

Analytics University Part I

Web analytics usage has reached mainstream status with 82% adoption among companies surveyed recently by Aberdeen. However, a vast range of maturity exists regarding analytics process, data analysis and corporate understanding of web metrics. A fundamental impediment precluding many companies from building a successful analytics program is a lack of skilled employees required to manage, distribute and analyze web analytics.

There is a good reason for this widespread lack of qualified employees: web analytics is hard. Nearly one-quarter of survey respondents reported that analytics data is difficult to interpret. And, 31% report difficulty converting analytics metrics to actionable information. Although these numbers are relatively small, Aberdeen believes that they reflect an underlying issue. Many companies don't realize the potential for positive impact that analytics can have on their business. In other words, they don't know enough to realize that they have a problem.

Options for Education

At this time, there are four different avenues that companies, analytics practitioners and aspiring web analysts can take to further their knowledge of web analytics, train existing employees and gain skills necessary to attain a job in the field of web analytics.

- Vendor Sponsored Programs
- Analytics Consultants, Blogs and Guru Sessions
- Community Forums & Industry Associations
- Academic Programs

Part I of this two part series will cover vendor sponsored programs and Consultants, Blogs and Guru Sessions. Part 2 will address community forums & industry associations and culminate with academic programs and case studies.

Vendor-Built Universities Lack Accreditation

There is a significant need for web analytics education and the vendor community is well aware and taking full advantage of this fact. Take for example: Coremetrics University, Google's Conversion University, Omniture University, Visual Science's former Digital Marketing University,

Fast Facts:

- ✓ 55% of companies currently use web analytics "Extensively" or "Moderately" throughout their organizations.
- ✓ "Not enough resources to manage web analytics" is the number one frustration expressed by survey respondents.

"I've had an open job requirement for more than 90 days. It's hard to find a qualified person – one with broad range and mix of business, marketing, and technology skills to succeed in web analytics."

~ Judah Phillips,

Director of Web Analytics
Reed Business Interactive

now called Active Insights and WebTrends' Professional Training Courses. Sounds like an impressive list of institutions and undoubtedly they deliver value to all of their students and alumni.

However, vendor training should be viewed for what it's worth. These classes provide tool-specific training to educate on installation, implementation, and integration of their tools to ensure the features and functions are fully utilized. Although this is a service welcomed by employees and many companies globally, it is a practice that, to a certain extent, is self-serving. All vendors want their customers to maximize the potential of their technology investments, but as illustrated in Table I, very few are accomplishing the task.

"Several vendors wanted to license the WAA courses but we've declined to remain tool agnostic.

Vendor courses are frequently more focused on the technical side, with implementation and core technical issues."

~ Jim Novo,

Web Analytics Association
Education Committee, Co-
Chair

Table I: Companies Underutilize Web Analytics Tools

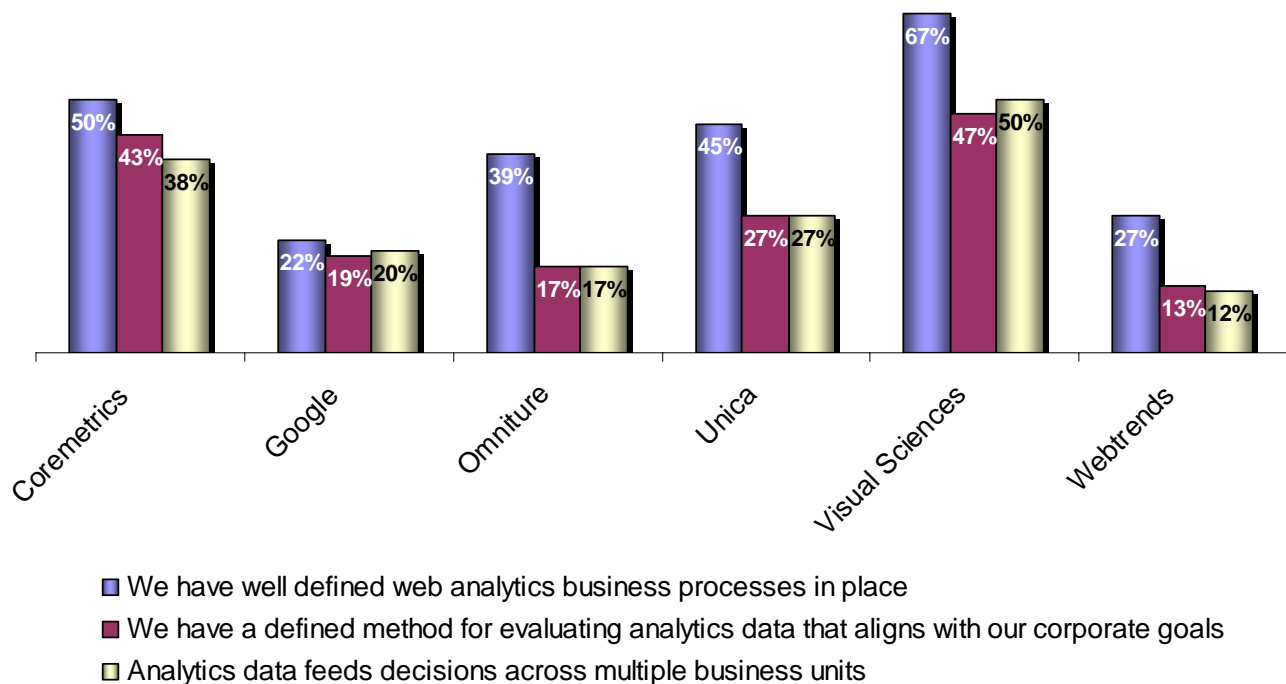
	Coremetrics	Google Analytics	Omiture	Unica	Visual Sciences	WebTrends
% of customers who claim they are <u>not getting</u> the full potential from their current web analytics technology	50%	43%	50%	18%	33%	39%
% of customers that reported data is difficult to extract from analytics platform	25%	22%	17%	36%	13%	15%
% of customers that dedicate full time staff to managing web analytics	38%	21%	39%	36%	53%	12%
% of customers that state analytics data is difficult to interpret	25%	24%	17%	18%	13%	30%

Source: Aberdeen Group, 2007

Note: Metrics displayed in Table I and Figure I reflect a sampling of customers that responded to Aberdeen's survey on Web Analytics. This data is intended to provide directional insight into the pressures and actions of a small sampling of customers using specific vendor solutions. Customers may or may not be using the latest versions of vendor solutions.

Companies that excel with web analytics foster a corporate culture of analytics where data is freely distributed; reports are widely accepted and well understood. This requires an organization that is seeped in data and committed to business processes that support their objectives and goals. Sound like a web analytics nirvana? It is, yet only 23% of companies currently have defined business processes for managing analytics. Even fewer (16%), have defined a method for evaluating web analytics that aligns with their corporate goals. These organizational and process vacancies reflect a corporate reality whereby the benefits of a technology are recognized, but remain out of reach for many businesses.

Figure I: Customer Survey Responses Reflect Deficiencies



Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2007

Consultants, Bloggers and Gurus: The Path to Enlightenment?

A wealth of knowledge resides among analytics consultants and industry gurus, which is sometimes in contrast to – or – in cooperation with, vendor services. A sampling of consultancies that specialize in web analytics include; [Commerce 360](#), [Luna Metrics](#), [Modem Media](#), [OX2](#), [ROI Revolution](#), [SEMphonic](#), [Stratigent](#), [ZAAZ](#) and most recently [Web Analytics Demystified](#).

Consultants have a great deal to offer in the way of helping companies to develop business processes and to build a strategy for web analytics. Many vendors partner also with consultants to aid in the implementation and configuration of web analytics technologies. Several even have certified partner programs that endorse consultants who have demonstrated a level of training and aptitude with their toolsets (see Table 2).

Have You Been Blogging Today?

The blogosphere is rich with web analytics practitioners who take time from their day jobs to muse about all things analytics. Blogs are often a great source of information to learn about analytics topics and increase

knowledge and expand resources. Blogs can also be a resource for hiring new recruits as described in [an April article from the Wall Street Journal](#). A sampling of prophetic blogs and bloggers includes: [Lies, Damned Lies...](#) (Ian Thomas), [Occam's Razor](#) (Avinash Kaushik), [WebAnalytics.be Blog](#) (Aurelie Pols), [Web Analysis, Behavioral Targeting and Advertising](#) (Anil Batra), [Web Analytics & Affiliate Marketing blog](#) (Dennis Mortensen), [Web Analytics Demystified Weblogs](#) (Eric T. Peterson & Judah Phillips) and [Web Metrics Guru](#) (Marshall Sponder). Each of these sites can provide hours of education and are likely to rock your notions of web analytics while maintaining the ability to teach you something you didn't know.

One Guru, Two Guru, Three Guru, Four...

The web analytics industry has recognized several key figures, termed Gurus (i.e., Bryan Eisenberg, Avinash Kaushik, Eric Peterson and Jim Sterne to name a few), that have been instrumental in the development and advances of the field. Yet, rather than sit up on high, these Gurus make themselves widely available to the industry and are willing to engage, discuss, and ruminate on web analytics. If you're stuck on a web analytics issue, visit a Guru Blog or pick up the phone and call. You will be surprised at how approachable these gurus are – but be warned, their enthusiasm is contagious.

The latest endeavor by Shane Atchison and Jason Burby of ZAAZ is a touring series of [Marketing ROI Executive Workshops](#). Their itinerary includes stops in five cities with the goal of educating executives on best practices for implementing and leading with web analytics. These experts will share their insights along with workshops led by Avinash Kaushik and others to inspire companies to think differently about web analytics and the potential impact analytics can have on a marketing organization.

Additionally, the Web Analytics Association has introduced a new series of guru workshops this summer to help acclimate new entrants to the practice of web analytics called [Web Analytics Association Base Camp](#). The camp includes one day workshops focused on introduction to analytics, online marketing campaign measurement and analytics for site optimization.

Web Analytics Gurus have made a significant impact on the industry based on their knowledge, leadership and devotion to analytics evangelism. Industry moguls like Eric Peterson are devoting their careers to helping business build processes to manage and leverage their data.

Where to Look for Help

As described herein, there are numerous resources available for companies looking to develop a web analytics strategy, understand how to use analytics technology and methods to interpret the data to bring value to an organization. These services solve some of the business problems of building an analytics culture, maximizing the potential of online tools and tapping into resources to further the knowledge of web analytics.

Table 2 provides a short list of vendors and consultants that provide educational resources and services to aid companies in pursuit of their analytics goals. This is by no means a complete list, rather to be viewed as examples of what is available in today's marketplace.

Table 2: Vendor & Consultant Offerings

Vendors	Analytics Training	Educational Resources
Coremetrics http://www.coremetrics.com/services/training.html	Business User & Executive Intro Courses, Marketing Training, Merchandising Training, Usability Training	Training Slides, FAQs, implementation Guides, On-Site Training, Web Based Training
Google Analytics http://www.google.com/analytics/support/overview.html	Getting started, Tracking, Reports, Common Tasks, AdWords	Help Center, Conversion University, Google Analytics Group, Official Google Analytics Blog
Omniure www.omniure.com/education	Implementation, Fundamentals, Understanding KPIs, Custom Variables & Events, Campaign Management, Increasing Conversions, Search Marketing	Omniure University, Regional Training, Web-Based Training, Custom Training, basic & advanced instruction, Omniure Certified Professional Program
Unica http://netinsight.unica.com/Services/Services.cfm?location=dropdown	Implementation, Basic Intro & Advanced Techniques, Business Process / Change Management, Web 2.0 Measurement & Optimization, Online-Offline Fusion, Best Practices	Training Sessions, Implementation Services, Technical Application Services, Best Practices, Customer Support
Visual Sciences http://www.websidestory.com/services/education/overview.html	Implementation Techniques, Report Building, Segmentation, Best Practices, Functional Analysis, Conversion Optimization	Active Insights Education Forum, Instructor-Led and Self-Paced Training, Business Data Integration, Visual Certified Professional Program
WebTrends http://www.webtrends.com/services/training/courses.aspx	Implementation, Custom Reports, Merchandising, Accuracy Best Practices, Measuring Web 2.0, Segmentation, Relationship Marketing, Performance Management	Regional, Web-based and Custom Training Courses, WebTrends Seminar Series, User Groups, In-Product Resource Center & Knowledgebase, Optimization Services
Consultants	Analytics Services Offered	Certified Vendor Partners
Commerce 360	Analytics Software Evaluation & Selection, Implementation & Configuration, Report Design & Development, Ongoing Analysis	Omniure
Luna Metrics	Analytics & Conversion Services, Multivariate Testing, KPI Definition, Software Recommendations	Google Analytics
Modem Media	Planning & Management Capabilities, Execution (Define, Build, Manage)	Omniure

OX2	Analytics 101, Current Solutions, Data Integration, KPIs, Data Distribution	Google Analytics, WebTrends
SEMphonic	"Functionalism" Understanding: Construction, Purpose & Desired Action	Unica, Visual Sciences
Stratigent	Vendor Selection, Assessment, Analysis, Optimization, Email, Experimentation, Training	Google Analytics, Omniture, Unica, Visual Sciences, WebTrends
Web Analytics Demystified	Strategic Assessment, Implementation Planning, KPI Planning, Business Process, Staffing Support, Analytics 2.0	n/a
ZAAZ	Accuracy Audits, Data Collection Best Practices, Goals & Metrics, ROI Monetization, Data Analysis, Optimization, Strategy	Google Analytics, Omniture, WebTrends

Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2007

Part 2 of Analytics University will detail user generated content from the web analytics community, the impact of the Web Analytics Association, as well as academic alternatives for educating professionals and aspiring web analysts.

For more information on this or other research topics, please visit www.aberdeen.com or contact:

Related Research

[Web Analytics: The Crystal Ball of Customer Behavior?](#) Benchmark Report, April 30, 2007

[Web Site Search: Revenue in the Results](#) Benchmark Report, February 28, 2007

[Online Content Speaks Volumes](#) Benchmark Report, June 30, 2007

[Online Retailers Flex their "Searchandising" Muscles](#) Sector Insight, April 23, 2007

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