

Do website bounce rates drive you crazy?



Photo: Lukas Blazek

If you are the person looking at your website analytics each month, first, good for you! Your website analytics tell a strong story about how, what, when, and where people are looking at your site. Bounce rate, however, is something that often makes people crazy, because it can change drastically from one month to the next.

What is bounce rate?

The bounce rate when a visitor comes to a website page and leaves from that same page without visiting any other pages on your site.

When is a low bounce rate good?

A low bounce rate usually means people are spending time on your site. It's a good thing when you want visitors to follow a specific content path, e.g., one blog article leads to additional resources, which end on a landing page. This could also be the case if you sell products and offer a "you might also like this" feature, which draws visitors' attention to additional product pages on the site.

When is a low bounce rate bad?

A low bounce rate could also mean many things, including:

1. Visitors simply cannot find the content they want when they get to the site and exit immediately;
2. Your site loads too slowly (2 seconds or less is ideal);
3. Content is too lengthy, causing visitors to skim content and potentially missing what

they want;

4. The wrong visitors are accessing your site via hashtags or search queries that were misleading or confusing;
5. Displaying confusing landing pages with either too many graphic, poor design, typos, or flagrant grammatical errors;
6. Producing low-quality content that isn't relevant nor important to visitors; and
7. Not having a mobile-ready site. That is most important when you notice the bounce rate increases month after month on your mobile device metrics.

When is a high bounce rate good?

A high bounce rate is good when you have a third-party tool or experience off your website that is required in order for a visitor to complete a process.

Example

You hosting an event and the registration is on Eventbrite. Your website analytics will follow people through your site until click "register" and are taken to the Eventbrite site. Bounce rate comes into play if you're sending people directly to the page that has the registration button it, which will cause them to land on the information page, and bounce over to Eventbrite from the same page.

That example would apply in any case where the action you want visitors to take sends them to another domain or site, for example, your YouTube channel, podcasts if they are hosted elsewhere, conference and event registrations, content that doesn't sit on your domain, surveys, email registration forms in third-party tools like MailChimp or Constant Contact.

What should I do now that I know what's happening?

In a nutshell, bounce rates provide you with insight into how visitors are interacting with your site. If you see a high fluctuation from month to month, it may mean the marketing and social media efforts in the higher month are driving visitors to act differently from the previous month. Keep track of the marketing and social media efforts, links being shared, calls to action being used, behavior flow, and landing pages where you're driving traffic. Ask yourself, are people doing what you want them to; or, are they leaving before completing the desired action?

Monitor your website analytics at least month, more often when running a high-profile or lead-generation campaign. Knowing how people are using the site will provide you and your

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site development team with insights into what needs to be changed in order to create a successful website flow.

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- [SSL Certificates and the Impact on Your Website](#)
- [SEO Checklist for the Do-It-Yourselfer](#)
- [20 SEO Pitfall to Avoid If You Want to Be Found Online](#)