

UKGAP Theme: Sustaining Resources for our Geodiversity

UKGAP Indicator 17: Awareness of the UKGAP – the number and type of users of the UKGAP website

Relevance

The UKGAP website provides a place to report on the range of activities undertaken to deliver the shared objectives of the UKGAP. Therefore the number of users of the UKGAP website provides a level of understanding of the number of people aware of the UKGAP. It is hoped that increased awareness of the UKGAP may lead to increased action for our Geodiversity. 'Awareness' can range from simply *knowing* that the website exists to having an increased *familiarity* with one or more webpages. Awareness also relates to the wider knowledge of the website's *presence* on the internet, including the number of links to the website that exist and its recognition within social networking sites.

Data Sources

Web analytics tools are utilised to track website traffic. Data from 'Google Analytics' have been utilised to provide an understanding of the use of the UKGAP website. Data collected by Google Analytics can be collated for specified date ranges and for the purposes of reporting against this indicator, data have been collated and compared on a monthly basis since the website went live in September 2011.

Background to the Data

Three categories of data collated from the range of Google Analytics metrics available have been deliberately chosen to represent the different levels of awareness described under the section above on 'Relevance'. The data are collected through the use of cookies (a text file that contains a unique but arbitrary string of digits and letters which act as a visitor ID). The data categories collated and their use are described below:

- The numbers of new and returning visitors and the number of visits they each make to the website assists in monitoring overall awareness and use of the UKGAP website;
- An identification of the web pages that are most often viewed by visitors to the UKGAP website assists in monitoring the more detailed use of the site; and,
- Finally, the way in which visitors accessed the UKGAP website assists in monitoring the methods used to promote the site.

A detailed explanation of the Google Analytics Data is shown in the Appendix to this indicator report.

Data and Trend Assessments

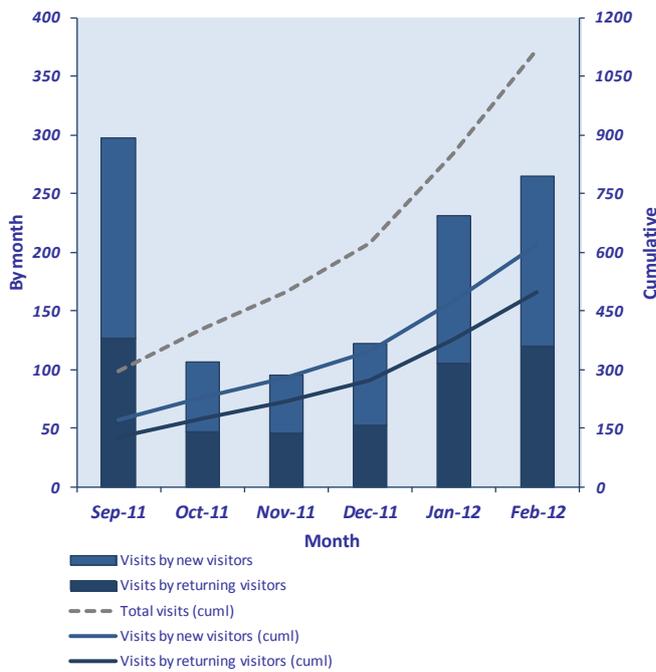
Visits to- and Visitors who used the UKGAP Website

The number of visits to the UKGAP website and the number of visitors who used the UKGAP website are shown in Table 17a and the two graphs below.

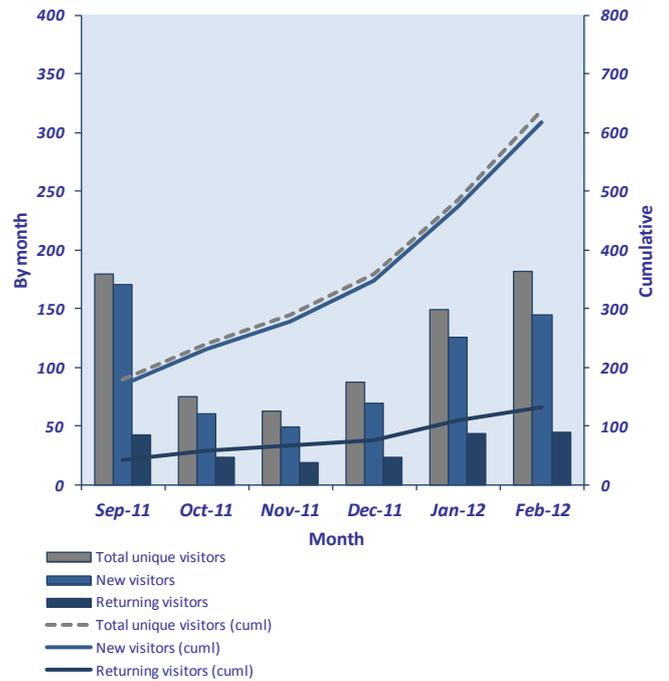
Table 17a: The number of visits to the UKGAP website and the number of visitors who used the UKGAP website

Visitors and their Visits	Sep-11	Oct-11	Nov-11	Dec-11	Jan-12	Feb-12
Total unique visitors	179	75	63	87	149	182
Total visits	297	107	95	122	231	265
New visitors / Visits by new visitors	170	60	49	69	125	145
Returning visitors	43	23	19	23	44	45
Visits by returning visitors	127	47	46	53	105	120

How many visits have been made to the UKGAP Website



How many visitors used the UKGAP Website



The total number of visits to the UKGAP website was greatest during the launch month of September 2011 at 297 visits and the total number of visitors that month was also one of the highest recorded at 179 visitors. The total numbers of visits and visitors was much lower during the months of October 2011, November 2011 and December 2011 with figures at around a third of launch month value. However, the total number of visits and visitors each month has been on the rise since December 2011 and the February 2012 figures are similar to the launch month at 265 visits and 182 visitors. For each month, just under half the visits comprised visitors who used the website more than once during that month or who had used the website in a previous month. However, the numbers of new visitors in each month has been far in excess of the total numbers of returning visitors.

The cumulative total number of visits from both new visitors and returning visitors has not begun to flatten off, suggesting that the website has not yet reached its potential in terms of use. The cumulative total number of new visitors is also on a steep rise with no sign of flattening off.

These data would appear to show that the UKGAP website is attracting a large number of new users, as well as maintaining the interest of those users who have already visited the site. This would indicate that there has been an increase in the awareness of the UKGAP over the period since the launch of the website.

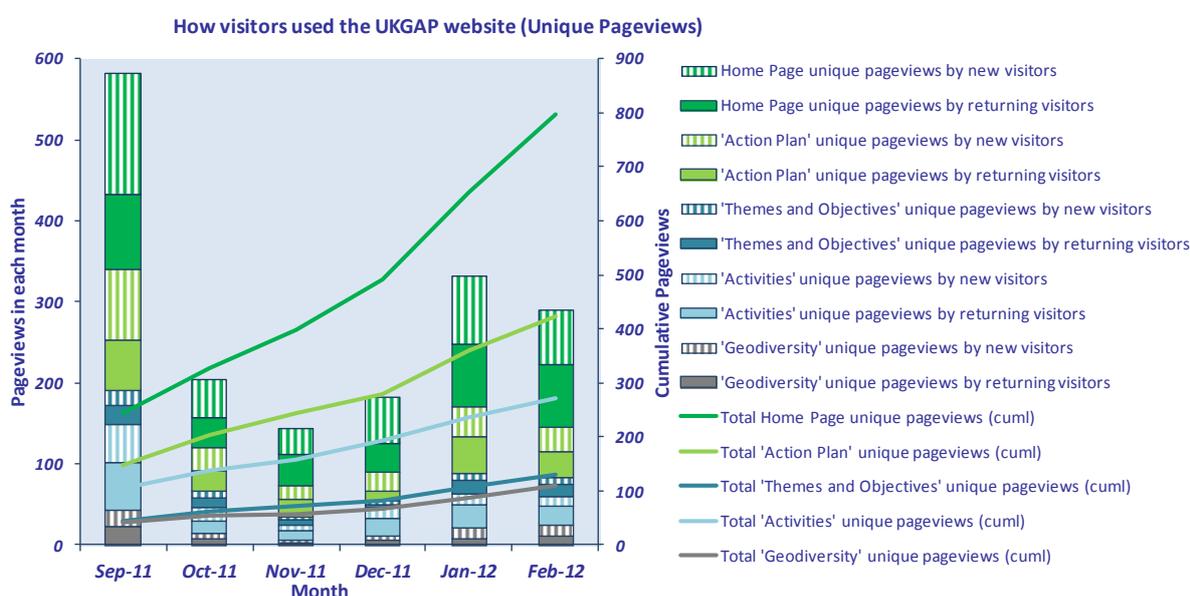
The total number of visits from returning visitors each month is greater than the total number of returning visitors. This appears to indicate that returning visitors are returning to the site regularly, rather than just once.

How Visitors used the UKGAP Website (Unique Pageviews)

Data identifying how visitors used the UKGAP website are shown in Table 17b and the following chart. A limited number of web pages, generally those most often used by visitors, have been selected.

Table 17b: How Visitors used the UKGAP Website (Unique Pageviews)

Unique Pageviews	Sep-11			Oct-11			Nov-11			Dec-11			Jan-12			Feb-12		
	All	New	Ret'd															
Total unique pageviews	1215	613	602	408	206	202	300	116	184	399	200	199	650	286	364	692	333	359
Home page	243	149	94	84	48	36	71	33	38	93	57	36	162	85	77	145	67	78
Action Plan page	149	87	62	55	30	25	39	16	23	35	23	12	82	38	44	62	30	32
Activities page	106	47	59	32	16	16	20	8	12	36	13	23	42	13	29	36	12	24
Themes and Objectives page	43	19	24	20	8	12	9	3	6	9	5	4	26	9	17	23	9	14
Geodiversity page	41	20	21	13	7	6	4	2	2	9	4	5	20	13	7	23	13	10



The total number of the selected web pages viewed is similar for both new and returning visitors, possibly showing both kinds of visitor tend to use the UKGAP in a comparable way. The home page is the page most viewed in sessions by both new and returning visitors.

The action plan page is the next most viewed part of the UKGAP website in sessions by both new and returning visitors. This could indicate that the placement of webpage links on the homepage more easily encourage people to these pages. It could also indicate that users are genuinely interested in the support for the UKGAP and perhaps how they could promote their own geodiversity activities. Other pages of the UKGAP website are viewed much less frequently by all visitors.

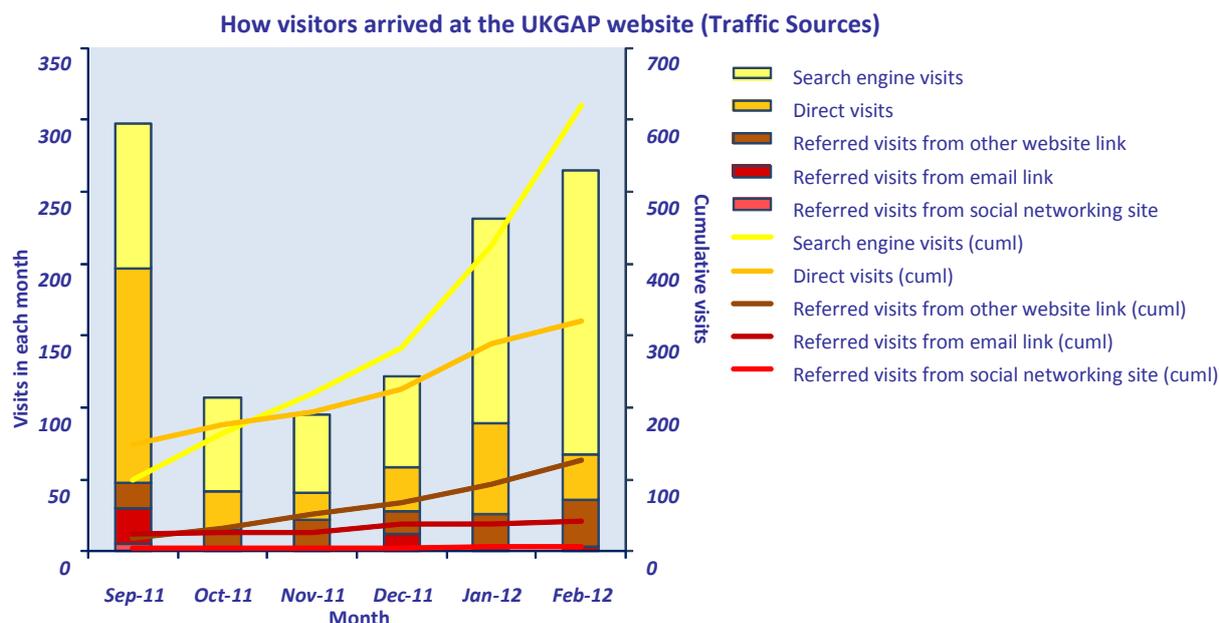
The greatest total number of web pages viewed recorded (1215) was during the launch month in September 2011. Although the total numbers of both visits and visitors were similar to the launch month in January 2012 and February 2012, the total number of pages viewed recorded in these months (650 and 692 respectively) was only half of that recorded in the launch month. This could indicate that users in January 2012 and February 2012 are not using the UKGAP website to the same depth as during the launch month. However, there was probably some checking and editing of both the text and layout of the UKGAP during the launch month that could also be part of what was captured by the data.

How Visitors Arrived at the UKGAP Website (Traffic Sources)

Data showing how visitors arrived at the UKGAP website is shown in Table 17c and the following chart.

Table 17c: How Visitors arrived at the UKGAP Website (Traffic Sources)

Traffic Sources	Sep-11	Oct-11	Nov-11	Dec-11	Jan-12	Feb-12
Direct visits	149	27	19	31	63	32
Search engine visits	100	65	54	63	142	197
Referred visits from other website links	18	14	21	16	25	33
Referred visits from email links	25	1	1	12	0	3
Referred visits from social networking sites	5	0	0	0	1	0



Awareness of the UKGAP overall appears to be largely generated via search engine results, with the exception of the launch month of September 2011. Most visits during the launch month were made by typing in the web address, showing that users were made aware of the UKGAP location directly during this first month. Visits to the UKGAP website via links embedded in emails were relatively greater during the launch month and again during December 2011. Visits via emails reflect personal recommendations for the UKGAP website and can be used to indicate the success of this type of discrete awareness-raising.

Awareness generated through links embedded in other websites increased slightly during January 2011 and February 2012. The number of visits generated through website links gives an indication of the site's 'presence' on the web including information on the organisations promoting and using the site. The specific websites that have generated awareness of the UKGAP to date include:

- jncc.defra.gov.uk
- naturalengland.org.uk
- geoconservation.com
- [neintranettechnical](#) (Natural England intranet)
- earthheritage.org.uk & haweht.easyssearch.org.uk (Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust website)
- thegeologytrusts.org
- londongeopartnership.org.uk (London Geodiversity Partnership website)
- tvrigs.org.uk (Tees Valley RIGS Group website)
- ukwildlife.com
- caribbeanhub.net (The Caribbean Conservation Network website)
- nbis.org.uk (Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service website)

- ougs.org (The Open University Geological Society website)

Very little awareness has so far been generated through social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook.

Data Limitations and Future Recommendations

The data are limited by some uncertainties in the way Google Analytics collects the data, particularly in relation to visitor type. As Google Analytics relies on the presence of a 'cookie', visitor numbers may be distorted by the cookie being deleted, a visitor using more than one type of browser, accessing the site from a different computer, the cookie expiring, or more than one visitor using the same user profile. However, Google Analytics considers that "*a good visitor-tracking system comes close to the actual numbers since it is based on typical behaviours of Internet users*".

As well as continuing to collect and collate the data presented in this indicator report, Google Analytics also offers a function to collect data on the networks people have used to access the UKGAP website. To date, networks used include: the University of Sheffield, Dorset County Council, Glasgow City Council, National Museum and Galleries of Wales, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, the Open University, and the Countryside Council for Wales service providers. As well as collecting a list of the organisations with links to the UKGAP from their web pages, it might also be useful for a list of the identifiable organisations using networks to access the UKGAP website to be collected. Both sets of organisations can be said to have shown awareness and interest in the UKGAP and might be interested in partnering in future geodiversity activities.

Appendix: Explanation of Google Analytics Data

Metric	Explanation of Metric using Google Analytics definitions	What these data might reveal
Visitor	<p>A visitor to the website is an individual user from a specific browser and computer. If the same individual uses a different computer and / or a different browser to access the website, that is recorded as a different visitor.</p> <p>Numbers for 'total unique visitors', 'new visitors' and 'returning visitors' can be collected and are independent datasets. A new visitor who visits the website more than once during a specified date range will be counted twice – once under the new visitor count and once under the returning visitor count. In the total unique visitor count they will only be counted once. Therefore the sum of new and returning visitors in a specified data range will not equal the number of total unique visitors for the same period. Similarly, because a visitor may use the site in several different discrete date ranges, the cumulative total across the complete timeframe will never equal the sum of the individual selected date ranges.</p> <p>Google Analytics sets an expiration date of 2 years for unique visitor tracking.</p>	<p>The numbers of new and returning visits and visitors reveals how the website is used, and could reflect both a simple awareness of the UKGAP by first time users and an increased awareness and familiarity of the UKGAP by returning users.</p>
Visits	<p>The number of visits describes the number of individual sessions initiated by all the visitors to the website. If a user is inactive for 30 minutes or more, any future activity is attributed to a new session. Users that leave the site and return within 30 minutes are counted as part of the original session.</p> <p>Numbers for all visits, visits from new visitors and visits from returning visitors can be collected.</p>	
Unique Pageviews	<p>A pageview is an instance of a discrete webpage being loaded by a browser. While reloaded webpages and returned-to webpages are counted as additional pageviews, in the 'unique pageview' metric these views are collated in each session. Therefore, a unique pageview represents the number of sessions or visits during which a discrete webpage was viewed one or more times.</p>	<p>The unique pageview metric can be used to find out more about the use of each webpage within the UKGAP website and thereby an understanding of the specific awareness of the different aspects of the UKGAP.</p>
Traffic Sources	<p>Each visit to a website (traffic) has an origin or source. Traffic sources can include direct visits from users who have typed in the web address, visits from users who have clicked on links from search engines, visits from users who have clicked on links from emails and visits from users who have clicked on links within other webpages.</p> <p>Google Analytics sets an expiration date of 6 months for traffic sources tracking.</p>	<p>Knowledge on traffic sources gives an indication of where promotion of the UKGAP website is generated from. When the traffic sources data is combined with the bounce rate data, a better idea of which visitors intended to come to the site may be identified. Overall, use of this metric may provide an understanding of where the most 'useful' awareness is being generated.</p>

Explanations have been paraphrased from Google's Analytics help pages at <http://support.google.com> which are © Google, 2012