Submitted by Adrianne Donald, UC Assistant Director for Student Involvement and Communications, and Gwen Landquist, UC Program Manager for Marketing and Art

ABSTRACT
From August 30, 2010 to December 18, 2010, the UC Marketing Group collected visitor data for the UC website using the Google Analytics tracking code. Interpretation of the data indicated that either site entrance pages were not relevant to the visitors, or that the visitors did not find the UC site interesting enough to remain on the site. As a result, the marketing group made changes to the website, which included site reorganization, redesign, and the relocation of several pages to facilitate ease of navigation. Visitor data was again collected January 24, 2011 to May 14, 2011 using Google Analytics. Interpretation of this data indicated a marked improvement in visitor satisfaction with the UC website.

BACKGROUND
The marketing group supports the overall mission of the UC, to provide student-focused opportunities, programs, services, and space, in their ability to develop and use effective promotions, communications, and informational pieces in a variety of media and formats. To accomplish that role, the marketing group uses the Internet to disseminate information about UC programs and services, with UM students as the primary audience. However, the complexity and quantity of services and programs offered makes this a challenging task. Organization of the great amount of information into a dynamic, intuitive navigation system for visitors is a further challenge.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE
The marketing group’s communications coordinator took on-line tutorials in February 2011 in order to become certified in Google Analytics. The certification, a $50.00 testing fee paid by the UC effective for one year, allowed the coordinator to embed proper tracking code in the UC website, collect the analytic data, know what relevant data to collect, and properly analyze the data. Upon becoming certified the communications coordinator set up the analytics parameters and monitored web traffic, as well as checked the web statistics monthly and reported them to UC staff at semester mid-term and at the completion of the semester. Data were collected for fall 2010 and spring 2011. The analytics parameters collected during both fall and spring semesters included time spent on site (in minutes: seconds); bounce rate (defined as the percentage of single page visits in which a person left a site from the entrance page, indicating the relevance or interest of the site to the visitor); absolute unique visits (defined as the number of visitors to a site, including each person only once for an entire time period); page views (defined as each instance that a page is loaded by a browser); and new visits (defined as the difference between visits and visitors).

Analytics measures both visits and visitors. Visits represent the number of individual sessions initiated by all visitors to a site. For example, if a user is inactive on a site and returns greater than 30 minutes later, future activity will be attributed to a new session and an additional visit and visitor, but not as an absolute unique visit. If a user returns to a site within 30 minutes, the visit is counted as part of the original session.

Fall data were analyzed, and the website modified, to improve parameter data for the spring semester. The fall and spring parameters were compared for changes in activity. The findings from each semester were used by the UC marketing group to make decisions restructuring site navigation, adding site features, and revising site infrastructure.

FINDINGS
The findings for August, 30, 2010 to December 18, 2010, indicated a bounce rate of 72.32 percent and the average time spent on the UC site as 01:09. Site visits totaled 9,939, with page views at 15,430 and new visits to the site comprising 36.70 percent of the total visitors.

Table 1: Google Analytic Parameters Fall 2010 and Spring 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytic Parameter</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Spring 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Time Spent on Site</td>
<td>01:19</td>
<td>01:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bounce rate (percent)</td>
<td>73.32</td>
<td>50.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The UC site contained useful information, but the web page (regardless of organization of the Conference and Event Planning Office pages; (3) the inclusion of information tabs in the body of certain secondary pages; (4) the addition of photos throughout the site; and, (5) the introduction of a movie trailer light-box function on the Weekend Movies page in place of a text description of each movie.

As a result of these modifications, from January 24, 2011 to May 14, 2011, the UC saw a 21.45 percent decrease in the site bounce rate to 50.87 percent, while the average time spent on site increased from 01.19 to 01:23. Site visits increased from 9,939 to 14,068, with 6,245 unique visits. UC page views totaled 32,354, and the data indicated 37.70 percent of those views were new site visits.

Analysis of the Google Analytics results also indicated an increase in visits from mobile devices, an increase in number of different browser types used to access the UC site (20), a 2.21 percentage point increase in search engine results, and a 7.36 percentage point increase in direct traffic to the site (2,587 hits in the spring up from 1,096 hits in the fall).

Further evaluation of the data showed that visitors to the UC website were exploring more pages on the site (201 pages viewed a total of 32,354 times in the spring compared with 49 pages viewed a total of 15,430 times in the fall). The most highly trafficked pages indicated by the data were the UC Home Page, Weekend Movies, About the UC, Conference and Event Planning Office, Building Hours, The Source, and This Week in the UC.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

After analyzing the data gathered from Google Analytics, the following initiatives are recommended and/or currently in progress.

In the future, further assessments might be initiated to consider several conjectures from the data: for some visitors, the UC site functioned very efficiently, and upon finding the information pertinent to their search, visitors exited the site; for some visitors, the UC website did not present information in an efficient and intuitive manner, and those visitors therefore exited the site out of frustration; or, finally, the UC site contained useful information, but the web page (regardless of navigation efficiency) did not offer further reasons for visitors to explore the UC site beyond their intentional task oriented visits.

**Create a Mobile Version of the University Center Website**

With Nick Shontz from campus IT, the UC is beta testing a mobile version of UC website. This mobile version was built using jQuery within the confines of the Cascade Server technology used by campus to ensure ease of site maintenance and support.

The mobile UC site exhibits a clean, simple design with custom icons for each navigation item to ensure that navigation is as intuitive as possible. The mobile version also has fewer features and less content than the standard website. Highlights include intuitive search functionality for contact information, building services, and building hours.

The UC will spend the fall 2011 semester gathering feedback on the mobile site, with hopes that the site will be fully operational no later than spring 2012. The mobile website can be accessed at http://m.umt.edu/uc.

**Increase Awareness of the University Center Website**

The UC will increase efforts to promote the website by including the web address on all promotional items for 2011 UM Orientation Service Fairs, GO Day, and WelcomeFeast. The web address will have a continued presence on marketing
materials that are disseminated, and when applicable, QR Codes will be featured on printed materials for easy access to information via smart phone.

Conduct a User Experience (UX) Test for the University Center Website
The UC, under the guidance of Dan Bowling, web manager of Student Affairs IT (SAIT), is currently completing a user experience (UX) test proposal to be submitted to The University of Montana Institutional Review Board for approval before testing begins fall semester 2011.

The UX test is designed to provide the UC marketing unit with insight as to how the UC’s target demographic (students) interacts with the site. It should highlight both site problem areas and strengths.

Upon administering the test, the results, along with current Google Analytics, will be analyzed and used to guide decisions made by the UC marketing department with regard to the re-design of the UC website. The re-design is tentatively set to commence at the end of the 2012 winter break, with plans to debut the new website in the summer of 2012.

The testing parameters, analytics data gathered, and process of evaluation will be made available to other units throughout Student Affairs in order that those units may conduct their own website testing if so desired.