

DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

SESSION 132

USING GOOGLE ANALYTICS TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

WITH YESENIA SOTELO

BETH: Hello, this is Beth Brodovsky and welcome to Driving Participation. Today I am on with Yesenia Sotelo. She is a web developer and a digital skills trainer for Smart Cause Digital, that's the name of her company, and Yesenia is somebody that I have been following online on social for years and years and she has such smart and interesting things to say that recently when Marlene Oliveira connected us, she said, "You've got to have Yesenia on the show," and I said, "Oh, I'm so excited to finally meet you." Well, not quite in person, but a little bit closer. Thank you so much for joining me today.

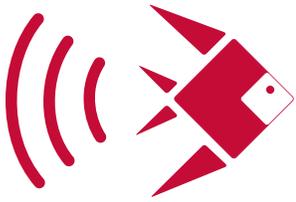
YESENIA: Beth, thank you for having me. It's been a joy just through the process of getting set up for the podcast chatting with you. Thank you.

BETH: I always love it when there's somebody that I kind of feel like I know online and actually get a chance to speak to and learn a little more on a one-on-one basis, and I'm thrilled to have this chance to introduce you and all of your knowledge and work to our audience because I've learned so much from you already just by following your work.

YESENIA: Yeah, and I feel like our audience overlaps. The people I work with are very similar to the people you work with.

BETH: Right and there's so many people out there that are like that, that are in roles figuring out marketing as they go. You know, P.S. now you have to do Google Analytics. Now you have to do this. There's never anything that's taken away. You know people say to me all the time, "Oh, with all this online stuff, do you miss print?" I don't miss print because we do it every day. Every day in my office we're doing design and marketing with everything because nobody lets





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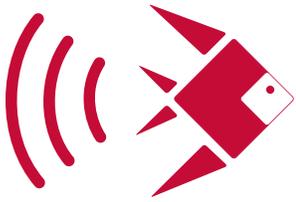
you off the hook with anything.

YESENIA: No, and I've had that job. I used to joke that I had a job where if it was plugged in it was mine. It was my job. It could be a computer, it could be a coffee machine. It was my job.

BETH: Right, exactly. My kids used to laugh at the fact that I can defragment a hard drive, but I can't fix the fact that the time is flashing 0:00 on like any device that's connected to my television. They're like, "Seriously, Mom." You never know. I am so excited to have you on. Yesenia is an expert in web development and especially in Google Analytics, and it's such a tough subject. I still struggle with wrapping my head around it, which is why we bring people into work with us when we're doing the deep dive into SEO and pay per click advertising and now it's expanding into other advertising. It's complicated, but it's actually in my mind because I'm old, it's actually not that old. My business is actually a year older than Google. So to me, this stuff hasn't been around all that long. I'm curious for you. How did you get into the work that you do?

YESENIA: That's a great point. The tool is new, but the concept is not and I will tell you how I got into this because my story does relate back to the topic. So I started learning web development in college in 1997, a long time ago at this point. I taught myself HTML in lieu of doing my bio homework. I was teaching myself HTML. Got out of college, landed a job in nonprofit, walked into the office, looked around and said, "These are my people. I'm at home here," and about five years ago I started Smart Cause Digital because I love what I do and I just wanted to do it all of the time. Google Analytics is a funny story because my first job out of college was in fundraising and even more specifically direct mail fundraising. I was sending out hundreds of thousands of print pieces every year and we had all these complicated spreadsheets about return rate and source codes and then later on [unclear 3:53] and anyone who is listening in the finance world knows exactly what I'm talking about and it was all analytics driven and Google Analytics is something that is similar in that it helps you measure, I was





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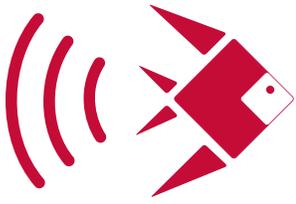
measuring at the time direct mail and which of those campaigns were successful and which lists that I sent to was actually making me money. Now I'm using Google Analytics to understand which of my pages are successful and which email I sent is making me money. So very, very similar. You mentioned that Google Analytics can feel a little bit intimidating. That is my story and it's one of the reasons that I feel like when I teach Google Analytics to others I can connect with them because I have been in that place of, "Oh my God, this is intimidating." I used to, like three years ago at this point, I had Google Analytics on my websites and I pretty much ignored it, but I knew I was supposed to be using it. It was like a gym. Like I should go, I should use it. So I ...

BETH: That is the best analogy ever!

YESENIA: Right! I'd open it up every few months like, "Today is the day," and I'd open it up and I'd go in there and it was just as intimidating as it is now and I would just look around and just get this feeling of, "Oh my God, too much information," and close it back up. I'll leave that for another day. Rinse and repeat, three months later do it again. Finally one day I was like, "Yesenia, you are a grown woman. This is part of what you do. You just need to figure this out," and I did and I think that way of approaching it has taught me to unlock how to teach others who are in the same place how to approach it because I've been there and I know how overwhelming it can be and I don't want to overwhelm anyone. I want them to feel the same way I do now, which is super empowered and excited.

BETH: I think that's so key, too, because I feel like, it's almost like it hits a point where there's divide between the people who know how to use it and the people that don't, and most of the people that know highly technical things seem to forget that there was a point where they had to learn it and I don't know if it's been so long or it's just in the way their brains work, but I've had people when I've asked them to explain things to me give me like, "Are you an idiot?" look. Like why do I have to explain this or even if they think they're explaining it and they want to explain it, even the words they're using to explain it are all like nerdy tech





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words. Anybody who says baked in or granular on this podcast is like out of the prize. Sorry. I think what happens, especially if you're working in a large group in tech, you start to like pick up that language because you're not part of that tribe and crossing the bridge over to the uninformed, getting out of connoisseur language and into consumer language becomes harder and harder the further you go up the expertise ladder.

YESENIA: That makes sense.

BETH: So like the fact that you're consciously focusing on the fact that remembering where you were and remembering how that felt, it's got to really help your ability to communicate this in a way that people actually understand.

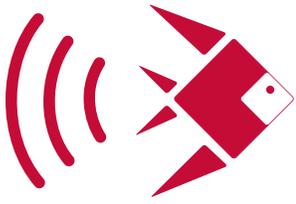
YESENIA: I hope so and again knowing that feeling then and knowing that feeling now is what gets me really excited because now I feel like it's a tool in my tool belt and it's something that helps me, not something I'm afraid of and I want everyone to feel that way.

BETH: And that's so great because that's the thing. That feeling when you've never done anything, even if it's like "I've never driven to this place before. I'm nervous about getting there," and then by the third time, it's like that's just the way you go. There's a lot of people. Anything that's new is intimidating and I love how you equated it to direct mail fundraising. I've never really heard anybody do that. Most of the time it's like, "Google Analytics, that's a thing in itself and it's new and it's complex and it's tech," but at its heart, is really is exactly the same as the data and the statistics and the numbers that we were all tracking on print stuff, and it's hard. It's the same concept. I love it. I've never really heard it explained like that before.

YESENIA: Thanks to you for making me remember that.

BETH: In the work that you're doing, I mean Google Analytics. It could be looked at as it's numbers on a page thing, but everything that we do is about getting





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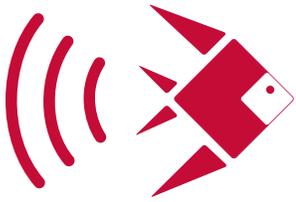
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people involved and understanding how they're involved and driving them to take an action and knowing what's happening is such a great trigger for that. In this work that you're doing, how does participation show up? How are you implementing it with organizations to help them thrive?

YESENIA: In the world of websites, which is Google Analytics and web development, which is the other thing that I do, participation is the whole goal. It's the whole reason we have a website. I only work with nonprofits and each of my clients wants someone to come to their website and participate, to do something, whether that be donate, volunteer, sign up for an email list, contact us to get some information, whatever that is, whatever the focus of the nonprofit is, how ever small or big. Wherever they are in the country or the world, their website has a goal of participation and in fact, one of my courses that I teach or classes that I teach is turn website visitors into supporters. Supporters I think is another way of saying participants, participation. It's all the same thing.

BETH: Absolutely and you know our goal is to take that level of engagement and have people take action on it and when you have a website, that's a critical thing. You want people to not just read it and go, "Oh that's nice," you want people to do things and one of the challenges that we see when we work with people are that the answer to audience is everyone or I want people to do things and this is coming out more and more again and so one of the things that I've become curious about is what are the different ways we can help people to understand their audience, know where to find them and know how to speak to them in a way that it really communicates clearly the unique offering that the organization has and attracts the perfect people to them that want to do things? So it's not such a herculean effort to force people. I want to convince people. How do you find people that want what you want and I know that you have some amazing ways that you can use this weird technology that's buried on our websites to help figure some of that stuff out. Where would people start? Let me start with this. Google Analytics. Let's just say there are people out there listening that haven't used it or have used it, but are exactly where you were when you started. They





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open it up every couple of months and go, “You know what? I think I’d rather make a donor call than figure this out. Let me cold call some prospects because that seems less painful than trying to dismantle this and figure out what to do.” How is Google Analytics relevant to nonprofits in this busy world of today’s marketing?

YESENIA: You said it perfectly. The busy world. The way I see Google Analytics as being relevant to nonprofits is it helps us cut through the noise because there is so much. The woman you were talking about in that example? You’re right. She could be spending her time calling a donor. She could be spending her time looking through some accounting reports to make sure that her organization is doing right. She could be spending her time writing an email for a donor appeal. She has so much that she could be doing and Google Analytics helps her and her team cut through the noise of all she could be doing or all they could be doing and start to focus just on 1) what’s working and 2) what the audience wants, what they’re actually responding to or even more surprisingly, what they’re interested in that the organization doesn’t even know about yet.

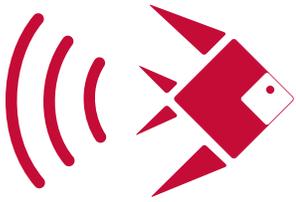
BETH: That is really interesting, that a lot of times when you see what people actually do, it will bring stuff to the top that you might not have expected.

YESENIA: Right, absolutely! The other thing I wanted to say about nonprofits before I forget is that we’re not just cutting through the noise. We’re slash/marketers as you said and when you have very little time for each of the parts of your job, you want to spend that time as smartly as you can and Google Analytics, the way I use it and the way I hope others use it, we’re focusing just on the most important parts. Just the places we’re gonna get the best return and that for anyone who is busy is like the magic key.

BETH: Exactly! OK, so that’s a perfect kickoff. What are the most important parts?

YESENIA: Oh sure. So the six terms that I teach everyone I meet and everyone



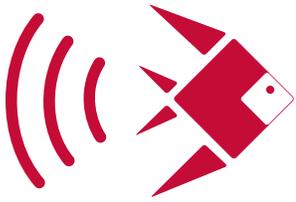


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listening here will walk away knowing are sessions, time on site, sorry. Sessions, page views, bounce rate, time on site, landing and exit pages and I'll talk you through what each of those mean. Sessions represents a person coming to your site, visiting any number of pages. It doesn't matter how many she gets to as long as she's actively clicking around your site she's counted once, like Google Analytics and if she stops clicking for 30 minutes, it's the end of her session. If she goes away to lunch and comes back, a whole new session because she probably takes a 30+ minute lunch. So it's a session. A page view represents one person browsing a page one time and that number can go very, very high because it's counted over and over again. Every time she reloads the page for example, new page view. If she clicks on a logo in your header and goes back to the home page, new page view. It just gets counted over and over again and it's always the biggest number. The next two terms are bounce rate and session duration or average session duration. A bounce rate is a tricky one to understand. It's a percentage when you look in your account. It's a percentage and it represents the number of people that came to your site, looked at one page and left. All they did was look at one page. It could have been the home page. A lot of people start at the home page, but it's not always the home page. It could have been an article that you tweeted that morning. It could have been the page that you shared via email for the upcoming gala. It could be any page. Just a percentage of people came to the site, looked at one page and left. Now with all the other analytics, I don't give ranges because everything is so varied. It really depends on you and your organization, but bounce rates is one I like to give a little context for because when most nonprofits look in their account, and if you're following along and you look in your account and you see a bounce rate that's like 70-something percent, you're like, "Oh my gosh, that's so terrible. Seventy percent of people are leaving our site. That's so terrible." It's actually very normal for the nonprofits I work with. I see bounce rates between 40-80 percent and it's totally normal. Nothing to worry about. Eighty percent and higher to me is the time to take a closer look. So if you're seeing a bounce rate of 80 percent and higher, take a look. See what's going on.





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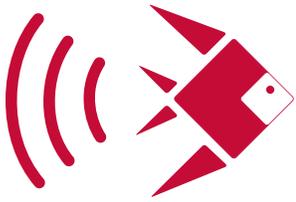
BETH: It's really helpful to have that because people don't know what's normal. What should I be looking for? Is that bad? It's really key and also the other question is, are there other places for them to go? I had somebody who had a landing page and a landing page is basically a single page that's not really attached to anything else and the only options are to go forward or to leave and it had a high bounce rate. Of course it would because it's a binary option. One thing or another thing whereas on a normal in your website, there should be lots of different places for them to click and go to another place.

YESENIA: In landing pages, that's a great example, Beth. Landing pages are a special case. You know when we create a landing page on our site, we have a very focused goal for it, an intention. Let's say it's signing up for email and ideally we're connecting that landing page to people who want to take that action. We're not just sending it to everyone because not everyone wants to sign up for our email. Maybe we're only sending it to people who we meet at the neighborhood farmer's market who came to our table that day. Maybe we're just sending them there and we already talked to them about our organization and we send them to this landing page so they can sign up and they have some context before they even get in there. When you have a landing page with a really high bounce rate, it could be like you said. It could be the page itself and something is going on there or it could be the audience. Maybe they didn't know what they were getting into and they clicked and they're like, "Oh I'm not ready for that," and then they left.

BETH: I'm curious. Why do you think it's pretty normal for a nonprofit to have an 80 percent bounce rate?

YESENIA: For most of the nonprofits I work with, the biggest source of traffic, the way most people find them is search engines and when I say search engines, I really mean Google because even though people use others, the majority is Google and what a bounce rate in that range, 70-80 percent, is representing is it's a lot of new people who are in the middle of their research. I had a baby eight months ago and for anyone who has had kids, you understand that every





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day of that child's life is a learning experience. A whole slew of things I have to understand and I spend a lot of time searching, whether it be about baby weaning or preschool or God knows what else. I am racking up bounce rates all over the internet because if I'm searching baby weaning for example, I probably go to 20 sites before I find one that I feel like, "OK, this is what I need right now." So when you're looking at your bounce rate on your site and you're seeing it kind of high, it often represents these people who are using their search engines to research whatever it is that your organization is doing and you're part of their research process. Ideally when you have an effective website, when you're driving participation, you are connecting with these people. You're saying, "Hey you're interested in X? We have X. Please come and join us."

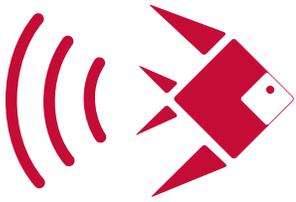
BETH: Right, which is exactly sort of the point. How can people get to be that one? Like when you've searched 100 different sites, that's the one that they land on and when it's search traffic, you're right. You get people. You're maybe getting seen by an audience and everyone, but if you want to create these conversion to drive this participation, you have to at some point get focused on what you really want and who you really want. How can people use the things that they learn from Google Analytics to understand who the people are that are staying? Who are the people that really are attracted to what they have and they don't have to change themselves to be perfect for them?

YESENIA: That's deep!

BETH: I know. I can't even tell you how many people that I interview equate some aspect of marketing to dating. It's quite hilarious! I don't want people chasing all those guys that walked away. So the people that come and do stay that don't bounce out, what can Google Analytics tell them about their behaviors or anything? I don't know a lot about this specific area myself, too, so I'm also curious.

YESENIA: Right. So Google Analytics could help, we can answer this question





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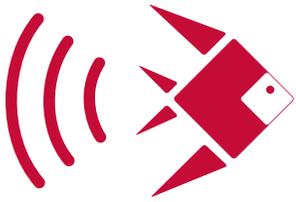
tons of ways so let's walk through the more clearer ones, the more clear ones. Google Analytics, for example, could help you understand of the people on your email list, when you're looking at just people on your email list, where are they going? Which email campaign did they open? When they opened that email campaign, what pages did they end up on? Did they just go to that gala fundraiser page you shared that day or did they keep clicking? Did they use any of the search tools? Did they download anything? It could help you understand more about the people you already know, the people who are on your email list for example.

BETH: And that comes from when you have an email that you send out, you put links into that email and people click on those links and end up on your website. In the back end of Google Analytics, how do people know which are the clicks that came from that email and which are clicks that came from somewhere else?

YESENIA: Great question. There are some tools in Google Analytics that are there when you create an account and everything is completely set up for you. There are some that you have to do work for and this is one of them. It's called Campaigns in Google Analytics and as you mentioned, you or your tool need to add some tags to all your links in your newsletters. That adding of tags, that step can be take care of manually and that's like the lesser option. We're lazy. We don't want to have to do this manually. Or it can be taken care of automatically. I use MailChimp personally for all my email marketing. In MailChimp, I entered in some information a long time ago with my Google Analytics and I gave it some of my preferences. I call my campaigns this, this and that. Now Google Analytics, I'm sorry. MailChimp just takes care of it. So when I send out my e-newsletter every Wednesday, all my links have the tags and I don't really have to do anything and it just goes in Google Analytics. So it goes back to the tool that you're using to reach out to people, whether it be MailChimp or ConstantContact or any of those.

BETH: So you need to make some connections between the two of them so that when you go into your Google Analytics account, it all just looks like a bunch of





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numbers and chaos and you don't know where to look, it will put it into a specific section and tell you, "Oh, you want to know what happened on that email? Here's your answer right here."

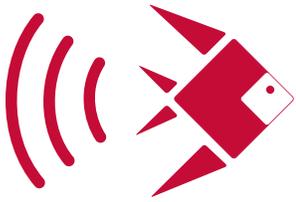
YESENIA: Yes, and even more beautiful for me is it will make a little, there's a pie chart that shows search engines, social, etc. It will make a new little pie slice, a delicious pie slice called email and you will see over time that your email people come to your site more often than anyone else, stick around longer, are less likely to bounce, look at more pages. They're your people and even though you already knew that instinctually, you feel so much better having the data to back it up to be able to say, "Look how much longer they stayed on our site. I really need to work on that e-newsletter."

BETH: Yeah, and I always say anything that can help convince you that regular communication is valuable and does something for your organization is good because marketing works and people don't just come. They don't just remember you. They're not thinking of you all the time so putting them into that cycle of communications and bring them constantly back to your website to learn more is incredibly valuable.

YESENIA: Right, right. That's a good segue to how Google Analytics can help you and this way is built in so you don't have to do anything. There's also a slice or section for social. So Google Analytics will show you, Facebook sent you 500 visits this month. Twitter sent you 200 visits this month. Pinterest sent you 50 visits this month, etc., and you can see what pages were popular with people from social and that's interesting to look at too. You might have promoted something on social and no one clicked on it. It's discouraging in some ways to do that, to post content that no one clicks on, but you know what? You might as well know. Going back to dating, if someone doesn't like you, you might as well know.

BETH: Right, bury your head in the sand and the problem is if you don't know,





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you're gonna keep putting I call it resources, which the definition of that is both time and/or money. You're gonna keep putting resources behind things thinking it worked or you're gonna become resistant to trying something new or changing because you're thinking it's working.

YESENIA: Great point.

BETH: The problem is that most things I feel like work just enough to make it hard to change.

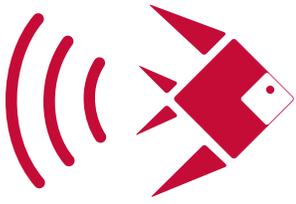
YESENIA: Yes! That's a really great point!

BETH: We see that all the time with even in a print direct mail campaign. People don't want to change the message. They don't want to try something new. They don't want to change the date they mail it. They don't want to change anything because that risk of failure, it feels so much more present and painful than the possibility for greater success.

YESENIA: Good, yeah. That's very true and here Google Analytics could possibly help someone who is in that place because perhaps one of the reasons we don't want to change is there is no promise of success when we try something new, but what I like about Google Analytics and the way I've always approached working for it because I used to work in nonprofits, the way I've always approached it is, "Let me just try something," and "Let me see how it did." So with Google Analytics, you could try something. You could say, "This month, I am not going to post anything on Facebook, and I'm just gonna post on Twitter and if it fails, that's OK because next month I can always switch back." Then Google Analytics could help you understand if it failed or not or whether it was successful, wildly successful and you should just quit Facebook and move to Twitter, but either way, there's that safety, it feels like a safety net to me to have those numbers.

BETH: I definitely think that is huge. You might be like, "Oh my gosh, I love, love,





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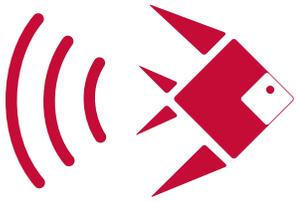
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love Facebook so much. I enjoy the community there and hanging out there,” but if you went back in and looked at your Google Analytics and saw that the actual traffic that clicks and comes through to your website is coming from Twitter, it will start to change how you think about your audience and where they’re coming from and possibly who they are. As I say, it may be the same person that’s on Google, I mean that’s on Twitter and on Facebook, but they’re a different person when they’re on that tool. Who I am when I’m on Facebook is very different from who I am when I’m on LinkedIn.

YESENIA: So astute, Beth! What’s also interesting to me about Google Analytics and working with, so every three months with my clients I sit down and I run their report for them from Google Analytics. I pull out what I find interesting and then we sit down for an hour and talk about it and what is so interesting to me about working with so many nonprofits in this way and doing them all at the same time is that I start to see the nuance and the difference between nonprofits because we’re not all the same. Right? With many different colors and flavors of the rainbow included and a lot of professional development preaches do this or do that; it works for everybody, and that’s not true, and what’s nice about Google Analytics is you find out what works for your organization. So yeah, Facebook is huge, literally huge. There’s a lot of people in it, but Beth, as you just pointed out, you are a different person on Facebook than you are on Twitter or LinkedIn for example. When I look at the analytics for my clients, some of them will have a lot of people coming from Facebook with really low times on site and really high bounce rates. Those people are just bopping in and leaving, whereas on Twitter, they might have half as much traffic on Twitter, but those people are spending 3-4 minutes looking at 2-3 pages. They’re really into it and depending on the nonprofit, depending on the goal you have, what kind of participation you want for your website, you might want those Twitter people. Those might be the people that are engaging in the action you wanted.

BETH: Exactly, and I think it’s gonna become more and more important to know





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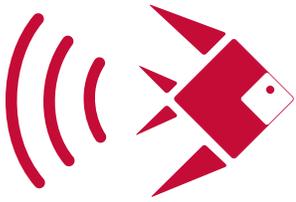
this as these platforms get more strategic and start asking for money for your participation on them. You know, Facebook everyone knows is now limiting your exposure for free and as a page you have to pay to get more exposure. So once you start shifting from just time over into time and money, you don't want to be putting your money behind something that isn't converting for you and the cool thing is you can really start to track through all of these platforms. You can put a little piece of code on them that lets you actually see what people do at the end. That code sort of ends up on a thank you page for something. So you can do and run small little tests to see which of these is actually going all the way through to the end because the reality is traffic to your website, that's step one. That's not an end goal, getting people to your website.

YESENIA: Right. The end goal could be the thank you page after they make the donation.

BETH: Exactly. Can you tell me about some of the different things that you've seen and you've experienced? What are some of the people that you've worked with learned about their audiences from Google Analytics?

YESENIA: It's always a fun conversation that I have every three months with my clients because we do learn and it's a conversation back and forth because when I run the analytics, I haven't talked to them. It might have been 3-4 months since we chatted so I'm just looking at numbers. It's when we get on that webinar together and start looking at the numbers together and we can layer on what they know, that we really start to get hilarious conclusions sometimes and stories that come out of it. So for example, I was talking to a client over the summer and we chat on a Wednesday so Friday was coming up. We were looking at all the files that were downloaded on their site. That's something you can do with Google Analytics. You can see all the PDF files that have been downloaded and she laughed. I said, "What's so funny?" and she said, "The intern application has been downloaded 70 times, and we haven't gotten any applications." The deadline was coming up on Friday and she had started to think no one wanted





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this internship because we haven't gotten any applications, and she realized they've downloaded the application and they're probably working on it and hopefully they'll come through by Friday. If your organization isn't looking for interns, that's OK. I've had other examples where it was the annual report or the sponsorship for the gala or a particular resource guide for a particular issue that the organization wasn't focused on, but there's always these surprises about what people are actually downloading that you didn't realize they were downloading.

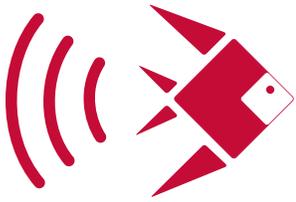
BETH: That's so cool! I actually didn't know that you could see that statistic. We have a lot of clients that are doing things like choosing to put an annual report, for example, online and that way saving a bunch of money on the printing of it and that could be a great thing to check. To say is that actually successful because people love to cut out printing and put things online because it's cheaper, but cheaper and not effective is not helpful. It's saving money at the expense of raising money isn't gonna work and you know, some of the largest nonprofits that raise the most money in the world also have the biggest expenses. They spend a lot of money to do that and you know, you're never gonna become a big organization without investing in this kind of stuff. People come to us all the time with, "We can't afford to print it." OK, you're gonna put it online and if nobody gets it, nobody downloads it, nobody looks at that page, that can help you make a decision the next year about what's good for you and what you want to do.

YESENIA: Absolutely! It works in both ways. You'll discover unexpected activity that you didn't know was going on and you'll like you said, discover which of your intended efforts didn't actually go as well as you hoped.

BETH: That's right. Anything else?

YESENIA: Just yesterday and I was thinking about you when I was having this conversation. Just yesterday I was having one of these meetings with my clients and we were looking through their queries, their search queries. So Google





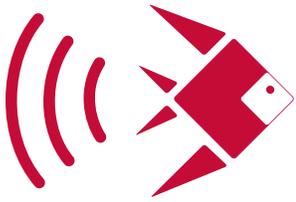
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Analytics will tell you what people were searching when they found you, what term, like baby weaning, and they had a couple of new terms come up since the last time we spoke, since previous quarter. They had two variations of the term “civic engagement.” It was a welcome surprise for them because it was exactly what they want. When you look in your Google Analytics, dear listeners, you might see a lot of variations of your name, your organization’s name or variations of your staff name, like your executive director. Those are well and good, but those are people who know you. What we want them to find your site, we really also want to find those people who don’t know you yet, but care about your issues and so for this organization, that’s very important. They have all these important issues that they do work on and they want to find new people who are interested and civic engagement after working for them for three years at this point, civic engagement had never come up as one of those terms and here it was in two different variations and maybe it was because we were talking about July, August, September and it was back to school and teachers were looking or students were looking, but wither way now they know that civic engagement is an up and coming topic that their audience cares about. It’s not one of the like pillars of their work, but it’s something that they do a lot of work on so now they can think about, “How can we blog about this? How can we post this on social? How can we put this in an e-newsletter?” It’s an opportunity for them to connect with an audience that wants that information.

BETH: I feel like there’s so many ways you can use that piece of information. You can use it to go, “Oh my gosh, these people are really interested in this. That’s how they’re finding our site. We need to increase what we say. We then need to push on that and do more focus on it.” Also we do a lot of branding work and a lot of times people struggle with spending the effort into branding because there’s no way to measure it. Just as you said, this gives me a great idea. I could put this, the term like in the key phrases that we come up with, the key ideas that the organization is coming up with. If we turn those into terms that we’re looking for in Google Analytics, that could be an indicator that your branding effort is working.





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YESENIA: Yes! I love that!

BETH: That's why you're talking to people. The other thing, the third thing that I guess came out of what you're saying is it could also tell you when things are going awry. Everybody writes their own website. Hey, I've got this great copy up there. If everyone is finding you, cold traffic finding you, that means that whatever you have, the words that you're having on the website, Google thinks that you are a good response for those queries. So if the words that people are finding you, you're like, "That's not really what we do," that should be an indicator that your tone, your message is off and it's not attracting the people to you or it's not attracting people. There's a disconnect in what people think you do or what Google thinks you do and what you actually do. So those are all like three really good ways that you could use what you find in analytics to help understand what people want and what Google is saying that you deliver.

YESENIA: Right, right.

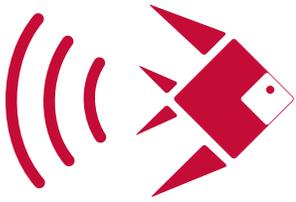
BETH: Because online that's all you really are. You are what the internet and the searchers define you as.

YESENIA: Right, there's a random algorithm that's decided.

BETH: Exactly, you are a panda. The question that came out of that is you said that you can use search terms, you can see search terms that people are using to find you. I thought through Google's changes over the last few years is they were eliminating your ability to see what search terms people were using to find you. Can you talk a little bit about what you're actually doing and what's still possible?

YESENIA: So they did greatly reduce your ability to see those terms. When you, dear listener, follow along and look in your Google Analytics and see your search queries, number one will always be not set in parenthesis. There will be this giant number. It will represent this massive number of sessions. What does not set mean? I have found many different responses from Google over the last





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few years what not set meant. None of them are the same so I will not give you an answer because we don't have one. What we do know is that beneath not set and the rest of that list are terms that have numbers next to them and you can, whether or not the numbers next to them are absolutely true, whether or not 334 people searched civic engagement, we don't know, but we do know that more people were searching civic engagement than were searching study guide for Connecticut or something else. So we can see the relative success or the relative impact perhaps of the search terms. So that's what we have available right now.

BETH: Again, that's what I thought and I always heard that the net set meant that those were people that were logged into Google account that were searching and the ones that you show are the ones that are not logged in. Isn't that funny? It's probably just like urban legend.

YESENIA: I don't know if you're right, I don't know if you're wrong. I've heard many other answers and I'm always like, "I don't know." I wish ...

BETH: It doesn't matter whether we know or not. All we can do is work with the information that Google still supplies.

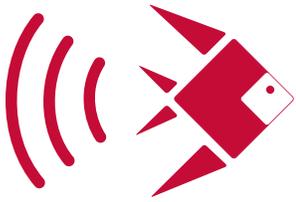
YESENIA: There you go, Beth. Exactly. That's the kind of attitude I want.

BETH: Right. Like you could lose a lot of time and energy mourning over stuff that you're like, "If we only." Well, you don't. It doesn't matter if you only because you don't. The key words, the words that come out of that are great ways that people can use to understand that and how are people figuring out where to start with that? What words they should be using or what things they should be doing the best they can to reach these audiences?

YESENIA: Is your question about search engine optimization?

BETH: Yes.





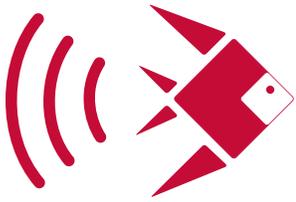
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YESENIA: My advice for nonprofits, especially because again the nonprofits I work with are just like the ones you work with Beth. It's the slash/marketers. We already have other hats. My advice regarding search engine optimization is twofold. One is to be consistent with your content, whatever that may be and you already mentioned that earlier. Be consistent. So getting that e-newsletter out on a regular basis, committing to a blogging schedule of your choice. It doesn't have to be every day, every week. Not even every month. I'm not prescribing the schedule. I'm just saying be consistent because Google wants sites that are consistently posting content. Again consistent is up to you. We do what we can. The second tip is always to get the most out of the effort because creating content is hard. It requires a lot of brain energy. It requires time for you to sit down and dedicate to it. Maybe you have to chase someone down. There's a lot that goes into the effort of creating content. You should get the most results from it that you can. Post it on social, post it in your email. Make sure that your title like you were talking about Beth, throwing in those key words in the title that would connect to people who are reading it. Do all of those things to get that return on investment on your article.

BETH: The third one I would add to that is the thing that I'm kind of struggling through myself right now, which is to make sure you're creating a rigorous reader focus. It's so easy when you're writing about stuff that you have expertise in that you know and you want people to do something, click that button, to write it from like your own perspective. We have something that we're promoting right now, which is a quick start guide for getting an annual appeal letter out in the next three weeks. If people haven't done that before or maybe the one that they've been doing hasn't worked very well, we've written this little quickie guide to say here's what you do with your list. Here's what you do with your writing. Here's what you do with your design, your mailing. Boom! In three weeks you can get all this done and get it out the door. The landing page, all the stuff that I've been writing has been quick start guide, quick start guide and I'm looking at my SEO and like even just the SEO functionality within my system is going, "No, no. Sorry. Nobody knows what you mean," and I do this for a living and even when





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I'm doing it, it's very hard to get out of your own head and out of your own way and just constantly test it against what does the world want. Where are they right now? What do people know? We all have this tendency to write, I would say we write like we're putting it in a grant every day. It's like grant applications. Let me impress them with how smart and intense we are because that's human nature. Of course we want people to think we're smart and good at what we do, but the average person like you said they're clicking around different websites. They're gonna stop on the stuff that they can absorb that feels exactly right for them.

YESENIA: Right.

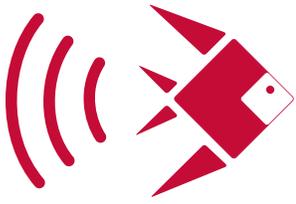
BETH: Do you have any sort of last tip that you would give somebody? If somebody says, "Oh my gosh, I really do need to go back in and look at my Google Analytics and see what I can learn about it that would help me create better content for my audience," what could you tell people to start off with that would help them take an action today?

YESENIA: Absolutely! So I have a free three-part mini course on Google Analytics. Part one helps you understand the key terms, part two I show you around. It's a little webinar so I show you around and in part three I show you how to get Google Analytics installed. That is specifically intended for people who are just getting started or who were like me and had the tool and really weren't using it. So really you are just getting started. If someone wants that, it's on my website. It's SmartCauseDigital.com. It's right on the home page and if you just sit there for a few seconds, a pop-up will come up and offer it to you as well. So you can choose. That's where they can get started with Google Analytics for free or you know, learn a little bit more of the articles and things I have on the site.

BETH: Fabulous and I will have links to that on the show notes page and if people have questions specifically for you, how can they get in touch with you?

YESENIA: My email is Yesenia@SmartCauseDigital.com and they can send me an





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email any time.

BETH: You can find Yesenia at her email or at her Twitter handle, which is @SilverBell and that will be a story for another day. We'll have links to all the different places you can find her online. Yesenia, thank you so much for joining me today. I know I learned a few new things and I'm sure all of our listeners did as well. I really am grateful for you sharing all of your knowledge with both me and our community.

YESENIA: Thank you. I had so much fun sharing the ideas that you shared with me. I appreciate it.

