

INSIDE: Your Google AdWords™ gift card worth \$50!

BRIAN CLIFTON

Foreword by **Jim Sterne**, Founder of the eMetrics Marketing Optimization Summit and Chairman of the Web Analytics Association

Advanced Web Metrics with Google Analytics™

THIRD EDITION



SERIOUS SKILLS.

Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

**[Praise for Advanced Web Metrics with
Google Analytics, Third Edition](#)**

**[Praise for Advanced Web Metrics with
Google Analytics, Third Edition](#)**

[Copyright](#)

[Publisher's Note](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Who Should Read This Book](#)

[What Is Covered in This Book](#)

[Google Analytics Individual Qualification](#)

[How to Contact the Author](#)

Part I: Measuring Success

Chapter 1: Why Understanding Your Web Traffic Is Important to Your Business

Website Measurement—Why Do This?
Information Web Analytics Can Provide
Where to Start
Decisions Web Analytics Can Help You Make
The ROI of Web Analytics
How Web Analytics Helps You Understand
Your Web Traffic
Where Web Analytics Fits In
How Is Google Analytics Different?
Where to Get Help
Summary

Chapter 2: Available Methodologies and Their Accuracy

Page Tags and Logfiles
Cookies in Web Analytics
Understanding Web Analytics Data
Accuracy
Improving the Accuracy of Web Analytics
Data
Privacy Considerations for the Web
Analytics Industry
Summary

Chapter 3: Google Analytics Features, Benefits, and Limitations

Key Features and Capabilities of Google Analytics

How Google Analytics Works

What Google Analytics Does Not Do

What Is Google Analytics Premium?

Google Analytics and Privacy

What Is Urchin?

Summary

Part II: Using Google Analytics Reports

Chapter 4: Using the Google Analytics Interface

Discoverability and Initial Report Access

Navigating Your Way Around: Report Layout

Summary

Chapter 5: Reports Explained

The Home Overview

Top Standard Reports

Understanding Report Sampling

Summary

Part III: Implementing Google Analytics

Chapter 6: Getting Started: Initial Setup

Creating Your Google Analytics Account

Tagging Your Pages

Back Up: Keeping a Local Copy of Your Data

Using Accounts, Web Properties, and Profiles

Agencies and Hosting Providers: Setting Up Client Accounts

Integrating with Your AdWords Data

Integrating with Your AdSense Data

Integrating with Your Webmaster Tools Data

Integrating with Feedburner

Tracking Mobile Visitors

Common Pre-implementation Questions
Summary

Chapter 7: Advanced Implementation

trackPageview: the Google Analytics Workhorse

Tracking E-commerce Transactions

Campaign Tracking

Event Tracking

Customizing the GATC

Summary

Chapter 8: Best Practices Configuration Guide

Initial Configuration

Goal Conversions and Funnels

Why Segmentation Is Important

Choosing Advanced Segments versus Profile Filters

Profile Segments: Segmenting Visitors Using Filters

Report Segments: Segmenting Visitors Using Advanced Segments

Creating Custom Intelligence Alerts

Summary

Chapter 9: Google Analytics Customizations

Why Customize an Existing Product?

Custom Reports

Customizing the List of Recognized Search Engines

Labeling Visitors, Sessions, and Pages

Tracking Error Pages and Broken Links

Differentiating Pay-Per-Click Network Partners

In-Page Analytics: Differentiating Identical Links

Matching Transactions to Specific Referral Data

Tracking Campaign Links to File Downloads

[*Changing the Referrer Credited for a Goal Conversion*](#)

[*Roll-up Reporting*](#)

[*Summary*](#)

[**Part IV: Using Visitor Data to Drive Website Improvement**](#)

[**Chapter 10: Focusing on Key Performance Indicators**](#)

[*Setting Objectives and Key Results*](#)

[*Selecting and Preparing KPIs*](#)

[*Presenting Your KPIs*](#)

[*KPI Examples by Job Role*](#)

[*Using KPIs for Web 2.0*](#)

[*Summary*](#)

[**Chapter 11: Real-World Tasks**](#)

[*Identify and Optimize Poor-Performing Pages*](#)

[*Measuring the Impact of Site Search*](#)

[*Optimizing Your Search Engine Marketing*](#)

[*Monetizing a Non-E-commerce Website*](#)

[*Tracking Offline Marketing*](#)

[*An Introduction to Google Website*](#)

[*Optimizer*](#)

[*Summary*](#)

Chapter 12: Integrating Google Analytics with Third-Party Applications

Extracting Google Analytics Information
Working with the Google Analytics Core Reporting API

Example App Case Studies

Demographics within Google Analytics

Call Tracking with Google Analytics

Video on Demand Tracking with Google Analytics

Mobile App Tracking with Google Analytics

Integrating Website Optimizer with Google Analytics

Summary

Appendix A: Regular Expression Overview

Understanding the Fundamentals
Regex Examples

Appendix B: Useful Tools

Tools to Help Audit Your GATC Deployment
Browser Add-ons

GATC Plug-ins

Desktop Helper Applications

Appendix C: Recommended Further Reading

[Books on Web Analytics and Related Areas](#)

[Web Resources](#)

[Blog Roll for Web Analytics](#)

[Index](#)

[Google AdWords Coupon](#)

Advanced Web Metrics with Google Analytics™

Third Edition

Brian Clifton



John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Praise for *Advanced Web Metrics with Google Analytics*, Third Edition

"It would be a cliché to say Brian Clifton knows Google Analytics like the back of his hand. But he does. So if there is only one book you can buy on Google Analytics... buy this book and you'll be on your way to being an Analysis Ninja!"

—Avinash Kaushik, author of *Web Analytics 2.0* (Sybex, 2010) and Digital Marketing Evangelist, Google

"With this new edition of Advanced Web Metrics with Google Analytics, Brian Clifton continues to raise the bar in explaining advanced web analytics— not just the mechanics but why certain things are crucial to measure, while other 'metrics' are actually red herrings and can harm rather than help your web success. A must-read if you're playing in the big leagues."

—Chris Sherman, Executive Editor, Search Engine Land

"A great practitioner's resource that not only covers the technical details for a best practice setup, but also ties it back to the business objectives. That's quite a unique combination for this subject."

—Sara Andersson, Founder of Search Integration AB and Chairperson, Search Engine Marketing Professional Organization (SEMPO), Scandinavia

"There is no doubt web analytics is evolving quickly. Brian's third edition of the book is chock full of the latest tips and guidance to get the most out of Google Analytics. Once again, he is sharing his great knowledge and expertise so everyone can benefit. With a good mix of concepts, examples and how-tos, the book structure and

writing style will please both marketers and technically inclined analysts and even help reconcile both universes. Advanced Web Metrics with Google Analytics is a must on every analyst's bookshelf—and if you had a previous edition, don't hesitate to upgrade as this new release covers all the cool new stuff like social media, visitors, flow, multi-channel funnels, and a lot more!"

—Stéphane Hamel, Director of Strategic Services, Cardinal Path

"Brian has proven in the previous editions of his book that he is the authority on how Google Analytics works. His latest edition continues to enhance this reputation. It includes his unique insights on the latest version of GA and includes descriptions of how to use the new features and reports. As Google Analytics itself evolves into a more powerful enterprise tool, Brian's book updates to keep up with the ever evolving feature set and long may it continue."

—Steve Jackson, Chief Analytics Officer, Kwantic

"Detailed advice and step-by-step guidance makes for a powerful combination in this excellent Google Analytics book. It's up-to-the-minute too, with new sections on privacy laws, tracking social, and measuring apps."

—Dan Drury, Director, Bowen Craggs & Co., and author of
The Financial Times Index of Corporate Website Effectiveness

"Brian has outdone himself with this edition, going deeper into measuring the previously impossible to measure with new features and functions and a few tricks that only someone with his experience could even imagine. This is a must read for anyone struggling with measuring the impact of their online business and trying to quickly identify new opportunities for increasing sales."

—Bill Hunt, CEO, Back Azimuth Consulting and coauthor of the best-selling book *Search Engine Marketing Inc.*

“So Clifton’s done it again. His third edition is the best yet, covering critical topics such as the justification for web measurement and its return on investment through web tracking methodologies and then on to providing the reader with the most authoritative, accurate, and extensive reference on Google Analytics that is available today. As always, Clifton’s easy writing style makes the book easy to read, and even the most complex of web analytics topics are simplified and explained fully. If you haven’t read Clifton’s book, you don’t really know Google Analytics.”

—Matt Trimmer, Principal Consultant and Managing Director of ivantage, a Google Analytics Certified Partner

“Brian’s book is the Bible on Google Analytics. This latest edition includes a lot of important updates to keep you at the cutting edge of web analytics and what Google Analytics can do to help improve your online business.”

—Ashley Friedlein, CEO, Econsultancy, Econsultancy.com

Senior Acquisitions Editor: Willem Knibbe
Development Editor: Dick Margulis
Technical Editor: Trevor Claiborne
Production Editor: Liz Britten
Copy Editor: Judy Flynn
Editorial Manager: Pete Gaughan
Production Manager: Tim Tate
Vice President and Executive Group Publisher: Richard Swadley
Vice President and Publisher: Neil Edde
Book Designer: Franz Baumhackl
Compositor: Maureen Forys, Happenstance Type-O-Rama
Proofreader: Nancy Bell
Indexer: Ted Laux
Project Coordinator, Cover: Katherine Crocker
Cover Designer: Ryan Sneed
Cover Image: © andipantz/iStockPhoto

Copyright © 2012 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Indianapolis,
Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

ISBN: 978-1-118-16844-8

ISBN: 978-1-118-22644-5 (ebk.)

ISBN: 978-1-118-23958-2 (ebk.)

ISBN: 978-1-118-26432-4 (ebk.)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive,

Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 646-8600.

Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: The publisher and the author make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this work and specifically disclaim all warranties, including without limitation warranties of fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales or promotional materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for every situation. This work is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If professional assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought. Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising herefrom. The fact that an organization or Web site is referred to in this work as a citation and/or a potential source of further information does not mean that the author or the publisher endorses the information the organization or Web site may provide or recommendations it may make. Further, readers should be aware that Internet Web sites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read.

For general information on our other products and services or to obtain technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at (877) 762-2974, outside the U.S. at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in

e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011946306

TRADEMARKS: Wiley, the Wiley logo, and the Sybex logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates, in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission.

Google Analytics is a trademark of Google, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Dear Reader,

Thank you for choosing *Advanced Web Metrics with Google Analytics, Third Edition*. This book is part of a family of premium-quality Sybex books, all of which are written by outstanding authors who combine practical experience with a gift for teaching.

Sybex was founded in 1976. More than 30 years later, we're still committed to producing consistently exceptional books. With each of our titles, we're working hard to set a new standard for the industry. From the paper we print on, to the authors we work with, our goal is to bring you the best books available.

I hope you see all that reflected in these pages. I'd be very interested to hear your comments and get your feedback on how we're doing. Feel free to let me know what you think about this or any other Sybex book by sending me an email at nedde@wiley.com. If you think you've found a technical error in this book, please visit <http://sybex.custhelp.com>. Customer feedback is critical to our efforts at Sybex.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Edde', with a stylized, cursive script.

Neil Edde
Vice President and Publisher
Sybex, an imprint of Wiley

*“ Web analytics is the study of the online visitor experience
in order to improve it.”*

—The author, circa 2007

*“Advanced web metrics is about doing the basics very well
and applying it in a clever way.”*

—Sara Andersson, CEO, Search Integration AB

Acknowledgments

After the first two editions of this book, writing this third edition has been both very rewarding and very hard work. Thankfully, my writing style has much improved—mainly due to the valuable feedback I have received from readers, clients, and workshop attendees alike. This has enabled me to produce this third edition not only with the latest features and updates from Google Analytics, but also in an improved pedagogical manner. I hope you consider it a worthy enhancement.

I have never considered myself a natural writer. Endlessly agonizing over every sentence, I would yearn for perfection, or at the very least adequacy. The first edition of this book, written while working 12 hours a day at Google, took me 18 months to finish (mainly written on trains and planes or in various hotel rooms across Europe or in the United States). I got myself organized and even more obsessive (if that were possible) and completed the second edition in six months. For the third edition, I am down to five months—to the relief of my much-supportive partner, Sara, and my friends and family.

Yet the process of writing remains enjoyable. In fact, I am already looking forward to my next writing project, though I am undecided as to what that should be—I said that in the last edition! However, I am not a one-man band, and many people have happily contributed their time to make this edition even better than the previous editions.

First, special thanks go to Trevor Claiborne, Brad Townsend, Alex Ortiz-Rosado, Nick Michailovski, and Tomas Remotigue, all of Google, who have significantly contributed to my knowledge and understanding of the internal workings of Google Analytics over the years. All worked in their own time to sanity-check and expand on the technical

aspects of this and previous editions of this book. Trevor is my much-appreciated technical editor. His eagle eye for detail and breadth of knowledge for all things Google have enabled me to write a much more comprehensive book.

Significant feedback, help, and brainstorming were also freely provided by Shelby Thayer, a web analytics practitioner, enthusiast, advocate, and all-round nice person working for Penn State University. As with the last edition, Shelby has kindly proofread and commented on *every* page of this book, ensuring content relevance and continuity. Her informed questions and detailed feedback have been invaluable to me.

Thanks also go to Leonardo Naressi of Direct Performance for his expertise and advice with Flash event and mobile tracking; Jeremy Aube of ROI Revolution, who provided expertise and help with updating content on Google Website Optimizer and who is a great asset of the GACP community; Sara Andersson for her generous advice and strategic thinking regarding integrating offline and online marketing and for sharing her ideas on search marketing, social media engagement, and life in general; Jim Sterne for reviewing this book and for honoring me by writing the foreword; Mikael Thuneberg (automateanalytics.com), John Babb ([idemension](http://idemension.com)), James Bake (Hanson Inc.), Henrik Lauritzen (UserReport), and Paul Walsh (Infinity Tracking Ltd.) for providing case study content to include with Chapter 12; and all members of the Google Analytics Certified Partners (GACP) network for their stimulating discussions, experiences, and thoughts when implementing and using Google Analytics for their clients.

Last but not least, many thanks to the Wiley publishing team: Willem Knibbe, whose enthusiasm for this topic keeps me wanting to produce further editions of this book; Dick Margulis, who originally helped me with the first edition and kept the structure and cohesion going in a straight line

throughout the process of writing this edition; Pete Gaughan, Liz Britten, Judy Flynn, and the many other people at Wiley who work tirelessly in the background to help create and polish what I hope you will consider is an enjoyable and informative read. Ultimately this was my mission for what potentially can be a very dry subject.

That's quite a long list, with people from all over the world (at least seven countries) helping to shape, expand, and improve the content provided. I hope I have remembered everyone.

About the Author

Brian Clifton, PhD, is an internationally recognized Google Analytics expert who consults on website performance optimization for global clients. Coming from a web development and search engine optimization (SEO) background, he has worked in these fields since 1997. His business was the first UK partner for Urchin Software Inc., the company that later became Google Analytics.

In 2005, Brian joined Google Europe. As former head of web analytics for Google Europe, Middle East, and Africa, he defined the strategy for adoption and built a team of pan-European product specialists. He is now Director of Data Insights and Analytics at Search Integration AB.

Brian received a BSc in chemistry from the University of Bristol in 1991 and a PhD in physical and theoretical chemistry in 1996. Further work as a postdoctoral researcher culminated in publishing several scientific papers in journals, including *Molecular Physics*, *Colloids and Surfaces*, and *Langmuir*. During that time, he was also an international weightlifter, representing Great Britain at world and European championships.

Studying science at university during the early nineties meant witnessing the incredible beginnings of the Web. In 1991, Tim Berners-Lee, a scientist working at the CERN laboratory in Switzerland, launched the first web browser and web server to the academic community, thereby sowing the first seeds of the World Wide Web.

Although the communication potential of the Web was immediately clear to Brian, it took a little while for ideas to formulate around business opportunities. In 1997 he left academia to found Omega Digital Media, a UK company specializing in the provision of professional services to organizations wishing to utilize the new digital medium.

Since leaving the field of chemical research (and weightlifting), Brian has continued to write—on his blog, Measuring Success (www.advanced-web-metrics.com/blog); as a guest writer on industry forums, and via white papers.

Brian holds the title of associate instructor at the University of British Columbia for his contribution to teaching modules in support of the Award of Achievement in Web Analytics. You can also hear him speak at numerous conferences around the world, where he discusses data-driven online strategies and site optimization. Brian was born in Manchester, United Kingdom, and now lives in Sweden.

Foreword

In 1990, the first web server hosted the first website at <http://info.cern.ch>. Tim Berners-Lee, a physicist at the European Organization for Nuclear Research, thought it might be a good idea. Turns out he was right.

As a transactional system, the web server was built with a logging capability that was a standard method for stockpiling details should everything go belly up.

It didn't take long for the data in these log files to attract the attention of those trying to make the systems work better. The first question, asked by webmasters like Tim, was whether the server was robust enough and the connection to the Internet was fast enough to keep up with demand. It was a technical challenge.

Eventually, the marketing department became aware that the geeks and nerds in the IT department were running the equivalent of electronic brochures on something called the World Wide Web. These marketing people were interested in system performance as well. But for them, it was not a technical matter but a question of customer experience.

Next, the marketing department wanted to know how many potential customers visited their websites every day. What did they do there? How deep did they dig? How often did they come back? How economical was the process of attracting them to the site?

As these questions became more and more complex, tool vendors bubbled up out of academia, the IT industry, and keyboards of those trying to answer their own questions using GREP and PERL.

Concurrently, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bristol was publishing completely unassociated papers like "Simulation of liquid benzene between two graphite

surfaces,” “The adsorption of tri-block copolymers at the solid-liquid and liquid-liquid interfaces,” and “Calculation of Silberberg’s polymer segmental adsorption energy by a free space molecular modeling technique.” Brian Clifton did not know it at the time, but these papers turned out to be just the sort of education required for delving into what would be known as web analytics.

It takes the same combination of deep technical understanding and inclusive, lateral creativity to come up with different ways to look at data. It doesn’t matter if you are creating “Methods for calculating solvent enthalpy of vaporization values by a molecular modeling technique” or trying to model human web surfing and buying behavior.

This mixture of left brain and right brain thinking is essential for modern marketing.

We will always need wildly imaginative, massively artistic, and enormously intuitive advertising “creatives.” But the smooth, sophisticated, and slightly jaded Mad Men who have ruled on gut feeling and intuition have been joined by the geeks and nerds in the marketing analytics department. These are the people who can verify that those brilliant ideas are brilliant in the eyes of the public as well as in the eyes of the award presenters.

What’s required is that magic mixture of technological smarts (where do these data come from?), psychological acumen (why do people act that way?), marketing mastery (how can we communicate our point more poignantly?), and analytics ingenuity (what if we looked at it from a different angle?).

This is where Brian Clifton stepped into the picture. He offered consulting services to companies that were struggling with the concept of online marketing. He realized that the best way to communicate with his clients was to show them the numbers. If they followed his advice, they could see an increase in brand recognition, purchase intent,

prospect engagement, revenue, and customer satisfaction in black and white.

To make all of this as clear as possible, Brian became an expert with one of the best tools on the market, a web analytics tool that was so valuable, Google bought it. Recognizing that tools alone do not build empires, Google hired Brian to represent the product in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

In this tome, Brian does more than simply unmask the technical particulars of Google Analytics. He also stays steadfastly practical. He, yes, walks you through the nuts and bolts of Google Analytics, but always with an eye on its usefulness. He doesn't just show you how the internal combustion engine works, he explains how to drive the car and then—perhaps most important of all—how to navigate in order to get to your desired destination.

You are lucky to have this book in your hands. If you are new to the idea of online marketing metrics, there is no better way to get started. If you've been around web analytics for a long time, even if you have read Brian's previous two editions, it is worth your while to dig into this one as well.

Think of this book as a refresher course with some new surprises thrown in. Google Analytics is constantly changing, and Brian clarifies how to harness the new powers Google has incorporated into the latest versions.

I am honored to join those who have penned forewords to Brian's previous editions: Chris Sherman, executive editor at Search Engine Land, partner at Third Door Media, and search expert extraordinaire; and Avinash Kaushik, digital marketing evangelist at Google, cofounder at Market Motive, author of *Web Analytics: An Hour A Day* and *Web Analytics 2.0*, and the most fervent advocate of the marketing analytics industry.

I am pleased to add my voice to the chorus of praise for Brian Clifton, his talents in the web analytics arena, and this resulting edition of *Advanced Web Metrics with Google Analytics*.

—Jim Sterne

Founder of the eMetrics Marketing Optimization Summit

Chairman of the Web Analytics Association

Introduction

Although the birth of the Web took place in August 1991, it did not become commercial until around 1995. In those early days, it was kind of fun to have a spinning logo, a few pictures, and your contact details as the basis of your online presence. My first website was just that—no more than my curriculum vitae online at the University of Bristol. Then companies decided to copy (or worse, scan) their paper catalogs and brochures and simply dump these on their websites. This was a step forward in providing more content, but the user experience was poor to say the least, and no one was really measuring conversions. The most anyone kept track of was hits, which nobody ever really understood, though they were assumed (incorrectly) to be visits.

Around the year 2000, and propelled by the dot-com boom, people suddenly seemed to realize the potential of the Web as a useful medium to find information; the number of visitors using it grew rapidly. Organizations started to think about fundamental questions such as, “*What is the purpose of having a website?*” and considered how to build relevant content for their online presence. With that, user experience improved. Then, when widespread broadband adoption began, those organizations wanted to attract the huge audience that was now online, hence the reason for the rapid growth in search engine marketing that followed.

Now, with businesses accepting the growing importance of their online presence, they are prepared to invest. But how much money and what resources should an organization put into this? What are the pain points for a visitor that stop them from transitioning from an anonymous visitor to a new lead or new customer? What is the most cost-efficient way to market the site, which channels produce the most

valuable leads, and can we predict the return on investment for the next campaign?

Answering such questions requires data and hence a measurement tool. Put simply, this is what web analytics tools, such as Google Analytics, allow you to do—study the online experience in order to improve it.

But what can be measured, how accurate is this, and with the plethora of data, which are the important metrics? In other words, how do you measure success? Using best practice principles I have gained as a professional practitioner, this book uses real-world examples that clearly demonstrate how to manage Google Analytics. These include not only installation and configuration guides but also how to turn data into information that enables you to understand and benchmark your website visitors' experience. With this understanding, you can then build business action items to drive improvements in visitor acquisition (both online and offline), conversion rates, repeat visit rates, customer retention, and ultimately your bottom line.

Who Should Read This Book

As a great friend and mentor to me once said, “Advanced web metrics is about doing the basics very well and applying it in a clever way.” I wish I had thought of that phrase! It epitomizes everything about my approach to web analytics and this book. Thus, I have attempted to make this book's subject matter accessible to a broad spectrum of readers—essentially anyone with a business interest in making their website work better. After all, the concept of measuring success is a universal desire.

The content is not aimed at the complete web novice, nor is it aimed at engineers—I am not one myself. Installing, configuring, or using Google Analytics does not require the

knowledge of an engineer! Rather, I hope that *Advanced Web Metrics with Google Analytics* will appeal to existing users of business data as well as readers new to the field of web measurement.

As the title implies, this book is intended for people who want to go beyond the basics of simply counting hits. These can be grouped into three types of users:

Marketers These are users who have experience with search engine marketing (paid and organic search), email marketing, social search, PR, and affiliate management but have not yet managed to find a unified measurement tool to compare these side by side. If you are in this group, focus your reading efforts on Chapters 1 to 5 and then Chapters 10 to 12 because these are nontechnical and do not require a technical knowledge of the implementation.

Webmasters These are experienced website builders who have the skill set and authorization to modify a website. For this group of users, the book offers sections and exercises that require you to modify your web page content; after all, web analytics is all about instigating change using reliable metrics as your guide. Therefore, knowledge of HTML (the ability to read browser source code) and experience with JavaScript are required. If you fall within this group, the book's entire content is for you. The technical implementation parts are contained in Chapters 6 through 9.

Senior managers These are decision makers who require guidance on preparing a data-driven strategy and action plan for their organization. I hope to supply these readers with an understanding of what can and cannot be achieved with web analytics and specifically provide information they need to plan the resources and timelines required for building an effective web measurement strategy. My aim for this group is to provide you with the information necessary to make informed managerial