

Usability Indicators for Site Analytics

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What are Usability Indicators?

Usability Indicators are quantitative measures within a site analytics system that suggest the usability of a system. They can be used to uncover usability issues and can be the basis for developing hypotheses to test with users. Data collection happens through a site analytics tool, such as Google Analytics, and data collection is based on site usage.

Why Use Usability Indicators?

There are some great benefits to implementing Usability Indicators into your human-centered design practice:

- **Leverages Existing Tools:** Many CMS systems have site analytics in place, which allows us to expand the use of existing tools
- **PRA Compliant:** Compliance is a key consideration when mapping out a user research plan, especially for quantitative large-scale research – but site analytic data is passive and we're not asking users to respond to questions or complete tasks. This means we're not directly interacting with users for feedback, and we do not trigger the need for PRA coverage.
- **Free and Passive Data Collection:** This is a simple data collection method that is often already happening, and the costs are either free or bundled into the tool you're already using. So, there's a low or zero level of effort for collecting this data.
- **Balanced Research:** It also helps your team triangulates quantitative and qualitative user data. It's a best practice to evaluate usability through both quantitative and qualitative data. In simple terms, quantitative data helps us understand what is happening and qualitative data tells us why it's happening. Bringing these modalities together helps us see the big picture and create better solutions. A lot of HCD methods are qualitative in nature, so site analytics are an excellent way to apply quantitative data to your HCD practice.

5 Usability Indicators

We recommend these 5 usability indicators specifically thinking about the functions of CMS systems. So, for example, we know our users need to use our systems so we won't focus on things like retention. We've also prioritized indicators that require minimal set up for tracking. These indicators answer the following questions:

- **Site Search:** What are people looking for on your site?
- **FAQ Page Visits:** What common questions and concerns do users have?
- **Clicks and Scrolls:** What are users most likely to click on? How far are they likely to scroll on high value pages?
- **Session Duration:** How long are users spending on your site?
- **Task completion:** How often are users completing key tasks? When are they dropping off in the funnel?

HCD PROCESS

- [Implement Phase](#)

More Information

- [Quick Resource Guide to UX Metrics](#)
- [Which UX Metrics Should You Be Tracking?](#)
- [Benchmarking the User Experience](#)
- [Google's HEART Framework for Measuring UX](#)
- [Measure What Matters](#) (John Doerr)

RELATED METHODS

- [Developing a UX Measurement Plan](#)
- [Change Management](#)
- [Feedback Loop](#)
- [Usability Testing](#)