



3 Steps to Improve your Web Analytics with Data Visualization

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If you're like most businesses, you have a web analytics tracking system. You may use Google Analytics, Omniture or even your direct log files. You probably have plenty of data. But are you really making sense of that data?

Most web analytics tracking tools are complete but not illuminating. Working through endless tables of data does nothing to help you answer the critical questions about your site:






What's converting? What content is performing? How do you drive revenues?

That's where visualization comes in. In this paper we'll show you why and how to use the analytics data you already have to get insight that you can use today.

Step 1: Learn How Your Content is Performing

On the web, good content is the difference between someone who bounces from your site and someone who becomes a regular visitor and ultimately a customer. So you've invested time in developing good content. How do you figure out if it's working?

Google Analytics' Top Content report is a good start: it has data on pageviews, time on page, bounce rate, and the percent of visitors who exit the site after viewing the page. But the report doesn't exude insight. In fact, it can make your eyes hurt:

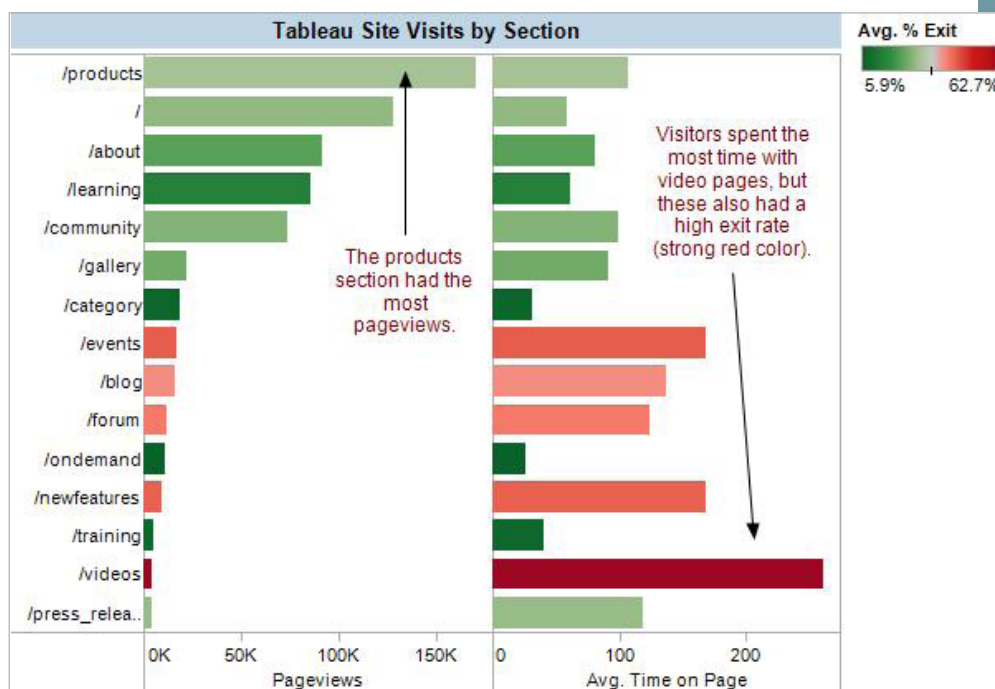
	Page	Pageviews ↓	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate	% Exit
21.	 /files/TableauDesktop.msi	2,255	2,068	00:03:28	66.67%	54.86%
22.	 /elearning/training	2,181	1,687	00:00:42	22.94%	11.00%
23.	 /vizchallenge	1,890	1,480	00:03:04	54.50%	42.54%
24.	 /about	1,767	1,484	00:00:39	34.30%	12.85%
25.	 /about/leadership	1,678	1,429	00:02:12	56.52%	34.39%

Tip: If your site has a hierarchy, like different sections that each contain many pages, break up the URL into its component parts by using Excel's text features.

First you want to get a sense for how your website is performing section-by-section, not page by page. This view shows a customer's site over a time period early this year. The view below shows a customer's site over time, earlier this year.

This customer wanted to know where to focus their web improvement efforts. To get the biggest impact, look for:

- Highly trafficked pages. You can get the most payoff by optimizing where you have visitors today. In this view, the products section and the homepage ("/") are by far the most important sections to get right.
- Outliers. These often provide valuable information. Here video shows up a dark red, meaning that there is a high exit rate on pages in that section. This is interesting: people are spending time there, showing engagement, but then exiting. This visualization hints at a dead-end in videos and suggests that we would benefit by offering an easy next action for visitors who are watching videos.

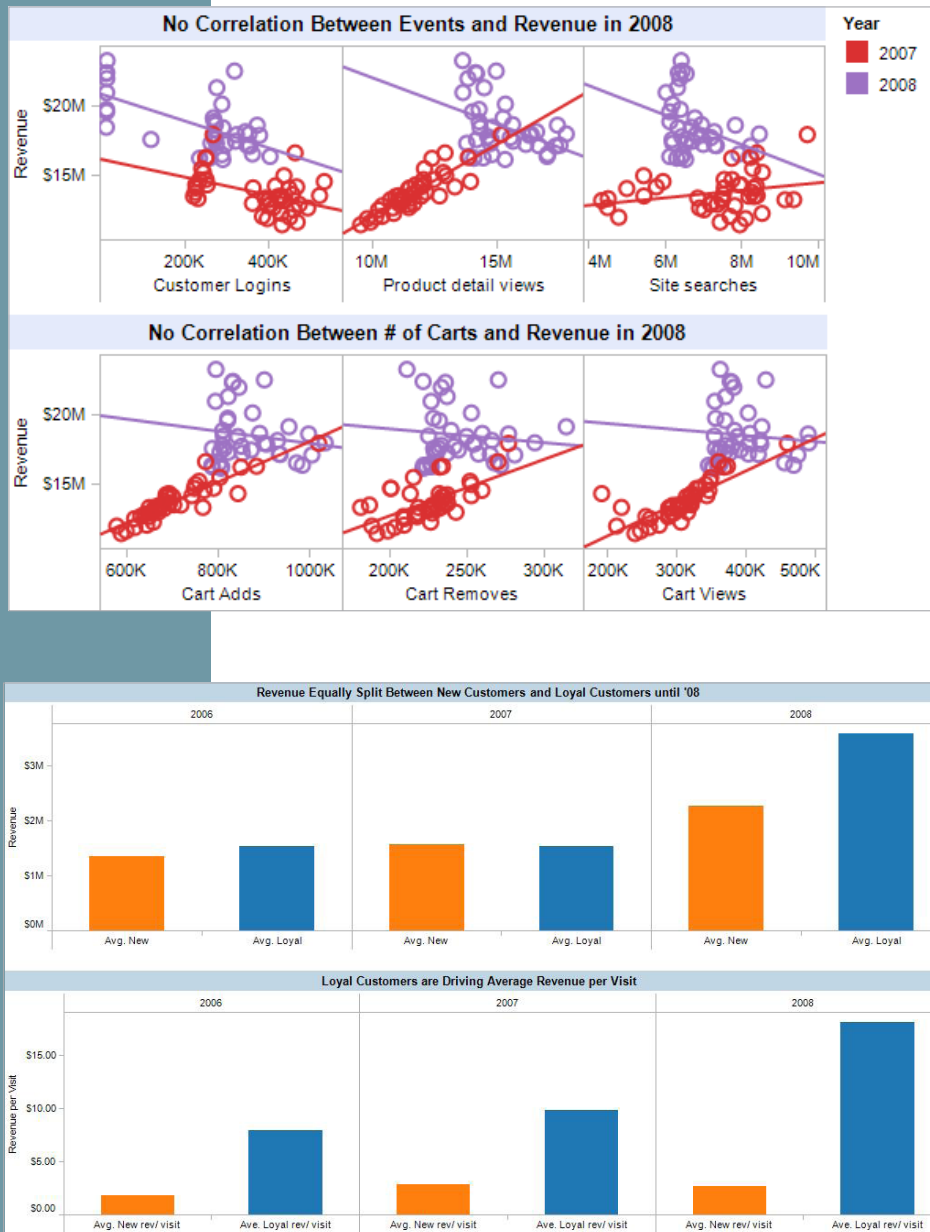


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Step 2: Drive More Online Revenue

Web analytics data is useless unless you use it to grow your business. Visualizing your data lets you identify patterns so you correct problems or take advantage of favorable trends.



One customer we worked with was in the fortunate situation of having had online revenues double. The problem was, they didn't know why. Using their Omniture data and Tableau they visualized the events that had driven revenues in the past: logins, product views, searches, and cart activity. Only customer logins seemed to be somewhat correlated to revenues

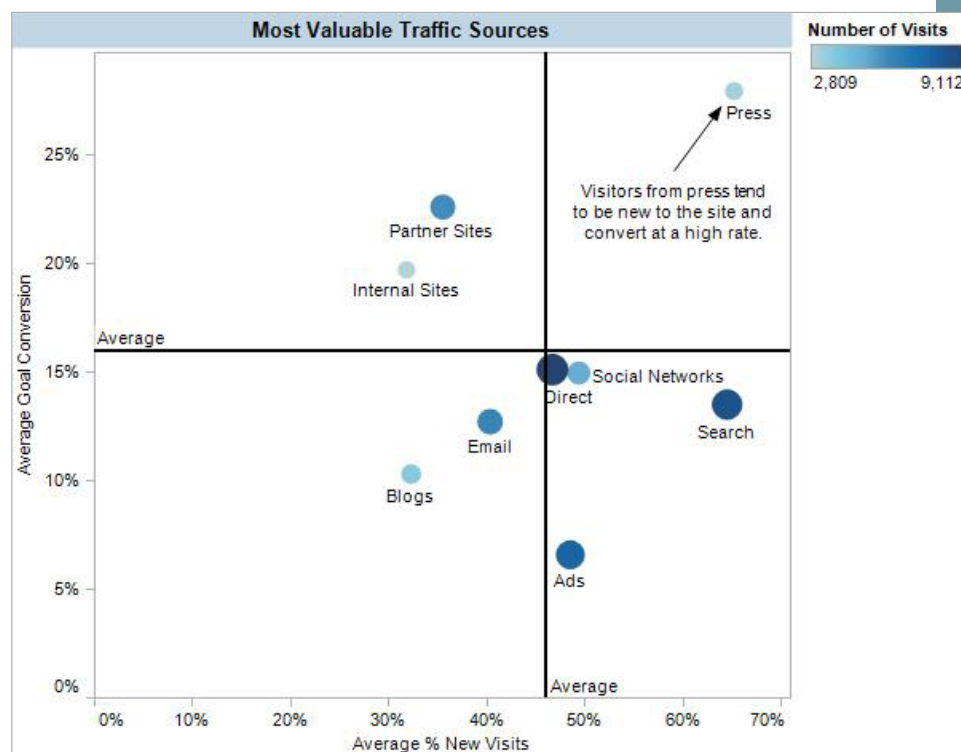
Digging further, they found that the number of units sold was staying constant, but revenues per order were way up. With a little more investigation, the customer created a new segmentation of customers: Loyal and New. Once they analyzed the data this way, the mystery was solved. Loyal visitors were buying much more per visit while new visitors had changed their behavior little. This led the customer to initiate a new loyalty program and create promotions to convert new visitors into loyal ones.

Step 3: Connect Web Analytics to Marketing Initiatives

One of the frustrations many people experience with web analytics data is that it's difficult to map it to your business. Perhaps you're trying to drive traffic and revenue through a combination of ads, blogs and social networks. If you're using Google Analytics you can see each traffic source individually, or in the groups that Google defines (CPC, Referral, etc).

But that doesn't tell you if your investment in social networking is paying off. By taking the top traffic sources and sorting them into meaningful groups that reflect your company's strategy, you can quickly see several trends. In the example below:

- Ads are converting at a rate much lower than other traffic sources
- Press traffic is sending a high proportion of new traffic, and it's converting well
- Partner sites are sending traffic that converts at a relatively high rate



Perhaps this company should refocus its marketing strategy on developing more partnerships and generating press rather than investing more money in ads and social networks.



Summary

This is just a preview of the power of data visualization: to take the massive data set that is web analytics data and help you explore it to find patterns and outliers. Rather than just monitoring a few top landing pages and traffic sources every month, you can understand your site holistically, find out what's working and get on top of problems quickly.

To get more out of your web analytics data,

- Think about your website by section first, then by landing page
- Break your products and customers into new segments to find important patterns
- Use your web data to evaluate the success of valuable initiatives

Visualization is the next level in web analytics. It's not data, it's insight.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Free trial: Download a 14-day fully-functional trial of Tableau Desktop

<http://www.tableausoftware.com/products/trial>

Case study: Eteamz improves online conversion and revenues with Tableau.

<http://www.tableausoftware.com/learning/applications/studies/etamz-data-visualization>

Whitepaper: How (not) to Build Your SEO Strategy: 10 Tricks Your Consultant Won't Tell You

<http://www.tableausoftware.com/whitepaper-how-to-build-seo-strategy>

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