Online tracking and web analysis 101

By [Sindy Peters](#)　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　13 May 2016

I'll be the first to admit that my online analytics skills are sub-par - mention anything data-related and my brain switches to safe mode. Eva Hieninger's session at #FRO16, however, kept me, and I imagine many others, engaged. Hieninger, owner of Marketing for Good (Germany), provided a brief but very lucid lesson in online tracking and web analysis during the virtual digital fundraising conference.

Eva Hieninger, owner of Marketing for Good (Germany)

Keeping it simple, Hieninger clarified why it's important, what it is, and lastly, how it works.

Imagine if you could evaluate your online marketing assets so that you can make better choices in terms of where you spend your money and how much, and improve your return on investment. This is exactly what your basic tracking system allows you to do, she explained.

"You have a really high advantage in comparison to classic advertising, such as posters in the streets or an ad in a magazine, because you don't really know if a person sees it and goes to your website and donates or goes and writes you a cheque. But with online marketing, you can track everything," she said.

Tools available

There are a number of online tools – some free, some a bit more complicated than others – that allow you to track a user's behaviour on your website, including any actions he/she may take. Here is a list of tools Hieninger recommended: [Google Analytics](#), [etracker](#), [Piwik](#), [Open Web Analytics](#), and [Clicky](#).

How does it work? There are three methods, explained Hieninger: conversion tracking, e-commerce tracking, and campaign tracking.

Conversion tracking tracks anything a user does on your website e.g. signing up for a newsletter or reading an article.

"With conversion tracking you can track how your donations perform, but you can also track how much your users are engaged with your website. To do conversion tracking, you need to implement a conversion pixel. For example, when you want to track when a user converts from a user to a donor, you need to implement a conversion pixel on your 'thank you for donation' page, explained Hieninger. She recommended using Google Tag Manager to implement the conversion pixels.

Using conversion tracking, you can ascertain how many users came through which channels, how many converted to donors and why. Using this data, you can decide which channels to invest more in.

"When several users go to the last page but they don't finish the donation, you can then formulate hypotheses on why these people don't actually go to the last step," she explained. The next step is to optimise your landing pages, testing out all these different hypotheses.

Measure your campaign success

E-commerce tracking allows you to see how much someone has donated, as well how your different fundraising products perform. It's actually very similar to campaign tracking which allows you to measure the success of your online campaigns. The technical bit is that you, for example, have to attach a parameter to the URLs of your ad campaigns. This allows you to track which source, medium, campaign, and which ad content is responsible for how much money or for how many conversions on your website. Hieninger recommended using Google's URL builder for this.

Summing up her session, she reiterated the importance of online tracking and web analysis: "Web analysis and tracking help you to get to know your user better and his behaviour. It also helps you to evaluate your marketing channels, your creative, and your landing pages, and you can optimise accordingly to the knowledge you gain through web analysis and tracking. You can save a lot of money, a lot of time and you can improve your return on investment."

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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