Enhancing the Library Website using Google Analytics

Part 1 – Background and setup

- UST campus analytics solution is WebTrends
  - Experienced some outages, interface not very intuitive (although new version much better)
- A **BRIEF** tour of Google Analytics
  - Signing up – use a shared, not personal account!
  - Adding the code – hopefully your site uses **includes** in some fashion.
  - Setting up profiles/reports/filters – start simple
  - Start gathering and looking at the data!

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- Some of the things we are tracking at UST
  - Library Website
  - Serial Solutions (federated search, journals)
  - EBSCO - hoping to add more vendors (Proquest, etc). Counter and Sushi are a pain!
  - Library page on the University portal
  - ContentDM – in *collection*_**footer.php**
  - ILL pages (OCLC) – in **include_footer.html**
  - Library Blogs – plug-ins available for most blogs
  - EZ-Proxy

Part 2 – How are your users using the site?

- Top pages, by directory (**drilldown**)

- What are your **top landing pages**? Are they as helpful as they could be?

- **Navigation analysis**– which paths are people using (**site overlay** – buggy currently, custom tracking)

- Browsers, OS, mobile, screen dimensions
  - Helps inform testing and also being able to advise users "Database X has problems with IE 6"
  - Mobile use rising, even with javascript only code.

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- **Search traffic**– where are people coming from and are they going where you want them to?
  - Search engines (campus search – big for us, Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc)
  - Blackboard
  - Facebook
- **Search terms** – what search terms are leading visitors to your site and where do they land?
- On/Off campus and wireless usage

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- How has usage changed over time?
  - Use **Date Range/Compare** to compare semesters, years, periods around a site change.
- Create **Segments**
  - Think of them as a specific **slice** of the data that you can then analyze and compare to total traffic
  - Examples:
    - on/off campus traffic
    - Subject Guides only
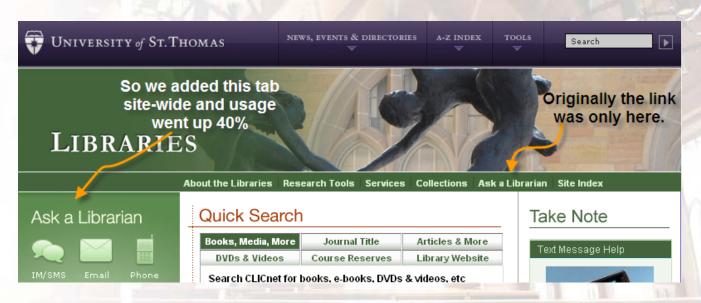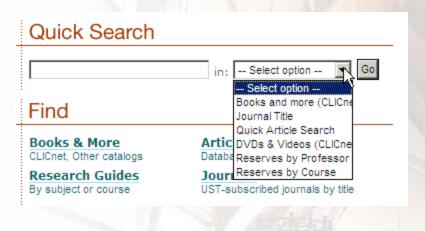   - Visits of more than one page (higher **bounce rate**)

Part 3 – Enhancements & their impact on stats

- **Ask a Librarian** – We wanted to highlight our chat and email reference service. Originally it was only in our top navigation, and highlighted on the home page.
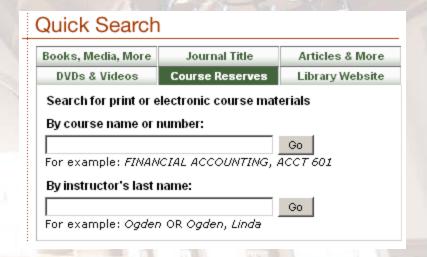
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- Our home page had a minimal search form that sent users to the OPAC, our Federated Search, Course Reserve search, etc.

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- We wanted to add some more contextual information, while still keeping the form compact. Also, the recent addition of Encore was causing some confusion, so we wanted to have links to our old OPAC, Encore tutorials and the My Account page in the OPAC.

Quick Search

Books, Media, More	Journal Title	Articles & More
DVDs & Videos	Course Reserves	Library Website

Search CLICnet for books, e-books, DVDs & videos, etc

[ ] Go

My account | Advanced search | Search tips | Video tutorial

Quick Search

Books, Media, More	Journal Title	Articles & More
DVDs & Videos	Course Reserves	Library Website

Search for print or electronic course materials

By course name or number:

[ ] Go

For example: *FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING, ACCT 601*

By instructor's last name:

[ ] Go

For example: *Ogden* OR *Ogden, Linda*
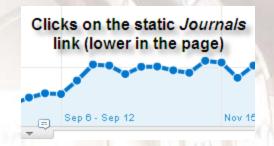
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- After this change usage spiked, especially for the items that were lower in the list before (Course Reserves, Journals, etc).

Course Reserves searches
Sep 6 - Sep 12

Course Reserve by Prof search
Sep 6 - Sep 12

DVD searches
Sep 6 - Sep 12

Journal searches
Sep 6 - Sep 12

Clicks on the static *Journals* link (lower in the page)
Sep 6 - Sep 12   Nov 15

Other things we are planning on trying:

- Use high traffic pages to create "most visited" links. We often create navigation hierarchy that our users don't need or understand…

- We are now tracking outbound database visits – plan to roll out a "top databases" feature.
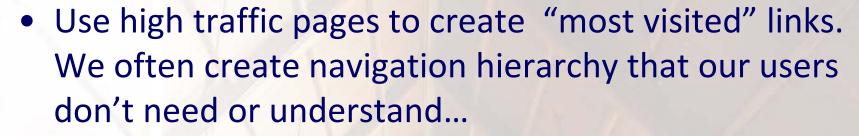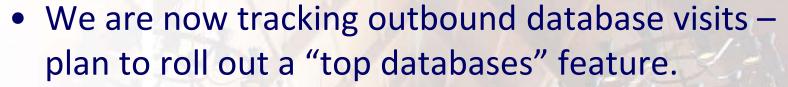
- Can we use some of the more "e-commerce" types features – goals, funnels, etc - for our purposes?

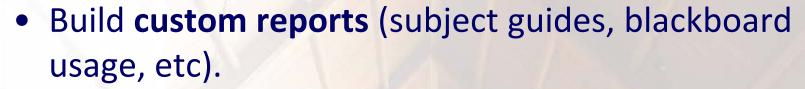- What does the **Intelligence** tool tell us and can we make it useful?

Encourages iterative improvements

- – Are you emphasizing the things you want?
- – Make a change (and annotate when/what you did)
- – Compare usage
- – Repeat!

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Part 4 – Help your staff

- Build **custom reports** (subject guides, blackboard usage, etc).
  - Page authors and content owners need to know how their materials are being used!
  - You can even have the reports auto-emailed on a scheduled basis!

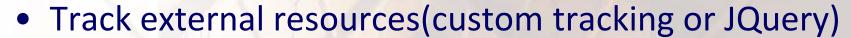# Enhancing the Library Website using Google Analytics

- **Library resources are dispersed across many sites, databases, publishers, etc.**
  - Get a better picture of what your users are doing across these resources.
  - This in turn helps show the value of your website and collections. A **good thing** in this day and age!

Part 5: Tips

- Page titles and directory structure are important! Best way to make sure you have usable data.

- Track external resources(custom tracking or JQuery)

- Event tracking – search terms, forms, page items/areas.

- Analytics API – see above

- Custom Reports and dashboards

- Tie in with your IM/SMS solution

- Asynchronous version of the code (faster?)

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- Use **annotations** to document when you've made changes to the site.

- Exporting ALL data from a view

  – Add ***&limit=50000*** to the end of the URL. The page will not display that amount, but if you then go to Export->CSV you will get the entire 50,000 (rather than the page-view limit of 500)

- If you start seeing weirdness with the reports, things are missing, or you have problems with the site overlay tool – clear your cookies!

- Impress your bosses with the Visualize tool

Part 6: Summary

- Again, knowing what our users are doing and using is important!

- For us Google Analytics is only part of a suite of tools. We are also using:

  – Google enterprise search

    - For indexing of sites

    - Key-matching (data bases = databases, research help = subject guide, course materials = course reserves…)

Part 6: Summary

- MS Sharepoint
  - Electronic collection of all patron interactions – reference desk, phone, chat transcripts, ILL, etc
- WebTrends
  - Alternate version of stats
  - File system level usage – course reserves, other documents that are labor intensive to track.
- Millennium reports

Part 7: Discussion

– How do we interpret all of these numbers?

- Normally a high *bounce rate* is a bad thing – but maybe they found an appropriate external resource (on a subject guide, OPAC, etc).
- Is a high *Average Time on Page* a good or bad thing?
- How could we use e-commerce type tools – *goals, funnels*, etc – and apply to the Library website?
  - Sample *Goal*
    » *User arrives via a search*
    » *Reads a subject guide*
    » *Links to a subscription resource*