Annual Web Analytics Narrative Report for D&D KM-IT
dndkm.org

Period
February 2011 to February 2012

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to take a “bird’s eye view” of the web traffic on D&D KM-IT for the past year. Figure 1 below compares the visits to D&D KM-IT between January 2011 (blue line) and January 2012 (orange line). It shows the growth of D&D KM-IT and the significant traffic increase since the launch of D&D KM-IT.

![Figure 1: Web traffic comparison (January 2011 vs. January 2012)](image)

This annual report will focus on the web site traffic from February 2011 to February 2012. Figure 2 below is a summary of this period. The dndkm.org website hosted 6,980 visitors, of which 3,608 were unique visitors. Those visitors produced 58,006 page views during this period and also viewed an average of 8.31 pages per visit. On average, these visitors spent 6 minutes and 19 seconds on the site.

![Figure 2: February 2011 to February 2012 site visitors overview](image)
During this period, D&D KM-IT was visited by every single state in the union with the exception of South Dakota. Florida, Tennessee, Washington State and California were that states that topped the list. D&D KM-IT was also visited by 94 countries with the top five being the United States, France, Canada, United Kingdom and Japan with a combined 5,578 visits.

The majority of the visitors (55.83%) coming to the site did so by Direct Traffic, followed by Search Engines (34.97%) and referring sites (9.20%). There a significant value to each of these sources of traffic and it’s important to understand the differences.

**Direct Traffic**

The analogy for Direct Traffic is that of someone who is in town and knows the area. He also knows that he want a latte from his favorite coffee place just a few blocks away, so he is able to go straight there. This basically equates to typing the URL in the address bar of the browser or bookmarking the webpage. This action will take the user directly to the product or service they are looking for. This is something websites aim for. It shows the loyalty of the visitors and their reliance on the product, services and/or content of the website. As mentioned above, 55.83% of this period traffic came from direct traffic.

**Search Engine Traffic**

Referring back to the same theme of someone who is in town, search engine traffic can be represented by a person that’s in town and knows what type of drink he wants. However, in this case, he does not know where to get it from. So, he browses a phone book and finds the coffee shop that serves his favorite drink. Most search engine traffic behaves exactly this way. The user may start searching for a product or service before he reaches the result with a company that will satisfy his needs. Search engine traffic demonstrates that the content of the website is competent and measurable to other similar websites. DND KM-IT received 34.97% of its visitors from search engine traffic. This number has been steadily increasing in the last few months.

**Referring Site**

Finally, the person is in town and knows exactly what type of drink they want. However, he doesn’t know where to get it and does not trust phonebooks. So the person calls a friend for help. The friend refers him to the coffee shop that is on the way from work. Therefore, referring traffic is traffic that comes from other websites, email links, blogs, etc. This type of traffic is a good indication of the website’s reputation and social status. Typical new websites take a considerable amount of time to develop a steady source of referring site traffic.
As a side note, the most popular browser used was Internet Explorer, accounting for 4,178 visits, followed by Chrome (1,205 visits) and Firefox (1,178 visits). Google was the search engine of choice followed by Bing.

Quick View Glance

Table 1 summarizes the changes on the most popular parameters Feb 2011 vs. Feb 2012. It basically demonstrates the percentages increase on the Number of Visits, Page Views, New Visits, Unique Visitors and Search Engine traffic. The details of each of these parameters will be discussed later in the “Web Analytics Analysis” section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Visits</th>
<th>Page Views</th>
<th>New Visits</th>
<th>Unique Visitors</th>
<th>Search Engines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2011 vs.</td>
<td>330.67% increase</td>
<td>169.38% increase</td>
<td>63.99% increase</td>
<td>606.25% increase</td>
<td>100.27% increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This report will mainly focus on the parameters listed on the table above. There are more parameters in the world of web analytics but the above parameters represent a solid baseline that are critical for measuring, analyzing and reporting on the effectiveness of D&D KM-IT for the past year. Web Analytics was implemented on D&D KM-IT about a year ago and it has allowed the development team to respond to the users’ interests by making the information they seek easier for them to access. This involved a series of consistent improvements to the navigation, layout and user experience. The ultimate aim is to mature a system that will contain all the necessary information for the D&D KM-IT community and allow the users of the system to consume the information as efficiently as possible across all modules and platforms. The primary purpose of implementing Web Analytics was always to follow up on the feedback it provided so that the development team can constantly improve the system, not only with new content, but also for popularity and usability. Web Analytics has allowed the development team to achieve just that and it’s the reason why many of the metrics discussed in this report have grown in triple digit percentages in a single year (See Table 1 above).
About KM-IT

The D&D KM-IT is a web-based knowledge management information tool custom built for the deactivation and decommissioning user community. This system is being developed by Florida International University - Applied Research Center (FIU-ARC) in collaboration with the Department of Energy - Environmental Management, EFCOG, and the ALARA Centers at Hanford and Savannah River.

Figure 3: D&D KM-IT view March 2012

The scope and objectives of D&D KM-IT are:

- To provide single-point access into the collective knowledge-base of the D&D community within and outside of the U.S. Department of Energy
- To prevent the loss of D&D knowledge and expertise that has been gained over the years by employees and contractors of DOE (e.g., D&D work performed under ARRA)
- To collect, consolidate, and share this valuable information in a universally available and easily usable system
History

During the summer of 2007, FIU visited the Hanford ALARA Center to demonstrate and discuss the future development of the D&D Hotline. By the fall of 2007, DOE HQ, FIU and the ALARA Centers at Hanford and Savannah River organized a Functional Requirements Workshop in Washington D.C. The purpose of the workshop was to define the requirements needed to guide the initial development of the D&D KM-IT. D&D KM-IT was first introduced to EFCOG's D&D Working Group at their Annual Meeting on November 2007. Phase I of the system was deployed to a limited audience with two modules (Hotline and ALARA Reports archive) on March 2008. Later that year, a workshop was held over the web for 16 participants (DOE EM, FIU, Hanford and SRS ALARA Centers, INL, SRNL, ORNL, EFCOG, and NVE) to discuss the long term vision of the project. Out of that workshop, a D&D KM-IT Vision Document was drafted on November 2008 and by January 2011; D&D KM-IT was made officially live to the D&D community. Currently (March 2012), the D&D KM-IT is fully functional, with 10 out of the 12 modules proposed now completed. The D&D KM-IT Mobile version was launched in the spring of 2012 with two initial modules: Vendor and Specialist Directory. Figure 4 is a screen capture of the original D&D KM-IT.

Figure 4: Original D&D KM-IT website
Web Analytics Analysis

The information gathered from the Web Analytics software is very valuable since it provides insight on site visitor behavior and is helpful to anticipate users’ interests and needs. This annual report will focus on the website traffic from February 2011 to February 2012. Whenever a reference to “this period” is made in this report, it will be referring to the time period between February 2011 and February 2012 unless otherwise stated.

Figure 5 is basically the same as Figure 1 in the Executive Summary; however, it will be discussed a bit deeper. This figure is a snapshot comparing the first month the website was live (January 2011) with the same month a year later (January 2012). The first thing to notice is the wave pattern of the blue and orange lines. When compared, the dates at the low points match perfectly with weekends (Saturday and Sunday). This is expected since most of the audience for D&D KM-IT comes from organizations with a Monday to Friday work schedule. This figure below paints a visual picture of how the web traffic has significantly increased a year after the D&D KM-IT was launched.

Moreover, Table 2 below really captures the changes on the most popular parameters from February 2011 to February 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Summarized parameters changes from February 2011 to February 2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Visits</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2011 to Feb 2012</td>
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</table>
Figure 6 shows that for the past year the majority of the visitors (55.83%) coming to the site did so by Direct Traffic, followed by Search Engines (34.97%) and referring sites (9.20%). This pie chart has changed over the development of D&D KM-IT. Figure 7 is a snapshot of what the visitor source looks like for the month of February 2012. This is a good indication. It demonstrates a good balance of users who visit the site directly (by typing the URL or using a bookmark), use search engines or use sites that link to D&D KM-IT. It also shows that the D&D KM-IT is being reached by search engine more frequently due to the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques implemented on the site. During the first month the D&D KM-IT was launched, 71.43% of the users reached the site directly and 23.81% did so by search engine. Only 4.76% of the users accessed the site through referrals. Figures 6 & 7 demonstrate that search engines are becoming a key part of D&D KM-IT traffic sources.

During this period, D&D KM-IT was visited by every single state in the union with the exception of South Dakota. Florida, Tennessee, Washington State and California were that states that topped the list. D&D KM-IT was also visited by 94 countries with the top five being the United States, France, Canada, United Kingdom and Japan with a combined 5,578 visits; a true testimony to the slogan “Powered by the Global D&D Community.”

Figure 8 below is an overview of the visitors from February 2011 to February 2012. The dndkm.org website hosted 6,980 visitors of which 3,608 were unique visitors. Those visitors produced 58,006 page views during this period and also viewed an average of 8.31 pages per visit. On average, these visitors spent an average of 6 minutes and 19 seconds on the site. Also, the bounce rate for the entire period was 47.23%. The bounce rate is basically the percentage of visitors that leave the website after only viewing the homepage or landing page. Finally, notice the almost symmetrical balance of New Visitors vs. Returning Visitors. This reveals that D&D KM-IT is attracting new visitors while maintaining its regular user base. The result is a well balanced audience.
The most popular browser used was Internet Explorer, accounting for 4,178 visits, followed by Chrome (1,205 visits) and Firefox (1,178 visits). D&D KM-IT was also visited by mobile devices. The mobile devices that topped the list were iPad, iPhone and Android. This is interesting information since at the time this report was written, the Mobile Application has been completed but is not yet public. So it is expected that the mobile audience will increase when the mobile application is launched with its two modules (Vendor and Specialist Directory).

Google was the search engine of choice, accounting for 32.08% of all visitors. Bing (also known as msn) followed Google in the search engine category. The top relevant search term was “accustrip system.”

Below is a snapshot of the entire period analytics with milestones and events added to demonstrate what impact each of these event had on the website traffic (Figure 9). Here is a summary of each milestone and event:

- **February 2011 – Web Crawler Module** – Gave visitors the ability to search all documents within D&D KM-IT and external D&D related sites.

- **March 2011 – Waste Management Symposia** - D&D KM-IT was featured at the Florida International University vendor booth and also was part of an oral presentation at the conference. This was also the official launch of the system.
• July 2011 – Vendor Module – Provides a directory of commercial D&D vendors.

• September 2011 – DOE Newsletter – D&D was featured in an email newsletter circulated by DOE Headquarters.

• September 2011 – ICEWM Conference – Dr. Leo Lagos was part of panel at the international conference in France that discussed global D&D community issues. D&D KM-IT was part of the discussion and was offered as one of the solutions for D&D Knowledge Management.

• October 2011 – Collaboration Tools – A set of tools that allows users to collaborate (share documents, calendar, blog and more).

• January 2012 – New Design Email – D&D KM-IT users were notified via email of the new design changes implemented as a result of web analytics observations.

• January 2012 – Mobile Application – Mobile application was completed with Vendor and Specialist Directory as its first two modules.

Figure 9: Yearly site traffic with milestones and events

**Accounting for Direct Access by Search Engines**

Another factor that should be addressed is the impact that search engines such as Google have when they access content from D&D KM-IT directly; bypassing the typical navigation a user undergoes to reach that document. For instance, when a user reaches the website, he undergoes a selection process to determine which modules to visit. Some of these modules have within them supporting documents such as PDF, images and videos. Search crawlers (sometimes known as spiders or robots) follow a similar behavior but the difference is that their aim is to follow (or click) on every link possible for the purpose of capturing all the content of the site for their index. The idea of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is to
design a website that allows these web site crawlers to easily accomplish that (more on SEO later on this document, “Search Engine Optimization” pg. 15). The drawback is that search engines such as Google then have a map of the entire website and are able to direct a search user to the exact location that information is located on the website. This is a great convenience to the user, but when the destination involves a document such as PDF, the Web Analytic tool is not able to count that interaction. The Web Analytic tool requires each page of the site to have an embedded code that logs the interaction between the user and the system. This code has limitations; for example, it cannot be added to a PDF document. Therefore, the Web Analytics is unaware that a user came directly from Google to a PDF document on the website. This is the why we implemented other tools on the system to run in parallel to detect incidents such as the scenario described above. These tools will be described on the following pages (see “Tools for SEO” pg. 16).

During the writing and editing of this document, we discovered that we can in fact take into account the direct access to PDFs by using Google’s Webmaster Tool. This tool only keeps a record for the last 3 months of site activity so we were not able to add it to the yearly numbers discussed above. However, the information gathered for a three-month period on the website was captured and analysed. Focusing on document interaction alone (in this case PDF), we were able to conclude:

- 866 documents were visited 3,531 times and generated 29,522 search result impressions,
- The top module visited for documents is the Innovative Technology Summary Reports (ITSR) modules with 1,448 document visits,
- The most popular document was “Graphite Electrode DC Arc Furnace” from the ITSR Mixed Waste category with 170 visits.

To put this in perspective, the D&D KM-IT website generates on average about 900 visits per month, not counting direct document visits. The average of the documents visits (3,531 for 3 months) is about 1,177 per month. This is more than 100% of the site visits. So it is safe to say that whatever traffic was generated by the website content, the same amount or more traffic was generated by the documents within the site. This astonishing discovery could only be realized by the use of multiple tracking tools and techniques.

**Web Analytics Benefits**

Web Analytics has allowed D&D KM-IT to respond to its users’ needs by making the information they seek easier for them to access. This involves creating summarized descriptions for links, search results and images. Other tasks include changing the position of new content at a visible level, minimizing scrolling on key content and providing links to related content. D&D KM-IT has modified its navigation and centralized its news module for consistency to reduce maintenance. It has also employed new gallery features for pictures and videos that allow more interaction for users while keeping the content search-engine friendly. The ultimate aim is to mature a
system that will contain all the necessary information for the D&D KM-IT community and allow the users of the system to consume the information as efficiently as possible across all module and platforms.

**Web Analytics - Implementation Importance**

The tasks mentioned above were not randomly selected. These tasks were identified from the information gathered by the Web Analytics software. Web Analytics provided us with a baseline of all the metrics and allowed us to focus on improving those metrics. It gave us a clear insight on how visitors currently reach and use D&D KM-IT. It also identified areas where the system needs improvement. The primary purpose of implementing Web Analytics was always to follow up on the feedback it provided so that we can constantly improve the system, not only with new content, but also for popularity and usability. Web Analytics has allowed us to achieve just that and it’s the reason why many of the metrics discussed in this report (Number of Visits, Page Views, New Visits, Unique Visitors and Search Engines) have grown in triple digit percentages in a single year (See Table 2 on page 9 above). The return on investment (RIO) experience from the implementation of the Web Analytics software is still growing because we continue to learn more about our site visitors: their interests, web navigation behavior, location, sources, keywords used to reach the site, platform used and so much more. In addition, by using Web Analytics software, the IT team has been able to focus effort on tasks with the highest ROI. This involves taking into consideration our findings when developing future modules and functionalities as well concentrating on tasks that will take the least amount of time but yield the most results. In essence, without Web Analytics software, the development of the system could continue but there wouldn’t be a way to measure the impact on the D&D community and ultimately the success of the system.

**Web Analytic Tracking Tools**

**Google Analytics**

Google Analytics is a free statistics tracking and analysis service that allows website administrators to analyze traffic flow on a website. Google Analytics is the most widely used website statistic service. It is used by 57% of the 10,000 most popular websites. It is also used by 49.95% of the top 1M sites. The majority of the parameters measured in this report are from Google Analytics for consistency purposes.
Bing

Bing (formerly Live Search, Windows Live Search, and MSN Search) is a web search engine (advertised as a "decision engine") from Microsoft Corporation. Bing, like Google, provides an interface for site administrators to analyze their web traffic.

Alexa

Alexa Internet, Inc. is a California-based subsidiary company of Amazon.com that is known for its toolbar and website. Once installed, the toolbar collects data on browsing behavior which is transmitted to the website where it is stored and analyzed and is the basis for the company's Web traffic reporting. Hence, the page is only ranked between users who have these sidebars installed and may be biased if a specific audience is reluctant to do this. The rank is based on three-month data so it provides a short term trend of traffic. Alexa claims that 6 million people visit its website monthly.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the visibility of a website or a web page in search engines’ search results. In general, the higher ranked on the search results page and more frequently a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine’s users. SEO targets different kinds of search, including image search, local search, video search, academic search, news search and industry-specific vertical search engines.

On the D&D KM-IT, several SEO functions were implemented. These included page by page examination of HTML code to ensure that the latest in SEO standards were contained within each of the tool’s pages. This included adding search engine semantic HTML code to better categorize and index each page for search engine crawlers as well as creation of XML and text-based sitemaps to Google, Bing, and Yahoo standards to catalog the content of each of the 1,800 D&D KM-IT pages. Also, publicizing D&D KM-IT on other domains was done to take advantage of Google Pagerank and Bing ranking systems, using ad campaigns, posted links, and other tools.

Suggested Actions

Every time new information is added to the site, it has to meet SEO standards; therefore, SEO is a continuous process that is never really complete. Among the continuing modifications to be done are:

- Continue to make D&D KM-IT search-engine friendly by applying Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques.
• Apply industry standards to leverage and enhance the system visibility to the search engines.

• Continue modification of existing and new pages (HTML code, Head tags, TITLE tags, images tags, robots.txt file and XML sitemap files).

• Continue to add search engine semantic HTML code to better categorize and index each page for search engine crawlers.

• Update XML and text based sitemaps to Google, Bing, and Yahoo to catalog the growing content of D&D KM-IT.

• Keep on publicizing D&D KM-IT on other domains to take advantage of Google Page rank and Bing ranking systems, using ad campaigns, posted links, and other tools.

**Tools for SEO**

D&D KM-IT has taken advantages of the latest tools to implement a search-engine friendly system. Among the tools used are those provided by the major search engine themselves like Google and Bing.

**Webmaster Tools**

Both Google and Bing allow site administrators to create an account and monitor their site behavior on their search engine. These tools measure many parameters and give the administrator insight on how to improve. Some of the popular parameters are: sitemaps, site links, search queries, links to the site, content keywords, search impact, user activity and audience. For instance, below is a view that displays the search queries, impressions and clicks on the site during the period of January 15, 2012 – February 14, 2012 (Figure 10).
XML Sitemap Generators

XML Sitemap Generators are tools that generate or maintain files in the XML Sitemaps format (an open standard defined on sitemaps.org) and supported by the search engines such as Ask, Google, Microsoft Live Search and Yahoo!. Sitemap files generally contain a collection of URLs on a website along with some meta-data for these URLs. XML Sitemap Generators generally create "web-type" XML Sitemap and URL-list files that make search crawler and spiders easy to read. D&D KM-IT relies heavily on sitemaps to keep search engines up to date with new content.

Microformatting

A microformat is a web-based approach to semantic markup which allows software to process information intended for end-users (such as contact information, geographic coordinates, calendar events, and the like) automatically. Much of the information displayed on D&D KM-IT
is micro-formatted, however there are many other elements that can also benefit greatly from microformatting; this task will be implemented in the near future.

**Machine Semantics**

The Machine Semantics or Semantic Web is a collaborative movement led by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) that promotes common formats for data on the World Wide Web. By encouraging the inclusion of semantic (relation between signifiers, such as words, phrases, signs and symbols, and what they stand for) content in web pages, the Semantic Web aims at converting the current web of unstructured documents into a "web of data." It builds on the W3C's Resource Description Framework (RDF). According to the W3C: "The Semantic Web provides a common framework that allows data to be shared and reused across application, enterprise, and community boundaries."

**Path Forward and Suggested Actions**

D&D KM-IT has yet to reach its full potential. However, web analytics are showing some very promising results. To continue the maturing process, there are several tasks from the SEO point of view from which D&D KM-IT will benefit. These are Keyword Research, Site Architecture, Content Development, Link Building and Analysis and Reporting.

**Keyword Research**

Keyword research, an important facet of search engine optimization, draws a distinct parallel to traditional market research. Just as successful ad campaigns contain content that appeals to their target demographic, successful websites implement keywords that have the highest relevance and conversion rates. In order to know which keywords to target for the D&D KM-IT website, it’s essential to understand the demand for a given term or phrase. This information is collected using Web Analytics. Each search engine uses its own unique algorithm that is made up of various ranking factors. These factors determine which web pages to display for a particular search. For the D&D KM-IT, keyword research will be conducted using several tools available like: Google Adwords’ Keyword Estimator, Google Insights for Search, Google Trends Keyword Demand Prediction and Microsoft AdCenter Keyword Forecasting. All of the tools mentioned above are keyword research and optimization software that provide keyword expansion, research and pricing for paid search and content ad campaigns. They will give a great insight on how to post the content on D&D KM-IT so it’s easier for humans and web crawlers to find it.
Site Architecture

Site Architecture is another significant component of SEO because it is the common ground between human visitors and search crawlers. These are the only two types of visitors that reach the site; therefore, the D&D KM-IT was designed to provide them with the same structure elements. To ensure proper site architecture, the D&D KM-IT will continue to implement several tasks. First, we’ll continue to work on reducing the number of clicks it takes the user to reach the bottom of any module. The aim is to keep the architecture flat by restructuring the page navigation. Next, a path to the user’s current location will be provided via “breadcrumb” navigation, which is very useful for search engine page categorization. Finally, keyword-rich internal linking will be employed to link relevant pages under each module. Placing anchor text around keywords guarantees that web crawlers know that these pages are important and therefore follow these links.

Content Development

Each piece of information added to D&D KM-IT is an asset for SEO. It creates a new entry on the sitemap and encourages search engines to update their index with the new information. Content is key on the World Wide Web. There are hundreds of sites that are visually unattractive but are very popular because of their content. Effort will continue to be made so the information provided is up to date, accurate and verified.

Link Building

Link building is the process of getting links from external sites to the D&D KM-IT website. Link building is one of the essential ingredients of a SEO campaign and it has a great influence on determining the success of a website. The D&D KM-IT architecture allows visitors and search crawlers direct access to each of the vendor details making it possible for other sites to link to vendor information. It is also equally important to get links for relevant sites. This interchange of information greatly increases the ranking on search engines and boosts the page rank of the site. The final result is an overall improved search engine visibility. But unlike other SEO components, link building is an ongoing process; one that involves third party web sites. Attempts will be made to improve this and to increase the number of website that currently link to D&D KM-IT.

Analysis and Reporting

Analysis and Reporting is an essential component of SEO. This is the only way to truly know the value of the SEO investments discussed above. Analysis and Reporting allow websites to “talk” to the site administrator and give feedback about the visitor’s behavior on the website. A monthly web analytic report will continue to be generated on D&D KM-IT to keep parties
involved with the project informed. In summary, analysis and reporting has allowed for a clear benchmark to be established to track the development, popularity and usage of the D&D KM-IT Website.

**Glossary**

**Visitors**: user visiting the website

**New Visitors**: visitors that visit the website for the first time

**Returning Visitors**: visitors that have visited the website and are now returning

**Page views**: number of pages a visitor clicks while visiting the website

**Unique visitor**: a single and same visitor that visits the website within a given period. Unique visitors by definition are only counted once regardless of how many times he or she visits the website during the period.

**Direct Traffic**: typing the address of the website URL or clicking on previously saved bookmark

**Bounce Rate**: the rate at which visitors leave the website after only seeing the homepage.

**Referring sites**: other website that links the website discussed in this report

**Clickthrough Rate (CTR)**: defined as the number of clicks on an ad divided by the number of times the ad is shown, expressed as a percentage