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Gawker Switches To Unique Visitors: The Advertisers' Preferred Stat

Gillian Reagan | Jan. 5, 2010, 3:54 PM | 1,543 | 2

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Gawker's Nick Denton is switching from pageviews to unique visitors: the advertisers' preferred stat.

In a memo posted by The Awl, Denton tells his staff that writers will now live and die by a "US monthly uniques" target. It's the stat that advertisers use to "decide which sites they will shower with dollars," he writes.

Unlike pageviews, which can deceptively reflect on the popularity of "click-nip" like slideshows, uniques tend to be better indicator of a site's competitive value and potential audience growth. "Each of those first-time visitors is a potential convert," he writes.



"It just means you have to be even more original, even more provocative or even more of a hustler than usual."

Denton warned writers in a Dec. 2 memo that the change would be coming:

Pageviews have been our standard measure of success. They're easy to understand. The Sitemeter numbers update throughout the day. But we do need to recognize that not all pageviews are created equal. A slideshow view is not worth as much as a click from Twitter or Facebook or Digg which brings a new reader to us. Expect more emphasis in 2010 on clicks through from external sites — and the "uniques" which measure of the number of people that we reach. We can't just satisfy our existing regulars; we have to recruit new ones.

This means a few more things for Gawker writers:

- Each site, whether it's Gizmodo or Jezebel or Gawker.com itself, will be given a target to reach a certain number of unique visitors per year.
- If they reach 13 percent more uniques over the target (say 1.2m new visitors over their 1.06m target), writers and editors at that blog will receive a 13 percent bonus on their yearly salary.
- Each editor of an individual blog will be able to distribute that 13 percent bonus as they please.
- Each editor can also encourage writers by promising a bonus amount if they get juicy exclusives. "For instance, she or he might decide to offer a bounty for a spy photo which would boost the site's uniques that month," Denton writes.

He added that posts with original thought and original reporting will woo these uniques, especially the ones that break out on Twitter, Facebook, and TV.

Read Denton's full memo at The Awl, with some helpful charts >>>

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Summary

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Gillian Reagan

Contact:
e-mail: greagan@businessinsider.com
AIM: gillianaire
Work Phone: 646-484-6409
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