

Website Analytics

Report, April, 2015

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The Student Engagement Project seeks to provide information and resources for educators seeking evidence-based strategies for working with students, including those with disabilities. The ultimate goal of the project is to assist educators in reducing school dropout and reducing the use of exclusionary discipline. To this end, the Student Engagement Project team has created over 50 “strategy briefs” and related documents to assist educators in working with students. Each strategy brief contains information culled from the voluminous educational research literature and distilled into short pdf documents written at a level accessible to teachers and administrators. For example, the “Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports” strategy brief outlines the research supporting its use and includes tips for implementation in schools or districts.

Materials created by the Student Engagement Project are made available free of charge on the project website: k12engagement.unl.edu. In addition to the aforementioned strategy briefs, the website contains information on legal and policy issues related to education, strategies for collecting data for use in educational decision making, and news items related to dropout and discipline. The purpose of this report is to describe the frequency of web traffic on the site as provided by Google Analytics.

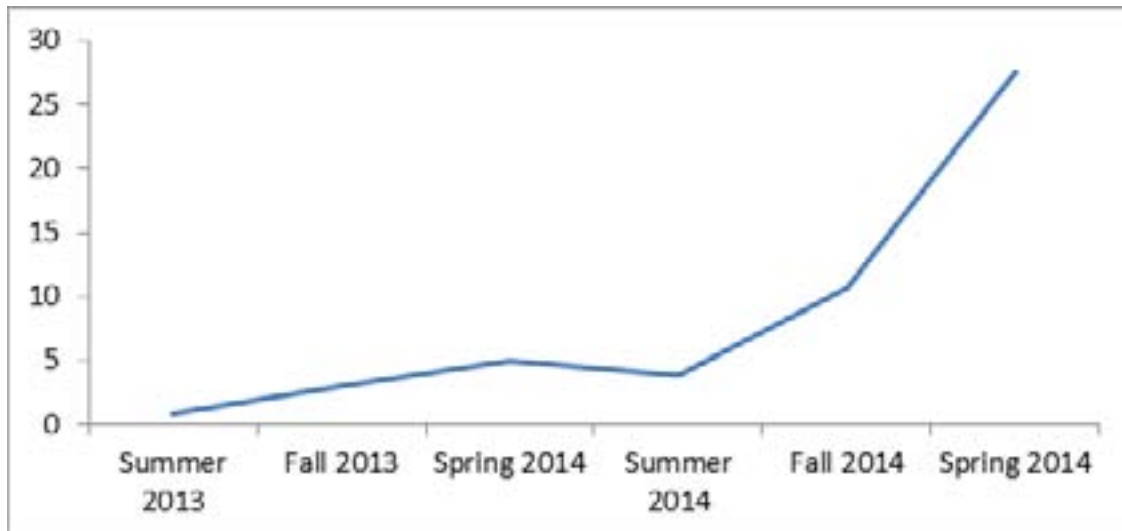
Growth over Time

Web traffic data is available beginning in May, 2013. Below is a summary of traffic since that time:

| Time Period | Sessions | Sessions per day |
|----------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Summer 2013 (May – July) | 84 | .91 |
| Fall 2013 (Aug – Dec) | 456 | 2.98 |
| Spring 2014 (Jan – April) | 595 | 4.96 |
| Summer 2014 (May – July) | 362 | 3.93 |
| Fall 2014 (Aug – Dec) | 1627 | 10.63 |
| Spring 2015 (Jan to April) | 3221 | 27.53 |

Each session represents one user connecting to the website. A session includes both first time users and returning users, and can consist of one or more page views. These results indicate that few users were accessing the website in the months following its launch (i.e., less than 3 users per day). Growth was achieved in the Spring of 2014, with a 66.4% increase over the Fall semester. A small (20.6%) reduction in traffic was experienced over the summer of 2014. Finally, Fall of 2014 and Spring of 2015 saw a dramatic – and growing – increase in traffic. Indeed, over the last several months, an average of almost 30 users visited the website each day. This is over 5 times the traffic during the same period the previous year.

Sessions per day, May 2013 - Present



***Note: prior to February 23, 2015, a significant portion of reported traffic included “false sessions” from a webcrawler (pa11y) used to ensure that the site is accessible to users with disabilities. Approximately 200 false sessions were generated each month. The session counts presented above do not include these false sessions. However, other statistics prior to this date will include them, and should be interpreted with caution.*

Current Use

More details about the current use of the website are presented below. These data are reported using the date range February 23 – April 27. That is, no “false session” data are included.

Session descriptions. Each session during this time period generated an average of 2.96 page views, indicating users are visiting an average of almost 3 pages each time they visit the site. Approximately 60% of sessions are new sessions while 40% are returning users, indicating that the majority of traffic are users visiting the site for the first time (or at least from a new IP address). The average session duration is 3 minutes 25 seconds, and the current Bounce Rate (i.e., the percentage of users who access exactly one page before leaving the site) is 62.9%.

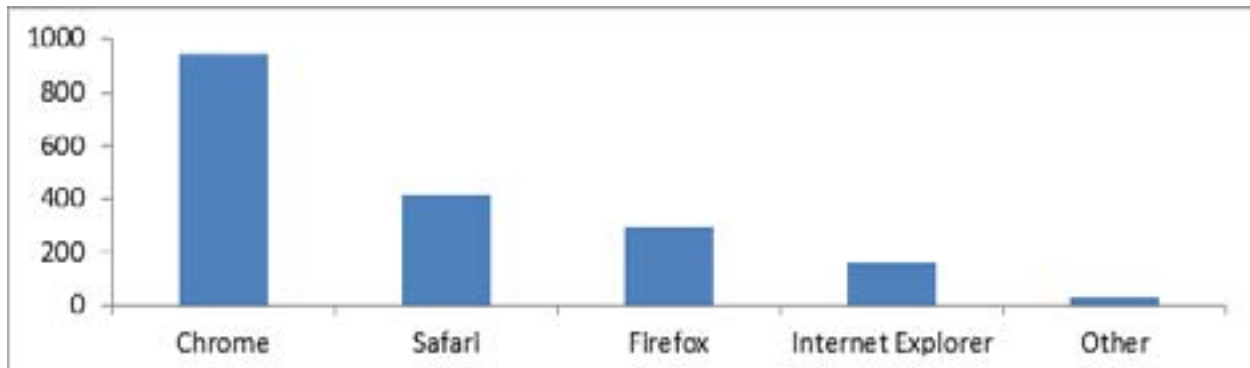
A high bounce rate may be a cause for concern, depending on where users enter the website. If users are accessing the home page and then leaving before viewing valuable content, then this may be an indication that users are unsure where to navigate in order to find what they are looking for. However, if users access a valuable page first (e.g., a strategy brief PDF), then immediately “bouncing” from the site is not as high of a concern. The k12engagement.unl.edu home page shows a 67.55% Bounce Rate. During the selected date range, 1,001 users entered the website through the home page, and approximately 670 of them did not navigate further.

Geography. The primary target audience of the website is educators in Midwestern states, especially in Nebraska. This reflected in the usage data: 72.4% of users are from the United States, and most users are from nearby cities, including Lincoln, Papillion, Kearney, and Omaha, Nebraska; Chicago; Overland

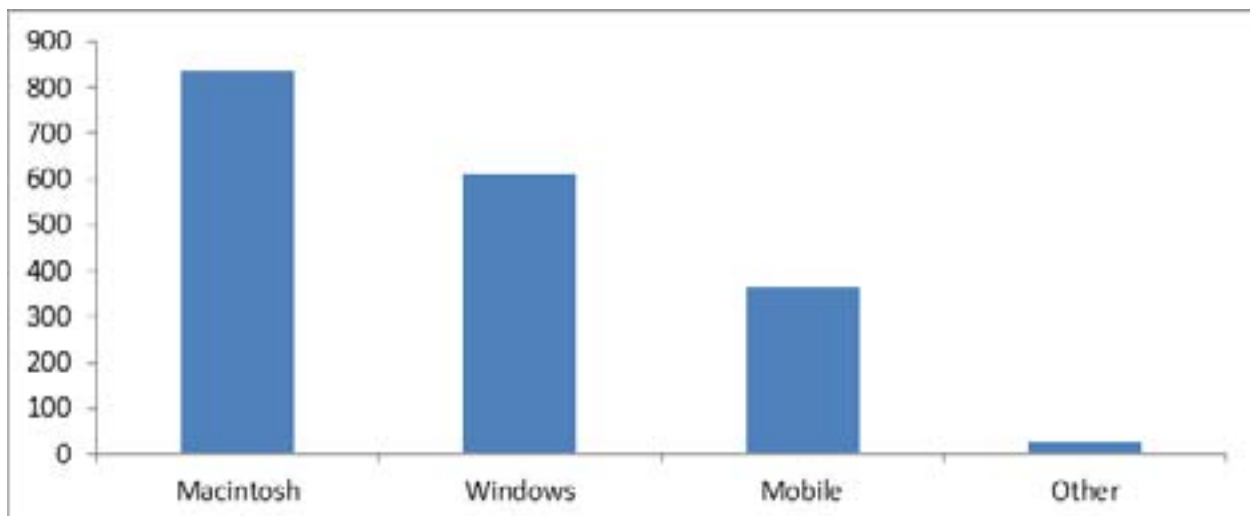
Park and Kansas City, Kansas, and more. This suggests that the majority of users visiting the site are at least from the target geographic area.

Operating systems and browsers. Knowing the technology that users tend to use allows us to make sure that all website features work for the majority of users.

Browsers used to access the website



Operating systems used to access the website



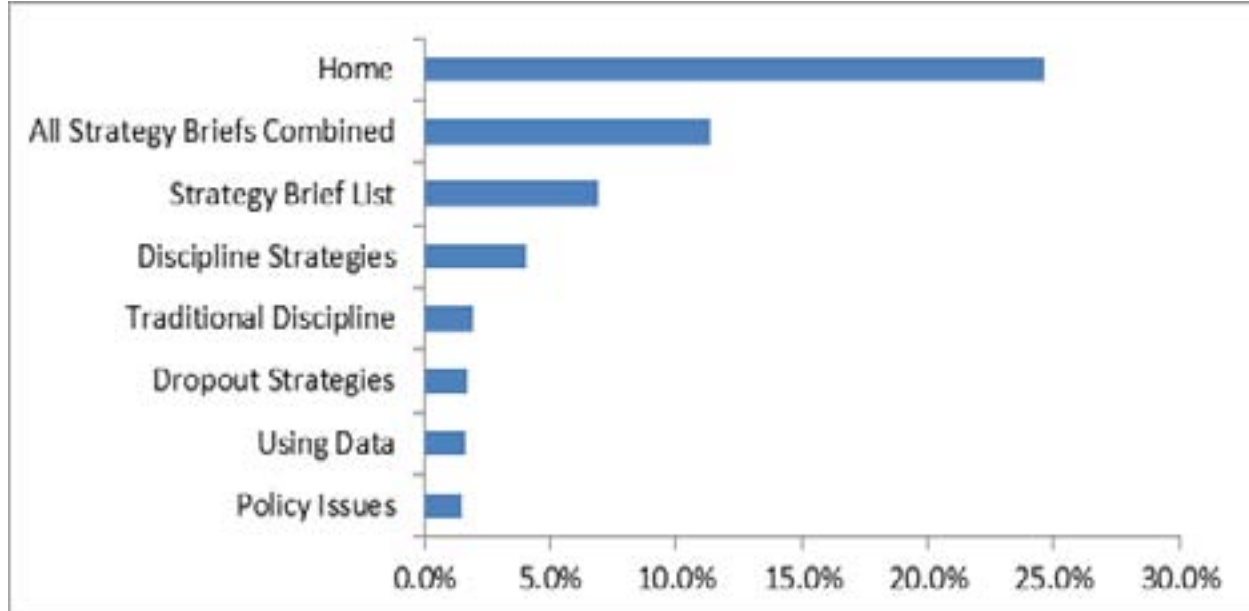
A variety of internet browsers are used to visit the website. The most common is Chrome, followed by Safari. Further, enough users access with Firefox and Internet Explorer that it must be ensured that all features on the site work for all four major browsers. Looking to the operating systems, Macintosh and Windows both see heavy use. Mobile operating systems, including iOS and Android, are also commonly used. Therefore, while most users access the site using their computers, mobile users do make up approximately 20% of the population and all pages should be designed with mobile users in mind.

Strategy Brief PDFs. While the site contains various features of interest to educators, the core purpose is to serve as a vehicle to deliver its most important content to users: the strategy brief PDFs. While not all users access the site with the goal of finding and reading these PDFs, it is anticipated that many or most of them are, especially those who may be accessing the site

multiple times. Therefore, an important question is: how many users are accessing these strategy briefs?

Since February 23, the strategy briefs have been accessed a total of 618 times. This is an average of approximately 18.7 per day, and represents 11.34% of the total pageviews. Additionally, only 82 (4.5% of users) sessions enter the website via one of these pages, and 86.7% of users accessing these briefs do so via other pages on the website. Indeed, this is precisely how the site is currently designed: users are expected to navigate to menus listing many different educational strategies, and from there are able to access the strategy brief pdfs. Users navigating directly to strategy brief PDFs likely come from search engines or are following a direct link to the page.

Most popular pages by percentage of total pageviews



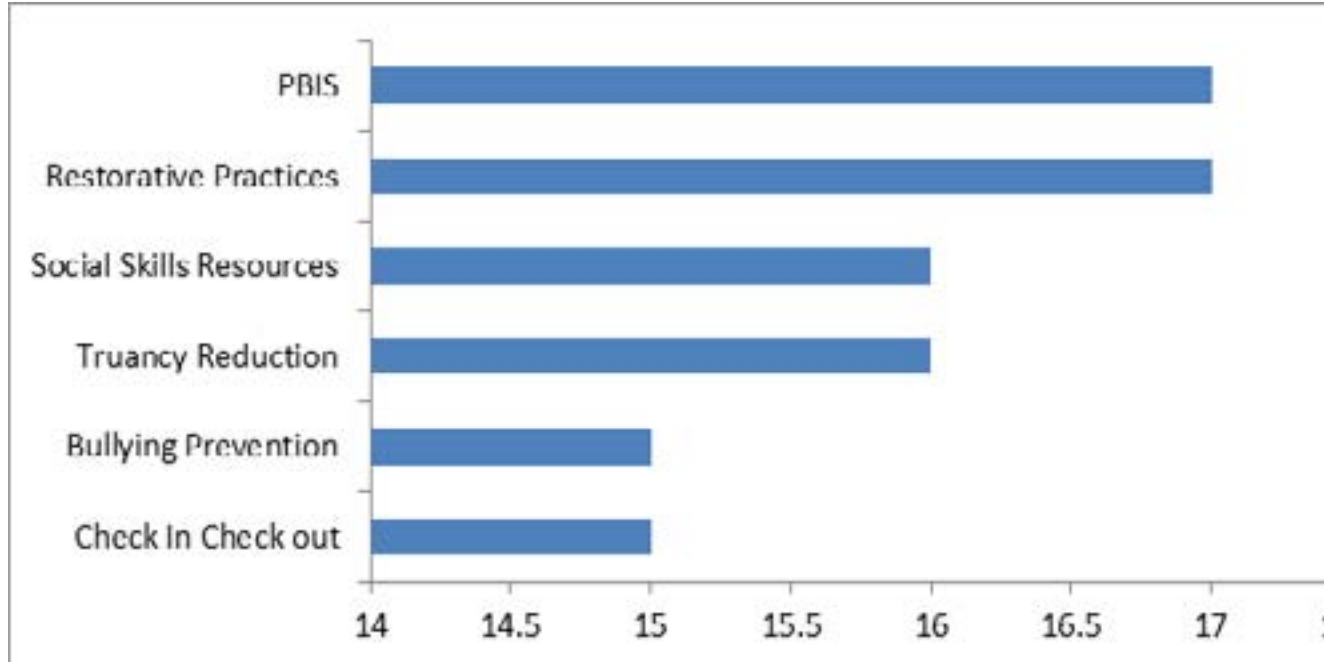
Most popular pages. As expected, the home page is the most visited page, with 1,342 total pageviews (24.62% of total pageviews). Other popular pages are shown below:

Summary and Recommendations for Improvement

Based on the information available from Google Analytics, it is clear that the site is seeing consistent use, and that this use is growing rapidly. It is likely that this growth can be attributed to increased advertising via presentations at local conferences, as well as via email (including emails to academics and educators who are being asked to review the strategy briefs).

Many users access the site using mobile technology, whether from tablets or cell phones. Of those that access using personal computers, the majority use Macintosh, possibly reflecting the fact that Apple has a large market share among educators (i.e., many districts purchase Macintosh computers for all staff members).

Most popular strategy brief pdfs by pageviews



A large percentage of users, especially those that access the home page first, do not navigate further into the website. That is, they do not click any links and likely are not seeing important content. However, it is important to note that some users will inevitably “bounce” (e.g., those who find the website by accident and are legitimately not interested in the content), and thus a bounce rate of less than 30% is not a realistic goal. Additionally, those that do navigate past the first page tend to view several different pages, and many appear to be accessing the strategy briefs.

Based on the data available from Google Analytics, the following recommendations are made to improve the website:

1. Increase the total pageviews of strategy brief pdfs. Above all else, the goal of the website is to provide users with the strategy brief pdfs. While the briefs are being accessed at a fairly high rate, it is recommended that this rate be improved. To do so, several strategies could be attempted:
 - Increase the visibility and importance of strategy briefs on the front page of the website.
 - Increase the visibility of brief “menus” and more clearly direct users to them.
 - Implement a way for users to select a particular problem behavior (e.g., poor academic performance, truancy, aggressive behavior) and receive suggestions for strategy briefs to read.
 - Implement a Google Analytics “goal” to track the number of users that enter the website on the home page and eventually navigate to a strategy brief page. This will serve as a better measure of user behavior than simple percentage data.
2. Decrease the bounce rate of the home page. Many users who access the home page are not navigating to other pages on the website. It is not known precisely why this is the case,

but several options for improvement include:

- Simplify the home page to include only the most pertinent links to the most important content.
 - Increase mobile usability through the use of break points.
 - Increase attractiveness of the home page design.
 - Make the most important links more attention grabbing (e.g., using a clear “call to action”).
3. Increase mobile friendliness. Strategies to ensure that the website is both accessible and usable for individuals using mobile devices may include:
- Addition of break points on every page.
 - Explicit testing of all pages using both tablets and cell phones to ensure that content is readable and loading correctly.
4. Increase the overall number of sessions and users. While site traffic is growing, it is anticipated that more and more potential users could be reached.
- Continue discussing the website during conference presentations.
 - Continue working with area school districts and state boards of education to share the website with teachers and administrators.
 - Increase search engine traffic.
 - Creation of a social media presence



Recommended Citation

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