

Content Effectiveness

And

Functionalism, v.2

By Chris Todd

CONTENT EFFECTIVENESS	1
Introduction.....	2
Functionalism	3
Functionalism: Mapping to Customer Support Site	4
The next step in our process is to examine the KPIs for each of our categories.....	11
Functionalism: Page Category KPIs.....	11
Engagers	11
Routers.....	12
Re-Assurers	13
Explainers.....	14
Explainers (for search)	15
Converters	16
Closer/Converter	16
Completer	17
Additional Site KPIs.....	18
Content Effectiveness Measures	18
Putting It All Together	21
KPI Examples.....	23
Missing Components	25

Introduction

Having highly effective content for a support site is critical to its success. I think it goes without saying that poor and/or missing content will lead to customer dissatisfaction and higher phone calls and emails to your support specialist. Let us not forget that the same can occur with good content when your customers cannot find it.

Think of it as if you were going to see one of your favorite performers. For example, say you were going to a U2 concert. Perhaps you got in an accident, or simply just got lost. If you never made the show, the show still went on (good content), but you never made it (you never found the content), so overall this would be an unsatisfactory experience. Likewise, suppose you had no problems traveling to the show, but there was a substitute for Edge that night or Bono's voice was particularly hoarse. In this case, you found the content, but the content did not live up to your expectations (it did not meet your needs). So, we can say that delivery (navigation and search) and the content itself make up the components of content effectiveness.

Notice that I started this by referring content effectiveness, and not call deflection. I believe effective content will lead to call deflection, but trying to compare customer support website success to closing a job ticket in a call center is difficult if not impossible. I will talk about why this is such a difficult task some other time. For right now though, by ignoring the comparison from website to call center, we can actually identify when we are successfully delivering usable content to our customers.

In 2003, I began an RFP process to acquire a new web measurement and analytics tool. One of my requirements for the successful vendor was to be able to demonstrate experience in the customer support space. None of the vendors were able to do that, including [Web Trends](#), [Omniture](#), and [Web Side Story](#). It is

now fall 2006, and I have a new assignment (at a new company) to develop a content effectiveness strategy. With the research that I have done for the past few months, I still have not been able to find very much information related to web analytics and customer support.

I did run across an interesting whitepaper from [SEMphonic](#), [Functionalism: A New Approach to Web Analytics](#). The authors of Functionalism have developed a new way to approach web analytics (they have tried many different approaches over the last 10 years) – through categorizing web pages by their purpose, and measuring each page on how well they serve their designated function. This paper will apply the Functionalism methodology to a customer support website, and more specifically, content effectiveness.

Functionalism

Before we go deeper into figuring out our content effectiveness strategy, let us explore Functionalism further. As I said, Functionalism uses the concept of categorizing each page by its function.

Once a page type is assigned, the success of a page is measured by Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) specific to the functions it was designed for. Central to Functionalism is the concept that a measure of success for one page can be a measure of failure for a different page. By categorizing and grouping pages by function, calculating and assigning KPI's makes the failure or success of a page more straightforward and transparent. It is in this assignment of type-specific, easily measurable KPI's that the power of Functionalism resides.

So the next obvious questions are “What are the page categories?” and “What KPIs do we measure for each of the categories?” Again going back to the whitepaper, these are the most common page classifications identified by SEMphonic.

- **Engagers:** Pages whose primary purpose is to interest the visitor and get them to do something/anything on the site.
- **Routers:** Pages whose function is to move visitors into specific places on the site. One of the differences between an Engager and a Router page is that the latter is built with the expectation that the visitor has come to the page looking for a particular

type of information/service. Search should often be treated as a special class of Router page.

- **Convincers:** Pages whose function is to “sell” the visitor on a product or service.
- **Explainers:** Pages whose job is to help the visitor understand some aspect of a product or service.
- **Informers:** Pages whose primary objective is to provide basic news and information about a product or industry. This differs from Explainers in that content is not specific to your own particular product or service.
- **Billboards:** Pages providing various content to visitors, but whose primary business objective is to display third-party advertisements on a Cost-per-Impression basis.
- **Sponsors:** Pages or series of pages which are themselves revenue-producing, whose content is mostly provided by a third-party who pays for inclusion within your website.
- **Closers:** Pages that are supposed to get visitors to enter a conversion process.
- **Converters:** Pages that are part of whatever is necessary to gather information/agreements and get a finished lead/sale/transaction.
- **Re-Assurers:** Pages built to re-assure the visitor about some potentially problematic issue or concern (privacy policies are a common example).
- **Tools:** Pages that are designed to collect or provide information as part of a nonsales process (like checking an account status or finding a location). There are many different kinds of tools and for a tool-rich site tool pages need to be subdivided into more granular types.
- **Completers:** Thank-you pages – designed to signal the completion of a process and – in some cases – drive to additional engagement.

Functionalism: Mapping to Customer Support Site

Now we understand a bit more about Functionalism, so let us now map it to our customer support site. I will start with a simple site, having separate pages for each stage through the site. At a later time, I’ll look at this from the perspective of a more complex site. To begin, we will look at the logical flow of our site.

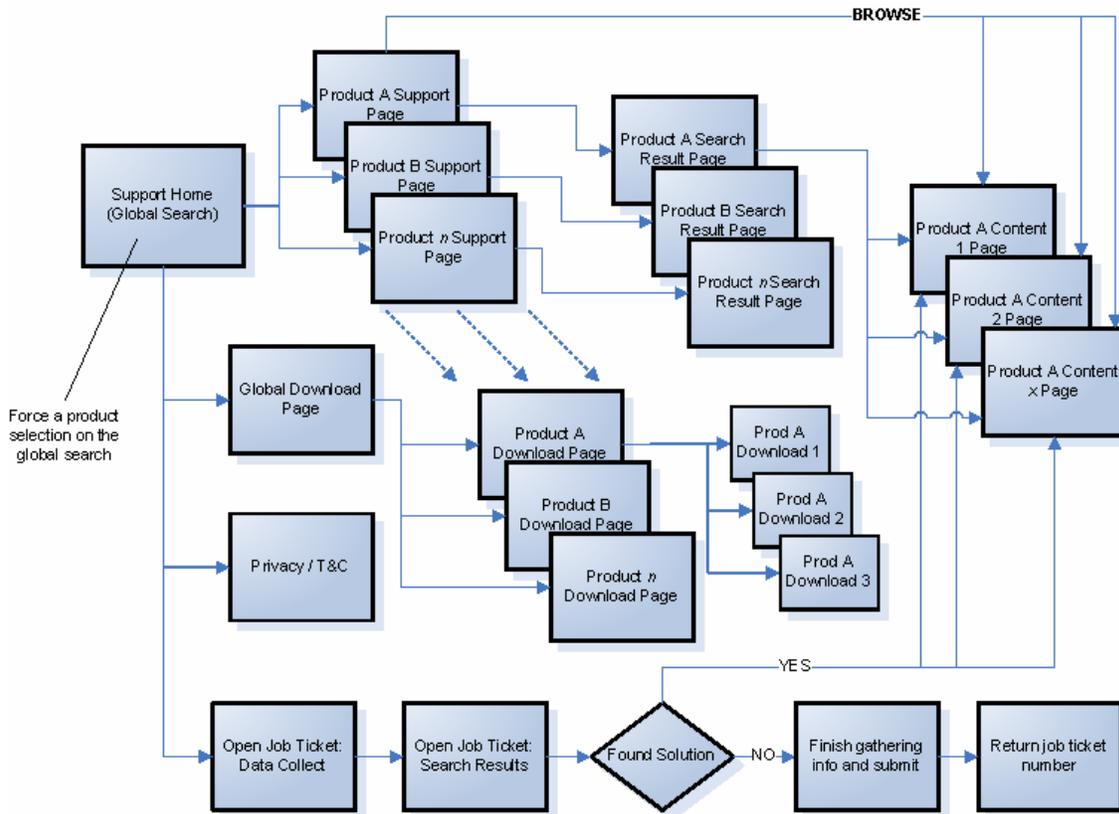


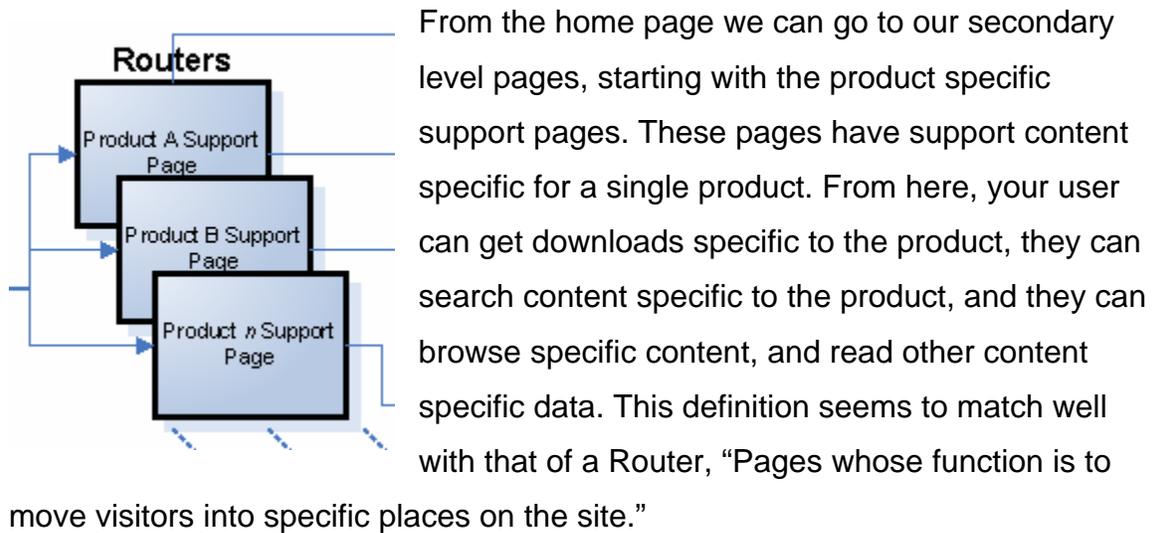
Figure 1: Generic Customer Support Site

We can see this is a typically, hierarchal website: you can search or browse for content by product, go directly to the download area, or open a job ticket. Notice I have also called out a global search on the home page, but force the user to select a product. Not only will it improve the search results for your customers, but it will help us tremendously on the analytics side because we will always know for what product the search terms were for. (Of course this can make it confusing for customers who are searching for content related to doing business with you, and are not searching for support content or drivers. So, you will either want that to show up in all search results, or make it obvious how to navigate to that information.)

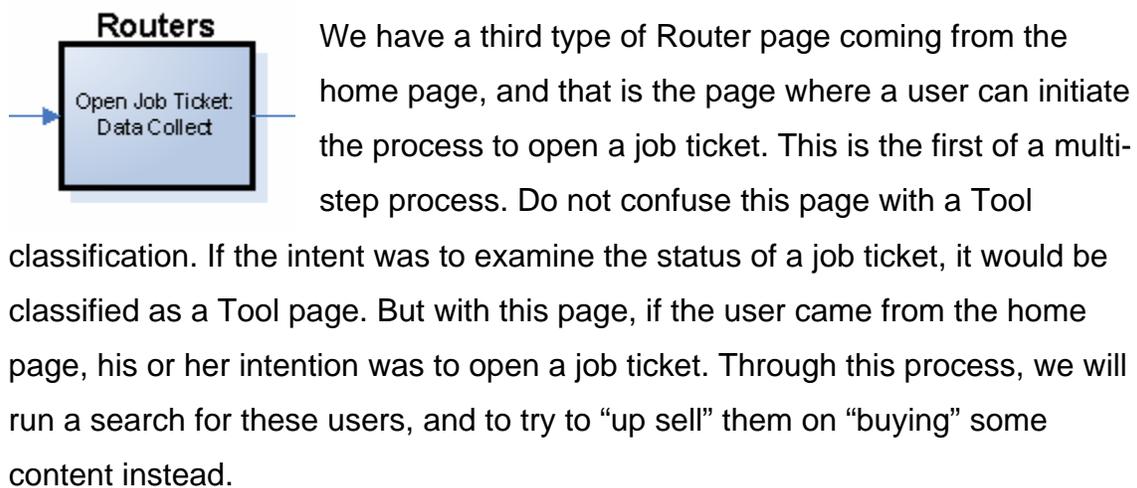
On to our mapping of Functionalism, I would categorize the home page as an Engager. We have the customer on our site, now we need to get them to take action.



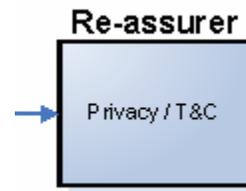
Hopefully we have presented enough information for them to pickup the scent to fulfill their intended goal or in other words, we should be engaging our users on the home page.



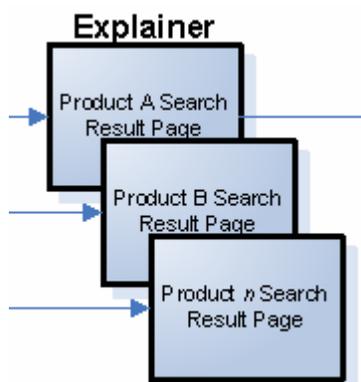
Also linked from the home page is the global download page. The purpose for this page is to assist the site visitors who specifically came to the site to get a download. From this page the visitor would select a specific product to reach the product download page. This is another form of a Router page.



There is one other page linked from the home page. This page covers your privacy and terms & conditions information. The Functionalism model refers to this page as a Re-assurer.



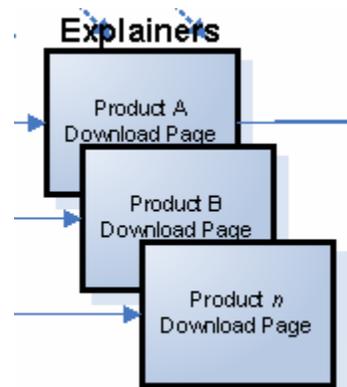
Moving to our tertiary level pages, the product search results pages are designed specifically to return answers to the customer queries. You might argue that this



is just another Router, but I would classify it as an Explainer – the page presents many links (number based on the search), and it is trying to explain what each of the possible links represents. This is the “money page”. Your users will make their decision on whether you have the content they need by what is presented. Of course this special explainer is based on the search terms or phrase, how well your search engine interprets the search phrase and finally, whether the content exists or not.

You could also add a Billboard classification onto this page if you were pushing promotions with your search engine. If you are not pushing promotions (and of course these should be relevant to support), we have another topic that we need to discuss at another time.

Also a tertiary page is our product download pages. The role of these pages is to define and present all the available downloads for the product. This could include updates, upgrades, patches, etc. These pages explain what content (files) is available. Therefore, these are Explainers too.



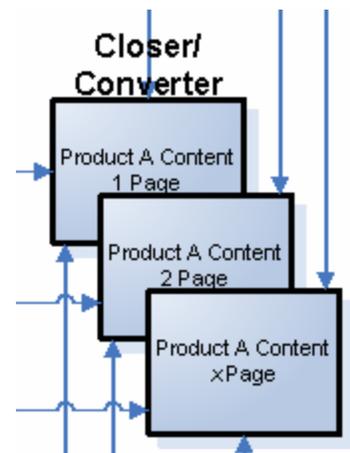
The last of the tertiary pages is the Open Job Ticket: Search Results. With this page, we are taking the customer symptom information that was completed in the Open Job Ticket: Data Collection page and running it against our search engine. This is an important Explainer page, as we would rather the user find a possible solution in the search results (up sell) over continuing with the Job Ticket process. This is the last chance before we engage a support representative to assist the user.



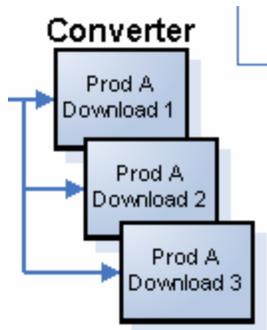
Let me make a side note before moving on. Some support sites may take their users through a set of questions and answers (often referred to as a wizard or decision tree) in order to determine the appropriate (solution) content to serve up. Though I did not show it in my model, they would be part of the browse path, and I would classify them as Routers.

Likewise, if I presented a list of content items to pick from, similar to the download file list, it would also be an Explainer page.

Finally, we have reached deep into our website to the content that we hope meets the users intended goal when they decided to visit our website. The first of these pages is the content page. The content page is both a Closer and a Converter in the Functionalism model. It is a Closer because it is our product – we want our users to “buy” it; the user uses the content to solve their problem. Therefore, the content page is also a Converter. If the user re-surfaces somewhere else on the site, our conversion failed; if they leave our site, they have “bought” our solution.



The next area to look at is the Downloads. These are files instead of pages, but still need the same attention. The files are really a special type of Converter.



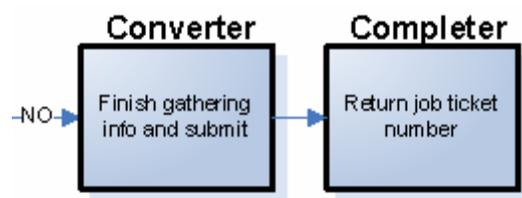
Users may come to your site and download all available downloads for their product. In comparison to the content page (where finding the right solution the first time is ideal), customers may download all the files, so we will need to consider it a successful conversion if one or more files are downloaded and then the user exits the site.

If we had a page between our list of downloads and the files, one that covered all the details of the download, you would look at Convincer and Closer measures in the Functionalism model.

There are also other behaviors we should consider in how we measure our KPIs for the Downloads. For now, we will just discuss the concepts, and later we will address the full set of KPIs. If a user came to your support site, went immediately to a download, retrieved the files, and then continued to search for content, I would not consider that a failure of the (download) content, which I would typically think for a Converter page. Rather, this was an intended step prior to getting an answer from the content.

Likewise, the reverse needs to be considered for those users who came from a content page and then downloaded files. The content page did not fail on the conversion, rather the content page need the files to complete the conversion. When we discuss KPIs, we will identify how to appropriately measure these special situations.

So finally we get to our last two pages, the completion of the job ticket process and the completion of the process. The purpose of the Converter page is to confirm and set expectations for the next step in the handling of the support inquiry. At this point, if you lose people on the Converter page, yet the user indicated



their problem was not solved, you likely have workflow problems – maybe you gather all the information upfront, and if the user says “no”, complete the transaction for them.

Finally, when we return a job ticket number, we classify the page as a Completer. SEMphonic makes a great point about this type of this page – it is often a wasted page. This would be a good time to push information – to re-engage your user. Most importantly, this user was not successful in solving their problem **this time**. Make sure they still understand that more times than not; the website is a quicker and more efficient way to solving their problem than to wait for you to contact them each and every time.

Now we have completed our categorization, and here is what we have done.

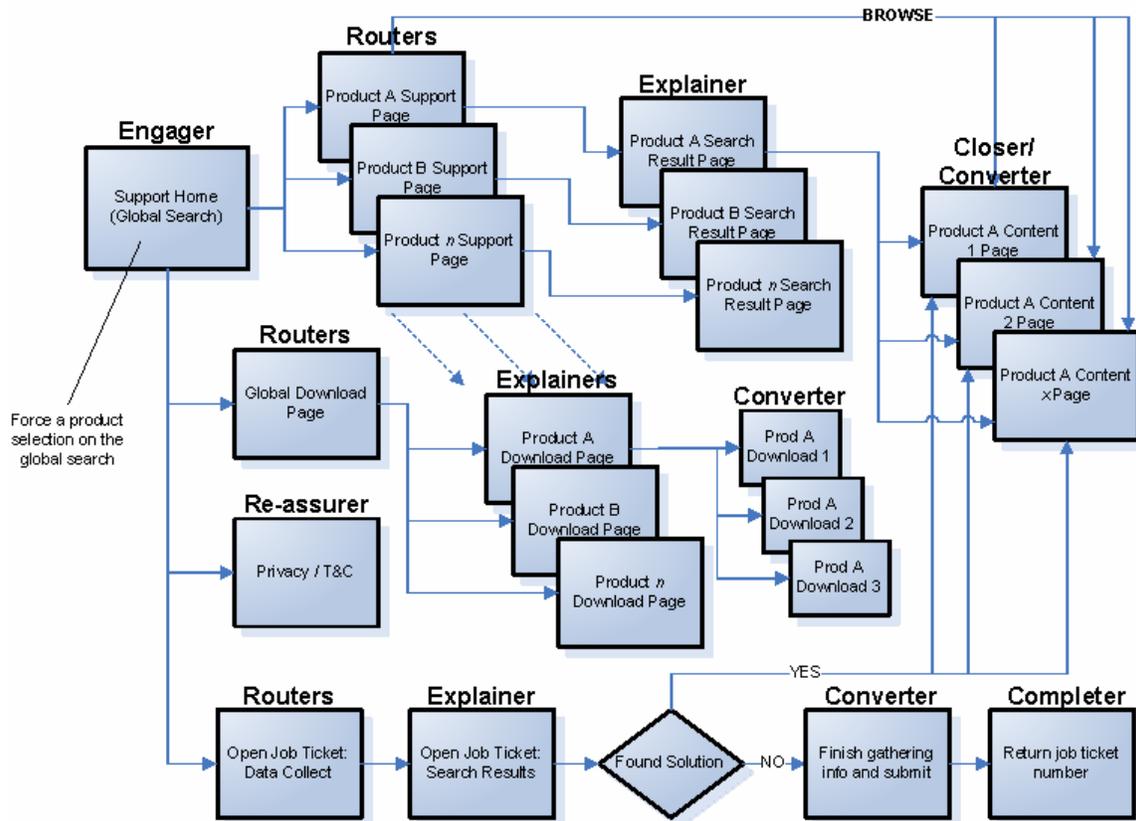


Figure 2: Categorized Generic Customer Support Site

The next step in our process is to examine the KPIs for each of our categories.

Functionalism: Page Category KPIs

Before I start, I want to add some clarifications. First, many organizations will have KPIs that reflect the few key indicators to check the health of various parts of their business. In this context, we are looking at the key indicators for a particular category. Second, remember that my goal is to focus on content effectiveness. If I was focusing on the entire support website, I would likely have some additional KPIs on some of the pages. Finally, you will find that I list KPIs used to detect potential problems (typically % based KPIs) as well as there are KPIs that are used to identify specific causes.

With that being said, I will go through each category one at a time. Finally, do not forget to return to Figure 2 often to remind your self how the categories and pages fit within the overall site.

Engagers

The only page within the Engager category is the sites home page. The “primary job is to grab the visitor’s interest and get them to do something (almost anything!) on the web site.”

- **Exit Rate:** This number should be low. For those who do exit, check to see if they are coming from somewhere else within your company’s site – if so, perhaps better labeling the link(s) is required. If your exit rate is from those who were in other places on the site, re-surfacing here, group them by those pages, and do the analysis to see where those pages are failing.
- **Exit Propensity:** Functionalism uses a weighted exit rate based on depth through the site. The propensity of exiting a site should be greater at the higher level pages than the lower. Compare exit propensity across all your pages – this one is likely going to be higher than most – those that we expect users to exit from.

- **% Engagement Links:** I would recommend you look at your primary content sources, group by path taken (product page, downloads, job ticket, and search). If you exclude re-surfaces, you can get a good idea of intent: product page = content; downloads = drivers and patches; and job ticket = I want personal assistance. My fourth group was search, which intent is much more difficult to determine (a good reason to not have it on the Engager). Either lump search into content or cluster search questions and answers to categorize (I would opt for the former for now.)
- **Subsequent Page Consumption:** So if users are not exiting from the home page, how well are they doing? Are they deeply engaged? If we look at this by our 3 (or 4) Routers (product pages, downloads, job ticket, plus possibly search), perhaps we can see which areas are doing the best or which areas need more attention.
- **Subsequent Success:** This is what it is all about – did our users make it from our home page to the content they required to meet their intent or goal?
- **% of Home Page Searches to Convert:** If you have opted for the open search on your home page, this is the number which will tell you if it is working.
- **% Re-surface:** How many users are coming back to the home page on the same session.

Routers

These are the Global Download page, the Open Job Ticket Data Collection page, and the Product Support pages. These are your most important pages, routing your users to specific content, either through a link or via a search.

- **% of Body Routers:** This is fairly simple – what are the percentages of users who follow the intent of the Router page.
- **% Routes by Group:** This is looking at all your routes, body, top, and back.

- **Exit Rate:** Users leaving here have probably lost the scent – they do not see how to find the content they need or have re-surfaced after being unsuccessful.
- **Exit Propensity:** Functionalism uses a weighted exit rate based on depth through the site. The propensity of exiting a site should be greater at the higher level pages than the lower. Compare exit propensity across all your pages of the same category. If one is higher than others from the same level (secondary, tertiary, and so on), this may be an indication that the page is not fulfilling its function.
- **% Re-surface:** The % of visitors who drill-down then come back up to the router page. Take a careful look at these – these users are not finding what they are looking for.
- **% Re-surface Body Routes:** This is the % of Re-surfacers that took body routes – are they taking the same path twice, and therefore lost? Or, is the path not intuitive enough where it was missed the first time? It is also possible this user is solving more than one problem.
- **% Re-surface Routes by Group:** Look at where users are going – is there a reason they did not take that path the first time? Did they get lost? Are they still lost or are they taking sideways navigation paths?
- **% Re-surface Exits:** This is a sub-set of the % Re-surface who left the site.

Re-Assurers

Remember the Re-assureres are Privacy and Terms & Conditions page(s).

Currently we are not going to examine these as there is not much correlation to content.

- **Process Re-Join Rate:** Watch this rate – if users are not re-joining, you likely have an issue with your terms of doing business.
- **Exit Rate:** The opposite of your re-join rate
- **Exit Propensity:** Functionalism uses a weighted exit rate based on depth through the site. The propensity of exiting a site should be greater at the

higher level pages than the lower. Compare exit propensity across all your pages of the same category. If one is higher than others from the same level (secondary, tertiary, and so on), this may be an indication that the page is not fulfilling its function

- **Percent Process Viewers / Percent Re-Assurers:** How many users are coming from a process, for example before completing information for a job ticket vs. total Re-Assurers.

Explainers

We have three types of Explainers:

1. The search result page – this will need some additional KPIs to evaluate the search
2. The search results specific to the job ticket flow – for all intents and purpose, this is the same as the standard search results, but the users' context is different. Be sure to contrast this in your analysis.
3. The product download page – it is going to explain the files for the specific product

These are the KPIs for all the Explainers.

- **Exit Rate:** If this is high, your users are not finding the patch or driver they were expecting.
- **Exit Propensity:** Functionalism uses a weighted exit rate based on depth through the site. The propensity of exiting a site should be greater at the higher level pages than the lower. Compare exit propensity across all your pages of the same category. If one is higher than others from the same level (secondary, tertiary, and so on), this may be an indication that the page is not fulfilling its function
- **% of Body Routers:** This is fairly simple – what are the percentages of users who follow the intent of the page (in our example, download one or more files).

- **% Routes by Group:** This is looking at all your routes, body, top, and back. You may see a high level of users navigating sideways or up if they do not find the file they expect or need assistance after getting the file(s).

Explainers (for search)

For search result pages, add these KPIs to the KPIs already discussed.

- **Rate of immediate drives to Convert:** This KPI will tell us how many users are successful in finding their answers through search.
- **Re-Surface:**
 - **% Re-surface:** % of visitors who drill-down then come back up to the router page. In the support space, this means the user did not find their answer from the search result – if you are lucky, they will try again.
 - **% Re-surface Exits:** These are users who viewed at least one search result, came back, and then left the site.
 - **% Re-surface Routes by Group:** Use this to understand where re-surface users are going.
- **% of No Results:** This is a great indication of no content and/or poorly tuned search engine.
- **% Refine Search:** How often do users have to refine searches?
- **Many Search Result, Low % Click-Through:** Possible issues include poor titles and outdated content. (You need to determine what the threshold is for “many” and click-through rate)
- **Search Terms**
 - **Search Terms that led to Convert:** identify what is working
 - **Convert Search Terms for Two+ Page Views:** These are the search terms where users viewed more than one page to find an answer, but were still successful. You may be able to use these to drive results higher in the result set.
 - **Search Terms and Answer Followed by Re-Surfacers:** What search result did the user follow (and fail with) causing them to re-

surface? Either good title, poor content or a better result needs to surface based on search.

- **Search Terms and Answers for Many Search Result, Low % Click-Through:** What was being searched on frequently, with high number of search matches, yet few users clicked-through.
- **Failed Searches:** Whether no results or if the user refined without clicking through. Use categories to help tune search engine or fill content gaps.
 - **Search Terms Prior to Refine Search:** This would help provide specific terms
 - **Search Terms for No Results**

Converters

The converters in our example are the files downloaded and the completion of the job ticket process.

- **Exit Rate:** This could be a good indication that the user got what they intended and left.
- **% Cancel (for downloads):** This would be a last-second exit, after the link has been clicked.
- **% Error**
- **Re-assurer Exit Rate:** How many of your customers decide they need to understand your terms and conditions and/or privacy policies, and decide to leave. A higher number here could be a problem.

Closer/Converter

These are the pages our users are looking for – the content pages (knowledge content, whitepapers, video/animation, and documentation).

- **Exit Rate:** This could be a good indication that the user got what they intended and left.
- **Exit Propensity:** This is the opposite from others, as we are favoring exits from an Explainer/Converter. Compare exit propensity across all your

pages of the same category. If one is lower than others from the same level (secondary, tertiary, and so on), this may be an indication that the page is not fulfilling its function.

- **% Routes by Group:** This is looking at all your routes, body, top, and back.
- **% Routes by Group by Content Type:** An extension to the above measure, but additional grouping by content types (if this exists on your site, i.e. text and video)
- **Time on page for non-exits by Group:** You really cannot get time when user exits (converts), but we can by which categories they re-surface to.

It can be very difficult to correlate time to action, but you can usually interpret a short time to mean the content did not meet expectation. For a long length in time, in general terms, it means the content was read and consumed but did not meet the user's need. The real challenge is in determining what time range to use. For example, less than 10 seconds for a short time period threshold (did not meet expectation) may be good for a document, but it could take longer than that just to open a page with several graphics or a video file, so it would not be a good threshold for those content types.

Completer

In our example, the only Completer page is the end of the job ticket process (includes any expectations and a thank you).

- **Exit Rate:** The opposite of re-engagement.
- **Site Re-Engagement:** high site re-engagement could mean many users are visiting with multiple problems or perhaps they are going to try and solve on their own, once the ball is rolling on their trouble ticket.
- **% of Opportunity:** This can vary based on how implemented, but generally, take the number who completed and divide into the number of users that were offered a search result based on their problem statement. The lower the number, the more users you diverted.

Additional Site KPIs

This is where I will list some other global KPIs across the site. Most of these should be familiar.

- **Unique visitors**
- **% Return Visitors:** This should be a familiar measure. If we were selling products, we would want people coming back to buy more products all the time. In the support area, we want to see this number be great in comparison to calling or emailing us. But obviously too much required support could mean loss of future business. With that being said, this number will vary – you want to see repeat visitors because it shows confidence in finding support on your site (unless they go directly to opening a job ticket),
- **Site availability %:** any downtime can lead to lower confidence. Enough and your customers will go else where.

Content Effectiveness Measures

Now we understand Functionalism and how it applies to a basic support site. The next step is to understand our content effectiveness measures – what we want to learn to improve our content. I will begin with the basics, “What is success?” and “What is failure?” I have divided this into actually three stages: success, failure, and abandonment.

1. **Failure:** Anyone session where a job ticket was opened
2. **Success:** Any session where the last access was a content item. This is our Converter (file downloaded) and Explainer/Converter categories. In our simple example, there were no reasonable next pages. In your site, consider that after the content, you may offer a promotion or survey. If this is clicked-through, do not discount the success.
3. **Abandonment:** This is all other sessions where the user did not exit the site after accessing a content item or open a job ticket.

I would make one exception to items two and three – if your user completes a survey at the end of their session, then I would allow it to override the success or

abandonment score. I would not override when a job ticket is open, as some users will categorize successfully opening a job ticket as a successful experience – I would not. These three combined should equal all exits and therefore your total sessions.

Moving on, why do people fail on your site or why do they abandon? Remember in the introduction, I used the U2 concert metaphor to help demonstrate that content effectiveness is more than content – it is also the navigation to find it and the systems it resides in. Well, keep this in mind as I have separated content effectiveness into four areas, with a total of 15 attributes. These are described below:

1. Content Gap

- Does Not Exist: Simply, if the content does not exist, your users will not find it.

2. Search Failure

- Writing Issues: Writing issues refer to things such as mismatch in terms or written at the wrong level, which is explained and covered in more detail in the next section. The relevancy for this category is that if the content title and/or description is not written appropriately, the user may not find it within their searching and/or browsing.
- Search Failure: The content exists, but it was never presented. Typically taxonomy, ontology, or synonym.
- Content Out-of-Date: This would be apparent relevant content, but it is out-dated, forcing the user to sort through. If the user clicks-through, this would manifest itself as inaccurate, incomplete and/or wrong content.
- User Search Terms: The terms used by the users are not significant to return appropriate results. You could also have a problem that appears search term based, but is more search engine caused – the classic example the use of keywords in a natural language search engine.

3. Content Usability

- Customer Intent: What the user wants and what is available do not align. When this occurs, you will never be able to meet the user's intended goal. For example, if the user came to your site to figure out how to perform a function in your product, yet your product does not support the function – your content would never meet their expectation. (Likewise though, if there was a work-around, perhaps you should have that content available.)
- Writing Issues
 - Mismatch of Terms: A mismatch in terms would be related to taxonomy and possibly language. A good example is the terms of the health care industry. Doctors use terms like pulmonary and cardiac, while we use terms such as lungs and heart, respectively.
 - Wrong Level: related to mismatch terms, if the user reading the content does not have the education to understand it, then we have failed to have effective content. This is very similar to mismatch of terms and is analyzed using the same methods.
 - Grammar: Poor grammar can be a big issue when describing a process or series of steps, particularly for non-native speaking users.
- Inaccurate, Incomplete, and/or Wrong: Of course your user will fail if your content is inaccurate, incomplete or wrong.
- Content Length: Do I need to read “War and Peace” or can I read three or four paragraphs? Do not lose your visitor because the content is not concise.
- Wrong Medium: I will demonstrate this concept through an example. Perhaps I learn best with a short demonstration that is visual, yet all you offer is a three page outline with the steps to solve a problem – the information could be accurate, but it may be

too difficult for me to successfully execute the steps just by reading the text.

4. System and Design

- Site Design:
 - Templates: This is all about presentation. Issues that occur include inability to see the link on a page to the font being too small to having to scroll too much.
 - Navigation: Similar to search, if the navigation is not intuitive and easy to “follow the scent”, users will never find that content you worked so hard to develop.
- Technology: This can manifest itself in various ways. For example, if you require me to download a 20 MB file, and I only have a dial-up connection, I am going to fail. With the higher adoption of video and Flash, as well as sites that only work with Internet Explorer, if you are not careful, you could exclude many of your customers.
- System Failure: Just as it says – if the system fails, your customers are not reading your content.

Putting It All Together

With our categories, and our KPIs, I have put this in a table that defines their relationships. Please note that this table will not help with file download related issues, though you can use it as an aid in looking at your Product Download page (Convincer).

Content Effectiveness	KPIs	Comments
Failure %	(Completer Exit Rate + Completer Site Re-Engagement) / Total Sessions	Any open job ticket is a failure. You could count a re-engagement after opening a job ticket as a second session, but it may be more effort than it is worth.

Success %	(Closer/Converter Exit Rate + Download Converter Exit Rate) / Total Sessions	Remember, if you have a survey and it indicates failure, it should supersede this.
Abandon %	(Engagers Exit Rate + Routers Exit Rate + Re-Assurers Exit Rate + Explainers Exit Rate + Job Ticket Converter Exit Rate) / Total Sessions	All other exit points. You need to balance the size of this group with failures to help determine where to put your efforts to increase your success rate.
Content Gap	Examine the KPIs on the Search Explainer page: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit Rate • Exit Propensity • % No Results • % Refine Search • Many Search Results, Low % Click-Through 	The KPI measures for content Gap and Search Failure are much the same. In both cases, users will not have a high-rate of click through and there will be a greater tendency to refine searches. The difference between the two is that for search failure, users may still find needed content. And of course if the content does not exist (a gap), they never will. See figures 3 and 4 below – you will see that by using multiple KPIs, you can identify different issues.
Search Failure	Examine the KPIs on the Search Explainer page: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit Rate • Exit Propensity • % No Results • % Refine Search • Many Search Results, Low % Click-Through 	
Content Usability	Examine the KPIs on the Search Explainer page: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Re-Surface • % Re-Surface Exits Look at the KPIs on the	High re-surface rate will usually mean the topic looked promising, but the content missed its mark. Very low time on Explainer/Converter pages

	<p>Closer/Converter page:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Routes by Group • Time on Page for Non-Exit by group 	<p>indicates the user is able to make a quick judgment that the content was not what was expected.</p>
System and Usability Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine % Re-Surface KPIs from Engagers and Routers • Sudden high failure rate in finding content across many or all products • Error logs 	<p>This is a balance between the re-surface KPIs and other system monitoring tools.</p>

KPI Examples

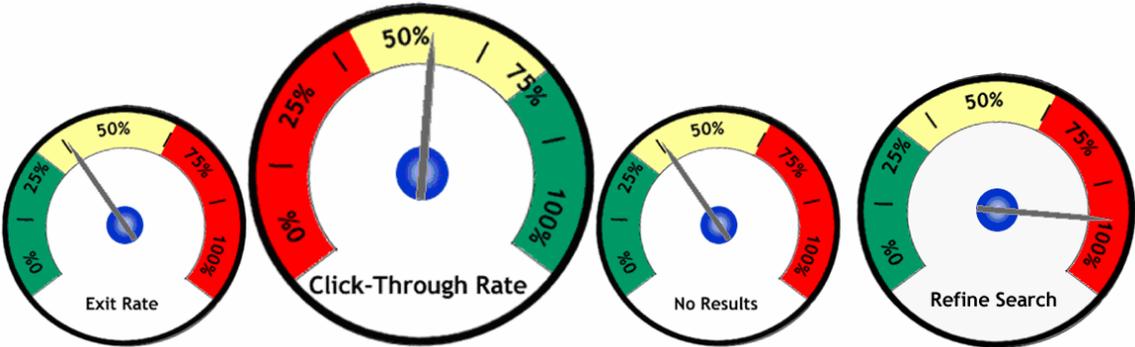


Figure 3: Search Explainer KPIs - 1

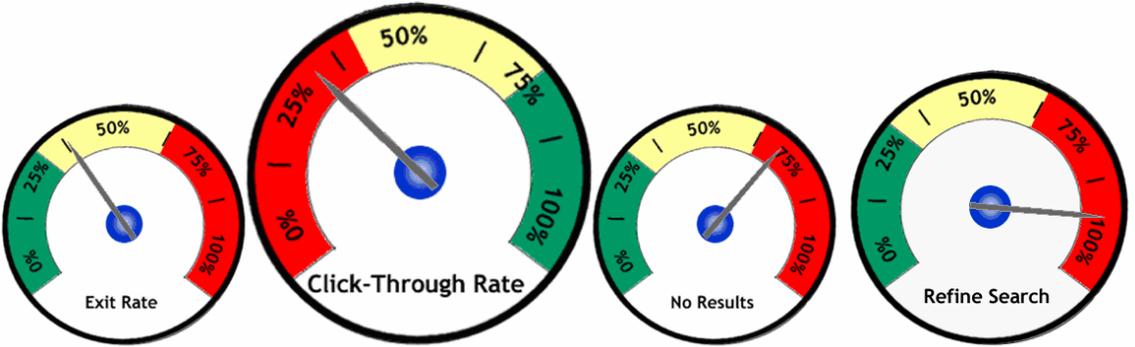


Figure 4: Search Explainer KPIs - 2

Take a look at figures 3 and 4 – both figures have the same Exit Rate and the same Refine Search results. What do you think is causing the problems? In comparing Click-Through Rate and No Results, figure 3 is likely more of an indication of some content gaps, while figure 4 is an indication of search engine problem. Of course this did not tell you what content is missing or how search is failing – this only helps to identify areas of trouble.

Many of the content effectiveness measures will take additional analysis, which means time. So our next steps are to determine where we might focus, and how we can get to the specific problem area. First consider whether you want to focus on Failure and Abandon groups together or separate. For those who abandoned, where did they go? Did they come back later? Did they find the answer from a third-party? Did the experience impact loyalty to your product and brand? Consider whether this is a big enough issue compared to failures that you want to focus exclusively around these users.

For the Failures, how much of the group tried to find an answer? Those who did may offer you an easy view into your content gaps. If you have a high number of viewers who did not try and help themselves before opening a job ticket, could indicate a fundamental issue with your site design and/or your business strategy around opening job tickets.

Though you may leave some opportunity on the table, I will consider the both groups in the discussion – through content effectiveness improvements, both groups should see improvement. At this point, I want to clarify one other assumption – I am assuming you have a reasonable content creation process. If you have a high rate of content quality issues or even content gaps, you may want to look at that part of your business further. That discussion is outside the scope of this document.

Your users' ability to your existing content should be your top priority. The reason is rather simple – putting forth effort to create more content that cannot be found is more expensive than not creating content (which will also not be found). So therefore, I would recommend, always focus on the ability to find content as your top priority.

In considering whether to make new content or fix existing content, I believe it is a toss up between the two. The good news is, if you find you have a lot of problems with existing content, by correcting your creation process you can reduce the possibility of it continuing to occur, and therefore it does not have to be an ongoing problem to fix.

Missing Components

There is much more I could have covered – this is a brief description of the topics to further expand on at a later date.

- **Customer survey:** As indicated with Success and Abandon, I would consider a survey more relevant than what the KPIs measured. You must also take into consideration when looking at a survey after content viewed that the content is no longer the last page. Oh, and this would be a Completer.
- **Wizard or Decision Trees:** This is an expanded browsing path, narrowing down possible content solutions as the customer answers questions. Exit from these pages indicate one of the following: too many clicks, questions unclear, or a content gap. If you use these, classify as Routers.
- **Internal use:** This can be very helpful to identify problems with existing content and possibly searching. If you have customers calling you on topics after reading the content, then the content is not meeting your users' needs. If the agents use this content without a problem, then you likely have an issue with it being written to the wrong level or possibly it is an incomplete solution (assumes too much information)

- **Exit Rate by Page Category:** This is another way to express Exit Propensity. Which pages are having the most user exits? Use this to drive attention priority to specific category pages.

Conclusion

There is much more to content effectiveness and functionalism than can possibly be covered in a whitepaper. This should serve as a guide to getting your organization thinking about how to measure your website to drive content improvements. Finally, I will borrow some guidance I heard from Avinash Kaushik, Senior Manger, Web Research and Analytics, Intuit, use the 10/90 Rule: for every \$10 you spend in a web analytics solution, you need to spend \$90 in brains [people]. You can go to:

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=1839220297665871408&q=genre%3Aeducational>, and play at the 36:53 mark to hear Avinash explain it, or read his blog entry, [The 10 / 90 Rule for Magnificent Web Analytics Success](#).