DATA IS THE NEW OIL

How to turn data into money.

Insights from CIMSOURCE

Yes, but like oil, raw data isn't valuable until it's refined.

See how to generate INSIGHTS from your product data worldwide!

CIMSOURCE
DIGITAL TOOL SERVICES

DATA IS THE NEW OIL?
HOW TO TURN PRODUCT DATA INTO DATA PRODUCTS

by Johannes Braun

The much-cited imperative of the Internet age "Data is the new oil!" must be put into perspective with regard to product data. Because a closer look makes it clear: it is the metadata that is worth mining for. It is access patterns and user profiles that are used by online platforms and retailers to generate advertising revenue and to market information without giving the originator of the product data a corresponding share.

With the help of our Business Intelligence & DataScience team (BI/DaSc), we want to change that. The aim is to shift the balance of power between manufacturers and online sales partners in favour of the tool manufacturers. The key to success should be the product data provided by the manufacturers. The idea is that anyone who wants to use the product data "pays" with access patterns.

"To identify access patterns, we need user data," says the BI/DaSc team. And collecting user data rings data protection alarm bells. So how do we make data collection compliant with DSGVO? "We need user consent if we are talking about personal data," is the answer from our data protection officer.
In the case of the ToolsUnited platform, this can be done easily via the corresponding registration. To be precise: By using only the log files of the ToolsUnited database, which do not contain any personal data (see Figure 1). In this way, each tool manufacturer can learn which tools are searched for, for which products data is downloaded and for which target system.

Who accessed from which region, how it came to a "hit" on ToolsUnited in the first place, this information provides "WebAnalytics" integrated into the ToolsUnited GUI. The prerequisite is that the respective user has agreed to the "cookies". The trade is: The customer wants to see product data reveals his identity and behaviour pattern in return. Both data sources, the ToolsUnited
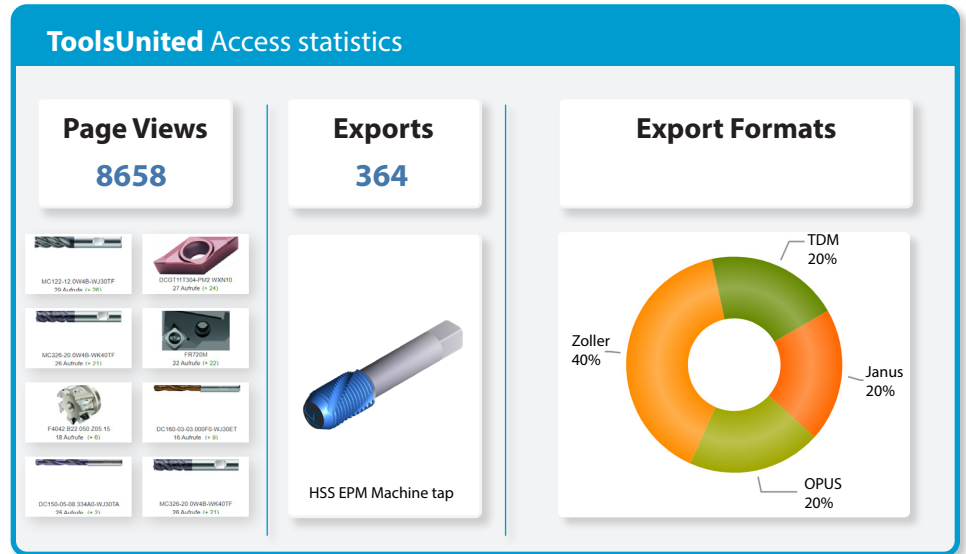

Fig.1: ToolsUnited access statistics based on log files without personal data

"logs" and the "WebAnalytics" have been combined by our BI/DaSc team in a single cockpit. This allows every tool manufacturer to see what is happening on ToolsUnited. So far, so good. It would be really exciting to see what happens overall with the product data provided.

"We need the user data from the corresponding online channels," was the answer from the BI/DaSc team. How do we get that? The idea: What if we place the product data technically the way advertisers do with banners or ads?
"That is conceivable if we (ToolsUnited) deliver

Fig. 3: Data Science Team: Hendrik (Front End), Ivy (Algorithm), Johannes (Front End), Andre (Database)

WebAnalytics Cockpit AnyTool

Pageviews	Visits	Visitors
117,012	**76,059**	**68,066**

Timeline

Toolsearch

Visitors
9.3%
88.4%

Where from?
What for?
Who searches?

Select Domain for Analysis

Traffic AnyTool

Traffic ToolsUnited
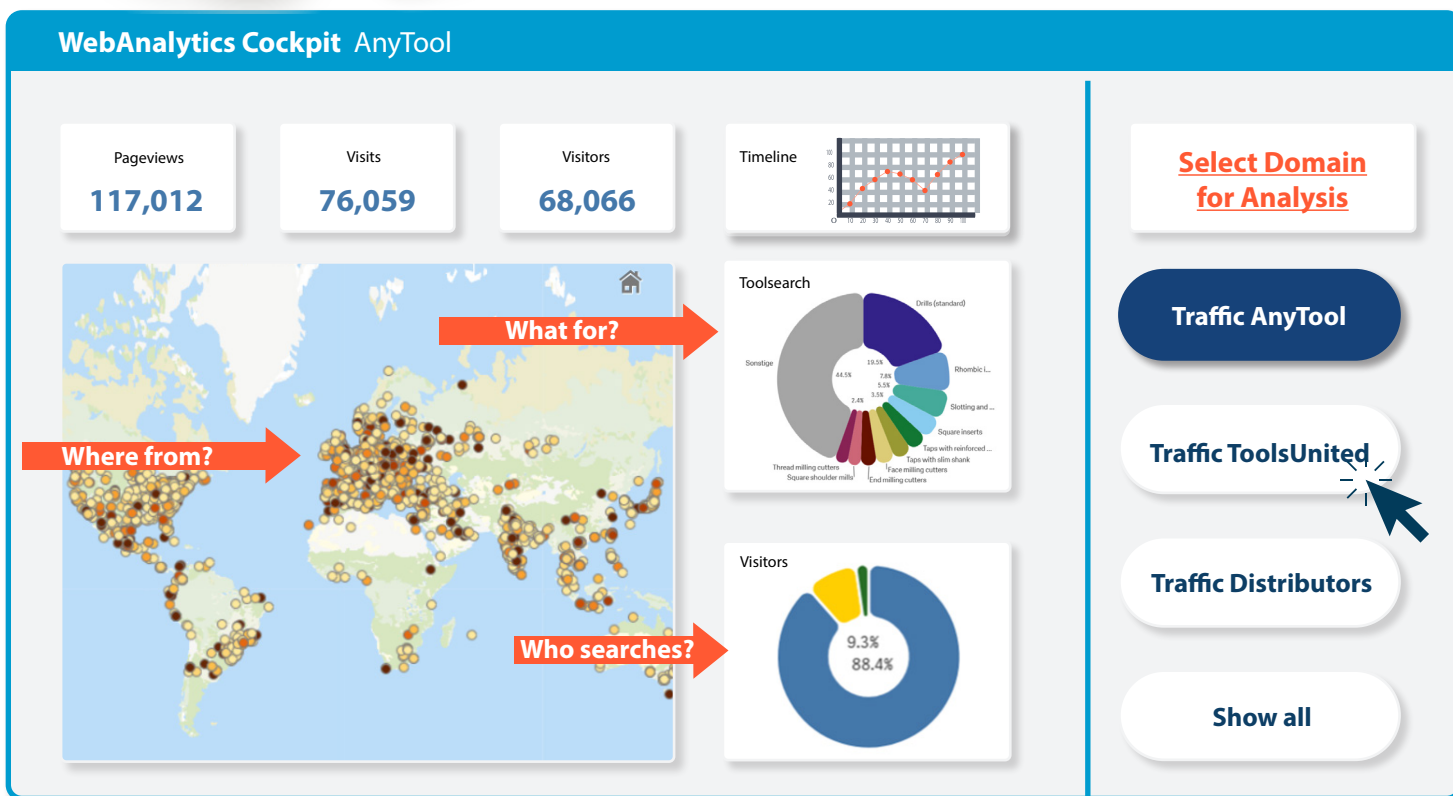
Traffic Distributors

Show all

Fig. 2: Cross-domain WebAnalytics Cockpit provides the tool manufacturer, as the originator of the data, with access statistics in the context of global market activity

the data," said the CIMSOURCE developers. No sooner said than done. For tool manufacturers who organize data provision via a "SalesSupportServer" (myToolsUnited), testing of the cross-domain ToolsUnited traffic cockpit is underway (see Figure 2).

"And what about online sales partners? What about the web sites of our distributors, whom we also supply with product data?" ask the beta testers of the ToolsUnited Traffic Cockpit. "We connect them with the same method," says the CIMSOURCE software team. Technically, this involves a connection from the online partner's website to the originator via the delivered product data record.

Which product was accessed and whether a download took place can thus be "tracked" across domains. The product data thus become data products that the tool manufacturer delivers as originator in exchange for interaction data from the data consumers. In order to put the access statistics in the context of worldwide market

activity according to user groups, product categories and regional markets, so-called conversion pixels are still necessary for tracking. And their use requires the consent of the website visitor.

Even if the deal "product data against access profile" between tool manufacturer and online partner stands, the collected data will be incomplete because of that.

The use of cookies might be declined, browser histories might be deleted... So using WebAnalytics also means to learn how to use the statistical perspectives. Unlike concrete sales figures and comparable facts, WebAnalytics does not deliver absolute truth.

Privacy by Design?

The big challenge for the ToolsUnited Traffic Cockpit remains data protection, especially the protection of customers' privacy. It can be assumed that the acceptance of classic

cookies or conversion pixels will continue to decline. True to our motto - "creative thinking .- tangible results" the BI/DaSc Team Science came up with this idea: To replace individual user identification with the categorization of interaction patterns using machine learning methods. And thus make the collection of personal data superfluous. Initial tests in the context of our "Data Science" working group are promising.

Stay tuned!

"The world's most valuable resource is no longer oil, but data."

The Economist, 2017

HERE'S HOW COMPANIES ARE MAKING MONEY FROM PRODUCT DATA:

Data driven services add value

• Tooling-as-a-Service: Instead of selling a tool once, offer predictive replacement services based on wear data.

• Machining recommendations: Provide cutting parameter suggestions tailored to customer machines and materials — a service powered by your digital product data.

• Digital twins: Sell access to high-quality 3D models, material behavior data, or simulation-ready files as part of a premium support package.

Improve Sales Through Smart Catalogs

• Enable real-time configuration and quoting: Let users generate part numbers, get instant pricing, and configure products based on real data.

• Use customer behavior (search/filter patterns) to guide inventory decisions and upselling.

• Embed your product data into customer systems (via API or tool libraries), making it easier to be chosen — data becomes the new sales rep.

Enable Integration with CAM/CAD/ERP Systems

• If your product data is structured (e.g., cutting tools, inserts, holders), it can be used directly in CAM systems like Siemens NX, Mastercam, or Fusion 360.
• That enables machine shops to simulate, optimize, and order with minimal manual work.
• Some suppliers now charge for access to enriched, validated digital libraries or monetize by offering integration packages.

Monetize Insights

• Use data from your products in the field (IoT or machine feedback) to:
    o Offer performance dashboards
    o Develop premium analytics subscriptions
    o Improve R&D based on real usage patterns

SALES SUPPORT SERVER CAN DO IT FOR YOU!

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