



Search Analytics for Your Site: Conversations with Your Customers

Louis Rosenfeld

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Any organization that has a searchable web site or intranet is sitting on top of hugely valuable and usually under-exploited data: logs that capture what users are searching for, how often each query was searched, and how many results each query retrieved. Search queries are gold: they are real data that show us exactly what users are searching for in their own words. This book shows you how to use search analytics to carry on a conversation with your customers: listen to and understand their needs, and improve your content, navigation and search performance to meet those needs.

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Andrew Hecht says

One of the best business related books I've ever read; It's incredibly well-written and full of actionable information. It has already changed the way we do analytics and will definitely improve our site. I've already started to segment our search queries now have a much better understanding of what keywords lead to conversion which is going to inform PPC activity. I'm also working with our WA person to set up about 15 new reports on search activity. I really can't wait to see the data.

Terry says

I read the seminal "Information Architecture for the Web" book by Rosenfeld before. Good book, terribly boring and dry. Not here. Working through the book with actual data and dusting of MS Excel, it is immediately compelling and accessible. I can see the benefits of trawling through this data could have. As described in the book, Site Search Analytics acts as a "boundary object" that may bring together the data-driven and the squishy designer types into an understanding of what people are looking for in their own words.

The graphics were great. You can download the spreadsheet from the site of his company. The sheet looks about 5 years old, if the date of the blog is to be believed. Some understanding of Excel is needed. I found myself learning to use "CTRL-Enter" to modify formulas in certain ways, and making multiple tabs to refer to cells in different parts of workbook.

One thing I think may need work is that often the Search Analytics data may need to be somehow "overlapped" with traditional Web Analytics data so one can see if pages provoke search. Otherwise, you are left to your own devices to bring the data together and make sense of it. Still, using only two chapters of the book will bring tremendous benefits. I gave it 4 out of 5, since the last chapters that talked about how to make Metadata/Navigation suggestions seemed a bit slapdash in telling you **how** to do it. It should have been fleshed out more accurately. Still, buy this book please.

Espen says

Very straightforward and practically oriented - with lots of good examples. Search log analysis - seeing what customers are looking for and whether or not they find it - is as close to having a real, recorded and analyzable conversation with your customers as you can come, yet very few companies do it. Rosenfeld shows how to do it, and also how to find the low-hanging fruit and how to justify spending resources on it.

This is not rocket science - I was, quite frankly, astonished at how few companies do this. With more and more traffic coming from search engines, more and more users using search rather than hierarchical navigation, and the invisibility of dissatisfied customers (and the lost opportunities they represent) this should be high on any CIOs agenda.

Highly recommended.

Carrie says

I'm not sure that this topic warranted its own book. I would think it would fit better as part of a book on site analytics as a whole; however, the author gave a lot of examples, which did help to fill out the book and were helpful in thinking through how the concepts might be applied.

Marcus Österberg says

Started out great but got increasingly less relevant for most of us. The first chapter is something everyone should read though.
