

Case Study: Vaya.nl Intergrated website survey feedback in Google Analytics

Two worlds: web analytics and website surveys

Web analytics plays an integral role in the practice of online marketing and sales. Trends in conversion funnels, page views and unique visitor counts help assess the performance of a website and of online marketing activities.

Albeit, very helpful, there are still some questions that web analytics cannot answer at this point. Web analytics provides valuable quantitative insights into what people do and how people navigate to and through websites, but it does not have much to say about audiences, target groups and user motivations. If web analytics answers many of the “what” questions, it does not provide a solid response to the “who” and “why”.

Website surveys gain direct feedback from users explaining things that are difficult to infer wholly from website analytics:

- Who is visiting the website?
- What motivates these visits?
- How successful are the visits in achieving users' objectives?
- How satisfied are users with the website?

The data from surveys of site visitors is obviously very complementary to the analytics data, but it's clear that combining these two data sources could lead to even more powerful insights around the behavior of different user segments and the quality of different traffic sources.

One world: website survey feedback in Google Analytics

In close co-operation with Google, online research firm MetrixLab has integrated data from its web survey solution, the Website Performance Monitor (WPM), into Google Analytics [please refer to Appendix for more information about the technical setup]. By combining visitor profiles, visitor reasons (data from the MetrixLab WPM) with web analytics data provided by Google Analytics, valuable insights can be established regarding website visitors' expectations and experiences.

Case Study: Vaya.nl

MetrixLab worked with one of its clients, Vaya.nl to implement this integrated solution. Vaya.nl is a Dutch online travel company and part of the Sundio Group. During a period of 6 months the MetrixLab Website Performance Monitor (WPM) has been implemented as a websurvey on the Vaya.nl website. All data gathered by this survey has been directly fed into the Google Analytics account of Vaya.nl, thus enabling Vaya.nl to analyze the combined data through Google Analytics.



Case Study: Vaya.nl Intergrated website survey feedback in Google Analytics

Basic Outline of the technical solution

Google and MetrixLab worked together to build scripts that took the completed coded survey responses and wrote them as data to a custom variable in Google Analytics, which could then be interrogated through the Advanced Segments function, by selecting different combinations of survey responses. The implementation from a clients' perspective is fairly easy and is explained in the Appendix to this document.

Basic Outline of the technical solution

During the pilot, Vaya.nl had a campaign running on Dutch national television. "As always with above the line advertisement, we saw an increase in people who came to our website by direct traffic", says Serge de Klerk, Brand Manager Vaya.nl. "This is our indicator that we've created awareness and triggered the audience to visit our website by directly typing in the URL they've seen in the TV commercial. The question we however always have is whether we've reached the audience we intended to reach. In our business we focus on a female audience and with our brand on the age group 25 through 45.

Thanks to the combination of GA and the MetrixLab Website Performance Monitor, we're able to measure our level of success. We saw that within the segment of females aged 18-25 (based on the WPM data), the majority was visiting the website directly by typing in the URL (Google



Analytics). When comparing this with other age groups, it's obvious that our intended target audience (25-45) has not been triggered more to visit the website directly.

Consequently, this is our input to start the discussion with our media agency how we should trigger our core target audience to visit the website directly. These are real additional insights we did not have before that help us improve our decision making process in the future."

Survey data reveals why page view metrics can be misleading

It is a commonly held belief that increasing engagement in the site as measured by page views/visit is a positive outcome for a brand. By linking survey insights on success and satisfaction to page view data with Vaya.nl; we were able to test this hypothesis. The screenshot below tells us the hypothesis is wrong.



Here we see the level of perceived success of a visitor to the website and the level of satisfaction of a visitor with the website. The level of success is measured by means of the MetrixLab WPM survey. In the case of Vaya.nl this could be a question like: 'You stated your primary reason to visit the website is to retrieve contact information of Vaya.nl. How successful have you been in retrieving this information?' The metric of general satisfaction has also the WPM as a source, the questions here is: 'In general, how satisfied are you with this website?'

Case Study: Vaya.nl

Intergrated website survey feedback in Google Analytics

At first we see that satisfied users have visited more pages than dissatisfied users, which can actually be seen as a positive result. It's obvious here that when users are satisfied, they tend to stick around, explore the website and visit more pages accordingly.

Strikingly, we also see that users who indicate they are not successful in their primary visit reason, have visited more pages than users who are unsuccessful. In this case, we could interpret the number of page views to be negative. Apparently users who can not reach their goal, try other ways to fulfill their information needs and hence visit more pages.

To conclude, page views/visits itself is not such a helpful metric without the context of success and satisfaction. Thanks to the setup of combining the web analytics data with survey data, we have been able to prove this.

Future possibilities: the power is huge!

Next to the already performed analysis above, a number of interesting and highly relevant analyses could be made. One could think of analysis like for instance:

- ■ Do visitors who click on a paid search result (GA data), differ in terms of their profile (WPM data) from visitors who click on an organic search result?
- ■ Do satisfied visitors (WPM data) show a higher return visit percentage (GA data)?
- ■ Why (WPM data) do potential customers exit the sales funnel without purchasing? (GA data)
- ■ What content areas of the website (GA data) do different user segments eg by demographic or purchase process phase (WPM data) over-index and under-index?

These sorts of analyses have great potential to validate the quality of different traffic sources, and also diagnose website content and purchase flow issues with richer insights, helping to improve online marketing efforts.

Basically any analysis is possible, provided the sample size is large enough and the right type of questions have been asked in the websurveys. So, to conclude, the power of this integrated approach is huge!

Contact

If you would like more information about this case or the possibilities for your own website, please contact the MetrixLab Ebusiness Research Team: info@metrixlab.com.

Appendix A: short technical outline of the solution

A detailed implementation scheme is available. The steps below merely serve as a short guideline.

1 WPM© Implementation

The WPM survey needs to be running on the client's website. In order to achieve this, a small piece of javascript should be implemented, which will be delivered and programmed by MetrixLab. Determining on the CMS infrastructure of the client, the WPM could be implemented on all the pages of the website.

2 Google Analytics implementation

Off course Google Analytics should be running on the website as well. The code in place, should be slightly adapted to ignore referrals (external visits) from the MetrixLab survey domain towards the website of the client. In this way the analytics data will not be influenced by the survey pages. MetrixLab will provide the details to adapt this code.

Case Study: Vaya.nl

Intergrated website survey feedback in Google Analytics

3 Create a specific folder on the client website
Within the root of the website of the client, a folder needs to be created in which all necessary files to create the connection could be uploaded.

4 MetrixLab analytics technique and privacy policy
MetrixLab will deliver a custom programmed file in which the connection between the WPM and GA has been made. The client should upload this file in the folder that has been created on the webroot. In addition to this, two .xml files who handle the privacy of the respondent will be delivered and need to be added to this folder as well.

5 Adding segmentation
On the basis of the MetrixLab analytics technique, strings are generated as content pages in Google Analytics. By means of these content pages one is able to segment on respondents and their given answers for each or multiple answers. By means of the 'advanced segments' option in GA, one is able to replicate all given answers of survey respondents. The segments in this case reflect the given answers of the respondents and could be applied to all reports available in Google Analytics.



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