

Understanding your web statistics

for your planned giving website.



We are often asked, “How will we know how many visits our site gets?” The answer is easy to determine, but the question, by itself, is wrong – similar to asking, “How many times did the phone ring in the Office of Planned Giving last January 7th?” Ask instead, *“How has the Internet been an integral part of our overall marketing strategy?”* Think about the ways your site can expand your marketing reach and put your message in front of your best prospects when they are in their most receptive moods.



As you market planned giving on the web it is important to realize that a planned giving website is *not a tool for closing gifts*; rather, it is a “marketing tool” that should be used to educate your prospects and motivate them to contact you to close the gifts.

Secondly, it is crucial to keep an eye on your web activity so that you are aware of what’s working and what’s not. Included with your planned giving website is a web statistics tool that easily enables you to monitor the activity on your site and, more importantly, market accordingly. The tool is devoted to your planned giving section, making it easy to focus in on what’s necessary.

Some important things to know when evaluating your web statistics:

Get out of the habit of referring to “hits.”

[For the rest of America:

H.I.T.S. = **H**ow **I**diots **T**rack **S**uccess.]

One of the terms frequently thrown around regarding website traffic is “hits.” What most people mean by “hits” is the number of visits the site gets. But technically, the word “hits” actually refers to the total number of files that are requested from the server. Therefore the number of hits to a site is always going to be *significantly* higher than the actual number of visits to the site. This is because a typical visit to



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a website will include “hits” on a number of pages. Not only is each page counted as a hit, but all the graphics and scripts on every page requested are also counted. Given the number of graphics on a typical webpage, the difference between hits and visits is substantial. It would not be uncommon for a traffic report to show ten or even twenty times as many hits as actual visits.

Look at visits, page views and average length of visit.

When analyzing your traffic report you can, for the most part, ignore hits. Instead, it's much more helpful to review the trends in visits, pageviews, and length of stay.

Tracking your overall website sessions is the best and most accurate way to determine your site's performance. A session is a unique visit by a single individual. One session is recorded for each unique site visit whether the visitor looks at one page or every page on the site.

What to Expect from your Web Statistics

Your planned giving website is used in conjunction with other marketing materials to inform and inspire prospective donors to contact you to make a gift. Therefore, only focusing in on traffic volume is not the most useful effort. Rather than worrying about how many sessions your site receives on a daily basis, it's better to understand how your site adjustments and marketing efforts impact your site's overall traffic patterns. Therefore, tracking session data from month to month, and watching for jumps in the charts after an advertisement has gone out are the best ways to analyze your website traffic reports. If your marketing is done properly you will very likely see growth in your overall session traffic over time.



Getting Visitors to Your Website

Three ways to promote your website and get visitors:

I. Use external sources:

FlashCards, newsletters, display ads... etc. Mention your URL on all your publications, develop a signature line in your email that hyperlinks to your website.

For a complete marketing resource ([a must read](#)), visit:

virtualgiving.com/clientonly

Login: client Password: pg222

For more information on planned giving marketing tools such as FlashCards, visit:

virtualgiving.com/services

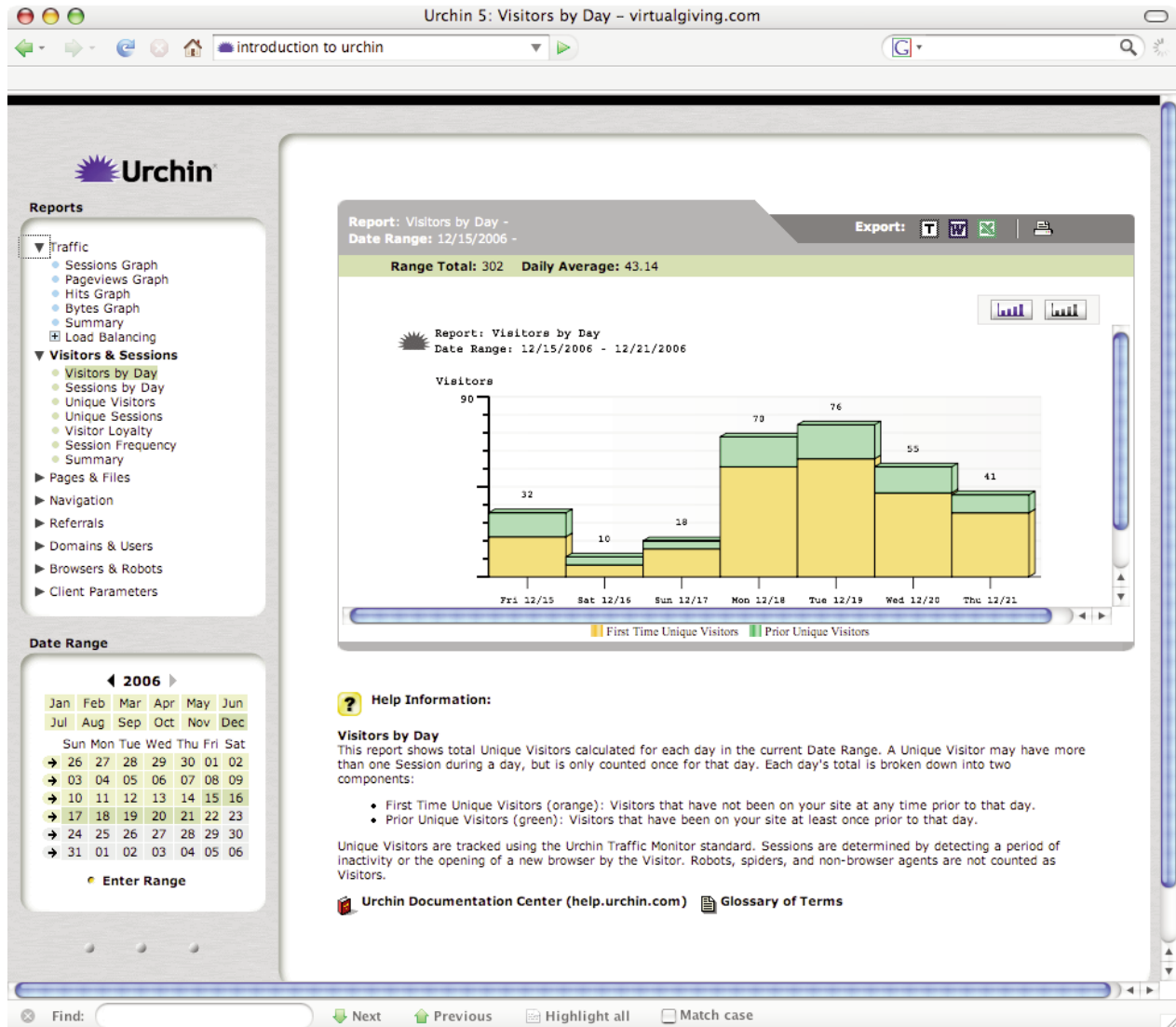
II. Use internal sources:

Develop interesting links within your current overall website that point to the planned giving pages.

Example: Let's say you are a research institute and have a page that outlines research you undertake. At the beginning of the page, you can mention: “The following research is possible through the *creative ways* individuals like you have supported us.” (The words “creative ways” can hyperlink to your planned giving pages.)

III. Promote your website personally:

If a prospect calls for information, for example, follow up afterwards by emailing a link to a specific page on your planned giving website.



See Urchin specifications at the end of this paper.

Unique Visitor:

A unique visitor is an IP address that has made at least 1 hit on 1 page of your web site during the current period shown by the report. If this host makes several visits during this period, *it is counted only once*.

The period shown by Urchin reports is by default the current month.

Visits:

Number of visits made by all visitors. Think "session" here, say a unique IP accesses a page, and then requests three others without an hour between any of the requests, all of the "pages" are included in the visit, therefore you should expect multiple pages per visit and multiple visits per unique visitor (assuming that some of the unique IPs are logged with more than an hour between requests).

Pages:

Also known as a web page, a page is defined as a single file on a web server. For example, a page could be an HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) document, an image, a java applet, a CGI script, etc. Any file that is neither a gif nor a jpeg is considered a page.

Hits:

Any files requested from the server (including files that are graphics and scripts).

Bandwidth:

The amount of data that can be transmitted along a communications channel in a fixed amount of time. For digital devices, the bandwidth is usually expressed in bits per second (bps) or bytes per second.



Questions? 800-490-7090

Urchin Specifications

Urchin is a web analytics software that gives detailed reports about website user traffic. With Urchin, you can see where your visitors are coming from, how they navigate through your site and many other statistics. Urchin is the most widely trusted commercial web analytics software in the world and is used by major organizations from the U.S. Government to GE, NBC, Proctor & Gamble, NASA, and AT&T.

Urchin is essential for online marketers, webmasters, and web designers and it is included at no additional charge for every VirtualGiving client. Urchin is the best, and we're the only provider in the planned giving community that delivers it. Its key features are:

- **Most Accurate Unique Visitor Reporting** – Unlike most other web statistics software, Urchin gives extremely accurate reports thanks to dual technology that analyzes both your basic server logs and Urchin's own proprietary cookie tracker.
- **SVG-based Business Ready Interactive Charts/Graphs** – You can give a fancy presentation of your website traffic by simply copying and pasting any of the Urchin report graphs into Microsoft Word or Excel.
- **Printer-Friendly Reports** – Do you feel like you need to print out a report? Just click on the printer-friendly layout button and you're good to go.
- **Fully Customizable Reports** – You can compare anything to anything.
- **Visitor Loyalty Reports** – Want to find out how successfully your site draws repeat visitors? With Urchin you can.
- **Click-Path Analysis** – Find out how users navigate through your site.



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