

Using Google Analytics to Enhance the Quality and Layout of a University Website: A Case Study

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A university website plays a significant role in showcasing the culture of the university, academic achievements and study programmes. The objective of this case study is to use Google Analytics data effectively to revamp the website of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya. Google Analytics records web traffic and performance data which can be used to identify the areas to improve a web site, however, this information does not indicate the ways to improve a website. Hence three hypotheses were developed to make effective modifications based on the Google Analytics reports. Hypothesis 1 is to restructure the Home page to enhance pageviews. Hypothesis 2 is to lessen the page depth to increase user retention on the page. Hypothesis 3 is to improve responsiveness to attract more mobile visitors.

This section presents results according to the Old Website (OW) versus New Website (NW) for a period of 6 months (April to November 2018 vs 2019). Page interaction from Landing page as Home to visited pages were identified in Student notices (SN) (4 vs 0) and Staff directory (SD) (4 vs 2). Furthermore, pageviews for the SN (42,173 (15.6%) vs 53,478 (16.6%)) and SD of the department sites (23,417 (8.7%) vs 4,427 (1.4%)) were examined. Further, News and Events (4,180 (1.6%) vs 6,806 (2.1%)), Academic programmes (3,358 (1.2%) vs 5,703 (1.8%)), Research (538 (0.2%) vs 1,611 (0.5%)) and About Us pages (273 (0.1%) vs 2,465 (0.8%)) were visited. We also explored Page depths (3.78 vs 3.20), Average session durations (02:53 vs 02:40), Average time on page (01:02 vs 01:13) and Bouncing rates (55.1% vs 64.8%). Users visited the website using desktops (12,003 (61.9%) vs 10,983 (34.4%)), mobiles (6,178 (31.9%) vs 19,331 (60.6%)) and tablets (1,210 (6.2%) vs 1,597 (5.0%)).

First hypothesis was assessed with views to restructured home page. We observed an increase in views for SN, News and Events, Academic programmes, Research and About Us pages. Decrement of pageviews to SD by individual department sites may due to visitors directly referred to SD via home page rather than via department sites. Therefore, we concluded that the first hypothesis is satisfied. Second hypothesis was assessed with Average time on a page. There we observed an increment. However, there was a decrease in Average session duration and Bouncing rate. It indicates that the visitors find the results they seek through the landing page. Therefore, we concluded that the second hypothesis is satisfied. Third hypothesis was assessed with device type. We observed an increase in mobile users. Nevertheless, there was an increment of overall users. Therefore, we concluded that the third hypothesis is satisfied. The overall review of Google Analytics pre and post-revamping data explains the increase in pageviews, user retention and user attraction.

Keywords: Google Analytics; Pageviews; Hypothesis; Revamping; Website

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