

## ***A better recipe for Web measurement***

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The other day a Web analyst mentioned (complained) that his business partners had provided 300 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) they wanted to measure. That's an order of magnitude more than any business should want to track. But I kept my mouth shut. Doubtless the business partners are proud of this KPI stew. I can just imagine the conversation: "You only track 200 KPIs? We track 300."

KPI stew is the Web analytic version of the multivitamin: It includes every conceivable vitamin and mineral, and lacks nothing except the ability to keep you alive.

What drives the creation of this sour concoction? The lack of any guiding principle about what is worth measuring. When you don't know why you're measuring things, any statistic might have a point.

What Web marketers really need to know is how to use Web measurement. They need a framework that is more than a set of platitudes like "measure to conversion" or "measure by customer segments." These beg the real questions: "How do I do it?" "When do I do it?" And "How does it apply to my business?"

There is such a beast.

Based on the simple idea that each piece of a Web site has a particular function and that its effectiveness in this function can be measured by using statistics that are highly tailored to its role, functionalism provides a method for integrating analytics into the business and design process.

In functionalism, you start by classifying the important pages on your site according to their roles. The methodology includes a rich set of page types that can be easily identified on most sites: router pages (move visitors to appropriate subcontent); convincers (get visitors ready to buy); closers (get visitors to pull the trigger); and reassurers ("don't worry, it's OK" pages such as your privacy policy statement).

Part of the beauty of the scheme is that it gives everyone involved with the site a clear way to describe why a page was built and what it's supposed to accomplish.

Each page type comes with a set of KPIs to measure page performance. So the analyst gets a ready-made template for measuring the success of any particular page on almost any kind of Web site.

Functionalism provides a framework in which you can agree on why a page is being built, what its outcomes should be, how to measure if it's successful and how it compares to other, similar pages on your site so you can decide which ones to try and improve.

Why functionalism? Because a better recipe makes a tastier dish. Little good ever came from eating KPI stew.