UTM Parameters

Background and Definition

- UTM stands for Urchin Traffic Monitor/Module
- Urchin Software Corp was acquired by Google in 2005 and from there, Google Analytics was born in 2006

- The UTM Parameters allow you to track your *external* campaigns – they enable you to see which campaign(s) drives traffic to your site and how the campaign(s) performs

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Structure and Examples

- Structure: Your website URL, immediately followed by a question mark (?) and the UTM Parameters.

- Examples:

  - http://www.depaul.edu?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=FallActivities16

  - http://www.depaul.edu?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=FallActivities16&utm_content=top+email+banner+link

The Parameters

- There are 5 parameters making up a complete UTM Parameter Set:
    - **utm_medium**, which is the **Campaign Medium**
    - **utm_source**, which is the **Campaign Source**
    - **utm_campaign**, which is the **Campaign Name**
    - **utm_term**, which is the **Campaign Term***
    - **utm_content**, which is the **Campaign Content***

* = optional

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Campaign Medium

- This is a *required* parameter
- **utm_medium** helps identify *a medium*, such as email, social, or cost-per-click
- Examples:
  - utm_medium=email
  - utm_medium=organic
  - utm_medium=social
  - utm_medium=cpc

Campaign Source

- This is a *required* parameter
- **utm_source** helps identify *where your traffic/campaign is coming from* e.g. the name of search engine, social network, newsletter name, or other sources. A source is more specific than and is a subset of a medium. For example, for medium=social, the sources could be Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Examples:
    - utm_source=newsletter
    - utm_source=twitter
    - utm_source=facebook

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Campaign Name

- This is a *required* parameter

- **utm_campaign** helps identify *a specific/unique campaign*. Give your campaign a unique name.

- Examples:
  - utm_campaign=FallVisit2016
  - utm_campaign=Newsletter16-17
  - utm_campaign=25-social-media-strategies

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Campaign Term

- This is an *optional* parameter
- **utm_term** helps identify *keywords for your campaign used in paid search*. This will show up as the "keyword" dimension in Google Analytics.
- If your Google Analytics account is linked to your AdWords account and auto-tagging is enabled, you can skip this
- Examples:
  - utm_term=undergraduate+degree
  - utm_term=graduate_program

Campaign Content

- This is an *optional* parameter

- **utm_content** is usually used to help differentiate ads/links that point to the same URL. This is usually used for A/B testing and content-targeted ads.

- It can also be used to add additional information to your campaign such as ad type, market, website language version, etc.

- Examples:
  - utm_content=cta-top-banner
  - utm_content=cta-sidebar
  - utm_content=cta-buttom

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Google URL Builder

- Use URL Builder to help create the required UTM parameters for your campaign

- Can be found here: **go.depaul.edu/URLBuilder**

- The parameters are joined using the ampersand (&) sign

URL builder form

Step 1: Enter the URL of your website.

Website URL *

_____
(e.g. http://www.urchin.com/download.html)

Step 2: Fill in the fields below. **Campaign Source, Campaign Medium and Campaign Name** should always be used.

Campaign Source *

_____
(referrer: google, citysearch, newsletter4)

Campaign Medium *

_____
(marketing medium: cpc, banner, email)

Campaign Term

_____
(identify the paid keywords)

Campaign Content

_____
(use to differentiate ads)

Campaign Name *

_____
(product, promo code, or slogan)

GENERATE URL   * Required field

More Examples

	Email campaign	Paid search campaign
Campaign Source	newsletter1	yahoo
Campaign Medium	email	cpc
Campaign Term		*the search term associated with this traffic*
Campaign Content	call_to_action_2	
Campaign Name	productxyz	productxyz

Social Media UTM Examples

	Tweet	Facebook	Pinterest
Source	twitter	facebook	pinterest
Medium	social	social	social
Campaign	launch-video	lead	pin-experiment

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Use Cases

1. Newsletter Link
   - Track how links on your newsletters are performing
   - Examples:
     - Newsletters sent out as part of a Campaign that aims to update students on fall events and activities
       - utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=FallActivities16
       - utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=FallActivities16&**utm_content=top+email+banner+link**

       (if in the newsletter, there are multiple links pointing to the same URL, then utm_content can be used to differentiate further those links)

Use Cases

2. Website Link in your email
   - If you have a website link(s) in your email signature/body, there is a smart way to see which employee email generates most visits
   - Examples:

     Let's say two employees, Jane Doe and John Doe, include website links in his email about Fall 16 Activities, one in the body and another one in the signature
       - utm_medium=email&utm_source=email+**signature**&utm_campaign=FallActivities16&utm_content=**Jane_Doe**
       - utm_medium=email&utm_source=email+**signature**&utm_campaign=FallActivities16&utm_content=**John_Doe**
       - utm_medium=email&utm_source=email+**body**&utm_campaign=FallActivities16&utm_content=John_Doe

Use Cases

3. Social Media posts
   - Untagged social links appear as Referrals (for Medium) in Google Analytics or Social Channel
   - Examples:
     - utm_medium=social&utm_source=**facebook**&utm_campaign=FallActivities16
     - utm_medium=social&utm_source=**linkedin**&utm_campaign=FallActivities16
     - utm_medium=email&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=FallActivities16&utm_content=**Jane_Doe**
     - utm_medium=email&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=FallActivities16&utm_content=**John_Doe**

Use Cases

4. Short URLs (bitly, goo.gl, tinyURL, Go URL, etc.)
   - You can use UTM Parameters in your Short URLs as well. In fact, masking a long URL with a short URL is a best practice. It is certainly easier to remember short URLs.
   - Short URLs can be used in OOH Advertising, printed materials, etc.
   - Examples:
     - utm_medium=**ooh**&utm_source=**billboard**&utm_campaign= BigData16
     - utm_medium=**print**&utm_source=**AdmitLetter**&utm_campaign=FallAdmissions16

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Naming Convention

- As the volume of your outgoing emails grow, tracking all the different UTM parameters can become challenging.

- Use of *consistent, meaningful names* and *proper documentation* is your best friend!

- Spreadsheet templates to help you organize and keep track of your UTM Parameters:
  - https://goo.gl/VnUUs9
  - https://goo.gl/8IklWl
  - https://goo.gl/68ixWq
  - https://goo.gl/h96rZb
  - https://goo.gl/zzfgW9
  - https://goo.gl/hz1j4o

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Tips and Tricks

- UTM parameters are separated with an ampersand (&)

- Parameter Values can be separated with a space. Use the Percentage (%) or Plus (+) sign for this.
  - Examples: utm_content=John**%**Doe or utm_content=John**+**Doe

    In Google Analytics, this will show up as *John Doe*

- To view tagged campaigns in Google Analytics, navigate to: **Acquisition → Campaigns → All Campaigns**

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Tips and Tricks

- Avoid tagging internal links (on your site) with UTM parameters! Because each time a link containing UTM parameters is clicked, a new visit is generated. So you could be a returning visitor, but incorrectly treated as a new visitor!

- Again, keep Parameter Names *consistent* and *meaningful*
    - This is a good guide to naming UTM parameters: http://blog.rafflecopter.com/2014/04/utm-naming-conventions/

Resources

- https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1033867
- https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1037445
- https://blog.bufferapp.com/utm-guide
- http://www.degordian.com/education/blog/5-cool-examples-of-utm-tracking/
- http://blog.rafflecopter.com/2014/04/utm-parameters-best-practices/
- https://blog.kissmetrics.com/how-to-use-utm-parameters/

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