

## SMALL-BUSINESS MARKETING

# Do your digital marketing metrics conflict? Here's why



BY ERIC CAWLEY

Imagine walking into a doctor's office and having four different doctors take your temperature. They get wildly varying results. Your blood pressure numbers vary, too.

That's what metrics

for online marketing can be like.

One of the best, free systems to measure a website's health is Google Analytics. GA reports website visitor counts, average time on your website, number of page views and how people found your website. By regularly reviewing your GA statistics, you gain insight into what's working — and what's not — on your website and the online ads that may promote it.

Your website's server logs may also provide meaningful data. Google Adwords and Facebook Ads can also report how many people clicked your online ads and were redirected to your website.

So, optimally, if 800 people clicked on your Google Adwords ad last month, Adwords would report 800 clicks. Google Analytics would also report 800 visits to your website from the ad. Your server's stats might say

the same thing.

Unfortunately, that isn't happening.

Many webmasters are seeing huge discrepancies between website/blog server data and Google Analytics statistics, and between both of those sources and Google Adwords and Facebook ads stats.

While it's normal and common to have slight variations between Adwords and GA data, large swings between the two are

not. Your Adwords report should not show 300 clicks while Google Analytics reports only 23 sessions from a campaign in the same time period, or vice versa.

Google says Analytics may not record a website session if cookies, JavaScript or images are disabled. Others have also offered good reasons why discrepancies exist.

Also, Facebook announced last month that for two years, it had underreported the average time users spent watching video ads on its platform. It had counted only video views lasting more than three seconds.

Ask your webmaster to report on possible

discrepancies. Ditto if you're running online ads, like Google Adwords or Facebook ads. Ask questions. Get details. You've likely spent good money on these online marketing platforms. You're entitled to know how cost-effective they are (or aren't).

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VIDEO

Eric Cawley explains discrepancies in online marketing data