

Do you Know where your Bookings are Truly Coming From?

Accurate tracking of HOW A GUEST FINDS YOU allows for quality marketing decisions.

Let's Begin with some Basic Q&A about the Topic

Q: How many places do you think your potential Guest shops before they decide to book a room with you?

A: Some experts say 13, some say 17, some say 22. The total number isn't what you need to focus on. What you need to focus on is the fact that there isn't one answer to the question "Where did your guest find you".

Q: So why would you even bother to ask, or trust what your guest TELLS YOU about where they found you?

A: Bottom line, you shouldn't be asking your guest. They don't know. How could they, when they probably looked at over a dozen places before booking with you?

Q: Aren't the answers the Guest selects about where they found me in my reservation system accurate?

A: Some Innkeepers use a drop box feature listing a variety of places that a guest can tell you they found you as part of the reservation system when a guest books a room. Using this type of data gathering is flawed, because you are still asking your guest to pick one place they found you. When you know they found you in many, many different places. This white paper is going to show you a BETTER and MORE ACCURATE WAY to determine how your guests find you online.

Q: Why do I care about where my Guests find me online?

A: So you know where to place your marketing dollars. Increased Web traffic doesn't mean an increase in bookings. Google has become much more specific as to the results they will provide for searches. Today, Google tries to best match the visitors search with the very best answer. So if you are paying a marketing firm to drive you more traffic, you need to make sure that traffic is actually turning into a head in bed.

Q: If you can't ask your Guest, and you need this information to best run your business, what do you do?

A: You use a FREE tool called Google Analytics. When properly installed, you will be able to determine the last place a guest was before they went to your website and booked a room. *You will also be able to better determine the websites that were visited along the way to the final click that made the booking on your site.*

An Example of Google Analytics data when CORRECTLY installed

Below is a snapshot of what you will see when you have your web master install Universal Analytics with E-Commerce Tracking correctly. Notice in the highlighted left hand column, this tells you where the guest was directly before they came to your site and booked a room. Also, notice the highlighted far right hand column. This is where you see how much each of these sites generated in revenue from the booking. Wouldn't you like to know actual dollars instead of just the number of sessions (2nd column). The dollar amounts shine a bright light on traffic. You don't want to just drive traffic, you want to drive TARGETED traffic that results in bookings!

| Source / Medium | Sessions | % New Sessions | New Users | Bounce Rate | Pages / Session | Avg. Session Duration | Ecommerce Conversion Rate | Transactions | Revenue |
|--|---|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|---|
| | 3,057 % of Total: 100.00% (3,057) | 74.19% Avg for View: 74.19% (0.00%) | 2,268 % of Total: 100.00% (2,268) | 43.18% Avg for View: 43.18% (0.00%) | 4.01 Avg for View: 4.01 (0.00%) | 00:02:58 Avg for View: 00:02:58 (0.00%) | 1.54% Avg for View: 1.54% (0.00%) | 47 % of Total: 100.00% (47) | \$16,118.00 % of Total: 100.00% (\$16,118.00) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. google / organic | 1,136 (37.16%) | 71.83% | 816 (35.90%) | 30.63% | 4.83 | 00:03:34 | 2.38% | 27 (57.45%) | \$9,368.00 (58.12%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. (direct) / (none) | 752 (24.60%) | 78.72% | 592 (26.10%) | 60.90% | 2.90 | 00:02:02 | 0.93% | 7 (14.89%) | \$2,853.00 (17.70%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. bedandbreakfast.com / referral | 380 (12.43%) | 67.11% | 255 (11.24%) | 17.37% | 5.55 | 00:04:19 | 1.05% | 4 (8.51%) | \$1,636.00 (10.15%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. tripadvisor.com / cpc | 45 (1.47%) | 60.00% | 27 (1.19%) | 44.44% | 4.07 | 00:06:01 | 4.44% | 2 (4.26%) | \$656.00 (4.07%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. bbonline.com / referral | 15 (0.49%) | 73.33% | 11 (0.49%) | 0.00% | 6.47 | 00:05:42 | 13.33% | 2 (4.26%) | \$477.00 (2.96%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. yahoo / organic | 35 (1.14%) | 68.57% | 24 (1.06%) | 34.29% | 4.71 | 00:03:28 | 5.71% | 2 (4.26%) | \$442.00 (2.74%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. visit.com / referral | 24 (0.79%) | 79.17% | 19 (0.84%) | 29.17% | 4.17 | 00:04:15 | 4.17% | 1 (2.13%) | \$288.00 (1.79%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8. aol / organic | 6 (0.20%) | 66.67% | 4 (0.18%) | 33.33% | 4.17 | 00:04:06 | 16.67% | 1 (2.13%) | \$249.00 (1.54%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. bing / organic | 82 (2.68%) | 67.07% | 55 (2.43%) | 31.71% | 4.95 | 00:04:21 | 1.22% | 1 (2.13%) | \$149.00 (0.92%) |

2 Examples of Google Analytics data when IN-CORRECTLY installed

Example 1: Below is a snapshot of what you will see when your webmaster has NOT installed Universal Analytics with E-Commerce Tracking correctly. Notice how all the revenue is bucketing under the Inn's name (in this example: inn.com). This is caused by an error in the installation process causing all the revenue that is being generated from places like: google.com, bedandbreakfast.com, tripadvisor.com, bbonline.com, yahoo.com, etc. and any other locations that might be driving you traffic to end up in your Website Referral bucket. It makes your Website look as if it's the one responsible for all your bookings, when in reality, it's the install that is incorrect. If the installation is repaired, the results would look more like those in the example above, giving credit where credit is due.

| Source / Medium | Acquisition | | | Behavior | | | Conversions eCommerce | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| | Sessions | % New Sessions | New Users | Bounce Rate | Pages / Session | Avg. Session Duration | Ecommerce Conversion Rate | Transactions | Revenue | |
| | 2,317 <small>% of Total: 100.00% (2,317)</small> | 70.87% <small>Avg for View: 70.78% (0.12%)</small> | 1,642 <small>% of Total: 100.12% (1,640)</small> | 32.11% <small>Avg for View: 32.11% (0.00%)</small> | 3.73 <small>Avg for View: 3.73 (0.00%)</small> | 00:03:02 <small>Avg for View: 00:03:02 (0.00%)</small> | 1.34% <small>Avg for View: 1.34% (0.00%)</small> | 31 <small>% of Total: 100.00% (31)</small> | \$15,489.90 <small>% of Total: 100.00% (\$15,489.90)</small> | |
| 1. inn.com / referral | 486 (20.98%) | 66.87% | 325 (19.79%) | 13.37% | 2.75 | 00:02:20 | 6.38% | 31 (100.00%) | \$15,489.90 (100.00%) | |
| 2. (direct) / (none) | 289 (12.47%) | 73.01% | 211 (12.85%) | 40.83% | 3.54 | 00:02:49 | 0.00% | 0 (0.00%) | \$0.00 (0.00%) | |

Example 2: Below is a snapshot of what you will see when your webmaster has NOT installed the revenue E-Commerce Tracking piece. Notice how there is NO revenue at all displaying in the highlighted far right hand column. This is because the E-Commerce Tracking piece is not installed.

| Source / Medium | Acquisition | | | Behavior | | | Conversions | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| | Sessions | % New Sessions | New Users | Bounce Rate | Pages / Session | Avg. Session Duration | Goal Conversion Rate | Goal Completions | Goal Value | |
| | 3,642 <small>% of Total: 91.44% (3,983)</small> | 83.39% <small>Avg for View: 83.48% (-0.11%)</small> | 3,037 <small>% of Total: 91.34% (3,325)</small> | 43.57% <small>Avg for View: 44.87% (-2.88%)</small> | 2.68 <small>Avg for View: 2.64 (1.54%)</small> | 00:02:18 <small>Avg for View: 00:02:16 (1.84%)</small> | 0.00% <small>Avg for View: 0.00% (0.00%)</small> | 0 <small>% of Total: 0.00% (0)</small> | \$0.00 <small>% of Total: 0.00% (\$0.00)</small> | |
| 1. google / organic | 1,618 (44.43%) | 83.68% | 1,354 (44.58%) | 41.16% | 2.78 | 00:02:28 | 0.00% | 0 (0.00%) | \$0.00 (0.00%) | |
| 2. (direct) / (none) | 819 (22.49%) | 82.91% | 679 (22.36%) | 51.53% | 2.43 | 00:01:58 | 0.00% | 0 (0.00%) | \$0.00 (0.00%) | |
| 3. bedandbreakfast.com / referral | 307 (8.43%) | 82.08% | 252 (8.30%) | 34.20% | 2.77 | 00:02:20 | 0.00% | 0 (0.00%) | \$0.00 (0.00%) | |
| 4. bbonline.com / referral | 111 (3.05%) | 90.09% | 100 (3.29%) | 24.32% | 3.58 | 00:03:31 | 0.00% | 0 (0.00%) | \$0.00 (0.00%) | |
| 5. bing / organic | 108 (2.97%) | 83.33% | 90 (2.96%) | 37.04% | 2.76 | 00:03:20 | 0.00% | 0 (0.00%) | \$0.00 (0.00%) | |
| 6. yahoo / organic | 89 (2.44%) | 79.78% | 71 (2.34%) | 48.31% | 2.65 | 00:02:05 | 0.00% | 0 (0.00%) | \$0.00 (0.00%) | |
| 7. tripadvisor.com / referral | 65 (1.78%) | 75.38% | 49 (1.61%) | 20.00% | 3.58 | 00:04:24 | 0.00% | 0 (0.00%) | \$0.00 (0.00%) | |

How do you SEE your own data in Google Analytics?

- Step 1:** Log Into Google Analytics <https://analytics.google.com/analytics/web/>
- Step 2:** Set the Date Range (Defaults to last 31 Days)
- Step 3:** Click Acquisition
- Step 4:** Click All Traffic
- Step 5:** Click Source/Medium

How to Install Google Analytics Correctly?

First, you must use an online reservation system. Second, you must determine if your online reservation system supports the current version of Universal Analytics with E-Commerce Tracking. The proper install of Universal Analytics with E-Commerce tracking is FULLY DEPENDENT on your reservation system supporting it.

Universal Analytics Reference: <https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/2790010?hl=en>

As of the writing of this Whitepaper, we have rigorously and successfully tested:

- ResNexus
- RezOvations
- ThinkReservations

If you are using another reservation software, you'll need to contact them to see if they support the current version of Universal Analytics and E-Commerce tracking.



Your webmaster must correctly install Universal Analytics and E-Commerce Tracking in 3 different systems / areas.

- Your Reservation System *
- Your Website / Blog *
- Your Google Analytics Account (*Set Exclusions and turn on E-Commerce Tracking*)

* Both your Reservation System and Website / Blog must also have the proper Cross Domain Tracking Code installed in order to have your referrals track properly in the correct referral buckets, and not just default under your Inn Name.

Cross Domain Tracking Reference: <https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1034342?hl=en>

Wrap-Up: Google's Universal Analytics and E-Commerce Tracking

What Does Universal Analytics and E-Commerce Track?

- Only Bookings when a Guest Books a Room from your Website

What Does it NOT Track?

- OTA Bookings
- Phone Bookings
- E-Mail Bookings
- Any Bookings NOT completed on your Website

How Do You Determine the Bookings made on your Site vs. Bookings not made on your Site?

Do you encourage all your guests to book Online? If so your Google Analytics data will be more all-encompassing. But if you take more than a few bookings on the phone, or through an OTA or an E-Mail request, then you'll need to do a bit of math to figure out the percentage of the bookings from Google Analytics vs. what it's not capturing. Just use your Reservation Software to get your revenue numbers so you can compare them to Google Analytics in order to get a percentage of bookings being made on your site. Remember to use the same date ranges so you are comparing apples to apples.

Finally, Universal Analytics and E-Commerce tracking is a quality solution, one far more advanced than asking your Guest where they found you, but keep in mind, as with all software and services, it is not perfect. When installed properly it will provide you a quality sample of where your Guests are finding you, thus allowing you to determine if your marketing dollars are being well-spent or not.

If you are currently paying a marketing firm that is only providing you traffic statistics, I would highly suggest you move into the world of E-Commerce tracking where you can verify your bookings against the traffic being reported. An increase in traffic will look good on your monthly report, but in the long run, will your overall revenue justify the marketing dollars you are spending? And what is it that is actually driving that revenue? Was it from the marketing work being completed (IE: paid for), or a directory listing, a regional or state site, TripAdvisor, press pickup, Etc.? With E-Commerce tracking you can answer those questions and in turn verify the accurate spending of your marketing dollars.