



## Using NetInsight®, GoodGuide.com™ Supercharges User Acquisition, Engagement, Growth, and Retention

GoodGuide Utilizes NetInsight to Perform Fine-Grained Analyses That Deepen Customer Engagement

### BACKGROUND

GoodGuide™ strives to provide the world's most comprehensive and most reliable source of information on the health, environmental, and social impacts of products and companies. GoodGuide's mission is to help consumers find safe, healthy, and green products that are better for themselves and for the planet. From its origins as a UC Berkeley research project, GoodGuide has developed into a fully-independent "For-Benefit" company that is committed to providing consumers the information they need to make better decisions, and to shifting the balance of information and power in the marketplace.

### THE CHALLENGES

GoodGuide.com was preparing to publicly launch its new web site, and as part of its initial launch, the company wanted to thoroughly track users' behaviors as they navigated the site. "Coming out of academia – with our founder a professor at the University of California, Berkeley – we deeply understood the importance of statistical analysis, and we wanted to bake that into our product from the outset," said Joel Lewenstein, software engineer and one of the designers of GoodGuide.com's customer front-end. "The foundation of what we do as a company [to help consumers identify healthier, more environmentally and socially positive products] is based on statistics and algorithms. There's something to be said for a company where everyone is numerically and analytically literate. We are focused on growth and creating the best user experience possible. This makes analytics even more crucial to us. From the very beginning, we need to identify the strongest areas of our site, understand how users are affected as they move through it, and discover where we need to improve. To do that, we need the ability to get 'down and dirty' with

the numbers. What we're doing is defined by people who really understand the subtleties of statistics, and we needed a package that could respond to their challenging requirements."

### THE SOLUTION

After evaluating several analytics packages, including the viability of the incumbent solution, said Lewenstein, GoodGuide.com ultimately selected Unica NetInsight. "We found that Unica offered powerful benefits: in particular, the ability to access the lowest level of data, and build custom reports from the ground up. NetInsight offered features we found especially crucial," said Lewenstein. "In particular, it can track on page events as opposed to simply page views, affording us a much closer look at exactly how users interact with our site. Within NetInsight, we defined a series of custom metrics for tracking the exact customer engagements that were of interest to us. These metrics took into account the various actions available on each page, to determine what constituted an 'engaged visitor.' We then considered how traffic from different entrance sources – for example, links from Google vs. direct traffic – engaged differently with the site. Our strategy has been to brainstorm the kinds of information we might want from analytics – for instance, what type of product was viewed, and what ratings that product had – so we can see how ratings affect 'visitorship.' We came up with a large list of parameters to implement in NetInsight, and as things come up over time, on Unica's end, all the data is there. We can then define custom metrics to analyze it in new ways. Organizationally, we've encouraged each team to take ownership of a certain set of analytics. Each type of page on the site, and each type of user, is tracked by an individual team member. We encourage experimentation, and everyone's asked to identify ways to en-

### OBJECTIVES

- Accelerate the acquisition of committed, repeat users
- Gain deep customer insight to build richer user experiences
- Deliver actionable knowledge for planning site content and features
- Tightly link web analytics to user demographics

### RESULTS

- Deeper customer engagement
- Accelerated user acquisition
- Support for faster, easier site improvement
- Fine-grained information for better decision-making

hance their particular metrics. While one or two central analytics team members architect and create reports, team members throughout the company use those reports to brainstorm new ways to improve their areas of the business.”

### Gaining a Far Deeper Understanding of User Acquisition

“Using NetInsight,” notes Lewenstein, “we’ve been able to keep an extremely close eye on our user acquisition metrics, and understand exactly where, when, and why our traffic spikes occur. We have gained a deep understanding of how different types of users respond to our site, and that’s allowing us to tailor content to each of our key user groups. NetInsight’s ability to segment visits by various qualities has proven especially important. We currently segment based on two aspects of a visit: entry page and source. We can differentiate between users who’ve come from Google, versus direct traffic; or users who’ve entered on the home page, versus a deeper, product-specific page. Based on this 2x2 matrix, we can perform analyses using the standard battery of engagement metrics, as well as more innovative metrics. This helps us focus our acquisition efforts on getting the ‘richest’ users; those who will find our site most valuable.”

“For example,” Lewenstein adds, “consider a visitor who’s been referred for the first time from Google. If we show that individual a page with really detailed information, how likely is it that they will become a repeat visitor, compared with someone who’s shown a very simple page? Unica does a very good job of allowing us to segment data, define visitor profiles and types of visits, and acquire these kinds of detailed metrics around them. Surrounding NetInsight, we’ve built a complete A/B testing framework and an iterative testing process that can test very quickly. We’ve been able to find that certain pages on our site provide a rich and engaging experience, whereas others don’t -- and we’ve been able to quickly make changes to reflect what we’ve learned.”

### Visitor Profiles and Unica’s Soft-Tagging Architecture Make It Easy to Change the Site’s Direction

“Unica really shines when it comes to letting us define visitor profiles in robust ways, based on multiple parameters; not just an entry page or a keyword, but a combination of sources,” said Lewenstein. “With these profiles, we can ask,

‘are we providing a good experience specifically to our health-conscious consumers?’ This information has absolutely helped to drive our product development cycle. When we’re asking which categories of products to add – *cars or electronics? pet food or personal care?* – this information is invaluable to us. We add new products every week, based on engagement metrics, and once again, NetInsight has been really helpful. If we’re trending toward adding more food products, we can automatically place a page tag on all food pages, without the custom URLs other analytics solutions would have forced us to use.”

### Fine-Grained Analysis of JavaScript Events

“We need to track usage for several interactive, JavaScript-based site features,” said Lewenstein. “At the time we conducted our analytics vendor evaluations, NetInsight could analyze these, while the other products under consideration couldn’t.. As a result, NetInsight enabled us to do much finer-grained analyses.”

“As an example, we provide sub ratings within our health, environmental, and social ratings. Within health, users can view sub ratings on carcinogens, endocrine disrupters, reproductive health hazards, and other individual areas. It would be extremely valuable to us if we discovered, say, that 80% of our users drill down to health sub ratings, while only 10% drill down on environmental sub ratings – and that’s the kind of information NetInsight can give us.”

### THE RESULTS

As promising startup GoodGuide.com continues to grow, Unica NetInsight is helping the company optimize its site far more systematically and rapidly, and increasing the site’s likelihood of long-term success. In particular, Unica NetInsight is helping GoodGuide.com:

- Understand exactly what content and features its visitors respond to, so it can focus its resources there – and mitigate the risks of new site investments
- Build the infrastructure needed to answer virtually any question, identify and respond to new opportunities, and make better decisions more quickly
- Gain a deeper understanding of its audience that can potentially be used in the future to build partnerships and identify relevant revenue sources

“We found that Unica offered powerful benefits over simpler solutions like Google Analytics: in particular, the ability to access the lowest level of data, and build custom reports from the ground up.”

Joel Lewenstein  
Software Engineer  
GoodGuide.com



<b>Unica Corporation</b>	Australia
Worldwide Headquarters	Belgium
Reservoir Place North	France
170 Tracer Lane	Germany
Waltham, MA 02451	India
USA	Netherlands
<b>T</b> +1.781.839.8000	Singapore
<b>F</b> +1.781.890.0012	Spain
<b>E</b> <a href="mailto:unica@unica.com">unica@unica.com</a>	United Kingdom
<b>www.unica.com</b>	United States

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