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# Measuring Media Relations Outputs for Internet Publications

If you think guidelines to measure print and broadcast media can give you a headache, trying to measure articles on the Internet is akin to getting a frontal lobotomy. How does one determine the number of people who may have seen a story on the Web, and what possible media value could it have? It's an issue that should be at the top of mind for communications executives, especially if you consider how much faster the Internet has grown compared with the historic growth of radio and TV, for example. To get a better handle on Web measurement, PRtrak/SDI recently worked with top executives in the advertising research, media buying and Web measurement industries to develop some methodologies and guidelines that would lay a cornerstone for Internet media measurement for the PR world. These methods are now being used by a number of PR vendors and hundreds of practitioners nationwide, and include the following:

### Internet Audience Estimates:

Internet audience estimates are easy to inflate, just by misunderstanding the various definitions alone.

**Hits:** many users cite "Hit" counts as evidence of how many times their story was accessed. But "Hits" is the most inflated number of all, since it delivers the total of all graphic elements accessed within an entire site each day.

**Impressions:** this number is also inflated, since it delivers the total of all pages viewed on a site per day.

**Visits:** since a story usually appears on a single page, the best number to use is Daily Average Visits, which shows the average number of times the site itself is accessed each day. Thus, at the most, this would be how many people could actually have seen your story. Essentially, Daily Average Visits for the Internet is the same as Gross Impressions are for broadcast stations – "eyeballs."

**Home Versus Non-Home Page Visits:** Keep in mind that "Visit" numbers tend to be available for Home Pages, which is not where most of us get story placements. So, if you wish to measure more precisely,

research done by SDI and comScore MediaMetrix has shown that the likelihood of a prospect to go from a home page to a secondary (or deeper) sub-page depends upon the type of site. For example, at the low end, only 8% of visitors to a "community" site go on to a sub-page, whereas at the high end, 28% do so on a financial site.

### Internet Media Values:

The metric to request is the 468 x 60 banner rate for a site. A reliable source for Internet advertising rates is:

SQAD Inc., which is the definitive standard in media-cost forecasting for the broadcast and Internet industries. SQAD obtains the real invoices paid by major ad agencies, and supplements that information with polling and then determines the "Average Banner CPM" paid by media buyers.

Using a straight banner rate for the value of a story is completely inaccurate. SDI found that what was missing in these calculations was the amount of space covered by a story, in the same way column inches are used to calculate print value. The algorithm that yields the most realistic

rates – when compared to print space costs – is to use 1 banner rate for each 50 words in an article.

### Adding It All Up:

Here is a summary of the steps, along with an example:

**Obtain Daily Average Visits for the site**  
(Example: 20,000 visits)

**Obtain the 468 x 60 Banner CPM**  
(Example: \$25)

**Divide Daily Average Visits by 1,000**  
(Example above: 20,000 divided by 1,000 = 20)

**Multiply the CPM by the result above to get the full Banner Cost**  
(Example above: \$25 x 20 = \$500)

**Divide the Word Count of your story by 50**  
(Example: a 200-word story divided by 50 = 4)

**Multiply the result above by the Banner Cost for story Media Value**  
(4 x \$500 = \$2,000 Media Value)

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