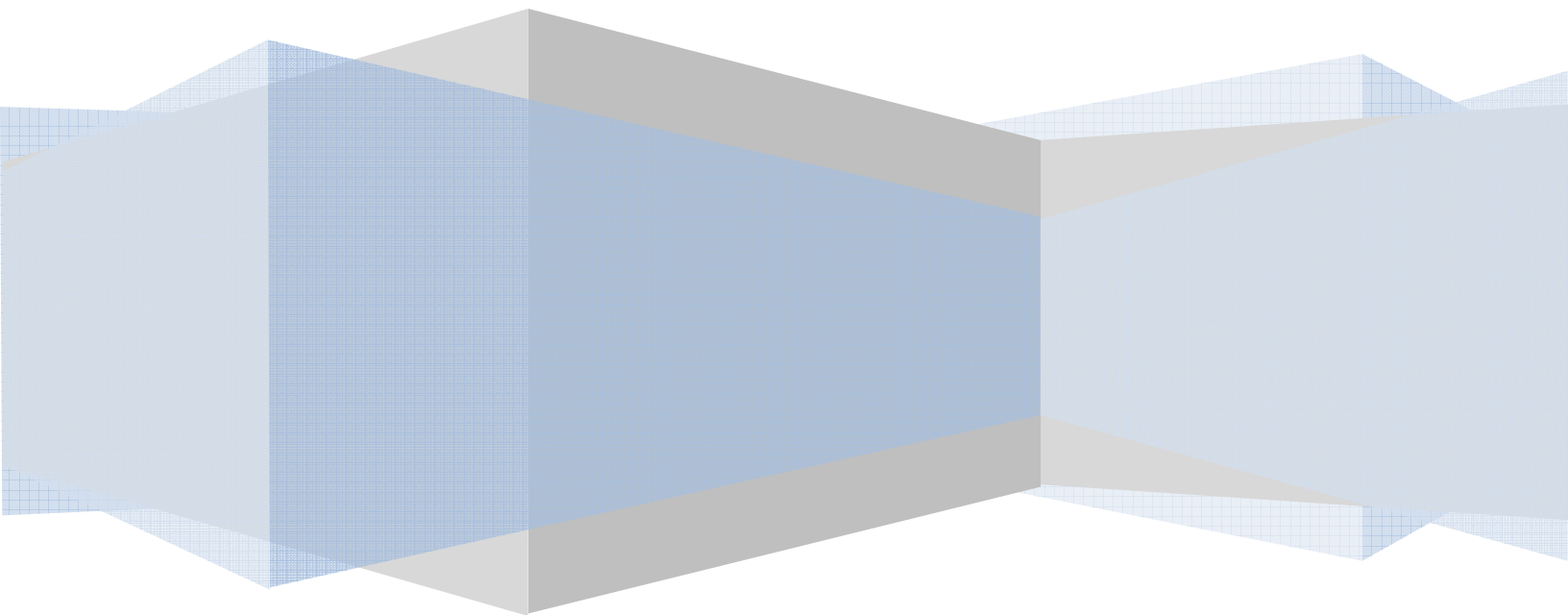


# **Using Online Analytics to Measure Online Video's Effectiveness**

**By Timothy R. Hawthorne**



## USING ONLINE ANALYTICS TO MEASURE ONLINE VIDEO'S EFFECTIVENESS

Online video is all the rage these days. Companies of all sizes and across all industries are investing in video cameras and editing tools, making videos and posting them on the web. What many of these firms don't realize is that putting video on the Internet without tracking its effectiveness is tantamount to hiring a new sales rep, training her, giving her a customer route and then never checking in with her.

That's where website analytics come in. Defined as the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of Internet data for the purposes of better understanding and optimizing web usage, analytics have become a critical element for companies that want to leverage their Internet marketing investments. Analytics are particularly relevant for users of online video, particularly those who want to know if their time and money investments are paying off—or not.

“Companies are looking for a connection to their ROI,” says Chris Savage, CEO at Lexington, Mass.-based Wistia, a provider of video sharing tools for business. “It's become even more important over the last year due to economic conditions, and as firms have started looking to video as a way to get their messages delivered in a more efficient matter.”

### MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

With so many videos posted online, Savage emphasizes that the logical question marketers should ask themselves is: How effective is our video? “If you spend \$5,000 to make the video and 10 hours of each salesperson's time pushing it, then you'll want to know if it's worth it,” Savage explains. “The goal is to draw a connection between the video and the investment to figure out the impact this marketing strategy is having on your business.”

That's where website analytics come into play. By tracking a site's statistics, analytics allow marketers to see how many people are looking at which videos, what sites those visitors are coming from and, specifically, who those users are. With that information, marketers can measure traffic to their websites, understand who's watching what and tweak their online video strategies accordingly.

Analytics tools range from simple programs that can be downloaded online for free to expensive systems that are installed on existing hardware—and everything in between. One of the most popular is Google Analytics. Free for users, the program takes just a couple of hours to install and configure. The program tracks how often visitors come to your site, conversions across multiple pages, visitor behavior and the percentage of people who click each link on a given page.

Video hosting firms like Wistia also offer analytics tools. Using such systems, marketers can upload their videos and use an application that tracks just how many people actually watch the clips, on which page they clicked “play video,” which videos have the highest engagement rates, how much of each clip was actually watched and at what point the typical user “skipped” to other parts of the show or tuned out completely.

With that information in hand, Savage says marketers are better able to craft clear, concise, effective messages that not only entice people to watch the videos, but also push them to buy your product or service.

## PART OF THE WHOLE

Analytics tend to work best when integrated into a firm's overall marketing plan, and shouldn't be relied upon as stand-alone tools. "Use the analytics as part of a comprehensive program that addresses what you're trying to achieve with your online video," says Brian Tervo, CEO at Burlington, Mass.-based TIE Kinetix, a provider of electronic, business-to-business collaboration tools. "And make sure that those analytics are aligned with your internal sales and marketing processes. Only then will you be able to tell if a campaign is really working."

If, for example, a particular video has received a lower number of hits than others on your site, think about how you can improve that clip to make it more compelling for visitors, encouraging engagement with the video. Companies that go through this exercise on a regular basis are sure to see increases in their online video ROI.

"It could be as simple as re-editing the video or as complex as making an entirely new one," says Savage, who recently worked with a product marketer that used analytics to hone its video content over time in order to create more effective messages for its customers. "The most important strategy that marketers can use is to look at the videos that they'll be creating in the future," says Savage. "Once you've come up with that concise message, it's pretty easy to keep your audience on your site, and engaged."

That's good news for marketers who are struggling to attract eyeballs and stand out among the massive clutter that is today's Internet. By combining online video with analytics, firms can craft marketing messages that not only call out to customers online, but also keep them watching the clips. The Holy Grail comes when those viewers take a positive action after viewing the clips, such as sending the video links to friends and family, signing up for an online service or purchasing a product.

"We've found that web pages which include video have dramatically higher conversion rates than those that don't," says Savage. "The key to upping these numbers is to constantly improve the videos themselves in a way that solidifies your relationships with customers and keeps them coming back for more."



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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