

## Understanding your website statistics

The following information is written for the use of Josh.biz clients but may also be useful to anyone who uses the same statistics package known as *AWStats* (*Advanced Web Statistics*). A regular review of your website statistics is crucial for all website owners in order to monitor performance, identify trends and to plan for future growth and development.

Here, we list and explain the really important statistics which every website owner should know about (as displayed by *AWStats*). For a detailed explanation of *AWStats*, visit the official [AWStats Glossary](#). As is often the case, you will find no shortage of further documentation by Googling.

### Introduction



Comprehensive statistics are provided with all the hosting packages Josh.biz provides. We encourage our clients to have a clear understanding of how to access their statistics and a fundamental understanding of the important points to focus upon.

Website statistics can be rather daunting when viewed for the first time. However, it's worth remembering that only a small portion of the statistics contains the really vital information and the following words of wisdom will help:

- **Be clear about how to access your statistics.** Keep a written record if necessary. If Josh.biz hosts your website for you, we can remind you of this information.

- **Understand how to change the reported period.** Your statistics will usually display data for the current day or month by default.
- **Focus on the important parts.** Two thirds of the information is usually only of interest to those with a very strong technical knowledge.
- Having focused on the necessary statistics, **understand the relevant jargon.** Much of the terminology can be intimidating and is sometimes entirely misused.

## How do I access my website statistics?

If your website is hosted by Josh.biz this information will have been supplied to you separately (usually when your website was launched). Contact us if you need a reminder. If your website is not hosted by Josh.biz, you will need to contact your own website hosting company.

## What statistics should I focus upon?

Typically, most website owners use their website statistics to check:

- The number of visitors (daily, monthly, yearly).
- Which pages are attracting the most visitors.
- Identification of external links (links from other websites) to your pages.
- Search engines, keywords and phrases used to find your website.



If visitor numbers are low, your website content may need revising or you may need to make more effort in nurturing incoming links to your website (back links). On the other hand, if visitor numbers are reasonable but these are not converting into enquiries or sales, other considerations may be necessary.

Website statistics can also assist you to measure the success of other marketing campaigns such as newspaper advertising and editorials when you would expect to see increased visitor numbers.

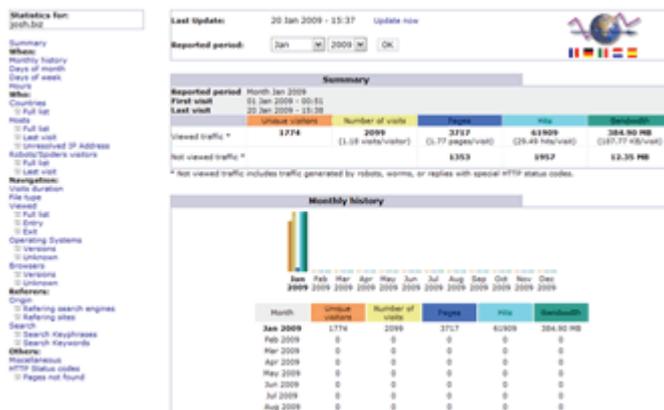
## What is AWStats?



AWStats (short for *Advanced Web Statistics*) is a popularly used package for compiling and representing website statistics. The resulting data is presented to the user as a web page. The user can analyse an assortment of information (of which only very little is usually valuable to small business owners).

The Josh.biz servers uses AWStats for most client websites. We also advocate the use of *Google Analytics* as a supplementary statistics device. If you are a Josh.biz client and want further information about employing *Google Analytics*, visit the [Google Analytics website](#) or contact us to assist.

## Understanding AWStats



Having browsed your statistics web page using the web address provided, you will be presented with a long page of statistical information about your website. The left hand bar provides text links to jump you down the page to a statistic of particular interest. Alternatively you can scroll up and down the page using the scroll bar.

### Don't run away yet!

For the uninitiated, the statistics page can be instantly overwhelming but please be assured, there are only certain parts which need to be focused upon, as we will explain shortly. It's also important to know how to set the period of time being reported upon, so lets deal with this first of all:

## Setting the 'Reported Period'

The chances are that when you first arrive on your statistics page, you will be automatically viewing the statistics for the current month. It will also display the date and time when the statistics were last updated. You can confirm this by looking closely at the first box in the main content area (as shown below). When available, you can manually update your statistics yourself by clicking 'Update Now'.

<b>Last Update:</b>	19 Jan 2009 - 15:36	<a href="#">Update now</a>
<b>Reported period:</b>	<input type="text" value="Jan"/> <input type="text" value="2009"/> <input type="button" value="OK"/>	

If you are visiting on the first day of the month, the statistics presented may only represent one single day. For this reason amongst many, you can change the reported period using the supplied drop down menus. If your [web hosting](#) permits, it is sometimes possible to view the statistics for a full year.

## First - the essential statistics to view

### 1. The Summary

Immediately underneath the Reported Period box is the Summary. This summarises various statistics for the reported period:

Summary				
<b>Reported period</b>	Month Jan 2009			
<b>First visit</b>	01 Jan 2009 - 00:51			
<b>Last visit</b>	19 Jan 2009 - 15:26			
	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	
Viewed traffic *	<b>1671</b>	<b>1970</b> (1.17 visits/visitor)	<b>3447</b> (1.74 pages/visit)	(C
Not viewed traffic *			<b>1276</b>	

\* Not viewed traffic includes traffic generated by robots, worms, or replies with special HTTP

The columns of data (colour coded) are not so easily understood. In fact, only the first two columns are usually of relevance to most website owners:

- *Unique visitors* (orange heading) - the number of unique visitors to your website in the reported period

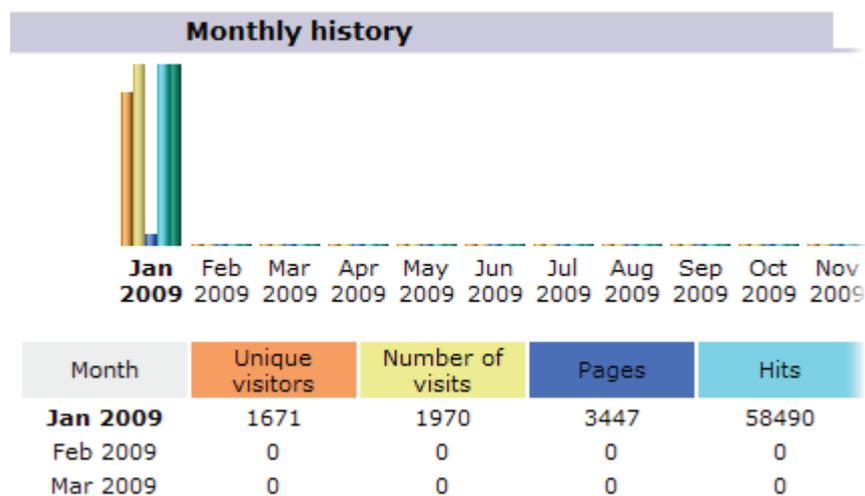
- *Number of visits* (yellow heading) - the number of visits made to your website in the reported period

An internet user might visit your website 5 times in one day but this will only be recorded as one unique visit. *Pages* provides the total number of individual pages visited within your website.

Be careful with the *hits* column. You will often hear people ask "how many *hits* have you had". The commonly used term, *hits*, is better regarded as either the *Unique visitors* or *Number of visits* statistic in AWStats. We don't recommend this link for 'non-technical' individuals, but if you really want to know more about the *hits* terminology, [visit Motive for an explanation.](#)

## 2. The Monthly History

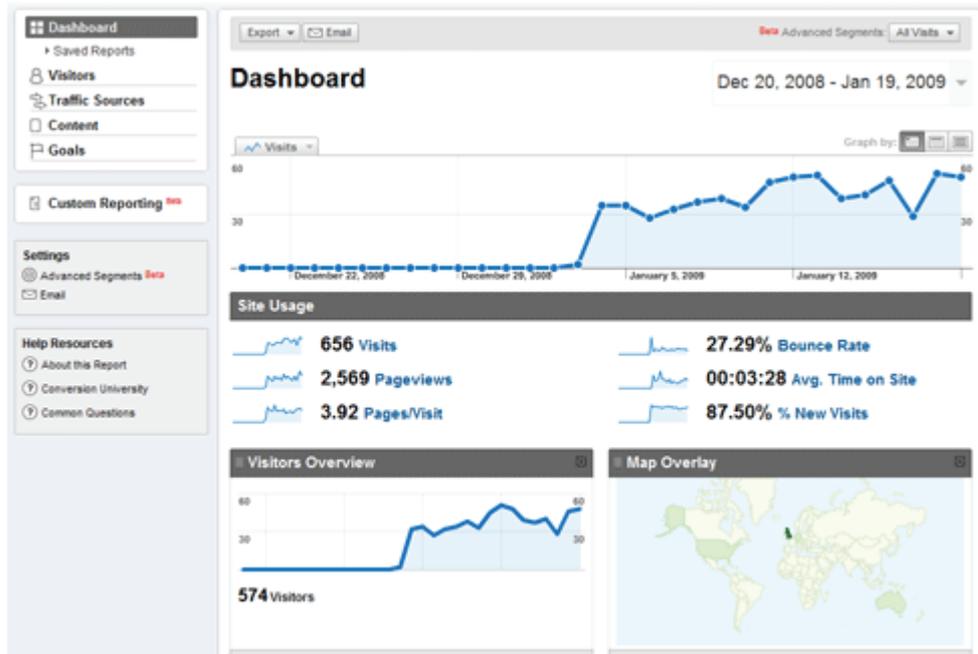
Monthly history is self explanatory, especially once you understand the column headings as mentioned above. Remember to concentrate on the first two columns (orange and yellow).



The Monthly History offers an instant way to compare visitor numbers during the months of the current year. To view monthly statistics for a previous year, simply select a month from a different year (back at the top of the statistics page).

AWStats is unable to display data between customised dates of your choosing – only full years. This demonstrates the failure of AWStats to match the customisation and friendly user interface of *Google Analytics*. Google's own free and popular statistics package, [Google Analytics](#) allows you to select very specific time periods

of your choosing and it shows off the figures with 'prettier' graphs and maps. See example screen shot below:



### 3. Pages

Pages lists the most visited pages on your site. Knowing which of your pages are trawling in the big visitor numbers is very useful when reviewing, editing and adding content.

Pages-URL (Top 10) - Full list - Entry - Exit				
23 different pages-url	Viewed	Average size	Entry	Exit
	709	12.87 KB	524	408
	517	9.86 KB	477	267
	426	10.71 KB	378	365
	240	58.53 KB	9	194
	190	11.86 KB	177	174
	153	4.95 KB	15	44
	153	16.71 KB	16	60
	105	12.71 KB	90	90
	100	12.08 KB	32	33
	100	17.78 KB	4	23
Others	754	13.18 KB	248	301

## 4. Connect to site from

This is an easy one to understand. It measures page referrals from both search engines and other websites. The search engine referrals will often simply reinforce existing knowledge of which companies dominate this industry.

Knowing about incoming links to your website is of very high value to most people. It will often encourage you to add content to your website when you realise that your information has value. Or it could be used to compare the success of different agencies / directories (especially when paid for).

This statistic presents the opportunity to introduce you to clicking the 'Full List' text link which, on this occasion, will allow you to view all the incoming links. Just viewing the first ten is never enough. You'll see the ability to get a full list on most of the statistics offered so try it elsewhere.

Connect to site from		
Origin		Pages
<b>Direct address / Bookmarks</b>		1318
<b>Links from a NewsGroup</b>		
<b>Links from an Internet Search Engine - Full list</b>		1287
- Google	1063 1064	
- Google (Images)	118 202	
- Unknown search engines	37 38	
- Yahoo	31 31	
- MSN	24 24	
- Ask Jeeves	8 8	
- AOL	6 6	
<b>Links from an external page (other web sites except search engines) - Full list</b>		300
	151 151	
	34 34	
	7 7	
	5 38	
	4 4	
	3 3	
	3 3	
	3 3	
	2 643	
	2 2	
	86 795	
<b>Unknown Origin</b>		1

## 5. Search Keyphrases and Search Keywords

This identifies the phrases and words which bring in visitors. This is usually great for confirming that your website is being found under your target words and phrases.

Search Keyphrases (Top 10)		
Full list		
692 different keyphrases	Search	Percent
[blurred]	51	4.7 %
[blurred]	18	1.6 %
[blurred]	18	1.6 %
[blurred]	17	1.5 %
[blurred]	16	1.4 %
[blurred]	12	1.1 %
[blurred]	12	1.1 %
[blurred]	11	1 %
[blurred]	10	0.9 %
[blurred]	10	0.9 %
Other phrases	896	83.6 %

To enhance the visibility of your website on the internet (the practice of SEO - *Search Engine Optimisation*) it is important to review this data closely. It shows current performance and may assist you to think more laterally about the words and phrases your website could be targeting.

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### And finally...

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Remember that online statistics are not 100% precise. They are best used to gauge approximate numbers and trends.

Further reading > [Google Analytics vs AWstats log file analysis - the differences](#)