Metrics to Mind Right Now for the Health of Your Website

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In a snapshot of around 350 small businesses, B2B firm Clutch found that one in five respondents "selectively" opted to use social platforms like Facebook as their primary online "home" instead of the conventional website.[1] Despite some movement on this front, websites are hardly going the way of the dinosaurs. In fact, it is estimated that a new website is "born" every three seconds. In all, more than 70% of businesses maintain a website – up from previous years due to the continued shift to e-commerce and remote work, defined markedly in our world by the onslaught of all things teledentistry.[2]

Digital "housekeeping"

You would not let office updates or protocols go on autopilot. Likewise, do not allow your digital house to gather cobwebs. Furthermore, while websites remain "king," social media is the undeniable "prince." As with one's portfolio, diversification is a best practice. Ideally, website and social channels are complementary, building upon each other, with content repurposed and cross-promoted in kind. By advancing commonalities, we streamline the ability to keep content fresh and forward and to be recognized as "worthy" in the eyes of

the algorithms that
determine what gets "seen" online.[3]

Metrics to mind right now

There are fundamental measurements all of us should know and regularly assess. In an environment characterized by an increasingly crowded online space and big game-changers like artificial intelligence and multimedia, these gauges of website health have never been more critical and potentially transformative for your practice.

Traffic – At its broadest, we refer to the number of visitors to your site. But you can also drill down on the number of new and returning visitors who use your website at least twice within a given period. And, yes, you can peek in at how figures fluctuate weekly, monthly, or from year to year. Notably, climbing return traffic is a good sign that individuals have bothered to revisit your website. They would not spend their precious time revisiting a clunky, unhelpful, unprofessional, or otherwise unattractive site. You may take a deep dive into factors
contributing to favourable return visitor counts by isolating a specific timeframe, for example, the immediate days, weeks, and months following content refreshes. Let the objective data guide you, telling you how well your efforts pay off.

User behaviour metrics – You can also get considerable insights into the content and design elements that may be working in your favour by closely analyzing the time users spend on your website ("session duration"), the number of pages visited per user session, and the "bounce rate." The bounce rate assesses the percentage of users who immediately "bounce" from your website after only looking at one page. This rate underscores the excellent care required when developing and maintaining the gateway into the rest of your website: the homepage. Potential patients will not bother checking out anything else if it is not appealing or valuable. The session duration and number of pages viewed indicate how well existing content resonates with users seeking dental expertise.

Further, isolate top-performing pages within your website by accounting for some of the abovementioned analytics. These numbers can be quite revealing; they spotlight those pages that are not getting read and those that are a draw. This analysis can also tell you how well certain services or categories of services are resonating with patients; for instance, you may find pages related to new laser therapies for gum disease or new content around gum disease are particularly popular, which may indicate the need for more

resources devoted to the
periodontal space in general.

Web performance analytics – Of course, content may not be found or "get read" at all if your site is slow or is not correctly optimized across mobile devices. Notably, the competing dentist down the block can have the same quality of content as your website; however, they have more visitors in the digital space coming through their doors than you do. Why? Because your site is slow! Aside from the speed it takes for your site to load, other essential signs of performance include those that assess "responsiveness," which is simply the way of referring to how the browser responds to interactions with users. If the responses to users' actions are delayed or fail the first time, you may lose valuable patients.

Action insights – How good is a website if it does not lead to some positive action that further positively impacts your practice? Click-through and Conversion rates are interrelated and among the most important results-driven website metrics. Click-through rates (CTRs) are the ratio of people who actually act on the call to action (CTA) per 100 users. The users who click on respective CTAs are so moved by what they see online that they are "called to action." In doing so, they may seek more information from a staffer or seek answers to specific questions from an associate. These actions could ultimately result in a meaningful relationship with you and your team.

While a potential reflection of the quality of content sitewide, the CTR also reflects the ease and clear or strategic placement of the all-important call to action. Furthermore, as indicated, the CTR is vital to the conversion strategy. The latter metric quantifies how well your website gets the user to do what you want; for example, we can put metrics to how well newsletter or email blast sign-ups are going. Depending on what we find, you may need to tweak the sign-up or how you promote certain elements of the "ask" to maximize the number of patients inspired to do something with the content and eventually interact with your team via the website.

Algorithms increasingly reward multimedia, image-rich content when determining what pages "get seen" by consumers (how your site ranks in relationship to other dentist's websites). So, make sure media is diverse and up to snuff, with no outdated photos or images that do not reflect your aspirational patient base. Additionally, AI is being leveraged as a resource to align one's website content with what consumers are seeking from dental partners.4 Just as you may consider AI tools to streamline diagnostic and other processes, the technology may also be used to optimize website content. While fundamentals may

remain the same, a new technology or technique always demands some attention, much like dentistry as a whole!

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