Tracking online data

This fact sheet offers tips for capturing and analysing online data across commonly used digital platforms.

Some of Arts Queensland's outcome report templates ask funding recipients to provide data about digital engagement, including unique users and new online visitors. The sections of this fact sheet marked with a star ★ are particularly relevant to these outcome report measures.

Beyond what is required in outcome reports, you may wish to implement a number of other measures in this fact sheet which will give you a more comprehensive picture of your online reach and engagement.

What is online data?

Online data tells you who is engaging with your digital platforms, how and when they are engaging and where they are from. By setting up simple systems for tracking data (known as 'web analytics') you will be able to analyse your web traffic and its source as well as visitor demographics and behaviours.

Why capture online data?

Digital platforms are increasingly used by artists and arts and cultural organisations to reach audiences for marketing and promotion, distribution and delivery of products and services, and active engagement and discussion. Capturing online data enables you to shape and refine your engagement strategies by better understanding your visitors and what approaches work best to reach your intended audiences.

When should online data tracking start?

To best understand engagement with your digital platforms, it is preferable to start capturing online data from the outset – that is, from the first day your online platform is launched (for new platforms) or from the first day your project or activity is launched online through one of your existing platforms (so you can analyse what impact the activity has made in driving visitors to your platforms).

What should be the core measure of reach – unique visitors or website hits?

★ To understand your digital reach, it is best to capture unique visitors wherever possible as this is the most realistic indication of the size of your audience base. This is the measure requested in the Arts Queensland outcome reports where available.

Website or webpage hits are less useful in understanding your digital reach as they may represent the same people accessing your digital platform on several different occasions.

In reality, no one measure is completely reliable. For example, 'unique visitors' is often calculated based on devices used – that is, one person who accesses a website from their home computer, mobile phone and ipad may be counted as three unique visitors (unless the particular site they are accessing requires a log-in). Having said that, it is still the best measure we have available in terms of reach.

What tools support online data tracking?

There is a range of tools for tracking online data. Websites often contain built-in systems for this purpose. There are also many open-source and fee-for-service tools available, from simple 'hit counters' to on-site engagement analytics.

The table below details some of the most frequently used measures and tools. Measures which are most useful to Arts Queensland outcome reports are marked with a star.

Platform	Measures of reach and engagement	Useful tools
Websites, Blogs 	Number of unique visitors ★ Number and % new visits ★ Number of repeat visitors Length of visit Mouse-move maps Click-move maps Traffic sources Visitor flow Demographic reports Geographic reports Shared links	Google Analytics On-site engagement analytics Hit counters
Facebook 	Page Likes ★ Post Likes Comments and posts from friends Shares	Facebook account stats
Twitter 	Followers ★ Retweets Favourites Link clicks	Twitter account stats Bitmarks Analytics
YouTube 	Unique visitors ★ Views Likes/Dislikes Subscribers Favourites Comments Shares	YouTube Analytics
Vimeo 	Plays ★ Likes URL Embeds	Vimeo stats Vimeo Advanced Statistics (available to Vimeo Plus and PRO members)

How do you set up these tools for tracking online data?

The remainder of this fact sheet outlines steps for setting up some of the tools mentioned in the table above and generating data reports.

1. Websites and blogs

Google Analytics

Google Analytics is particularly useful in generating reports that analyse the number of unique visitors to your site in a specified timeframe as well as number of new visitors. It captures data not only from your website, but also from platforms associated with your website such as social media, videos, tablets and smartphones.

It is important to note that Google Analytics only collects data from the date of set-up and cannot report retrospectively – hence, the data you initially gather on new visitors to your website may not accurately demonstrate your new visitor growth. Ideally then, Google Analytics (or a similar tool) will be set up from the launch of your website or blog.

To set up Google Analytics:
1. Visit http://www.google.com/analytics
2. Select 'Access Google Analytics' in the top right-hand corner
3. Sign up and receive your Google Analytics tracking code
4. Follow the instructions to add the tracking code to your website (you should be able to view your first report within a few hours)
5. Select 'Reporting' on the initial Google Analytics screen
6. In the column on the left-hand side, you will see options to access various types of data including visitors and traffic sources

★ **To generate a Google Analytics report on unique visitors and new visitors:**
1. Log in to Google Analytics
2. Select your website
3. If it is not already selected, click 'Reporting' on the bar at the top of the webpage
4. In the column on the left-hand side, select 'Audience'
5. Adjust the date range by selecting the dropdown date menu in the top right-hand corner
6. The number of unique visitors and the percentage of new visits for this date range will appear below the line graph
7. Calculate the 'number of new visitors' using the 'percentage of new visits' and the 'number of unique visitors'. That is, if you have 500 unique visitors and 50% new visits, the number of new visitors would be 250 (50% of 500).
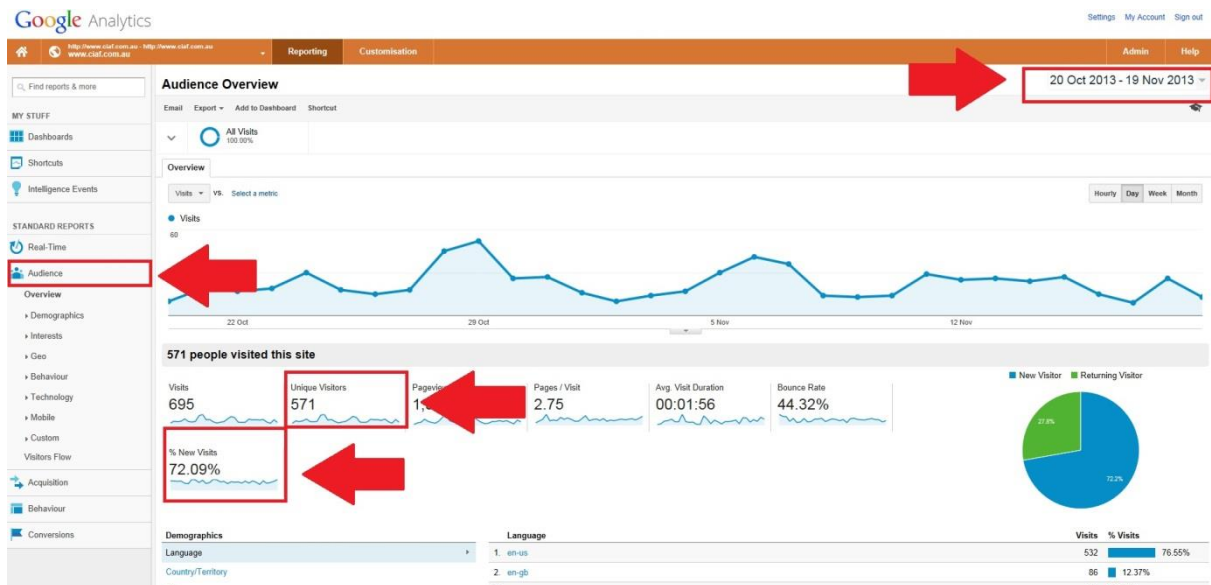
Examples of other Google Analytics reports available:

- Demographic and geographic analysis: provides a breakdown of the gender and age of your visitors and where they are from. This helps you understand the diversity of your visitor base and your success in reaching your target audience.

- Visitor flow: reports visitor navigation through your website. This helps you understand what parts of your website are of particular interest to your visitors and may also help in further refining your website design.

- Traffic source: identifies where visitors are being directed to your site from (e.g. a search engine, link on another website, link from a newsletter etc.) This may help refine your communications and marketing strategies.

- New versus returning visitors: reports ratio of new to returning visitors by number and percentage of visits. This helps ascertain audience retention.

On-site engagement analytics

Various online services provide on-site engagement analytics which give an insight into visitor behaviours and how user-friendly and intuitive your website is. These services attract an additional charge to set up. On-site engagement analytics use visitor recordings, mouse-moves and click heat maps to report on where your visitors are clicking, lingering and leaving.

Hit counters

Hit counters can be installed on your website or blog to track the number of page views. Some hit counters can be accessed free of charge while others attract a cost. A hit counter may not be necessary if you are using Google Analytics as this also captures page views. Moreover, unlike hit counters, Google Analytics records unique visitors and views so is more useful in understanding reach.

2. Facebook

★ **Page likes:**

This is the equivalent of 'unique users' as it shows the number of Facebook members who 'like' your Facebook page. As a proxy measure of new visitors, calculate the difference between the number of page likes at the beginning and end of your project or reporting year.

1. Log in to your Facebook page
2. At the top of the screen, in the banner under your cover photo, you will find the number of 'Likes'
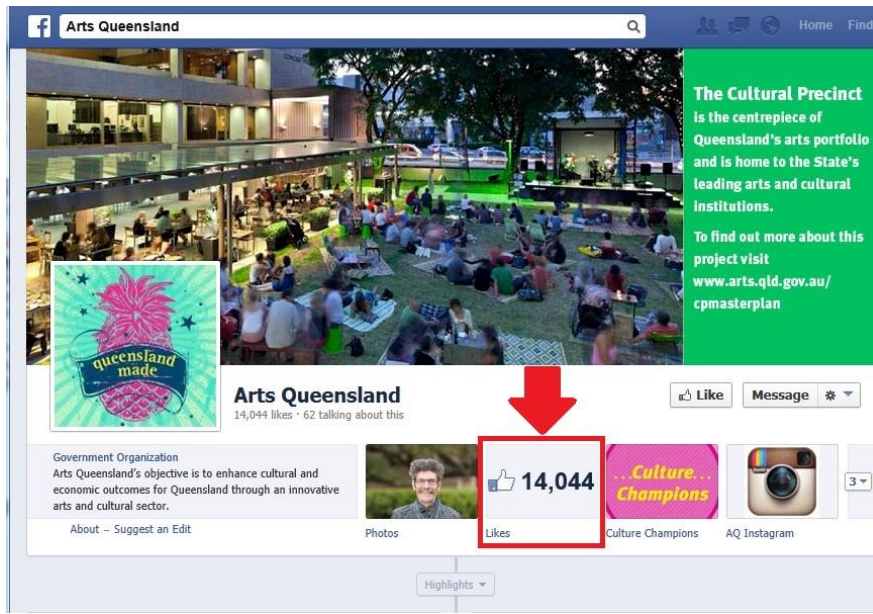
Post likes:

You may also wish to capture the number of 'likes' of specific posts.

1. Log in to your Facebook page
2. Below the 'Like - Comment – Share' section of your post, you will find the number of people who have 'liked' it
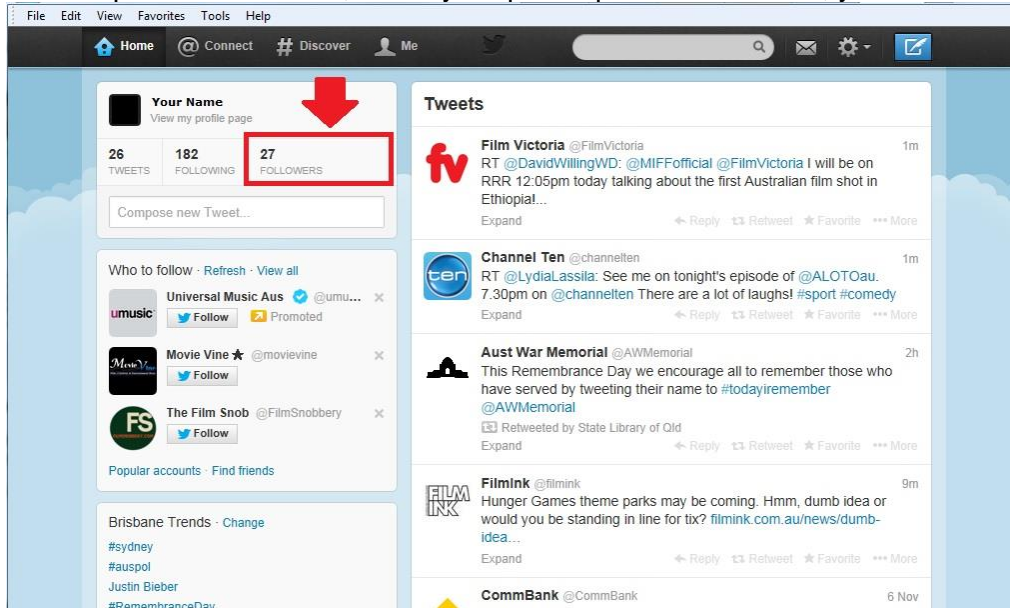
3. Twitter

Twitter stats

⭐ **Followers:**

This is the equivalent of 'unique users' as it shows the number of Twitter members who 'follow' your Twitter feeds (tweets). As a proxy measure of new visitors, calculate the difference between the number of followers at the beginning and end of your project or reporting year.

1. Log in to Twitter
2. In the top left-hand corner, under your profile picture and name, you will find the number of followers

Interactions:

As a way of monitoring the impact of your tweets, it may also be useful to count the number of related interactions – that is, your tweets that are 'favourited' or 'retweeted' or other people's tweets that mention you.

1. Log in to Twitter
2. In the top left-hand corner select 'Connect'
3. In the left-hand column, select 'Interactions' to view all tweets that have been favourited, retweeted or that make mention of you

Bitmarks – Analytics

If you have used a URL shortening service such as Bitly to condense a link in your tweet, you can track the number of times your link has been used.

1. Log in to Bitly www.bitly.com
2. Your bitmarks will be shown on this page, with the number of clicks in the bottom left-hand corner of each box
3. For more in-depth reporting such as date and hourly breakdowns, select 'View Stats'
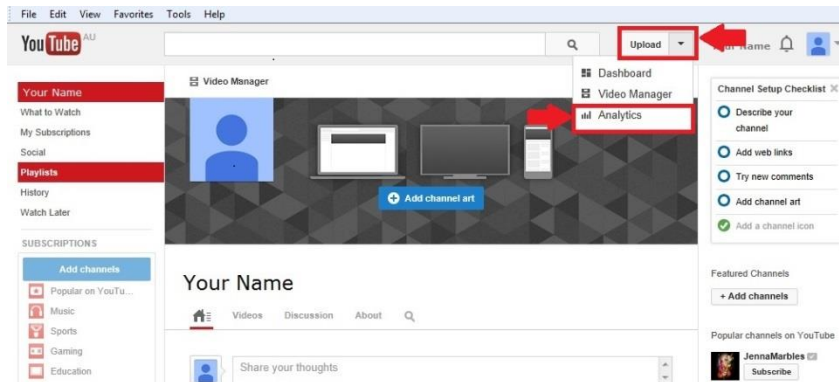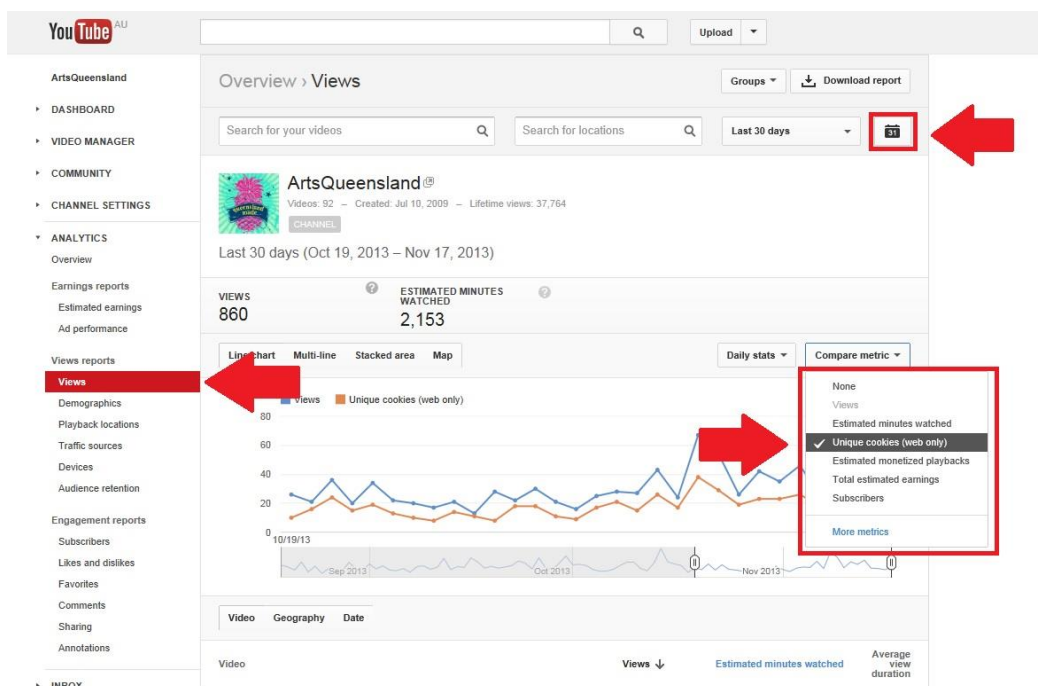
4. YouTube

YouTube Analytics

YouTube Analytics allows you to track a range of data such as unique visitors, views, demographics and source and length of engagement.

★ **Unique visitors:**
1. Sign in to YouTube
2. Click the drop-down arrow beside 'Upload' in the top right-hand corner and select 'Analytics'

3. On the left-hand side of the screen, you will see a column with options to access various reports (under 'View Reports') such as views, demographics, playback locations, traffic sources, devices and audience retention
4. Select 'Views' and adjust the date range by selecting the calendar icon in the top right-hand corner
5. In the 'Compare metric' dropdown menu, select 'Unique cookies (web only)' – the graph will now display the number of unique visitors in comparison to overall views. You can also run your mouse along the lines to reveal viewing figures for each day.

Other YouTube reports available:
Below 'View Reports', you can access 'Engagement Reports' which provide insight on subscribers, likes and dislikes, favourites, comments, sharing and annotations.

You can also use YouTube Analytics to explore view duration such as:
- Average duration – the average length of time people engage with your videos
- Absolute retention – which parts of your videos visitors are viewing
- Relative retention – comparing view duration for your video with other videos of a similar length on YouTube

This can be helpful in identifying what content most attracts your audience and points of disengagement.

5. Vimeo

All Vimeo accounts allow you to track the number of plays, likes and URL embeds generated from your video.
1. Go to your video's page on Vimeo
2. Select the 'Stats' button below your video description where you will find data on plays, likes, comments and URL embeds
3. For the Arts Queensland outcome reports, access data on 'plays' (unless you are able to access 'unique visitor' data through the fee-for-service advanced statistics)
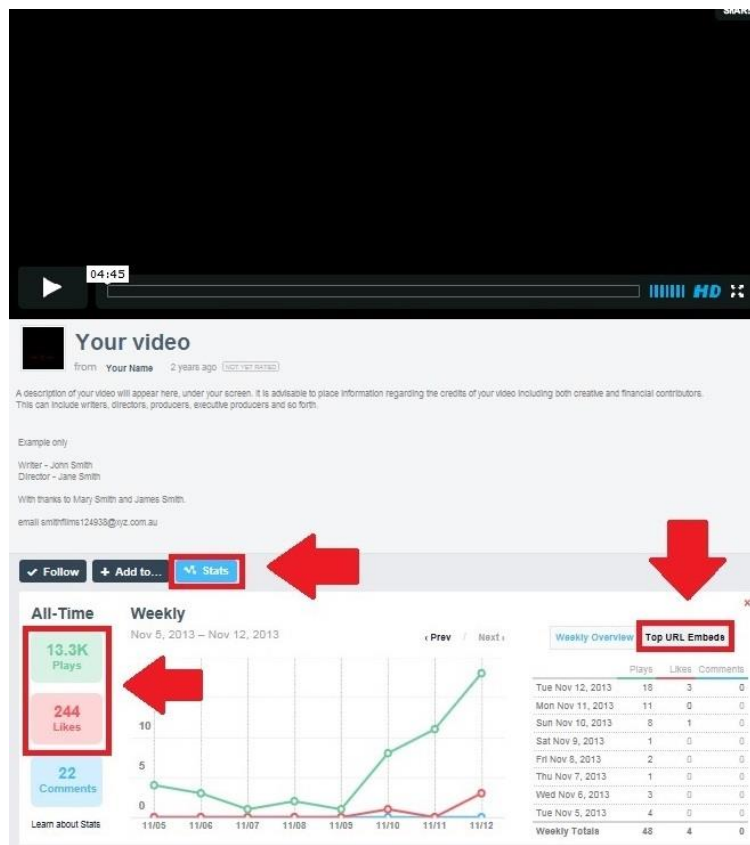
For more advanced statistics, such as demographic and geographic data, a subscription to Vimeo Plus or Pro is required.