



# The Copywriter's Guide to Analytics

# Introduction

There is a reason that so many tools are popping up with analytics. People want to know where their content is going. They want to know how their content is being viewed and most importantly, they want to see the value in the content they are buying. This guide is for both the copywriters of the world and those that purchase their services. I will go over some very basic rules of copywriting and then delve into how to read your Google Analytics for copywriting purposes. There are plenty of tools out there for analytics (it seems new startups are joining the movement every month!) but since GA (Google Analytics) is free I will stick with that one.

In short, I think you will find that the more strategy you put into your copywriting, the more your conversion rate will increase. If you combine a solid strategy and continue along with intelligent tweaking, your site will be a moneymaker for the long haul!

Enjoy!

# Copywriting General Rules

**B**elow are some very basic rules to copywriting. Whether you are writing website copy, an offline newsletter or anything else, you want to make sure that you (or the person you hired) are following these rules:

## Rule #1: Never Put The Cart Before The Horse

Always have a strategy in mind before you do any writing. Just like when you were in college and you had to create a solid outline before writing an essay, you need to have a clear plan before you pen the first word.

Specifically, when you doing marketing copy you want to have a clear understanding of your audience, their pain points, what terms they use and more. I'll talk about that in more detail below but remember that you shouldn't just sit down and start typing away. I realize some people believe this works for them – they're wrong. Even if you can start throwing up basically good copy off the top of your head, you can only improve your writing by having a strategy.

## Rule #2: Revel In Both Pleasure and Pain

When you spend the time to know your audience you should know their pleasure and pain points. The gut reactions they have to particular words or situations. In knowing these special points, you can intelligently respond within your copy.

For example, consider all the countless studies about the increased conversion rates of checkout pages that utilize trust symbols. Even trust symbols that are not independently appealing, as a whole increase conversions. That's because the trust symbol is used strategically when someone is feeling insecure – at the point they are pulling out their credit card.

## Rule #3: Know Who You Are Talking To

Within your strategy, you should have a clear concept of the buying cycle of each type of audience profile. Your copy should be specific enough that it touches a person right where they are and tells them exactly what to do.

Segmentation is not just a design issue. Don't write the same type of content for two different audience profiles. Speak to the right audience, at the right time and make sure to only provide appropriate resources.

## Rule #4: Keep it Simple

The #1 mistake most sites make is a confusing call to action. Each individual page of your site should have 1 single action item. Each time you give a site visitor an option, you have cut your chances of them doing what you want them to do in half.

This doesn't mean get rid of your navigation menu and advertisements, but be mindful of your site design and your copy. Make sure that a complete stranger can tell exactly what you want them to do. Don't overwhelm site visitors or potential clients. There are plenty of competitors keeping it simple.

# Stage One of Analytics:

## Building a Solid Foundation

Now that we know the primary rules of solid copywriting, let's talk about how to get started with GA. As soon as you sign up, you will see lots and lots of numbers. If you are a graph lover and a number enthusiast chances are you are already well aware of the power behind GA.

For the rest of us, I am going to break these down term by term:

***Unique Visitor:*** This is a great litmus test for how well you are marketing your site. Whether you are doing it with PPC, SEO or anything else the amount of unique visitors is a very important factor in the popularity of your site. Essentially unique visitors are the unique IP addresses that visit your site.

For example, if your sister visits your site at her family computer and then your nephew does as well – this will count as

one unique visitor. Google doesn't know that two humans visited your site, just that one IP address did.

**Time on Site:** Based on which page within your site this is and how content heavy it is, your copywriter likely plays a vital role in this number. For example, if you have a 1200 word blog post that has a 6 minute time on site, chances are people are reading the post.

On the other hand, if your site is mostly design heavy that might be the larger contributing factor to time on site. With GA you can view time on site both at the page level and at the domain level.

**Bounce Rate:** The amount of people that left your site after a single page visit. Depending on the way your site is set up a high bounce rate cannot be avoided. For example, a one page portfolio site is going to have a drastically high bounce rate. For most of us however, our bounce rate depends on the quality of the landing pages.

**Page Views:** The amount of pages people viewed on your site during a single visit. As they go from one page to another you can track

their level of interest. It's common sense that someone who looks at 15 different pages on your site is closer to a sale than someone who just looks at one or two pages. If someone visits your site in the morning and looks at 4 pages and then comes back a few days later to look at another 4, it will be averaged as 4 views, not 8.

**Landing Page:** This would be whichever page that your site visitor landed on. This is not necessarily your main page. Especially for those sites that have implemented content marketing your landing pages are numerous and change often. Really, any page on your site can be a landing page to some visitor.

**New/Returning Visits:** Again, this term is pretty self explanatory – new visitors are those IP addresses that haven't been to your site before whereas returning visitors have been to your site before. Remember, Google doesn't know anything beyond the IP of the computer accessing your site. So if you have a traveling groupie that views your site from different places they will be viewed as a new rather than returning visitor.

# Stage Two of Analytics:

## The Effect of Copywriting on Stats

Now that we have a clear understanding of what these terms mean in the general sense, let's delve into what they mean in relation to your copy.

### Unique Visitor

A good copywriter will bring in more and more unique visitors as time progresses. This is a natural consequence of genuinely good copy. When you have valuable content on your site the following things happen:

- People share your content on social feeds
- People talk about your content on their own site
- People will come back to your site, so they can be counted as a unique visitor the next week, month or year.

For example, if someone visits your site in May and comes back in June and you are looking at the GA, only for June they will be a unique visitor again. If you are looking at both May and June they will only be counted once.

A bad copywriter will lower unique visitors for the exact opposite reasons. Yet, I am of the opinion that marketing plays a much bigger role in unique visitors than the copy itself. You can have the best site on the planet but without proper marketing nobody will ever know about it. It's a bit of a chicken and an egg for sure but you need some sort of marketing (SEO, content marketing, PPC, other) to get the ball rolling.

## Time on Site and Bounce Rate

A good copywriter will increase your time on site and decrease bounce rate almost immediately. Then, your time on site rate will only get better and your bounce rate will decrease as your traffic increases. This is definitely a snowball effect; people that value good content will naturally find your site and soak it up.

The biggest factor for both time on site and bounce rate is copywriting.

Unlike design elements that make up that initial 20-30 seconds, copy will keep people on your site for minutes. When your site struggles with low time on site and a high bounce rate the reasons are:

1. You are not providing what you promised. If you had a meta description or title that read "Find out about summer boats" and the copy is actually about how to winterize boats people aren't going to stay long.
2. You aren't providing enough value. Maybe your copy is about summer boats but it is just a paragraph or is just fluff. Whatever it is, it isn't valuable to the site visitor.
3. You aren't providing a clear CTA, or "call to action." A call to action is necessary on each page of your site. Without it, people don't know what to do. And without giving clear directions they are just as likely to go somewhere else than they are to hang out on your site longer.



## Page Views

In general page views will increase with good copywriting but this depends greatly on the site design and the utility of the site. On one hand page views can be seen as the opposite of the bounce rate. If someone goes from one page to another within your site they have both increased your page views and decreased your bounce rate.

However, when you have a high time on site and a low page view stat the reason is typically the utility of the site. For example, let's say your site is the online extension of an offline group and only one page chances each day or week.

Consider a neighborhood watch website. Each unique visitor is probably a member of the neighborhood and they are returning each week to check out a specific announcement. Their time on site is going to be high because the content is valuable to them. However, they aren't going to revisit static pages they've seen before.

I'm not saying static pages aren't good – far from it. The point is to be aware of the utility of your site and

consider that when viewing these statistics.

# Stage Three of Analytics:

## Leveraging Analytics for Copywriting

Now that we know more about GA and how it is affected by copywriting, let's look at it from a different angle. Let's see how we should leverage our knowledge from GA to create better copy.

### Use GA to Fill in the Gaps

Even the best strategies need tweaking. That's what keeps you ahead of your competition. Look at the keywords bringing you search traffic. Are these terms you should be adding to your SEO plan? What about your most popular post? Are you surprised by the post that has the highest time on site? If so, you should try writing about that topic more often!

Do yourself a favor and check out your analytics each month in detail. See what landing pages are getting the most attention. You can easily set an alert for each week for top landing pages. This will

provide you a quick and dirty look at the pages bringing in the most traffic. As well as how much time people are spending on those pages.

## Increase Usability Across Your Site

Conversely, see what pages aren't doing so well. It's possible that what you thought was going to be a gem of a post was a dud. Investigate why. If you didn't get any traffic then it might be worth it to tweak the title for better clickthroughs.

Or maybe your title wasn't specific enough. Oftentimes copywriters get caught in creativity without balancing utility. A cutesy title is great but when you don't give enough information about the body in the title you'll get traffic that isn't really interested and you will miss your ideal audience. Another option is to add more meat or repurpose the content for a better user experience. Whatever it is, the stats on GA will show you which landing pages need more work.



## In Closing...

Google Analytics is free, and so there is truly no reason not to leverage this tool. If you work for a website and do not have access to their analytics, simply ask. Explain to your employer the value of knowing the analytics for good copywriting. Chances are they will be more than happy to open the books.

Remember that analytics are going to make the biggest difference in 2012. You can't simply shoot from the hip anymore. Each site visitor is a potential sale, and in this highly competitive economy you can't risk losing even one!

I've found that the biggest obstacle for copywriters or anyone using analytics for the first time is that they get overwhelmed. There is no reason to follow every rabbit trail. Start slow, just the few terms mentioned above. They will provide you mounds of actionable information. You'll be comfortable in no time and will start really flexing those GA muscles! In the meantime, keep writing intelligently! Don't let that content go to waste!

# About

## Content Equals Money

Content Equals Money is a content writing service that serves a wide variety of clients with top-shelf, sharable content. We cater to SEO marketing agencies as well as small business, providing content marketing strategies applicable to many fields. Whether you need content for yourself or content for your clients, Content Equals Money is the insource writing service to suit your needs!

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