

## Introduction

### Document Purpose

As our agenda time during the two-day meeting is already full of important topics, I chose to prepare this document and share it online. The intent is to: ❶ highlight the Alliance site's purpose as a resource, ❷ encourage interest in creating focus in our event sites' purpose, ❸ suggest that our event sites communicate values, and ❹ address device compatibility.

### Disclaimer

Whether I am referring to the Alliance site, Carolinas' PETS site, or that of another one of our fellow events, my comments are not intended to be a critique of someone else's efforts, nor are they intended to place any of those cited as the best possible design.

My purpose is to raise awareness and generate interest toward providing unique and inviting sites for our potential event participants. From my perspective, our websites are built for the participants and for the event leaders (DGs, DGEs, DGNs, Discussion Leaders, Exec Committee).

### A Website's Purpose

Our websites are a resource to participants and an opportunity to engage with attendees beyond the actual event. We need to challenge ourselves to provide the best experience for our sites' visitors. Our websites often present the first introduction to our events for a prospective participant.

Our websites provide information and communicate values. One question for each of us to ask ourselves is: "Through our website, are we projecting the image that conveys a relevant message about our PETS?"

### MDP Alliance Website [www.petsalliance.org](http://www.petsalliance.org)

#### Alliance Website Purpose

Be a relevant resource for MDP events, RI Leadership and Staff, keynote speakers.

#### Building Blocks

Our site is simply built upon a content management system (CMS) platform known as Drupal. Some of the more popular platforms are [WordPress](#), [Drupal](#), and [Joomla](#) ... each with a large following of developers (of themes and templates) and users. We selected Drupal for the Alliance site. Then we chose a theme, which basically provides the look and feel for the site as well as the specific features we desired.



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### Design Features

- Clean interface, no animation
- Responsive; website adapts to the device viewing it (smart phone, tablet PC, etc)
- Easy to deploy, maintain, and periodically change to project a fresh site design
- Added a component to support registration and an automatic email confirmation script
- Added a form submission component for the agenda topics solicitation
- One-click to contact a popular speaker by email or by smartphone
- Search for a popular speaker's recent and future engagements (based on accurate data provided from each event's leadership)
- Purposely elected not to include a bio document or print-quality photo (to protect against stale information being used that could embarrass a guest speaker or us)

### Participation Needed from each MDP Leadership Team

Below are five categories that directly contribute to our site's relevance:

#### Calendar

Please share information with us about the dates and venues for your future events

- 2018 events must be correct, 2019 and 2020 would be helpful
- Primary users are RI Leadership and Staff, peers, keynote speakers

#### Members

Please help us keep current the contacts listed for your event

- top three contacts for 2018 event should have current contact data & positions/titles

#### Speakers

Please share information with us about the most successful keynote speakers from your events

- must be non-regional in presentation, appeal, availability (we all have RPICs, RRFs, etc)
- full contact information and photograph
- topic/speech title (what was the focus of their presentation)
- presentation timeline (date and time they spoke at your event) helpful to other events that desire to share a speaker

#### Resources (shared documents, publications)

Please share documents that others might find useful for their event

- Event SOPs, RI PETS Training docs, Club Officer Publications, MDP docs

#### Volunteer, our "Need Help" page needs volunteers

Please consider sharing your expertise

- Find a topic at which you excel and volunteer to assist someone. Just send me an email and I will add you to the list. We only want three or four volunteers per topic. Please consider that humility is critical as we provide information to our peers. The purpose for volunteering is simply offering to help a fellow Rotarian improve their event.

## Brief Set of Minimum Design Considerations

### Home Page (purpose)

- First impression

### Overall Site Image (what does the site say about your event?)

- Gateway to your event; welcoming
- Make a positive impression on every page
- Convey value to the user (useful, beneficial)
- Branding (Rotary compliant, set an example)
- Up-to-date, when do you prep your site,
  - Make it ready for next year?

### Site Navigation

- Intuitive (menus are logical for the novice user)
- Responsive (must be device friendly)
- User should easily find what they need

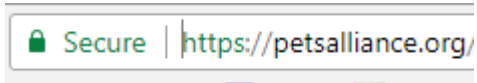
### Resource

- Relevant
- Event registration
- Training materials
- Reference documents/forms

### Site Security

- Site needs to be secure (more than simply appear secure)
- Search engines and anti-malware apps display security issues
- Browser needs to display a “secure” indicator instead of questionable security about this site’s design
  - Google’s campaign for “HTTPS everywhere” is based on the idea that ALL communication should be private (encrypted)
  - Other browsers are embracing this as well
  - Security Certificates are not difficult to obtain/maintain
  - See images on next page

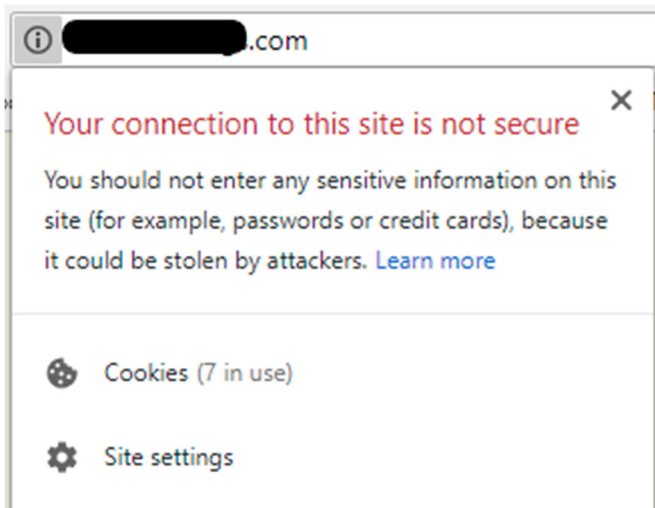
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The browser indicates “Secure”.



The browser displays “i” in a circle, indicating that the connection is not private.



If a user clicks on the “i” symbol, the browser will display some of the issues that lead it to flag potential risks on the site.

### Site Performance Tools

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is OK but Analytics is a better indicator.

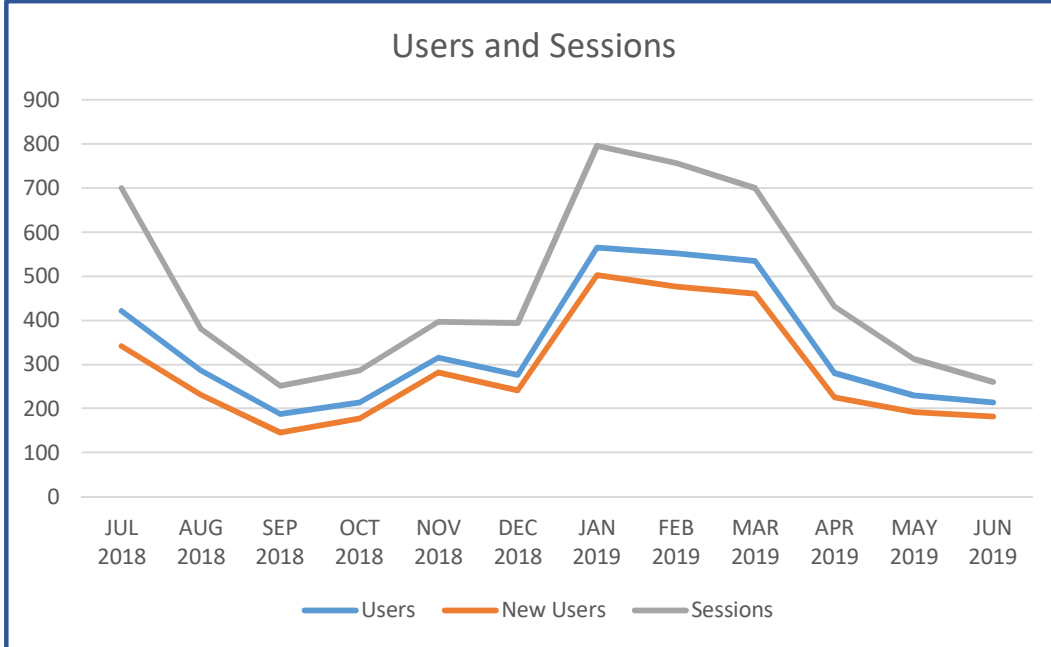
Google Analytics is only one of these tools. Subscribe to a service and monitor your site for activity, especially during periods of registration or pre-PETS activities assigned to the participants. Look for:

- New & repeat users
- Source of visit (direct, organic searches, referrals, social media)
- Bounce rate (home page and then exit)
- Page hits (frequency per page)
- Pages per Session (quantity of pages per visit)
- Session Duration (how much time stayed on the site)

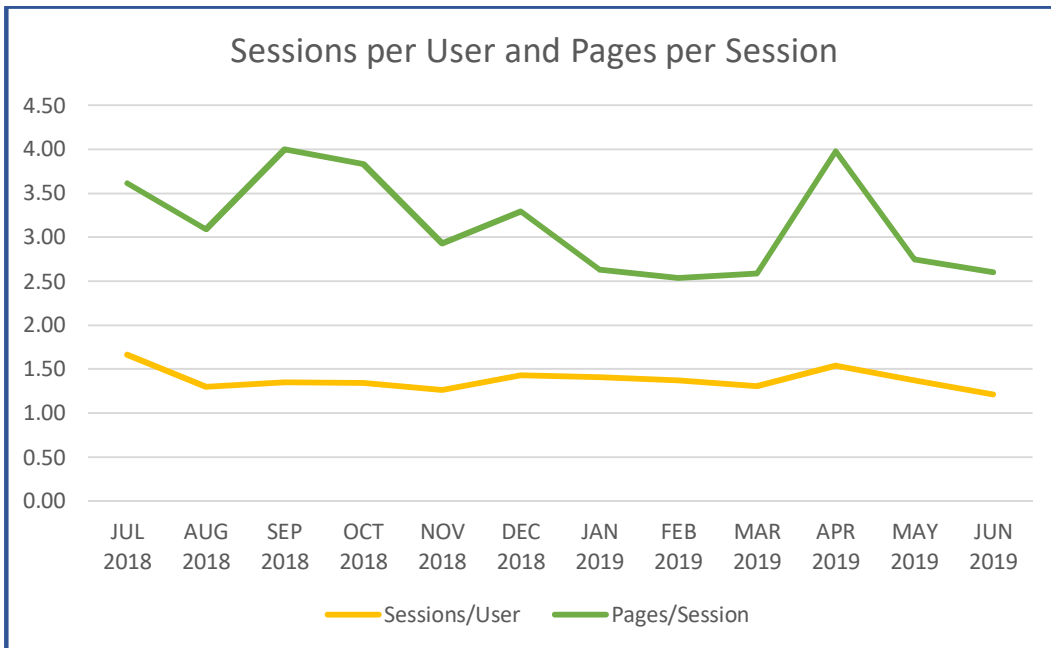
See sample on following pages; think about the story being told by the data...

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The following data pertains to the MDP Alliance site; July 1, 2018 ~ June 30, 2019.



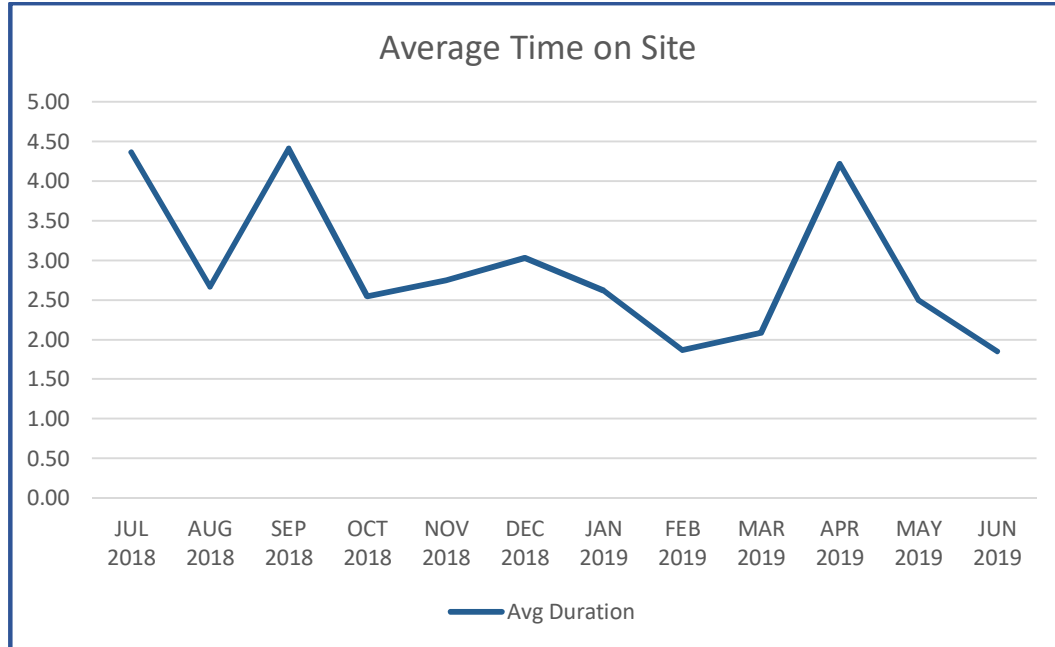
New users are wonderful to have; repeat users indicate greater interest in the site and thus multiple sessions. Sessions are incremented every time a user visits.



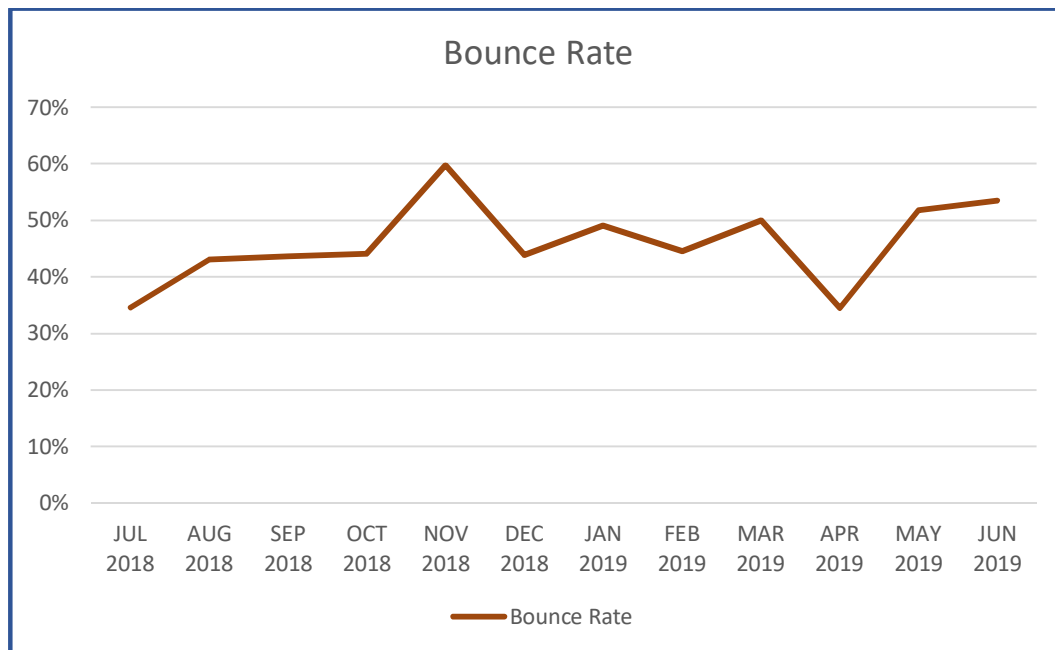
If most of these users had only one or two pages, then seeing a count as high as four could indicate that a few users are frequent visitors browsing several pages. Some industry standards quote two minutes as a good “time on site”.

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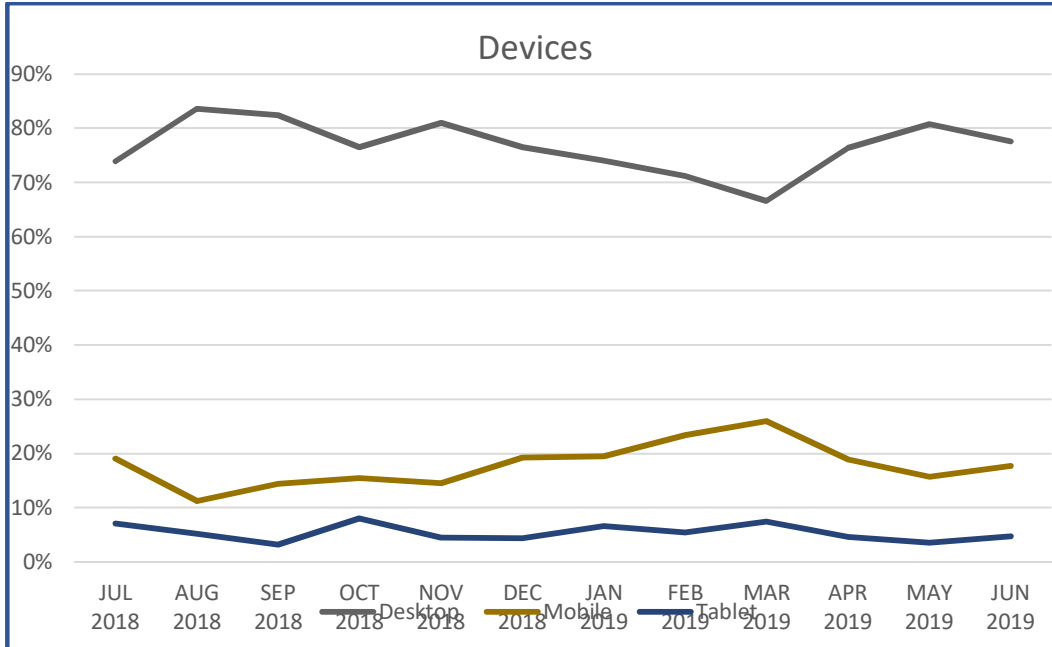
If a longer time on site is coupled with several pages visited, then we have a healthy statistic indicating a higher level of engagement. Some industry standards quote two minutes as good.



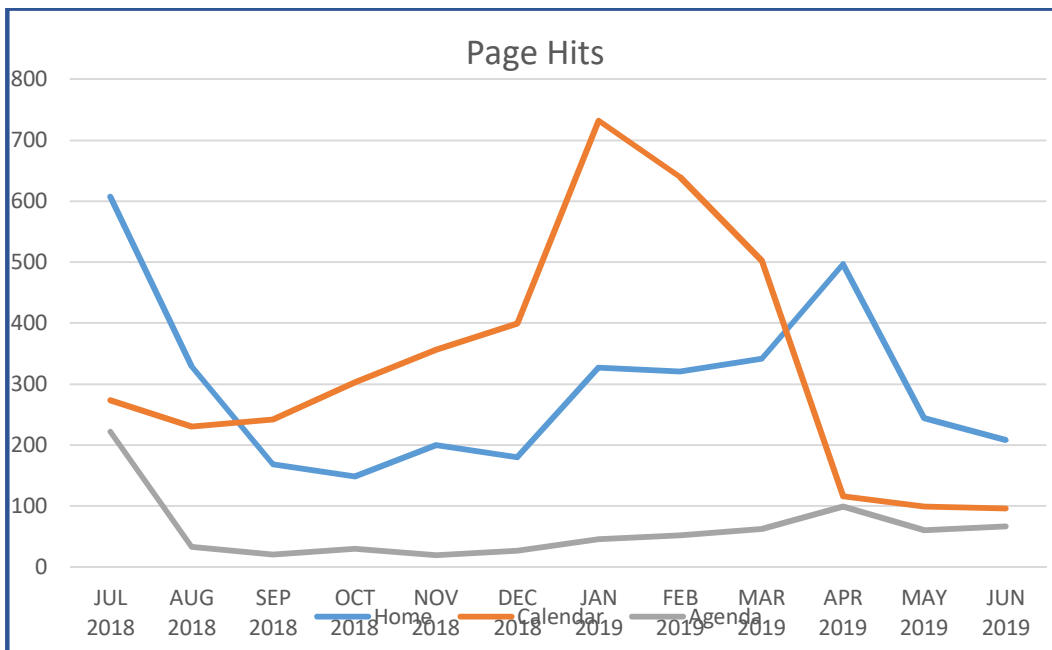
A bounce rate at 50% to 60% is OK based on what the user is doing. If they only visit one page, but it is bookmarked and they visit often, then a one-page visit is not a bad thing. At any rate, If we don't catch a user's interest within the first 30 seconds, they're gone.

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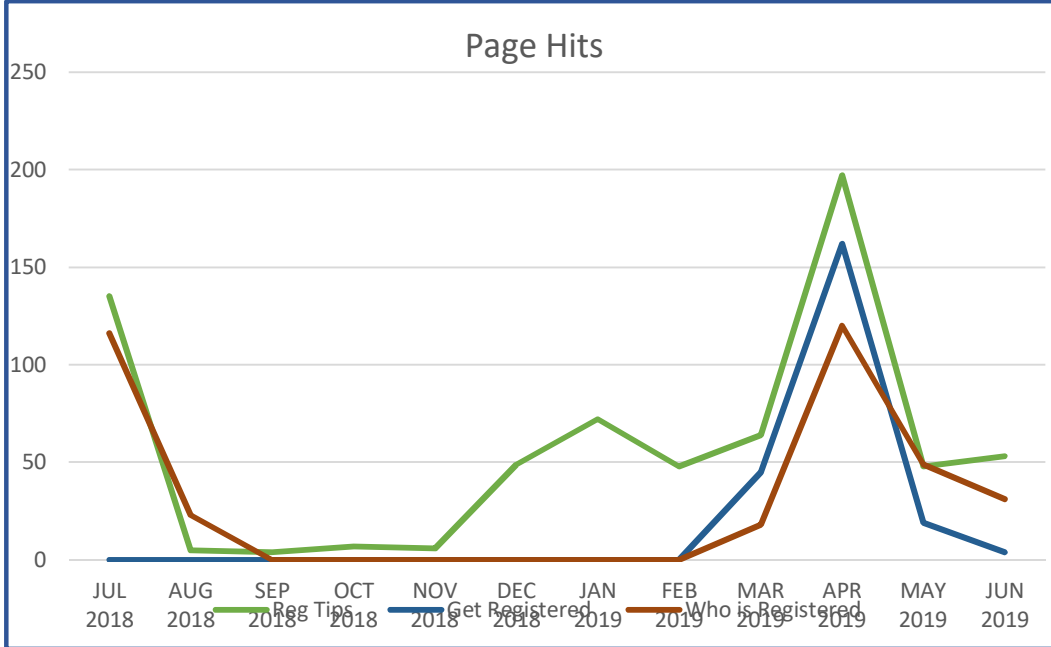
While we want our sites to be responsive to the device using it, sites like ours still see a lot of visits from PCs. A news site like the NYTimes likely has heavy tablet & smart phone usage.



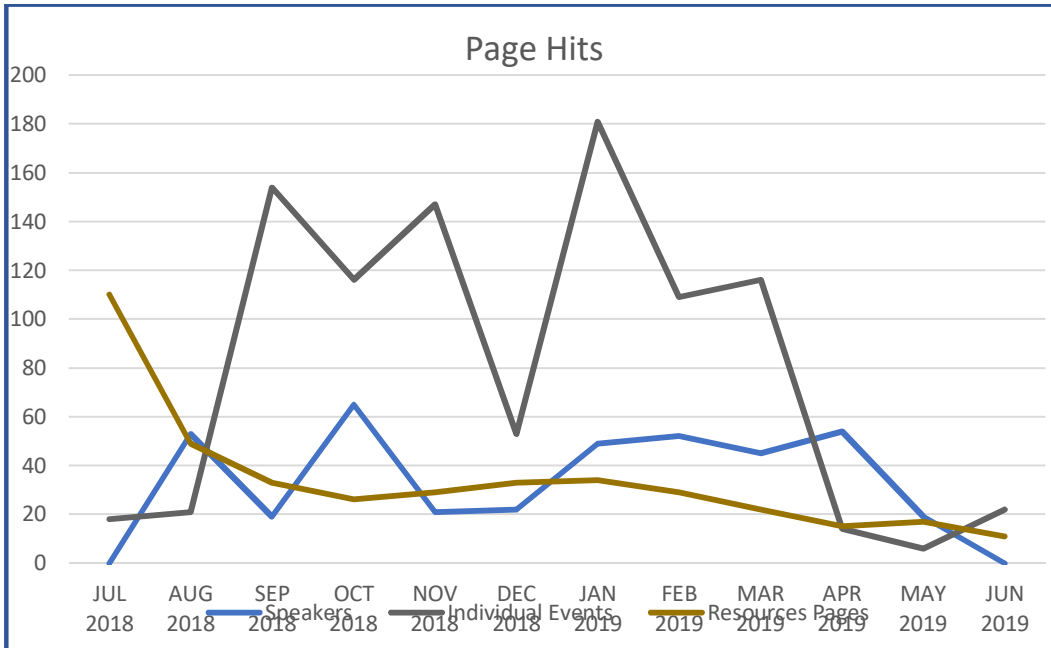
Three pages: Home, Calendar, Agenda. Home is active year-round; heaviest in July and April (Reg opens). Calendar is active year-round; heaviest in July and then winter to spring. Would surprise us all to know how many PEs end up on our site ... trying to find their event website.

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Three pages: Registration Tips, Get Registered, Who is Registered. Last July is heavy, then almost nothing until March/April. The peak in April as that is when we open registration.



Three pages: Speakers, MDP Events, Resources. The individual events page is high traffic in fall and spring (planning and execution), while Speakers has its best traffic in the late summer and fall (shopping current event replacements), and spring could represent future events.