

How to Determine a Domain Name's Type-in Traffic

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There are 3 ways to determine if a domain name has type-in traffic. In today's tutorial, I show you exactly how to do that with the tools I trust.

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There are 3 ways to determine if a domain name has type-in traffic: looking at real data, looking at estimated data, and looking at old data. Using all three data sources will give you an idea what the true order of magnitude is for the domain name of interest.

But in life we don't have all the data we want all the time. So knowing how to gather these three types of data sets will allow us to make an educated decision with limited data.

The first option is looking at real data. To do this, you look at the analytics and see if it has type-in traffic.

Obviously, including analytics code for tracking requires you have some sort of web page rendering when the domain name resolves.

The web page could be a blank page that serves Google Analytics code, an Efty for-sale landing page that tracks visitors, or a full WordPress website with JetPack analytics installed. It doesn't really matter -- you just need something that can track unique users visiting the domain name.

If Google Analytics is installed, to view the type-in data you go to Google Analytics, select the website, then go to Acquisition, All Traffic, Channels and look at the Direct channel for the time period selected.

We can see that there have 1,421 type-ins from 1,301 people in the past 30 days on my domain name.

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Google Analytics shows exact numbers but the resolution of data isn't really that exact -- so it doesn't matter. We're just looking for the order of magnitude. Is it zero, 10, 100, 1,000, 10,000, 100,000 or a million? In this case, it's about 1,000.

We'll note that Google Analytics says about 1,400. That's what the real data tells us.

Google Analytics = 1,400

Now let's look at estimated data. There are a number of sites that estimate the traffic to websites by buying the anonymous data from Internet Service Providers, or ISPs.

In other words, if you use Comcast to get on the web at home or at your office, and you type Google.com into your browser, Comcast records that and -- along with a ton of other websites you visited -- anonymizes the data and sells it to others for their use. The International Herald Tribune estimated that British Telecom made about \$167 million selling anonymized ISP data in 2009.

Now that you're freaked out, let me tell you how you can use this to your advantage.

That data that's being sold in bulk from ISPs to others includes everything: people visiting websites that exist, as well as people typing in domain names that don't resolve. Going to a website like SimilarWeb.com will tell you how much traffic a website or domain name receives.

Using my example site, on SimilarWeb I can see an average of about 4,000 visitors per month with about 88% of them being direct, type-in so 4,000 times .88 equals about 3,500. Not the same as 1,400 in Google Analytics, but the same order of magnitude. So let's record that.

SimilarWeb = 3,500

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That's what the estimated data tells us. So now we know what the real data tells us as well as what the estimated data tells us.

Now, let's look at the final data set: what the old data tells us.

To find this data set, we use EstiBot.com. So go to EstiBot.com, type in the domain name of interest, and wait for it to return the data. When it loads, scroll down to the Type-in Score area and look for the Overture (domain) data.

When the Overture search engine used to exist, it would collect data on the the number of times a domain name was queried. The data is presented on a per day basis, so 41 queries per day -- in this case -- multiple by 30 days per month will give us an estimate of the direct type-ins per month.

So 41 times 30 equals about 1,230. Not exactly the same as the 1,400 from Google Analytics or the 3,500 from SimilarWeb, but it's the same order of magnitude.

EstiBot = 1,230

Given this data, I'd say it's fair to assume that the domain name receives about 1,000 to 2,000 direct type-ins per month.

Let's look at a couple of other extreme examples.

Here's an example with more data.

Beer.com is parked, meaning it's not a developed, active website even though it likely has some backlinks from other websites which sends it some traffic. It's fair to assume that most of it's traffic is likely coming from direct, type-in traffic -- but let's check it out.

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I don't have access to the analytics associated with Beer.com, so the first option -- looking at real data -- is not available to me.

The second option is to look at estimated data. Visiting SimilarWeb.com shows me that Beer.com receives about 15,000 visitors per month with about 43% of it coming from direct traffic. So 15,000 times .43 equals 6,450 direct, type-ins per month.

Now let's check out the third and final option: the old data.

Visiting EstiBot and typing in Beer.com shows me a Type-in Score at Overture (domain) of 5,074 per day, which is about 152,000 type-ins per month.

So here's a discrepancy.

One data set says the order of magnitude is about 10,000 while other other data set says order of magnitude is about 100,000. Which is right?

Who knows. Maybe less people are typing in Beer.com today. Get real data or choose the conservative option. Make your own decision from there.

Now, what if a domain name doesn't have very much data.

JGG.com is parked, meaning it's not a developed, active website. I don't know anything about this three letter .com domain name. I just picked it off the top of my head.

I have no idea what the real data is for JGG.com.

The second option is to look at estimated data. Visiting SimilarWeb.com shows me that they don't have enough information on JGG.com to even display a traffic graph or a ranking.

Now let's check out the third and final option to gather data: the old data.

Visiting EstiBot and typing in JGG.com shows me a Type-in Score at Overture (domain) of 0 per day.

So, estimated data matches with older data. JGG.com likely has no type-in traffic or less than 100 per month as there is no data.

Often as investors we have to make decisions with the best available data. Knowing that there are 3 ways to determine if a domain name has type-in traffic -- using real data, estimated data and old data -- will help us find the true order of magnitude for any domain name of interest.

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