

3 New Metrics in New Zealand Market Intelligence

As the online landscape continues to evolve Nielsen Online would like to ensure that the metrics available to our clients answer all the questions that need addressing. Nielsen Online is therefore planning the incorporation of 3 additional metrics into its Market Intelligence service to help its clients better understand website traffic and behaviour.

1. Average Daily Unique Browser

Background

Traditionally Market Intelligence ranking reports have defaulted to ranking by Unique Browsers (UBs). This metric can be defined as an individual browser on a computer or handheld device that can access a web page. The uniqueness of this browser is identified by the use of cookies and is commonly viewed over a monthly period. When a user visits a monitored site a cookie is attached to the browser so that when the same browser returns to the site, our system recognises the cookie and can also define the frequency of return (Unique Browser Frequency). A recognised issue with all cookie-based browser measurement is that browsers do not always equate precisely to actual visitors. For example, a user may visit a site, delete his/her cookies, then visit the site again during the same month and so be counted as two unique browsers. Users who delete cookies after each session could result in high re-counts over longer periods of time

Other factors contributing to the differences between UBs and people include one person accessing from multiple devices/locations/logins(user profiles)/browsers (e.g. IE and Firefox) and multiple people accessing from the same device/login.

The Way Forward

It is clear that the difference between UBs and people increase over time. For example, in the very first minute of November 2007 it's fairly safe to say that:

- No single person started a session, visited a site, deleted cookies/ended the session, started a new session and visited the same site;
- No single person visited the same site from two devices (e.g. computer and cell phone) or from two different locations (eg. home and work) or with two browsers (eg. IE and Firefox); and
- No two people shared the same cookie (ie. same device/login/user profile).

The chance of these events occurring increase over time, and are correlated with visit frequency.

From the Nielsen Online Australian Data Integration project (where we can analyse cookie data in relation our metered panel of internet users) we've learned that in a single day the Unique Browser to people ratio for most sites is at least 95% accurate.

Introducing an **Average Daily Unique Browser (ADUB)** metric allows us to capitalise on this logic for a more reliable default ranking in Market Intelligence. It will provide a truer indication of sustained growth or decline and therefore a better ranking metric.

This is simply because a short spike in UBs for a site can increase its monthly UBs significantly, but average daily UBs would flatten that effect. This metric can be applied to any period – (two weeks, three weeks, two months), although it should not be used to identify the reach of a campaign longer than the period of a day.

How is it calculated?

The ADUB metric is calculated slightly differently depending on the focal reporting frequency:

- For Daily Reporting - the average UB of the past 28 days (the report date plus the previous 27 days);
- For Weekly Reporting - the average UB of the days in the reporting week; or
- For Monthly Reporting - the average UB of the days in the reporting month.

Note that for Weekly and Monthly reporting the average for incomplete periods (e.g. viewing a May monthly report on May 15) is the average 'to date'. Also, newly added sites are averaged over the available days.

2. Total Time on Site

Background

Online web development techniques are rapidly changing in New Zealand, in particular through introduction of new technologies such as AJAX, and through increased use of streaming, etc. These technologies allow content to refresh without uploading a new page. For sites that adopt these new technologies, content – pages, video streams, etc – can now be viewed without generating additional traffic impressions. In such cases a user may only be responsible for a single page impression, but the duration indicates a high level of engagement with the content. Traditionally we have used Page Impressions to measure content viewed on a site and Average Session Duration to understand the level of engagement on the site.

The Way Forward

Total Time on site (TT ['000 sec]) is the result of the combination of Page Impressions and Page Duration across all the Unique Browsers on the site. This allows us to rank sites taking into account both content and duration. With the introduction of this metric, a site with high volumes of Page Impressions with short Page Durations, for example, can be ranked against a site with high Session Duration and low Page Impressions. This is a fairer representation of a site's performance than Page Impressions alone.

How is it calculated?

The metric reports the total amount of time, reported in thousands of seconds, all UBs spent on a site during the reporting period. This is calculated by multiplying Page Impressions (PI) by Average Page Duration (APD). Like Page Impressions this metric is not affected by cookie generation.

3. Total Number of Sessions

Background

This metric gives us another perspective on the popularity of a site over a given period. To understand the total number of sessions users have had on a site, in the past we needed to multiply the number of Unique Browsers by the Unique Browser Frequency ("Loyalty").

The Way Forward

As Total Sessions is a reasonably common Key Performance Indicator for many publishers, we would like to include the metric for ranking within New Zealand Market Intelligence. This will simply save time and the need for additional calculations.

How is it calculated?

The metric is calculated by reporting the total number of times UBs visit to a site, having left for more than 30 minutes, during the reporting period. It is equivalent to Average 'UB Frequency' times UBs. Like Page Impressions this metric is also not affected by cookie generation issues.

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