

# Understanding Your Web Statistics

*for your planned giving website*



We are often asked, “How will we know how many visits our site gets?” The answer is easy to determine, but the question, by itself, is wrong – similar to asking, “How many times did the phone ring in the Office of Planned Giving last January 7th?” Ask instead, “*How has the Internet been an integral part of our overall marketing strategy?*” Think about the ways your

site can expand your marketing reach and put your message in front of your best prospects when they are in their most receptive moods.

As you market planned giving on the web it is important to realize that a planned giving website is not a tool for closing gifts; rather, it is a “marketing tool” that should be used to educate your prospects and motivate them to contact you to close the gifts.

Secondly, it is crucial to keep an eye on your web activity so that you are aware of what’s working and what’s not. Included with your planned giving website is a web statistics tool that easily enables you to monitor the activity on your site and, more importantly, market accordingly. The tool is devoted to your planned giving section, making it easy to focus in on what’s necessary.

Some important things to know when evaluating your web statistics:

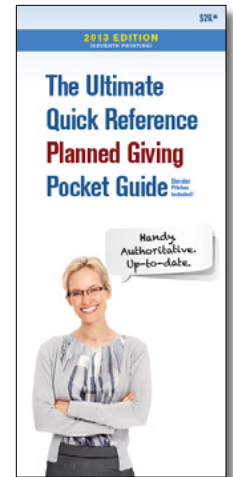
## Get out of the habit of referring to “hits.”

[For the rest of America:

H.I.T.S. = How Idiots Track Success.]

One of the terms frequently thrown around regarding website traffic is “hits.” A “Hit” happens when any website file is requested (visited) from your server. This includes graphics files and scripts for each page a “visitor” lands on. So you can have multiple “hits” for every individual viewing of each page on your website. This inflates your hit totals. What’s more, “visitors” aren’t always human! Search engines and other web entities send out bots that explore your site. This is good because that’s how search engines learn your site it there – but it also drives up the number of spurious “hits.” Bottom line: Most hits stats

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*Every fundraiser needs this planned giving pocket guide.*

simply compile the wrong data – and you’d be wrong to make marketing decisions based upon them.

## Look at visits, page views and average length of visit.

When analyzing your traffic report you can, for the most part, ignore hits. Instead, it’s much more helpful to review the trends in visits, pageviews, and length of stay.

Tracking your overall website sessions is the best and most accurate way to determine your site’s performance. A session is a unique visit by a single individual. One session is recorded for each unique site visit whether the visitor looks at one page or every page on the site.

## What to Expect from your Web Statistics

Your planned giving website is used in conjunction with other marketing materials to inform and inspire prospective donors to contact you to make a gift. Therefore, only focusing in on traffic volume is not the most useful effort. Rather than worrying about how many sessions your site receives on a daily basis, it’s better to understand how your site adjustments and marketing efforts impact your site’s overall traffic patterns. Therefore, tracking session data from month to month, and watching for jumps in the charts after an advertisement has gone out are the best ways to analyze your website traffic reports. If your marketing is done properly you will very likely see



growth in your overall session traffic over time.

For web stats, we at VirtualGiving.Com we use the powerful new PIWIK application. It’s flexible and user-friendly and gets the most useful information out of visitor data.

## Getting Visitors to Your Website

Three ways to promote your website and get visitors:

### I. Use external sources:

Postcards, newsletters, display ads... etc. Mention your URL on all your publications, develop a signature line in your email that hyperlinks to your website.

### II. Use internal sources:

Develop interesting links within your current overall website that point to the planned giving pages.

Example: Let’s say you are a research institute and have a page that outlines research you undertake. At the beginning of the page, you can mention: “*The following research is possible through the creative ways individuals like you have supported us.*” (The words “creative ways” can hyperlink to your planned giving pages.)

### III. Promote your website personally:

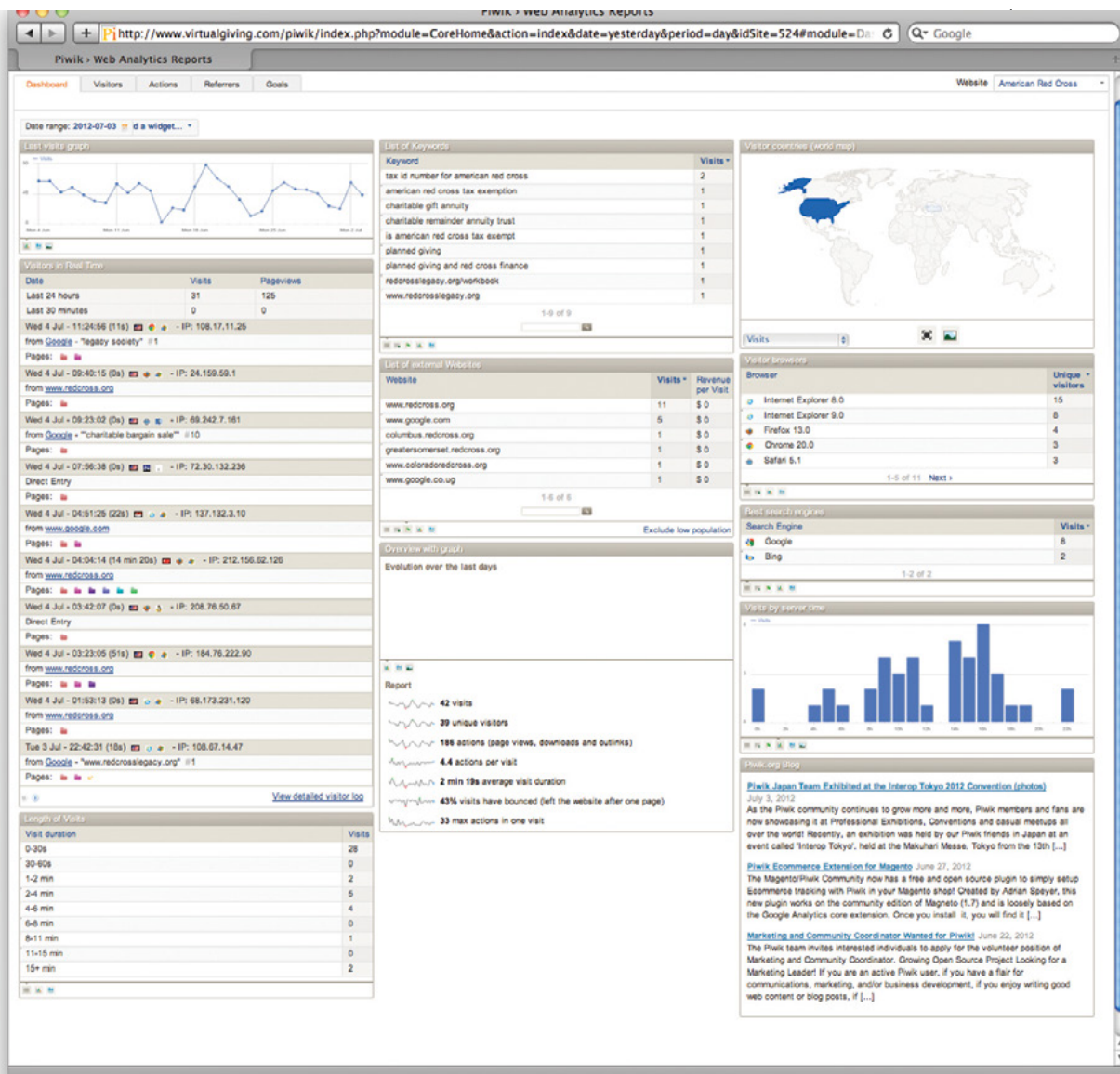
If a prospect calls for information, for example, follow up afterwards by emailing a link to a specific page on your planned giving website.



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## Unique Visitor:

A unique visitor is an IP address that has made at least 1 hit on 1 page of your web site during the current period shown by the report. If this host makes several visits during this period, it is counted only once.

The period shown by Piwik reports is by default the current month.

## Visits:

Number of visits made by all visitors. Think “session” here, say a unique IP accesses a page, and then requests three others without an hour between any of the requests, all of the “pages” are included in the visit, therefore you should expect multiple pages per visit and multiple visits per unique visitor (assuming that some of the unique IPs are logged with more than an hour between requests).



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## Piwik Specifications

All standard statistics reports: top keywords and search engines, websites, top page URLs, page titles, user countries, providers, operating system, browsers, resolution, engagement (time on site, pages per visit, repeated visits), and many more, classified into four main analytics report categories – Visitors, Actions, Referrers, Goals/Ecommerce (30+ reports)

- Real Time Reports - Piwik offers real time web analytics reports. When you request data for “today”, or “current month” or any date range including today, the reports will include the most recent visits, ensuring you always access up-to-date analytics data.
- Customizable Dashboards - You can add new widgets to your Dashboard, to ensure it reports on all of your most important metrics.
- Analytics Campaign Tracking - Campaign tracking in Piwik Analytics lets you track how efficient various marketing campaigns are in bringing visitors to your website, how well these visitors convert and how much revenue they generate.
- Scheduled Email Reports - A simple way of giving other people access to your Piwik analytics is to send regular emails reports specifically tailored to their needs. You can send reports as a PDF file or as HTML content.



I hope you found this white paper stimulating and useful.

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Let's improve and succeed *together*.

Viken Mikaelian  
Founder, PlannedGiving.Com

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### Pages:

Also known as a web page, a page is defined as a single file on a web server. For example, a page could be an HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) document, an image, a java applet, a CGI script, etc. Any file that is neither a gif nor a jpeg is considered a page.

### Hits:

Any files requested from the server (including files that are graphics and scripts).

### Bandwidth:

The amount of data that can be transmitted along a communications channel in a fixed amount of time. For digital devices, the bandwidth is usually expressed in bits per second (bps) or bytes per second.



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