

Paper 348-2009

Mainstreaming Web Data with SAS® Web Analytics 5.3

Kim Weller, SAS Institute, Inc., Cary, NC

ABSTRACT

All too often Web site data stays within the web team. It is leveraged for useful endeavors such as understanding web traffic, tracking online behavior, and improving site performance. However, in this multichannel world, valuable customer insights are gained and marketing abilities are enhanced when web data is combined with data from other customer contact points such as call centers, stores, and offline marketing campaigns. Learn how the new SAS® Web Analytics leverages the new SAS 9.2 Platform to make the most of web data.

INTRODUCTION

The Web Analytics industry developed out of a need to measure the web channel and address the unique challenges of web data. Until recently many Web organizations were run in a silo, particularly in the US. Now, the web has become “business as usual” but most companies have not brought the web into the fold analytically. The Web Analytics tools employed by most companies merely support reporting. SAS® is working to change that with the release of SAS® Web Analytics 5.3. SAS® Web Analytics 5.3 leverages the developments in the SAS® 9.2 Platform to give companies the ability to better visualize, integrate and analyze their web data, allowing users to make better decisions.

VISUALIZE

The first step in breaking down silos within an organization is establishing one version of the truth that people can understand.

Continuation of body—after source code. This is a sample figure.

PORTAL INTEGRATION

The ability to seamlessly integrate into the SAS® Portal gives an organization the ability to present Web data in the same frame as data from other channels in the organization. The prebuilt Portal (figure 1) demonstrates an integrated access point for Web data. the single access point into the Web Analytics application as well as pre-built Web Reports Studio reports. User generated reports could also

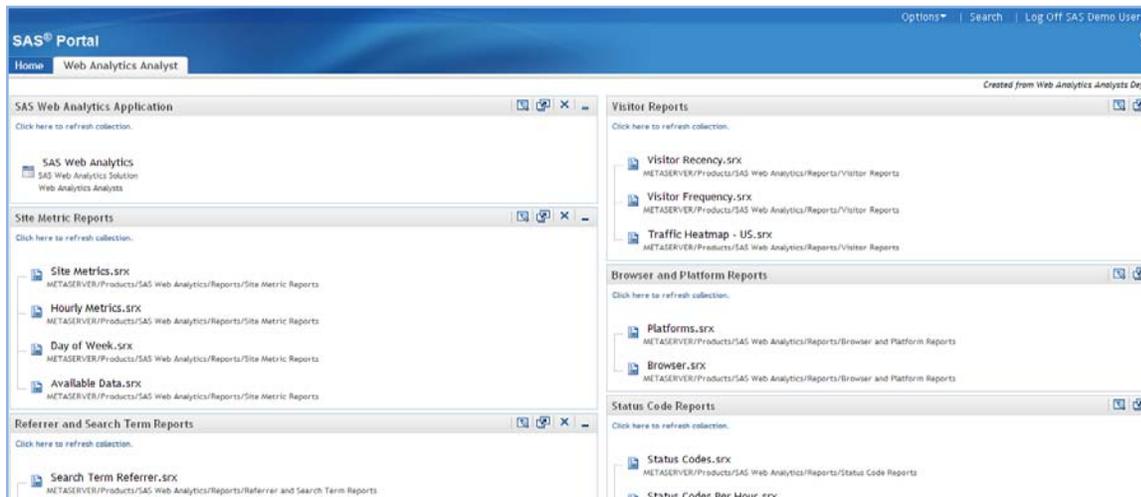


Figure 1. SAS® Portal Portal View for Web Analyst with links to SAS Application and WRS Reports

USER INTERFACE

Advances in SAS® 9.2 facilitated improvements to the SAS® Web Analytics user interface. Web data has so many variables that it is often difficult to represent complex concepts such as how visitors navigate through a Web site. The Funnel Report is an excellent example of how SAS® Web Analytics 5.3 leverages SAS® 9.2 to create a report that is both intuitive and rich with actionable information.

The Funnel Report (See Figure 2 below) displays the flow of visitors through a user defined set of pages. This report is key for users to understand how visitors interact with the most important processes on their Web site. In addition to showing the drop off at each step, the report tracks users as they flow into, out of and through the funnel. The report captures where (e.g. google.com, cnn.com) visitors enter the funnel and where they go once they exit the funnel. Labels in this report are customizable on a per report basis.

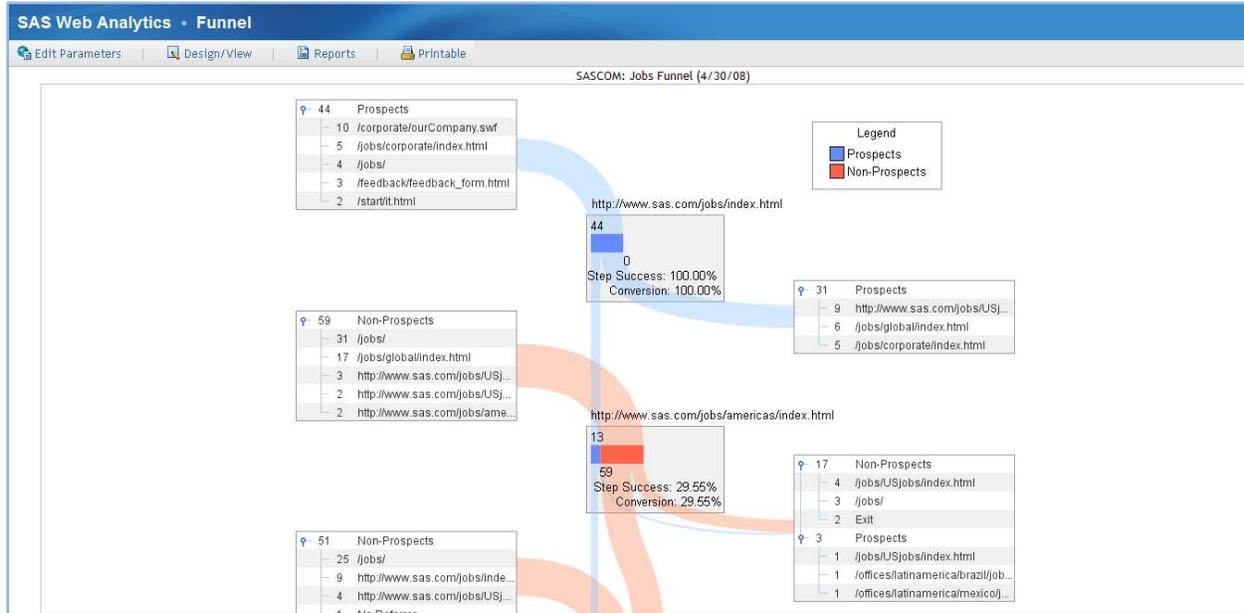


Figure 2. SAS® Web Analytics Funnel Report
Data driven graphics depict the flow of Web traffic through a user defined set of pages

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The SAS® Web Analytics Roadmap shows the commitment to enhancing the user experience. The next major endeavor in this area is the adoption of a Flash/Flex based user interface, enabling more dynamic interaction with Web data.

INTEGRATE

In this economic environment, businesses cannot afford to view their Web data in a vacuum. Focusing solely on improving the Web channel ignores the reality that customers interact with business through multiple channels. They are touched by Marketing efforts driving customers to a site through online ads, e-mail, search engines, direct mail, offline media. Customers reach out through different sales and service channels as well, whether it is a call to a call center, a trip to a store or a contact form on a Web site. Organizations that want to succeed will understand the interaction of these channels and optimize with the entire business ecosystem in mind, not just individual touchpoints. SAS® Web Analytics 5.3 leverages SAS® data integration capabilities as well as facilitating users' Web data integration initiatives.

OPENNESS

SAS® Web Analytics 5.3 includes a fully documented and open dimensional data model for all historical data. This is new for SAS® Web Analytics and an important point of differentiation between SAS® the competition. In previous versions the data was summarized into marts, limiting the users' ability to drill further into the data for analysis and custom reporting. This openness was leveraged in the development of the Search Engine Bid reporting and analysis capabilities now available in SAS® Web Analytics.

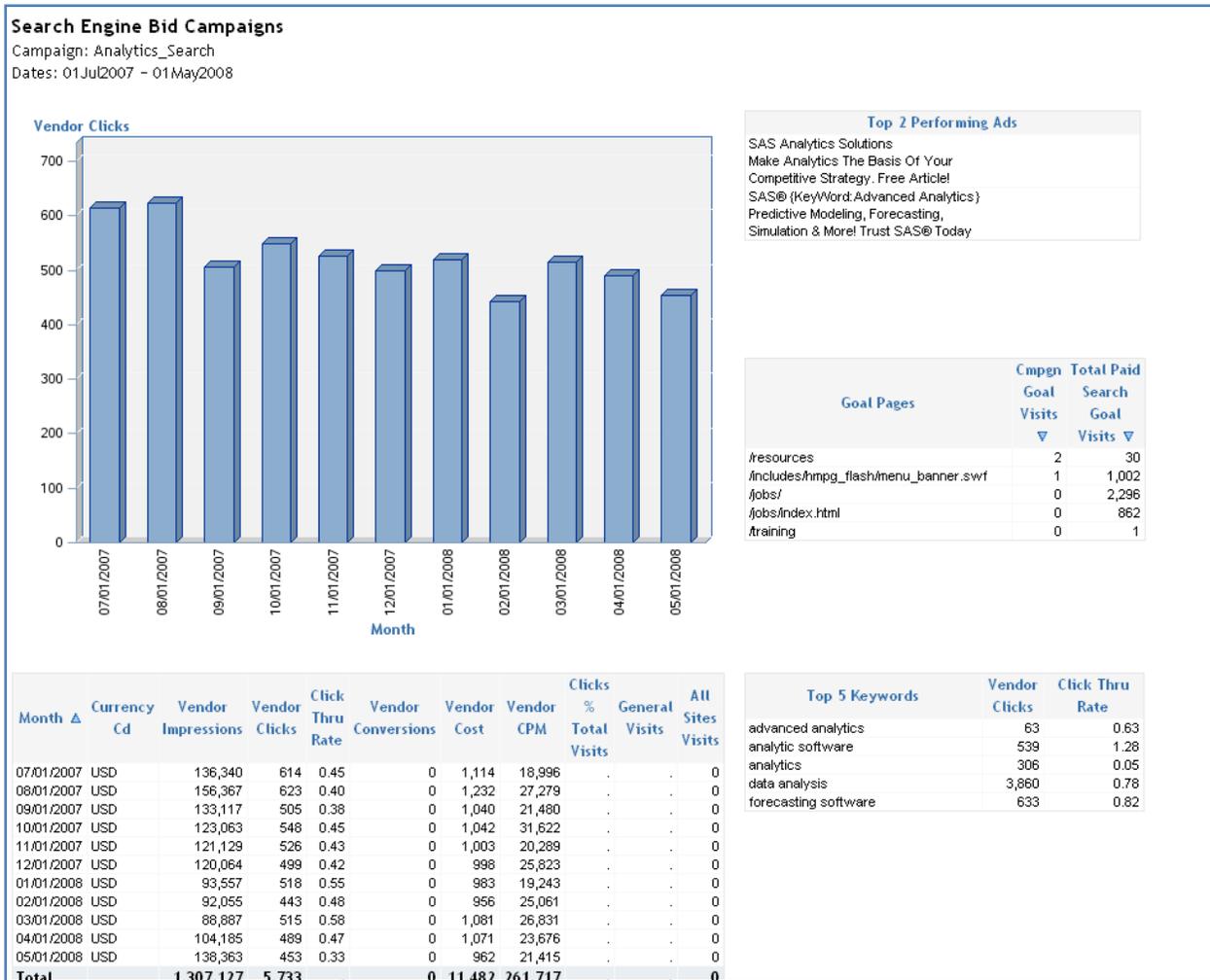


Figure 3. SAS® Web Analytics Search Engine Bid Campaign Report
Google Adwords data is integrated with Web data for comprehensive view of Paid Search performance

Reporting on Search Engine data is a new feature in SAS® Web Analytics 5.3. As companies increase their spending on Search Engine Marketing, the management of this channel has grown in complexity. Search Engines, such as Google, use a bid system to determine the ranking of displayed links and ads shown when a user enters a word or phrase into a search box. Each search engine provider offers an application that allows the user to create campaigns and place bids on these keywords. SAS® Web Analytics 5.3 helps users manage Search Engine Marketing by providing reports and analysis on the cost and effectiveness of purchased keywords and ads. SAS® Web Analytics 5.3 supports Google Adwords and provides a DI Studio data extract from Google AdWords using a Web Service. The historical data is stored in a Search Engine Bid Data data mart.

PROFILES

For a Web site to be effective, content should be targeted. SAS® Web Analytics 5.3 allows the user to be targeted in their analysis with Profiles. Key reports such as the Funnel Report, Pathing Analysis and Page Overlay can be run for a particular Profile. There are 3 Profiles built into the product based on referral from Search Engine traffic (See Figure 4 below). More importantly, the open and flexible nature of SAS® Web Analytics 5.3 gives the user the ability to add Profiles and make them available for analysis using SAS® Data Integration Studio.

Portal

SAS Web Analytics - Design Funnel

Design View Edit Parameters Save Save As Reports Printable

Funnel Properties

Web mart: UI_Test_SAS

Name: Test Funnel

Prospects Label: P

Non-Prospects Label: NP

Is Active?

Profiles: GOOGLE, SEARCH ENGINE, YAHOO

Profile Operator: And Or

Add Pages... Move Up Move Down Clear

Funnel Levels

Name	Adjacent?
http://www.sas.com/jobs/index.html	Yes
http://www.sas.com/contact/intro.html	Yes
http://www.sas.com/resources/	Yes
http://www.sas.com/success/index.html	Yes
http://www.sas.com/partners/index.html	Yes
http://www.sas.com/corporate/index.html	Yes
http://www.sas.com/technologies/analytcs/index.html	Yes
http://www.sas.com/technologies/architecture/index.html	Yes

Figure 4. SAS® Web Analytics Design Funnel Interface
Profiles can be selected in the design of a Funnel Report

CUSTOMER INTELLIGENCE INTEGRATION

There will be a 5.3.x release of SAS® Web Analytics in conjunction with the rest of the Customer Intelligence suite of products later in 2009. To build on the theme of integration, a key benefit of this release will be the opportunity for users of SAS® Marketing Automation and SAS® Web Analytics to deepen their understanding of campaign performance. Using SAS® Web Analytics organizations will be able to designate user defined activities on a Web site as Responses, or desired customer actions, for SAS® Marketing Automation.

ANALYZE

The irony of the Web Analytics industry has been that there is little in the way of analytics, just plenty of reporting. SAS® is leading the charge to bring advanced analytics to the Web. Advanced analytics are not new to SAS® Web Analytics. However, the market is now beginning to recognize the need for actionable and insightful analysis of web data. To serve the need SAS® Web Analytics includes the Performance Monitor and Performance Insight reports which replace the Dashboard and Scorecard reports from the previous release. These tools move the Web Analyst from merely reporting what happened in the past to truly influencing future performance.

PERFORMANCE MONITOR

Performance Monitor (See Figure 5 below) puts the performance of each metric into context. Stoplights clearly indicate the health of a metric in both the short term and the long term, enabling timely action while averting rash decisions. Forecast graphs give a view of the future, providing upper and lower confidence levels represented by a shaded band. Performance Monitor also provides a mechanism for setting and tracking metrics to a goal.



Figure 5. SAS® Web Analytics Performance Monitor
Emphasis is put on future direction in the Performance Monitor

PERFORMANCE INSIGHT

Using the power of Performance Insight (See Figure 6 below) can be a game-changing initiative for an organization. Performance Insight takes Web Analytics to the next level by statistically determining the significant metrics that drive a target Key Performance Indicator (KPI) via advanced econometric time-series techniques. The Response Seeking function provides a “What if?” scenario tool where the user can define how much the target KPI needs to improve and then determine how much each individual driver metric needs to change to achieve the improvement in the KPI.

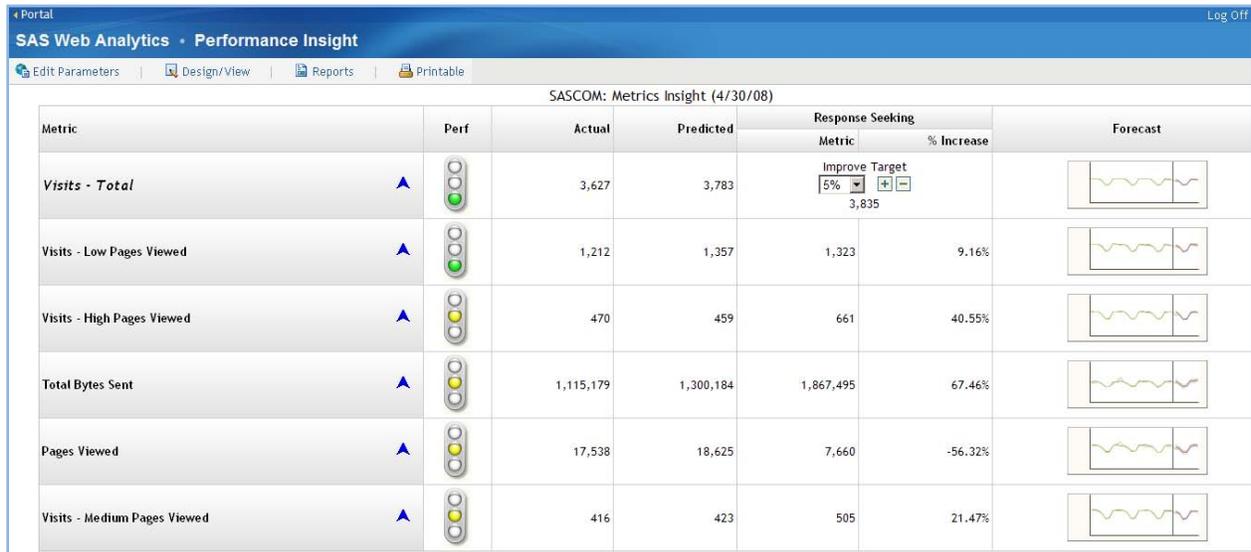


Figure 6. SAS® Web Analytics Performance Insight
Information is made actionable in Performance Insight

In an advertising model, Web sites generate revenue through traffic and viewed content. In an e-commerce organization, conversion is a KPI along with sales and margin. It is imperative for the organization to understand what levers can be pulled to influence their KPIs and drive profitability for their company. Performance Insight gives its users clear direction on where to invest their precious resources.

CONCLUSION

SAS® Web Analytics 5.3 provides.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Your comments and questions are valued and encouraged. Contact the author at:

Name: Kim Weller
Enterprise: SAS Institute, Inc.
Address: 100 SAS Campus Drive, Bldg R
City, State ZIP: Cary, NC 27519
Work Phone: (919) 531-2482
E-mail: kim.weller@sas.com

SAS and all other SAS Institute Inc. product or service names are registered trademarks or trademarks of SAS Institute Inc. in the USA and other countries. ® indicates USA registration.

Other brand and product names are trademarks of their respective companies.