Lesson no. 11 – Understanding Bounce Rate

UNDERSTANDING BOUNCE RATE

Bounce is a visitor who only sees one page before leaving your page. Bounces are thought to indicate a bad visitors but it's not always the case. For example if a visitor types "leadfeeder pricing" to Google, ends up to our pricing page, finds the information and leaves, it's a bounce but it can still be a quality visit.

Bounce is defined as a Session that only has one Interaction. You can decrease the amount of Bounces by adding Events that cause Interactions. For example you can send an Event when user scrolls the page and that way remove visitors who scroll your page from Bounce rate

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXIT RATE AND BOUNCE RATE

Let's start with the definitions:

Bounce Rate: the percentage of single-engagement sessions

Exit Rate: the percentage of exits on a page

In more human words, bounce rate is determined by calculating the number of bounces over the total number of pageviews to a page. A bounce occurs whenever a user enters the page and subsequently exits without visiting another page on the website or interacting with any of the elements on the page (e.g. commenting).

Exit rate, on the other hand, looks at the number of people who exit your website after landing on a page and compares it to the total number of views the page received.

Bounce Rate

$$R_b = \frac{T_v}{T_e}$$

R_b = Bounce Rate
T_v = Total one-page visits
T_e = Total entrance visits

Exit Rate

$$R_e = \frac{T_{exits}}{T_{views}}$$

R_e = Exit Rate
T_{exits} = Total exits from page
T_{views} = Total visits to page

Unfortunately, Google's definitions of these metrics make it very easy to confuse the two since they sound so similar. After all, the basic goal of these metrics is the same: calculate the percentage of people who leave a page after opening it. There is one significant difference.

Exit rate is the percentage of visits that were the last in the session whereas bounce rate is the percentage of visits that were the only one of the session.

This means, bounces are only recorded if a user exits directly from the page they entered while exit rates are recorded regardless of a user's prior activity on your website. Therefore, all bounces are exits but not all exits are bounces.

To clarify the difference, we can consider a simple website with four pages: Home Page, Product Page, Confirmation Page, and Contact Us Page. We can imagine five different sessions to this website over the course of a week.

Monday: New Visitor > Home Page > EXIT

Tuesday: New Visitor > Home Page > Product Page > Confirmation Page > EXIT

Wednesday: New Visitor > Home Page > Product Page > EXIT

Thursday: New Visitor > Contact Us Page > EXIT

Friday: New Visitor > Confirmation Page > Contact Us Page > EXIT

Out of the above five sessions, there were only two bounces.

Even though exits occurred on all five days, bounces occurred only on Monday and Thursday because those were the only two days where the visitor exited as soon as they entered the site. On every other day, the visitor visited at least two pages before exiting.
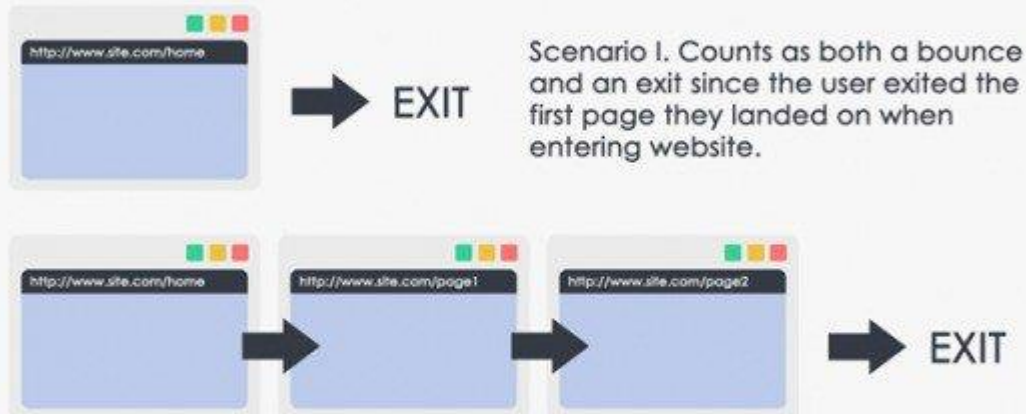
For these five sessions, the following Google Analytics report would be produced.

HOME PAGE: 3 entrances | 3 page views | 33% bounce rate | 33% exit rate

PRODUCT PAGE: 0 entrances | 2 page views | 0% bounce rate | 50% exit rate

CONFIRMATION PAGE: 1 entrance | 2 page views | 0% bounce rate | 50% exit rate

CONTACT US PAGE: 1 entrance | 2 page views | 100% bounce rate | 100% exit rate

Therefore, a high exit rate doesn't necessarily equate to a high bounce rate since users might have landed on the page from somewhere else on the site. Similarly, a low bounce rate does not mean a low exit rate since bounce rate doesn't account for most exits, only those that occur on the first page the user lands on.

Always remember that exits can be more than one-page visits while bounces are always one-page visits.