

# Digital Insights and Analytics: Blog Analysis

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Ellie Feis

Prof. Valerie Jones

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## Blog Content

My blog, Chicks Review Flicks, was created as a review website for both movies and television shows. I ran this blog with a partner. The content includes reviews about movies in theaters, reviews about movies released on streaming sites, and television shows that are available to stream. The majority of the content are text posts that include the overall rating of the movie/show at the top and a list of specific items at the end that encourage people to see the movie based on if they like the listed factors. The other posts were mostly infographics that presented my thoughts in a visually or creative way.

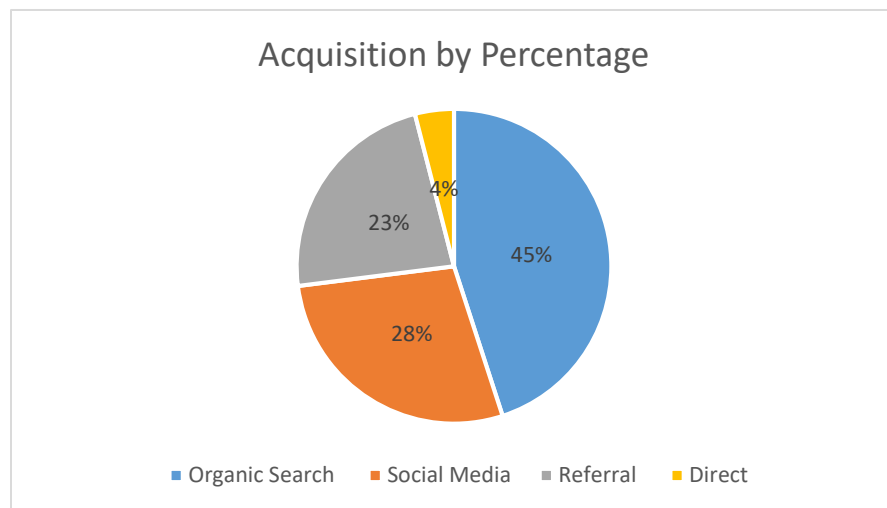
I chose this topic for my blog because I like talking about movies almost as much as I like watching them. My dream job is to work in the movie industry someday, so the blog gave me a chance to learn more about what makes a movie great while also practicing my writing skills.

Besides my love for movies, I wanted to create a blog that was different from typical review websites. As a frequent moviegoer who does not have enough time or money to go see every film in theaters, I had always wished there was a site that told me if I should see the movie in theaters or wait, or if it was even worth my time and money at all. The scale I created was based on whether or not it was worth watching and was a great way to distinguish my blog and appeal to my target audience, college students and young adults. Most movie reviews target for this demographic try to be funny to distinguish themselves, so I wanted to make my posts as concise as possible and just give my overall impressions and thoughts.

I mostly posted on the weekends because I reasoned that more people would have time to go to the movies (or prepare to see it in the upcoming week) or watch a TV episode.

## Analysis: Acquisition

After filtering spam users by using segmentation to only view users without the spam language, we acquired a total of 129 users and had 175 sessions (“Core Analysis Techniques”) (“Definitive Guide”). For acquiring new visitors to the blog, my blog partner and I used search



engine optimization, social media and word-of-mouth. The pie chart below was constructed from our Google Analytics data (see the table below). The results

reveal that the most successful tactic for acquisition was through organic search (or when people find the site through a search engine) followed by social media. This proves that the titles of our

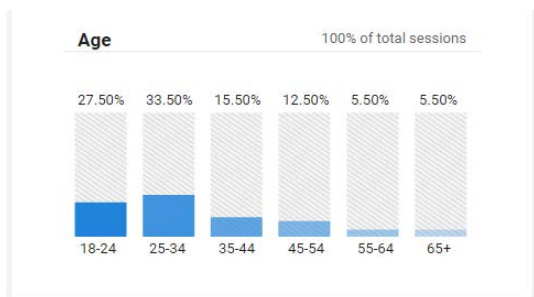
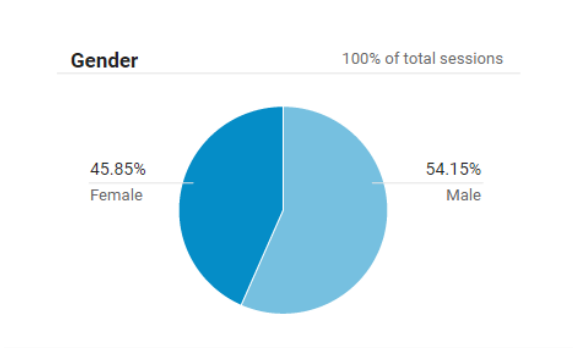
All Sessions (no spam)	175 % of Total: 56.27% (311)	72.57% Avg for View: 42.77% (69.70%)	127 % of Total: 95.49% (133)	2.86% Avg for View: 3.54% (-19.22%)	5.09 Avg for View: 3.74 (36.00%)	00:01:06 Avg for View: 00:03:21 (-67.00%)	0.00% Avg for View: 0.00% (0.00%)	0 % of Total: 0.00% (0)	\$0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (\$0.00)
1. Organic Search	79 (45.14%)	100.00%	79 (62.20%)	2.53%	2.89	00:00:00	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
2. Social	49 (28.00%)	2.04%	1 (0.79%)	2.04%	10.61	00:03:22	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
3. Referral	40 (22.86%)	100.00%	40 (31.50%)	5.00%	2.88	00:00:00	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
4. Direct	7 (4.00%)	100.00%	7 (5.51%)	0.00%	3.86	00:04:07	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)

posts, which featured the name of the movie or the show, was a key component to gaining traffic.

Social media was an important component, as well, and was responsible of 28 percent of our sessions. Referral occurs when a user finds the site through a link on a non-search engine medium, so I was surprised that nearly a quarter of our users were from referral traffic, or more specifically, they were referred to the blog from the Blogger website (“Acquisition Reports”). The fact that only 7 percent of our users came from direct provides a key insight. Assuming only

a few of these users are from word-of-mouth, it proves that even though talking to people is a promotion tactic that never loses its validity, it is not as effective as connecting with them via the medium of social media. However, our word-of-mouth efforts could be connected to our search engine results. Bill Tancer observes that many people Google a website instead of type in the URL, which could mean many of our search engine results came from our word-of-mouth efforts (144).

Upon examination of the social media metric, I found that the results from social media are not from Twitter, the main source we used to promote. The main social media referral was Blogger followed by Reddit. This reveals that the social media we used to promote the blog on our



own was ineffective. In the future, adjustments need to be made to make social media promotion effective, including posting regularly after each blog post and posting multiple times (Agius and Patel).

After combining the acquisition data with the age data, we can conclude that we did not completely reach the audience we wanted to reach. Our target audience was college students, in particular females due to the nature of our name, but the content was more popular among 25-34 year-olds and the majority (54.15 percent) of users were male. The United States was the most popular geographic region.

It is also important to look at social media referrals in terms of

	175	72.57%	127	2.86%	5.09	00:01:06	0.00%	0	\$0.00
All Sessions (no spam)	% of Total: 56.27% (311)	Avg for View: 42.77% (69.70%)	% of Total: 95.49% (133)	Avg for View: 3.54% (19.22%)	Avg for View: 3.74 (36.00%)	Avg for View: 00:03:21 (47.00%)	Avg for View: 0.00% (0.00%)	% of Total: 0.00% (0)	% of Total: 0.00% (0.00)
1. United States	63 (36.00%)	23.81%	15 (11.01%)	1.59%	9.00	00:03:05	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
2. (not set)	36 (20.57%)	100.00%	36 (28.35%)	2.78%	2.92	00:00:00	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
3. United Kingdom	28 (16.00%)	100.00%	28 (22.05%)	7.14%	2.82	00:00:00	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
4. Austria	23 (13.14%)	100.00%	23 (18.11%)	4.35%	2.87	00:00:00	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
5. Italy	17 (9.71%)	100.00%	17 (13.39%)	0.00%	2.94	00:00:00	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
6. Germany	7 (4.00%)	100.00%	7 (5.51%)	0.00%	2.86	00:00:00	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
7. Canada	1 (0.57%)	100.00%	1 (0.79%)	0.00%	3.00	00:00:00	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)

psychographics. The majority of our readers came from Blogger or Reddit users, which is a cause for concern because it is not where we promoted our website. It is an indicator that we may either a) have corrupted data and/or b) are attracting the wrong demographic.

Social Network	Sessions	% Sessions
1. Blogger	50	55.56%
2. reddit	32	35.56%
3. Stack Exchange	6	6.67%
4. Twitter	2	2.22%

According to the Pew Research Center, Reddit users are primarily male, which is not our target audience member description (Brown et. al).

### Analysis: Behavior

User Type	Sessions	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration
<b>All Sessions (no spam)</b>	<b>173</b> % of Total: 56.35% (307)	<b>73.41%</b> Avg for View: 43.32% (69.45%)	<b>127</b> % of Total: 95.49% (133)	<b>2.89%</b> Avg for View: 3.58% (-19.34%)	<b>4.95</b> Avg for View: 3.67 (35.06%)	<b>00:01:05</b> Avg for View: 00:03:21 (-67.71%)
1. New Visitor	127 (73.41%)	100.00%	127(100.00%)	3.15%	2.94	00:00:14
2. Returning Visitor	46 (26.59%)	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	2.17%	10.52	00:03:27

The Google Analytics data provided key insights into how the audience behaved on

the blog. One important aspect to note is the different between new and returning visitors, as evidenced by the chart above.

New visitors often click on the page briefly and visit for a moment or two. Under the average time for view section, new visitors spent an average of 14 seconds on the page. However, returning visitors spent a more considerable time, an average of three minutes and 27 seconds. The users who did return to the content had a large average session duration.

The below behavior flow chart on the following page shows the traffic through the site (excluding issues presented with spam). The first interaction occurred on the first page (indicated by the /). Since the homepage is where the latest posts are shown, this is a good sign. A few visitors after visiting the homepage decided to continue to the archive, the search bar, or different



pages. However, the homepage was a popular exit page, or the last page visited (“Behavior Reports”). This is not too much of a concern, considering the recent content is on the homepage and the majority of visitors may not be interested in seeking out past posts, but it does imply that many users did not find the top post interesting enough to seek out other posts.

To measure engagement, we examined comments on posts. There were only two comments total for our blog posts, which indicated that in terms of behavior, readers were not overly interested in engaging or adding to the content.

#### Analysis: Outcomes

I set up my digital marketing and measurement model with the goals of engagement and loyalty. The key performance indicators (or metrics that help “you understand how you are doing against your objectives”) for engagement were through comments on posts and through the time spent on the page (Kaushik). For loyalty, I used the KPI of how return users I obtained. At the beginning of the semester, my KPIs for behavior were to have an average duration of two minutes spent on the page per session, gain a fair amount of returning users (25 percent) and to measure the number of comments left on the page to encourage engagement.

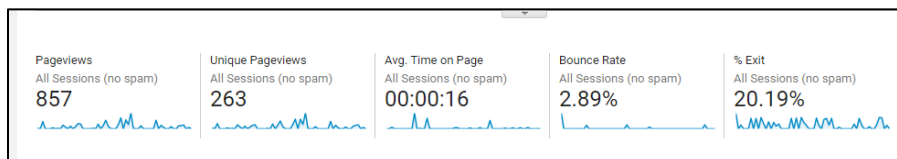
For the amount of returning users, we were successful in meeting our goal of 25 percent. The pie chart on the right shows that 26.6 percent of our sessions were from returning visitors, and 73.4 percent were from new visitors.



However, I was not successful in meeting my initial session goal average of two minutes per session. The chart below shows that the majority of my page views fell within the 0-10 second range, meaning that most users clicked on our page before leaving the site. This could be

Sessions		Pageviews	
All Sessions (no spam)	<b>173</b> % of Total: 56.35% (307)	All Sessions (no spam)	<b>857</b> % of Total: 76.11% (1,126)
Session Duration	Sessions	Pageviews	Pageviews
0-10 seconds	147	431	
11-30 seconds	4	27	
31-60 seconds	2	21	
61-180 seconds	7	78	
181-600 seconds	9	222	
601-1800 seconds	3	54	
1801+ seconds	1	24	

attributed to either people browsing through blogs quickly or a spam website. However, the second largest range of session duration fell within the 181-600 second duration, which was the three minutes. According to the average time on page measurement below, the average was 16 seconds, very short of the initial three minute goal.



Throughout the semester, this goal changed because I realized that some of the infographics were brief, meaning that expecting a viewer to stay on the page for more than three minutes is a little high. My goal changed to an average of one minute for each time on the page.

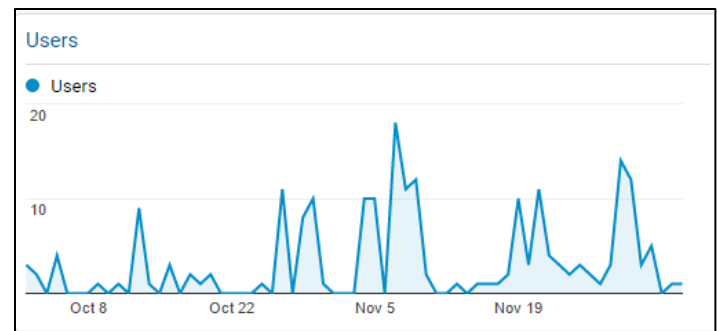
Aside from Google Analytics data, I examined my blog's data to measure engagement. There were only two comments total, meaning that although returning users were interested in the content, they were not willing to engage with it further.

## Actions Taken

Throughout the course of the semester, I undertook some actions to try to adjust my blog content in order to get try and increase traffic and interest in the posts.

One of the first things I tried was to shift the focus on general movies and television shows to fresh, relevant content immediately. This proved to be a challenge; as a busy college student, I did not always have time to go see a movie the day it came out and write a review on it the minute it was released. However, when I made the effort to go to earlier showings of wide, popular releases and get my review on the movie out immediately, the effort paid off. One of the more successful posts I wrote was about “Doctor Strange,” which I saw the Saturday after it was released. I had a total of 10 page views that day, which is indicated by the spike in the graph below before Nov. 5. After that success, I shifted the content I wrote about away from older

movies and television shows and tried to focus on what was new and relevant and popular, which proved to be successful for my upcoming posts.



As a promoter, I realized later in the semester that more could be done to drive traffic to the blog because I was not getting the numbers that I had initially hoped for. I decided to branch out and use my Twitter account to start promoting. However, this did not lead to a significant improvement in acquisition. According to Google Analytics, there were only two total page views from Twitter, and both my blog and I were promoting through Twitter. I consider this promotion a success, though, because the data showed that one of the two referrals from Twitter came from my article on “Arrival,” as



indicated by the table below.

Shared URL <sup>?</sup>	Sessions <sup>?</sup> ↓	Pageviews <sup>?</sup>	Avg. Session Duration <sup>?</sup>	Pages / Session <sup>?</sup>
1. <a href="http://chicksreviewflicks.blogspot.com/">chicksreviewflicks.blogspot.com/</a>	1 (50.00%)	3 (50.00%)	00:00:00	3.00
2. <a href="http://chicksreviewflicks.blogspot.com/2016/11/arrival-science-fiction-masterpiece.html">chicksreviewflicks.blogspot.com/2016/11/arrival-science-fiction-masterpiece.html</a>	1 (50.00%)	3 (50.00%)	00:00:00	3.00

I also noticed that many of our more popular posts occurred during the week. Initially I thought posting on the weekends would be the most effective, but due to the popularity of our weekday posts, I decided to put more effort into posting during the week, if possible. Visitor results were about the same.

To increase engagement, I also attempted adding more questions to the ends of my blog posts, asking visitors to provide their feedback.

## Insights on Results

The final results from the data give much insight into how important content, timing, promotion and social following are to being a successful blogger.

The data revealed that the most popular content for my blog is new content or content that is relevant to current events. In general, the data showed that after a movie or a television show has been released for a while, the interest in the topic fades; less people are searching for a review on that information. The standard text reviews were also more successful than the infographics or the video presentation. I believe these were less interesting to viewers because they did not have the voice or a detail of a classic movie review. However, list-style pieces were popular because they formatted traditional content in a new way.

Timing is also important. While most of our blog posts occurred on the weekend or Sundays, some of the most success we had in obtaining traffic for posts that were not about recently released movies was when we posted throughout the week or on different days. The content about new releases, because it is somewhat time sensitive, had to be released as quickly as possible after the movie was released for the readers to assume it is interesting.

The data shows the importance of promoting effectively. I think we suffered in getting more acquisitions and users because our promotions were not thorough enough. My failure to promote on social media earlier in the semester resulted in a lack of reaching a potential audience and building a relationship with users that would keep returning. I only have a small social media following on Twitter so I was unable to drive a large amount of traffic, but the users I do have are engaged. Our blog's lack of success in promotion through social media is apparent in the fact that only two users from Twitter. A strong social media presence would have helped inform

more people about the blog and would have possibly created a following. Without that established, we did not receive as many people engaged.

Attempts at engagement through measuring blog comments proved to be unsuccessful. I made adjustments and encouraged more people to comment and provide feedback on the posts, but this was not a successful way to increase engagement.

I also believe the results I obtained could be the consequence of some spam issues. Though I filtered out the majority of the content I believed to be spam in this report, the overall influence on the data is unpredictable. Potential issues with this could come skew average session duration and other influences on the behavior.

## Closing Argument

For a future student to be successful in data analytics and analysis, it is important to take time to learn why data is important and to understand what metrics mean before implementing Google Analytics. It can be tempting to immediately start setting up Google Analytics and gather data, but it is important to understand the purpose of it and to have flexible goals in mind. I found this step to be vital; had I not taken the time to familiarize myself with the course readings, build a knowledge of data and data gathering and participate in discussions, I would not know how to interpret the data I gathered in Google Analytics.

Another suggestion for a future student is evaluate your data on a regular basis to be certain your content is resonating with visitors. During the class, evaluation of the data was not my top priority. If I had the opportunity to take this class again, I would reevaluate my goals and my metrics every single week to be certain my content was still engaging and adjust accordingly. Also, it is important to educate yourself on what is spam and what is not spam. Always make sure to look past the numbers to see where the numbers are coming from; since Google Analytics adjustments do not apply to past data, failure to make changes as soon as the problem occurs can lead to issues in the future (“How Google Analytics Works”). This proved to be a challenge I had to tackle in presenting my results because the data became skewed. The battle against spam is never over; you must learn to constantly readjust and monitor.

I will argue that for a blog to be successful, an emphasis should be placed on acquisition. During the course, I mainly relied on search engine optimization and word-of-mouth to promote my blog. As a result, the numbers were not as high as I would have liked them to be. My blog partner used social media to drive visitors to the blog, and that was where the majority of our visitors came from. I wish I had used my social media to promote my material throughout the

course of the semester and had taken the time to develop graphics to accompany the posts across social media. Looking back, the creation of a unique Twitter page for my blog would be an effective way to drive traffic to my blog without causing me to feel as if I am spamming followers on my personal social media accounts.

For the content of the blog posts, I would make a suggestion to new students to experiment with a variety of mediums and topics, even if you think you know what the reception will be. Some of the most successful posts I made were ones I did not believe people would find a compelling interest in, such as the top Halloween movies list. At the end of the course, I made a blog post that was a narrated PowerPoint, which was not as successful as the other posts even though I expected more people to be interested in it. Doing something different provides you with more insight into what your audience does or does not want to see in the future; if all your posts are similar in nature, you risk never knowing where you have the potential to further connect with your audience.

Also, be creative with measuring engagement is vital. In the future with my blog, I will come up with other metrics to measure engagement and set up more events to see if I can measure engagement in different ways, such as video clicks or making links to movie sites and measuring how many people click on those.

Hi future DIGIA student!

I am excited for you to begin your own journey towards becoming a better data analyst and interpreter. No matter what your experience level is, this class will challenge you to not only learn more about data, but to learn how to interpret it and communicate its meanings with others.

Before this class, I knew very little about gathering data. However, over the course of the semester, I learned what key metrics and measurements for websites are, how to set them up and what insights they give us visitors. I never realized that data is important to track because it reveals what an audience is thinking and feeling without having them explicitly saying so.

The blog project increased my confidence. As someone who has always aspired to be a blogger but never thought I could run a blog or create compelling content, this class helped me get over my fear of sharing content I have created with others and also helped me learn how to plan ahead and think about my audience.

This course also taught me the importance of communication and accountability when you cannot physically meet with a person; I had a partner with my blog I only met with once, and the members for my group project never met. However, I now feel more confident in my ability to work with others solely through digital communication.

This class is challenging. As someone who is not technically savvy, there were times where I felt lost. The most important thing you can do is always start your work early and take the time to really read the data for the client project. For blog posts, plan what you are going to do a week in advance. Setting up your initial blog and Google Analytics is frustrating, but do not be afraid to make some mistakes until you figure everything out. If you put effort into it and are willing to learn, this course will teach you to be an effective communicator in an area that is difficult to master. Also, always be sure to constantly battle spam websites on your blog.

Overall, this course, though challenging, is one that will provide you with a skill set that will increase your effectiveness as a communicator. I wish you the best of luck in your upcoming semester.

Sincerely,

Ellie Feis

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