

Google Universal Analytics + Sitecore DMS

Closing the loop on your marketing campaigns

[nonlinear digital](#) is the full-service digital agency division of nonlinear creations, with extensive knowledge and technical expertise in various CMS and marketing/analytics solutions, particularly the Sitecore platform. Our teams, working with you, use an agile methodology to create unique website and digital experiences that drive business results in a measurable way.

For more information on our services or to get in touch, please visit:

www.nonlinearcreations.com

Contents

Summary 4

Introduction 5

Where Sitecore is invaluable 6

- A/B testing
- Profiling users
- Targeted personalization
- Multi-channel publishing
- Sitecore reporting options

Google Universal Analytics - the definitive reporting framework 9

One analytics system to rule them all?

The power of DMS-GA integration: 5 Scenarios 11

- Tracking key on-site activities by Sitecore persona
- Measuring effectiveness of A/B or Multivariate tests
- Tracking campaign success by overall impact on engagement value
- Measure effectiveness of personalization efforts
- Rethinking remarketing - using site personas to drive off site marketing

Technical considerations 14

- Hit-level dimensions
- Session-level dimensions
- User-level dimensions
- Dimensions vs metrics

The nonlinear Sitecore DMS - Google Analytics Integration Engine 15

About nonlinear 16

Summary

The Sitecore Digital Marketing System gives marketers an unprecedented ability to quickly design and roll out personalization, content testing and multichannel marketing campaigns. But determining if these campaigns succeed or fail can be challenging with Sitecore's native tools.

Marketers have adopted Google Analytics almost universally as a system for understanding how visitors interact with online content. Google's new Universal Analytics extend the reach of this platform beyond the website.

Integrating the Sitecore DMS with Google Universal Analytics gives marketers the power they need to:

- ~ Quickly conceive, design and implement marketing campaigns
- ~ Understand which campaigns work, which don't, and quickly refine their approach to drive improved business outcomes

The nonlinear Integration Engine is the short path to making this promise a reality.

Introduction

Of the trends we've seen in digital marketing in the last several years, it's been the emergence of multi-channel digital marketing platforms that has generated the most excitement but also the most trepidation. Formally distinct product categories like content management systems, email marketing systems, marketing automation platforms and analytics suites have started to overlap with the emergence of products like the Sitecore Customer Engagement Platform (CEP).

Marrying the trusted and established Sitecore CMS with the nascent but powerful Digital Marketing System (DMS), the Sitecore CEP has emerged as one of the leaders in this new class of multi-channel marketing platforms. The ability to do advanced digital marketing activities like automated multi-channel lead nurturing, A/B testing of content and real-time content personalization, among other things, in the same system that also powers your website content represents a leap forward for savvy digital marketers.

But as is often the case when a platform offers such a wide array of functionality, each individual offering can vary quite dramatically in its maturity and level of sophistication, especially when compared to its single-function solution peers. Users of the Sitecore CEP have found, in particular, that analytics reporting is not as intuitive as single-function offerings like Google Analytics. All of the data one needs to generate reports exists inside Sitecore but accessing it can require SQL queries or other workarounds that users more familiar with Google-like interfaces may struggle with.

At the same time Sitecore was evolving into a multi-channel marketing platform, Google Analytics was evolving as well, culminating in the release of Google Universal Analytics. Among the innovations in the new release is the ability to create custom dimensions and metrics and to track dimensions and metrics across platforms rather than just from websites.

By plugging the new Google Universal Analytics reporting and analysis processes into the Sitecore CEP's vast data stockpiles, marketers can begin to close the loop on reporting on the performance of their digital marketing efforts. This is made even more powerful when one considers the many things that Sitecore can do to affect change in your marketing outcomes (testing and personalization of content, to name just two). In short, you can publish, test and personalize content in Sitecore and use Google-simple reporting tools to see how effective each action has been in driving desired outcomes.

The paper that follows looks at the relative strengths of each platform and lays out several scenarios that demonstrate the power of the integration of the two.

Learn more about this new breed of marketing platform by downloading our whitepaper:

7 Steps for Driving Success With Web Engagement Management / Customer Experience Management
<http://www.nonlinearcreations.com/Whitepapers/8-Steps-for-Driving-Success-with-Web-Engagement-Management.aspx>

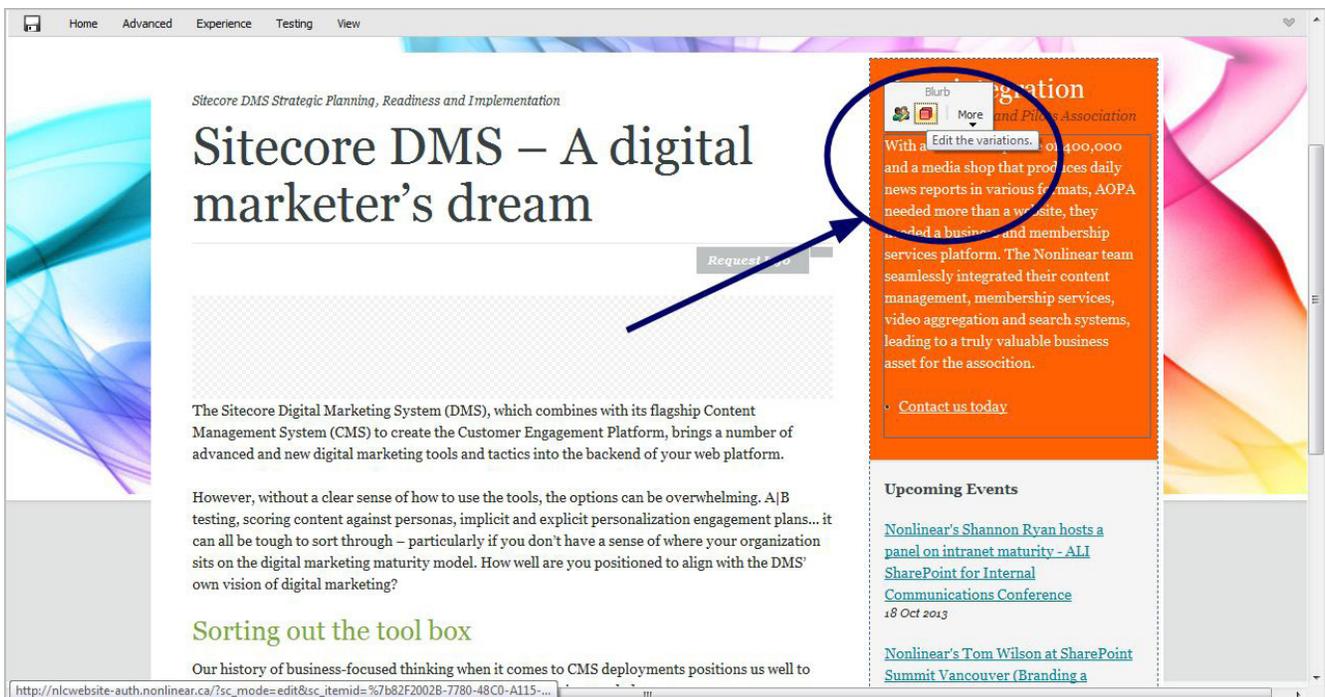
Where Sitecore is invaluable

Identified as a leader in the new multi-channel marketing platform software class by leading analyst groups like Forrester and Gartner, the Sitecore Customer Engagement Platform combines the tested and true website publishing features of the Sitecore CMS with several more advanced capabilities for digital marketing as part of the Digital Marketing System (DMS).

The relatively straightforward way in which Sitecore enables users to implement content-centred tactics like personalization and A/B testing, coupled with its cross-channel publishing ability, makes Sitecore a true digital marketing platform, complete with its own database of incredibly valuable information about your visitors.

A/B testing

For anyone familiar with earlier iterations of the Google Website Optimizer (now known as Google Content Experiments), the ease with which A/B tests can be configured inside Sitecore is revolutionary. Thanks to the component-based page editor in the latest release of Sitecore, A/B tests can be configured on the fly by content owners with no development or coding skill required.



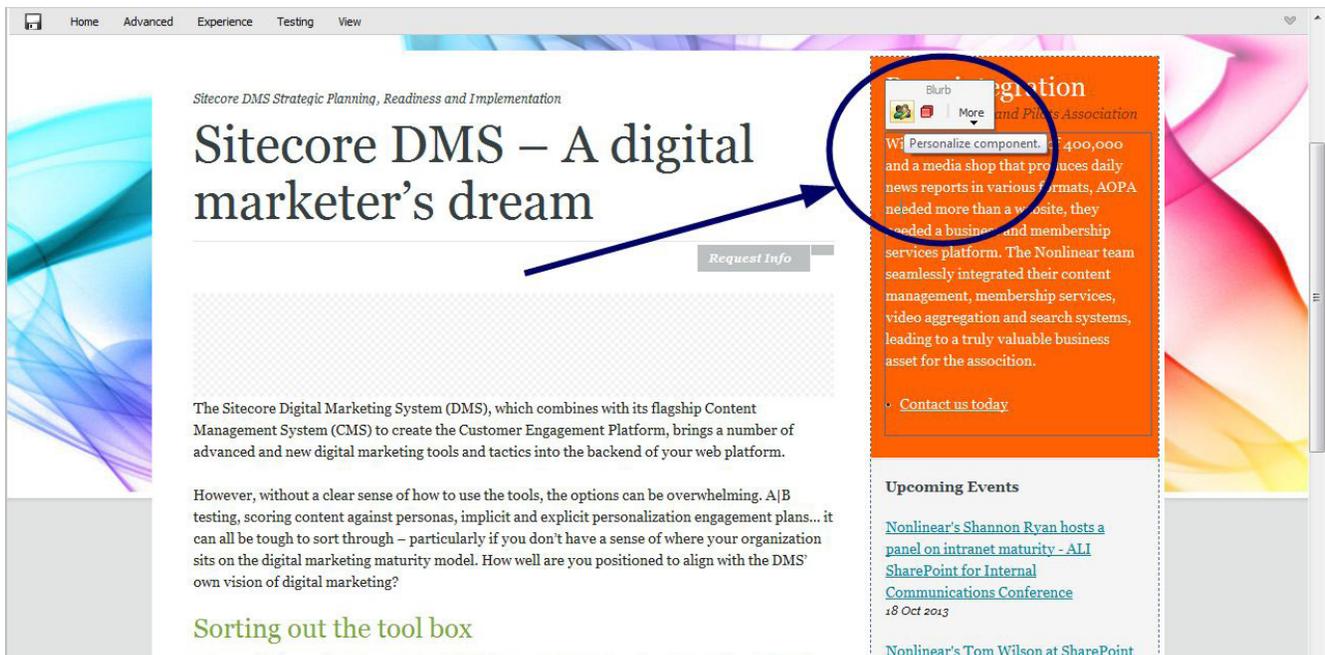
From the Sitecore page editor mode, mousing over a component exposes a series of options including the option to manage variations for the purposes of setting up an A/B or multivariate test.

Profiling users

The ability to score any piece of content inside Sitecore against pre-defined personas means that site owners can build personas of site visitors, even anonymous visitors, based on their on-site behavior. This not only means that site owners can get insight into their traffic, but Sitecore can personalize the site based on the profile scores of any visitor, known or anonymous.

Targeted personalization

As is the case with A/B testing, personalizing content in Sitecore is simple with the combination of the page editor mode and a user-friendly rules engine that allows you to personalize against a wide range of variables. This ease of use allows the marketer to invest their time in creating unique and powerful personalization rules rather than worrying over the details of implementation.



Similarly, one need only mouse over any component in page editor mode to expose a link to manage personalization for the item.

For more information on Sitecore DMS, download our whitepaper:

A Marketer’s Guide to the Sitecore DMS

<http://www.nonlinearcreations.com/Whitepapers/Marketers-Guide-Sitecore-DMS.aspx>

Multi-channel publishing

Long seen as a leader in web content publishing, Sitecore is now capable of publishing content across channels. The latest version of the Email Campaign Manager, in particular, goes a long way towards bringing Sitecore in line with the capabilities of dedicated e-mail tools like ExactTarget, Constant Contact and MailChimp. Sitecore can also publish directly to major social media channels as well as offering offline publishing capabilities with the Adaptive Print Studio.

Sitecore reporting options

Sitecore is arguably best in class at allowing marketers to easily implement advanced content marketing campaigns. But marketers can face a challenge in understanding the effectiveness of these campaigns. Sitecore provides three means for accessing the data that is collected by the Digital Marketing System:

- ~ Built in reports. These have radically improved with each iteration of the Sitecore platform and will meet many of the standard reporting requirements a marketer might have. They are suitable for providing top-level reports to management. A marketer is ill advised to use these reports, however, for trying to discern the relative effectiveness of two personalization campaigns. They are relatively simple to use, but limited in their applicability.
- ~ Direct SQL queries. The built-in reports can be greatly expanded by creating custom queries into the DMS database. This provides the marketer with essentially unlimited flexibility to probe the data for answers. But it requires SQL database skills or ongoing access to someone with those skills.
- ~ The Engagement Intelligence Analyzer. This OLAP technology is available along with analysis software known as Targit (which requires an extra license from Sitecore) for those with a knack for analytics. It leverages traditional business intelligence technology to provide power analysts with the ability to deeply probe the data that resides within the DMS database. Properly configured, the engagement intelligence cube is powerful, but does require sophisticated analyst capabilities.

All of these reporting options provide access to important data. But each has drawbacks that slow the ability of marketers to evaluate the effectiveness of the tactics they have deployed. In our experience, the speed with which marketers can envision, test and revise campaigns is the most significant determinant of ongoing online success. Fortunately, as the rest of this paper discusses, there is an alternative.

Google Universal Analytics - the definitive reporting framework

Google recently rethought Google Analytics from the ground up and the result is the release of Google Universal Analytics.

This latest iteration of the wildly popular Google Analytics solution introduces two game-changing capabilities:

- ~ Marketers can create a large number of dimensions and metrics customized to their unique business processes.
- ~ Data from offline sources and other channels can be integrated, displayed and analyzed within the familiar Google Analytics reporting framework.

According to Econsultancy (July 2013), almost 90 percent of organizations make use of Google Analytics - for about half, it's the only online analytics tool they use. The almost universal adoption of Google Analytics has two causes:

- ~ It's free (well, technically, there is no licensing cost unless you upgrade to the premium edition).
- ~ Google invested heavily in making Google Analytics the most intuitive analytic interface available. Internet veterans can testify to how astonishingly easy GA is to use in comparison to first and second generation log analysis tools.

One analytics system to rule them all?

The argument for centralizing all online marketing statistics within Google Universal Analytics is compelling:

1. Your analysts already know the system and understand how the reporting framework works
2. Google's investment in usability means you'll be able to add new analysts without an enormous learning curve
3. Google is not going away. And their release of Universal Analytics is solid proof that they see owning the analytics space as a critical part of their business strategy. Based on their track record, we tend to bet with Google rather than against them.
4. Your analytics framework will automatically tie into Google Adwords and other Google marketing initiatives, dramatically simplifying your ability to tie your spend in these channels to the outcomes on your site (this is, we assume, the underlying reason for Google's investment in GA).

The Sitecore DMS collects valuable business information that is unavailable from any other source - including a typical Google Analytics configuration on your site. For example, for any given visitor it may record:

- ~ The persona into which they fall
- ~ Their behavior based on profile values associated to pages visited
- ~ Their “engagement value” - the relative value of the visitor based on their behavior
- ~ Whether they were presented with personalized content
- ~ Whether they responded to personalized content
- ~ If they viewed the A or the B in an A|B test
- ~ If they reacted to the A or the B

Making this data available within Google Universal Analytics gives marketers instant insight into how they can best modify campaigns to drive tangible business outcomes.

The power of integration: 5 scenarios

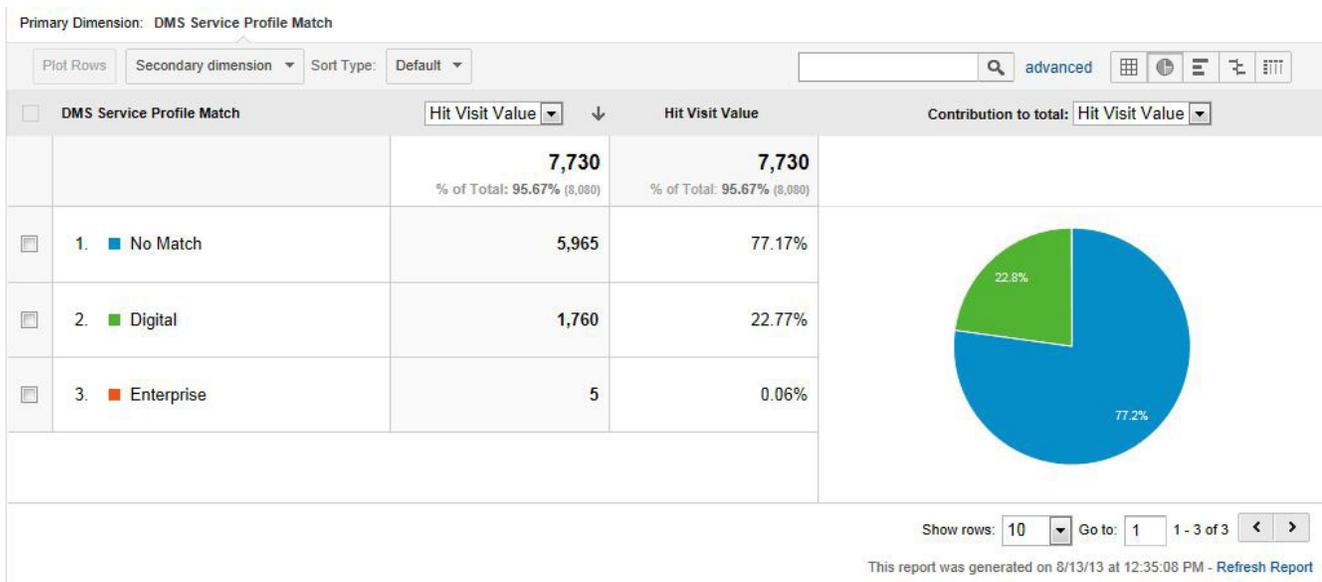
Tracking key on-site activities by Sitecore persona

As discussed above, the ability to quickly align even anonymous site visitors against pre-defined personas based on their on-site behaviors is one of the more powerful pieces of functionality in the Sitecore DMS. However, there is no quick and easy way to segment traffic against these personas for the purposes of reporting on their behavior, especially with regards to completing goals etc.

By configuring and saving the information about Sitecore personas using custom dimensions in Google Analytics, site owners can easily run standard Google reports to see how the various personas perform as compared to one another. This allows you to answer questions like:

- ~ Do visitors from Profile A convert at a higher rate than visitors from Profile B?
- ~ What is the primary source of traffic for visitors from Profile A? Profile B?

With that information at your fingertips, you can easily refine your approach on the fly. Test new conversion points for a lower-converting persona or invest more heavily in outreach via channels that drive more traffic for key personas, etc.



This report shows visitors from the "Digital" persona score higher visit values than those from the "Enterprise" persona, though the highest value visitors don't match any persona at all. The next step would be to investigate persona configurations to determine why.

Measuring effectiveness of A|B or multivariate tests

Configuring A|B or Multivariate tests in Sitecore is simple, but determining the effectiveness of the test is less straightforward. By default, Sitecore DMS evaluates a test based on the “engagement value” of the visitors ensuing behavior taking into account their activity across the entire site.

In many scenarios, marketers would much rather understand the effect of the test on a specific outcome – Did they purchase the product? Did they download the whitepaper? Did they subscribe to the newsletter?

Integration with Google Universal Analytics allows marketers to easily answer these questions. More than that, it gives analysts the ability to understand an A|B test in the context of other campaigns. For example, do visitors arriving as a result of paid search respond differently to an A|B test than those who respond to an email campaign?

For most organizations, A|B testing is the most powerful, least-utilized online marketing tactic. Combining Sitecore DMS and Google Analytics renders it fast, easy and simple.

Tracking campaign success by overall impact on engagement value

The inclusion of engagement value configurations in Sitecore is one of the most powerful elements of the DMS, particularly because you can score engagement points simply by viewing content – a traditional conversion is not required. Because of the potential ubiquity of engagement value allocation points throughout the site, though, it can be challenging to determine which individual marketing campaigns had the greatest impact on engagement value accrual.

This is where Google’s long history of offering diverse segmentation options comes in particularly handy. With proper integration, one can segment visitors by campaign to see overall engagement value dimensions, or vice-versa.

This means you can answer questions like:

- ~ Which campaign drove visits with higher engagement values?
- ~ Do higher value visitors tend to come from email campaigns or social media campaigns?

Primary Dimension: **Campaign ID**

Plot Rows: Secondary dimension Sort Type: Default

Visitor Type	Digital ?	Enterprise ?
	1,330 <small>% of Total: 100.00% (1,330)</small>	60 <small>% of Total: 100.00% (60)</small>
1. Email campaign 1	1,050	0
2. Social campaign 1	280	60

Show rows: 10 Go to: 1 1 - 2 of 2

This report was generated on 8/13/13 at 12:38:39 PM - Refresh Report

This shows Email Campaign 1 generated 1,050 engagement points, while Social Campaign 1 generated 280 points among visitors who fall into the “Digital” persona. Further segmentation could show how many visits comprised those point totals, giving extra insight.

Measure effectiveness of personalization efforts

As discussed earlier, Sitecore DMS makes it relatively easy to configure personalization based on a wide range of variables, including implicit ones like geography. It's straightforward, for example, to show a visitor from California one call to action and a visitor from Maine another call to action in the same spot on a page. However, reporting on the relative success of the personalized call to action (which state's visitors converted more often?) is not nearly so straightforward.

Treating the personalization rule as a dimension in Google Universal Analytics, however, allows you to easily segment traffic by which version of the call to action they saw, thus allowing you to compare page views, conversion rates and bounces by segment.

This gives marketers the answer to questions like:

- ~ Are my personalization efforts really driving more conversion?
- ~ Which personalization dimension has the biggest impact on conversions?
- ~ Which type of visitor converts at the highest rate?

Rethinking remarketing - using site personas to drive off site marketing

While the scenarios above cover off some critically-important insights you can glean into the success of your efforts, one of the most powerful benefits of integrating Sitecore DMS with Google Analytics can be found in the existing integration between Analytics and other Google applications, particularly remarketing in Google Advertising.

The notion of configuring your advertising efforts based on segments in Google Analytics was discussed above. Taking that logic a step further by integrating with Sitecore makes it all the more powerful.

By way of an example, consider a website for a business school. Say a visitor named Harry comes to the site and, based on his on-site behaviors, Sitecore DMS places him in the "Prospective Executive MBA student" persona. The marketing team at the business school uses Google Analytics to segment behavior based on the Sitecore personas and identifies several hundred "Perspective Executive MBA student" visitors.

The team can then use Google Analytics to define those visitors as a remarketing list, then go into Google AdWords to create a display advertisement to be shown to anyone on that list on any site they visit that is a member of the Google display ad network (sites not owned by Google that nevertheless use Google to display advertising).

The next day, Harry visits his daily newspaper site and sees an ad promoting the Executive MBA program. Over the course of the week, Harry sees a variety of ads from the school on a variety of sites, all targeting him as a prospective student for that particular program. After a week, he returns to the site and downloads an application form.

This niche targeting is much more difficult without the Sitecore DMS - GA integration

Technical considerations

While primarily a marketing-focused discussion, there are a few technical considerations marketers will want to discuss with the IT team planning your integration. Chief among them is ensuring you categorize dimensions properly.

Hit-level dimensions

These are dimensions that apply to any hit on your site. They can be things like which variation of a personalized element the visitor saw, or which variation of an A/B test.

Session-level dimensions

These are dimensions that persist across an entire session. They can include things like data about a profile match or a visit value when a goal has been completed.

User-level dimensions

These are dimensions about specific users, often relevant in the case of an extranet or some other logged-in environment.

Dimensions vs metrics

This bit of terminology can be confusing for some users. To best understand the difference between dimensions and metrics, consider that dimensions are qualitative measurements whereas metrics are quantitative. A user accruing engagement value points, for example, would be treated as a metric in Google Universal Analytics. A user scoring against a specific persona would relate to a dimension.

Metrics are always hit-level, therefore you need to be sure to correctly track engagement values from your visits at the appropriate moments to avoid double sending the same data to Google Universal Analytics.

The nonlinear Sitecore DMS - Google Analytics Integration Engine

We hope the imperative for marketers operating Sitecore DMS to integrate underlying data with Google Analytics is clear. Nonlinear has developed an integration engine that dramatically simplifies this integration.

We invested in this technology so that marketers can take advantage of the power of Sitecore DMS much more quickly and much more effectively than if they relied on Sitecore's native reporting capabilities.

To get started with your own integration, contact us today
dms-ga@nonlinearcreations.com

About nonlinear

Who is nonlinear digital?

nonlinear digital is the full-service digital agency division of non-linear creations. With offices across Canada, the USA and Brazil, nonlinear has a track record of successfully planning, executing and measuring the effectiveness of digital marketing and outreach solutions for a range of clients.

What does nonlinear digital do?

We write digital strategy. We build eye-catching websites and we do it with a technical proficiency that is second to none. We help organize your digital team and educate your stakeholders. We help you extract meaning from data so you know if you're really driving business value from your investment.

We are a full-service digital agency with extensive knowledge and technical expertise in various CMS and marketing/ analytics solutions. Our teams, working with you, use an agile methodology to create unique website and digital experiences that drive business results in a measurable way.

What makes nonlinear different?

We put business first. After almost 20 years in the game, we have seen technologies and trends come and go. What has remained constant, however, is the need to drive tangible business outcomes from your digital spend. Today our focus is on creating an engaging online presence that:

- ~ serves your customers' needs by being memorable, relevant and increasingly personalized and accessible on any device
- ~ serves your business' needs by generating meaningful data from which you can extract real insights and metrics tied to your business goals

Contact us today

www.nonlinearcreations.com

cxm@nonlinearcreations.com