The history of the internet site "Spiders from Europe and Australia"

In de mid-seventies I started working at the blood transfusion service in Amsterdam. One of my first investigations was at the allergy lab to identify the major allergens in wasp venom. The project started by catching different species of *Vespula* wasps occurring in The Netherlands. That was of course great fun. Having just bought a camera set I started to make pictures of these wasps. My interest in macro photography was born.

Because insects fly away, spiders were better targets. After a few years interest faded in macro photography because there was no purpose for my pictures. Like many guys I was interested in computers and started making computer programs for my lab and for fun.

After 15 years of programming I realised programming was a waist of time; you did not get rich, it took a lot of time to make a program and when the program was finished it was almost instantly old-fashioned.

The spider hobby was revived when I wanted to do something on the internet. The spiders and insects photos were scanned, identified and the first web pages were made. The first roots for this web site were seeded on 10 March 1996. There was an immunology page, a spider page and an insect page. (The web site www.archive.org makes copies of web sites. The oldest copy of my site is from 6 December 1998).

I started almost blank with my knowledge of spiders and made the best of it with my three books about spiders and an insect field guide from 1972.

I soon realised I needed to specialise. "Spiders of Europe" was the first project. But that was soon reduced to "Spiders of NW-Europe". The insect page was after its first edition never updated again. Several holidays I visited France that lies a few hundres kilometres south of the Netherlands. It has much more country sites and because it is a little warmer it hosts more species. The holidays in France generated many pictures from many species.

Identifying the spiders was very difficult with only the picture spider guide from Dick Jones. But luckily the British arachnology society – BAS - came with a site on the internet and I made contact with several arachnologists to help me. Soon there after several people associated with WIS, now ARABEL, from Belgium assisted me with help and advice.

In 1997 I went to Queensland on holiday. Together with my friend Ronald Loggen we made over 1500 pictures. When a film was full we developed them in a one hour shop.

With a few kg of pictures we came home and spent months identifying the photographed spiders. In that time "The silken web" of Bert Brunet was published and in second hand bookshops I found Australian spiders in colour of R. Mascord, A guide to Australian spiders by Densy Clyne and Australian spiders by Keith C. McKeown. The photo's were scanned and published on the internet. I returned to Australia several times and visited other parts of the country but never had such an amount of different species as in Queensland.

With all these pictures the administration of the photos and negatives became a

struggle. Luck for me my spider companion, who finds many of the spiders I shoot, is also a keen database programmer. We developed an Access database for the administration. But first we had to scan the 5000 negatives and positives with my new film scanner. Fortunately scanning of a negative takes some time (1-2 minutes) and while the scanner scans I was able to identify many of the spiders. For more than a year, after work, I went "upstairs" to my room for 30 - 60 minutes and "did some spiders", then I became hungry and went for dinner and took my rest.

The database stores information of the picture; the name of the creature, date and place where it was found, its quality, if it is published on a page, the film and negative number and so on. I now can make selections and print reports of all the pictures and its information in the database.
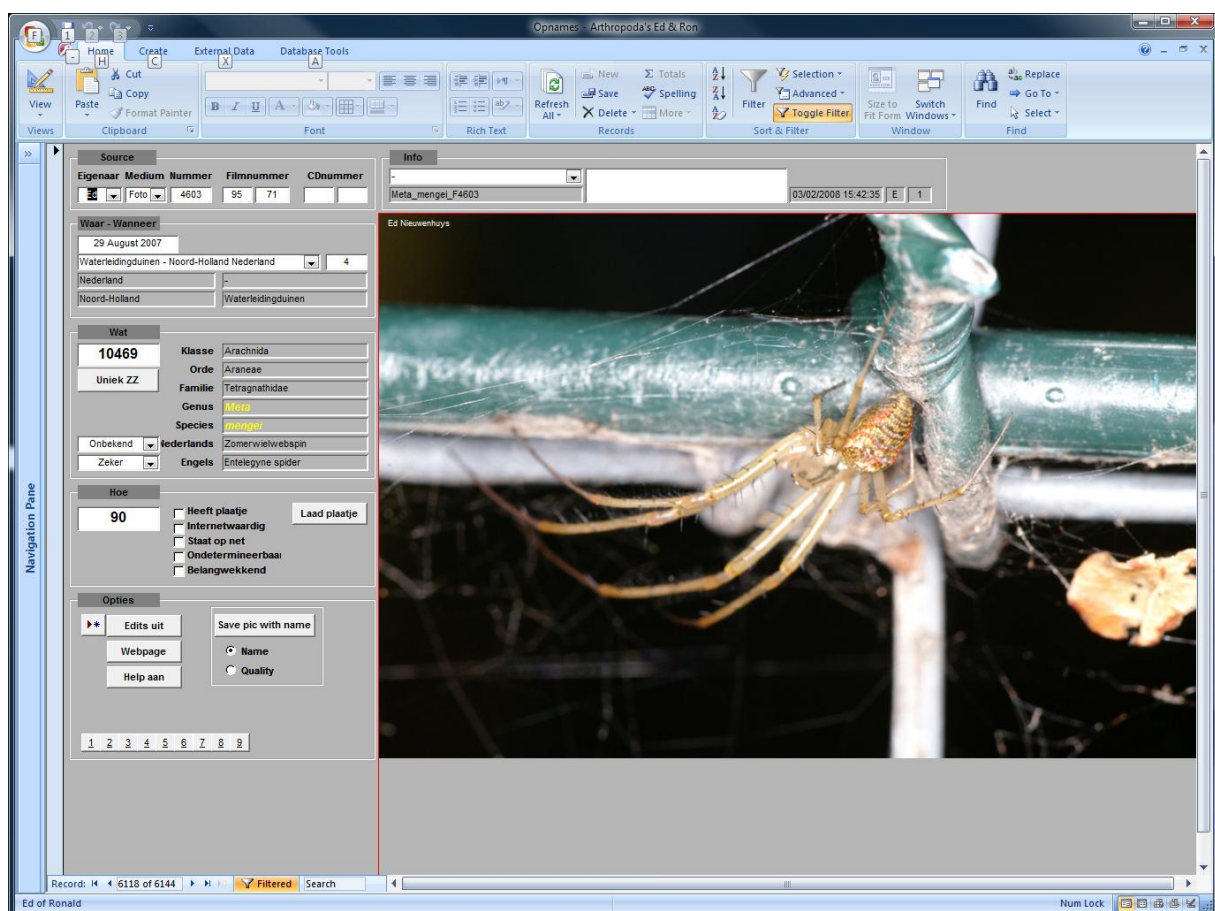
Until now I do not take specimen home to determine the species. Without a corpse determination is tricky, I know, but at the moment I start collection spiders, I have to stop being an amateur, then it becomes a profession. If I am unsure I call the spider ZZ +number and hope one of you will recognize it and give the spider a name. If a spiders is very small, rare or very difficult to identify it is not suitable for my site because its purpose is to let visitors have a better look at spiders, to appreciate them, to give them a change to identify the spider they are interested in and learn a little about its behaviour. I think I have found a balance between the fast modern internet visitor and the information given. The replies on many questions, asked by mail during the last ten years are incorporated in the pages.

The statistics of the visits of the pages is interesting to study.
From 13 feb 2007 – 12 feb 2008 there were 604,884 visits with 1.5 million page views. This year there were more visits to the Australian page than the European one. The European page is getting lesser visits and the Australian some more. I think there is some competition from American sites the last years because the amount of US-visitors is getting less.

Visits **604,884**	Pages/Visit **2.44**	Avg. Time on Site **00:02:15**	% New Visits **88.20%**		Bounce Rate **63.42%**
Country/Territory	Visits	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1. United States	295,905	2.03	00:01:43	91.13%	70.12%
2. Australia	62,732	**3.87**	**00:04:14**	86.84%	**39.97%**
3. United Kingdom	62,469	2.77	00:02:25	89.69%	57.13%
4. Netherlands	50,677	2.69	00:02:24	78.61%	58.08%
5. Canada	27,155	2.16	00:01:53	89.89%	67.96%
6. Belgium	20,310	2.86	00:02:27	81.03%	57.05%
7. Germany	8,007	2.79	00:02:24	88.42%	59.37%
8. France	6,141	2.79	00:02:18	83.52%	61.28%
9. Ireland	5,175	1.97	00:01:30	92.62%	75.01%
10. New Zealand	4,560	2.53	00:02:33	87.43%	60.18%
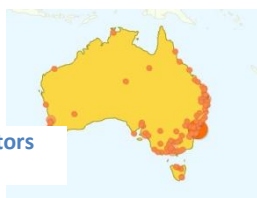
Where are the visitors coming from?

Most visitors are from the USA. The Netherlands and Australia have roughly the same amount of inhabitants and as one can see roughly the same amount of visitors. Australians stay significantly much longer on a page than other visitors. The bounce rate, i.e. the percentage of single-page visits, is also significantly much lower for Australians than for other countries. The same applies for the pages visited. I think we can conclude that Australians visit the site more to study than visitors from other countries. I think an average bounce rate of 63% is not bad. We can conclude that 1/3 of the visitors are serious visitors.

But what are they visiting? Not what I wanted. Spiderinfo.htm, on number 3, is one of my first attempts to write something about spiders. Number 13 "The spider" and number 6 "de spin" are the extended and modern multipage version written in English and Dutch I want visitors to read. But 100 visitors a day for both pages is still not bad if you do not look at their bounce rate and exit percentage. If you do exclude the probably non-readers, you see that only around 50 serious visitors a day are reading one of both pages.

Pageviews **1,477,707**	Unique Pageviews **1,039,720**		Time on page **00:01:33**	Bounce Rate **63.42%**	% Exit **40.93 %**
URL (NB The "Spiders" folder contains the European spider pages)		Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Time on Page	Bounce Rate	% Exit
1. australian/Spidaus.html		225,439	96,098	00:01:07	32.07%	25.43%
2. Spiders/spidhome.htm		160,876	86,566	00:01:06	47.71%	33.19%
3. Spiders/Info/spiderinfo.htm		57,696	47,862	00:03:15	73.32%	70.04%
4. Spiders/Famdraw/Locchart.htm		57,508	30,271	00:01:03	47.50%	32.35%
5. Spiders/thumbnails/spidhome_thumbnails.htm		52,234	33,743	00:01:55	60.54%	38.69%
6. Spiders/InfoNed/De_spin.html		36,906	25,207	00:01:28	53.01%	49.72%
7. Spiders/InfoNed/webthread.html		36,758	28,220	00:02:27	72.24%	52.24%
8. australian/huntsman/Huntsman.html		36,655	32,714	00:02:38	88.11%	68.27%
9. Spiders/Salticidae/Salticidae.htm		36,605	32,163	00:03:39	79.00%	73.62%
10. australian/araneidae/araneidae.html		34,270	24,071	00:01:29	74.78%	30.97%
11. australian/Mygalomorphae/Mygalomorphae.htm		33,563	25,163	00:01:44	73.02%	24.02%
12. australian/thomisidae/crabspiders.html		33,200	29,069	00:02:29	79.93%	70.37%
13. Spiders/InfoNed/The_spider.html		33,113	23,162	00:01:04	58.18%	34.23%
14. Spiders/Araneidae/Araneidae.htm		33,020	28,649	00:02:47	78.57%	60.05%
15. Spiders/Info/Construction_of_a_web.html		32,831	27,007	00:02:51	64.19%	62.22%

What are people doing on the site and why are they there?
Some will look for common spider information, mostly about silk and web construction. The other half looks for crab spiders, jumping spiders or spider pictures.
The search term "red back" in Google does not find my Theriid page in the first 50 entries of Google. But the search term "redback" does! I discovered that I misspelled redback for red back, but Google corrects this error. When you place "red back" between quotes the results are different again. The Theriid page is now on the second Google page. A trick to make use of misspellings is to use the different spellings on a page. If you do not want to show the text with misspellings you can make the text color the same as the background color and the text is hidden. When I checked the month February 2008 the Australian Theridiidae page has risen to place 9. The European Theriid page is on 59 of the around 150 pages.

You can see how people arrive at your site. 68% of the visitors are from search engines, 25% from referring sites and 7% is direct traffic. It is important to get high ratings in the search engines and get linked from high rated sites. I can not answer the question how I did manage to get so many visitors, or better to get so high in search engine results. I know that links to your site from other sites helps but also that the page should be alive. I think that the "time on page" and "bounce rate" are also a parameters that are used in the ranking.
Unfortunately you can not ask why visitors bounce but you can investigate with what phrases they found your site. Two simple search terms, Australian spiders and spiders attracts 10% of the visitors. The bounce rate and average time on site between the two search terms is again significantly different.

	Search keyword	Visits	Pages/ Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1	australian spiders	29,717	4.86	00:05:07	88.35%	24.00%
2	spiders	14,127	3.13	00:02:45	86.52%	54.07%
3	crab spider	13,040	1.4	00:01:02	92.63%	80.43%
4	spider identification	9,136	3.01	00:02:09	96.73%	54.47%
5	spin (spider in Dutch)	8,424	3.13	00:02:09	84.58%	52.77%
6	spinnen	8,087	3.48	00:02:42	76.96%	52.79%
7	crab spiders	7,660	1.54	00:01:11	90.82%	76.80%
8	jumping spiders	6,881	1.43	00:01:34	91.41%	74.26%
9	spider web	6,880	1.84	00:02:01	89.58%	63.58%
10	spider silk	6,439	1.78	00:02:28	84.22%	65.68%

I use Google analytics to analyse the site. It is great to use and it gives you much more information than the few examples I have shown you here. You can even see from what town a visitor on a given time on a given date on a given time came from and what pages they visited.
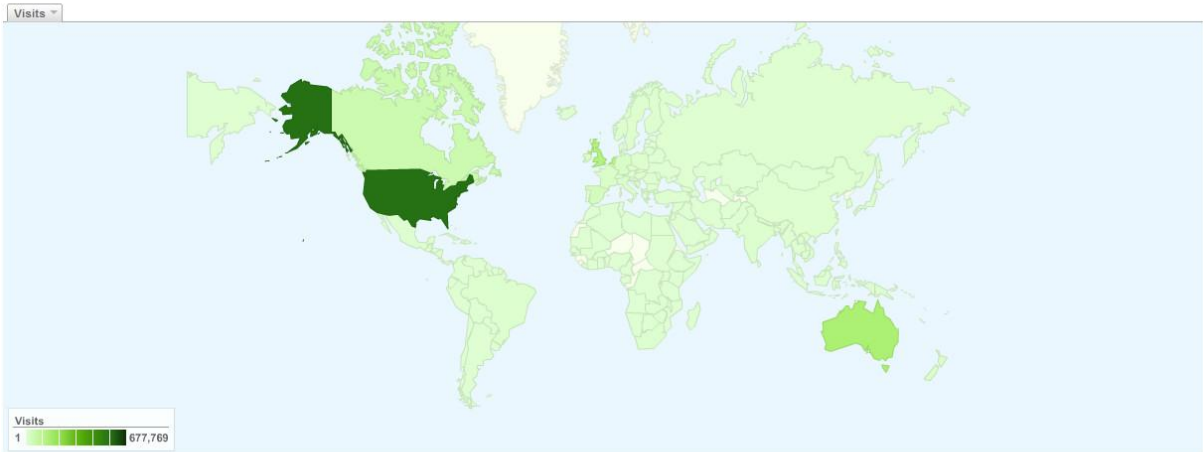
1. Nerang	295	4.44	00:05:02	87.46%	31.53%

Since September 2007 visits from Nerang (QLD, Australia) is increasing rapidly from 1 to 6 per day. These people seem very interested! (But what about privacy?)

Ed Nieuwenhuys
2008-2009

Map Overlay

Visits ▾

Visits
1 ▬▬▬▬▬ 677,769

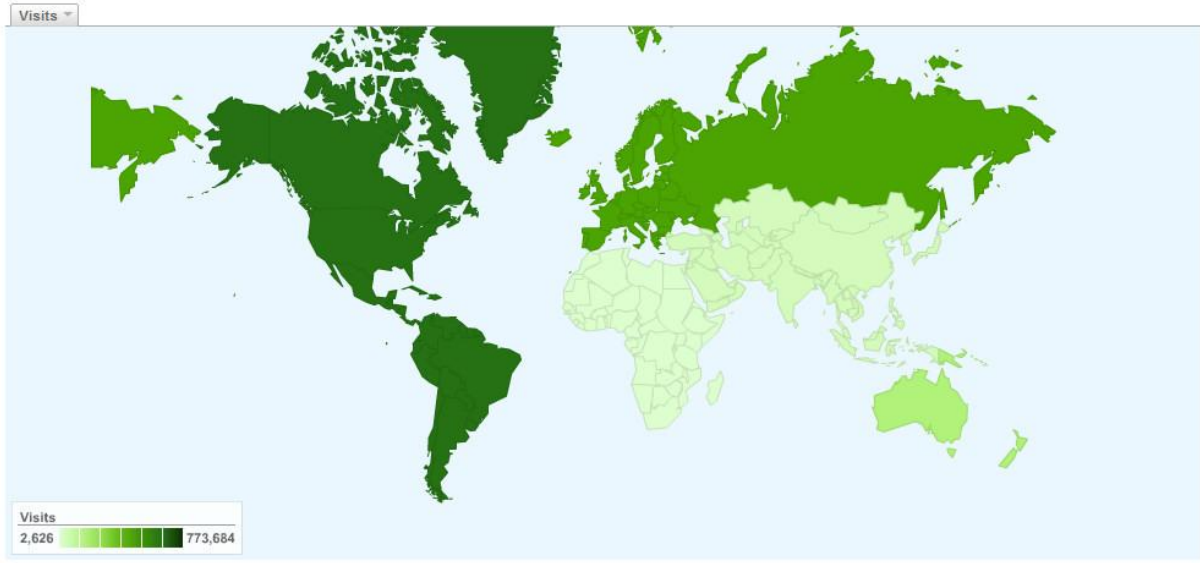**1,591,133 visits came from 221 countries/territories**

Detail Level: City | Country/Territory | Sub Continent Region | Continent   Dimension: None ▾

Site Usage	Goal Set 1				Views: ⊞ ◑ ≣ ⊹ ∭
Visits ⑦ **1,591,133** % of Site Total: 100.00%	Pages/Visit ⑦ **2.37** Site Avg: 2.37 (0.00%)	Avg. Time on Site ⑦ **00:02:13** Site Avg: 00:02:13 (0.00%)	% New Visits ⑦ **88.50%** Site Avg: 88.39% (0.12%)	Bounce Rate ⑦ **64.07%** Site Avg: 64.07% (0.00%)	

	Detail Level: Country/Territory ▾	Visits ↓	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1.	United States	677,769	1.93	00:01:36	91.47%	71.27%
2.	Australia	191,715	3.62	00:04:03	86.78%	40.71%
3.	United Kingdom	164,948	2.57	00:02:15	89.87%	59.48%
4.	Netherlands	152,568	2.95	00:02:36	79.68%	53.93%
5.	Canada	69,439	2.15	00:02:49	90.31%	67.77%
6.	Belgium	49,316	2.85	00:02:24	81.97%	57.81%
7.	Spain	40,991	1.30	00:00:32	93.89%	92.08%
8.	Germany	24,235	2.57	00:02:13	89.15%	60.72%
9.	France	19,014	2.55	00:02:09	84.55%	63.17%
10.	Ireland	14,783	1.85	00:01:21	93.62%	76.83%

Map Overlay

Visits ▾
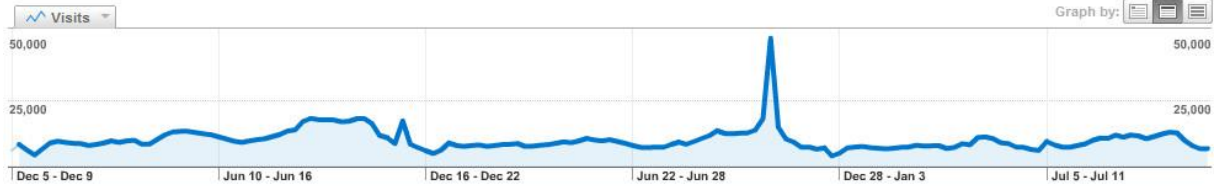
Visits
2,626 ▮▮▮▮▮▮ 773,684

1,591,133 visits came from 6 continents

Detail Level: City | Country/Territory | Sub Continent Region | Continent   Dimension: None ☒

| Site Usage | Goal Set 1 | | | | Views: ▦ ◉ ☰ ⵣ ▥ |

Visits (?)	Pages/Visit (?)	Avg. Time on Site (?)	% New Visits (?)	Bounce Rate (?)
1,591,133	**2.37**	**00:02:13**	**88.50%**	**64.07%**
% of Site Total: 100.00%	Site Avg: 2.37 (0.00%)	Site Avg: 00:02:13 (0.00%)	Site Avg: 88.39% (0.12%)	Site Avg: 64.07% (0.00%)

	Detail Level: Continent ☒	Visits ↓	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1.	Americas	773,684	1.95	00:01:43	91.33%	71.14%
2.	Europe	542,915	2.56	00:02:15	85.45%	61.58%
3.	Oceania	205,326	3.54	00:03:57	86.85%	42.12%
4.	Asia	54,457	2.06	00:02:14	84.95%	70.17%
5.	Africa	12,125	2.06	00:02:14	88.68%	68.84%
6.	(not set)	2,626	2.34	00:02:11	89.22%	61.88%

Traffic Sources Overview

Visits ▾   Graph by:

50,000	50,000
25,000	25,000

Dec 5 - Dec 9 | Jun 10 - Jun 16 | Dec 16 - Dec 22 | Jun 22 - Jun 28 | Dec 28 - Jan 3 | Jul 5 - Jul 11

All traffic sources sent a total of 1,591,133 visits

- **6.92%** Direct Traffic
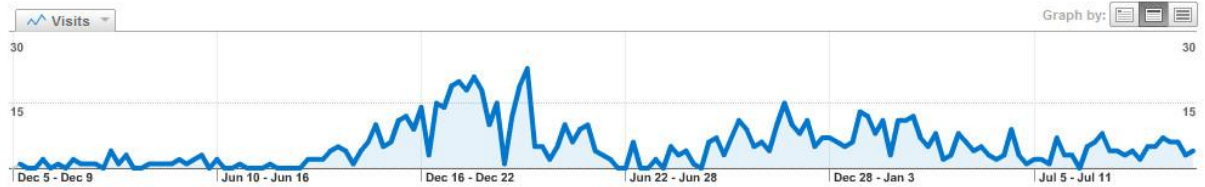- **26.37%** Referring Sites
- **66.66%** Search Engines

- ■ Search Engines 1,060,720.00 (66.66%)
- ■ Referring Sites 419,561.00 (26.37%)
- ■ Direct Traffic 110,180.00 (6.92%)
- ■ Other 672 (0.04%)
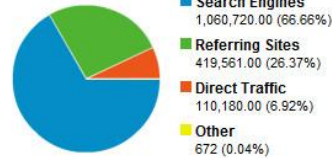
Top Traffic Sources

Sources	Visits	% visits
google (organic)	908,432	57.09%
(direct) ((none))	110,180	6.92%
ask (organic)	58,967	3.71%
yahoo (organic)	46,484	2.92%
yonkis.com (referral)	38,481	2.42%

Keywords	Visits	% visits
australian spiders	78,408	8.24%
spinnen	28,552	3.00%
spiders	23,769	2.50%
crab spiders	16,767	1.76%
spiders in australia	16,694	1.75%

City Detail:
Nerang

Visits ▾   Graph by:

30	30
15	15

Dec 5 - Dec 9 | Jun 10 - Jun 16 | Dec 16 - Dec 22 | Jun 22 - Jun 28 | Dec 28 - Jan 3 | Jul 5 - Jul 11

This city sent 808 visits

Site Usage | Goal Set 1   Views:

None ▾

- **808** Visits
  % of Site Total: 0.05%
- **00:04:03** Avg. Time on Site
  Site Avg: 00:02:13 (83.03%)
- **37.13%** Bounce Rate
  Site Avg: 64.07% (-42.05%)
- **3.78** Pages/Visit
  Site Avg: 2.37 (59.56%)
- **87.38%** % New Visits
  Site Avg: 88.39% (-1.15%)

Visitors Overview

Dec 5, 2006 - Dec 5, 2009

Visitors — Graph by:

50,000 · 25,000 · 25,000 · 50,000

Dec 5 - Dec 9 | Jun 10 - Jun 16 | Dec 16 - Dec 22 | Jun 22 - Jun 28 | Dec 28 - Jan 3 | Jul 5 - Jul 11
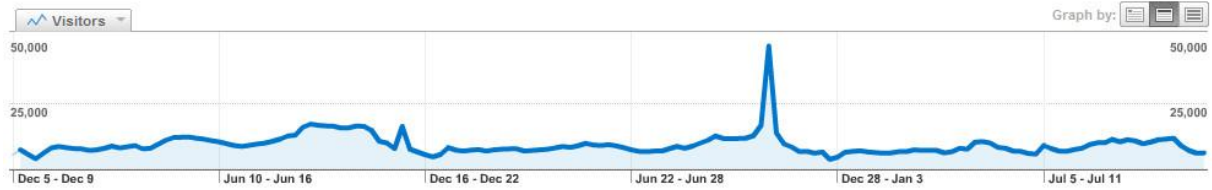
1,407,838 people visited this site

1,591,133 **Visits**

1,407,838 **Absolute Unique Visitors**

3,767,986 **Pageviews**

2.37 **Average Pageviews**

00:02:13 **Time on Site**

64.07% **Bounce Rate**

88.39% **New Visits**