CultSense Quality Tools

Tool 2:

GOOGLE ANALYTICS

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cult sense

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Google Analytics is a powerful tool, largely used and referred to in the (digital) market-ing environments. But how can it be beneficial for projects and contribute to quality control, in particularly in non-profit contexts? Below is a description how we use it in our project and what indicators can be useful also for other projects.

Regarding the quality control for the CultSense project (www.cultsense.com), we rely on some indicators frequently used on Google Analytics. These indicators concern the use of website, and the first step was to register the website to Google Analytics. Having these indicators is important because they help us to identify some elements that may matter in terms of research but also in education. Below, we briefly exempli-fied some of these indicators and explain how each one can improve the quality con-trol of projects.

Google Analytics is used to build models that can assist in understanding, tracking, monitoring, and predicting customer behaviour in relation to a particular website. The standard data available on Google Analytics includes the following classification of indicators:

- Session-related metrics: page views, visits, unique visitors, bounce rate, session duration.
- New and returning visitors: users who have viewed the site before or not.
- Language and location indicators: to showcase understanding on consumers from geographical perspectives.
- Demographics: data on the new and returning visitors' age.
- Technical data on visitors' device: what device type they use, as well as browser, resolution, and operating system available on their devices.
- Traffic sources: it establishes the pages from which visitors arrived to the site.
- Goal conversion: measures the frequency with which a defined goal is achieved in an established timeframe.
- E-commerce tracking: businesses can monitor online shopper behaviour (probably not useful for most research and educational projects).

Based on this general classification, there are certain indicators that showcase the per-formance of a website and highlight opportunities to improve the reach and dissemi-nation of the content, namely:

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Page views – The number of times a visitor views a page on your website is reflected by the 'page views' concept. One page view is recorded each time a page from a particular website loads in a browser. A single page's multiple views are tallied.

Page views are limited in the information they provide. They are more helpful when combined with other metrics to provide more context of the site's performance. Page views can offer a general perspective on the most popular pages (in a particular time-frame) and how much traffic a site is receiving overall.

Average Time on Page – In this case, Google Analytics records the average time visitors spend on a particular webpage. Time on page can be a great indicator of how interesting and effective a page's material is for the visitors. This indicator should however be interpreted in terms of the length of the content on a particular page. In interpreting this indicator, the longer periods of time associated with particular pages denote visitors' interest and appreciation in that content.

Bounce rate – The percentage of visitors to a particular website who load only one page before leaving without interacting or viewing any other pages is known as the 'bounce rate'. In other words, it reflects a single-page session on a site.

Traffic Sources -Understanding the channels used by people to reach the website can offer valuable information. As part of the acquisition report available in Google Analytics, there are four main types of traffic sources:

Direct traffic results from typing the domain name or URL into a browser. Direct traffic also results from clicking on a bookmark. On the one hand, if a high number of users access a website directly, it would show that the website is well-established in their minds. On the other hand, it would also mean that the website should advance their visitor acquisition efforts.

Organic Search traffic reflects the users who discovered a website through unpaid listings on the search engine results page (SERP). They most likely found your website from Google Search. If most of the traffic comes from organic traffic, then search engine optimization strategy of the website is performing very well.

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Referral traffic showcases visitors who reached the site by clicking on a hyperlink on another website.

Social traffic reflects visitors who reach the site via links from social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn...).

C*ohort Analysis -* In Google Analytics, cohort analysis enables website managers to understand patterns of user behaviour, new users vs. retained users. In other words, it is possible to assess a website's ability to retain users in a particular timeframe.

E*xit Rate -* For a particular webpage, exit rate shows the percentage of page views that were the last of the session. Similarly, the final pages that visitors view before leaving your website are termed exit pages. In other words, exit rate highlights where the users (who have accessed two or more pages) were when they decided to leave the website.

S*essions by country -*In Google Analytics, it is also useful to examine the users' location to understand if the content of a website reflects the interests of an international audience. Further, the location overview of users can be further explored in terms of user acquisition, retention, and conversion.

Google Analytics produces reports and you can choose the timeframe. This can be helpful to provide an overview at different moments, for different periods or overall to website. A close monitoring, for example, every 2 or 3 months, can help projects to improve their dissemination and check against indicators, like visits, countries reached, etc.

If you want to know more about Google Analytics, this is a good start:
https://marketingplatform.google.com/about/analytics/

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