

From Goals to Action

Using stats the right way

ONA 2009



YAHOO!

Hello!

- Eric F. Brown
 - Front Page Planning Editor at Yahoo!
- What I do:
 - **Identify** content that performs well
 - **Share** learnings with team
 - **Optimize** content on future budgets



“Preaching to the Cheerleaders”

Common email:

**“This content got [insert number] clicks!
What a great success!”**

5 replies to the entire CC list:

“Great job!!!!!!1! J ”

The questions we *should* ask:

- Do we have a rigorous success metric(s)? Did we meet them?
- How will we use these insights in the future?
- Did this content further our company’s objectives?



How Yahoo! leverages stats






Mission: Connect users with the things and people that matter to them the most

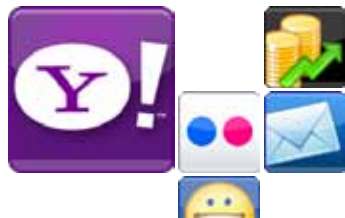
Content Optimization Engine

- Ranks content by key metric (CTR) and displays top scorer
- **Human editors control it:** “Voice choices” trump algorithm
- Provides rigorous stats reporting
- Under testing: Segmentation models

Communicate what works

- Stats reports: Send out to stakeholders, Be honest!
- Programming reviews: Internal and external
 - Twiki great for sharing/collaboration

Package	<u>Young Adults</u> (7)	<u>Social Chairmen</u> (9)	<u>CHO</u> (4)	<u>Young Boomers</u> (5)	<u>Older Boomers</u> (7)
All Below Packages					
	7	1	1	1	1
	12	7	2	3	2
	1	3	6	8	13
	4	4	5	5	5
	16	11	3	4	4



Three key takeaways

1. Be “on message” with the mission

- Possible missions for other companies:
 - “Bring readers the most important local news”
 - “Serve users with the Web’s best Fantasy sports advice”
 - “Give office workers a fun, short video to watch during lunch”

2. Develop robust metrics, and grade everything

- If you hit your metrics, you should hit your mission
- Traffic (clicks, time spent), Revenues (CPM), Competitive factors (“stolen” traffic, traffic rankings)

3. Schedule MORE content that performs well, and LESS content that doesn’t

- Find trends, Make recommendations, Share findings!




Warning: Don't go stats-crazy!

Clicks, CTR, etc., do NOT trump “qualitative” factors

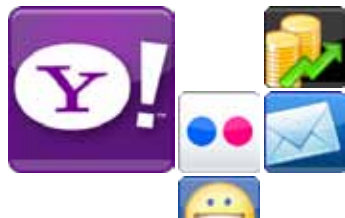
- Also important: Voice, News judgment, Appropriateness, Timeliness ...

How Yahoo! does it

- **Human editors control** the algorithm, not the other way around
- Turn “qualitative” factors into quantitative stats
 - Editors score content on Voice metrics
 - This helps content-optimization engine account for “qualitative” factors

Image	Info	Slug	Feature/F1	Author	Forced	Must See
	<p><u>Unique power of senator from Maine</u> Senator's unique power in D.C.</p> <p>Republican Olympia Snowe could give Democrats a landmark health care win with a yes vote.</p>	090928 news snowe clout t	true/true	johncr		Featured(360)

Obligated to show!



Thank you!

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