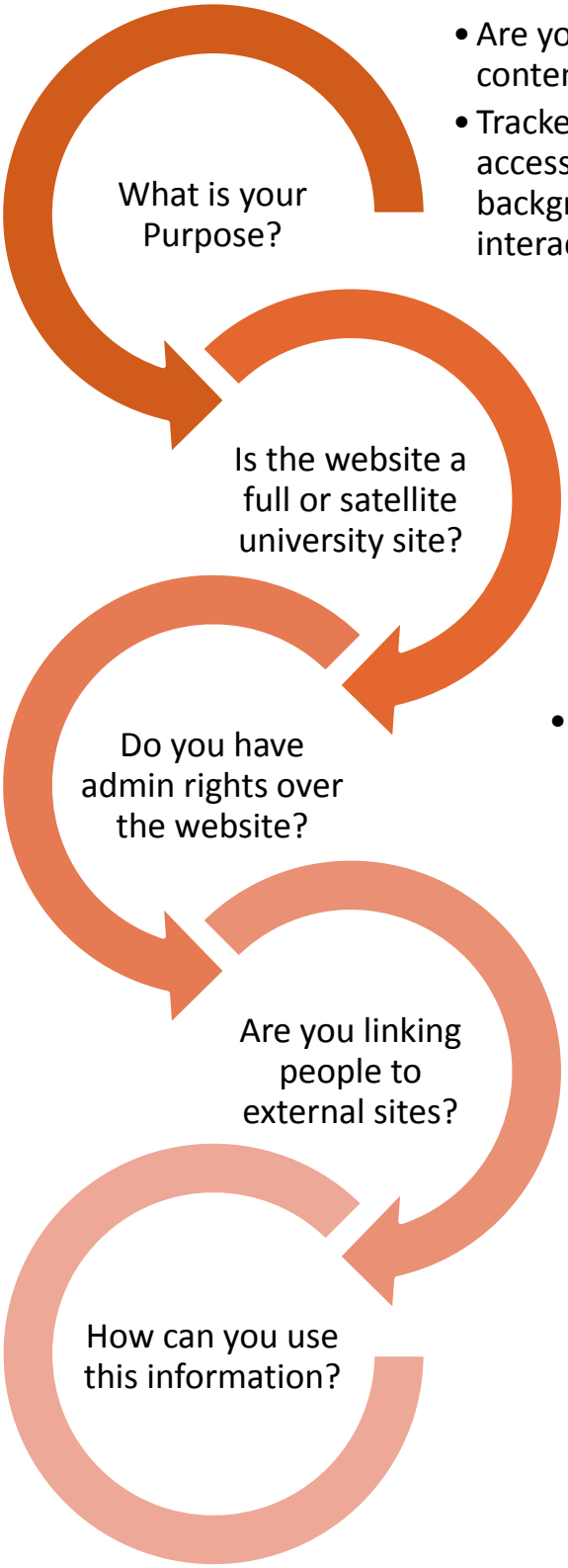
Evaluating Activity Online

A wide range of public engagement can take place online, however without face-to-face interaction it can be hard to measure the success of your activity. This guide explains two possible mechanisms for this.

For more guidance on planning and conducting evaluation, read our basic evaluation guide.

	Tracked Links	Google Analytics
What are they?	Tracked links can be clicked on by online users to direct them to specific webpages, which could feature information, media or surveys. As people click on these basic information is recorded, such as the number of times they've been used and when. This demonstrates whether people are using your information online to access other websites or further content.	This free service works in the background of webpages to monitor what people do while online. This information includes how many different people visit your website, how long they spend on there and some idea of what they do while on there. This allows you to find out whether people are using your website and to compare behaviour over different dates.
What are the Limits?	Tracked links only record the total number of times they've been clicked on, which means that two clicks could be from either two different people or the same person twice. Tracked links only record whether you directed people to a website, you won't know their behaviour once on there, did they read the whole thing or close the webpage immediately?	You must own the website to be able to set up Google Analytics, if it's a university website your web team will be able to do this for you. The service is more complicated to set up and use than tracked links, but once set up will rarely need changing. Consult your Web or IT team for more information and help setting up.
Method	Sign up to a free online bit.ly account to record data. Once on there enter the website you want people to visit into the box at the top of the page, then copy the link that appears and use that to direct people. The statistics will appear by selecting the relevant link in the left hand column of the website.	It is best to consult your IT or Web Team to ask how to set up Google Analytics for websites related to your work. Although more complicated than tracked links, you can set Google Analytics yourself, following their instructions, or this slightly easier to follow guide.

Which Tool is best for you?



- Are you measuring people's involvement with your content or the effectiveness of your promotion?
- Tracked links will show how many people use your links to access information but Google Analytics will run in the background of websites to record user behaviour and interaction with your content.

- If your website is part of the wider university website then your Web or IT team might have Google Analytics already running on the site. Contact them to check or set this up.

- If you run the website yourself you will be able to set up a Google Analytics account to monitor user behaviour. Contact your Web Team for information and help to set this up.

- You can't use Google Analytics on websites you don't own. However, if you're evaluating whether people are using your online content or social media to access information or content on external websites, then you can use tracked links to collect basic information.

- Our Evaluation Ideas for Online Activity guides provide some basic ideas of the online behaviour you can indicate using either Google Analytics or Tracked Links.

Google Analytics Evaluation Ideas

Target Users

Public engagement works best when targeted at a particular group of the public. Google Analytics can identify age, location and gender statistics to help identify who actually has been accessing the website.

Site Visitors

Find out how many people have accessed your website and whether this increased around related events and over time.

You can view total users and unique users, depending on what you're tracking.

Page Engagement

Analytics will show you average time spent on your pages, demonstrating whether people are reading through your content or quickly leaving the page.

You will also be able to see which pages people access from your site, indicating interests.

Tracked Links Evaluation ideas

User Behaviour

By tracking links throughout your pages you'll be able to see what people were most interested in.

e.g. This could be links to related information, or between media types, such as choosing to view either podcasts or videos.

Site Visitors

Find out how many people have accessed your website and get a rough idea whether this increased around related events.

.e.g. To evaluate whether traffic to the website increased after face-to-face activities.

Page Engagement

Tracked links throughout your page, such as a 'read on…' button to more information at the bottom, will indicate whether visitors remained engaged throughout the page.