

The World is in a State of Flux. Is Your Website Traffic, Too?

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As we look back at the Internet landscape of 2020, to look forward to a more “precedented” (hopefully) 2021 from the get-go, online traffic has presented a silver lining.

We’ve put a spotlight on a COVID-19’s impact on the Internet by the numbers:

- 40% growth in overall Internet traffic (between February 1 to April 19);
- 58% of the traffic associated with video streaming
- 11% of the traffic associated with social networking
- 8% share of global traffic dedicated to general browsing
- 16% was YouTube’s share of worldwide video platform-related internet traffic in 2020
- 9% was YouTube’s share in 2019

In fact, the health, capacity and resiliency of networks that facilitate and support these technologies have become a critical policy point. Likewise, international policy is even being coordinated via these networks.

What this means for your website

Now, let us consider the “numbers” associated with your website. Granted, health care is a completely different animal from retail, education, home improvement and other sectors that are powering these online traffic surges. Pointedly, elective services offered by your office are naturally not going to be buoyed during phases when all but essential emergency procedures are restricted. However, if a look at your metrics indicates that the COVID-19 Internet usage spike never happened, there may be opportunities to re-strategize and take a deeper dive at why the traffic has not fluctuated favourably as offices reopened and greater certainty reigned.

Just a few of the ways that dentists can harness some of the findings indicated by the data points above include:

Diversifying the types of content on your website – If the pandemic has reinforced anything to the health care marketing realm, it is the power of a rich visitor website experience. By “rich experience,” we are referring to the development of a website that is dynamic. New visitors and loyal “fans” alike are treated to substantive, printed content that is timely and provides value. With the push of a button, readers can “virtually” visit your office, “sit-in” on procedures, and hear from you and your team about what makes your office tick. Likewise, prospective patients can see wonderful, clear, well-lit pictures of your best work. Take advantage of all of the available opportunities to reach patients wherever they may be, in terms of personal preferences for the consumption of content. Be aware that now, more than ever, healthcare consumers are craving a real, human connection. Try to replicate as much as you can about the face-to-face experience at your office on your website.

There is no better time to deploy teledentistry – The hard fact is that not all dental offices will survive the pandemic, just as not all ophthalmologists, dermatologists, veterinarians, attorneys, real estate brokers and myriad other professionals will be able to sustain their establishments through the pandemic and its series of waves. Those businesses that will live to survive the next wave have embraced those technologies which bring the office to the patient’s home. So many practices have had telehealth and teledentistry services on their radar. There are many reasons in the current environment to no longer let tele-opportunities pass you by. Notably, platforms to facilitate secure, high-quality videoconferencing and communication are increasingly sophisticated, reliable, efficient, easy-to-use, and they are no longer cost-prohibitive.

Quality matters – What good does the addition of videos, audio and photos have on your website if the video doesn’t load quickly? Or if the audio sounds like you are in a tunnel? Or the photos are not clear and require squinting to “see” them? Professional photos, video and audio are accessible via mobile devices. First-rate multimedia is within reach when you consider the fundamentals: clear audio, video, and images, and engaging subject matter featured within that content. Furthermore, be authentic. Showcase your work. Minimize the use of stock photos, when genuine, candid images of your team and patients, for instance, can be quite endearing.

Get social – Do not underestimate one of the biggest drivers behind explosive Internet traffic during COVID-19. Take advantage of all of the social channels that are available to you. These channels present a way to engage with new and existing patients and their families in ways that

other types of content cannot. That being said, it is also important to engage and interact with the reader, listener, and viewer via other forms of content. Think in terms of calls to action at the end of the thought-provoking and timely articles and blogs on your website or within video and audio posts. You want to inspire the visitor to connect and communicate. Any hurdles to connecting should be minimized (see above point about “teledentistry”). Take care of the fundamentals as well with contact details that are easy-to-find and easy-to-read, and with buttons to schedule appointments online for added convenience.

“Timeless” website fluctuation-oriented considerations

If your website is in a state of flux, it can mean any number of things. In more precedented times, there may be a little less speculation about the factors that may be resulting in a dip in traffic. However, it is critical to focus on controlling what you can. The first step to making sense of the fluctuations is monitoring the numbers in the first place. That way, you are able to take a longer view and are less likely to panic or make rash decisions off of short-term fluctuations. Panic investing is less likely to obtain a good result over the longer term. The same notion applies to panic-induced website marketing. In general, good, bad, and indifferent fluctuations can provide an interesting insight into market and industry trends, which can then be used to drive high-impact content creation. We’ve listed some of the reasons you may notice peaks and valleys when it comes to online visitors, just as you might notice peaks and valleys when it comes to in-person patient traffic:

Competitive dynamics – There will always be new offices. There will always be dentists who retire. Likewise, some businesses may be sold to dentists that are new to the area. These changes can reflect in searches, search results, and ultimately traffic to your site.

Seasonality – You know your “peak periods.” These peaks in busy-ness at your practice probably coincide with peaks on your website. Generally, there are certain times of the year, such as around the holidays, when fewer people are on their computers searching for your services. Consumer traffic may be diverted to retailers, area attractions, or of-the-moment event sites.

Economy – Persistent unknown, broader economic hardships can be opportunities in disguise. You can differentiate yourself from the competition with promotions that have the added benefit of engaging the healthcare consumer. Messaging should also focus on value, the return that your patients can get from the investment they make in quality services to support their health and well-being.

Algorithm updates, trending oral health and dentistry topics, and reputation and website-oriented changes can also cause traffic to be in a state of flux. It is critical to remember not all change is bad, especially if it reflects renewed interest and traction, and a positive response to more frequent posts on your website, or a design refresh.

About the Author



Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy dentists, with a team of more than 180 full time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you're looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren.

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