



## D4.12 Report on website visitors (months 1-18)

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Topten ACT aims at transforming the European market of energy-using products towards higher energy efficiency. Topten ACT identifies the top energy-efficient products in 16 European countries, and makes this information available to consumers and large buyers on tailored national websites. The most energy efficient models in different product categories (such as household appliances, lighting, office equipment, consumer electronics, cars) are presented with comprehensive product information based on official labels and standardized declarations. Topten works with manufacturers and thus increases both market offer and consumer demand of high energy efficiency products. Topten is strictly neutral and independent from manufacturers and retailers, its selection criteria are always published online. Topten ACT is supported by the European Commission's research and innovation programme Horizon 2020, and many national organisations (energy agencies, environmental and consumer organisations, research institutes). The Topten ACT project involves 17 partners in 16 European countries. It is coordinated by ADEME (Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Énergie). More information and access to all national websites on the European site: [www.topten.eu](http://www.topten.eu)

WP4 Dissemination and Exploitation, Task 4.3 – Monitoring of Websites and Media Impact, D4.12 - 1st report summarising key website visitors statistics (months 1-18).

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## Background

Each Topten national partner operates a website to point consumers towards the most energy efficient products on the market. As a whole, the project aims to reach 2 million web visitors per year by the end of the project. Each partner's website has been monitored using Google Analytics with the exception of Austria (who use their internal CMS to track web hits and Germany, who use Piwik). The desired cumulative web hits total is split relative to the size of the partner country. As an expected share, indicative figures for the web visitor target are as follows:

- 180,000 visitors per year in Austria, Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy and the UK
- 100,000 visitors per year in Belgium, Spain, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Sweden
- 65,000 visitors per year in Czech Republic, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Norway
- 60,000 visitors per year to the Topten.eu website

The indicative target is 2 million visitors per year across all sites by the end of the project; in year one the project aims to achieve around 1.8 million hits, measured as unique users. This report also uses sessions as a web-visit reporting metric.

Website analytics provide a useful guide to the effectiveness of a website, but also should not be considered definitive in all cases; direct comparisons cannot always be made with other websites where parameters vary, such as methods used to promote the site, device compatibility, and the web interface.

## Analytics tools

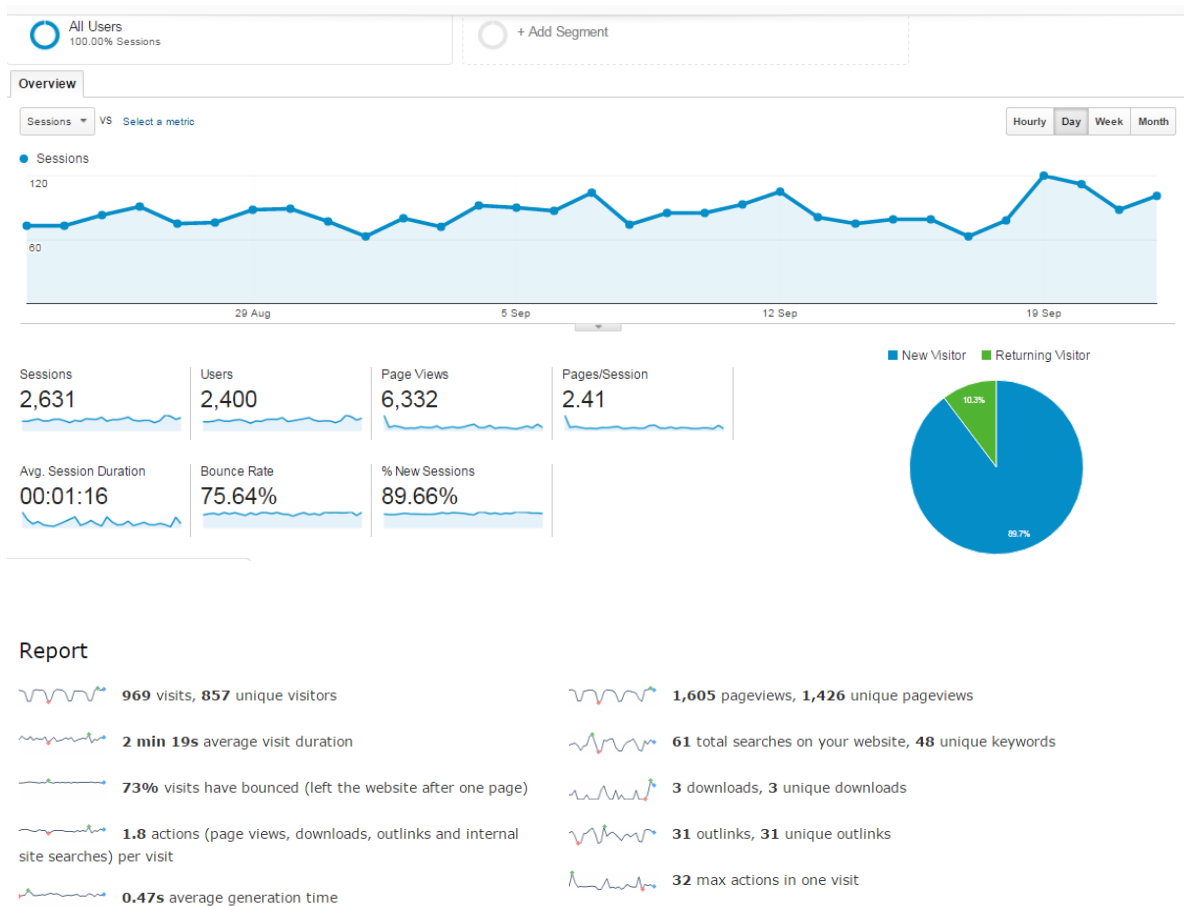
Austria and Germany track web sessions using slightly different tools from the remainder of the consortium. Without knowing the exact algorithms used by these tools, it is not possible to apply an exact correction factor to their figures for direct comparison to Google Analytics. For example, different tools would estimate and record in slightly different ways whether it was thought a session was carried out by a 'genuine' user or a 'robot'. However, the definitions of these metrics (listed in the next section) are the same.

Figures from Austria and Germany therefore are not recorded in an identical way to those from other nations, but for the purposes of reporting the approach is considered equivalent. Web sessions and other metrics are recorded using a similar ethos and are not thought to differ significantly between analytics tools.

## Definitions

### Sessions

A session involves entering a partner's web domain and viewing one or more pages of the website as a whole before exiting. All pages viewed are not counted separately; a session more accurately measures a user's interaction than counting all pages that an individual might access on one visit.



**Image 1: Example Google Analytics and Piwik dashboards**

### Users

Defined as the number of different individuals carrying out a session on a Topten website.

### Page Views

The total number of different pages within a site that are accessed

### Bounce rate

The percentage of visitors to a particular website who navigate away from the site after viewing only one page.

### Loyalty

The percentage of all visitors who are a returning visitor.

### Website Visitor Statistics

Statistics are shown for the 12 month period from the beginning of the project (1<sup>st</sup> March 2015 – 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016) and the 18 month period running up until the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016.

### Total unique users and web sessions, all countries combined

Month	Unique web users	Total web sessions	Indicated target
12	1,736,535	2,072,186	>1,800,000
18	2,497,157	2,946,852	N/A

Table 1: Total number of web visitors across all partner countries at months 12 and 18

### Breakdown of web sessions by country size relative to respective indicative target

#### Total web sessions and users, all countries

Country	12 month sessions	12 month users	18 month sessions	18 month users
Target	180000		N/A	
AT	807470	661284	1170480	991926
CH	491655	404812	688662	567001
DE	185353	157724	257347	218328
FR	173711	153935	234960	205717
IT	79948	70101	123987	108699
UK	63189	58627	76881	71049
Indicated target	100000		N/A	
BE	22437	19947	33602	29633
ES	32674	29433	43567	39453
PL	5665	5043	7623	6670
PT	38252	32092	54924	46121
RO	41823	37443	56557	50366
SE	24024	20448	37902	32461
Indicated target	65000		N/A	
CZ	20225	15881	34860	27322
LU	9864	7117	14354	10567
LT	8027	7230	11574	10484
NO	7339	6424	9444	8192
Indicated target	60000		N/A	
EU	60530	48994	90128	73168
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>2072186</b>	<b>1736535</b>	<b>2946852</b>	<b>2497157</b>
Indicated target	180000		N/A	

Table 2 –web sessions and users by country, and combined figures

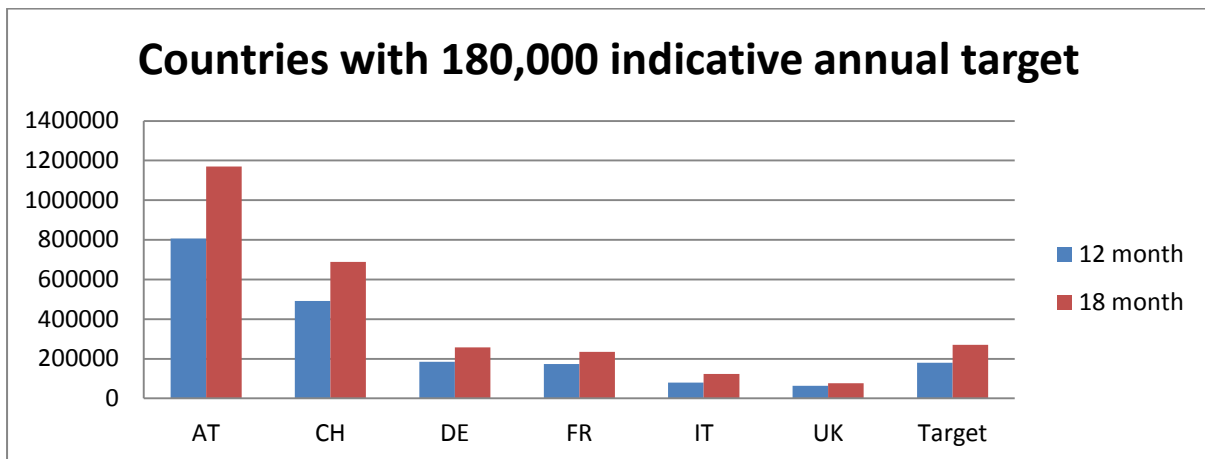


Figure 1: Number of visitors during first 12 months and first 18 months of the project, by countries with an annual indicative visitor target of 180,000

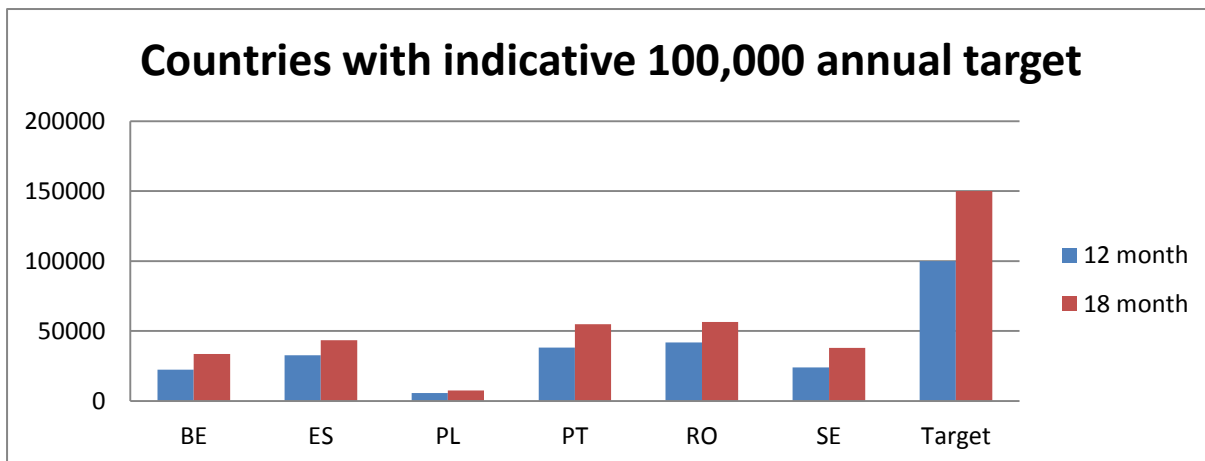


Figure 2: Number of visitors during first 12 months and first 18 months of the project, by countries with an annual indicative visitor target of 100,000

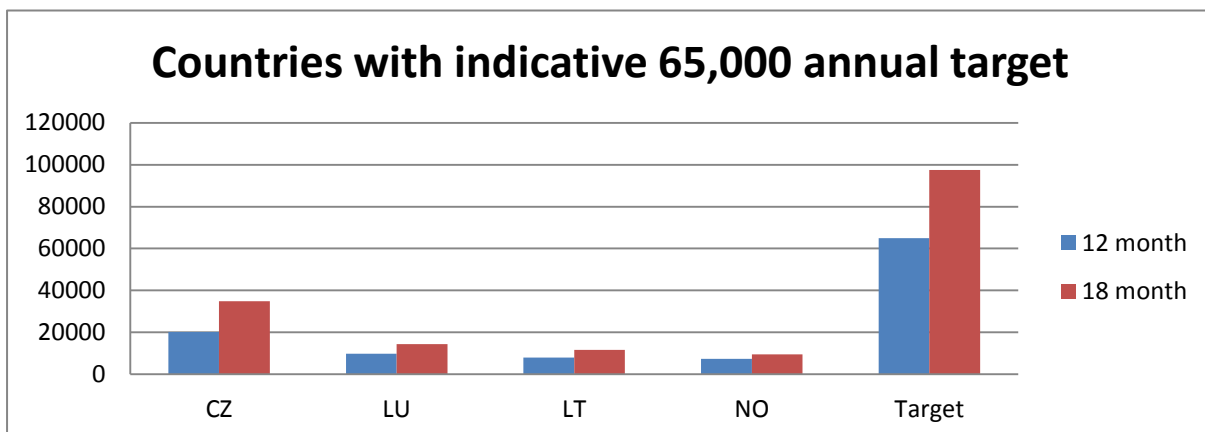


Figure 3: Number of visitors during first 12 months and first 18 months of the project, by countries with an annual indicative visitor target of 65,000

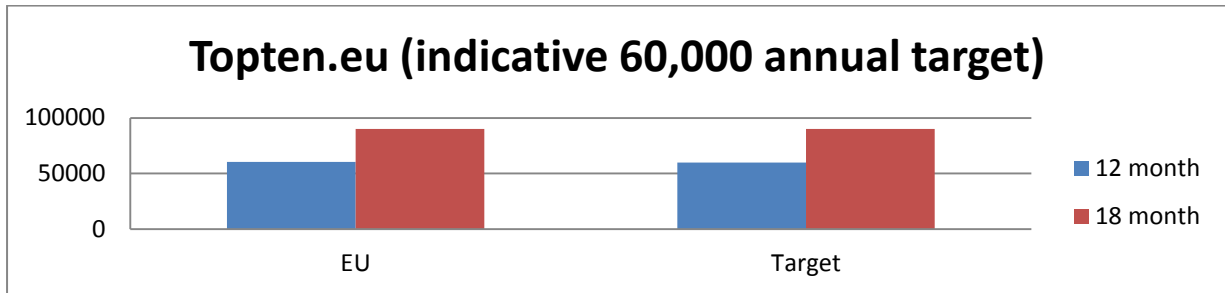


Figure 4: Number of visitors to the topten.eu site during first 12 months and first 18 months of the project

### Monthly web users and sessions

Trends in monthly web users and sessions have been measured. To achieve the indicated target of 1.8 million users per year, this averages out monthly at 150,000 users combined across all sites. By the grouped national indicative targets, average monthly visitors would have to be as follows:

Annual indicative target	Average monthly visitors to achieve target
180,000	15,000
100,000	8,333
65,000	5,417
60,000	5,000

Table 3: Annual indicative target of visitors broken down into average monthly target

### Combined web sessions and users, all countries

In the graphs below, aggregate visitors (sessions and users) to all websites, and those in the different target brackets are shown (as sessions only). In the first 12 months of the project, web users fluctuated above and below the desired average per month, whereas sessions largely exceeded the indicative target. Trends of a decrease over summer and increases in the autumn and winter months were observed, possibly due to early Christmas or 'Black Friday' purchases, or consumers spending more time indoors due to changing weather. Since February 2016 however, overall web visitors for the project have been measured on a downward projection.

### Sessions and users, all websites combined

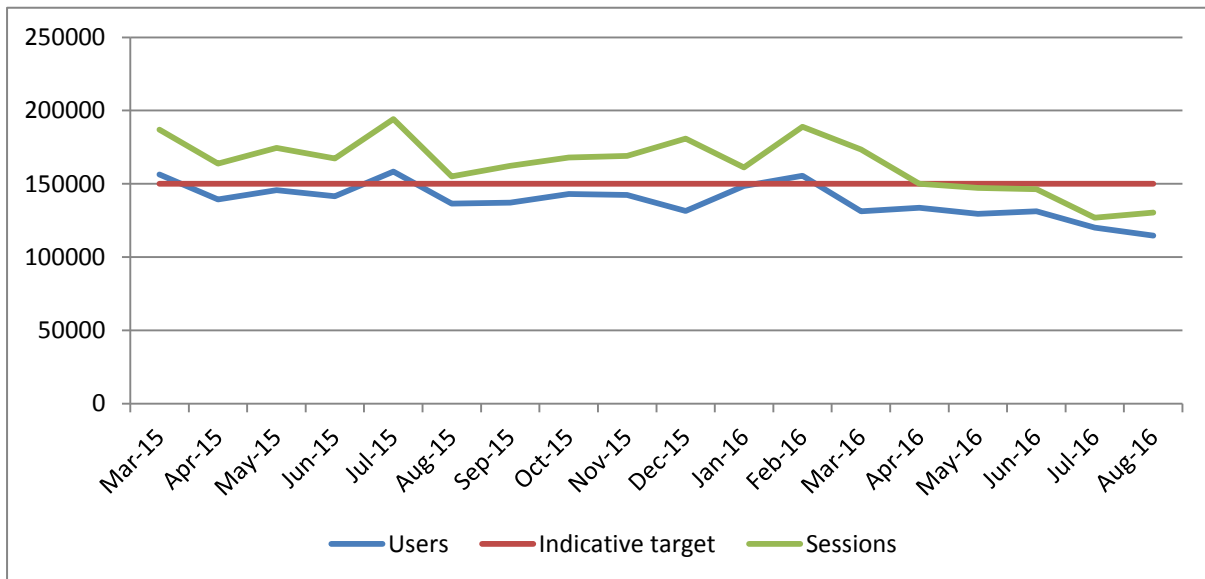


Figure 5: Aggregated number of visitors per month across all Topten websites

Date	No. website visits (sessions)	No. unique visitors (users)
Mar-15	186972	156343
Apr-15	163859	139499
May-15	174464	145735
Jun-15	167374	141660
Jul-15	194175	158480
Aug-15	155013	136634
Sep-15	162353	137167
Oct-15	167920	143063
Nov-15	169191	142366
Dec-15	180803	131508
Jan-16	161183	148591
Feb-16	188879	155489
Mar-16	173415	131227
Apr-16	150067	133649
May-16	147302	129645
Jun-16	146406	131275
Jul-16	126985	120195
Aug-16	130491	114631
<b>Total</b>	<b>2946852</b>	<b>2497157</b>

Table 4: Aggregated number of visitors per month across all Topten websites

### Countries with 180,000 annual indicative target

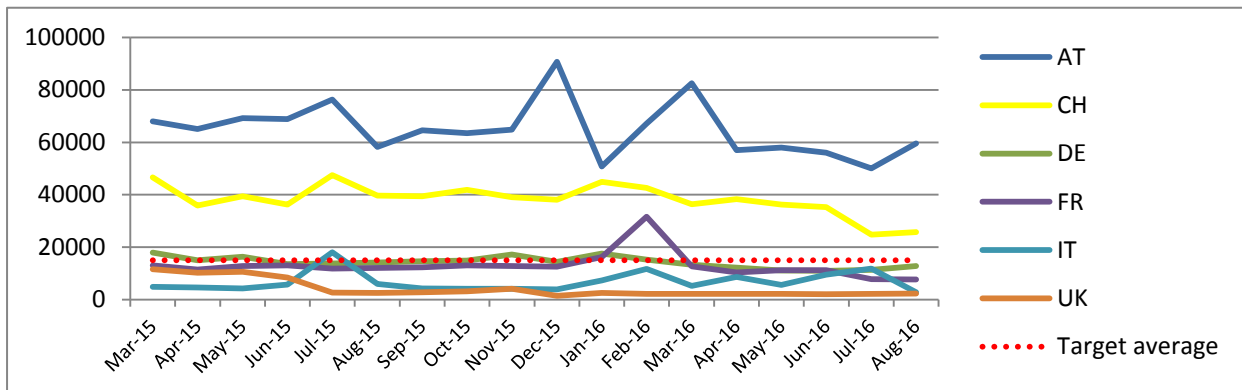


Figure 6: Number of sessions per month to websites of countries with an annual indicative visitor target of 180,000

### Countries with 100,000 annual indicative target

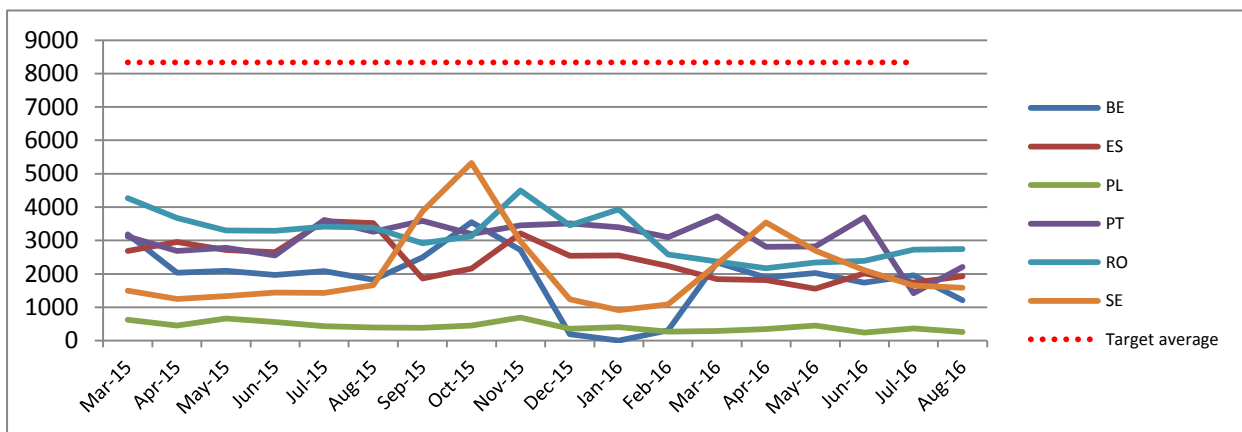


Figure 7: Number of sessions per month to websites of countries with an annual indicative visitor target of 100,000

Note – Belgium had an issue with its data collection through Google analytics for January 2016, when no visitors were recorded. This is confirmed as an error and it is thought that visitors for that month were typical of levels seen in the period. The overall figure would therefore be higher for BE.

### Countries with 65,000 annual indicative target

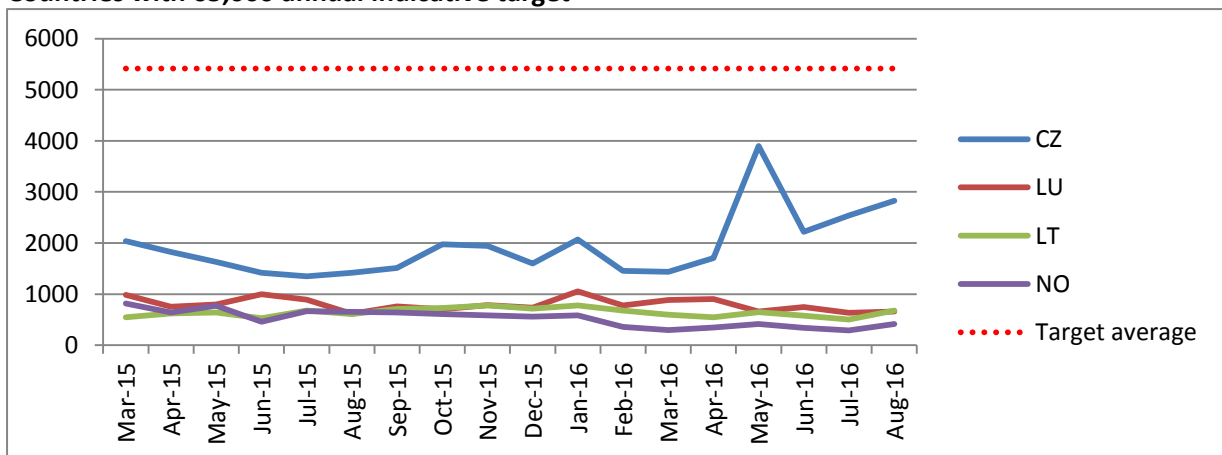


Figure 8: Number of sessions per month to websites of countries with an annual indicative visitor target of 65,000



### Topten.eu (60,000 annual indicative target)

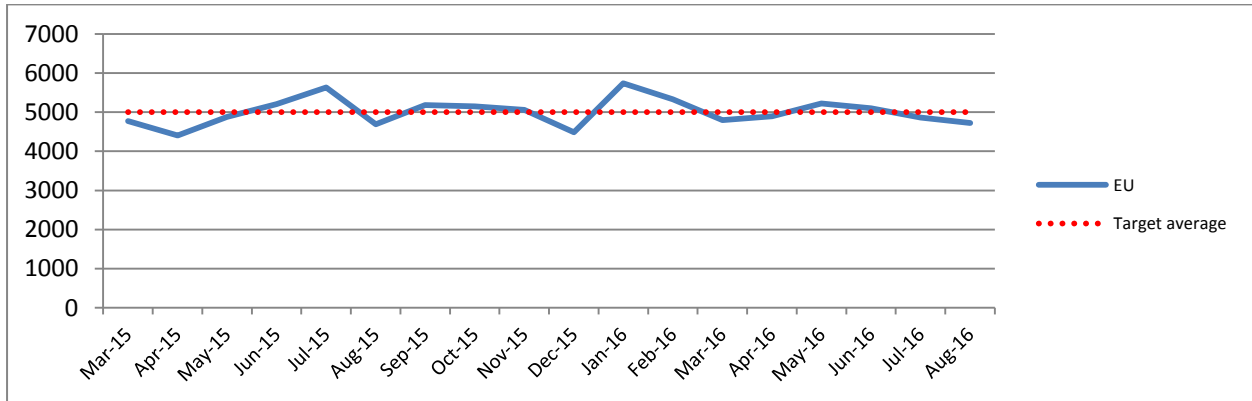


Figure 9: Number of sessions per month topten.eu website (annual indicative visitor target of 60,000)

### User Retention

For the first 18 months of the project, statistics have been collated for bounce rate, loyalty and pages viewed per session as follows.

The average user journey for a Topten website is as follows: a user spends 2 minutes and 17 seconds on the website and views 2.75 pages. 19% of visitors return to the site at some point; 60% of visitors view only one page before leaving the site.

### Bounce rate

Bounce rate is a useful signifier of user engagement and content quality. Websites that are more easily navigated generally have lower bounce rates; sometimes technical issues such as the speed at which pages load can also affect this. However, as stated earlier, web analytics metrics are not perfect – in the case of bounce rate the user will eventually leave the site. Comparison with other B2C websites is not always useful – it is more important to assess whether a website is improving or regressing in this metric and what effect changes to the site may have had.

Various internet sites on digital marketing and analytics address the bounce rate metric. Spinutech.com defines 50% as the industry standard<sup>1</sup>. Gorocketfuel.com measured<sup>2</sup> around 60 websites and found that the average bounce rate can vary significantly, and is usually measured between 26% and 70%. The assessment made was that bounce rates in the range of 26-40% were considered excellent, 41-55% was considered average, and 56-70% is higher than average but should not necessarily give cause for alarm. A bounce rate above 70% was considered disappointing by Gorocketfuel for websites outside news, blogs or those related to events. It is considered that bounce rates are generally higher from mobile users.

Topten sites were measured to have an average bounce rate of 60% in months 1-18, with 9 of the 16 sites measuring this metric at this rate or lower.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.spinutech.com/blog/digital-marketing/7-website-analytics-that-matter-most/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gorocketfuel.com/the-rocket-blog/whats-the-average-bounce-rate-in-google-analytics/>

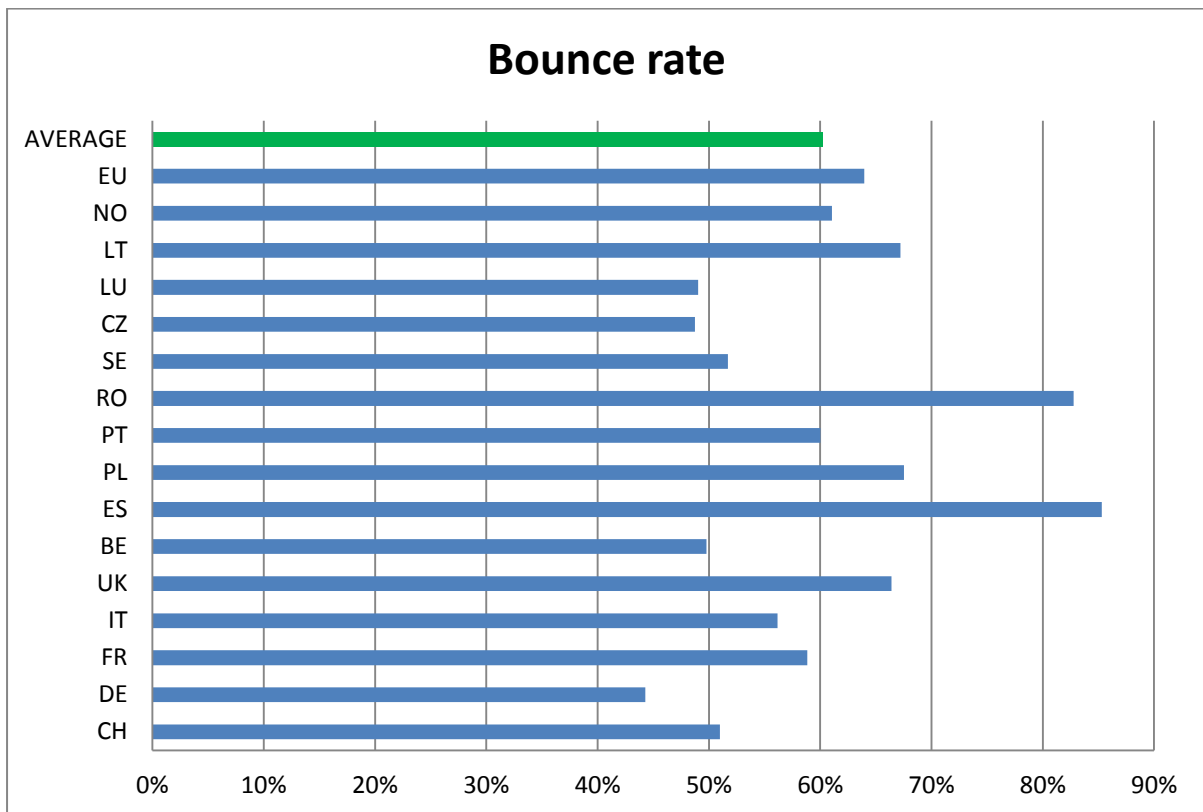


Figure 10: Percentage of visitors who navigated away from the site after viewing only one page, by country

### Loyalty

Loyalty was seen to vary quite significantly in the metrics reported by the different countries – ranging between 8% in Lithuania and 31% in Luxembourg. However, loyalty is not considered to be a significant metric for the project. While it is preferable if users do return to the site, a healthy influx of new visitors is also desirable to further the project’s reach.

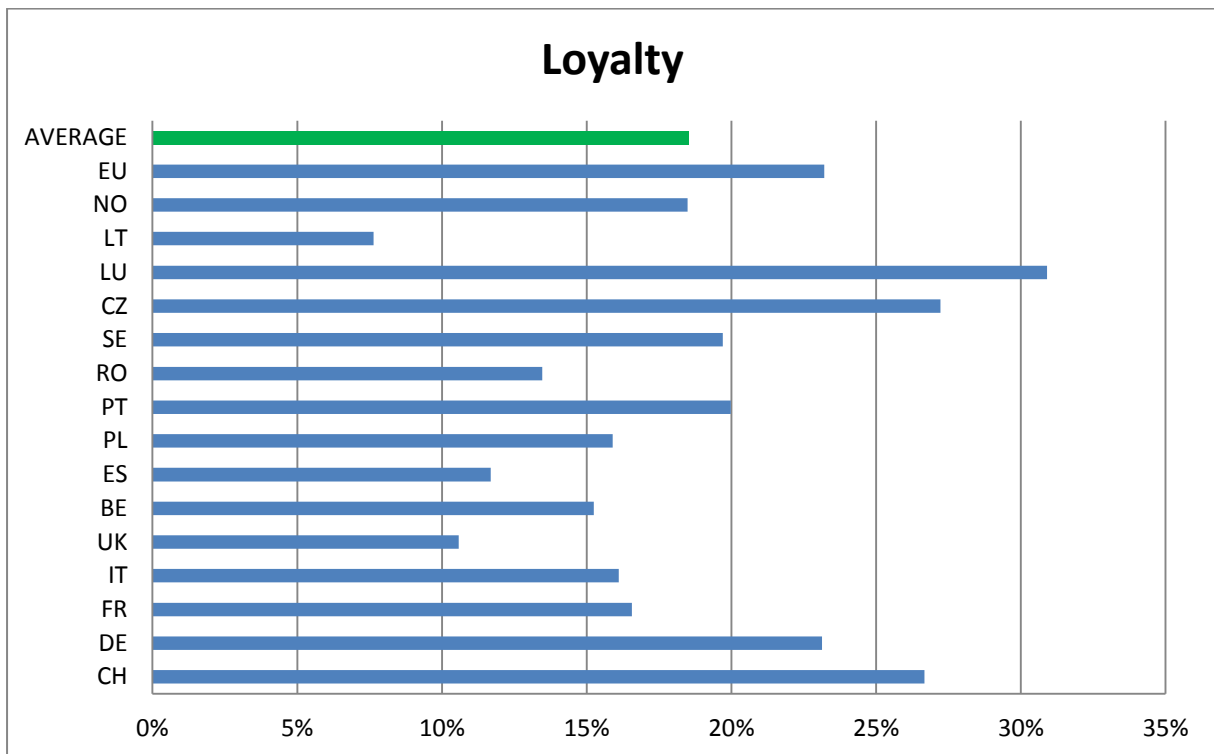


Figure 11: Percentage of website visitors who have previously visited the site, by country

### Pages per session and time on site

Spinutech.com cites 2 pages per session and 2-3 minutes on a website as an unofficial industry standard<sup>3</sup>. Again, it should be highlighted that these metrics may not provide definitive guidance, and analysing metrics in combination may also be beneficial.

14 of the 16 Topten sites averaged over 2 pages per session and 2 minutes of viewing time, suggesting low concern in this area.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.spinutech.com/blog/digital-marketing/7-website-analytics-that-matter-most/>

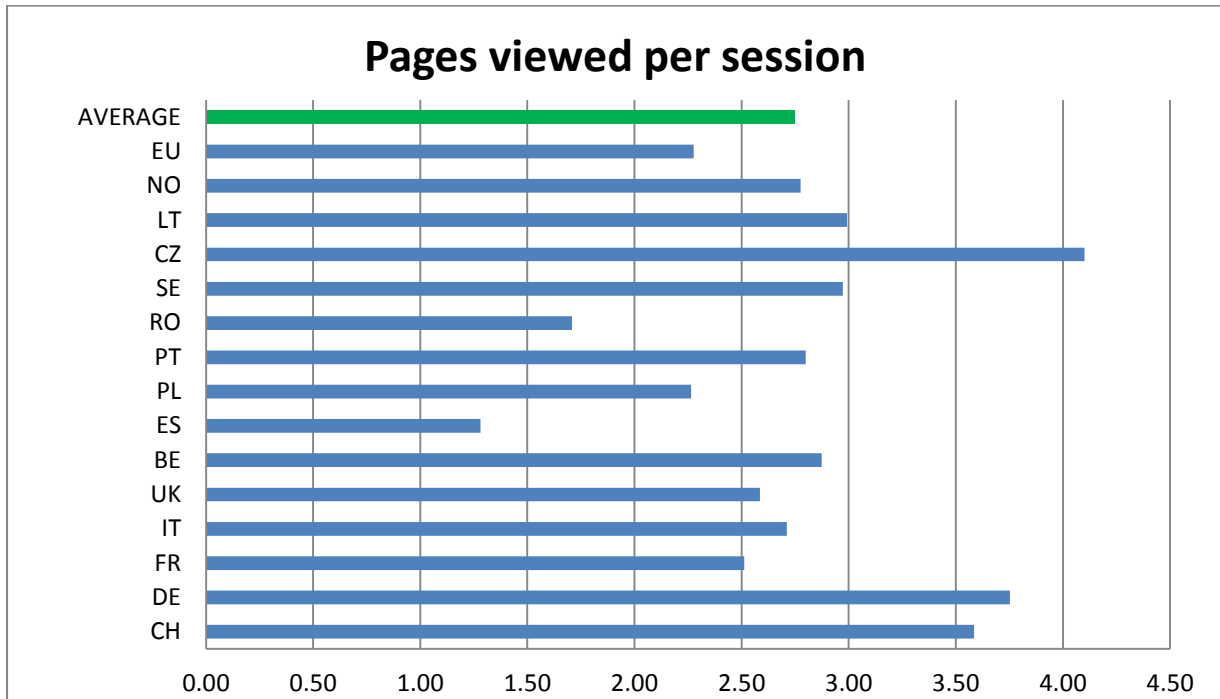


Figure 12: Average number of pages web visitors view during each session, by country

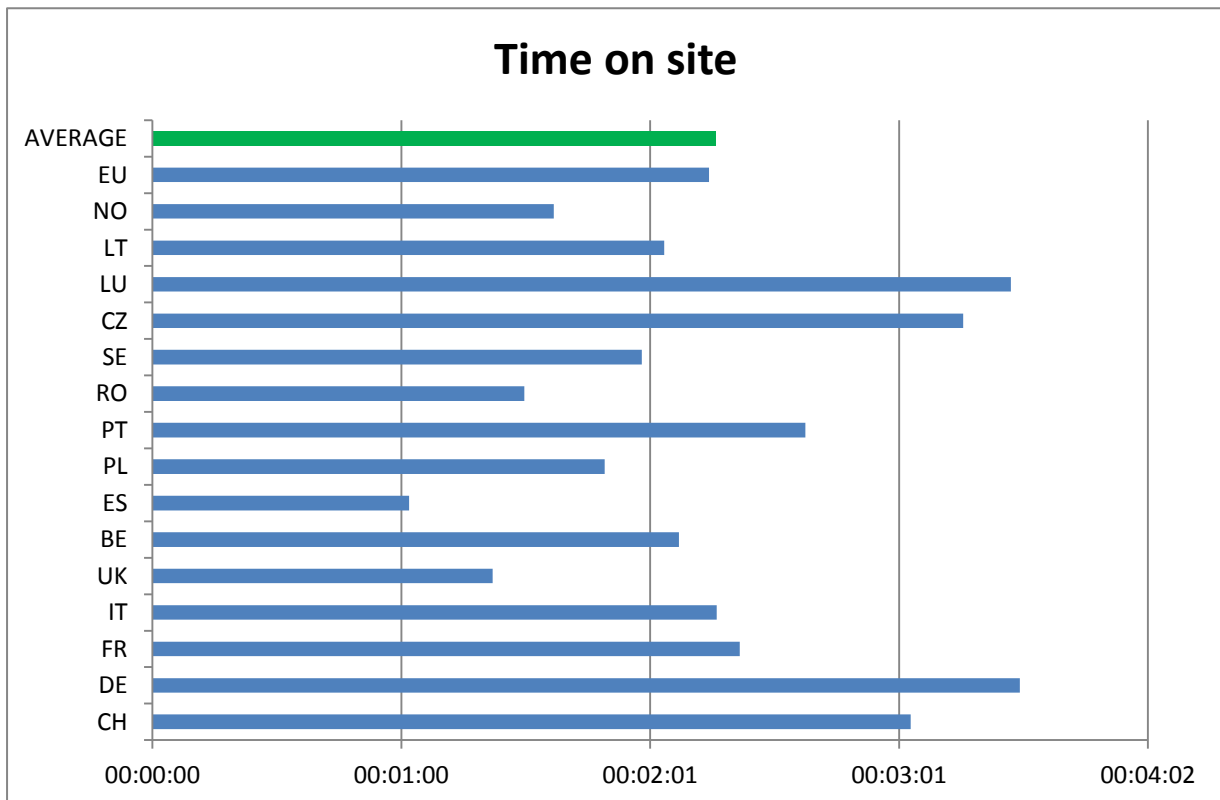


Figure 13: Time in minutes each visitor spends on a Top Ten website, by country

## Visitors to Topten social media accounts

Beyond web visits, partners are using further online channels to promote Topten to a larger audience.

Twitter followers are the total number for the account as of 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and may include some from the Topten MAX round of the project. This is therefore only for information, as some of the data is from outside the reporting period, but gives a good estimate of the further project reach.

Tweets and impressions are taken from Twitter Analytics figures reported only during months 1-18 of Topten ACT. Only dedicated Topten Twitter accounts are assessed here; some partners, such as Spain and the UK also use larger organisational accounts to promote Topten.

Partner	Twitter followers	Tweets	Tweet impressions
UK	473	46	23,313
Germany	250	117	65,988
France	212	403*	157,900*
Czech Republic	149	134	28,493
Luxembourg	45	122	4,394
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,129</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>280,088</b>

*Table 5: Number of followers, tweets and tweet impressions during months 1 to 18 from the five countries who use Twitter*

\*Includes from both Guide Topten Twitter and a personal product energy efficiency expert account.

Five countries use Facebook accounts dedicated specifically to Topten to promote the project. Some organisations, such as Italy also use their organisations' accounts to promote the project.

Partner	Facebook likes
Austria	2,186

Czech Republic	1,060
France	853
Romania	137
Switzerland	326
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,562</b>

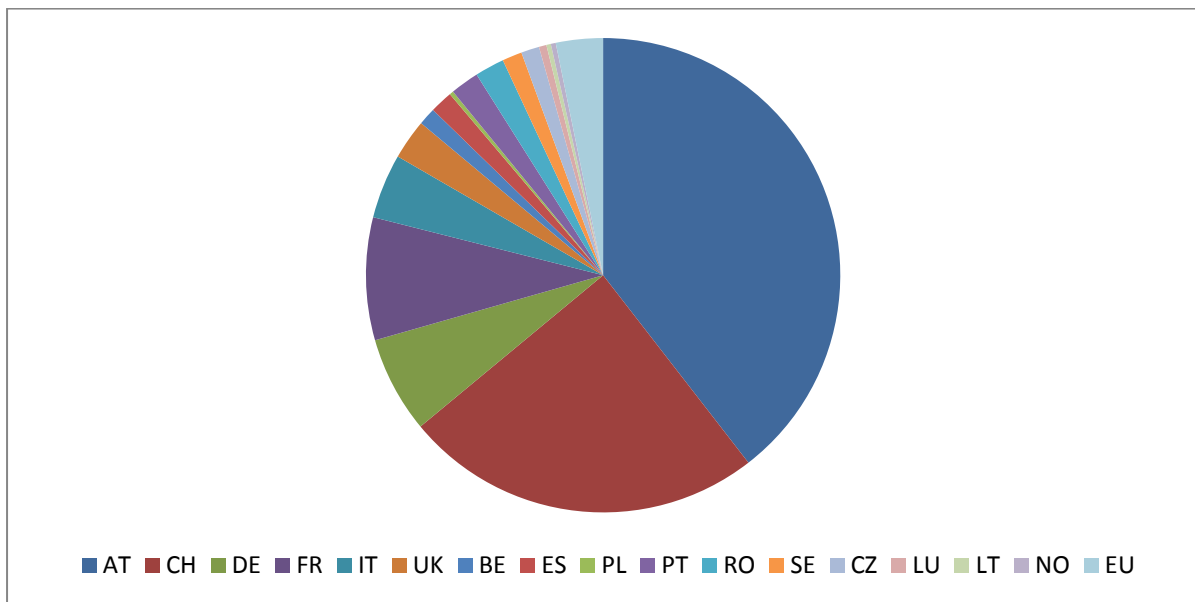
*Table 6: Number of Facebook likes of Topten dedicated Facebook pages, during months 1 -18 in the five countries who use Facebook*

### Overall figures and conclusions

At the halfway stage of the project, visitors to the Topten web sites, as individual unique users, are at approximately 1.7 million at month 12 against the indicated target of 1.8 million. Measured as sessions, the project exceeded 1.8 million aggregate visitors. Topten ACT aims to achieve 2 million visitors per year by the end of the project, and despite a slight drop in web visitors recently (which was also seen in summer 2015) rates remain on track to achieve the end of project target.

However, measuring sessions is considered more appropriate, and going forward, it is requested that sessions are used as the reporting metric. A visitor returning to a site is a significant part of the user journey; the user might need to come back to find more information and then make a purchasing decision on a subsequent visit to the site, or access a different product group – the original visit is not the only significant one. Counting sessions on websites, regardless of whether it was a new or existing user, would therefore appear pragmatic.

A large proportion of these web sessions (over three quarters) were seen from Austria, Switzerland, Germany and France. However, Topten is more established and receives more support from national authorities in some countries than others, so national comparisons are of limited benefit. Whilst the cumulative figure is healthy, further promotion of Topten in countries where the project is less established will be required to meet web hits targets going forward.



**Figure 14: Split of web hits (as sessions) across the different partners, months 1-18.**

Some partners have observed significant fluctuations in web visitors due to individual events gaining high exposure for the project. Some of these are explored in more detail in the *Report on Dissemination Activities* (Deliverable 4.8). TV appearances and the release of videos for the project were a factor behind large spikes in France, Portugal and Spain.

Social media has been a successful driver of web hits in the Czech Republic, who experienced a spike in visitors in May 2015 (3,900 against an average of 1,937, as sessions). Combining social media content through a variety of means and where possible through accounts with more followers can be an effective strategy. These figures have not been counted towards the overall numbers, but can be significant in terms of people reached.

Social media has also been effective in providing content independently of the partner’s site. For example, in the UK, EST ran a PR campaign largely through social media in August 2016. The campaign spanned several social media platforms including EST’s Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn accounts. From this it was measured that a 10 day concentrated campaign was able to have a total reach of 214,500 people, enabling significant coverage for Topten outside of the website itself.

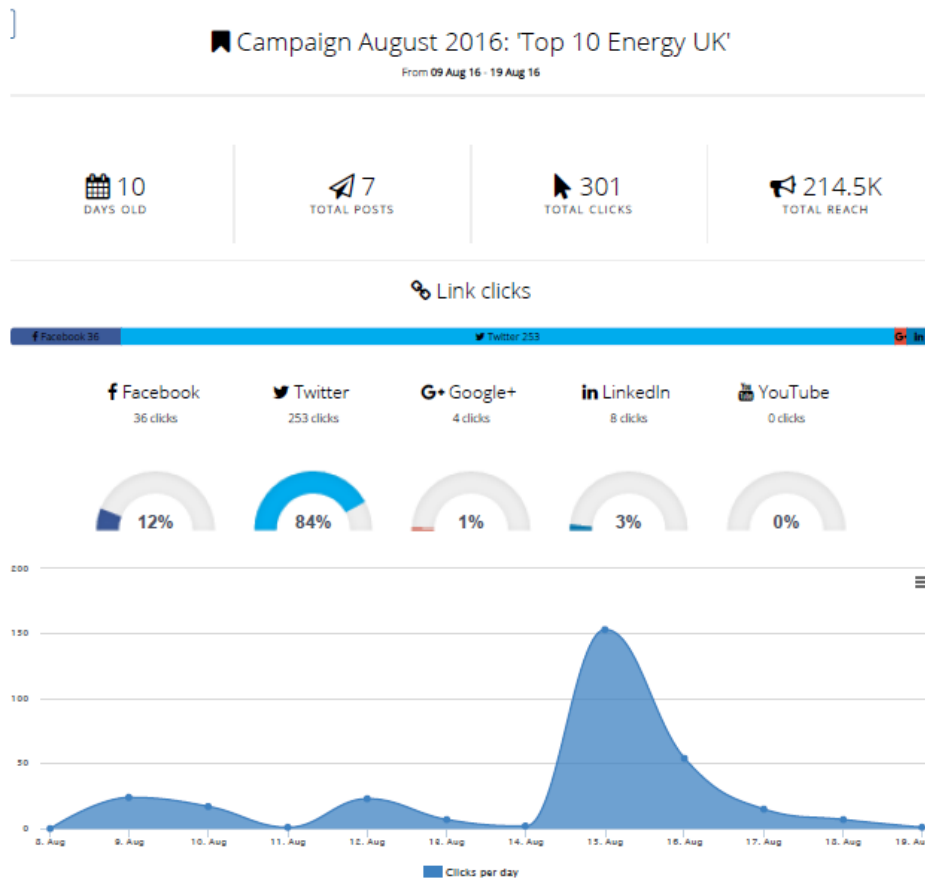


Image 2: Web analytics campaign results from EST

When considering social media figures, the projects has also benefitted from over 280,000 tweet impressions and 4500 people engaging Facebook pages, providing project reach and promotion further to the websites.

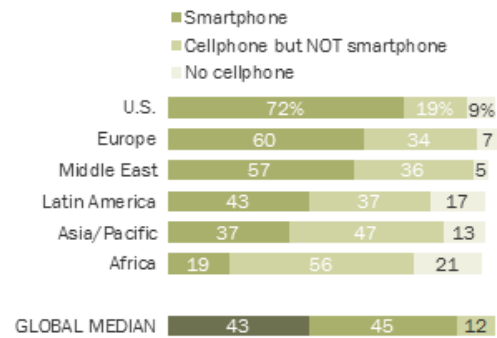
Regarding web analytics, some sites appear to have high bounce rates, but overall time spent on sites and pages accessed are delivering acceptable performance. The key metric for partners in this case is ensuring that numbers in these areas are not decreasing overall, and that instances where good content and promotion increased web traffic are captured and repeated where possible.

An overall downward trend in visitors has been observed between months 12-18 – this may be due to seasonal variations, which were seen in 2015. It may even be due to changed algorithms in analytics programmes, which is difficult to monitor. It is hoped that the upcoming refresh of several partner websites will help increase visitors. Following upgrade, for the first time many Topten websites will be able to be viewed on mobile devices, a key current user consideration.



## Smartphones are more common in U.S., Europe, and the Middle East

Regional medians of adults who report owning a ...



Note: Percentages based on total sample. Russia and Ukraine not included in Europe median.

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q71 & Q72.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Accessing websites via a mobile device (phone or tablet) is now a significant user trend. A spring 2015 survey by the Pew Research Centre<sup>4</sup> found 60% of adults in Europe own a smartphone.

Figure 15, left: 2015 Smartphone ownership rates from Pew Research Centre

Several national Topten websites were not set up for mobile access in the first 18 months of the project, but this is changing. At the time of writing this report, of the 17 Topten national sites, only 8 were set up to be mobile-optimised. Several partners are due to upgrade to new web platforms which will allow for better mobile access – this should make a significant contribution to website visitors going forward.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/02/22/smartphone-ownership-and-internet-usage-continues-to-climb-in-emerging-economies/>