In 2012, the main internal campus website, http://inside.mines.edu, continued to grow significantly in both visitors and pages viewed. Approximately 800,000 unique visitors spent time on the site in 2012. They returned to the site multiple times, resulting in about 2 million total visits and 5 million pageviews. Visits peaked on Tuesday, August 21 (the start of the fall semester) at more than 15,000 (up from about 12,000 the previous year). About 61 percent of visitors in 2012 were repeat customers, while 39 percent visited for the first time – to be expected in a site tailored to the internal Mines community. Bounce rates remained at about 50 percent. These details are summarized below:

Compared to 2011 (after compensating for missing data), visits in 2012 were up about 15 percent; unique visitors increased about 20 percent; pageviews increased 20 percent. The number of pages viewed per visit, average duration of visits, bounce rate, and percentage of new visits did not change significantly.

Though any steadily increasing system presents questions of sustainability in the long haul, our server administrators believe we have sufficient hardware to sustain this rate of increase for the foreseeable future.

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1 Due to a period in December 2011 and January 2012 in which no analytics data were collected, these numbers are certainly slight underestimates – by approximately 4 percent in 2012 and 8 percent in 2011.

2 A “unique visitor” is defined as a visit from a particular IP address. A “visit” is a separate accessing of the website, irrespective of IP address. A “pageview” is a single page accessed by a visitor. “Bounce rate” refers to the percentage of visitors who enter the site then leave (or “bounce”) rather than viewing more pages. As a rule of thumb, 50 percent is a typical bounce rate and to be expected.
Other metrics of interest:

- **Preferred language of visitors** (as determined by their browser language preferences) in 2012: English (all variants), 95.3 percent; Chinese, 1.5 percent; Spanish (European and South American variants), 0.7 percent; French, 0.25 percent; Korean 0.25 percent; Brazilian Portuguese 0.21 percent; German, 0.15 percent. Compared to 2011, this represents a slight (less than 1 percent) decrease in access by English speakers, but a greater than 60 percent increase in visits by Chinese speakers, albeit from a low initial base. Other language preferences remained more or less unchanged.

- **Visits by country of origin**: United States, 90.1 percent; India, 0.8 percent; China, 0.8 percent; Canada, 0.6 percent; United Kingdom, 0.5 percent. Other countries with significant visits included Australia, Indonesia, Japan, and South Korea. These figures represent a 2 percent decrease for US-originated visits compared to 2011. India and China increased their share of visits by about 15 percent this year. Figures for other countries remained fairly stable.

- **Preferred web browser**: Internet Explorer (all variants) continued its downward trend as 30 percent of users accessed inside.mines.edu with IE, compared to 39 percent in 2011. Firefox use dropped from 25 percent to 21 percent. Safari grew its share of users from 17.5 percent to 20 percent. And Chrome was the big winner, increasing from 17.3 percent to 26 percent year-to-year. Mobile browsers also continued their longstanding and dramatic upward trend (see more on mobile below).

- **Preferred operating system**: Windows (all variants) decreased slightly as the operating system of choice for accessing our web services, dropping from 74 percent to 69 percent in 2012 year. Mac OS X increased its share slightly, from 20 to 21 percent. Linux remained relatively constant, dropping from 2.1 percent to 2.0 percent. The biggest increase in visits came among mobile operating systems, primarily Android and iOS, up 75 percent.

- **Use of mobile devices**: Mobile-device access to inside.mines.edu again increased dramatically, as it has for each of the past few years, from 1.5 percent of visits in 2010, to 3.5 percent in 2011, to 7.5 percent in 2012. At this rate of increase, half of visits to inside.mines.edu will be by mobile device in just a few years. Of note: Approximately half of mobile visits to inside.mines.edu are made on phones (almost entirely Android or Apple models) and half on tablets (again, primarily Android or Apple models). Apple phones and tablets remain the single most popular mobile platform of our customers.

In conclusion, visits to inside.mines.edu continued to increase significantly in 2012. In part, this is a structural increase, largely because more departments (with more web pages, and more students to view those pages) joined the CMS in that year. There were simply more reasons for Mines students, staff, and faculty to visit the site.

Also, visitors using mobile devices continue to increase significantly, as they have for several years, indicating that we should re-evaluate our mobile strategy frequently. Providing content for small-format, mobile devices is likely to be the largest challenge to Mines web services in the next decade.
WWW.MINES.EDU

The outward-facing marketing site http://www.mines.edu also saw increased visits and pageviews in 2012, though not to the extent experienced by its sister website. Over 620,000 unique visitors navigated to the site, with almost 1.2 million total visitors and almost 4 million pageviews.\(^3\) Visitors to this site looked at more pages, for a longer time, and with a lower “bounce” rate than did visitors to inside.mines.edu. The 45.5 percent bounce rate here is comparatively low and indicates a site that is “sticky” — a site that has multiple pages of interest to a typical visitor. Half of all visitors were new (as would be expected in a marketing website). The largest numbers of visitors were found on Monday, January 9, just before the start of the spring semester, and Monday, August 20, just before the start of the fall semester.

![General overview of www.mines.edu web traffic (2012)](image)

However, in 2012, visits were just 2 percent more than in 2011. Unique visitors increased 5 percent while pageviews increased 3.9 percent. Visitors viewed about the same number of pages per visit, but for a longer time. The bounce rate and percentage of new visits decreased slightly compared to 2011. We seemed to have reached more or less a steady state with the www.mines.edu server, whereas inside.mines.edu is still seeing substantial increases in visits year-to-year.

Other metrics of interest:

- **Preferred language of visitors** (as determined by their browser language preferences) in 2012: A slightly higher percentage of international visitors is found on www.mines.edu as compared to inside.mines.edu. English (all variants) accounts for 93.4 percent of visits; Chinese, 2.3 percent; Spanish (European and South American variants), 1 percent; French, 0.3 percent; Brazilian Portuguese 0.3 percent; Russian, 0.3 percent; Turkish, 0.2 percent. These figures are substantially unchanged since 2011.

- **Visits by country of origin**: Again, visitors to www.mines.edu tend to be somewhat more likely to reside outside the United States than visitors to inside.mines.edu. The United States

\(^3\) These data are not affected by the missing-data issue experienced by inside.mines.edu, so these numbers can be considered complete and accurate.
accounted for 84.3 percent of 2012 visitors (versus more than 90 percent on inside.mines.edu). China supplied 2.2 percent of visitors; India, 1.3 percent; Canada, 0.9 percent; the United Kingdom, 0.7 percent; Saudi Arabia, 0.6 percent; Iran, 0.55 percent; Nigeria, 0.4 percent; Australia, 0.4 percent. These numbers represent a slight drop of US visitors and slight increases from various other countries, but the proportions remain substantially similar to those seen in 2011.

- **Preferred operating system:** Windows (all variants) was used by 67 percent of our visitors, down from 73 percent the year before. Mac OS X was the choice of 21 percent (up from 20 percent). Linux captured 1 percent, down slightly from 2011. Most of the remaining traffic came from mobile operating systems like iOS and Android, the fastest-growing segment for our customers. (See more about mobile visits, below.)

- **Preferred web browser:** Customers of our marketing site (i.e., our potential students and their parents) use a variety of browsers. Internet Explorer (all variants) continued its downward trend, being used for 40 percent of visits in 2011 but only 32 percent in 2012; Safari rose from 20 percent to a 23 percent share; Chrome showed the biggest increase, from 15 to 23 percent; Firefox dropped from 22 percent to 18 percent. (Mobile browsers continued their long upward trend and accounted for most of the rest.)

- **Use of mobile devices:** Mobile-device access to inside.mines.edu again increased dramatically, as it has for the past several years. In 2012, 10.9 percent of page visits were made with a mobile device, typically a phone or a tablet computer (up from 5.7 percent in 2011 and 2.3 percent in 2010). Apple devices continue to represent about 70 percent of all mobile visits to www.mines.edu. Android devices represent 23 percent, Blackberry about 2 percent, with a number of mobile platforms accounting for the remaining 5 percentage points. In 2012, we saw a shift by our visitors toward tablets and away from phones. Tablets accounted for about half of all mobile visits.

In conclusion, the marketing site www.mines.edu – used primarily by potential and future members of the Mines community – may be seen as a preview of our future web needs. The trends seen here – particularly concerning the rise of mobile web access – show us where the web at Mines needs to go. Clearly, our mobile-device strategy should be revisited frequently and with some urgency. On the other hand, as more people use tablets to access Mines pages (rather than using small-screen phones), this may tend to lessen our need for mobile-device-specific pages. Since we specifically refrained from using Flash in our main websites, tablets (including the iPad, which does not support Flash) can access our full web sites with ease. But if access via mobile phone also continues to increase dramatically, perhaps new mobile-specific apps or web pages will be in our future.

Note that this document is a general summary of web trends. For more details and specific numbers over several years, take a look at our new document (available at http://inside.mines.edu/CCIT-CMS) called *Mines Web Statistics at Your Fingertips*. It details specific numbers from 2009, when we began to collect detailed analytics of our sites, to the present.