

GOOGLE ANALYTICS--FREE WEBSITE VISITATION DATA

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At the 2006 Slice of Life, there were lively discussions about how useful it is to collect data about the number of visitors to your websites, where they are coming from, how they were referred to your site, which pages they visited, how they flowed through your site, and for how long. Such information can be a powerful persuader when seeking funding or justifying new media development and distribution. Data has also been used by faculty to demonstrate the impact of their web-based publications or teaching tools on their field or in education. In some cases this has definitely assisted in gaining promotion or tenure.

There are numerous sophisticated web analytic tools available on a subscription or purchase basis that will track and report your website data. Google offers a free utility called Google Analytics (<http://www.google.com/analytics>) that tracks visitation data and provides very understandable, online reports with a "dashboard" you can customize for your site. Compared to other website analytic tools, Google's is easy to use, very functional in sorting through data, and readily converts statistics into readable reports, charts, and even geographically mapped results. Multiple individuals can access the same report data by logging into a specific account.

We recently added the code snippet to start collecting data for our Adult and Pediatric Neurologic Examination websites (<http://library.med.utah.edu/neurologicexam/>). Come see the different types of reports we are now accessing free via Google Analytics as we peer into site visits. (Note: the free version of Google Analytics can be applied to sites publicly available via the Internet.)

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