

## **Google Analytics :: Branding and Packaging Results**

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Google has scored a major coup with the release of Google Analytics. In the spirit of helping webmasters and search marketers move site visitors into converted site users, Google is offering its enormously useful site analytics tool, Urchin, free of charge under the re-branded name [Google Analytics](#). The software is designed to help webmasters and marketers understand site visitors and their behaviours. Last year, it cost almost \$500/mth to subscribe to.

For Google, search is about business and business is about results. Results are measured in many different ways, depending on the goals of those gauging the yardstick. For Google, the yardstick continues to appear infinite, defying common sense, which logically tells us otherwise. The introduction of Google Analytics solidifies Google's place as the pinnacle of search advertising providers and is likely to convert a lot of webmasters into Google account holders.

"Conversions" is a term used by marketers and webmasters as a way to measure results. The word itself is rather ambiguous and can have slightly different meanings for different people but ultimately means the same thing. Conversion means getting site visitors to do an intended task while visiting your site. For an ecommerce site, site-visits that lead to sales are considered conversions. Sites that primarily provide information might see an increase in repeat visitors as an indication of successful conversions. Similarly, sites running ads powered by Google AdWords might consider ad-clicks as successful conversions as Google certainly does.

According to the basic information provided on the [features page](#), Google Analytics can help you, "Learn how visitors interact with your website and identify the navigational bottlenecks that keep them from completing your conversion goals. Find out how profitable your keywords are across search engines and campaigns. Pinpoint where your best customers come from and which markets are most profitable to you. Google Analytics gives you this and more through easy-to-understand visually enhanced reports."

Once a user gets into the system, they are rewarded with access to a remarkable tool. If they are an AdWords advertiser or AdSense partner, a wide array of tools and assistants are provided to help convert visitors into billable (or payable) clicks. Google obviously believes that it can make more money by helping AdWords advertisers and the owners of the website that display AdWords. For Google however, the rewards go deeper than a basic bottom line.

Yesterday, the system ground to a near halt as millions of webmasters rushed to sign up. Google will be receiving a wealth of consumer and marketing information from sites using the software, information that will be incorporated into Google's understanding of how users travel through sites found in its index. That kind of information is worth its weight in Google shares.

Google Analytics is a members-only service. Unless they already have one, webmasters and advertisers will need to establish an account through Gmail or AdWords before being granted free access. Once an account is established, the information provided is pretty intense.

Separated into three general user types, Executive, Webmaster, and Marketer, Google Analytics shows up to the minute information on over seventy essential elements, giving decision makers a lot of data to work with. The internal system is set up around a left-hand side dashboard of expanding drop-down menus for each of the general user overlays, each of which displays a series of reports. Users can also select a drop down display that expands to show the full range of elements to analyze.

Having said all that, it isn't really possible to give a full review of the data generated by Google Analytics as we have just inserted the tracking-script into documents on our site this morning. It will take about twelve hours for information to accumulate.

On the surface, it appears as if Google has taken some of the best elements of other analytic programs and integrated AdWords/AdSense conversion support features. The layout is easy to use and there is a good mix of information and supporting graphical elements to ease the headaches commonly associated with statistical analysis. The first overlay provides an at-a-glance dashboard with gauges indicating site visitors, unique visitors, top documents, top keywords, and other user-specific information sets.

Account access can be shared with other Google Account holders, a feature that will allow SEOs and SEMs to share information directly with their clients. While it is a violation of the Terms of Service agreement to charge clients for access to data generated by Google Analytics, a service helping them interpret and understand the stats and information seems a natural evolution for search marketing professionals.

As reported by David Utter in [WebProNews](#), Google Analytics doesn't seem to worry newly minted rivals [WebTrends](#) and [ClickTracks](#) though its introduction did send shivers down the spines of shareholders in analytics firm Web Side Story.

Michael Stebbins, VP Marketing for analytics firm ClickTracks, said: "Google is the rising tide that raises all the web analytics ships. The announcement to offer free analytics is a great validation of our market. We're thrilled they are opening the market's eyes to what web analytics can do today. At the same time, we need to put it in perspective: when Google offered Blogger it did not put other blogger platforms out of business. When the tide levels out, the web analytics tools that provide the most value for marketers will be the ones that thrive." (Source, WebProNews)

Google has made a masterful move in the introduction of Google Analytics. They have produced a superior analytic package, branded it under their name, and tied it into the most popular paid-advertising program on the web. Under other circumstances it wouldn't take long for one of its competitors to catch up with their own analytics package however, Google's purchase of Urchin last year put them far ahead of any rivals.