

The State of The Diamondback

Oct. 3, 2019

Audience Overview: how big is our audience?

A comparison of the last three months:

dbknews.com traffic	Sept. 1 - Sept. 30, 2019	Aug. 1 - Aug. 31, 2019	July 1 - July 31, 2019
Sessions	234,036	117,234	81,371
Users	168,603	92,042	66,849
New users	150,264	84,548	59,974
Pageviews	359,422	177,123	122,432
Pages per session	1.54	1.51	1.50
Average session length in minutes	00:00:53	00:00:46	00:00:45
Bounce rate	79.84%	81.38%	80.03%

In our first full month back, our numbers have stabilized to pre-break levels, even exceeding those levels in some cases. For example, 168,603 users is **the most monthly users we've had in 2019**.

We also saw a **99.6 percent increase in sessions**, which is indicative of the return to the routine of the school year. The return to College Park often incites a revival of interest in local news.

Not only are people clicking more, but they're reading more. Our pages per session have increased by 2 percent, and our average session length has increased by 15.2 percent. While these increases are small, they are **indicative of a positive trend**.

A Comparison of September 2019 and September 2018

dbknews.com traffic	Sept. 1 - Sept. 30, 2019	Aug. 1 - Aug. 31, 2018	% change 2018 - 2019
Sessions	234,036	264,808	-11.6%
Users	168,603	184,652	-8.7%
New users	150,264	161,202	-6.8%
Pageviews	359,422	384,906	-6.6%
Pages per session	1.54	1.45	6.2%
Average session length in minutes	00:00:53	00:01:14	-28.4%
Bounce rate	79.84%	14.61%	-65.2%

Just like August 2018, September 2018 was full of quite high-profile stories, including a car crash that affected several students and an obituary stemming from that crash, the controversial “White Awake” club, and students sleeping in air-conditioned lounges, as well as continued McNair coverage.

This year, we just haven’t had to deal with the events of the same magnitude as last year. And, barring any unexpected major newsworthy events, **we probably will not be able to match last fall’s levels of engagement.** It will be more helpful to compare each month to those preceding it, as that is a more realistic comparison.

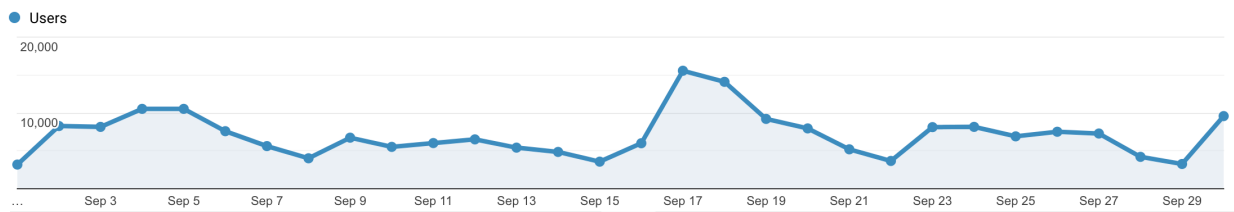
One number of concern from last month was our bounce rate. Since switching publishing systems last October, our bounce rate has been consistently higher than in the past. And given the looming end of print, this is something that deserves attention.

Bounce rate is the percentage of people leaving a page on our site without browsing any other content. We want people to be perusing our site so they can get as much content as they would from the printed paper, so having a lower bounce rate would indicate that they are doing that.

However, **having a high bounce rate is not necessarily bad.** In fact, it’s quite common for news sites: people often come for a specific reason, are satisfied and leave. This is especially prevalent with mobile users, which is reflected in the segmented bounce rates. The bounce rate for desktop users is 74.69 percent, while the bounce rate for mobile users is 82.07 percent.

Attempts to decrease bounce rate could include an increased number of “Read more” embedded links, including one at the very end of an article.

A Look at Day-to-Day Traffic



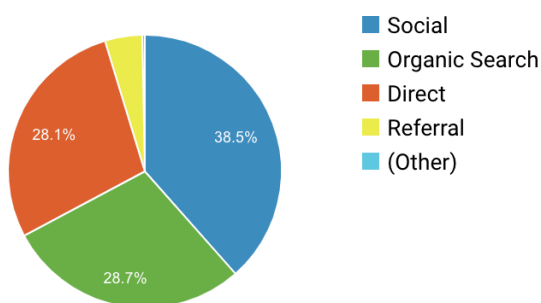
This breakdown makes sense, as it follows our normal trend of lower traffic on the weekends and relatively steady weekday traffic. Sept. 17 is of note, however, as we had **close to 15,600 users** that day. This spike corresponds to our very well-received article about the Key of David demonstrators and university students' counterprotest.

Several of our staff members were at the scene and live-tweeted the events, leading to semi-viral tweets like [this](#). This was crucial to our coverage, as this content is often more well-received when coming from a recognizable human than a news organization. This is seen when you compare the previous tweet's engagement to that of [this tweet](#). Retweeting content like this onto our page is a tactic that will be good to keep in mind.

In addition, our coverage was reproduced on baltimoresun.com, in an article that linked to our site. This, as well as being good recognition for our reporters' hard work, is excellent for our digital presence. Their linking to our coverage hopefully directed at least some traffic to our site, and it serves as good publicity — a way of **showing The Sun's audience we can be a valuable resource for them**.

How did people find our coverage of the demonstration?

Top Channels

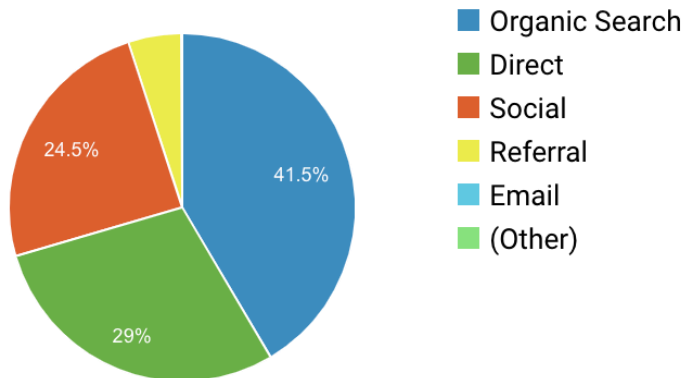


A plurality of the sessions came from social, which makes sense given the online buzz about the situation. However, we also got a lot of traffic from organic search, which is an indication that our use of SEO was successful in this case.

This whole situation gives us a good sense of what our readers care about and how they prefer to interact with our content, which is crucial information to have in our transition to online-only.

The Top Channels Directing to dbknews.com

Top Channels



Our top channels remain pretty standard. Organic search is still the highest percentage of traffic, which is confirmation that **our SEO-friendly headlines are working.**

Last month, there was some concern with the social channel, which only directed 17 percent of our traffic. This month **social brought in about a fourth of our traffic — 24.5 percent** — which is one of the best performances in recent history. There were two weeks in September where about

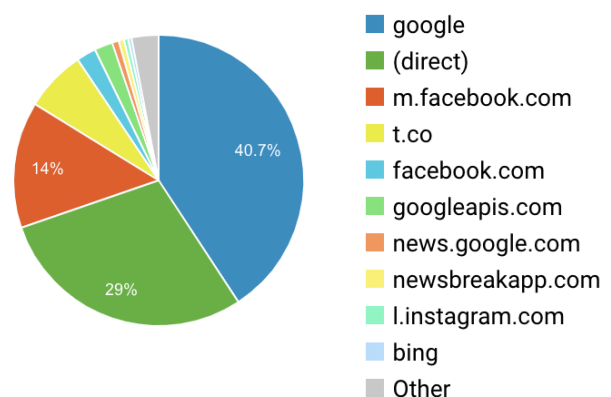
30 percent of all dbknews.com sessions came from social, which is a testament to our engagement team's hard work and indicates a **positive direction for The Diamondback's online presence.**

The Top Sources Directing to dbknews.com

Google remains a top source for our site, which again reflects a high percentage of organic searches. **The divide between mobile and desktop users is alive and well** — m.facebook.com (Facebook for mobile) and t.co (Twitter for mobile) are very high on this list, while facebook.com is lower and twitter.com still does not feature.

The noteworthy statistic here is the appearance of **newsbreakapp.com**, which has never been featured in this list before. The News Break app is a geolocation-aware app that allows users to easily access local news content. The percentage of sessions directed from this source is not negligible — it's definitely worth investigating the app and its influence on the media landscape. There may be some value to get from this app.

Top Sources



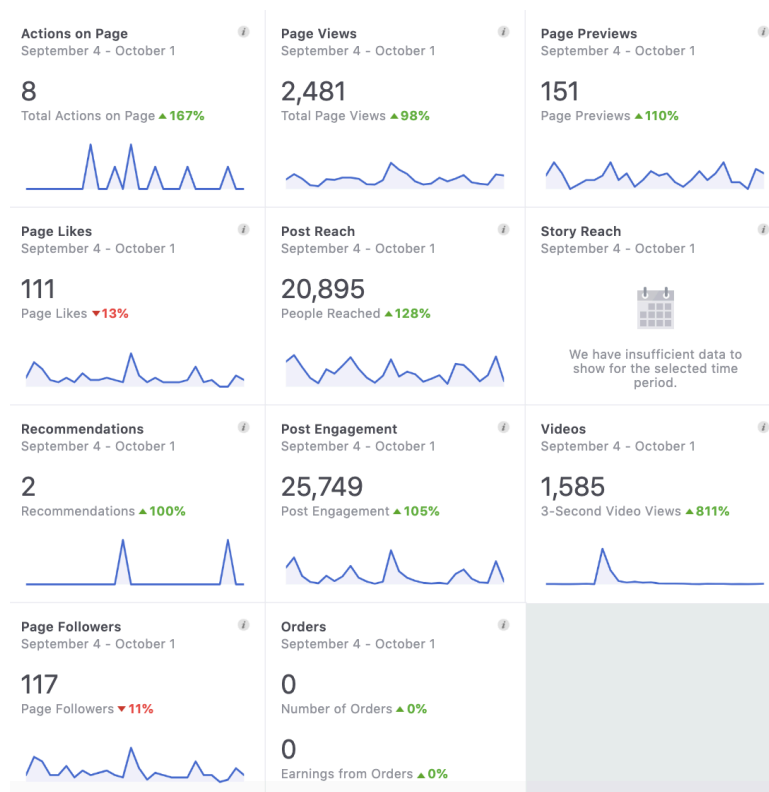
Checking in on Twitter

28 day summary with change over previous period



These statistics show a marked improvement from our summer online presence. We hit **over 1 million impressions** and got five times as many profile visits, which is valuable. If we continue our **rigid tweeting schedule** we should be able to increase these numbers further.











Checking in on Facebook



In the same vein, we are seeing substantial improvement in our Facebook engagement. We **doubled both our Post Reach and our Page Views**, which is excellent for audience outreach. It is important to note the **loss of Page Likes and Page Followers** — we need to take a look at our posting and style and evaluate whether we are pushing our audience away in any way.

Behavior Overview: what is our audience doing?


The Most Popular Stories of September

<input type="checkbox"/>	Page ?	Pageviews ? ↓	Unique Pageviews ?	Avg. Time on Page ?	Entrances ?	Bounce Rate ?
		359,422 % of Total: 100.00% (359,422)	295,089 % of Total: 100.00% (295,089)	00:01:40 Avg for View: 00:01:40 (0.00%)	234,028 % of Total: 100.00% (234,028)	79.84% Avg for View: 79.84% (0.00%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. / 	33,042 (9.19%)	22,017 (7.46%)	00:00:54	19,393 (8.29%)	30.42%
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. /2019/09/17/umd-sexist-protest-key-of-david-christian-center/ 	27,152 (7.55%)	23,189 (7.86%)	00:03:49	21,989 (9.40%)	83.31%
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. /2019/09/04/umd-old-bay-crab-box-dining-services-cost/ 	6,876 (1.91%)	6,455 (2.19%)	00:02:37	5,833 (2.49%)	88.26%
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. /category/news/ 	6,416 (1.79%)	4,321 (1.46%)	00:00:56	1,415 (0.60%)	75.76%
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. /2019/09/02/katrina-dennis-board-of-regents-dies-breast-cancer/ 	5,132 (1.43%)	4,810 (1.63%)	00:01:58	4,463 (1.91%)	93.70%
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. /2019/09/02/umd-student-yudi-konwar-microphone-assam-delta-epsilon-memorial-obituary/ 	4,997 (1.39%)	4,548 (1.54%)	00:02:44	3,842 (1.64%)	88.37%
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. /2019/09/22/grace-vanderwaal-ur-so-beautiful-930-club-concert-review/ 	4,796 (1.33%)	4,507 (1.53%)	00:03:39	4,453 (1.90%)	93.20%
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. /2019/09/02/marathon-deli-lotsa-insomnia-cookies-eps-cb-chinese-demolish/ 	4,652 (1.29%)	4,146 (1.40%)	00:02:23	3,182 (1.36%)	82.46%
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. /category/sports/ 	4,417 (1.23%)	3,477 (1.18%)	00:00:47	1,711 (0.73%)	80.01%
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. /2019/09/05/new-restaurant-umd-college-park-qdoba-hotpot-open/ 	4,343 (1.21%)	3,874 (1.31%)	00:02:53	3,250 (1.39%)	81.75%


The pages listed here reflect the most-viewed stories and sections for all users. The “/” represents our homepage. The next most-viewed story was the article about the Key of David demonstrators, which was discussed at length in [A Look at Day-to-Day Traffic](#).

Other notable stories include the feature article on the Dining Services’ student “Welcome Box,” which is a **quirky topic that incited online discussion**. Other top articles include a student obituary and an announcement of Regent Katrina Dennis’ death, as well as updates on which College Park businesses are closing/opening. **Obituaries and articles about changing student life often do well**, which gives us a good sense of what students are interested in knowing about their university.

September's top tweets

Tweets	Top Tweets	Tweets and replies	Promoted	Impressions	Engagements	Engagement rate
	The Diamondback @thedbk · Sep 30 The Diamondback will publish its final print edition in March. dbknews.com/2019/09/30/dia... View Tweet activity			62,673	3,046	4.9%
					Promote	

Ironically, our top tweet this month was our announcement of the end of print. An announcement like this is always going to get a lot of engagement, especially because a lot of our audience has some sort of emotional tie to the paper, like DBK alumni.

	The Diamondback @thedbk · Sep 4 Opinion: If Marathon Deli dies, College Park dies, too. dbknews.com/2019/09/04/col... View Tweet activity			18,118	1,703	9.4%
					Promote	

Our second top tweet was an opinion piece disparaging attempts at development in College Park. Marathon Deli is a beloved institution in the city, and many people are worried it will close. By mentioning it by name and hinting at its possible demise, this tweet does a good job of drawing people in. This tweet resulted in **nearly 1000 link clicks**.