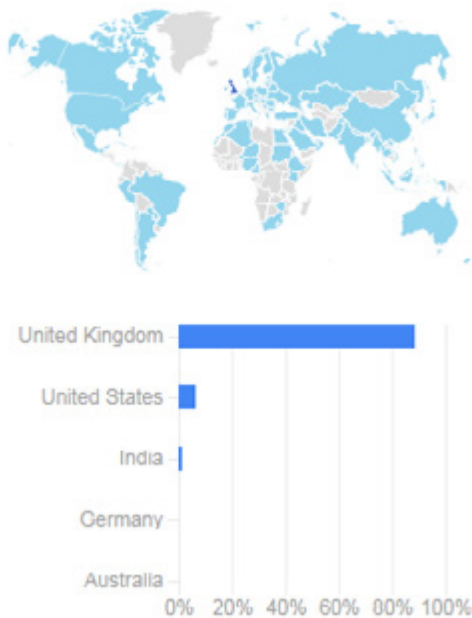
We will of course highlight the benefits of data as this series progresses and will showcase some of the things that you can do with your data in future chapters. But for now, the main benefits are:

- *Ensuring data quality*
- *Measuring campaign success*
- *Enabling users to get the insight they need*
- *Establishing meaningful customer segments*
- *Encouraging customer growth*
- *Modelling and predicting profitability*



Where are your users?

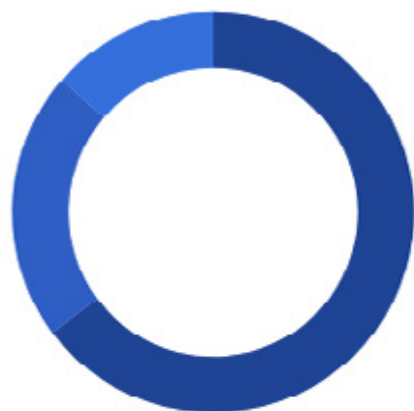
Sessions by country



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.

Sessions by device



Mobile

64.7%

↑1.8%



Desktop

21.7%

↑4.8%



Tablet

13.6%

↓6.6%

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 your 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.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The benefits of a data heavy strategy are that you are learning and adapting at the same time as your customers. You are making everything more personal and ensuring that any gaps that you develop are being filled and you are tailoring your approach to marketing as a whole. Future parts of the Data Series will look at:

- *Audience profiling*
- *Audience behaviour*
- *Social analytics*
- *Conversions and attribution*

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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

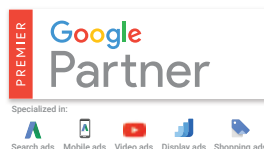
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