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Personalized content targeting on the website by Ravi Pathak

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My understanding of targeting is to provide content to the user which has high probably to be consumed.

What is Targeting?

Targeting may be over simplified, however, easier said than done. Now that I am in my 6th year of web analytics industry, I now started realizing what & why probably Jim Sterne has his firmâ€™s name as Target!

Content personalization and targeting are two interchangeably used word that I have come across. However they are separate from behavioral targeting which has more to do with the targeted ads to be shown to the user. There is significant debate getting generated at Anil Batraâ€™s Blog about the definition of behavioral targeting, however letâ€™s keep the focus of this post to content personalization and not behavioral targeting!

In my opinion, content personalization is, giving the user what he might be interested in. It can have a little overlap with behavioral targeting, yes. The way it differs from behavioral targeting is, content targeting can also be done for first time users. It's easier, because you don't have to chase each single user to know his behavior. Interesting?

Different levels of targeting

I can think of two levels of targeting; Segment level & Individual level. The difference is in the granularity by which you can segment. In other words, this classification is based on the degree of small segments that you can create for your individual users. For example, you can create two segments of your visitor new & repeat and provide them different content. This is pretty straight forward as you create two different design of the page which works for your new & repeat visitor.

Individual level targeting or what I call one-to-one targeting is more granular where you provide exactly the content that your specific visitor would like to consume. For example if you are coming back to Amazon, it provides you specific unique content that would want to consume based on your prior visits to the site.

While Derek has a great content personalization presentation, I plan to expand the concepts that he has laid out. Another nice variable that should be added apart from different levels of targeting is situation in which customer is viewing the site.

In other words, your targeting effort doesnâ€™t stop at just segmenting your traffic, but it should also include the situation in which users are coming to your site. For e.g. if you go to Zaaz on Friday night, you will see great message customized for you for Friday night.

More to come on content personalization â€“ What are your thoughts?

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