

# Using Google Analytics to Inform Fellowship Website Development and Recruitment Strategies During The COVID-19 Pandemic

Zachary Pruitt M.D., Matthew C. Miles M.D., MEd., Department of Internal Medicine, Wake Forest School of Medicine

## Background:

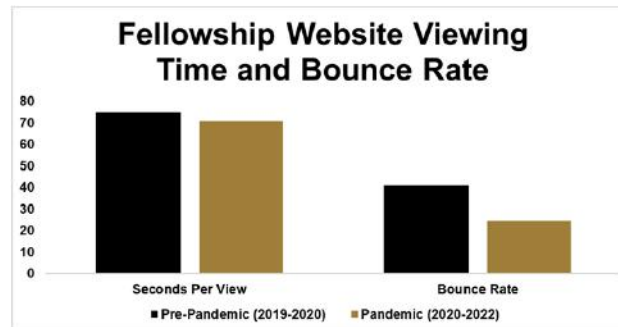
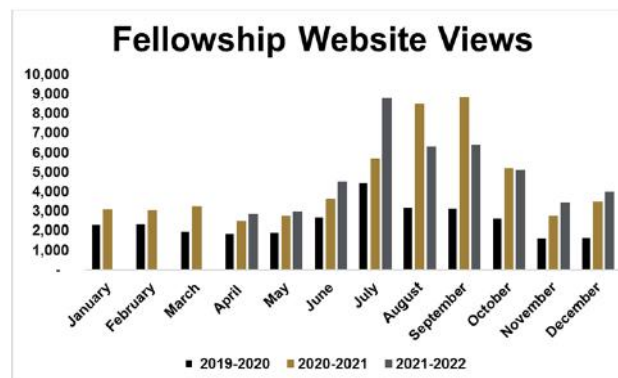
- Because of Covid-19, fellowship programs had to redesign their recruitment strategies.
- The primary need was to create an informative website to provide applicants a meaningful remote experience.
- Google Analytics is a powerful program that allows for website data collection and trend analysis.
- To our knowledge, there has been no published research supporting data analytics in evaluating a fellowship programs' website traffic.

## Aim:

- This study sought to assess the utility of Google Analytics in analyzing fellowship program website viewership data.
- Additionally, we sought to use the data collected to provide insight as fellowship program leadership tailors web pages to maximize viewer engagement.

## Methods:

- Google Analytics was used to compare data from all Internal Medicine Subspecialty Fellowship program website landing pages from three recruitment seasons; 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 (through December 2021).
- Data was compared from pre-pandemic (2019-2020) and pandemic (2020-2021 and 2021-2022) recruitment seasons.
- Three elements were tracked: website page views, time spent on the pages, and bounce rate – the percentage of viewers who leave a page without clicking a link (a lower bounce rate suggests greater engagement).



## Results:

- All program websites were viewed 31,956 times in 2019-2020, 71,338 times in 2020-2021, and 66,593 times in 2021-2022. Traffic increased 53.7% in pandemic seasons compared to pre-pandemic.
- Peak traffic months occurred July to November, accounting for 55.1% and 74.3% of total views in pre-pandemic and pandemic seasons, respectively.
- Page views were up, but time spent on pages were flat, 74.8 to 70.7 seconds per user pre-pandemic compared to pandemic seasons.
- Bounce rate significantly improved from 40.9% to 24.4% from pre-pandemic to pandemic seasons.

## Discussion:

- With the transition to virtual fellowship recruitment, websites are more important than ever.
- Fellowship program website traffic has been much greater since the onset of COVID-19. A defined peak of viewership occurs from July to November, which means final websites should be ready by June.
- Though viewing time was flat, bounce rate improved suggesting increased interactivity. This suggests that applicants are more willing to interact with website content.
- Google Analytics collects robust and easily analyzed data. It is effective in tracking the online presence of fellowship programs and can inform adjustments to maximize viewership and applicant interaction.