



Identifying your website visitors - wow!

By Neil Edwards

The website is now Rome for nearly every business - all roads must lead to it. By driving visitors to your website, you enable them to find out more about your business, your offer, your people and your values.

Getting traffic to the website in the first place can be tough enough, and while exceptional tools like **Google Analytics**¹ can tell you everything you could want to know and more about the number of visitors to your site, including how they got there and what they did when they arrived, you are still several steps away from turning those visitors into customers if they don't fill out your contact form, make a call or reveal their identity in some other way, for example, by downloading some content.

Software that allows you to identify the companies that are visiting your website has been around for a couple of years now, bridging the gap between marketing and sales and putting users more firmly in control of the lead generation process.

We have just started to use a website visitor identification programme (**WOW Analytics**²) at The Marketing Eye and have been very impressed with the added momentum it has put into our sales programme. Like all things, it isn't a panacea and we thought we would share with you what we have learned so far.

¹ <http://www.google.co.uk/analytics/>

² <http://www.wowanalytics.co.uk/>

How it works

All of the platforms work by matching the IP address of the visitor against a database of IP address owners. The quality of any of the platforms is therefore entirely dependent on the depth and accuracy of the provider's database.

Number of visitors identified

We are finding that approximately 20% of our visitors are identified. The leakage is a combination of personal visitors, visitors accessing the website from a remote location, e.g. at home or a hotel lobby, and IP addresses not being on the provider's database - most providers claim to have around 60%.

Information provided

When a visitor is identified, the detail provided is very powerful indeed. You get the name of the company and a short profile, the pages that have been visited and a consequent grading of the potential lead. The software remembers previous visitors, so the warmth of a lead can build up over time.

Links are provided into Google to help you find out more about your visitor and the system we use also integrates with LinkedIn, which is particularly useful when trying to identify decision makers and any existing contacts we might have with them.

Making the most of website visitor identification software

Here are a few reminders and points to note based on our findings to date.

The software identifies the company, not the individual visitor:

This means you have to be prepared to do some work to find out who the visitor might have been. If it is a small business, or the service you offer is relevant to a particular department, this might

be quite easy to narrow down. With a visit from a large corporation, this can be much harder.

We have developed some telephone dialogue and email scripts, which are proving effective in helping us identify and get talking to a relevant person (ask us for details³).

Not every visitor is a prospect:

As well as prospects, your visitors will include existing customers, businesses that see you as a prospect, competitors and lost souls that just stumble on the site and can be immediately qualified out. You can tell the system this and it quickly categorises your visitors to isolate the ones to focus on.

Not every prospect is ready to be a client or a customer:

You have to accept the fact that a lot of research happens online and some of it is more focused than the rest. The fact that your visitor didn't make contact directly suggests that they are not yet ready to buy (or that your website didn't do a good enough job of persuading them to take the next step).

When you have identified your visitor, add them into your nurturing programme to receive your eshots or event invitations.

Quality leads needs quality visitors:

To get the most from website visitor identification software, you first of all need a decent number of relevant visitors to your website.

Taking the free trial that most of the platforms offer (avoid the ones that don't) is a good way of finding out what the quality of your current traffic is.

³

http://www.themarketingeye.com/help_and_faqs/contact_us.html

If the number or quality of visitors is low, you are probably best advised to turn your attention to your search engine optimisation and pay-per-click activity first. Start or fine tune these activities and then bring in the software so that you can turn your anonymous visitors into leads.

Information is nothing without action:

You need to monitor your dashboard daily (the temptation to stare at it constantly will soon pass) and be ready to research and write to the hottest prospects. Doing nothing will mean you are no further forward than before - maybe just a little more frustrated that nobody is completing your contact form.

Summary

In summary, we have found visitor identification software to be an integral part of our holistic inbound marketing and lead generation strategy: it is a great way to maximise the ROI from the channels and activities that we use to get visitors to the website and it means we have a regular flow of marketing qualified leads to pass into our sales process.

Used intelligently and with realistic expectations, it can do the same for you.

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About the Author

Neil Edwards is a Chartered Marketer and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing. He has worked on a number of well-known brands in the UK and overseas during a varied career with The Royal Bank of Scotland Group. He is an accomplished speaker and blogger as well as being a CIM mentor for careers and marketing qualifications.

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