

## WEB RANKING CREDIBILITY

Dear Friends:

We have recently noticed a great deal of discussion and confusion regarding traffic statistics and analysis of online summer camp directories. We believe it is important to provide to you with accurate information regarding Alexa Web Information Traffic Service and MetricsMarkets traffic statistics, so that you may make a more informed decision regarding the allocation of your advertising dollars.

**Unless otherwise noted, all of the information below is quoted directly from the Alexa website.**

Alexa could not exist without the participation of the Alexa Toolbar community. Want to help? Install the Alexa Toolbar. **(note: in other words, only those users who have the toolbar installed will be counted)**

**“The traffic data are based on the set of Alexa users (advertised by Alexa as “10 million downloads”) which may not be a representative sample of the global Internet population” (Alexa does not state that there are over 655 million estimated internet users based upon research presented by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in its “E-Commerce and Development Report 2002”). “Known biases include (but are likely not limited to) the following:**

- **Our users are disproportionately likely to visit alexa.com, amazon.com and archive.org, and traffic to these sites may be substantially over counted.**
- **The Alexa Toolbar works only with the Internet Explorer browser.** Sites frequented mainly by users of other browsers will be undercounted. **For example, the AOL/Netscape browser is not supported, which means that Alexa collects little data from AOL users, and our traffic to aol.com is likely lower than it would be for a more representative sample.**
- **The Alexa Toolbar works only on Windows operating systems.** Although a large majority of the Internet population currently used Windows, traffic to any sites which are disproportionately visited by users of other operating systems will be undercounted.
- The rate of adoption of Alexa software in different parts of the world may vary widely due to advertising locality, language, and other geographic and cultural factors. **For example, to some extent the prominence of Korean sites among our top-ranked sites reflects known high rates of general Internet usage in South Korea, but there may also be a disproportionate number of Korean Alexa users.**
- **In some cases traffic data may also be adversely affected by our "site" definitions.** With tens of millions of hosts on the Internet, our automated procedures for determining which hosts are serving the "same" content may be incorrect and/or out-of-date. Similarly, the determinations of domains and home pages may not always be accurate. **When these determinations change (as they**

**do periodically), there may be sudden artificial changes in the Alexa traffic rankings for some sites as a consequence.**

- **The Alexa Toolbar turns itself off on secure pages (https:).** Sites with secure page views will be under-represented in the Alexa traffic data.”

“In addition to the biases above, **the Alexa user base is only a sample of the Internet population**” (based upon 10 million Alexa toolbar downloads and 655 million Internet users, **the actual internet sample size is a statistically insignificant 1.5%**), “and sites with relatively low traffic will not be accurately ranked by Alexa due to the statistical limitations of the sample. Alexa's data come from a large sample of several million Alexa Toolbar users; however, this is not large enough to accurately determine the rankings of sites with fewer than roughly 1,000 total monthly visitors. **Generally, Traffic Rankings of 100,000+ should be regarded as not reliable because the amount of data we receive is not statistically significant.** Conversely, the more traffic a site receives (the closer it gets to the number 1 position), the more reliable its Traffic Ranking becomes.”

(Note)While Alexa numbers might appear interesting and possibly provide some form of superficial assessment about any given website's relative traffic, a true count of a website's visitor traffic can only be obtained through direct examination of the actual website's internal access logs or via a third party direct audit.

**Metrics Market, another “leading online traffic analysis resource” sited by a competitor, also requires further analysis.** According to their website, “Metrics Market is an international company specializing in providing global Internet metrics and research services. All research & development is conducted at our New Zealand based research laboratory and sales representatives are available in North America and the United Kingdom.”

**The totality of MetricsMarkets published, scientific tracking methodology reveals the following:**

“The results shown above are collected from a sample of over 2 million users. They are usually accurate to within 5-15% of real traffic, however some anomalies may happen which can reduce the accuracy.” **It is critical to note that 2 million users represent .3% of all Internet users!**

### **Comparing MetricsMarket with your own web statistics**

**These figures will usually not directly correlate with web server logs as they do not include visits from search engine spiders/crawlers, monitoring services or cached hits.**

Usually your web server logs will indicate more unique visitors than we do and a number in between will likely be the truer figure.”

## **Our Summary Comments**

As with many other “trusted sources”, further analysis typically reveals the flaws inherent in a given study or published statistics. We believe that the entire traffic statistics matter required more disclosure so that the current misinformation campaign by one of the online directories can be viewed completely, rather than the slanted and skewed manner presented by our competitor. All of this information is readily available at [alexa.com](http://alexa.com) and [metricsmarket.com](http://metricsmarket.com) for your personal reference.

Please also note that some online directories use the term “hits” regarding traffic measurement. Any disclosure of “hits” needs to be qualified, since by many definitions a single web page request by a visitor can easily generate dozens of “hits”. It is accepted that the use of “hits” represents false large numbers.

Finally, please do not mistake company press releases as facts or actual press articles.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss this issue further, please do not hesitate to contact any of us. We would be pleased to share our thoughts with you and assist you in any way possible in an honest and complete discussion of the facts.

Best regards,

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