USING SERVER LOGS TO DETERMINE HOW YOUR WEB SITE IS BEING USED – WHO, WHAT, WHEN AND WHERE.

Gary L. Nieder and Mark D. Anderson. Department of Anatomy and Physiology and the Interdisciplinary Teaching Laboratory, Wright State University School of Medicine, Dayton, OH

Introduction, Summary or Focus: This session will benefit those individuals who maintain a web site for their class, clerkship, etc and want to characterize the use of their site. Participants should leave the session with a better understanding of what information is contained in serve logs and how to go about analyzing that data.

Abstract: After spending countless hours putting together a web site for your course, professional working group or public information service you may ask "How is it being used?…Is it being used?". Typically, every request for a page, graphic or multimedia file is logged by your web server. Streaming media, FTP and database servers are also logging activity. What information do these logs contain, and is any of it useful? Can it tell you who is looking at what on your site when and from where? This session will explore what data is in web server logs and how it can be analyzed to gain useful information about how your site is used. We will discuss how to set up your logging system to collect the information you want and what software is available on different platforms to conduct a thorough log analysis. Importantly, we will also talk about the limitations of web log analysis and what can not be gleaned from this data.