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## **Website Statistics**

Tracking website usage via statistics can provide useful information about how your website is being used; who is using your website, how often, when, and if they are returning. This is useful in determining if your website is being used, where your visitors are coming from, how often you should be updating your content and if you need a bigger server for your website to accommodate the traffic.

### Tracking web statistics

I came across this article that really helped to define some website statistics jargon, <http://www.advanced-web-metrics.com/scripts/accuracy-whitepaper.pdf> This paper specifically goes into details regarding two techniques of collecting website statistics: page tags or log files.

The National Water program had been analyzing ISA log files to determine how the National website was being used. We were using the free log analysis program Analog 6.0 to pull out information contained in the log files. This is a very customizable and log analysis tool. The drawbacks however are that it takes some time to determine how to best to extract the information you want from the log files.

In researching web statistic jargon I came across the Google tool Analytics which uses page tags to monitor web traffic.

### Setting up your Google Analytics:

Google provides more detailed information on how to go through these steps.

1. You must sign into [www.google.com/analytics/indexu.html](http://www.google.com/analytics/indexu.html) with your Google Account (you may create one if you do not have one).
2. Next you'll want to create a Website Profile. This is where you put in the information about the URL that you would like to track.
3. Google provides you with the unique JavaScript code (.js) to copy onto each webpage.
4. Copy code onto web-pages. When you have finished click the Finish button at the bottom of the Google page.
5. The Analytics settings have been completed. You will need to wait 24 hours for Google to report on your website profile.

## Reports on Google Analytics:

Some of the statistics available:

Visitors – number of people, unique visitors, pageviews, time on site, new visits. There are also “help resources” which provide definitions and how to use the reports.

Traffic sources – where are people coming from - direct traffic, referring sites, search engines, keywords used to find your site.

Content – top content, most popular pages, top landing pages, top exit pages (last page viewed). Site overlay to show where people are clicking on your webpage.

## Tips and Tricks:

Here are some important things to think about or to take into consideration when setting up your Google Analytics. Many of these have been pulled from the Google help forum at <http://groups.google.com/group/analytics-help/topics>.

*\* It is important to note that when a filter is created within Google Analytics, it's immediately applied to new data coming into your account. New filters will not affect historical data, and it is not possible to reprocess your old data through the new filter. Therefore, always keep "raw" data intact - that is, keep your original web site profile and apply new filters to a duplicate profile in your account.*

- Make sure you're excluding your "external" IP. Most people mistakenly think their "internal" IP address is their REAL IP address. To find your REAL "external" IP go to <http://whatismyipaddress.com>
- Google Analytics uses JavaScript embedded into each page, and since nearly no robots (search engine spiders, content scrapers, etc.) can execute JavaScript, Google Analytics never even knows they're there, but they would still show up in your log files.

Another useful webpage to help manage your website can be found at

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/>

<http://www.advanced-web-metrics.com/blog/2007/09/05/what-is-the-2nd-thing-to-do-when-considering-a-web-analytics-implementation/#comment-1247>