



Channel or Site Section

Like the hierarchy variable, the **s.channel** variable is used as a roll-up of pages for de-duplication and reporting purposes. There is no nesting that occurs with the **s.channel** variable, and it is thus somewhat easier to implement than the **s.hier** variable in which all hierarchy levels must be coded on the page according to a strict taxonomy. The **s.channel** variable, on the other hand, only holds one value. The **s.channel** variable populates the “Most Popular Site Sections” report in SiteCatalyst.

The **s.channel** variable is critical for very large sites with a large number of pages. It is also useful for sites where pages may not be named in a consistent or user-friendly manner (for example, where a typical url might be www.mysite.com/page12345).

Strategies

“Site Sections” can be defined in all sorts of ways, and does not necessarily have to reflect or mirror your URL structure. For example, Site Sections can be thought of as topical (“sports”, “wellness”). Or they can be geographical (“France”, “New York”), or functional (“router pages”, “converter pages”). However you want to characterize your site, make sure that pathing is turned on for the **s.channel** variable. This allows for much more digestible information about the full paths taken on your site.

Stakeholders

Measurement and Marketing will certainly be involved, as well as IT. IT may be populating the **s.channel** variable through a CMS solution. Different branding or marketing teams may have very different ideas about how to characterize “site sections”. An important thing to realize is that the **s.channel** variable behaves just like any other prop variable. If one team thinks of the site topically, while an IA team thinks of it functionally, the **s.channel** can be used for one and a prop variable for the other.

Recommendation

Very few sites are so small that some kind of page roll-up is unnecessary. For large sites, such a roll-up is critical. We would recommend use of the **s.channel** variable over the **s.hier** variable, since it is easier to implement and has all the properties and functionalities of any prop variable.