



# MEASURING CONTENT:

The metrics you need, and the ones to ignore



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

■ Introduction.....	3
■ Purposeful Content: The first step of measurement .....	4
■ Google Analytics: The most valuable tool in the box.....	6
■ Social Metrics: More than just cat videos.....	9
■ Beyond Measurement: Putting the metrics to good use .....	13



## INTRODUCTION

At this stage, most marketing teams know content is a vital part of an overall strategy. The difficulty, however, comes with demonstrating the value of content. Unlike other services, you can't simply generate an excel sheet to get an overview of what's working and what's not.

Measuring content involves nuance, constant analysis, and creativity. Pulling the right metrics will help you put yourself in the position of your target audience, and understand exactly they are (or aren't) engaging with your content.

Creating content without smart measurement methodologies in place is similar to singing in an empty room---it doesn't matter how beautiful your voice is if no one can hear you.

In this e-book, we'll explore the best methods for measuring your content success. We'll recommend which metrics to focus on, what tools you should use, and how to improve your content based on what you discover.

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## PURPOSEFUL CONTENT: THE FIRST STEP OF MEASUREMENT

With every piece of content you create, it's essential to first consider what you want to achieve. This purpose will shape your overall content strategy into something that will help your company reach goals, rather than simply tick the content marketing box.

**Less than half of B2B marketers** (44 per cent) can confidently say they are clear on what content marketing success or effectiveness actually looks like, so having a goal and knowing when you reach it will already put you ahead of the pack.



Source: Content Marketing Institute, 2016 B2B Report





There are countless goals you can achieve with content, but here are some of the most common to use as a starting point:

- Brand awareness
- Increased organic traffic
- Lead generation/conversion
- Improved search rankings
- Thought leadership
- Customer engagement

We'll explain each of these metrics and how to measure them, but for quick reference, we've created a quick cheat sheet to help:

BRAND AWARENESS	INCREASED ORGANIC TRAFFIC	LEAD GENERATION	IMPROVED SEARCH RANKINGS	THOUGHT LEADERSHIP	CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT
Social Impressions	Page Visits	Conversions	Keyword Rankings	Social Shares	Time on Page
Social Reach	Entrances	Goal Completions	Organic Traffic to Page	Likes	Bounce Rate
Social Shares	Organic Traffic to Page	Traffic Flow	Search Terms	Follower Growth	Exit Rate
Follower Growth				Referral Traffic	

It's likely you want your content to achieve several (or all) of these goals, but having at least one primary goal for each piece of content will ensure you know what it is you should be measuring.

Once you know what you want to achieve, and what you need to track, it's time to determine which tools will help you track and measure.



## GOOGLE ANALYTICS: THE MOST VALUABLE TOOL IN THE BOX

It probably comes as no surprise that **Google Analytics** (GA) is the ultimate tool for measuring content. GA can give you the base metrics you need to track and measure content—other tools will help you build from there.

For most types of content, engagement is the most important metric. In fact, **72 per cent of those asked** in a Content Marketing Institute survey said engaging content would be their top priority over the coming year. With such a spotlight on content creation, GA is vital in measuring progress across a number of metrics.

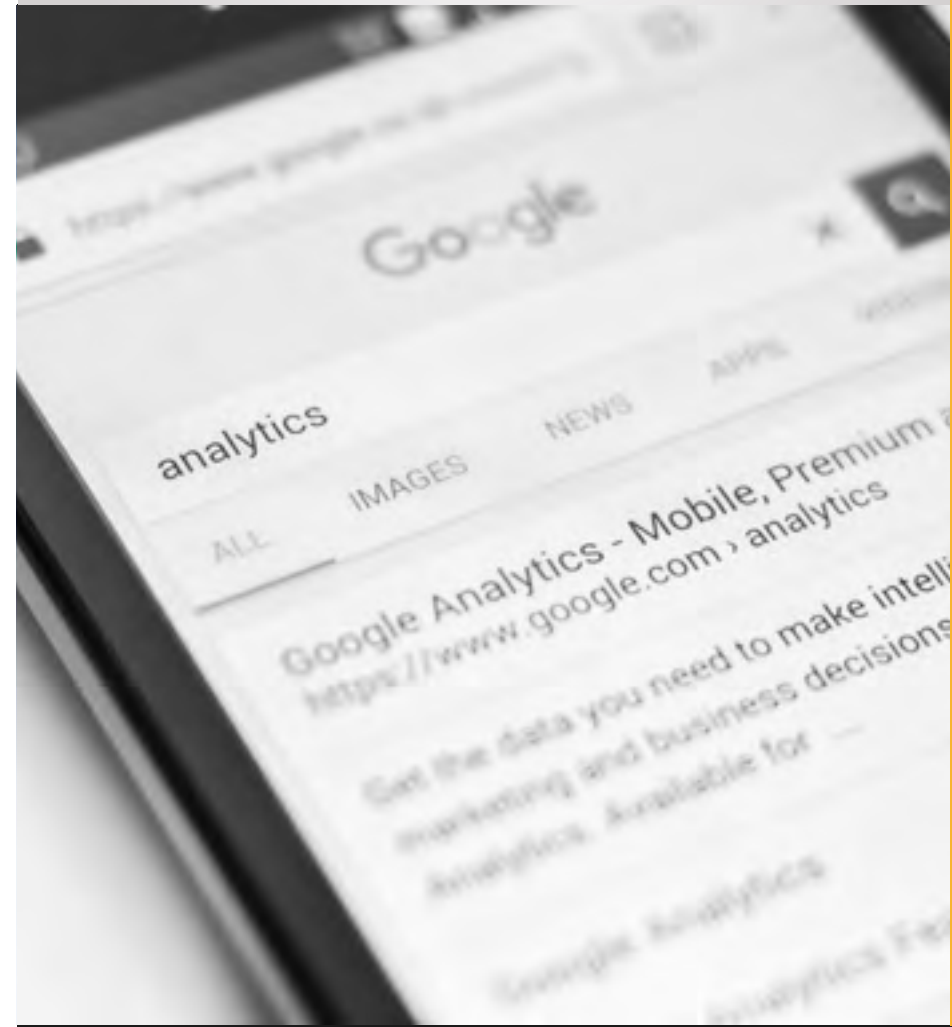
**Site visits/web traffic:** With **63 per cent of marketers** using site visit figures to measure their success, these numbers should be factored in for any on-site content you create. By using GA to measure your traffic to content hosting pages, you can see how many people visit a page over a certain period of time (lifespan), and how many of those visitors are unique or new—which often translates to new potential customers.

Overall page traffic can tell you a lot about your audience and your products, such as whether a particular product push is gaining more attention, whether your overall traffic is increasing due to content, and what content pieces most people are most interested in, to name a few. If there are pages that no one visits, these figures can highlight technical issues within your site, or at least tell you when a piece of content isn't grabbing people's attention.

**Time on site:** Time on site may be a quantitative nugget of data, but it can offer real qualitative insights. Remember: Just because a piece of content has pulled in a large number of visitors doesn't necessarily mean success. If the time on site is very low, it means that though people have been enticed to click through, something about the piece of content isn't holding their interest. Time spent on page can help tell you if they actually read or viewed the information found there.



Google Analytics



The correct time on site will depend on what sort of content is there. For video content, you want people to stay on the page at least long enough to watch the majority of the footage.

For written content, it depends largely on the word count and the complexity of what's listed there. **One study suggests** that 55 per cent of clicks lead to 15 seconds or less of time spent on the page, so if your reader is spending a minute or longer on a URL, you're probably doing something right. One exception to this rule is your contact page – here, your reader should be able to find basic information such as open hours, phone numbers and email addresses quickly. Some will navigate away from this page once they've collected the information they need, which could lead to low time on page.

**Bounce rate:** The bounce rate is notoriously one of the most confusing metrics when it comes to measuring a piece of content's effectiveness. In short, this figure shows what percentage of viewers who land on a page navigate away without interacting with other content on the site. For example, when you click on an interesting article on Facebook, read the article, and then immediately go back to Facebook, GA will count you as a bounce (no matter how long you spent on the page).

Generally speaking, a bounce rate under roughly 40 per cent is very good, whereas 40 to 60 per cent is the average. Up to 70 per cent still isn't much of a reason for concern, but if you're pushing past that figure you may need to assess the page to decipher why users are leaving so quickly. Bear in mind that if your content is meant solely to improve rankings and engage readers, and not necessarily make conversions, then a high bounce rate may be natural. After all, people who read an engaging blog article may only be looking to read a blog article at that time, not make a purchase.

There's still value in showing them that you are a thought leader, and they will ideally recall your branding when it does come time for them to make a purchase. That being said, if you have people on one engaging page, it's important to put other elements on that page (such as related articles) to encourage them to stick around, not bounce away.





**Entrances:** An entrance is recorded when a visitor first comes to your site through a specific page. Any page can be an 'entrance', and from there a user may continue browsing other places in your site. If GA is telling you a page logs a lot of entrances, it's a sign it's doing particularly well for a certain search term that brings users directly to that page (rather than your usual main page or other major landing pages). If other sites are linking directly to that page, or if you've promoted it on social, you can also see entrances spike—which is almost always a good thing.

**Referral traffic:** Much like a real-life referral, in GA a referral occurs whenever another website directs a user to your page via a link. This could be someone sharing a link on Facebook (this would be counted as a social referral), or mentioning your site within a blog on their own page, for example. Unlike UTM parameters, referral traffic is not generated through links created by you. Google Analytics helps you see who is sending the most traffic your way and how. If you are attempting to evaluate what third-party websites or social networks are most effective at driving eyeballs to your content, this is a vital metric.

**Exits:** Are there certain pages on your site that GA shows as having a high number of 'exits'? As the name suggests, these pages are where users are clicking out of your site completely. The difference between bounce rate and exit rate is nuanced. For a bounce rate, the page being viewed was the only one viewed in a session – meaning users landed on that page first, then left the page without doing anything else. The exit rate, however, is just the last page in the session – a user could have visited every single page on your site, but the last one they visited will be counted toward the exit rate.

A high number of exits isn't always a bad thing, and it's certainly to be expected across the board as no user will browse indefinitely. However, if it's a landing page or other URL that should realistically be encouraging users to delve further into your site, a high exit rate would definitely be a bad sign.





## SOCIAL METRICS: MORE THAN JUST CAT VIDEOS

As soon as you add social media platforms to the mix, you're tapping into a smorgasbord of new and useful metrics. While not all content should be shared on social (informational landing pages, for example, probably won't perform very well), there are certain content goals that are impossible to achieve without social: brand awareness and thought leadership.

Social media can also be an excellent way to drive overall traffic to your site via content. For content marketers looking for ways to test and analyze content, improve their brand awareness, or connect with new audiences, social media is a must.

Social media metrics are one of the **top five methods** used by marketers to gage how their content is faring, what's popular, what gets the most engagement, and what helps create the all-important click-throughs these platforms can bring.

### NEARLY 7 OUT OF EVERY 10 AUSTRALIANS ARE ON FACEBOOK EVERY DAY



**Facebook:** There are more than **1.1 billion active users** on this platform every single day, with 16 million users in Australia alone. That's nearly 7 out of every 10 Australians. The fact that companies can create pages and share content for free makes it one of the best social tools on the web.

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