10 key steps to trusted data

How do I get my analytics data correct?

Most websites use web analytics tools from third party suppliers to count their traffic. These services offer website publishers a variety of different and variable settings, many of which are critical to the final statistics that are reported. Every website is different and so no one set up is the same. It is therefore vital that the web analytics service is configured, implemented and maintained correctly. The following list of recommendations is not exhaustive, but makes 10 important suggestions to help you deliver accurate data.

10 key steps to quality data

1) Ensure all traffic from Robots and Spiders are removed using the IAB/ABC International Spiders and Robots list
2) Ensure all traffic from publisher internal IP addresses, automated website maintenance and checking tools and other invalid sources such as "click-farm" traffic is removed
3) Ensure that the cookies used to identify browsers ("Unique Browsers") visiting the site are consistent (recognized by all domains across the site)
4) Ensure cookies are persistent over time. In practice, this means that if the cookie has a fixed expiry date they should expire either 12 months from the last time the browser accessed the site, or a minimum of 25 months after the cookie is set.
5) If you want a total for a network of sites, ensure Unique Browsers are de-duplicated across all domains within networks e.g. by working with your analytics supplier to have a network tag in place
6) Ensure Visits are calculated using a 30 minute time-out between consecutive Page Impressions
7) Ensure Visit Durations are calculated only from Visits that have a record for both the start and end of the Visit e.g. two Page Impressions or a Page Impression and a page unload
8) Ensure all subsiting traffic (Page Impressions pushed to the browser e.g. by auto-opening new windows of different sites) is excluded
9) Ensure invalid URLs are not counted, i.e. URLs that the user did not directly request
10) Ensure that one Page Impression does not get reported more than once, for example by having multiple tags on it.

Analytics data is not audited data

Because web traffic data is collected, analysed and reported by the website publisher and because websites and their analytics settings change over time, analytics data is not audited data. Only the latter, checked by an independent third party to industry standards, delivers credible and comparable data.

About ABC

ABC is governed by the media industry, for the media industry and is expert at setting data and process standards across multiple platforms. ABC provides a stamp of trust for media buyers, media owners, publishers and digital traders working in existing and emerging platforms.

10 key steps to trusted data

ABC was established in the UK in 1931 and is a founder member of the International Federation of ABCs (IFABC), of which ABC CEO Jerry Wright is President. ABC's digital arm was established in 1996.. ABC works to deliver common international standards for measuring digital reach, engagement and loyalty, as well as creating common standards for good practice throughout the industry.

For more information please visit: www.abc.org.uk and www.jicwebs.org