



WHITE PAPER



CHANNELS AND HIERARCHIES

Grouping Traffic-Related Content

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Version 2.0



1 Overview

A channel, or site section, uses the channel variable to group similar traffic-related content, e.g. pages. You can use a channel to report visits, visitors, etc. For example, your web site has a Products Section where visitors can view your products that are segmented into different categories; e.g., electronics, office, and software. By populating the channel variable with "electronics," the products contained in the Electronics Section of your web site can be tracked with SiteCatalyst.

SiteCatalyst also uses hierarchies to segment data based on the strict content hierarchy of the web site. Visit data can be rolled up to the highest level of the hierarchy or broken down to a more granular level. For example, your web site offers news-related information. As such, you populate the hier1 variable with "US:Northeast:NewYork:NewYorkCity." In the Hierarchy Report, you would be able to view visits from a high level, i.e. US, or drill into the hierarchy to a more granular level such as NewYorkCity.

1.1 Channels – Best Practices

The channel variable is unique in that it allows visibility to both traffic (pageviews, visitors, visits, etc.) and conversion metrics (revenue, units, orders, etc.). The channel variable collects data for both the Most Popular Site Sections Report and the Site Sections Report in SiteCatalyst.

To configure the channel variable, set the name of the site section in the channel variable on each page of the site. For example, if a particular page is part of the Electronics Site Section, the variable would be set to "electronics." Frequently, the channel variable is used to capture multiple dimensions by delineating the value with a semi-colon. For example, the Cameras Section might be contained within the "Electronics" section. In this case, channel would be set to "electronics:cameras" so the user can see specific metrics by section or sub-section.

Consider the following when implementing channels in SiteCatalyst.

- The channel variable should be set on every page that pertains to a site section.
- Avoid assigning all transactional pages as "conversion" or "shopping cart" because doing so renders the additional conversion metrics worthless.
- The channel variable can be classified using SAINT.
- The channel variable can be enabled to show pathing by channel.

1.1.1 Channels Example

To track conversion rate by site section, Acme Corporation uses the channel variable (s.channel="electronics:cameras";) to capture and report pageviews, visits, unique visitors, cart additions, units, orders and revenue.

Figure 1-A: Channels Report

Details										
Site Sections	Page Views	Visits	Weekly Vis	Orders	Units	Revenue				
1. Initial Buy Process	37 22.3%	17 45.9%	17 65.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	\$0 0.0%				
2. Gaming	23 13.9%	12 32.4%	11 42.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	\$0 0.0%				
3. Computers	22 13.3%	10 27.0%	9 34.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	\$0 0.0%				
4. Accessories	20 12.0%	10 27.0%	10 38.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	\$0 0.0%				
5. Monitors	14 8.4%	8 21.6%	8 30.8%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	\$0 0.0%				
6. Electronics	14 8.4%	8 21.6%	8 30.8%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	\$0 0.0%				
7. Networking	8 4.8%	4 10.8%	4 15.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	\$0 0.0%				
8. Digital Cameras	7 4.2%	4 10.8%	4 15.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	\$0 0.0%				
9. PDAs	7 4.2%	4 10.8%	4 15.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	\$0 0.0%				
10. Notebooks	7 4.2%	6 16.2%	6 23.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	\$0 0.0%				
11. Software	7 4.2%	6 16.2%	6 23.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	\$0 0.0%				
Total	166	37	26	0	0	\$0				

Report Generated by SiteCatalyst at 08:28 PM WEDT, 1 Jul 2005



NOTE: The report shown above contains both traffic and conversion metrics.

1.2 Hierarchies

Many sites have a strict content hierarchy. Each level of the hierarchy may represent a “mini site” or content group that is managed somewhat independently or may have different goals. For example, the Electronics Section of your web site may contain sub-sections for PDAs, laptop computers, desktop computers, etc. Customers can track their website traffic by including direct support for site hierarchies within SiteCatalyst.

The implementation of one or more of the Hierarchy variables (up to five hierarchies per site) provides the ability to start at the top level of the site hierarchy and then drill through it. The Pageviews, Visits, and Unique Visitors metrics are available for each level of the hierarchy. They are true calculated metrics instead of the sum of visits or unique visitors to the child nodes or sub-levels in the hierarchy.

To generate hierarchy reporting, populate the hier1 variable with a delimited list of the levels and sub-levels of that hierarchy, beginning with the highest level. Any delimiter for the hierarchy levels may be used, however, the comma (,) is preferred. Notify your Omniture Implementation Consultant of your preferred hierarchy delimiter.



NOTE: By default, SiteCatalyst will track up to ten levels for hierarchy reporting but may be configured to track additional levels by contacting your Omniture Implementation Consultant. A maximum of 98 levels is supported but is further limited by the number of characters that are supported.

Consider the following when implementing hierarchies in SiteCatalyst.

- The maximum length of each hierarchy level is 255 bytes. Each portion of the hier variable is limited to 255 bytes, and the total for the entire variable is also 255 bytes. The length of any individual level should be clipped to 255 divided by the number of elements plus one (to account for the delimiter character between levels).
- Strip commas and semicolons from hierarchy level names.
- Do not leave the beginning hierarchy level blank (“,Level 2,Level 3”) or end the hierarchy variable with a delimiter (“Level 1,Level 2,Level 3,”) because doing so will create a “blank” level of the hierarchy, which will be reported as “Unspecified.”
- Do not leave any extra white space before or after the delimiter, e.g. “Level 1,Level 2” is correct while “Level 1 , Level 2” is incorrect.
- Leaving blank any of the sub-levels that contain their own sub-levels, i.e. “Level 1, , Level 3” results in a level being reported as “Unspecified.”

1.2.1 Hierarchy Example

Acme Corporation would like to use a hierarchy to track unique visitors by the sections and subsections contained in their web site. The main sections include Catalog and Electronics, while the main subsection includes Audio Portable Audio and Video. The syntax format is s.hier1="Level 1,Level 2,Level 3,Level 4." As such the code would display as shown below.

```
s.hier1="Catalog,Electronics,Audio & Video,Portable Audio & Video"
```

The Hierarchy Report in SiteCatalyst will display as shown below with the collected unique visitor information based on the code shown above.

Figure 1-B: Hierarchy Report

Details						
Level 1 / Level 2 / Level 3 / Level 4 / Level 5	Total Page Views		Total Visits		Total Visitors	
Catalog	43,857	96.19%	20,502	94.86%	20,735	94.82%
Electronics	31,199	71.14%	14,563	71.03%	14,705	70.92%
Audio & Video	14,822	47.51%	7,801	53.57%	7,922	53.87%
Portable Audio & Video	4,544	30.66%	2,527	32.39%	2,573	32.48%
Level 5	Page Views ▾		Visits ▾		Visitors ▾	
1. MP3 & Digital Audio	2,137	47.0%	1,426	56.4%	1,461	56.8%
2. Portable CD Players	1,055	23.2%	708	28.0%	724	28.1%
3. Portable DVD Players	581	12.8%	371	14.7%	372	14.5%
4. Headphones	558	12.3%	358	14.2%	369	14.3%
5. Portable Radios	123	2.7%	98	3.9%	104	4.0%
6. Portable CD/MP3 Players	83	1.8%	54	2.1%	55	2.1%
7. Unspecified	7	0.2%	6	0.2%	6	0.2%
Total	4,544		2,527		2,573	

Report Generated by SiteCatalyst using [Report Accelerator](#) at 3:24 PM PDT, 7 May 2004



CALL 1.877.722.7088
1.801.722.0139

www.omniture.com
info@omniture.com

550 East Timpanogos Circle
Orem, Utah 84097

