

Google Analytics 'Healthcheck' list

From the Culture24 Action Research Project 'How to evaluate online success'

Follow the following checklist and fix or add as many of the below as possible to your Google Analytics profile(s). Note that filters *won't change historical data* but will work going forward. Also please note that ideally all organisations should maintain a "vanilla" profile on which no modifications are ever made (and no filters are applied).

Basic account setup issues

1. Move to the new Google Analytics code

This needs to be put in your header, below the closing </head> tag.

Go to your login > Profile Settings > Tracking code.

Copy and paste the new asynchronous code.

Note: when implemented, it will break the GATAG.JS for automated tracking of downloads, PDFs etc. To remedy this you can use a replacement piece of extra code here -

<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/dmsblog/index.php/2011/07/14/fixing-document-download-and-link-tracking-with-the-google-analytics-asynchronous-tracking-code/>

2. Set up filters

Note that filter order is really important. The following filters should be set up in the order listed.

a. Internal traffic filter

This is to ensure that your Google Analytics account is not recording visits from web users within your organisation, by filtering out Internal ISPs. This needs to be separated out as internal behaviour skews stats like collection searches and average time on site.

See <http://www.google.com/support/analytics/bin/answer.py?answer=55481>

For larger organisations you may be able to find the strings for your own organisation listed in reports under:

Visitors > Network Properties > Service Providers

(Then search for a word in your organisation's name)

If this is the case you can also use the Visitor ISP Organisation as a filter rather than IP exclusions.

Filter Name: Filter own institution

Filter Type: Custom filter

(select "Exclude")

Filter Field: Visitor ISP Organization

EXAMPLE Filter Patter: powerhouse* (this filters all traffic known to come from ISPs containing the string 'powerhouse')

Case sensitive: No

Note: If you have public access terminals on site (or another reason for wanting to track internal visitors) then segment this traffic out in a separate report using a cloned profile that is marked INTERNAL ONLY. Keep your main profile clean and external.

b. Lowercase filtering (e.g. to count SEB.HTM as the same as seb.htm)

Many sites have duplicate data, and the usual cause of this is mixed case URLs. Google Analytics is case sensitive, so it captures the data exactly as it appears in the location bar of the browser. Therefore, if a mixed case URL is in the browser, it will be captured and displayed as mixed case within your Google Analytics reports.

It's very easy to have two URLs that have the same functional meaning but appear as two line items in Analytics because they have a different case. Here's an example:

/example/index.php?year=2007&keyword=big

/Example/index.php?year=2007&keyword=Big

Both URLs probably lead to the same landing page, but they just appear to be different because of the case. We want to force both URLs to have the same case and thus make them appear as a single line item in your reports. This can be done by creating a lowercase or uppercase filter. Using either one will give you the same result.

The following filter will force the Request URI to lowercase. Add a new filter to your profile with the following values:

Filter Name: Force URI case to lower

Filter Type: Custom filter

(select "Lowercase")

Filter Field: Request URI

See

<http://www.google.com/support/analytics/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=90397> for more information.

c, Filter webmail

This filter allows you to consolidate the location of your content – separate hotmail as a referring website as opposed to users who use it as an email client. It's made up of two filters:

- Consolidate webmail
- Separate webmail from referral

See ROI Revolution for guidance on setting this up -

http://www.roirevolution.com/blog/2011/01/handling_email_referrals_in_google_analytics.php

3. Ensure that you have set up onsite search tracking

You can set this up in Profile Settings.

Edit Profile information > Site search > Do track site search.

You will need to look at the variables used by your onsite search tools and make sure they are set correctly in Google Analytics. See

<http://www.google.com/support/analytics/bin/answer.py?answer=75817>