

Disruptively Diversifying Field of Web Analytics



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We define web analytics as figuring out how people interact with your company or your brand online, with the objective of optimizing this interaction. If you want to know how web analytics will move in future, you need to look at how people are interacting with brands and companies online. Online marketing used to be one of the channels when marketers talked about multi-channel marketing. Apart from websites, there are blogs, Facebook pages, Facebook widgets, mobile applications, twitter streams, coupon websites, review websites, social bookmarking, multimedia content sharing, and more. Users can interact with your brand on any of these channels. As this movement happens, web analytics as an industry is also going to follow the trends. There are going to be measurement frameworks and new tools that will measure such interactions based on the client's analytics requirements and online marketing goals.

Traditionally, web analytics tools used to handle the full lifecycle of data from collecting to processing to presenting. This will change with the new tools. The big players in the market always had APIs and it wasn't very cheap to access these APIs. But now with tools like Google Analytics, it is a lot easier to build a tool that does something very specific. These new tools are going to look better and would build more intelligence. Data collection and processing might become a little more commoditized than it is now.

Another trend that we can see is the number of data sources. Earlier, web analytics typically involved analyzing data that originated from your own website, or marketing campaigns. But now you have a proliferation of data points. There are now blogs, iPhone apps, social media, and a whole lot of such things. With user generated content, we also are seeing the challenge of having to deal with qualitative data. How do you make sense of 5,000 tweets? How do we summarize all that and help our customers identify trends and make business decisions?

The third trend that we see happening is integration with Business Intelligence Tools. Larger organizations typically have BI tools and they are going to try and bring the web analytics data into it.

The challenge that entrepreneurs would face is the pace at which things are happening. Just when you think you have come up with an idea, 10 other startups are already on it and have entered the beta phase. You get a hang of how things are happening on the social media front and here comes another company with a mobile app that's threatening your business model. But I consider these as advantages. Change always brings disruption and disruptions are good for the newcomers.