



# Getting the Most from Your Web Investment

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Empirical Path Consulting

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1. Why take this course
2. Why digital communications
3. Why measurement
4. The return: conversions and more
5. The investment: time and money
6. The audience
7. The website
8. Outreach:
9. ROI: now what?

# Why Take This Course

## Learning Objectives

- Understand the pros and cons of web measurement approaches including web analytics, surveys, and syndicated research.
- Understand how to install a free web analytics tool, create Key Performance Indicators, and receive and share regular reports.
- Understand how to enhance and customize a free web analytics tool to
  - Measure conversions such as
    - donating
    - volunteering
    - contacting
    - sharing
  - Measure off-site outreach such as
    - email
    - search engine marketing
    - blogs
    - social media

# Why Take This Course About Me

- Peter Howley has created and **measured online marketing** and market research for government, commercial, and not-for-profit organizations since 1999.
- He founded Empirical Path in 2002 to bring his **data-driven approach** to clients nationwide, including St. Louis Children's Hospital, BabyCenter.com, the *New Republic*, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- A certified expert in Omniture and Google Analytics, Howley synthesizes web analytics, survey research, and third-party data to provide unexpected **insights into audiences and markets.**

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9. ROI: now what?

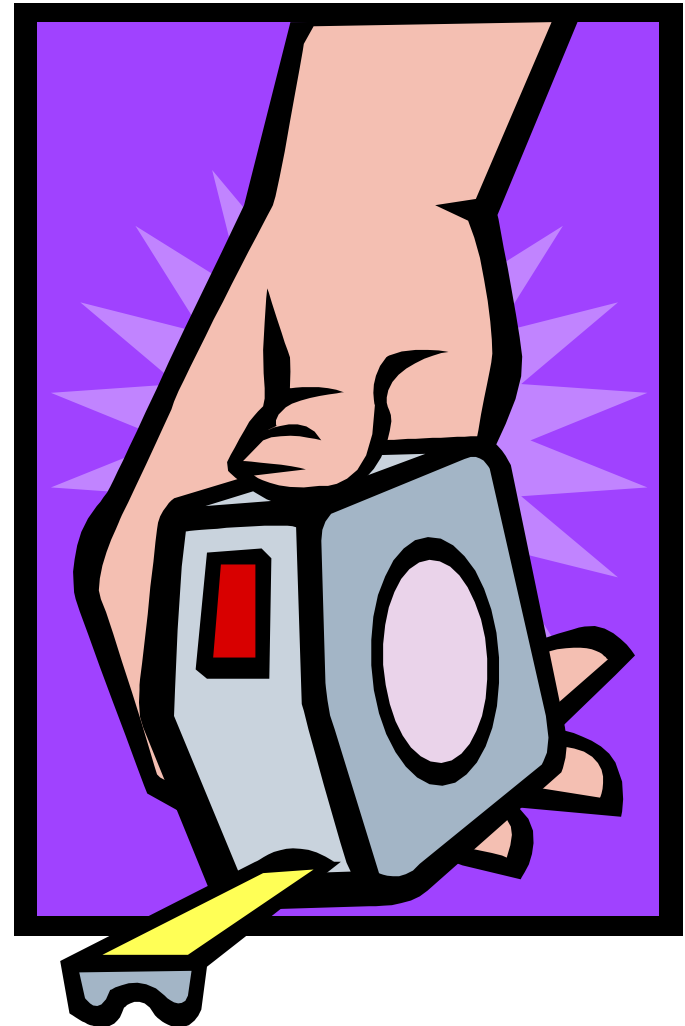
- Leverage the medium of choice among many audiences
- Economize vs. less cost-effective\* offline channels
- Keep up with (or an edge on) competitors
- Encourage interactivity
- Measure and improve

# Why Digital Communications Exercise

- *What are the goals of your organization's digital communications?*
- *Please be more specific (for later...)*

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- Defend digital communications investment
- Right-size that investment
- Re-allocate that investment to most valuable activities
- Celebrate and reward successes
- Learn from mistakes



# Why Measurement Exercise

- *How do you currently measure your organization's digital communications?*
- *Why do you do it, really?*
- *Or why not?*
- *What additional investments in digital communications would you make if you could prove the return?*

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# The Return Conversions and More

- Reasons your stakeholders engage with your digital communications = ways your organization can earn a return
  - Donate
  - Volunteer
  - Attend
  - Apply for help
  - Apply to help
  - Spread the word
  - Interact with one another
  - Learn about the issue
  - Learn about the organization

- *What can people accomplish with your digital communications that benefits the organization?*
- *Do you measure each of these “conversions”?*
- *How readily can you change the required process for each of these conversions?*

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# The Investment Time & Money

- Time

- Budgeting
- Approvals
- Website copy writing
- Website design and art
- Email copy writing
- Email design and art
- Blogging
- Message board moderation
- Social media participation
- Social media monitoring
- Search engine optimization

- Money

- Website development
- Website hosting
- Email service provider
- Merchant account or PayPal
- Content management system
- Message board software
- Website analytics
- Social media monitoring
- Search marketing
- Advertising

- *How do you track the hard costs – money – of digital communications?*
- *How do you track the soft costs – time – of digital communications?*
- *Can you break these down by digital communications channel, medium, campaign, or initiative?*

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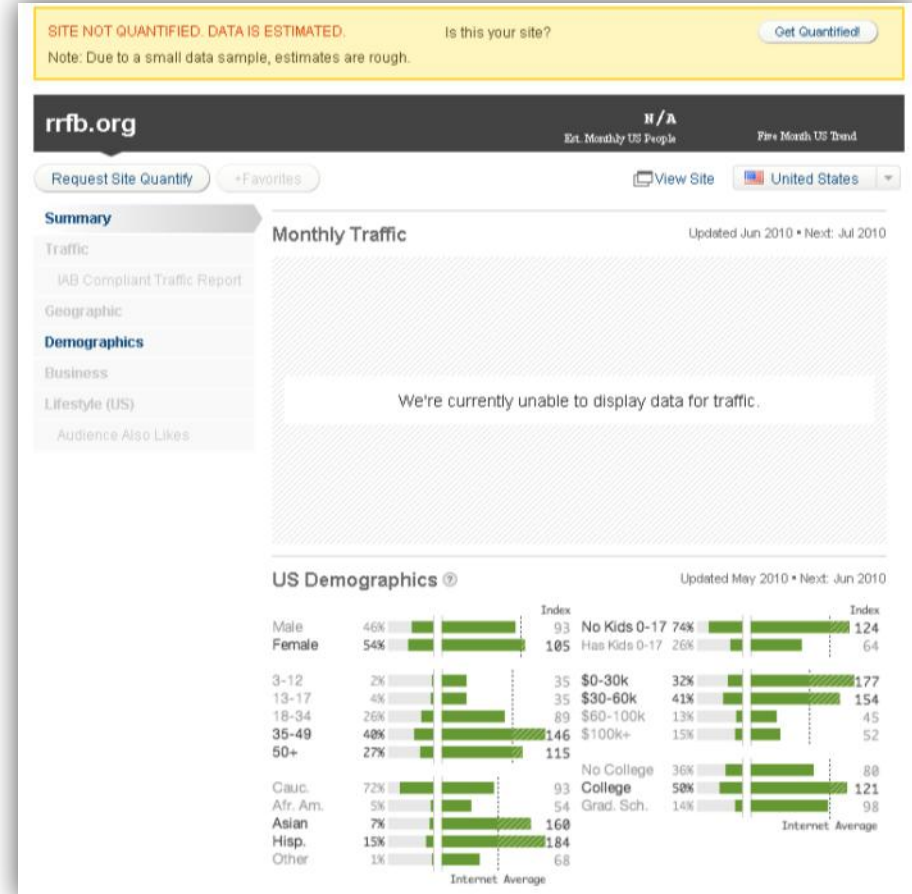
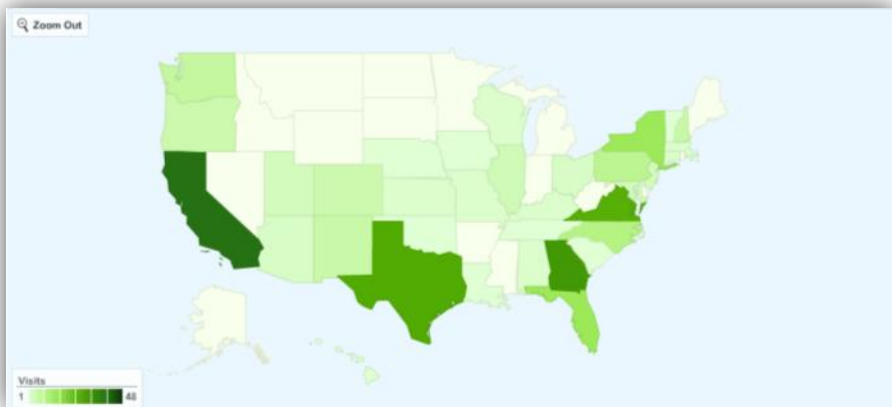
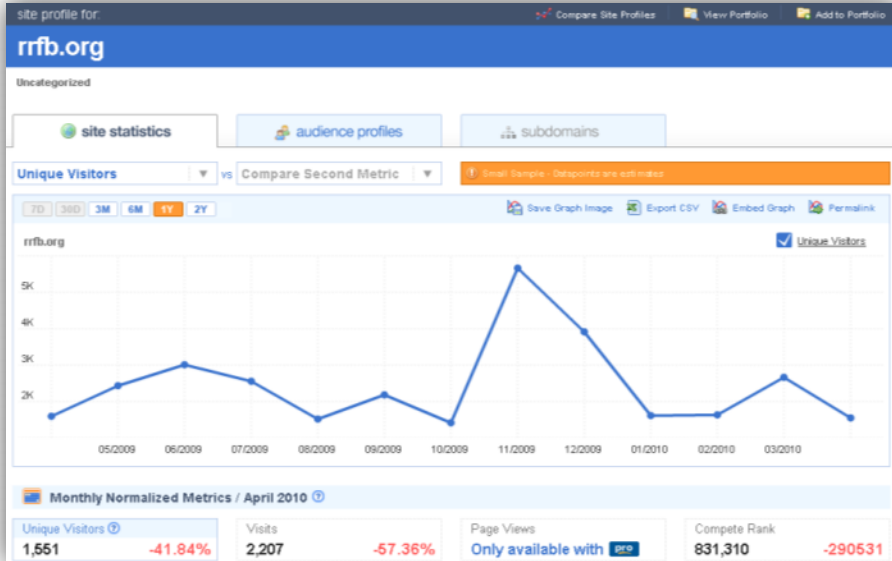
# The Audience Measure Size & Composition

- Size
  - + Google Analytics “Unique Visitors”\*
  - + Quantcast “People”\*\*
  - + DoubleClick Ad Planner “Unique Visitors”\*\*
  - + Compete “Unique Visitors”\*\*
  - Google Trends “Daily Unique Visitors”(trend only)
  - Alexa “Reach” (% of global web users only)
- Composition
  - + Online survey\*
  - + Google Analytics “Map Overlay,” “Browser Capabilities,” “Network Properties” (ISP or company name)\*
  - + Quantcast “US Demographics” and “Geographic”\*\*
  - + DoubleClick Ad Planner US gender, education, age, HHI\*\*
  - Compete “Audience Profile”\*\*
  - Alexa “Audience”
  - Microsoft AdCenter Labs “Audience Intelligence”
  - Google Trends “Regions”

\* requires software or code on site but no minimum traffic

\*\*enhanced by software or code on site

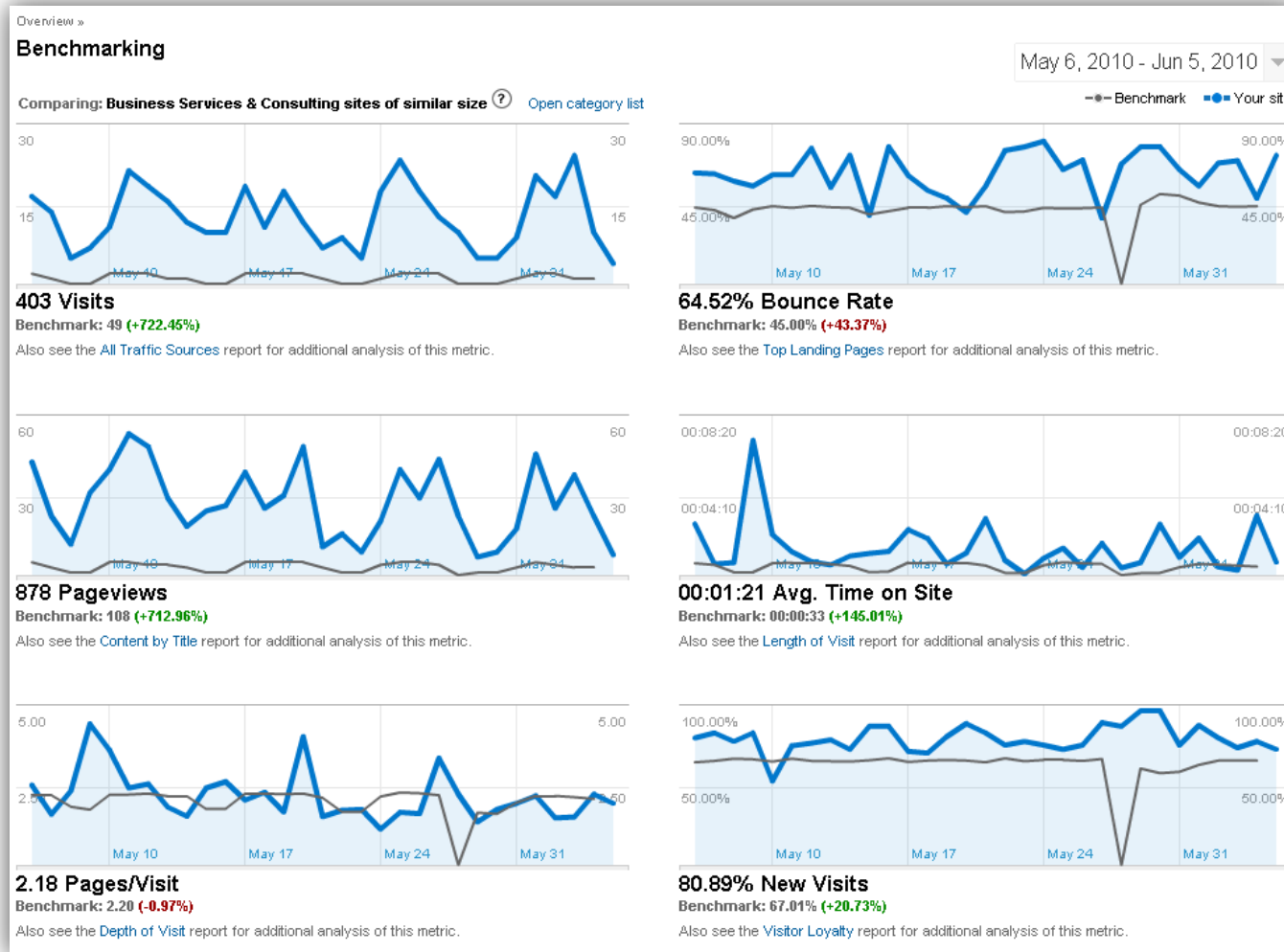
# The Audience Measure Size & Composition



# The Audience Benchmark Peers

- Why?
  - Learn who to study and borrow best practices from
  - Set baselines for your own measurement
  - Establish stretch goals
- How?
  - Research peers via the same audience size & composition tools
    - See also Facebook Fans, Twitter Followers, YouTube Subscribers/comments, blog comments, message board posts, number of inbound links, search engine rankings, etc.
  - Adjust statistics on peers using membership, budget, or staff size figures or even population figures
  - With Google Analytics, see Benchmarking stats for your category or sub-category
    - Ditto for email service provider Constant Contact
  - With an online survey, gather subjective feedback on peers' digital communications from shared audience

# The Audience Benchmark Peers



# The Audience Survey Needs and Opinions

- Questions
  - Anything you want...
  - Open-ended
    - Why us, who else, how are we doing, what better, what else?
    - Usage of and satisfaction with digital communications
  - Closed-ended
    - Same as above, when finite/structured responses needed
    - Likelihood to complete “conversions” discussed earlier
  - Segmenting
    - Demographics OK
    - Relationship with organization is even more actionable
- Tools
  - SurveyMonkey
  - Constant Contact
  - Vovici
  - Your own web developer
- Distribution
  - Email list
  - URL in printed materials
  - Social media
  - Invitation on website (captures less committed visitors)
- Tips
  - Keep it short
  - Consider a non-distorting incentive

# The Audience Survey Needs and Opinions



**Empirical Path**  
MARKET DATA — DRIVEN

## 2009 U.S. Merchant Local Marketing Study

Thank you for taking a few minutes to share your opinion about local advertising and marketing. Empirical Path is a market research and business planning consultancy serving media and technology clients. We will keep all of your responses confidential and enter you into a drawing to win one of three \$500 cash prizes.

### 1. Who has the final decision-making authority over LOCAL marketing spending in your business? What is your role?

	Final decision-maker	Your role
Owner of multiple units	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National executive (not the owner) with marketing responsibility for multiple units	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State or regional executive with marketing responsibility for multiple units	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local manager with marketing responsibility for multiple units	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Owner of one unit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local manager (not the owner) with marketing responsibility for one unit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 2. How EFFECTIVE are each of the following marketing mediums for your business?

Please use a scale of 1 to 3, where 1 is the best and 3 is the worst.

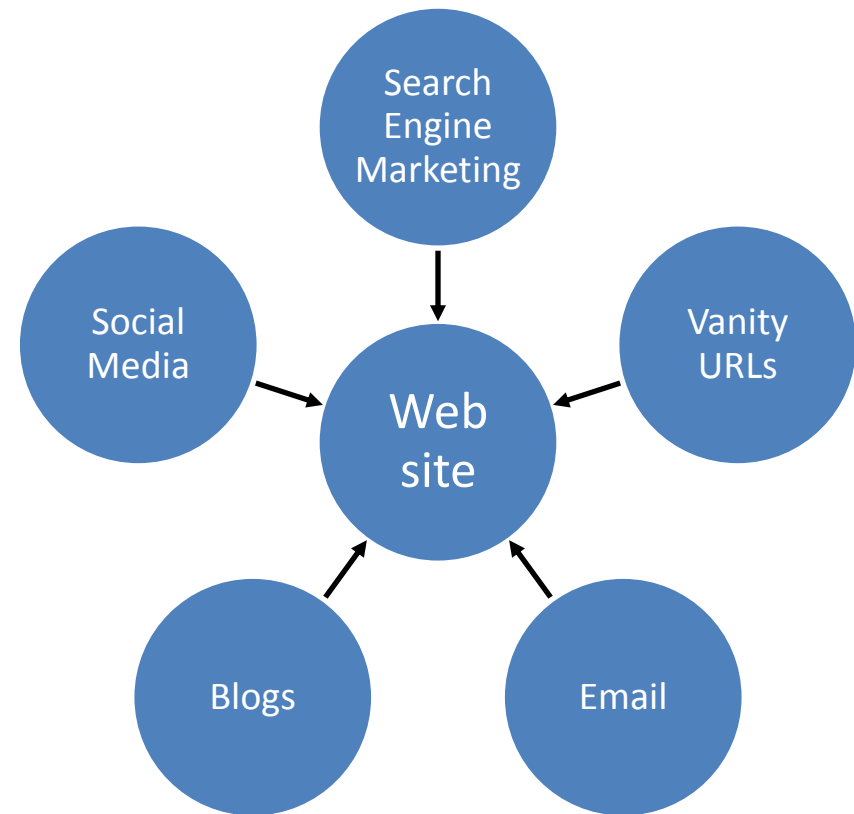
Please choose N/A if you have not considered a medium.

	1 = Best	2	3 = Worst	N/A
Local Internet-based advertisements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electronic Newsletters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local alternative newspaper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Billboards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Printed yellow pages directory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Signs or cards in common areas of other merchants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online yellow pages directory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- *What is your goal for the number of people who visit your website each month?*
- *What segment of your audience would you like to increase?*
- *What peer or competitor organizations do you keep an eye on?*
- *What one thing would you most like to ask people who visit your website?*

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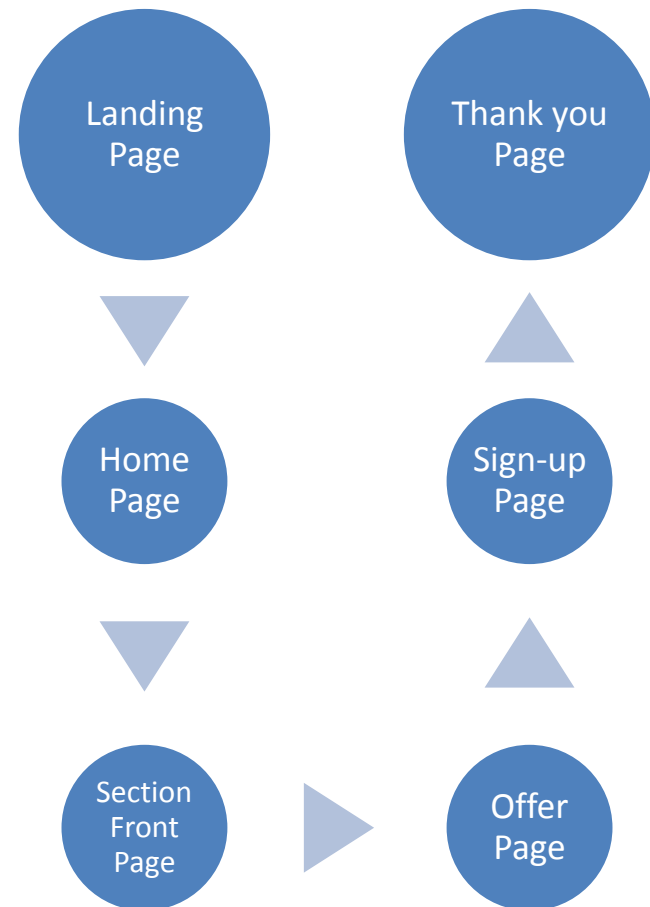
- The website is still the hub of organizations' digital communications
  - Almost compulsory to have one
  - No user registration or subscription required
  - Allows data capture and transactions
  - In organization's control (more than other channels)



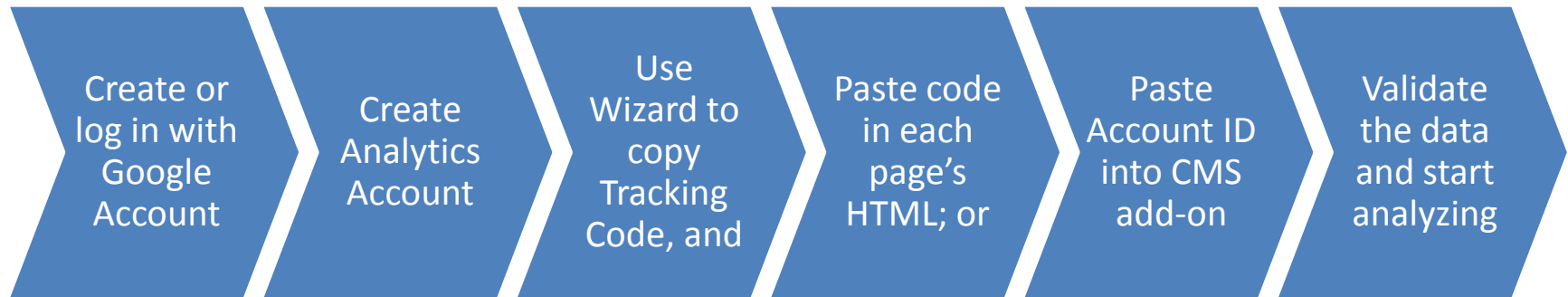
# The Website

## See How People Use It

- Tracking visitors' paths as they navigate through the website is the classic use of web analytics
  - Where do people who start on the home page go next?
  - Where do people who start on other landing pages go next?
  - What pages lead people toward conversions?
  - What pages make people exit the site?
  - What directory of content do people view the most or for the longest time?



# The Website Install Google Analytics



- This is just a Gmail or other email address registered with Google to log into all their features

- This is the specific Google tool needed for web analytics

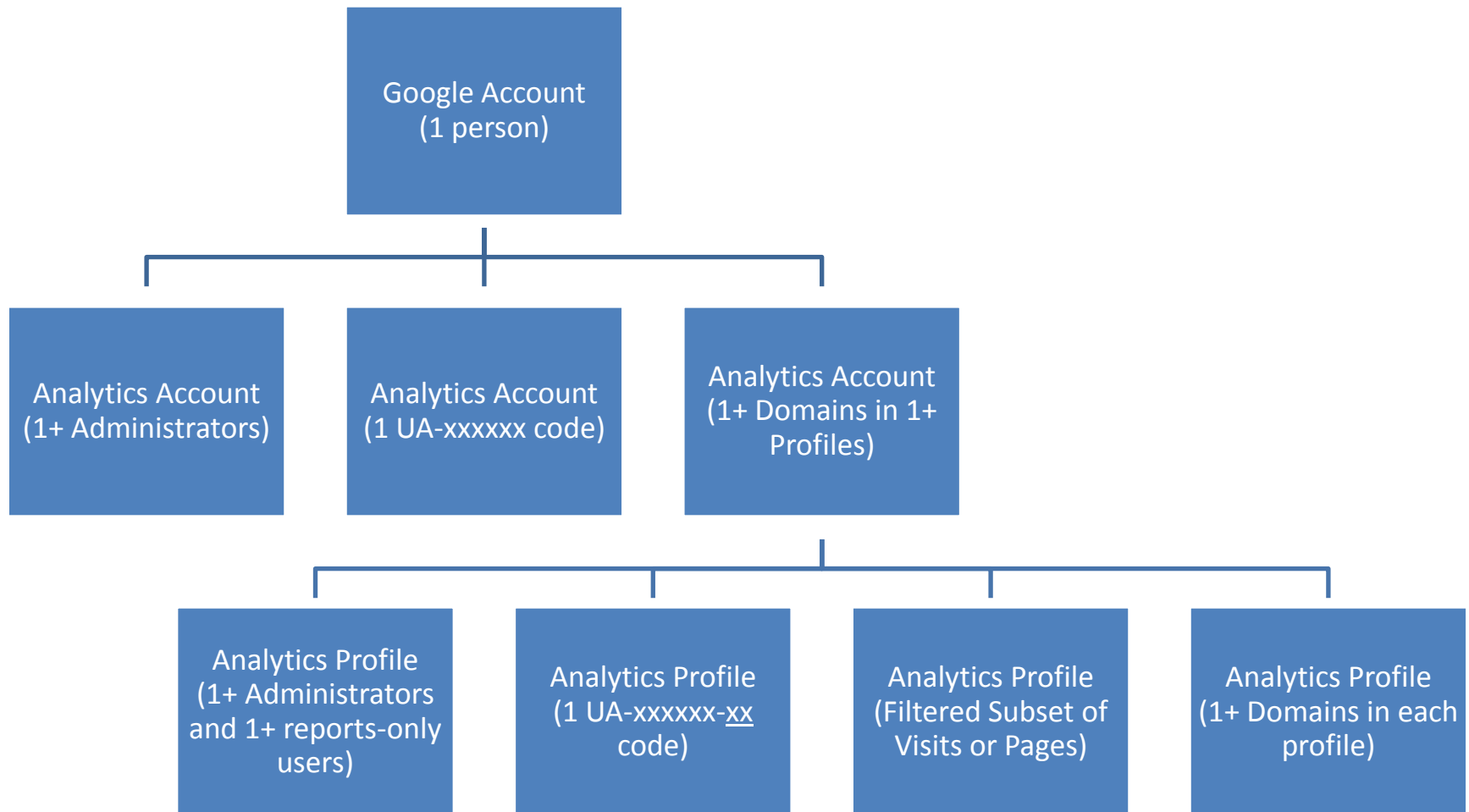
- Choose domain(s) and sub-domains
- Enable AdWords and other campaign data integration

- At the top or bottom; the new asynchronous download tag won't slow page load time

- Content management systems like WordPress and Joomla have add-ins or modules that accept your UA-xxxxx code

- Data available from this day forward

# The Website Configure Google Analytics



# The Website Use Google Analytics Wizard

Analytics Settings > Tracking Code

## Tracking Code

**Tracking Status Information**

Profile Name: [www.empiricalpath.com](http://www.empiricalpath.com)

Website URL: <http://www.empiricalpath.com>

Web Property ID <sup>?</sup>: UA-12625662-2

Tracking Status: ! **Tracking Not Installed** (Last checked: Jun 4, 2010 3:16:02 PM)  
The Google Analytics tracking code has not been detected on your website's home page. For Analytics to function, you or your web administrator must add the code to each page of your website.

### Instructions for adding tracking

Standard **Advanced** Custom

**1 What are you tracking?**

**A single domain (default)**  
Domain: [www.empiricalpath.com](http://www.empiricalpath.com)

One domain with multiple subdomains

Multiple top-level domains

A site built for a mobile phone

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**Your account is already receiving data from AdWords**

I want to track online ad campaigns from other providers

My online campaigns from other providers use different tags than those used by Google Analytics

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I am currently tracking using Urochin software <sup>?</sup>

I want to track dynamic content

I want to track PHP pages

**2 Paste this code on your site**

Copy the following code, then paste it onto every page you want to track immediately before the closing </head> tag. [Learn more](#)

```

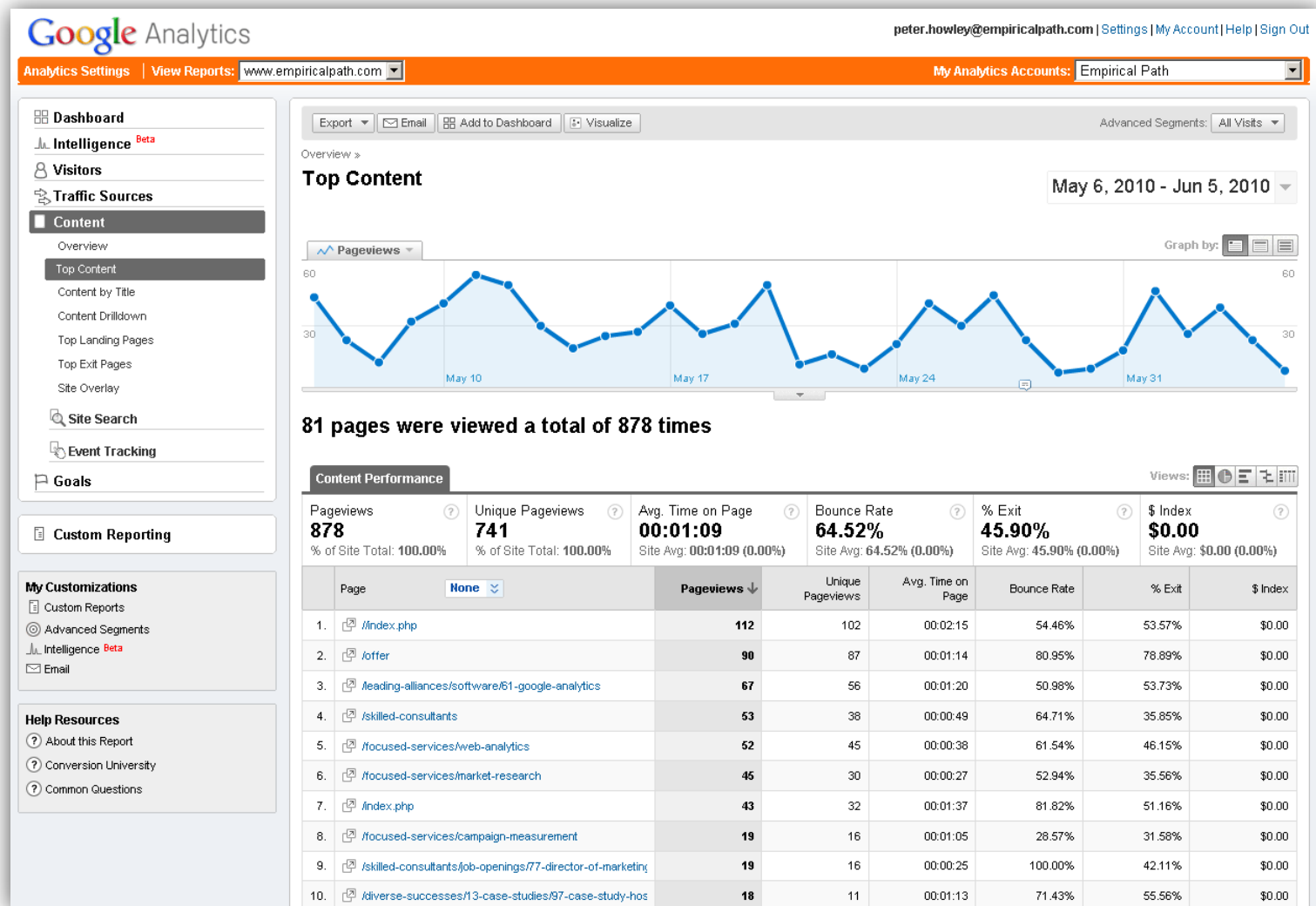
<script type="text/javascript">

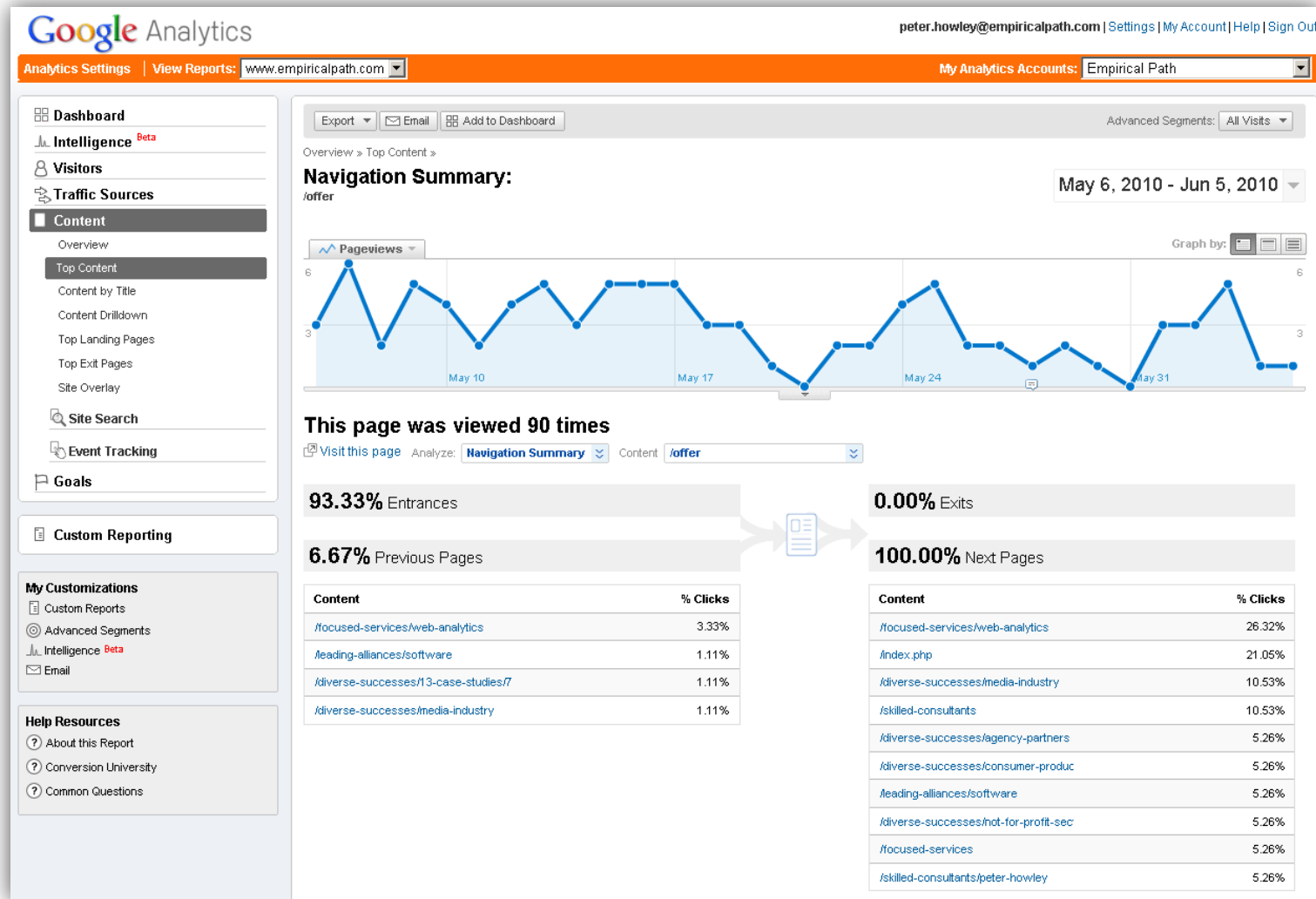
var _gaq = _gaq || [];
_gaq.push(['_setAccount', 'UA-12625662-2']);
_gaq.push(['_trackPageview']);

(function() {
  var ga = document.createElement('script'); ga.type = 'text/javascript';
  ga.src = ('https:' == document.location.protocol ? 'https://ssl' : 'http://www') +
  '.google-analytics.com/ga.js';
  var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(ga, s);
})();

</script>

```

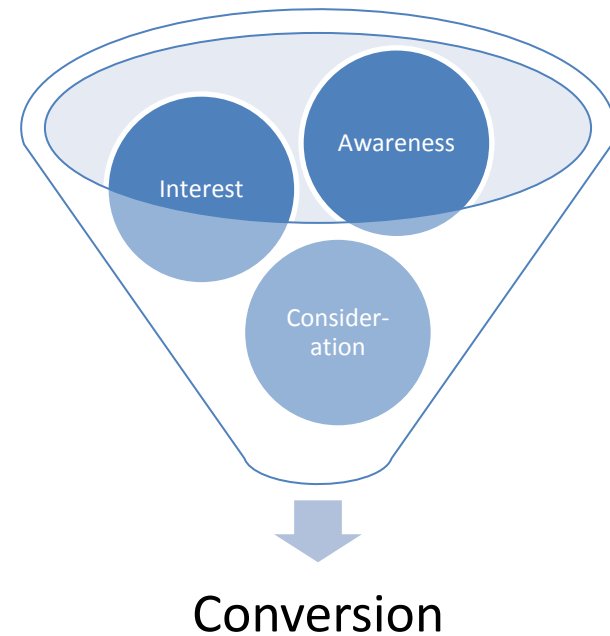




- *What is the most important landing page or entry point on your website?*
  - *Not always the home page.*
- *What link or page would you most like visitors who start there to click?*

# The Website Bring People Closer

- The universal goal of a website is to bring visitors closer to the organization
  - As discussed, conversions are steps that visitors take to do just that:
    - Donate
    - Volunteer and attend
    - Apply for help and to help
    - Spread the word
    - Interact with one another
    - Learn about the issue and organization
- So measurement is most valuable here



# The Website Define Conversions

- Why?
  - Conversions represent visitors becoming closer to the organization
  - Defining conversions enables deeper Google Analytics reporting
    - Conversion rates for each traffic source, search engine keyword, and email newsletter
    - Conversion funnels to see smoothness of each step in process
- How?
  - Define the user action closest to the completion of each conversion as a “Goal” in Google Analytics
- Which ones?
  - Benefit the organization
  - Tracking allows you to change something about the user experience
  - Tracking is easy

# The Website Segment Conversions

## Hardest to Track

- Viewed Flash video
- Interacted with a Rich Internet Application (RIA)

*Call GA Certified Partner*

## Harder to Track

- Clicked to 3rd-party payment site (off site)
- Saw RSVP confirmation page (w/o unique URL)
- Shared article via AddThis or social media button

*Alter HTML of Submit button or exit link to record pageview or Event*

## Easy to Track

- Saw registration form thank-you page (with unique URL on your site)
- Read 3+ pages
- Visited for 5+ minutes

*Use URL Destination, Time on Site, or Pages/Visit Goal Type*

- Find Analytics Settings
- Edit Profile
- Add Goal
- Name Goal (in detail)
- Activate Goal
- Select Goal Type (e.g., URL Destination)
- Type in Goal URL (your page closest to goal confirmation)
- Save Goal

Analytics Settings > Profile Settings > Goal Settings

---

**Goals (set 1): Goal 2**

**Enter Goal Information**

Goal Name:   
Goal name will appear in conversion reports.

Active Goal:  On  Off

Goal Position:   
Changing goal position will not move historical data for this goal

**Please select a goal type**

Goal Type:  URL Destination  
 Time on Site  
 Pages/Visit

---

**Goal Details**

Match Type <sup>?</sup>:

Goal URL <sup>?</sup>:   
(e.g. For the goal page "http://www.mysite.com/thankyou.html" enter "/thankyou.html")  
 To help you verify that your goal URL is set up correctly, please see the tips [here](#) .

Case Sensitive:  URLs entered above must exactly match the capitalization of visited URLs.

Goal Value:  optional

---

**Goal Funnel** optional

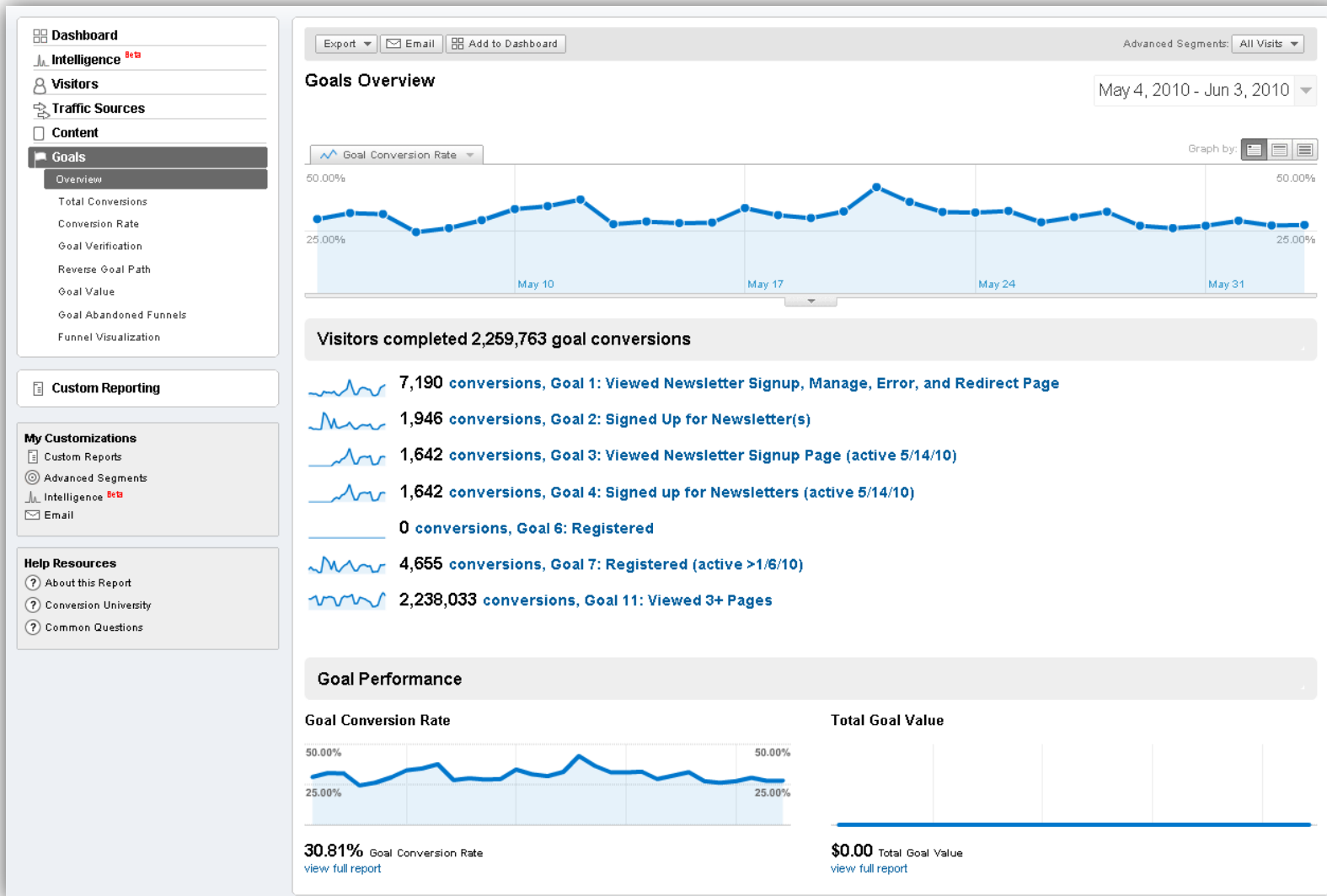
A funnel is a series of pages leading up to the goal URL. For example, the funnel may include steps in your checkout process that lead you to the thank you page (goal).

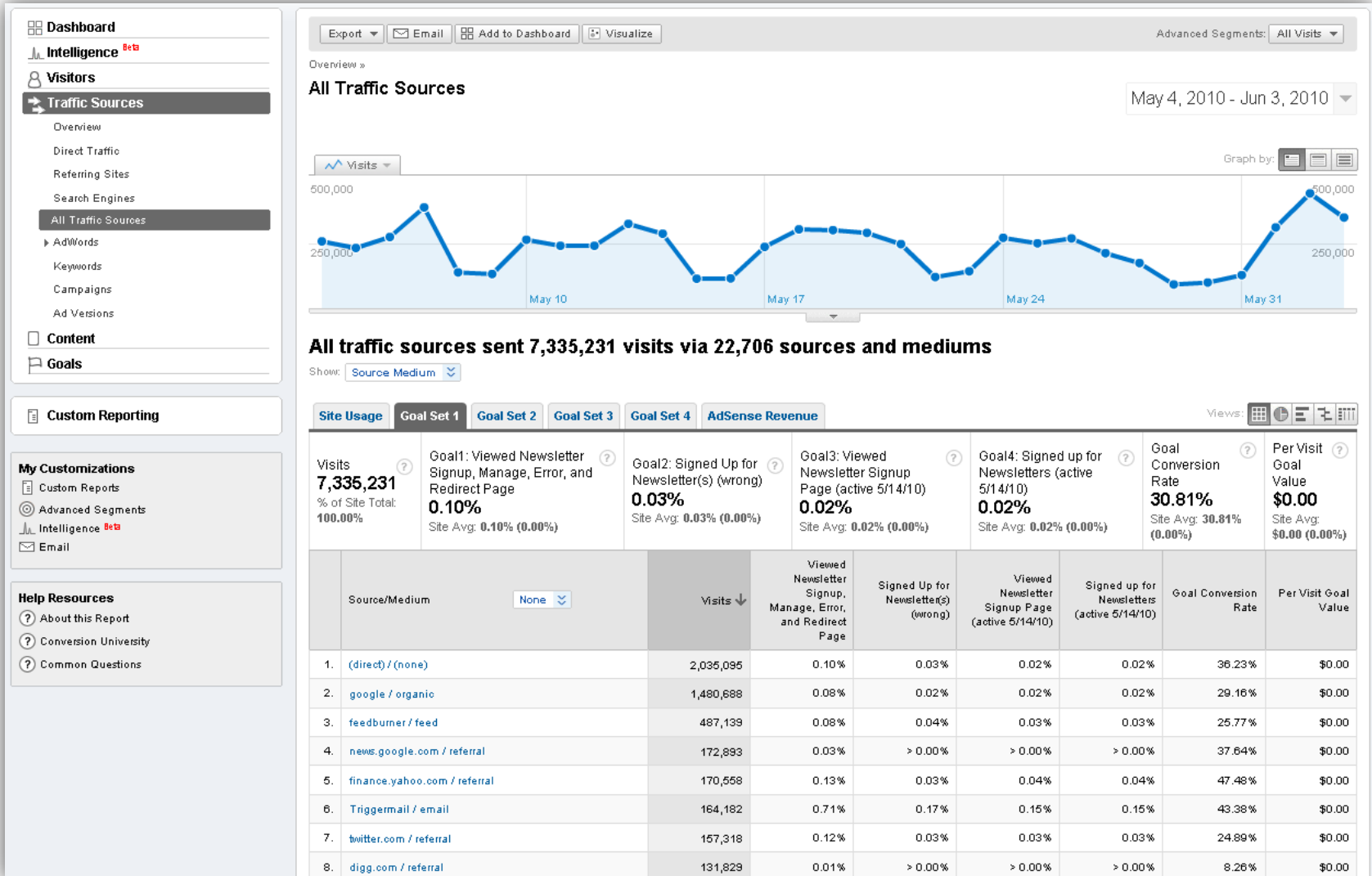
+ Yes, create a funnel for this goal

---

## Create Actionable Conversion Metrics

- Default Key Performance Indicator
  - Number of conversions per month
- Good KPIs
  - Conversions per Visit
- Best KPIs
  - Conversions per Visit for each
    - Channel (search, social, email)
    - Campaign (annual fundraiser, special event, matching offer)
    - Search engine keyword
  - Conversion Completions per Start
  - Conversion Value per Visit





- *What conversion could you track most easily on your website?*
- *What Key Performance Indicator would track it?*
  - *Numerator (e.g., donations)*
  - *Per Denominator (e.g., returning visits)*
  - *For each Category (e.g., email newsletter)*
- *What actions could you take when this KPI declines? Increases?*

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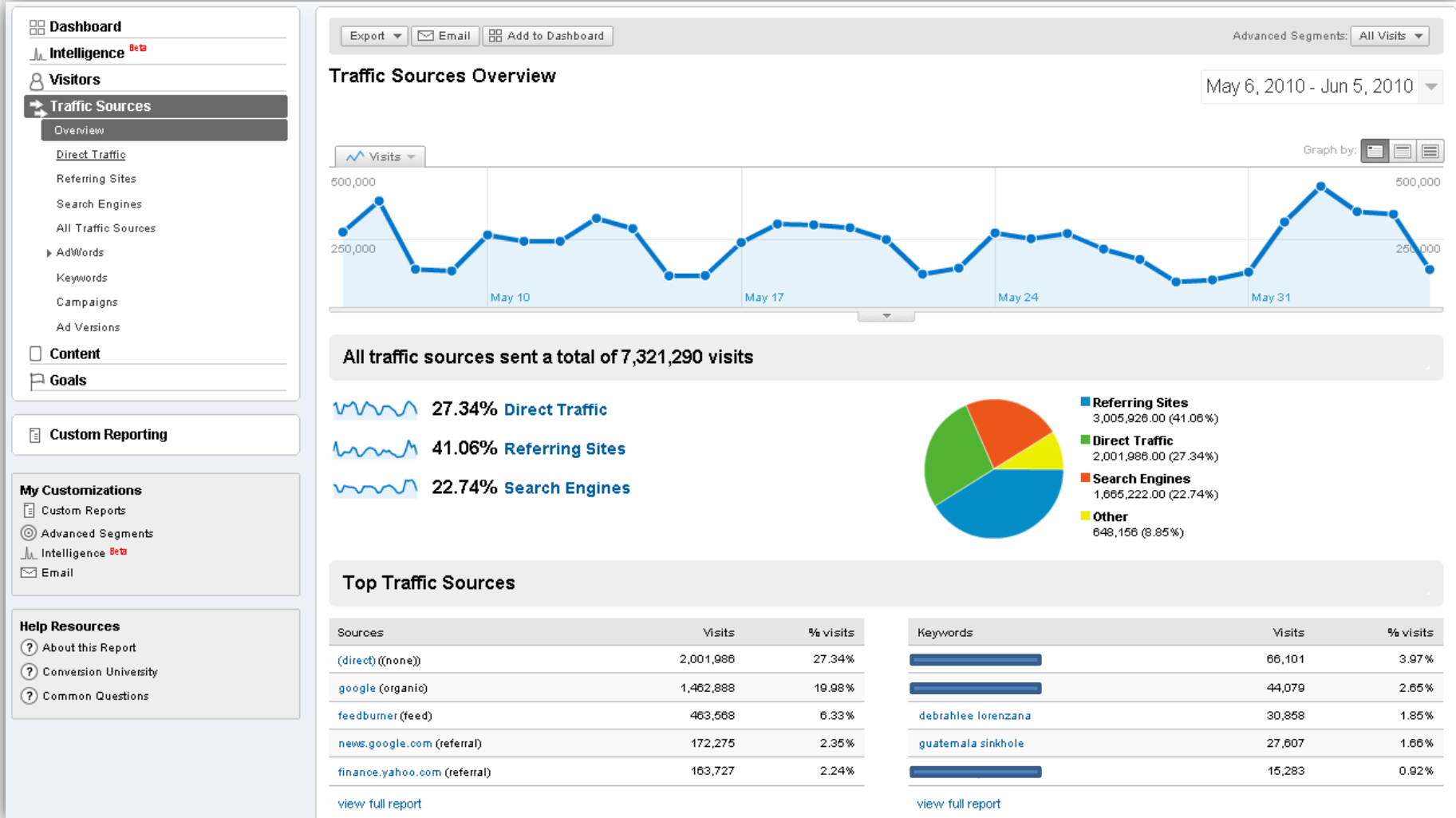
# Outreach

## See How People Find You

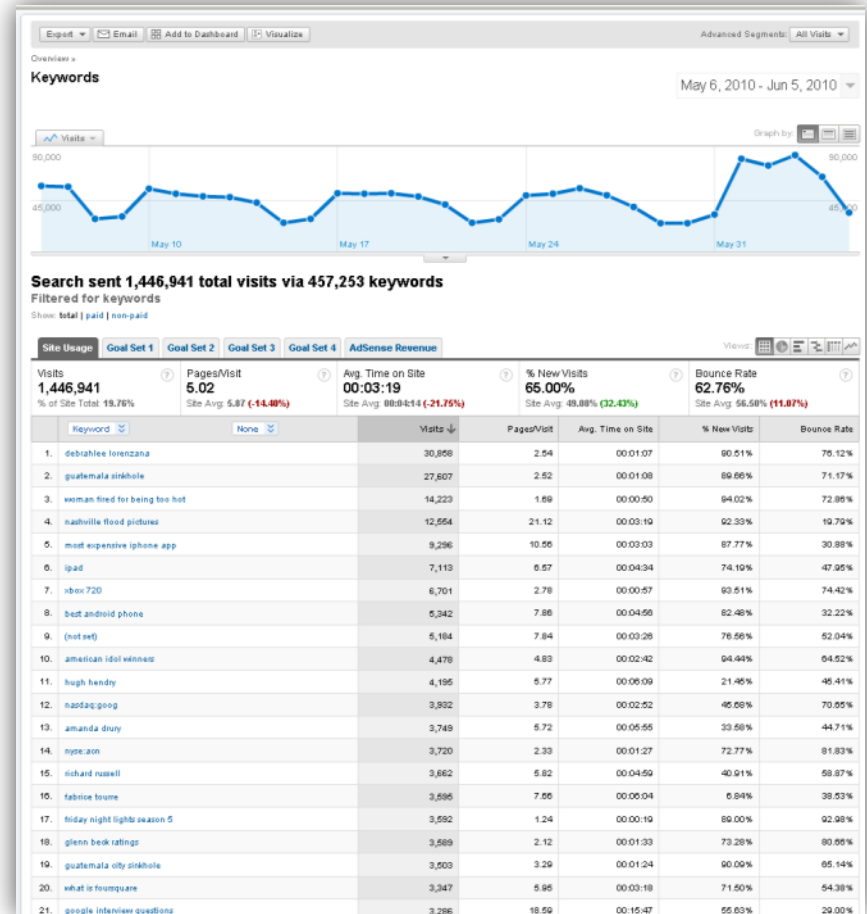
- Knowing how people find the site is key to getting the most from your web investments
  - Often more than half of your investment is in off-site activities
    - Search engine marketing
    - Social media
    - Email newsletters
  - Some of these channels are made for reaching new people, some for engaging current stakeholders
  - More visitors means more return on your fixed on-site investments



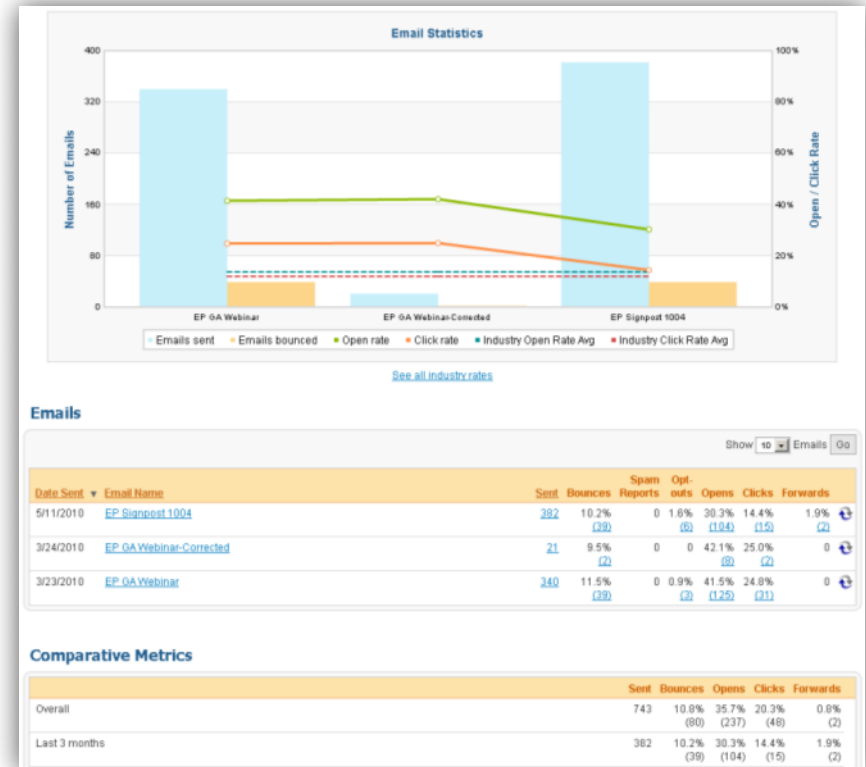
## View Visits x Traffic Sources



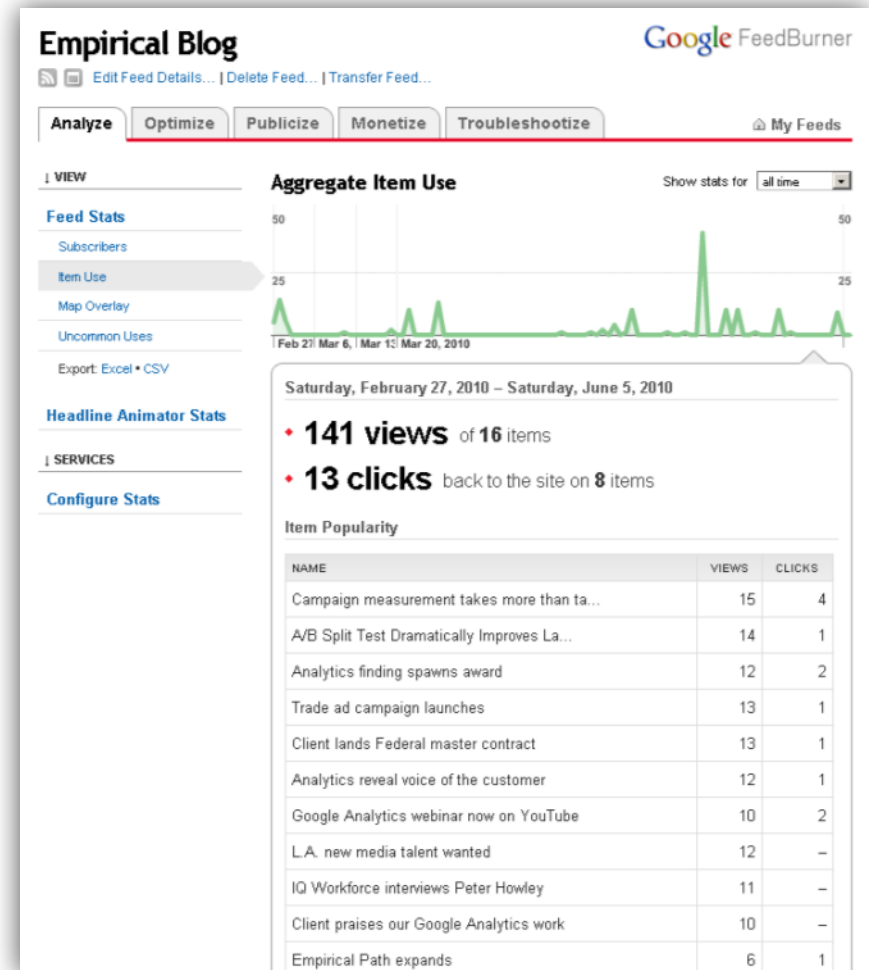
- Most Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is measured by Google Analytics without much customization
  - Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
    - Visits from natural or organic search results are automatically recorded for each engine and keyword
  - Pay-per-Click (PPC)
    - Visits from paid text ads on search engines and their content networks must be ID'd to Google Analytics
      - Google AdWords ads: link AdWords account to Analytics account
      - Other engines: append query parameters, aka campaign tags, to landing page URLs inserted in text ads



- Email is one of the toughest channels to measure, but the most necessary
  - Necessary
    - By default, visits from email systems like Outlook are mis-attributed to direct traffic
    - Visits from web-based email systems like Gmail are mis-attributed to referring sites
    - Email services like Constant Contact don't report engagement or conversions
  - Tough
    - To tell Google Analytics that a visit came from email, each link in that email to a landing page must be campaign tagged
      - Instead of <http://www.rffb.org/volunteer.htm>
      - The email should link to [http://www.rffb.org/volunteer.htm?utm\\_source=may\\_newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=article\\_1&utm\\_campaign=volunteer](http://www.rffb.org/volunteer.htm?utm_source=may_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=article_1&utm_campaign=volunteer)
      - Tools like Vertical Response and MailChimp semi-automate tagging



- Links from blog or other content in RSS feeds can be tracked like email
  - Necessary
    - By default, visits from client readers are mis-attributed to direct traffic
    - Visits from web-based readers like Google Reader are mis-attributed to referring sites
    - RSS services like FeedBurner don't report engagement or conversions
  - Tough
    - To tell Google Analytics that a visit came from RSS, each link in that feed to a landing page must be campaign tagged
      - Instead of <http://www.rrfb.org/volunteer.htm>
      - The email should link to [http://www.rrfb.org/volunteer.htm?utm\\_source=FeedBurner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_content=100608\\_post&utm\\_campaign=volunteer](http://www.rrfb.org/volunteer.htm?utm_source=FeedBurner&utm_medium=feed&utm_content=100608_post&utm_campaign=volunteer)
      - Tools like FeedBurner fully automate tagging



- Social media goals go beyond website visits, but measuring visits and conversions can justify the investment
  - Social media engagement
    - Facebook Fans, Twitter followers, YouTube comments, etc.
    - Facebook Insights
  - Impact on visitation and conversions
    - By default, all visits from Facebook, Twitter, etc. are attributed to referring sites, regardless of whether your outreach was involved
    - As with email, campaign tagging will allocate visits from your efforts to campaigns, instead
      - Tools like HootSuite semi-automate tagging



- Offline channels like mailers, billboards, and brochures have a measurable impact on the site
  - Vanity URLs
    - Create a memorable, unique URL to be used in just one edition or type of communications vehicle
      - For June mailer:  
<http://www.rrfb.org/help>
    - Redirect that page's visitors to a campaign tagged landing page
      - [http://www.rrfb.org/volunteer.htm?utm\\_source=june\\_mailer&utm\\_medium=mail&utm\\_campaign=volunteer](http://www.rrfb.org/volunteer.htm?utm_source=june_mailer&utm_medium=mail&utm_campaign=volunteer)
    - Track resulting visits and signups in Google Analytics Campaigns
      - A new Source and Medium will appear in reports



- *What is the mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive list of marketing channels (or “mediums,” in Google Analytics) that you use?*
- *What are some of the communications campaigns (events, features, or offers that you communicate via multiple mediums) that you run?*

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- Collect traffic data and ensure accurate enough
- Create finite, actionable Key Performance Indicators
- Collect default and custom reports in Google Analytics Dashboard(s)
- Schedule distribution of PDF reports to other decision-makers
  - Write plain-English summaries of data
  - Provide actionable recommendations
- Test new approaches to digital communications and measure impact

# Now What? Exercise

- *What reports would help decision-makers improve your digital communications?*
- *What few Key Performance Indicators would be included in each?*
- *Who would receive each?*
- *How frequently?*

Report	KPIs	Recipients	Frequency

- Contact me with any questions:  
Peter Howley  
peter.howley@empiricalpath.com  
Twitter: @phowley99 and @EmpiricalPath  
505/856-6131
- Take advantage of all the free Google Analytics support documentation and message boards