

Campaign Management and Measurement using client-side technology from speed-trap

WHITE PAPER



The need for campaign measurement & management on the web...

The web promised to be the marketer's dream – free access to millions of potential customers, endless opportunities to segment, focus, personalise and analyse those visitors - and all the data we needed to allow us to further tune our campaigns and deliver untold profits. Sadly, for many organisations, the experience has not measured up to the expectations...

The problem is that the web-technology produces a rather confusing and remote environment for those of us who are trying to plan and measure on-line marketing campaigns.

At first glance there seems to be a wealth of available information and statistics; "page impressions", "click-thrus", "unique visitors", etc. But it doesn't take long to discover that when it comes to buying and selling on-line advertising these statistics become like the lamp-post is to the drunk – more for support than illumination!

Reality: We have examples of speed-trap customers who have been billed for hundreds of clicks that never happened, thousands of visitors who never arrived, and campaigns that were entirely constructed from robots who masqueraded as "visitors" to generate income for the advertising agency.

The problem is that traditional server-side campaign measurement mechanisms are shaky at best and wide open to abuse by unscrupulous organisations.

The bottom line is simple – you are spending real money on on-line and banner advertising, and yet you have little or no solid information to tell you if you are getting the visitors you were expecting if the ones who *do* arrive are serious potential customers or just misdirected surfers.

speed-trap, the client-side experts, have developed a solution to overcome this "web-blindness". This product (Prophet) is a unique and complete Campaign Measurement system.

Prophet is designed to finally answer John Wanamaker's famous complaint: *"Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half."*

The client-side difference

Prophet is able to perform its feats of insight and intelligence gathering because it collects its data from the user's browser as they use your site; rather than from traditional server-side solutions (web-logs, web-bugs etc.)

This is why Prophet is called a "client-side" solution.

This approach provides three major benefits – the data is more accurate, the data is more complete and the data is gathered in context.

This means that you can have confidence in the information you receive – and you have the depth of insight to be able to answer any question concerning the way your campaigns are working or the visitors who it is attracting.

Prophet can provide four key datasets:

- How many actually saw your advertisement or link
- How many actually clicked your advertisement or link
- How many actually received the resulting content
- What did they do next, later, ever...

Armed with this set of information, you can make data-driven decisions about where you spend your money and what return it is generating.

Accurate measurement of campaign success

Prophet can now provide accurate information on which campaigns are delivering traffic and which campaigns are delivering buyers and "intenders" and tyre-kickers.

Prophet's unique ability to capture clicks, page-load, page-complete and page-unload events mean that the system can measure exactly how many visitors receive a page, how many see the page completely loaded (including embedded images) and how long they view the page before they leave, and what they do next. Because the system can also track referrers and process http query strings it allows tracking of the complete user journey, from entry page to transaction completion.

Reality: ...one of my largest campaigns is only generating a 0.03% clickthru rate - just in one in 6,000 visitors is looking at the product information page and so far only *one* person clicked "buy"...

So Prophet can measure both traditional banner campaigns, e-mail campaigns and other referrers (search, engines, partners, or catalogues.)

This insight can be translated directly to bottom-line cost reductions or improvements in profitability, by allowing you to directly link expenditure on advertising to results (not just hits).

With Prophet in place you can make more of your existing advertising budget or achieve the same results with less. It's a solution that will pay for itself within weeks or months.

Banner, e-mail and hyperlink campaign measurement

Prophet's can track campaigns whether they are driven from e-mail, banner advertising or hyperlink campaigns (including search engine traffic). The unique benefit of the system is its ability to move beyond the traditional "hit" metric, and provide a complete insight into the Customer Experience and Journey.

Prophet not only proves that the visitor received the intended content, but can also prove exactly how long it took to arrive, how long the visitor viewed it for, and what they did next. This level of insight allows Brand and Site Managers to make informed decisions about which campaigns are delivering the most valuable users and if their sites are delivering a customer experience which meets the objectives of their brand.

Real-time Event Delivery and Analysis

As the event-stream gathered by Prophet is returned in near real time (within 1-2 seconds) it is possible to provide “real-time” statistics on campaign performance, usage and behaviour.

Using the interactive dashboard interface Prophet can deliver reports such as “number of sessions from campaign x”, “basket value by referrer”, product brochure eye-balls seconds by campaign” and any other you decide updated hourly, daily or down to the “last 5 minutes”.

In addition, because the data is returned “as it happens”, and from each and every page in your site, the system is able to report on incomplete activities – e.g. forms which are not completed, purchases which were abandoned in mid-session

Interactive Dashboard Reporting

The data gathered by Prophet provides a complete interactive Dashboard and Dashboard Development Kit (DDK) to allow and your team you instant access to web-based reports on campaign efficiency.

The standard Dashboard provides out-of-the-box reporting of referrer-based campaigns, and with the standard installation and commissioning package speed-trap will help you set up the dashboard to report the key reports you need to monitor and manage your campaigns. Or we can train you to build your own reports from the data Prophet provides.

So instead of being weighed down by endless reports, you can have a single web page which provides the key indicators and measures to let you know if you are on track.

Interactive Analysis with the Analyst Workbench

Because Prophet is part of the Prophet family of client-side tools and solutions you can upgrade your installation with the Prophet Analyser Workbench. This unique workbench allows you to drill-down into the raw data collected by Prophet to let you undertake behavioural analysis and customer journey and experience research.

Armed with this capability you can not only monitor the campaigns you are running today, but understand enough about how your visitors behave to help you design the campaigns you want to run tomorrow.

Say “goodbye” to robots and crawlers

Because the data is gathered from within the browser, visitors to the site who are not running browsers are automatically ignored. This means that robots and crawlers are automatically excluded from the data Prophet gathers, thus giving you the confidence you need when presenting results to partners and management about your *real* visitors.

Because the data is gathered from within the browser, session continuity is automatically ensured. There is no need to collect IP address or drop persistent cookies; the data Prophet collected is automatically tagged with a sessionID that will remain constant for the entire duration of the session. This mechanism will continue to operate even if the user leaves and returns to the instrumented site several times or opens pages in new browser windows.

Privacy Friendly Too

Privacy and security are also key issues for any on-line application. So Prophet comes with a comprehensive set of safeguards, giving you control over the data you gather and complete protection of the privacy and security of your visitors.

To ensure that gathered data is not compromised Prophet encrypts all data before it is returned to the collection server using its own light-weight encryption processes. If you are working on a secure application it can also use HTTPS protocols and browser level (128 bit) encryption on secure pages, (or you can configure it use this level of encryption at all times.)

To protect the privacy of your users you can control every aspect of its data collection from the server console interfaces. (Or we can provide systems with key collection functions disabled to prevent accidental or unauthorised activation of these functions.)

So, for example, you can stop Prophet from gathering keystroke values – in this way any entered data will be shown as strings of asterisks – or you could disable the collection of IP addresses information - as fixed IP addresses may convey “personal information” - or disable the collection of cookie data – where this may contain sensitive information.

This means that in fact while Prophet is capable of delivering a level of insight impossible with any previous technology it can do this in an entirely anonymous and privacy-friendly way. As such Prophet represents a solution that is more privacy-friendly than traditional web-log analysis systems.

This set of functionality means that you and your users can utilise Prophet’s power in complete confidence and safety.

The Prophet Benefit

Because the Prophet client-side architecture interrogates the Document Object Model within the browser for the pages it is monitoring, the system is entirely data-driven. This confers several major advantages to the data Prophet gathers:

It means you get can see everything, without the need for additional coding. This means that you learn things you never expected; pictures that users click thinking that they are links; text that catches user's attention as an apparent hyperlink – even though it leads nowhere; watch them abandon a form when they reach the question which confuses them or see how key data is missed because their browser window is too small...

It means that Prophet can record *all* activity and present it using the language and context of your site – if there is a button called “checkout” and it gets clicked Prophet will show you a “click” event on an object called “checkout” – with no effort on your part.

It means the system automatically deals with dynamically generated content and pages – you do not need to tell Prophet anything about the pages and frames it is instrumenting – it understands what is delivered and will automatically report on activity, experience and journey using the same terminology that you did in building the site.

Together this unique set of patented functionality means that the data, reports and insight the system provides is instantly usable by you and your client organisations.

Instant answers and low-cost deployment

speed-trap's technology does not demand the major investment in "instrumenting" a site which traditional "tagging" or "observation log" based solutions demand. Prophet's unique architecture means that integration is achieved through an installation, which is simple and quick. A single tag in the footer of the pages you want to instrument will deliver the complete power of Prophet providing you access to the complete dataset which Prophet collects – instant observations of any aspect of site usage, visitor behaviour and/or system performance.

On the server side any system capable of supporting a Java 1.3 environment can play host to the Prophet collection server, most customers can deploy Prophet and be collecting meaningful data within one to two days.

The system's architecture automatically supports sites utilising dynamic content, secure pages and embedded applications with no changes to the insert or content.

Prophet-TK is specifically designed to integrate with your site and can retrieve content-related information to help you understand exactly what content is being delivered and the impact it is having, using language that you and your colleagues will understand.

Moreover, Prophet will work with any HTML content, so HTML campaigns, media players and pop-ups can all be monitored in an integrated way with Prophet-TK.

Serious capability, total accuracy

Perhaps most surprising is the sheer depth of information that Prophet can put in your hands. The single Prophet monitoring tag in the pages you want to monitor gets Prophet ready to deliver up to 26 types of “event” with over 160 other “properties” on hand. This data defines every aspect of the environment and activity involved in a visit to the site.

Prophet’s unique client-side architecture also means it provides complete accuracy too. By avoiding the problems of IP address resolution, web cache-hits and cookies, Prophet delivers data you can rely upon.

Because the data is gathered from within the browser, every page is captured, whether it is delivered from the web server, ISP cache or from the browser’s internal cache. You get complete data with no gaps and you can see the effect that the caching has on the performance as experienced by the user.

The Bottom Line

Prophet and its client-side approach to information gathering and analysis, provides a unique source of campaign and customer data, which is accurate, complete, real-time and reliable.

Prophet has already helped our customers to make more effective use of their marketing budget – either by reducing spend or through better targeting.

Prophet’s access to detailed, reliable client-side data means that we can track any campaign from click to completion – and probably reduce your costs and increase your productivity in the process.

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