Number of links to web products from other websites

Indicator Number:
22

Logic Model Component:
Outputs (Reach and Engagement)

Data Type(s):
Count

Short Definition:
Captures the number of links, or URLs, located on another website that directs users to the publisher’s website

Definition and Explanation (Long):
This indicator captures the number of links, or URLs, located on another website that directs users to the publisher’s website. The referring website creates and maintains these links.

Data Requirements:
Quantitative data from web analytics, webmaster tools, search engine optimization (SEO) tools

Data Sources:
Web analytics software, such as Google Analytics, Piwik, or Web Trends; webmaster reports, such as those from Google Webmaster Tools, Bing Webmaster Tools, or Alexa.com; SEO tools such as Majestic SEO or Open Site Explorer

Frequency of Data Collection:
Quarterly

Purpose:
The number of links and variety of referring sources directing traffic to an organization’s online information products indicate both reach and authority. If reputable websites link to an organization’s website or its online resources, one can reasonably argue that the destination resource has recognized the publisher’s authority on a given topic.

Issues and Challenges:
Some search engines can provide information on what other websites link to a specific site. For example, searching in Google for "www.mysite.com" returns a list of URLs that provide
links to www.mysite.com. However, data from search engines are far from comprehensive, as most search engines make only partial data available in order to maintain the confidentiality of their ranking algorithms and to deter spammers. A more comprehensive view may be available through webmaster tools provided by services like Google or Bing. Like webmaster tools, SEO tools directed at online marketing professionals can provide similar link data. However, most SEO tools cost in the range of $75 to $150 per month, which is out of reach for many programs and small organizations.

**Related Indicators:**

Indicators on web analytics: 19, 20, 21, 29, and 30

**Resources:**

For more information about Web analytics, see Appendix 3 on p.83.

**Indicator Snapshots:**

As of January 2013, 5,917 sources provided referral links to web pages on www.k4health.org.

As of August 2013, 940 websites link to www.measure evaluation.org.

**Pages in the Guide:**

41-42

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