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Search Analytics For Your Site



Synopsis

Any organization that has a searchable web site or intranet is sitting on top of hugely valuable and usually under-exploited data: logs that capture what users are searching for, how often each query was searched, and how many results each query retrieved. Search queries are gold: they are real data that show us exactly what users are searching for in their own words. This book shows you how to use search analytics to carry on a conversation with your customers: listen to and understand their needs, and improve your content, navigation and search performance to meet those needs.

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Customer Reviews

This book has been a long time in the writing but the end result is well worth the wait. Lou Rosenfeld, (co-author with Peter Morville of Information Architecture for the World Wide Web) has written a stunning book on how to optimise web sites and intranets through the careful use of analytics. There have been many books on search engine optimisation but that is a different subject!Section 1 introduces the basic principles of site analytics, Section 2 covers how to analyse the data, and Section 3 is about how to use the analysis to build better sites. In all there are eleven

chapters. Section 2 is the heart of the book, with chapters covering pattern analysis, failure analysis, session analysis, audience analysis and finally goal-based analysis. One of my favourites is Practical Tips for Improving Content, as so often a poor user experience is not related to a design flaw but content that the site visitor is not able to either understand or trust. Section 4, entitled Coda, just has a single chapter on bridging web analytics and user experience. Although many of the examples are from web sites the basic principles are just as relevant to intranets. The writing style is immensely readable and the design and production of the book are flawless. The book is illustrated with a number of case studies, and at the end of each chapter is a short but carefully written summary. As with all Rosenfeld Media books the book has an associated web site. What I missed in this book is any guidance on the make-up of a search analytics team. Log analysis needs to be carried out by people with the right skill sets, and most probably they are information professionals with a library or information science background.

Okay, I'm halfway through Search Analytics for Your Site: Conversations with Your Customers (SAYS), and it's time to stop. Why? Not because it isn't helpful. On the contrary, it's exactly the book I need -- in fact, the book my whole team needs -- right now. Not because it's hard to read. Lou Rosenfeld writes clearly and the book is formatted to be highly readable. I've almost come to take those features for granted in books from Rosenfeld Media, but it's always a pleasure to find both plain language and a format that is considerate to the reader in books that I have to read for work. Not because I already know all this stuff. I can't wait to get to Chapters 5 through 10 and all they can tell me about making the best use of Google Analytics. The people who use our website will appreciate it deeply if I do. If you've looked at the table of contents, you might notice that I didn't say anything about reading Chapter 11. That's because, cued by the most helpful section, "How to Use This Book," which immediately follows the dedication, I skipped ahead and read Chapter 11 first. The advice given there is tailored to your own situation. So, because your needs and background are not the same as mine, you might follow a different approach. In a nutshell, my needs are that we're trying to get support for using Google Analytics to drive targeted usability testing on our website. More on that later. But the point is that I need to learn as much about Google Analytics and the tools it will give us for improving our website so my boss can make the pitch to folks higher on the management chain. Let me make that point clear: We don't yet have Google Analytics working on our site. We're trying to get permission to do so.

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