

Omniture Webmetrics Report #1 (April – November 2005)

This report supplies a summary of some basic Omniture metrics from April 2005 (when the Omniture report suites were first consistently implemented) until the end of November.

The high-level view is that visits are going up slowly, but that visits of two pages or more are going up faster (they have doubled since April, when Omniture was first properly applied to nsdl.org). Currently, we have 8000+ visits of two pages or more per month, i.e. somewhat under 300/day.

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1 VISITS

Omniure defines a 'visit' as

The number of times a visitor browses to your site. A visit begins when a person first views a page on your company's Web site, and lasts until that person stops all activity on the site for a period of 30 minutes (Web analytics general industry standard). The industry assumes that, given the length of time, the person likely closed their browser and reinitiated a separate "visit." A unique visitor could be responsible for multiple visits (or sessions) during a day, month, and year

For the purposes of nsdl.org metrics it is assumed that each visit is a record of someone attempting a task at nsdl.org. As such 'visit' is a preferable metric to page views, hits, etc., in that it is easier to equate one 'visit' with one 'task,' rather than multiple page views and/or hits.

Without persistent tracking we cannot tell who repeat visitors are, and so the 'unique visitor' category is ignored. We have no way of telling whether two calls from the same IP address an hour apart are by the same person, or by two different people using the same computer (e.g. in a school library). Similarly, we have no way of knowing whether or not two calls from different IP addresses on the same day may be two different people, or the same person using a work and a home computer.

Using visits as the basic metric, we can say that for the past few months, use of nsdl.org has been increasing, particularly when 'single page visits' – where a user enters and exits nsdl.org on the same page without visiting any other page – are ignored.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	
		Single Page Visits	SPVs As % of All Visits	Front Page Entry	Front Page Entry %	Single Front Page Visits	Front Page SPV as % of Front Page Entry	Front Page SPV as % of All Visits	Two + Pages per Front Page Visit	Two + Pages per Site Visit
Month	Visits	(SPVs)	Visits	Entry						
Apr	8328	4270	51.3	6320	75.9	2988	47.3	35.9	3332	4058
May	9259	4760	51.4	7177	77.5	3557	49.6	38.4	3620	4499
Jun	9915	5391	54.4	7932	80.0	4185	52.8	42.2	3747	4524
Jul	8035	4193	52.2	6099	75.9	3100	50.8	38.6	2999	3842
Aug	9203	5049	54.9	7112	77.3	3763	52.9	40.9	3349	4154
Sep	11541	5713	49.5	8805	76.3	4202	47.7	36.4	4603	5828
Oct	13453	5737	42.6	9973	74.1	4013	40.2	29.8	5960	7716
Nov	13769	5470	39.7	9935	72.2	3452	34.7	25.1	6483	8299

According to the metrics:

- Monthly visits to nsdl.org rose from 8328 in April to 13769 in November (col. 2) (Chart 1). In November, the week of the AM was up, and the week of Thanksgiving was down.
- The number of 'single page visits' has been rising since April (col. 3) (Chart 1), but since August has fallen as a proportion of all visits from 55% to 40% (col. 4) (Chart 3)
- Entrances through the front page rose from 6320 to 9935, (col. 5) (Chart 2). As a proportion of all visits to nsdl.org, front page entrance has remained steady (70%-80%) since April (col. 6)
- The number of people who exited nsdl.org after viewing only the front page has stayed steady at ~3k-4k, (col.7) (Chart 2), but has fallen as a proportion of overall visitors (cols. 8, 9) (Chart 3)
- The number of visitors that look at two or more pages has doubled since April, both for those entering through the front page, and for the site as a whole (cols. 10, 11) (Chart 4)
- The bottom line: 8300 visits of 2 pages or more in November – say ~ 300/day.

Monthly Visits, April - November 2005

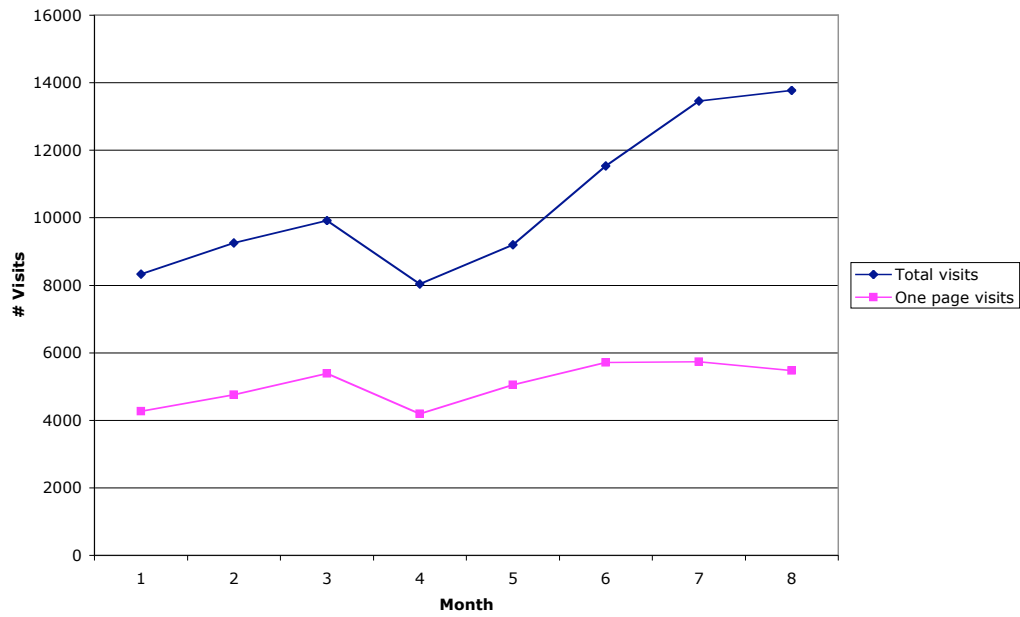


Chart 1

Monthly Front Page Visits, April - November 2005

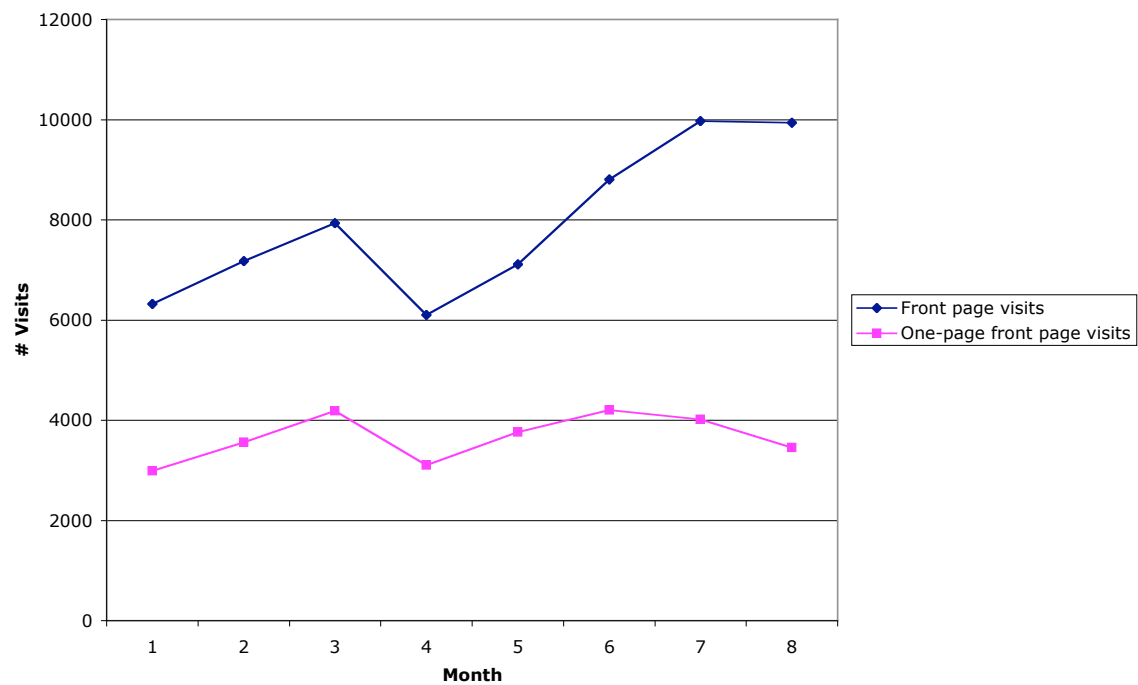


Chart 2

One Page Visits As % Of All Visits, Apr-Nov 2005

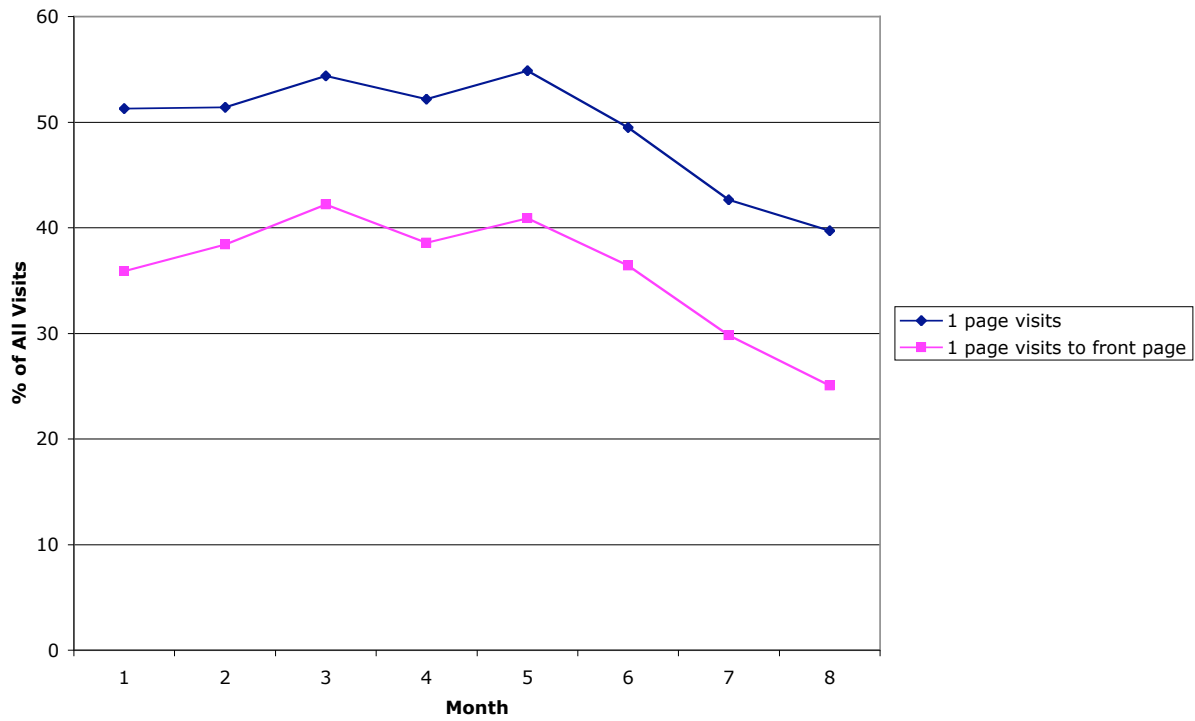


Chart 3

Visits of 2 pages or more April - November 2005

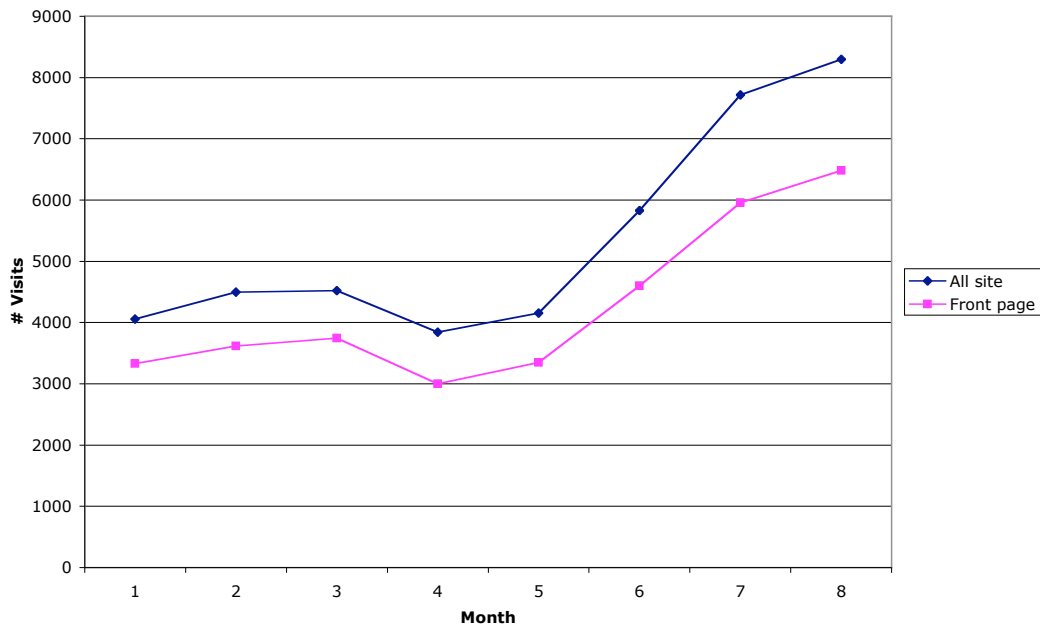


Chart 4

2 REFERRERS

According to Omniture referrers are

Locations from which visitors to your site come. They can be Web sites with search engines or advertisements, e-mail messages, Web sites with links to your site, or a shortcut on your own computer. For example, if a visitor clicks on an ad banner or link of any kind from site A and arrives at site B, site A 'refers' you to site B. Site B's SiteCatalyst account will register site A as a referrer and log one page view for site B.

Referrers fall into two main categories: Domains and URLs. Domains refer to the domain name, and appear as the base domain without the query string or subdirectories attached. Examples of a domain referrer could include "aol.com," "yahoo.com" or "google.com." URLs include the base domain name, as well as any query strings or subdirectories. Examples of a URL referrer could include "aol.com/subdirectory," "aol.com/search_string," or "aol.com/subdirectory/search_string."

Between April to November, nsdl.org had 87,463 referrals. Referrals to nsdl.org come from various sources. According to Omniture's typology, visitors came to the site as a result of one of three actions:

- Clicking on a link from another web page
- Typing or retrieving a bookmarked URL
- Following a search engine link.

In the case of nsdl.org, these three actions are represented as follows for April to November:

- Links from other web sites: 35,154 (40.2%)
- Typed/bookmarked URL: 33,207 (38.0%)
- Search engine referrals: 19,086 (21.8%)

While search engine referrals are significant – a point brought up in meetings from time to time – they are at the head of a very skewed distribution amongst referrers (). There is also a very long 'tail' to the distribution, and in fact the greatest number of referrals - in both cases, twice as many as those from search engines – come from the following

- (a) previously bookmarked nsdl.org pages, and/or directly from URLs typed directly into the browser navigation bar, and
- (b) links embedded in non-search engine pages.

These proportions (i.e. 40:40:20 for links:bookmarks:search engines) remained steady between April and November (Charts 4, 5). This suggests that campaigns and strategies to persuade other organizations to put links and logos for NSDL on their sites could be very productive in terms of driving up site traffic.

You can look through the top referrers (below) for interesting tidbits. For instance, we were big in Finland, apparently, and also in Seattle. The 104 hits from dlib were from the Lagoze et al. article in the November issue. The 62 hits from SurveyMonkey were because the survey redirected to the front page after all the questions had been answered.

Referrals April-November 2005

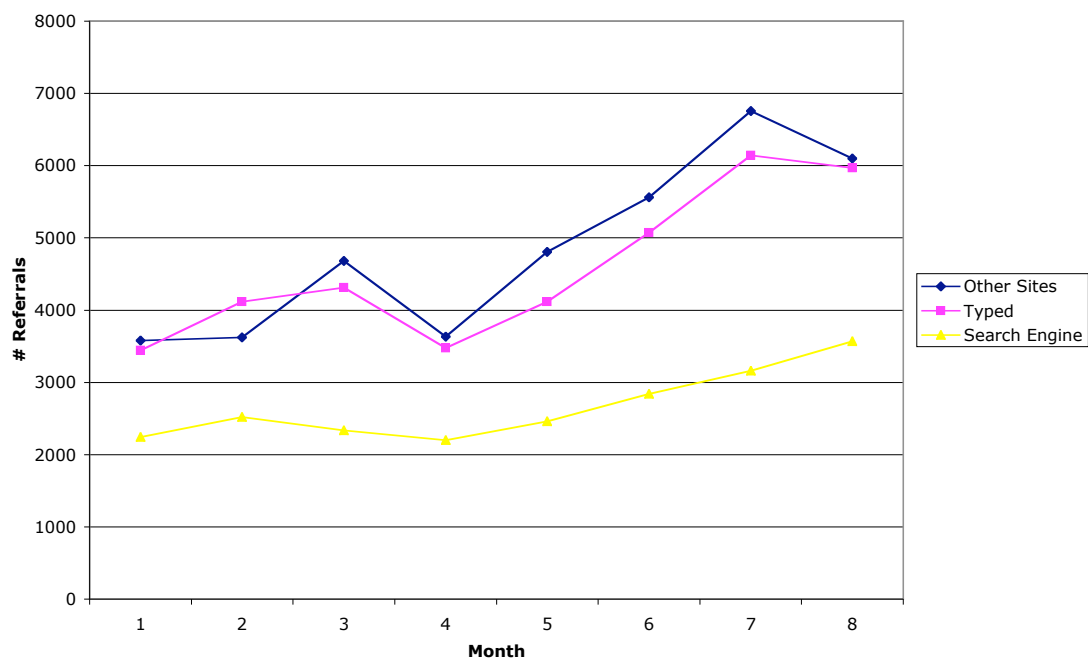


Chart 4

Referrals April-November 2005

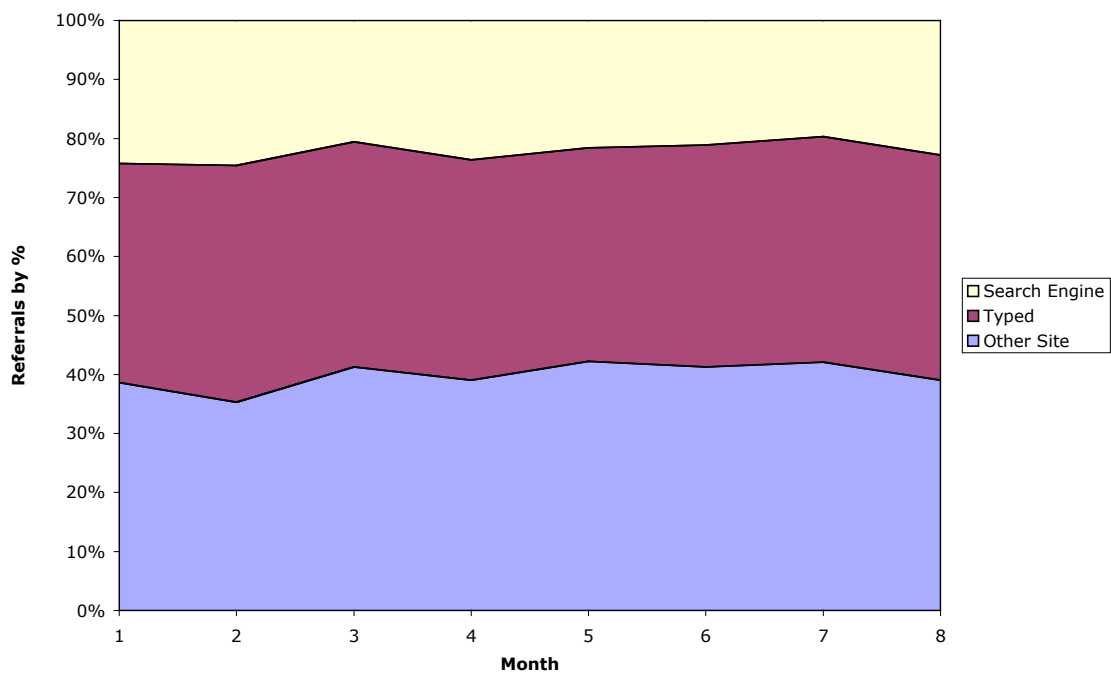


Chart 5

Referrers for November 2005

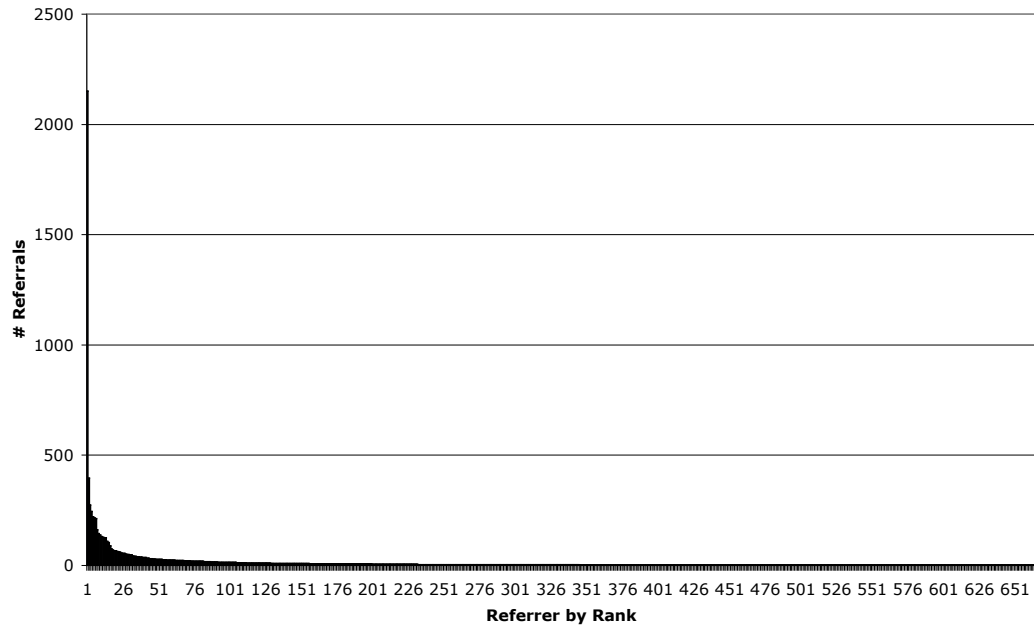


Chart 6

google.com	2150
yahoo.com	395
teacherweb.com	273
inxight.com	244
cs.uta.fi	221
healcentral.org	216
seattleschools.org	213
nsf.gov	161
wisc.edu	144
google.co.in	138
msn.com	131
ucar.edu	128
cornell.edu	126
blogspot.com	126
usu.edu	108
dlib.org	104
google.co.uk	89
vlbrary.org	75
google.ca	70
csbsju.edu	67
wolfram.com	67
surveymonkey.com	62
secyt.gov.ar	61
wikipedia.org	60
dlese.org	56
shodor.org	55

altavista.com	54
opencontent.org	51
kent.edu	50
rosettaproject.org	49
dana-wh.net	48
k12.co.us	48
washington.edu	43
stanford.edu	41
nanorobotdesign.com	40
aol.com	39
siu.edu	39
colorado.edu	38
uen.org	38
google.com.tw	36
exploratorium.edu	36
divched.org	35
amser.org	33
k12.ca.us	32
google.it	30
asdk12.org	30
educationworld.com	29
wa.edu.au	29
kids.gov	28
opencourse.org	28
naver.com	28
google.de	28
rice.edu	27
icio.us	26
ipmnet.ru	26
mathdl.org	25
compadre.org	24
lii.org	24
asdlb.org	24
simmons.edu	23
ucr.edu	23
apa.org	23
k12.mi.us	22
google.co.th	22
google.es	22
libraryjournal.com	22
williamstallings.com	22
carleton.edu	22
storyline.com	21
eschoolnews.com	20
edc.org	20
khake.com	20
reciprocalnet.org	20

3 Search

The way that Omniture is currently set up means that it is not possible to track the use of the search pages. I'm not sure of the finer technical details, but after some calls to Omniture, as I understand it, apparently our configuration does not yet recognize how to parse URLs with query strings into separate report categories. At the moment therefore Omniture does not distinguish between:

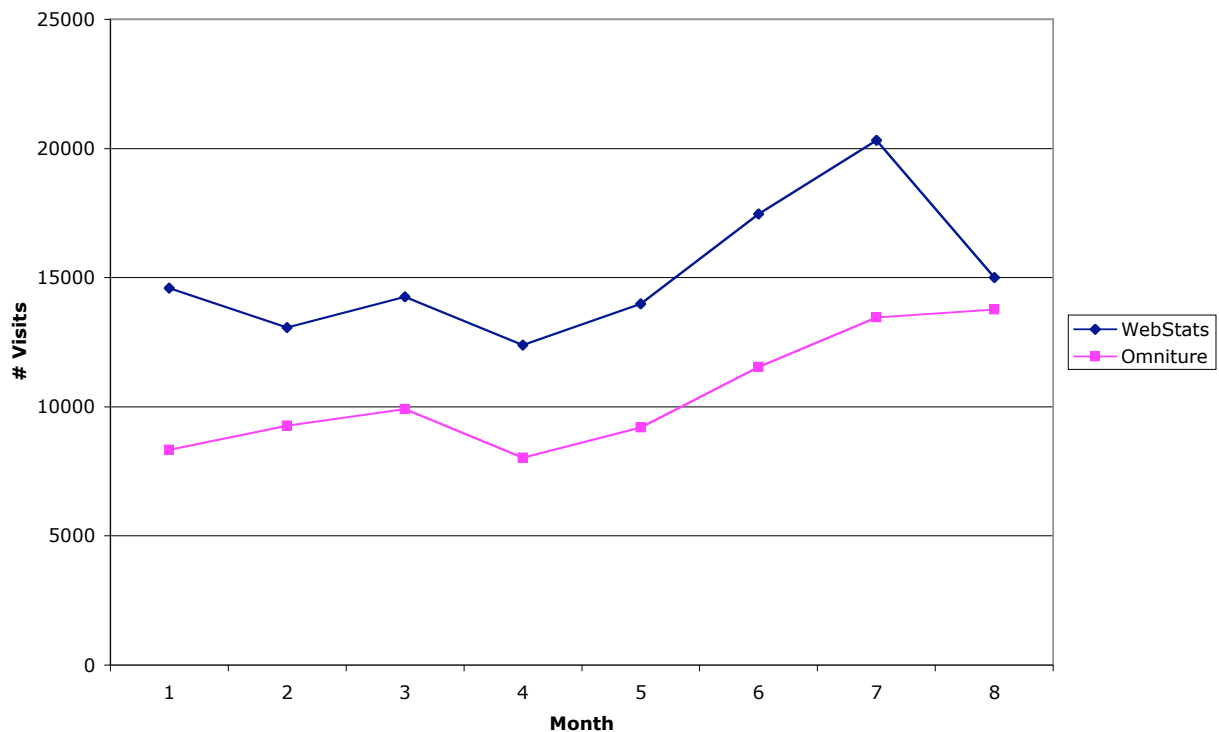
- the front page search results page <http://nsdl.org/search/?formview=>
- the advanced search page <http://nsdl.org/search/>
- the advanced search page results page <http://nsdl.org/search/index.php?verb=>

I've spoken with Alex and Karen regarding placing an item in Work Tracker to resolve this.

4 Omniture vs. WebStats

A comparison of Omniture and the existing nsdl.org WebStats (<http://content.nsdl.org/cgi-bin/metrics/awstats.pl?config=nsdl2.org>) shows some difference between the two metrics with respect to visits, but also that the two metrics track together quite well (Chart 7). I assume that the difference lies mainly with the Omniture filters that catch bots, crawlers, etc. There is however some divergence for the month of November.

WebStats vs. Omniture, April-November 2005



5 CI Log-ins

I have set up an Omniture account for CI folks. The account will let you see the traffic for nsdl.org, as well as for the 'roll-up' suite of all the associated project metrics aggregated into one report. If you would like a login, please contact me directly at UCAR.