

18th International Conference on Knowledge-Based and Intelligent
Information & Engineering Systems - KES2014

Study on web analytics utilizing segmentation knowledge in business to business manufacturer site

Akiyuki Sekiguchi^{a*}, Kazuhiko Tsuda^b

^aGraduate School of Systems and Information Engineering, University of Tsukuba, 3-29-1 Otsuka, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-0012, Japan

^bGraduate School of Business Sciences University of Tsukuba, 3-29-1 Otsuka, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-0012, Japan

Abstract

Web analytics of B to B sites is mandatory for improving usability and leveraging data for marketing. In this study we tried web analytics by some segmentation and confirmed it is effective. We defined some of the segment models (7 segmentation type) and examined web access using some segments. One of the most important segmentations is registered versus unregistered users and we confirmed user behavior is different with each segment. We confirmed key metrics like bounce rate, referrer, and exit page analysis are especially beneficial for B to B manufacturer site enhancement.

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Peer-review under responsibility of KES International.

Keywords: Web analytics, B to B;

1. Introduction

We posit that there are two purposes of Business to Business (B to B) web analytics: (1) Improve and optimize the site for users by path analysis; and (2) Use in marketing activities. Compared to B-to-C web analytics, B-to-B web analytics has the following three characteristics.

- (a) In many cases, the buyer is not the same person as the web user. So it is important to analyse all the users from the same company or organization as a single unit.
- (b) The goal of visitors to the website is often not only to make a purchase.
- (c) It is rare for a user to complete their goal within a single session. In most cases, users require multiple sessions spread out over a long period of time to complete their goal.

In our previous studies we came up with a web analytics scheme for B to B websites and we also checked effectiveness of page dwell time as well as traditional metrics like page view, unique users, visits per user, and conversion rate. In this study we tried using analytics by segmentation. Firstly we defined the scope of segmentation and next we captured analytic data. Considering B to B characteristics in analytics, we tried to survey the effectiveness of user behavior by segmentation. In this study we utilized a two-months' term of web access data from one semiconductor manufacturer site using web beacon technology.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +81-3-4226-6788

E-mail address: s1330180@u.tsukuba.ac.jp

2. Previous work

In our previous studies, we came up with a web analytics scheme for B to B websites and we defined B to B site conversion type and importance of user registration on web as reference¹⁵. In another study we checked effectiveness of page dwell time as well as traditional metrics like page view, unique users, visits per user, and conversion rate as reference¹⁴. General web analytic study is shown in reference^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13}.

3. Web segmentation category

When we think of usability with web analytics method, we need to assume user segments because user behavior can differ by user segmentation. Using some of our surveys, we came up with the user segmentation model shown in Table 1.

Table 1. User segmentation model

Segmentation category	Major segment from web analytics point of view	Considerations
By content category	Viewers of product information versus viewers of investment relations (IR)/company information User seeking to download software versus e-commerce users	Generally speaking user visits are distinguished into IR/company information seekers and product/solution information seekers on B to B sites. In most cases their behavior is completely different.
By time and place	Weekday users versus weekend users Midnight users versus business hour users By country/state By language	Regional aspect and language aspect should be considered but weekend and weekday aspect is not important in B to B business.
By user referrer	Users arriving through search engine, by e-mail clicks, or by bookmark/URL typing	User behavior differences are important in this area. As expected search engine users are not familiar with the site but bookmarked users can be more knowledgeable about the site.
By visit frequency	First time versus second and more frequent users	Site exploration behavior can differ widely between beginners to the site and veterans.
By user commitment level (Registered or unregistered)	Registered users versus unregistered users	Most companies urge potential users to register their profiles in their authentication system. Once they register they have some commitment to provide their information to the manufacturer. Also, the manufacturer can contact them.
By company profiles	Focus customer versus unfocused Large customers versus small customers	Typically for focus customers there is a salespeople channel and visitors don't need to purchase products via the website, but for small customers there is often no channel. So behavior on the website can be very different.
By participation segment	Only web tracking for converted customers or unconverted customers	Conversion is one of the main purposes in B to B manufacturer sites and it is meaningful for distinguishing converted web activity and unconverted activity.

On the other hand, in most manufacturer sites, the following are typical content categories and we assume user behavior can be different due to difference in purpose of visit.

- 1) Products
- 2) Solutions
- 3) Support (FAQ or Contacts)
- 4) Download or resources
- 5) Purchase
- 6) Press or news
- 7) Seminar/Training
- 8) User registration/Login

In our past studies, we saw key contents, which are sometimes called hook contents, which require authentication and user registration to view. Once users register their profiles, they are regarded as committed potential or existing customers and then the manufacturer can contact them within the limits of the privacy policy. In addition, we can say registered users are more interested in manufacturer information than unregistered. In typical cases, an unregistered visitor can be just a visitor and they probably came to the site by chance through a search engine like Google. Registered customers sometimes want to get updates from the manufacturer. A web journey map is shown in Fig.1. We defined processes as Lead/Find, Explorer, Try, Buy, and Maintain. In a B to B site we need to consider offline activity linked with on-line activity because

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