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|-----------------------|--|
| Title | Metrics |
| Meta Data | usage, number of hits, abandoned tasks, task time to completion, response times, system availability, total number of users, total number of concurrent users, benchmarking, benchmark, measurement, WebTrends, log files, server logs, NetRatings, metrics, measure |
| Guideline or Standard | Guideline |
| Applies to | All |
| Summary | <p>Metrics are measurements of a Web site or application that determine whether the goals and requirements have been met. Performance is evaluated against a benchmark, which is the standard level at which the Web site or application should perform.</p> <p>What to Measure</p> <p>Process data indicates shows the subjective success of a site. Can the users find what they need? Are the key user tasks addressed? Do they users understand the terminology? Is the information architecture clear? Refer to the Standard UX Methodologies guideline for more information on what process data measures.</p> <p>According to Jakob Nielsen, the most critical bottom-line metric is the user success rate, which is the percentage of tasks that users complete correctly. User success is key. i If users can't cannot accomplish their target task, nothing else matters. Other bottom-line metrics include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task completion time • Error rate • Popular pages • Percentage of time that users follow an optimal navigation path • Where users are leaving your site • Tasks that are more difficult on your site than on competitors' sites • Total number of visits, total number of users, and concurrent users • System availability and response time <p>Raw numbers are not as important as trends. It doesn't does not matter if your Web site got had two 2 million visitor users this month. It only matters if that this is an improvement over the previous month, or over the same month of the previous year.</p> <p>Also Additionally, it is worse to measure too many things than not to measure anything at all. Trying to track everything is a common problem in organizations. Selecting the vital few key measures is critical.</p> <p>How to Measure</p> <p>Use surveys, questionnaires, and user observation methods (such as usability testing and user interviews) to gather process data. Testing three to five users is</p> |

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Comment [LEM1]: Since this is the first time you've mentioned Nielsen in this standard, give a brief description of who he is/why his opinion is important.

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Comment [LEM2]: The EDS Style Guide uses numerals with terms like "million."

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| | <p>sufficient for process data. After the fifth user, you have all the insight you are likely will probably to get, and it is time to improve the design to and test it again. Refer to the Standard UX Methodologies guideline for more information on how to collect process data.</p> <p>Use online tools to gather bottom-line data for statistically reliable results. Jakob Nielsen recommends testing a minimum of 20 users for bottom-line data, so bottom-line data is at least four times as expensive to gather as process data. Since Because it is more expensive to gather quantitative bottom-line data, and yet qualitative process data is more informative, Nielsen recommends a measurement system based on process data instead of bottom-line data unless the project is well funded.</p> <p>The majority of Web sites benefit most from studying novice users because people users rarely spend enough time on a Web site to become experts. Exceptions are sites like such as Yahoo.com and aAmazon.com, which have highly committed and loyal users and can benefit from studying their expert users. Other exceptions are intranets, extranets, and Web applications because they usually have expert users.</p> |
| <p>Description</p> | <p>What are Metrics?</p> <p>Metrics are measurements of a Web site or application that determine whether the goals and requirements have been met. Performance is evaluated against a benchmark, which is the standard level at which the Web site or application should perform.</p> <p>Metrics process data is gathered by qualitative observations of what people users are thinking and doing. Process data identifies what does and does not work by noting where users are pleasantly surprised, confused, or frustrated.</p> <p>Metrics bottom-line data consists of quantitative measures that provide statistical significance, such as error rates or the time it takes to complete a task or the error rate. It is more difficult to collect bottom-line data because many users are required for statistically reliable results. Bottom-line data is best for tuning the performance of an existing Web site; it it is also good for comparing Web sites. These comparisons can be especially useful for convincing management to make a change.</p> <p>Criteria for Metrics</p> <p>The following are the criteria for an effective measurementsing system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer is better — Concentrate on measuring the vital few key variables rather than the trivial many. No one individual can monitor and control more than 20 variables on a regularly basis. You may have hundreds or thousands of metrics in your database, but no individual should focus on more than a few major ones metrics. • Measures should be Linked to success factors — Focus on key business drivers. For example, if you have identified technical competence as something that gives you an edge on your competition, make sure that you measure technical competence. • Measures should Reflect past, present, and future states — Ensure that the organization is concerned with all three perspectives. • Measures should be Based on the needs of the target audiences. |

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Comment [LEM3]: I added these words to be sure the user is keeping straight which kind of data is which.

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Comment [LEM4]: I changed "people" and "visitors" to "users" throughout since we'd decided several months ago to be consistent in what we called users. I didn't change it in at least one place, though, because the word "use" was adjacent to it and would have been confusing to say "users use."

Comment [LEM5]: No need for changes—I just wanted to say that this is an extremely important point; I'm glad it's in here.

- ~~Measures should s~~**Start at the top and flow down to all levels of employees in the organization** ~~—~~ Metrics that ~~the~~ lower ~~employee~~ levels ~~are~~ monitoring should support the measures that upper management has identified as critical.
- ~~Multiple indices should be able to be c~~**Combine multiple indices** ~~d~~ into a single index to give an overall assessment of performance.
- ~~Measures should be a~~**Adjusted** as your environment and strategy change.
- ~~Measurement g~~**Goals should be** based on research, not arbitrary numbers.

(Brown, Mark Graham. *Keeping Score: Using the Right Metrics to Drive World-Class Performance*. Quality Resources, 1996.)

Where are You on the Web Metrics Continuum?

Not every company should or can measure everything. What you measure depends on ~~your Web site~~ the goals of ~~your Web site~~ and the size of your budget. It also depends on where you are and where you aspire to be on the Web Metrics Continuum:

- **Level 1 – No Server Logs** – “We do not look at our server logs.”
- **Level 2 – Occasional Log File Report** – “We get daily reports from our hosting service. We look at these once a month to see if there ~~is~~ anything going on.”
- **Level 3 – Log File Analysis** – “We have our logs crunched, and we do a formal review every week. We know that ~~people~~users come to our site more on Mondays and Tuesdays, and traffic peaks at about 10:00 ~~a~~A.M. We know which pages are the most popular, and we watch for changes in traffic when we do special promotions. We know which pages ~~people~~users most often use as entry pages, and we know where they leave. We know that we get the most traffic from Yahoo! and Google and which search phrases they ~~are~~re using to find us. Once a month, we print out a huge color graph that shows our progress and pin it to the wall where everybody can see it.”
- **Level 4 – Cookies** – “We use cookies to track sessions and do path analysis. We ~~have~~ve got a good picture of how ~~people~~users navigate the site differently from one visit to the next. We ~~have~~ve got a registration page and ~~have~~ determined that sales do, indeed, go up when we welcome ~~people~~users back to the site by name. We know which promotions are bringing in the most ~~visitor~~users and which are bringing in the most repeat ~~visitor~~users. People with direct Web responsibility depend on these reports, and upper management asks about our progress about once a month.”
- **Level 5 – Web Analytics Analysis** – “Using a variety of tools, we track exactly which ads are turning into sales in the short term and which are boosting loyalty in the long run. We know where to spend our time to increase traffic to the site, increase visit duration, increase sales, or lower costs. An executive committee meets every two weeks to look at our progress and make recommendations.”
- **Level 6 – Web Information Integration** – “We ~~have~~ve tied our ~~analytics~~ analysis and e-commerce systems together with our offline order processing and inventory control systems and can clearly forecast how much stock we ~~will~~ need on hand to meet the needs of various promotions. Representatives in our customer service call center/e-mail center can see which pages callers have looked at and can advise them according to their particular level of

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Comment [LEM6]: “Analysis” is the correct usage here.

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knowledge."

- **Level 7 – Web Information Distribution** – "We make sure that the information we glean off our Web site and from our customer relationship management systems is disbursed throughout the organization. Executives and managers have access to near real-time numbers about what is's happening on our site."
- **Level 8 – Web Information Comprehension** – "We have weekly meetings to ensure that the data we send out is fully understood and becomes part of the decision-making process. We get feedback from the Executive Web Team about the changes they-it sees in sales and customer satisfaction. Our compensation is tied to these reports, so we have them audited once a quarter by an outside firm."
- **Level 9 – Web Information Incorporation** – "It is's a completely closed -loop. We are-re responsible for carrying out the work orders from the business unit managers who are responsible for profit and loss. They have their finger on the pulse of the site, catalogue sales, and store sales. They can tell in an instant how a new product line, promotional campaign, or product photograph is doing."

(Where did the above nine levels come from? I expected to see attribution on these since you have quotes around them.--LEM)

Planning Metrics

Even with hardware getting-becoming cheaper and analytic software becoming more prevalent, there is a point of diminishing returns on measurements. Make sure the economics are aligned with your goals and that it does not cost more to capture the metrics than what they are worth.

- Define the **business and competitive goals** of the site and determine how to-measure success will be measured for these goals. Sample business and competitive goals measurements are listed below:
 - How many users does the site need to stay in business?
 - How many visitors-users need to become paying customers (the conversion rate)?
 - How many visitors-users need to become community members?
- Also specify the **design goals** and how they-to will be evaluated them. Sample design goals are listed below:
 - Reduce the average number of mistakes that-users make on the existing site from 3-three per user session to one1 per user session.
 - The average time to complete a purchase will be no more than 1.5 minutes.
 - Keep download time below 20 seconds for 90 percent of the target audience.

Use these steps to plan your measurement system:

1. **Assess:** Where are you now? What tools do you have? What expertise do you have? What level of management commitment do you have from-management?
2. **Determine:** Where do you want to be in five5 years?
3. **Decide:** What do you really need to know? Measuring everything just because

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Comment [LEM7]: Add attribution for these nine levels?

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Comment [LEM8]: The spell vs. numeral rule I'm using (a standard one that is also in the EDS Style Guide) is spell out below 10 unless it's a decimal (like your 1.5 in the next bullet) or something like a step number.

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| | <p>you can isn't is not a good idea just because you can.</p> <p>4. Ask: What are the three or four metrics that would only take require a small effort from a developer but be a huge gain for management?</p> <p>5. Prioritize: Work out a plan of attack based on your priorities.</p> <p>6. Budget: The Web team should not have to fund metrics projects except those for which they are directly responsible: server performance, network load, and uptime statistics. Everything else belongs to the different business units. If HR Human Resources wants to know how many people users looked at a given job offer, or if Mmarketing wants to know about the cost of eyeball acquisition, they need to should pay for it.</p> <p>7. Outlook: After you have a couple of wins in your pocket, look at your existing systems, Web servers, and applications, and map out a master plan. Which Web sites should be completely rebuilt? Which only need a few patches? How are will you going to tie your legacy systems into the user-facing applications? How are will you going to retrofit all of your number-crunching capability so that you can actually tell what your company is doing and what that it means?</p> <p>What to Measure</p> <p>Process data indicates the subjective success of a site. Can the users find what they need? Are the key user tasks addressed? Do they users understand the terminology? Is the information architecture clear? Refer to the Standard UX Methodologies guideline for more information on what process data measures.</p> <p>According to Jakob Nielsen, the most critical bottom-line metric is the user success rate, which is the percentage of tasks that users complete correctly. User success is key. if users can't cannot accomplish their target task, nothing else matters. Other bottom-line metrics include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Task completion time• Error rate• Popular pages• Percentage of time that users follow an optimal navigation path• Where users are leaving your site• Tasks that are more difficult on your site than on competitors' sites• Total number of visits, total number of users, and concurrent users• System availability and response time <p>Raw numbers are not as important as trends. It doesn't does not matter if your Web site got had two million visiter users this month. It only matters if that this is an improvement over the previous month, or over the same month of the previous year.</p> <p>Also Additionally, it is worse to measure too many things than not to measure anything at all. Trying to track everything is a common problem in organizations. Selecting the vital few key measures is critical.</p> <p>When to Measure</p> <p><i>Add an intro sentence here saying something like "You will gather metrics throughout the System Life Cycle (SLC) and not just in the later phases." or</i></p> |
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Comment [LEM9]: Is this a well-known term? Unless you're sure it is, either use a more specific (and common) term/phrase or explain it briefly in parentheses.

Comment [LEM10]: This wording may be too vague for non-native English speakers. Can you reword to be more specific? Also, explain "wins"—wins in what area/category?

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whatever methodology you are referencing below. Which is it, anyway? I don't see these exact phase names in the SLC3 or in anything else mentioned in the User Experience Strategy doc. --LEM

- **Discovery Phase** – During the Discovery Phase, evaluate the needs of the user to validate site goals and rough designs. Proper testing in this phase helps can ensure that avoid a more expensive reworking will not be required later. Gather process data first because it gives a good overview of a Web site's of the problems in a Web site and is easier to collect.
- **Design Phase** – Since Because process data can be obtained from even low-fidelity paper prototypes, it you can be gathered it in the earliest stages of design. Continually gather metrics and make improvements throughout the Design Phase. As soon as you have a running prototype of your Web site, you can start getting bottom-line data.
- **Development Phase** – Design changes in the Development Phase necessitate require additional testing to analyze user response. Repeat the tests used in the discovery and design phases to see how the changes affect the results.
- **Maintenance Phase** – Throughout the Maintenance Phase, continue to monitor user metrics such as total number of hits, conversion rate, satisfaction metrics, and usability evaluations in to identify changes and set goals for future releases.
- **Site Redesign** – For sSite rRedesigns, find and quantify the biggest problems and. Ddecide what will have the biggest impact effect on user retention. Research the existing site, competitive sites, and new ideas.

How to Measure

Use surveys, questionnaires, and user observation methods (such as usability testing and user interviews) to gather process data. Testing three to five users is sufficient for process data. After the fifth user, you have all the insight you are likely to will probably get, and it is time to improve the design to and test it again. Refer to the Standard UX Methodologies guideline for more information on how to collect process data.

Use online tools to gather bottom-line data for statistically reliable results. Jakob Nielsen recommends testing a minimum of 20 users for bottom-line data, so bottom-line data is at least four times as expensive to gather as process data. Since it is more expensive to gather quantitative bottom-line data and qualitative process data is more informative, Nielsen recommends a measurement system based on process data instead of bottom-line data unless the project is well funded.

The majority of Web sites benefit most from studying novice users because people users rarely spend enough time on a Web site to become experts. Exceptions are sites like Yahoo.com and aAmazon.com, which have highly committed and loyal users and can benefit from studying their expert users. Other exceptions are intranets, extranets, and Web applications because they usually have expert users.

Visibility to search engines is critical. Improving your standings in the search engines has become such a complex mix of branding, positioning, and technology that some companies now specialize in improving search engine visibility. Companies like Visibility Factor can give you up-to-the-minute reports of where your site appears on which the pages of which specific search engines.

(Visibility Factor, Inc. Visibility Factor. Visibility Factor, Inc., 2004, accessed 14

Comment [LEM11]: You need an intro sentence here; see comment in text.

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Comment [LEM12]: "Impact" is actually supposed to be reserved for something that physically hits something else; "effect" is the correct usage here. You see it used this way all the time, but it's actually incorrect. I'm sure I say it when I'm not "editing" my own speech!

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Metrics **reports** should meet the following criteria:

- ~~be r~~Regularly scheduled
- ~~a~~Activity-based
- ~~and also a~~Available by ~~request~~.
- ~~They should s~~Support a user-defined reporting period
- ~~and be able to be e~~Exportedable to Microsoft Office applications.

Log Files

Web servers collect a huge amount of data in server logs every day. These log files provide benefits useful for metrics analysis but also have some problems.

Benefits of Log Files

- ~~The l~~Log files show when users link to your site from another site and where users were when they linked to your site.
- Log files show the search terms users typed into a search engine to locate your site. An ongoing review of the terms can indicate which marketing efforts are working and as well as show the changes in ~~the language that~~ the public uses to find your type of goods and services. Site content and information architecture should always match the users' terminology.
- Server logs can show the most-used entry and exit pages on the site. These are the pages most people use as a door into your site and the last page they ~~looked at view just~~ before they ~~left~~leave. Discovering where ~~people users~~ decide to leave your site can give you valuable pointers to problem areas and pages where users become disillusioned.
- Server logs record server errors, helping ~~so that you can~~ ensure that incoming links are pointing to valid pages.

The Problems Wwith Log Files

- Cache files can cause undercounting ~~on in~~ the log files.
- Automated crawling tools, such as spiders and robots, can cause ~~overcountingover counting on in~~ the log files.
- Accesses from ~~the same one~~ Internet Protocol (IP) address look like they all came from the same person, which is not always true, especially with dynamic assignment of IP addresses.
- Conversely, you should eliminate an excessively ~~large~~ number of accesses made from ~~the same one~~ IP address ~~should be eliminated so as not to so that you avoid~~ skewing the numbers.
- You must analyze the huge amount of data ~~on in~~ the log files must be analyzed to pull usable information from ~~them it~~. Proper server log analysis takes a lot of ~~horsepower~~, frequently more than what is required to serve the pages of the site itself.

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Comment [LEM14]: This is a fairly rough version of what needs to be added here; rewrite if you think of better wording!

Comment [LEM15]: The "always" seems to be implied as well as important here, so I added it.

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Comment [LEM16]: Replace this with the correct term from the computer industry—bandwidth, RAM, whatever is the one most affected here.

WebTrends

The most well-known log analysis tool is WebTrends. Standard WebTrends reports include the following:

- **Overall Number of Visits** – Users are counted based on sessions. If a user is gone for more than 30 minutes, that session is considered closed. The next time ~~they~~ that user clicks is counted ~~s~~ as a new session.
- **Top Pages** – Which pages are most popular? How often ~~are~~ does the ~~they looked at by the~~ surfing public look at them? How long did users remain on each page?
- **Top Entry Pages** – The first pages users see when they come to your site can make a serious first impression. However, you may find that the home page is not ~~the your~~ most common entry to your site ~~page~~.
- **Advertising Views and Clicks** – How many times ~~were~~ was an ads seen on your site, and how often ~~were~~ was it they clicked? This report is ~~not only~~ of interest important to advertisers ~~but and~~ can also be useful for information about special offers, closeout specials, or promotions that cross-reference other areas within your site.
- **Top Referring Sites** – Knowing how ~~people~~ users find your site is crucial.
- **Top Search Phrases** – This report shows the popularity of search terms that drew ~~people~~ users to your site. What were ~~people~~ users searching for when they found you? This report also shows which search engines are sending you traffic.

~~(~~WebTrends, Inc. ~~WebTrends~~ WebTrends, Inc., 2005, accessed 14 November 2005.)


“Big Picture” Metrics

NetRatings, Inc. provides Internet and digital media measurement and analysis. As shown below, ~~the~~ the list of ~~Top~~ rankings for Web usage and most-frequently accessed sites is available on the NetRatings site. Detailed information about users of a specific site is available to paying clients.

Comment [LEM17]: I changed the reference to ads to be singular, since you don't care so much how often ALL ads are seen/clicked but instead on the performance/visibility of each specific ad. I know you know this, but the plural wording implied something else.

Comment [LEM18]: I added this to Sources field.

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Nielsen//NetRatings
A global leader in Internet media and market research

United States: Top 10 Parent Companies
Week ending October 31, 2005
Home Panel

| Parent Name | Unique Audience (000) | Reach % | Time Per Person |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Microsoft | 58,640 | 52.53 | 00:31:28 |
| Yahoo! | 53,554 | 47.98 | 00:50:33 |
| Time Warner | 52,374 | 46.92 | 01:24:20 |
| Google | 38,570 | 34.55 | 00:11:06 |
| eBay | 20,039 | 17.95 | 00:49:22 |
| InterActiveCorp | 15,642 | 14.01 | 00:10:32 |
| United States Government | 12,810 | 11.48 | 00:11:19 |
| Amazon | 11,236 | 10.07 | 00:10:55 |
| Walt Disney Internet Group | 10,319 | 9.24 | 00:21:40 |
| Viacom International | 10,260 | 9.19 | 00:25:26 |

([NetRatings, Inc. Nielsen/NetRatings](#) ~~NetRatings, Inc.~~, 2005, accessed 15 November 2005.)

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Acting on the Results

Ensure that everyone using the metrics understands the **terminology** used in the results. For example, “nNumber of hits” is often misinterpreted; the following are all counted as hits:-

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- An individual hit is recorded when the server sends a file ~~is actually sent by the server~~.
- If a request is made for a page with two graphics, ~~there are~~ three requests actually occur: one for the page and one each for the graphics.
- If, ~~however,~~ the page cannot be found, ~~the response that is sent is~~ an error message is sent, which can also be recorded as a single hit.

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It is more difficult to apply **bottom-line data** than process data because bottom-line data does not identify the cause of the problems. ~~It just~~Bottom-line data only identifies when users are going too slowly or making too many mistakes. To ~~solve~~ address the ~~issues~~causes, you ~~will have to~~must go back ~~into~~ the design phase ~~to and~~ design a solution. However, be sure to gather process data on the new design as well.

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Determine the relative importance of **performance versus satisfaction**. For a Web site ~~that is intended~~designed for frequent use (stock quotes, for example), performance might be weighted higher than preference. For an entertainment site or a site that will only be used once, preference may get the higher weight.

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According to Nielsen, if your site's usability does not improve by at least 20% percent per year by applying both process-based and bottom-line-based metrics, you are falling behind relative to both the competition and the needs of the new,

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| | less technically-inclined users who are coming online. |
| Related Guidelines and Standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard UX Methodologies |
| Technical Considerations | <p>Design Web sites with measurement in mind. For example, if there are ten-10 questions and answers on a single Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page, then you can tell how many times that page was viewed. But However, if you have a main FAQ page with ten-10 questions that are linked to their respective answer pages, then by reading the log files, you can tell which are the most frequently-asked questions by reading the log files.</p> <p>To the extent Whenever possible, design repeatable, measurable processes on common platforms to enable measurement, comparison, and trend analysis.</p> <p>When new content or features are requested for the site, require that success metrics are included in the request. Build these measurability goals into the new features.</p> |
| Why is this important? | <p>Web site evaluation is the most often overlooked part of iterative-site design and site-maintenance. Without evaluation you cannot know if you have met your target goals, which aspects features are working, and which are not. Capturing and evaluating metrics is how you know tells you objectively if you are successful. Metrics can reveal trends, usability issues, and design-improvement opportunities.</p> |
| Sources | <p>Brown, Mark Graham. <i>Keeping Score: Using the Right Metrics to Drive World-Class Performance</i>. Quality Resources; 1996.</p> <p>Nielsen, Jakob. "Success Rate: The Simplest Usability Metric." Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox, <i>useit.com</i>, 18 February 2001, http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20010218.html (accessed 7 November 2005).</p> <p>Nielsen, Jakob. "Usability Metrics." Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox, <i>useit.com</i>, 21 January 2001, http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20010121.html (accessed 7 November 2005).</p> <p>NetRatings, Inc. <i>Nielsen/NetRatings</i>, 2005, http://www.netratings.com/ (accessed 15 November 2005).</p> <p>Sterne, Jim. <i>Web Metrics: Proven Methods for Measuring Web Site Success</i>. John Wiley and Sons; 2002.</p> <p>Van Duyne, Douglas K., James Landay, and Jason Hong. <i>The Design of Sites: Patterns, Principles, and Processes for Crafting a Customer-Centered Web Experience</i>. First edition, Addison-Wesley Professional; 2003.</p> <p>Visibility Factor, Inc. <i>Visibility Factor</i>, http://www.visibilityfactor.com/, 2004 (accessed 14 November 2005).</p> <p>(WebTrends, Inc. <i>WebTrends</i>, http://www.webtrends.com/, 2005 (accessed 14 November 2005).</p> <p>Wieder, Tamara. "E-Commerce Benchmarking." <i>Computerworld</i>, 7 August 2000, http://www.computerworld.com/managementtopics/ebusiness/story/0,10801,48235.</p> |

Comment [LEM20]: If you only have one bullet, you don't need bullets at all. I changed this to regular text instead of a bullet; if you add more items, though, you'll need to go back to bullets.

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Comment [LEM21]: Numbers 10 and up are written as numerals.

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Comment [LEM22]: Design is probably enough to say here since you're referring to all design—original and the maintenance changes and upgrades to design (and you also mention maintenance in this sentence).

Comment [LEM23]: I changed to "features" because "aspects" really means perspective/point of view.

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