

Interpreting Web Site Statistics with AWSTATS

AWSTATS creates graphical and textual displays of the information contained in web log files. Web logs contain plain text information about visitors to your site such as how they arrived at your site, if the visit was search engine directed, any search term entered, and the [IP address](#) of the visitor. These raw log files cannot be intuitively read. So, AWSTATS takes this information and breaks the data into visually readable chunks. In addition, the graphical displays indicate trends about your website over time.

| | Unique visitors | Number of visits | Pages | Hits | Bandwidth |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Viewed traffic * | 2349 | 3235 (1.37 visits/visitor) | 331948 (102.61 pages/visit) | 556596 (172.05 hits/visit) | 1.11 GB (358.18 KB/visit) |

Unique visitors

Every computer is connected to the Internet via a connection with a unique identifier called an IP address. This IP address is logged in the server logs much like your phone number is logged in the caller ID of the person you dialed. For many caller ID devices, a second call from the same phone will only display the calling number one time--even if the second call was by a different individual. Conversely, if the same individual calls you from two different phone numbers, both calls are logged. The same holds true for measuring unique visitors to your website.

Unique IP address totals are incremented one time regardless of the number of times the visiting computer connects to your server. Therefore, if two people from the same office call up your website address for different reasons, they are counted only once yet reflect two distinctly different visitors. By the same token, if one of these visitors later visits your website from home that evening, the visit is counted a second time despite the fact that the two separate IPs are from the same person. So, unique visitors are measured as separate connections from a visitor's computer to your website's server and will generally reflect the number of different visitors to your website.

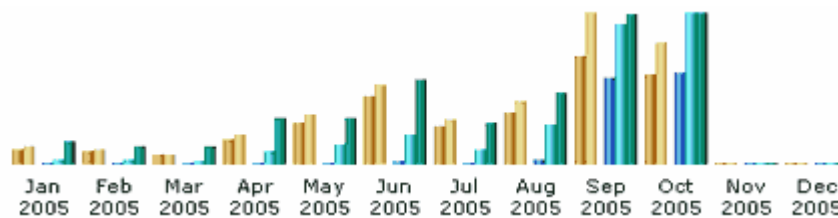
Hits

Because we often hear the term "hit count", let's take a moment to find out what this number really means. Each time a visitor types in your web address, the browser "hits" the website's server for the document that tells the browser how to display your web page. As the browser begins to display the information, it will continue to hit the server for any additional elements needed. For example, a logo will represent one hit as the server returns that image to your browser. Any background design constitutes another hit. And a music file represents yet another. Because of how hits are measured, this number is generally an inflated value and vastly different from true visitors. By the way, the more images in a website, the greater number of hits will be recorded.

Bandwidth

If your website is successful, bandwidth may cost you! Bandwidth represents the total amount of data sent out from your server. All images and text take up space on the server. When these files are sent to your visitor's browser, they represent the amount of bandwidth utilized. Websites with streaming video or large music files utilize significantly more bandwidth than all-text sites such as Wikipedia. If bandwidth increases, it generally means that business is up. However, if bandwidth costs are increasing faster than profits, you may want to consider downsizing file sizes.

Monthly History and Trends



Discovering Trends

Monthly History displays visitor and bandwidth data over time. While the unique IP address is not an absolute reflection of each individual visitor to your website, it does provide a picture of the website's traffic. More than anything, the number serves as a barometer of your website's ability to grow and attract new visitors. Here, you can look for trends such as seasonal gains for your industry. For example, nurseries and garden shops will generally see increased traffic during the spring and summer months. Our goals aim at seeing a general gain in visitors over time--that is, more visitors this year than last, or this month as compared to the previous one. The image above illustrates a nice upward trend in visitors over time which is borne out by the actual visitor count at right.

| Month | Unique visitors |
|----------|-----------------|
| Jan 2005 | 352 |
| Feb 2005 | 323 |
| Mar 2005 | 224 |
| Apr 2005 | 623 |
| May 2005 | 1021 |
| Jun 2005 | 1684 |
| Jul 2005 | 963 |
| Aug 2005 | 1283 |
| Sep 2005 | 2719 |
| Oct 2005 | 2321 |

Reviewing **Days of the Month** may show patterns of usage. For example, a business related website generally has higher traffic during the week with less traffic over weekends and holidays. Family entertainment websites may find the reverse is true. **Hours** data may prove useful during some advertising campaigns such as through radio or television. Consistent jumps in visitors shortly after radio advertising may be directly attributable to your ads. In cases like this, businesses must actively market to this group with direct tie-ins to the website.

Robots/Spiders Visitors

Robots and spiders are automated programs that enter websites and follow internal links to all pages of the site. Robots are responsible for indexing websites for key phrases that may pertain to your website's products, services,

or information. In our work, we will want to know when and which search engines robots have entered a website, so we can determine timelines on when our client's website will be found. The notable robots are **Inktomi Slurp**, Yahoo's spider, **Googlebot**, and **MSNBot**. New sites may not have any spiders or robots entering the website until a link to it exists from an established site or when the site is submitted to the search engine. Consider submitting your site *directly* to these search engines until you are found. *NOTE:* Do not submit your site more than once nor should you ever submit your website to a *website submission service*. And steer clear of link exchanges or link farms programs. Not only will none of these services help you, but being associated with unethical websites risks banning your site from one or more major search engines.

Search Keyphrases

| Search Keyphrases (Top 10) | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| Full list | | |
| 53 different keyphrases | Search | Percent |
| thunder tix | 3 | 4.6 % |
| computer programming and design | 3 | 4.6 % |
| box office ticketing thunder data system | 3 | 4.6 % |
| brownsville programmer | 3 | 4.6 % |
| what are texas custom | 2 | 3.1 % |
| online ticket sales software | 2 | 3.1 % |
| computer programming careers | 2 | 3.1 % |
| computer programming | 1 | 1.5 % |
| animation websites | 1 | 1.5 % |

The single most important page to the Thunder Data staff is the Search Keyphrases listing. From a search engine optimization standpoint, this listing tells us what key words drove visitors to a given website. For example, if a potential client of Thunder Data enters **Austin**

website design into Google and then follows that link to our page, those three words will appear in our Search Keyphrases listing. Further, if another visitor later follows the same steps, our listing will show two visits for the same phrase.

These phrases are important for two reasons. One, if your website is being found for any key phrases related to your business, your business is already ahead of many websites. This is the first step in search engine success. Secondly, the listing can serve as an excellent tool from which you can tailor future SEO efforts. For example, if your company has just designed cell phone lanyards for carrying your mobile on your neck, you'll want to look for variations of this search term in your listing. Concentrate on creating good content about your new lanyards for visitors to find you. Your SEO efforts may focus on using variations of your product name such as **cell phone lanyards** or **mobile phone necklaces**. When those search terms appear, bingo! You've made your mark!

Favorites

Your website achieves its crowning success when you see your website has been saved to the Favorites file of a visitor's browser. Posted under

| Miscellaneous | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Miscellaneous | | |
| Add to favorites (estimated) | 40 / 508 Visitors | 7.8 % |

Miscellaneous the "add to favorites" corresponds to the number of visitors who have found your website

worthwhile enough to save. Saved pages on a browser are often referred to as *bookmarks*. In this case, 40 of the approximately 500 visitors found the site worthy enough to save. The importance cannot be understated. First, it is a vote that the content there has value for your visitor and potential customer. Secondly, valuable content is more likely to be passed to either another potential visitor or posted to another website. The latter could start you on the course to greater search engine effectiveness through cross linking. So, if work to earn these Favorites votes by adding excellent, valuable content, you will be rewarded.

Conclusion

AWSTATS is just one of many webstats or traffic analytics packages. Most website traffic tools offer information that help direct SEO efforts. Understanding how to use this information may make take those visitors from "just looking" to buying your products and services.

[More reading here.](#)