



Google Analytics as a Tool to Integrate the College of Management Website Business Objectives With Measurable Goals



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Introduction

Since the development of web-analytics and log file analysis in 1993, organizations favoring an evidence-based approach have been able to achieve strategic objectives and strengthen their core competencies (A Brief History of Web Analytics, 2010). A plethora of web-analysis tools allows businesses to collect and process high volumes of real-time data including click-streams, demographics, and user interests, allowing for decision-making based on actual data as opposed to opinions.

In order to maintain a competitive advantage, the College of Management has decided to implement one of the tools called **Google Analytics** to analyze its website traffic in an attempt to identify areas for improvement.

Stakeholders

While the College of Management has a variety of stakeholders, five key audience segments were identified and prioritized in order to effectively target and meet the needs of these segments:

External segments:

- Potential students:** having currently enrolled approximately 80% graduate & 20% undergraduate students, the COM website needs to effectively deliver and present information on:
 - University and COM prestige and key selling points, programs and course details, entry requirements, application procedures, contact information (open days, enquiry routes), etc.
- Alumni and Friends:**
 - University and COM and developments, ways to keep in touch and contribute (Alumni week, events, philanthropy), etc.
- Global Research and Business Communities:**
 - Collaborative opportunities, research profiles, news, events, achievements, employment opportunities, career fairs, etc.

Internal segments:

- Current Students:**
 - Key day-to-day information, such as class schedules, syllabi, office hours, events, professional development and projects, academic and career support, etc.
- Staff:**
 - Events, document sharing, collaborative working, online tools, assessment initiative, contacts, etc.

Methodology

In order to effectively identify the key stakeholders and strategic objectives for the COM website, administration participated in a series of meetings to review and utilize the framework offered by *Durham University Web Strategy 2009-2012* document.

For the purpose of clarification and identification of business requirements, administration additionally reviewed the *LTU Discovery Report* by George Lovio, dated June 28 2012. Key takeaways were noted and recorded to provide guidance in the development and implementation of the aforementioned strategies.

In order to better serve the needs of its key target audiences, the COM identified **6 strategic objectives** and translated them into a set of measurable goals linked with variable data available through Google Analytics.

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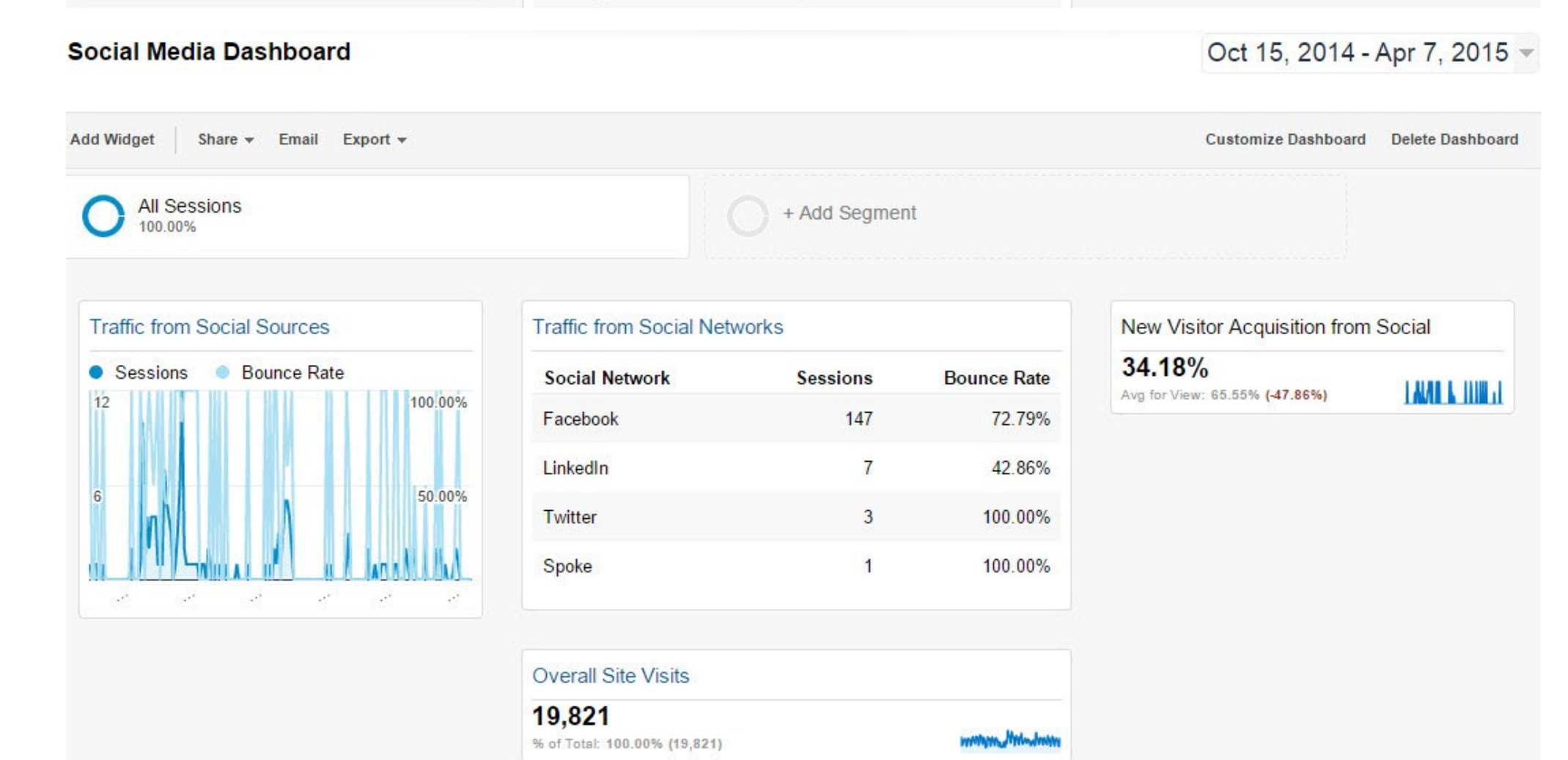
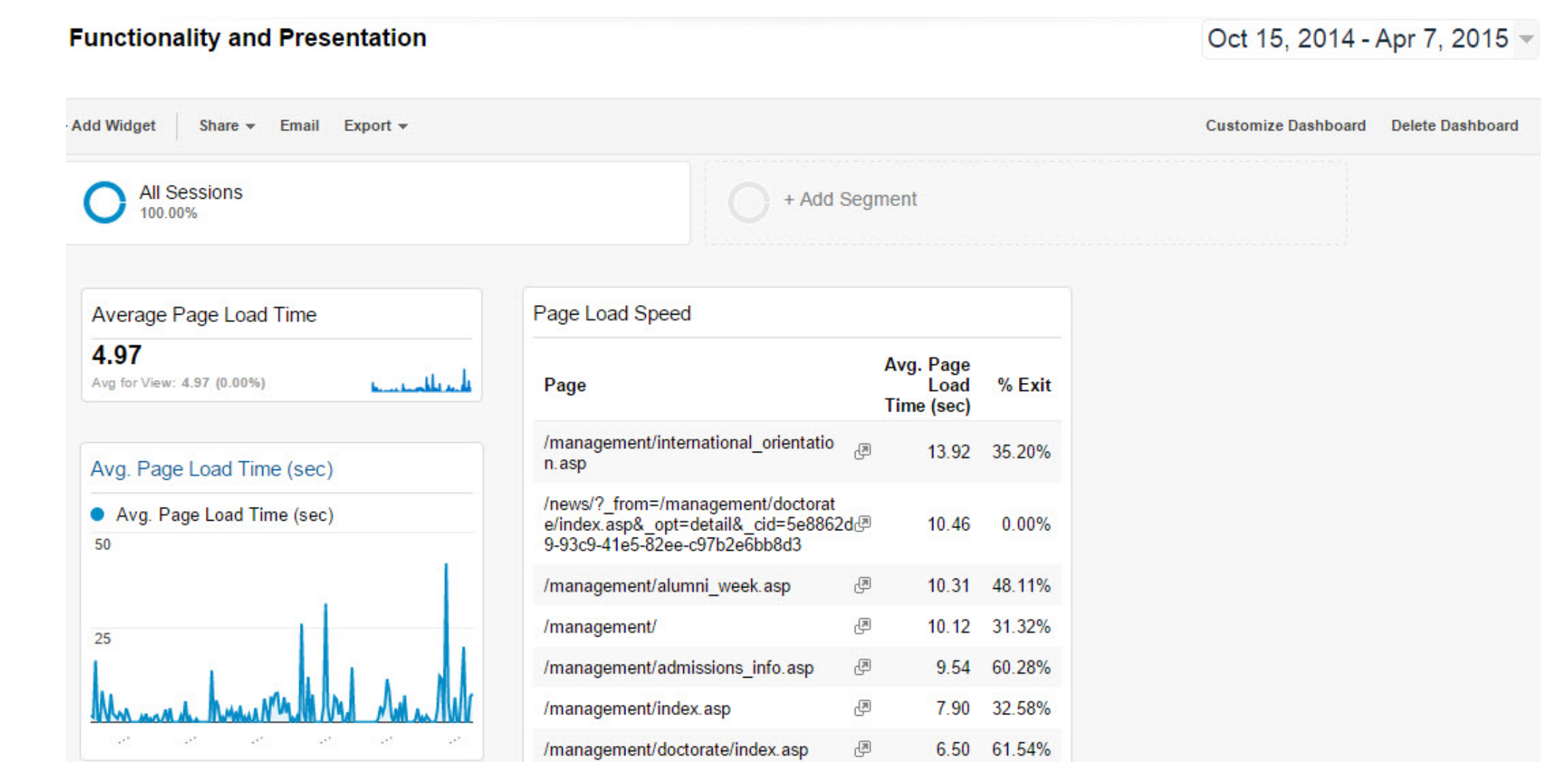
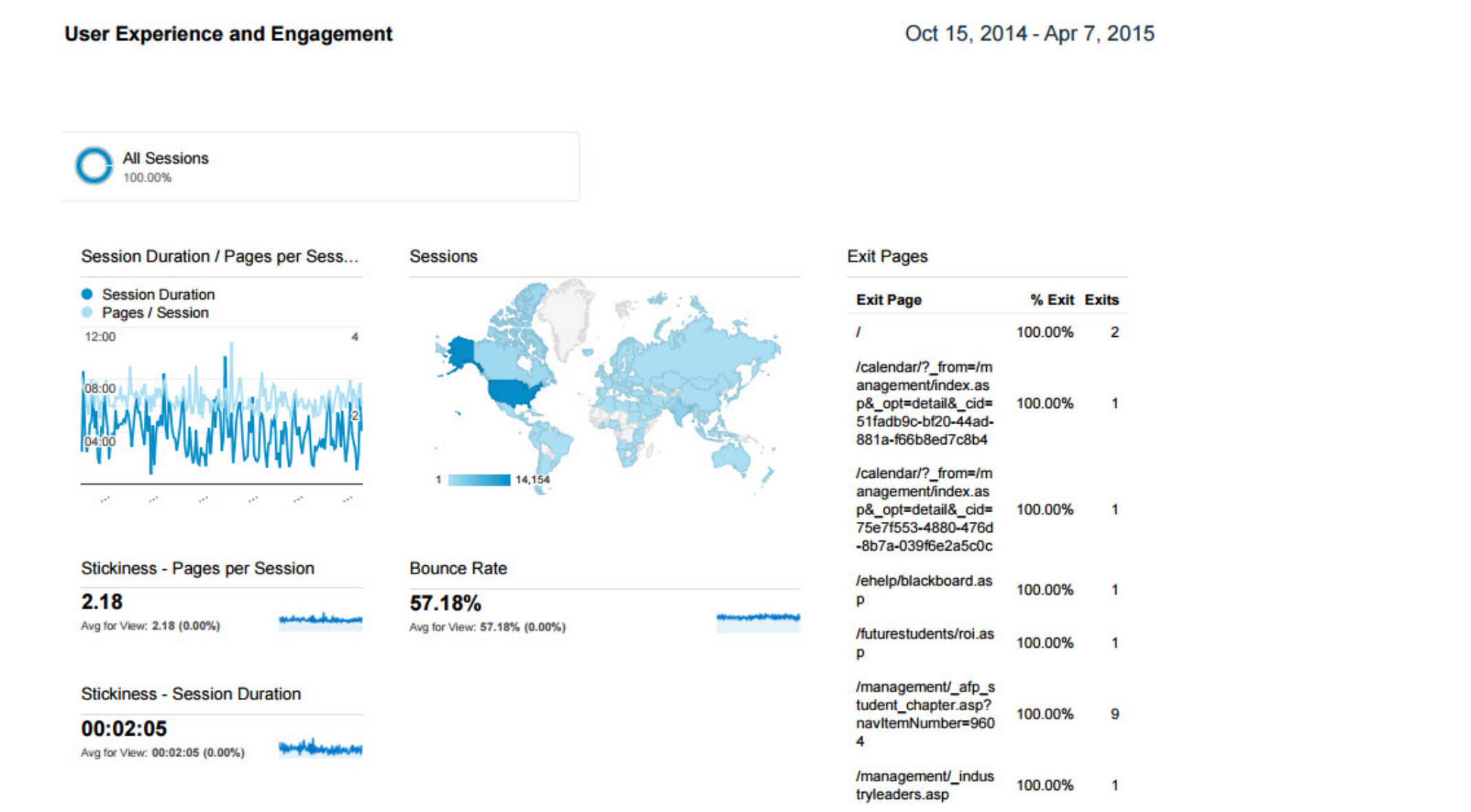
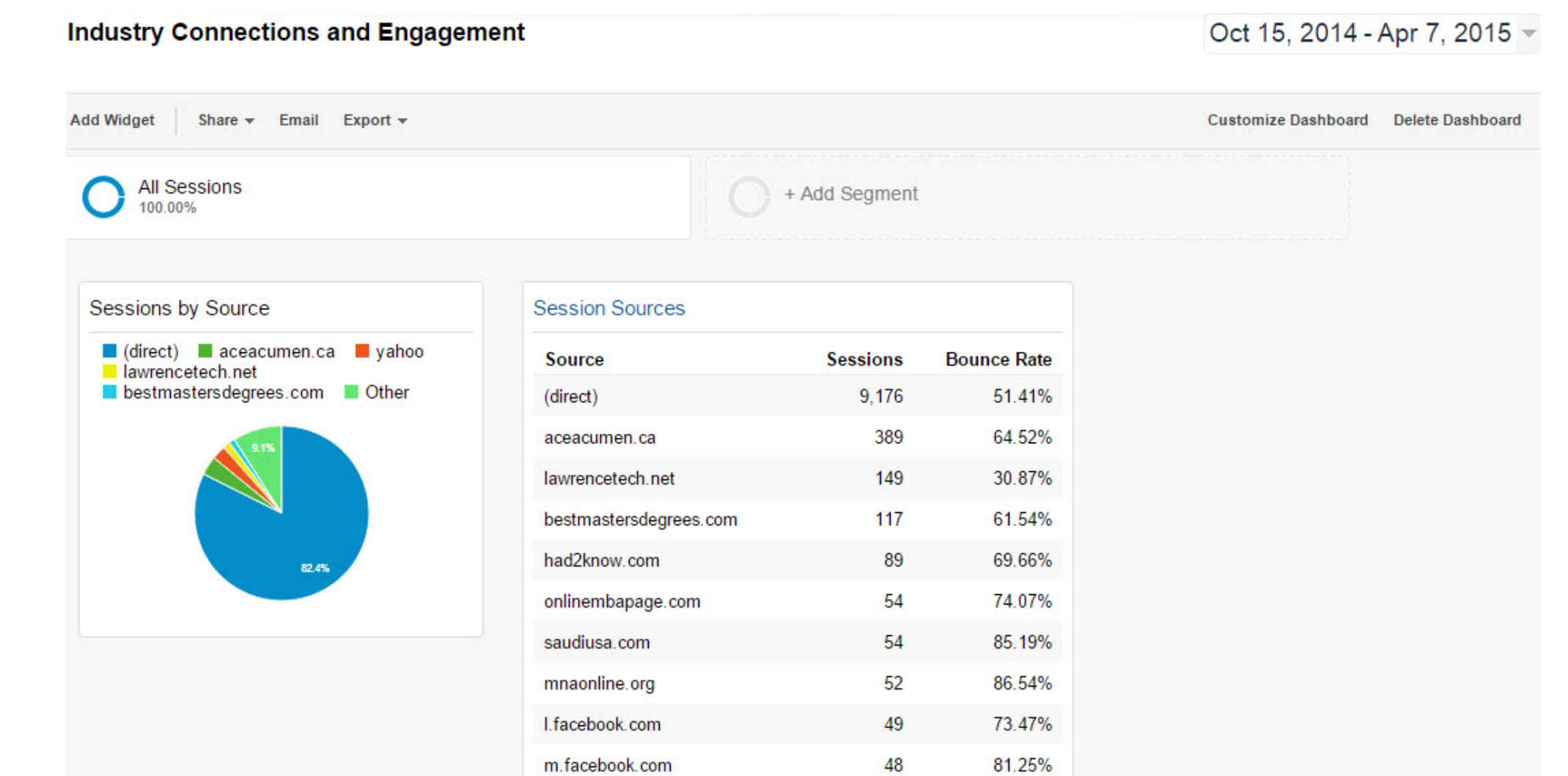
Business Requirements from Discovery Report Dated 28 June 2012

- The COM web strategy should include the promotion of a key LTU differentiator: Theory-and-Practice approach
- Current students have expressed a need to increase visibility of their work and activities on the website, both inside and outside of the classroom
- Content management should demonstrate what it is like to be a student at LTU – both inside and outside of the classroom
- Content management and presentation targeting prospective students is vital in addressing declining enrollment, as they were identified as primary decision makers in choosing the educational institution as opposed to parents
- There is a need to associate clear guidelines in the organization and delivery of Dynamic & Static content
- Content should be logically organized as it may appear overwhelming and confusing. “Trying to do too much” may lead to relying on a built-in search and sometimes Google queries with LTU as a keyword.
- Key content of interest for prospective students includes a following sequence of queries: Broad Major – Types of Classes – Types of Jobs Post-Graduation
- LTU COM web strategy should address students’ concerns associated with the lack of processes for careful selection of information transmission channels. It is important to identify appropriate mediums for different information types (Email, website, blog, Social Networks, etc.)
- There is a need to establish clear navigation for day-to-day student necessities such as: class schedules, calendars, BlackBoard, etc.
- Content auditing and archiving of old links and processes should be reviewed and improved upon a regular basis

Results

Current performance has been benchmarked allowing for the monitoring of KPIs and assess target completion in order to measure future success or failure.

6 Strategic Objectives	Measurable Goals and Targets
1. Improve user-experience and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously review exit pages to identify issues Reduce bounce rate to 50% by April 2016 Increase “stickiness” (amount of time spent on site per session) to 2:30 by November 2015
2. Strengthen connections with the industry and community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase amount of referrals/trackbacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify 2 new organizations to partner with and establish links to each other quarterly Monitor sessions generated by current partners and identify areas for improvement
3. Deliver excellent functionality for research, teaching, studies through web-based applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the average page load time to 4 minutes by April 2016 Continuously review “slow” pages to identify issues
4. Integrate Social Media content and improve social presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase new visitor acquisition from Social Media to 45% by November 2015 Increase amount of Social Media referrals (sessions) to 50 per month by April 2016 Revitalize social presence on such social networks as LinkedIn by the end of 2015
5. Improve and standardize the layout of academic program pages and provide clear and consistent “calls to action” from these pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unavailable at this time. Requires additional actions on administrative end Assess technical requirements and develop implementation plan
6. Track conversion of prospective students from visiting program information to application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unavailable at this time. Requires additional actions on administrative end Assess technical requirements and develop implementation plan



Outcomes and Discussion

In conclusion, a recommended set of follow-up actions, based on targets established from the analysis, are as follows:

- Continuously monitor and review described metrics in order to identify issues and opportunities. Audit website for obsolete and irrelevant content.
- Actively post and share events, developments, research and workshops featuring current students, interactions with faculty, alumni and friends of the COM across various social networks based on target audience.
- Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with industry and community leaders online.
- Clearly define processes for content creation and management, assign roles and responsibilities, assess technical requirements and develop implementation plans for tracking conversion of prospective students, and other target audience behaviors.