WHAT IS FORM ANALYTICS?
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What is form analytics?

Simply put, form analytics is a measurement tool that shows you how website visitors interact with your online forms.

Think of it as a monitoring tool. With it, you can see things like how website visitors viewed your form, if they started to fill it out, or whether they abandoned the form altogether. You can also see how long it takes visitors to complete the form, how often they changed information, and if any of the boxes slowed down the completion of the form – just to name a few.

Form analytics focuses on three things:

- **Site visitors**: Potential customers that are on your website.
- **Fields**: The boxes on a form that ask for information.
- **Metrics**: The data behind a visitor’s actions.

Strong form analytics tools track (just about) every move a visitor makes, from where their mouse moves to how far they scroll to find your form.
Why is form analytics important?

Form analytics help you in a lot of ways, but here’s a look at a few of the most important reasons to rely on this data:

**Increase leads**
The purpose of a form is to gain information from customers. Period. By using form analytics you can optimize your forms, resulting in more submissions and more leads generated for your company.

**Decrease abandonment rates**
With form analytics, you’ll know what hurdles visitors face when filling out a form. You can remove confusing questions, require fewer fields, or craft better descriptions to decrease abandonment rates.

**Solve problems**
Form analytics alert you to problems that you wouldn’t know about otherwise. Without analytics, you’d make changes to your form hoping results improved. With form analytics, you don’t guess – you know.
Common reasons for Form Abandonment

Why do visitors stop filling out a form? There are a lot of reasons, but the most common include:

**Long load times**
Have you ever started filling out a form, but it took forever to advance to the next field or page? If visitors have to wait, they’ll leave. It doesn’t matter how much they’ve already filled out, visitors have zero tolerance for wasting their time.

**Trust issues**
Privacy matters. Visitors need reassurance that their information remains private and won’t result in a flood of useless emails. Your form needs to include trust signals, such as security assurances if your form is asking for payment information, or an explanation of how the visitor’s information will be used.

**Unwilling to share information**
Form analytics show you how long it takes a visitor to fill out each field. If visitors take a lot of time to fill out a particular box, maybe they aren’t comfortable sharing that information, like a cell phone number or salary range. If customers change information on a form, it also suggests visitors are hesitant to provide the requested information.

**Validation issues**
If a visitor has filled out a long form and hit “submit” only to be shown an error message because they missed a field or submitted invalid information, it’s tempting to abandon the form altogether. Instead, choose to display inline validation, such as a highlighted field during the process to catch the visitor’s eye before they click “finished.”
Form length
Visitors may start to fill out a form only to scroll down and realize that it’s too lengthy or time consuming. This could mean that you’re asking too many questions or questions that appear too detailed.

Poor design
Don’t bore potential customers with a drab form. Play around with sliders, buttons, and toggles to spice up a form. Do what you can to make a form interesting or game-like so you can minimize abandonment rates.

CAPTCHA issues
To make sure humans are filling out your forms – not bots or machines – you might use a CAPTCHA device where the visitor has to perform a quick task to show they’re human. While it does keep spammers from filling out your forms, it is a deterrent for legitimate customers looking to provide information.

Irrelevancy
Sometimes, a visitor abandons a form because the questions feel irrelevant to their needs. If a visitor is joining an email list, for example, but has to fill out questions about his or her age, marital status, and whether or not they’d like a free trial of your product – it feels like the form is collecting a bunch of irrelevant data.

Incompatibility
Your form has to look great on every device and every screen. When a visitor tries to fill out your form on a smartphone, for example, it should adapt to the screen. If there are any incompatibility errors, you’ll see abandonment rates climb.

Creating a profile
If you ask visitors to create a profile or set up login credentials, you’re probably scaring some of them away. Let the visitor fill out the form first, you can always ask them to create a profile later.
KPIs to measure Forms’ Performance

When you use form analytics, you get access to decision-making data. More specifically, you get a variety of KPIs, or key performance indicators, that show you how effective your forms are.

*The KPIs are tied to your company’s targets and goals and can represent indicators for financial, procedural, and directional success.*

Let’s get down to brass tacks. What metrics will you see? Here’s a look at the insights you’ll gain access to:

1. **Form views:**
   Whether you’re sending out a link to your form in an email, posting it on social email, embedding it on your blog, or using it as a standalone page on your website, it’s vital that you know how many people are viewing the form.

2. **Form entries:**
   Incomplete forms for which the user hit “submit” are considered entries, not completed forms. More detailed form analytics can help determine why the form is incomplete.

3. **Form completions:**
   Unlike a form entry, which could be a partially completed form, this KPI tells you how many visitors finished filling out all the entries on the form before hitting the “submit” button. It’s not realistic to expect a 100% completion rate, especially if your form requests a payment or requires a contract agreement. Completed forms often represent the most qualified leads, as the visitors took the time to fill out all of the information you requested.

4. **Form abandonment:**
   See how many visitors stopped filling out your form and didn’t submit it with this metric. You can also reference drop-off reports that show you the last active field the visitor filled out before abandoning the form. If you notice a high drop-off rate for one particular field, you might consider rephrasing the question or removing it altogether.
Field health score.
This KPI lets you compare your fields’ performance to that of others in your industry. You’ll learn which forms are causing you more problems than they’re worth so you can weed them out, and which fields should be optimized.

Average interaction time:
It’s important to know how long it takes visitors to fill out your entire form as lengthy completion times can turn visitors off.

Hesitation time:
Knowing how long a visitor hesitates in a field before typing the first character can provide valuable insight into the information you’re seeking. It may be too personal, too confusing, or require research that visitors need to perform before they can answer, like finding an account number.

Traffic sources:
How did visitors reach your form? Did they click on a Facebook ad? Find it on your website? It’s important to know how visitors come across your form so you can put more resources toward the channels that drive the most traffic. You might decide to increase your social ad spending, for example, if it’s the prime source of traffic to your form.

Device specific engagement report:
This KPI lets you view the performance factors of your form across a variety of devices so you know not only who is coming from say, a tablet, but also if they’re being hindered from converting due to a flaw in your form that makes their device incompatible or provides a less-than-desirable experience.
Email opt-in:
If one of the goals of your form is to get people to opt-in to receiving emails, either as a primary or secondary goal, you’ll need to measure this KPI to determine if it’s working.

Average interaction time:
Referrals fuel business, which is why it’s important to track them. Whether you ask a visitor to refer your business at the end of a form, or if you ask a visitor if they were referred by someone, it’s good to track.
If you can understand who refers your business, you can make efforts to increase referrals.

Average order value (AOV):
If you don’t know the average dollar amount each customer is spending when they place an order through your form, you’re skipping a very important KPI that can tell you a lot about your form, your marketing, and your profits.
This can help set budgets, pricing, shipping costs, return policies, and volume discounts, as well as teach you a lot about cross-selling, upselling and even whether you need to add coupons to your form design.
You can experiment with a variety of forms, including some that cross-sell or upsell near the end of the order process to determine if there’s an opportunity to increase your AOV on the spot, or if it’s something that needs to be done later.

Traffic sources:
How many customers did you gain as a result of a form? That’s what this KPI tells you. It’s a good benchmark that shows the health and effectiveness of your form overall.
Of course, this KPI rests on the goals of your form. If you’re simply gathering contact information for say, a contest entry, you may have a low customer acquisition. If the form is being completed to get a free trial of a product, you may have a higher customer acquisition rate from satisfied customers.
No matter what the purpose of your form, the total number of customers acquired helps you see how effective your form is.
Choosing the right form analytics tool

There are a lot of considerations when you’re weighing which form analytics tool is right for your needs. To start, you’ll want to consider these three factors:

- **Purpose of forms**
- **The projected financial impact of forms**
- **Cost to optimize forms**

### Purpose of forms

Whether you’re using an online form to collect email addresses and build your contact list or you’re using a more in-depth form to build qualified leads with associated profiles, your forms are important. They’re collecting vital information for your company. Information that can drive sales.

### The projected financial impact of forms

Take a moment to consider how your forms will impact your bottom line. If you generate a list of potential customers who turn into loyalists, for example, your form could have a tremendous impact on your profit margin.

Remember, forms aren’t single-use. In other words, you can use a number of different forms that provide different kinds of customer data over the years. You can have dozens of forms in your arsenal and use them when it makes sense for your business.

### Cost to optimize forms

Cost is always a consideration for businesses. While free tools exist, more advanced form analytics tools often prove their use and return on investment immediately. When you can glance at a report, change part of your form and automatically see better results – you won’t worry about spending a few bucks on an analytics tool.
Optimizing forms: The Process

Optimizing your forms is essentially a three-step process:

- **Review the information you get from your form analytics.**
- **Turn those insights into action by changing your form’s fields, prompts, design or length.**
- **Repeat.**

Forget about making assumptions. Form analytics combines technology and metrics to give you tangible feedback into your user’s actions, or lack of action. Why waste time and money guessing what’s wrong with your form? Your attempts at optimizing without form analytics could lead you in the wrong direction. For example:

**Optimizing your form’s length**

**Incorrect assumption:** We’re not getting conversions because our form is too long.

**Action taken:** You shorten your form by eliminating questions and still see low conversion rates.

**What form analytics show:** Visitors are hesitant to fill out certain fields on your form. The hesitation time increases with each block and leads to abandonment.

**Action taken:** You reduce the number of sensitive questions to two, and move them to the end of the form. The result? Conversions increase.
Optimizing the ease of your fields’ responses

Incorrect assumption: Visitors don’t want to answer a question about their company’s budget.

Action taken: Budget questions are removed to reduce abandonment rates, but nothing changes.

What form analytics show: Visitors take a lot of time to fill out the form, but that time is consistent across the board. This could suggest problems with the form’s design. What’s taking visitors so long to provide information? Maybe the form has clunky dropdown menus or multi-part questions that slow the process down.

Action taken: The form’s design is revised with ease of use in mind. Dropdown menus are replaced with multiple choice options and questions are streamlined.

Optimizing your form’s design for mobile

Incorrect assumption: Our form is mobile-friendly because it’s short and simple.

Action taken: Nothing. You assume your form looks great on small screens and see no need for changes.

What form analytics show: Detailed form analytics may show that users are having difficulty clicking on small fields or buttons. You may also learn that users are constantly enlarging fonts to read detailed text. All of these metrics indicate a problem with mobile-readiness.
**Action taken:** To start, you increase the size of your form’s fields and the padding around the fields to make it easier for mobile device users to tap on a single box. You implement infographics, buttons, slides and pop-up number keypads or keyboards whenever possible.

If you include phone numbers on your form, design them as text so potential customers can simply tap on them to call.

We want real people filling out our forms

**Incorrect assumption:** We need CAPTCHAs to avoid getting an overload of bots filling out our form.

**Action taken:** A CAPTCHA screen prompts visitors to complete a simple task to prove they’re human, which can irritate visitors, slow the form submission process down or lead to form abandonment.

**What form analytics show:** If form analytics shows you’ve got a lot of users filling out your form but leaving it incomplete once they get to your CAPTCHA box, it may be because they’re having trouble reading the distorted letters and numbers, or completing whatever tasks is asked.

Some CAPTCHAs also expire within a few minutes but don’t warn users that they need to reload the page to get a new code. If your form is long, users may be hesitant to reload the page for a new code for fear that they’ll lose their responses and have to start from scratch.

**Action taken:** Optimizing your form to avoid the need for CAPTCHA may be as simple as using a tool that automatically filters out spam. There’s a technique called a “honeypot” that creates an invisible field that only bots will fill out, giving themselves away as spam. It’s a simple way to optimize your form with no impact to human users.
Visitors won’t have any problem understanding questions

Incorrect assumption: Our form’s questions are clear enough for users to understand.

Action taken: The form is released in hopes of success.

What form analytics show: Field hesitancy may show that users are taking a minute to:

• research an answer
• think about if and how they want to answer
• understand what you’re asking

There are several negative outcomes that can come from field hesitancy. Worst-case scenario, users leave your form to do research and never return.

Users may also try to skip the field entirely or answer incorrectly.

There’s also a chance that the question doesn’t apply to the user, leaving them stumped as to how to answer or causing them to abandon the form because they’ve come to the (incorrect) conclusion that your product or service must not apply to them.

Action taken: Good form analytics will let you know when a field is troublesome and ripe with hesitancy. You may decide to add a prompt to further clarify what information you’re seeking, make the question optional or remove it.

Another option is to turn your question into a multiple choice question to help offer insight into the type of information you’re seeking.

You may also choose to optimize your form using conditional logic. With “if/then” fields or secondary questions that only show up if they’re relevant to the visitor.
Form analytics reports

Depending on the scope of the analytics tool you choose, you’ll get a varying amount of information in your form analytics report.

Looking for a free tool with Google Analytics (GA), for example, you’ll find insight into:

- How your users reach your form
- How long visitors view your form
- How much time visitors spend on your site in general, and on individual pages
- What users do on your site
- Which search terms and keywords brought traffic to your form
- How your form performs on mobile devices
- How many of your visitors are new vs. returning
- Bounce rates, or visitors who viewed one page and left
- Exit rates, or visitors who viewed a minimum of two pages and left

Ideally, your form analytics reports should also show you things like:

**Who:**

Beyond statistical data, you’ll want as much information as possible to identify who actually filled out your form (or attempted to). Google Analytics has a strict policy against collecting personal identifiable information, such as names and email addresses. More extensive form analytics reports may be able to get you this type of information.

**How visitors react and respond to elements on your page:**

Tools like heatmaps can show you what attracted visitors to your form in the first place and what they’re looking at on your page.

You’ll get insights on things like whether or not page visitors missed your call-to-action or link to fill out the form. Heatmaps can also give you tangible information to help you run A/B testing on a variety of page designs like, call-to-action buttons, placement and form layouts.
Analyzing forms with Google Analytics—and their challenges

It may sound tempting to try only Google Analytics for your form analytics because it’s free. But GA’s reports are focused more on the numbers than the “why” behind them. That’s where more extensive form analytics tools come in.

More advanced form analytics provide actionable information that can help you optimize your form, get more customer information and drive more sales.

*Think of paid tools as investments rather than costs.* It’s easy to see why a good ROI can alleviate the argument against simply relying on hunches and jumping to conclusions that may or may not be correct.

Need some examples of insights you can get from more extensive form analytics tools? Consider the following:

**Which of your form’s fields cause abandonment:**

Advanced form analytics tools can tell you which field a visitor was filling out when they decided to abandon the form.

**Example insight:** One of your fields is asking for a cell phone number. The user is afraid they’ll get text messages or unsolicited calls when all they’re seeking is access to information on your site. Rather than give up their cell phone number, they leave your form.

**How long a visitor stayed on a page before they started filling out a field:**

Detailed form analytics tools will let you know how long a visitor was reading or scrolling on the page before they started filling out the form.

**Example insight:** Maybe the user scrolled down to read the privacy policy to ensure their information wouldn’t be shared. Or perhaps the user wanted to see how long the form was. You can A/B test different pieces of content that surround your form to improve your completion rates.
Knowing how users find your form, navigate through it and decide to fill it out are essential to any marketing efforts. From choosing keywords and crafting ads to designing forms and measuring results, event tracking is a vital component to budgeting and sales decisions.

How long it takes users to fill out a particular field:

Using the field time report from detailed form analytics can help you determine if a particular field is taking users a particularly long time to fill in.

**Example insight:** The question may be confusing, suggesting that you add a prompt, or the question may require research to answer, leading users away from your site to find answers. There may also be hesitation if a question is too personal or thought-provoking, which may lead you to remove it from the form.

If you want to track a user’s activity or interaction with a form or web page element (commonly referred to as tracking an “event”), form analytics can help by providing some innovative features. Interactions can happen through a mouse, keyboard, frame or form. Some of these event tracking features include:

- Keyword rank
- Who clicked an image to enlarge it
- Which fields were abandoned
- Page scrolls
- Pop-ups views
- Link clicks
- Video plays
- File downloads
- Clicking on a button
- Sharing
- Mouse movement
- Loading JavaScript, flash contents, etc.
Form analytics and privacy

If you use Google Analytics on your website, you’ll be required to have a Privacy Policy in place. This includes disclosing the use of GA, how the data you gather is collected and processed, and the disclosure of the use of cookies. This notice needs to be easily accessible to your site’s (or app’s) visitors.

There’s no need to require explicit consent; simply including the notice is enough, although you can give users the ability to opt out of cookies.

Freshmarketer doesn’t collect the data that your users enter into your forms. Our tools simply analyze statistics about the data that’s entered (e.g., number of form visitors, average time to complete the form) or not entered (e.g., form abandonment, fields left empty), types of device and which paths your users took to arrive at the form.

Although we process data, we don’t own, control or direct the use of it. In fact, we’re largely unaware of what information is being stored on our platform. We only access the information contained in your forms when it is “reasonably necessary” to provide our form analytics service to you, our customer, or as required by law.

When processing personal data on behalf of you, our customer, we follow your instructions with respect to the service data to the extent consistent with the functionality of our form analytics service. We use multiple measures to ensure that all data is protected from technical, physical and administration unauthorized processing, as well as loss, destruction or damage.
Convert website visitors into qualified leads with Freshmarketer.

Get Started