



Unica® NetInsight® Helps Foxwoods® Reduce Web Analytics Costs Across the Entire Lifecycle – for Every Site and Marketing Program

Using NetInsight, Foxwoods empowers its marketers to make smarter decisions while slashing the costs of licensing, hardware, and maintenance

BACKGROUND

North America's largest casino, Foxwoods Resort Casino®, is located in the rolling hills of southeastern Connecticut and is easily accessible from Boston, New York, Hartford and Providence. Owned by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, Foxwoods features six casinos with more than 7,200 slots, 380 table games, the only WPT World Poker Room™ in New England, High Stakes Bingo and Ultimate Race Book. In May 2008, the \$700 million MGM Grand at Foxwoods® debuted, bolstering Foxwoods' preeminence as the East Coast's ultimate casino resort destination.

THE CHALLENGES

By 2006, Foxwoods had already been utilizing web analytics for years. However, Foxwoods' IS organization was dissatisfied with both the cost and flexibility of its existing tools. For instance, Foxwoods' pre-existing web analytics product required extensive custom tagging of web pages – and those pages required constant retagging as the company's web site evolved and expanded. Second, the product was too complex for business users to work with directly; IS had to handle all reporting on behalf of the business. This raised costs and limited marketers' ability to get fast, actionable answers. Third, Foxwoods' existing product required IS to support an additional database platform, increasing IS costs.

As Foxwoods' IS organization moved toward a major web site overhaul in 2006, it concluded that its web analytics product was no longer tenable. Upgrading the product offered by its existing vendor soon proved to be equally unattractive. According to Merilee Paoloni, senior staff consultant, IS Gaming Systems, "The main challenge that prompted Foxwoods IT to implement Unica NetInsight was the cost

of ownership of our previous web analytics solution. We began evaluating web analytics alternatives in 2005-2006 when the new release of our existing web analytics solution outgrew our existing infrastructure."

THE SOLUTION

"We chose Unica NetInsight because it met both our business and budget requirements better than any other option we considered," says Paoloni. "To begin with, it ran on our existing hardware – and licensing and maintaining it cost far less than upgrading our existing system would have. Furthermore, after installing NetInsight, a Unica support engineer arrived on site to assist with creating scripts for log shipping, setting up profiles, and report creation. We coded our web site so that URL parameters and browser cookies could be used to track and correlate user interactions with transactional components on the site. These values were used in conjunction with NetInsight's Parameter Summary and Scenario reports to provide our Marketing team with conversion reports for e-Commerce transactions."

Paoloni adds, "within just weeks of implementing NetInsight, Marketing was able to track overall site traffic, repeat visitors, new visitors, traffic to our member's-only rewards area, and transaction drop-off points – all using out-of-the-box reports together with custom reports developed by IS. Since then, we've used the same techniques for tracking visitor response to both print and online advertising campaigns."

Systematically reducing IS cost of ownership

"From an IS perspective," says Paoloni, "NetInsight offered multiple benefits. First, it required no custom web page tagging. We've had three

OBJECTIVES

- Reduce the cost of ownership of web analytics, in terms of licensing, deployment, and ongoing maintenance
- Simplify the stack of technologies IS was required to support
- Enable marketing professionals to create as many of their own reports as possible
- Improve both business and technical flexibility
- Deliver useful metrics to support a comprehensive web site overhaul

RESULTS

- Substantially lower IS costs
- Self-service analytics for marketers
- Fast answers on site/campaign performance
- More business flexibility

revisions to Foxwoods.com, including a major site overhaul – and we created an entirely new site, www.MGMatFoxwoods.com. With that kind of growth and change, eliminating custom tagging has saved an enormous amount of web development effort. What's more, eliminating custom tagging makes web analytics far less prone to error. We now have a new content management system, too – and with NetInsight, we don't have to worry about whether the content manager retags every page properly, either."

"Second, NetInsight runs on Microsoft SQL Server, a platform our IS team is already familiar with supporting. It also works with our existing Microsoft IIS web server files, which made the transition even easier."

Empowering marketing with self-service web analytics

"When we originally invested in web analytics," says Paoloni, "it was mainly IS that drove the process. That's why our original objectives were IS-centric. But as marketing began to see what NetInsight could do, it began to come up with new ideas. As just one small example, we quickly added a script to track our visitors' screen resolutions. We knew customers were moving away from 800x600 monitors, but with NetInsight, we were able to quickly give our creative partners precise specs on what they were actually using, so they knew what to build for. That's information we simply couldn't get before."

"NetInsight has quickly become an invaluable resource for our marketers. They've come to rely on it, all the way up to the vice president's level. And I've been able to enable them to do quite a bit with NetInsight for themselves. On those occasions when they do want a more complex report than they can generate themselves, I'll do that for them – but it never takes very long. Using NetInsight, we can now look at our web site across the board, and see exactly how we're performing. That's something we could never do before."

Gauging customer response to every print and online campaign

"We're experimenting with different media, banner ads, print media, and all different ways of driving people to our site," says Paoloni.

"NetInsight is flexible enough to handle all of them. When we first implemented it in 2006, direct mail was our primary advertising vehicle; now we direct customers to Foxwoods.com both in print and online ads. NetInsight allows Foxwoods to gauge customer response to these campaigns by enabling us to monitor traffic based on advertised URL parameters and paths. That's allowed our online Marketing team to determine exactly which advertising media are most effective."

"I work closely with my counterpart in Marketing, who'll say, 'here are the ads we want to track; here's the URL we want to track against.' On our web site, our URLs contain certain parameters on the query string that we can pull into NetInsight and report from. The colleague can get her own report."

"Furthermore, we recently implemented a new hotel booking engine that provides a two-month total view of hotel availability. That required more complex reports that show the response to this calendar component, and how it's changed our traffic patterns. It's easy to get those reports now. There's no way I could have gotten them before."

THE RESULTS

Unica NetInsight has helped both Foxwoods' IS and marketing organizations achieve their core business objectives:

- **Lower IS costs, both upfront and on an ongoing basis.** NetInsight reduced licensing costs, eliminated the need to purchase new server hardware, and eliminated costly, inefficient custom tagging.
- **More empowered marketers.** Marketers can now run many of their analytics reports without IS intervention, and when IS support is needed, complex analytic solutions can be delivered more easily and quickly.
- **Greater business flexibility.** Foxwoods' marketers can now ask questions that would never have been practical before, and get rapid feedback on the performance impact of changes to both pages and sites.

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