

**HIGH TECH OFFICE****ALAN ZISMAN***Analyzing stats can help your business build a better website*

Last week, we started looking at ways to find out who visits my (or your) website in order to increase visits to the site and its overall effectiveness. I found the site statistics provided by my web host only moderately useful and signed onto Google's free Google Analytics service, adding "invisible" code to some of my web pages so that they send information to Google whenever someone visits them. (Read on: you may be surprised at the information your web browser sends about you without your involvement.)

I noted that my Google Analytics data would become more useful over time as more of my pages report the results of more visitors. But even an early look is informative. With data updated daily, Google Analytics reports that over the past month my tagged pages had 842 visitors who made more than 1,000 visits viewing a total of about 1,800 pages. Visitors spent, on average, a little over a minute on the site.

Half came to me directly, 40% from other websites, with a surprisingly low 10% referred by search engines. Google accounted for nearly all the search engine referrals – 108 – with only six coming from Yahoo and just two from Microsoft's new Bing service.

The browser most used by [www.zisman.ca](http://www.zisman.ca) visitors was Firefox – nearly 40% of the traffic. Google's new Chrome browser was used by 6% – a surprisingly high number to me. Sixty-seven per cent used Windows and 30% Macs. There were a few iPhone users and a tiny number of BlackBerry users. Visitors to my websites are not typical. In the world at large, Internet Explorer is the most-used browser, while only about 10% are Mac-oids.

A mere 1.6% used an old style dial-up connection while three-quarters had screen resolutions greater than 1024 by 768, meaning that I can assume fast connections and large screen sizes when designing my pages.

Half my visitors were from Canada, but in that month, I also had visitors from 72 other countries, speaking 45 languages.

There is also information on pages visited. For instance, in that month [squeezebox-circle.org](http://squeezebox-circle.org), a website I maintain for a group of Vancouver accordion players, had 257 page views from 196 unique viewers. With that page offering musician and event listings and resources for accordion players, I'd like to get it to top of the pops in relevant search categories.

If you search for, say "Vancouver accordions" in Google, right now the [squeezebox-circle.org](http://squeezebox-circle.org) page shows up on the third page of 2,680,000 hits. Many hits with higher listings are out of date or only vaguely on-topic, but it would take a persistent searcher to discover the site that way; one company offering to help (for a fee) with search engine optimization claims that 79% of searchers don't look beyond the first five hits, while 28% will check the first three

pages. (Yes, that totals more than 100%.)

The site comes up better in other, more targeted searches. Search for "Vancouver accordion club" and it's No. 3. For "Vancouver accordion musicians" it's No. 5.

Googling search engine optimization brings up lots of tips: suggestions to include site and page-specific

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Wider Funnel specialize  
in helping clients with  
conversion optimization  
by using Google  
Analytics results**

keywords in each page's title, for instance, and to break up pages so that each page has a single focus and a file name reflective of that focus. Google Analytics will show me whether following those tips brings more readers to those

pages. By examining information such as the average time spent on individual pages in a website, website owners can design multiple variations of a page and use the Google Analytics data to see what is most effective at capturing users' attention or producing other desired outcomes.

Companies like local **Wider Funnel** specialize in

helping clients with conversion optimization by using Google Analytics results, along with other tools, to fine-tune website design to maximize results. ■

*Alan Zisman is a Vancouver educator and computer specialist. He can be reached at [www.zisman.ca](http://www.zisman.ca). His column appears weekly.*

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