

## Editorial

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The previous issue (vol.1, n°3) promised readers an overview of full website traffic statistics over a year (December 2010 – November 2011). The present editorial is entirely devoted to a presentation of such data.

The journal's editors are naturally curious to know how many readers *Res Militaris* has, and their distribution by country. And so maybe are its readers. A lot was thus expected of the figures available in order to satisfy that curiosity. Unfortunately, examination of those (most detailed) data supplied by the *Webalizer* web server log file analysis tool (<http://resmilitaris.net/webalizer>) proves a rather uncertain and confusing exercise : no single measure can be interpreted as the exact number of “real people” who have been consulting our website.

Based on information secured from <ftp://ftp.mrunix.net/pub/webalizer/README> and <http://www.webalizer.org/simpleton.html> (together with precious comments from the journal's webmaster and Web-savvy friends of the co-editors-in-chief...), several measures appear to be worth considering:

### 1) “Hits”

These are requests made to the server, in our case for html pages or PDF files. The figures quoted under this heading represent the total number of requests that were made during the specified report period. Yet, a single visit can generate several hits.

### 2) “Files”

Some requests made to the server require that it then send something back to the requesting client, such as a html page or graphic image. When this happens, it is considered a “file”. The relationship between “hits” and “files” can be thought of as “incoming requests” and “outgoing responses”.

### 3) “Pages”

These are generally understood as html pages. Since most of our editorial substance comes in the form of PDF files, the number of “pages” does not seem a reliable measure.

### 4) “Unique Sites”

The “sites” number shows how many unique IP addresses made requests to the server during the reporting time period. While this does not mean the number of unique individual users (real people) that visited, which is impossible to determine using just logs and the HTTP protocol, *the figure quoted under this rubric might be about as close as you one can get.*

### 5) “Visits”

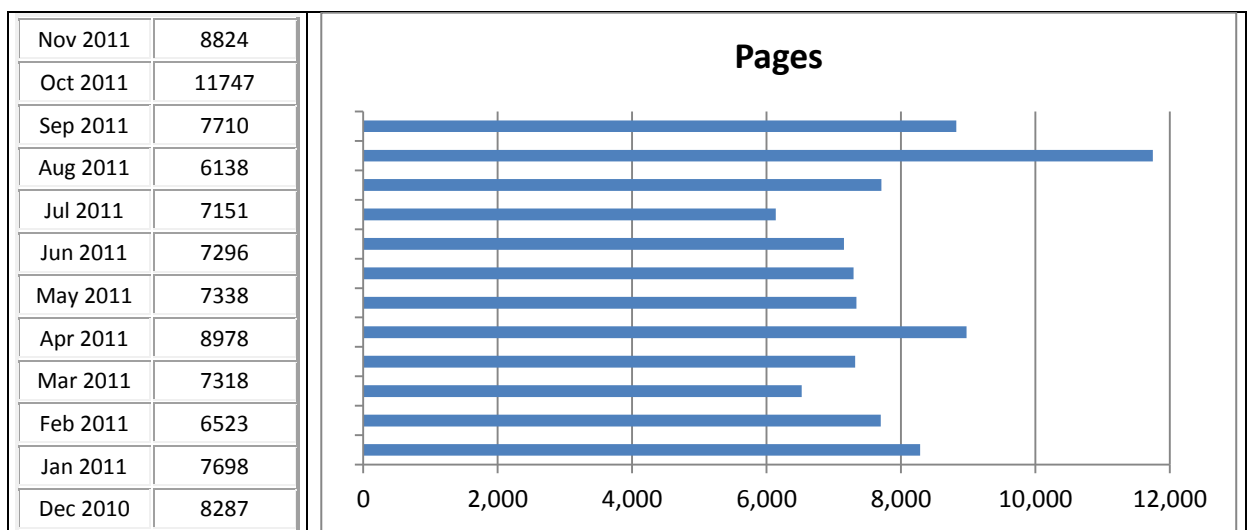
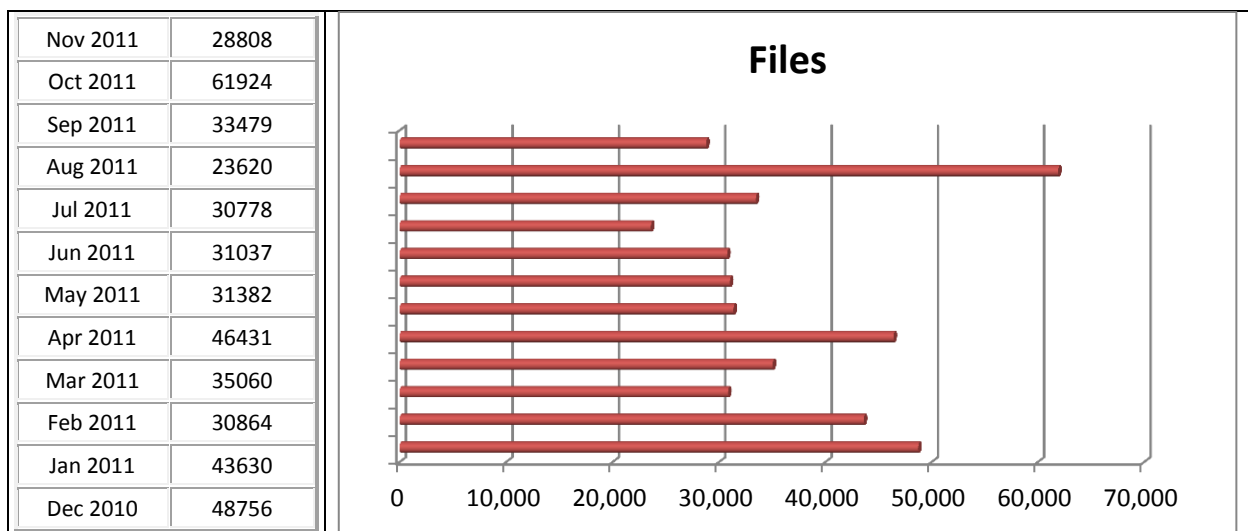
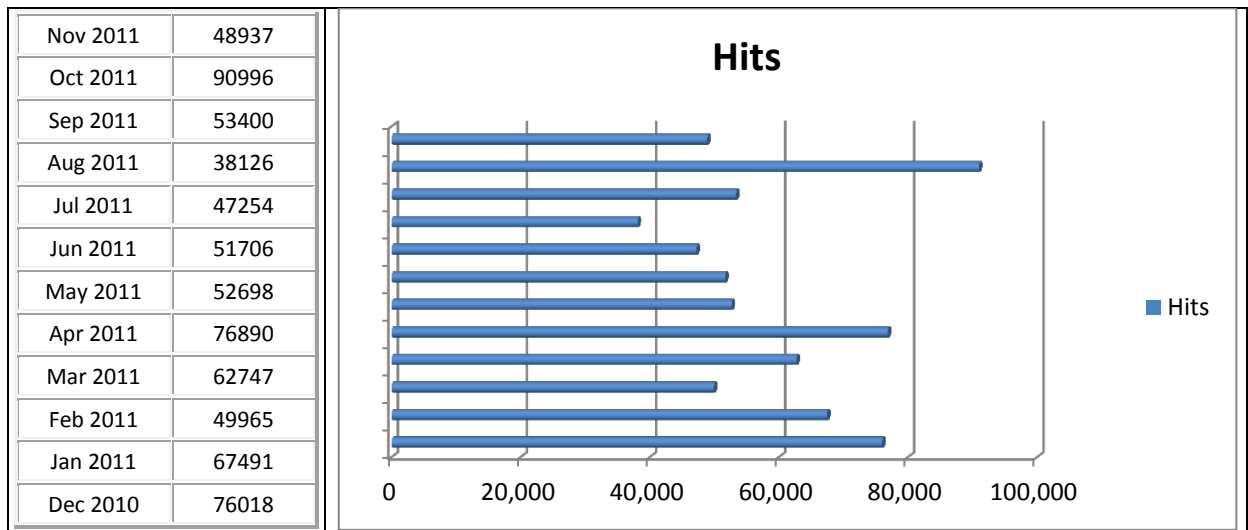
Whenever a request is made to the server from a given IP address (site), the amount of time since a previous request by the address is calculated (if any). If the time difference is greater than 30 minutes (or if no previous request has been made), it is considered a “new visit”, and this total is incremented. So that (a) if a user visits our site at 1:00 in the afternoon, and then returns at 3:00, two visits would be registered, and (b) if a visit lasts less than 30 minutes, it is counted as a hit, not as a new visit.

Note: Visits only occur on PageType requests, that is, for any request whose URL is one of the “page”types defined with the PageType and PagePrefix option, and not excluded by the OmitPage option. Due to the limitation of the HTTP protocol, log rotations and other factors, this number should not be taken as absolutely accurate, rather, *it should be considered a pretty close “guess”.*

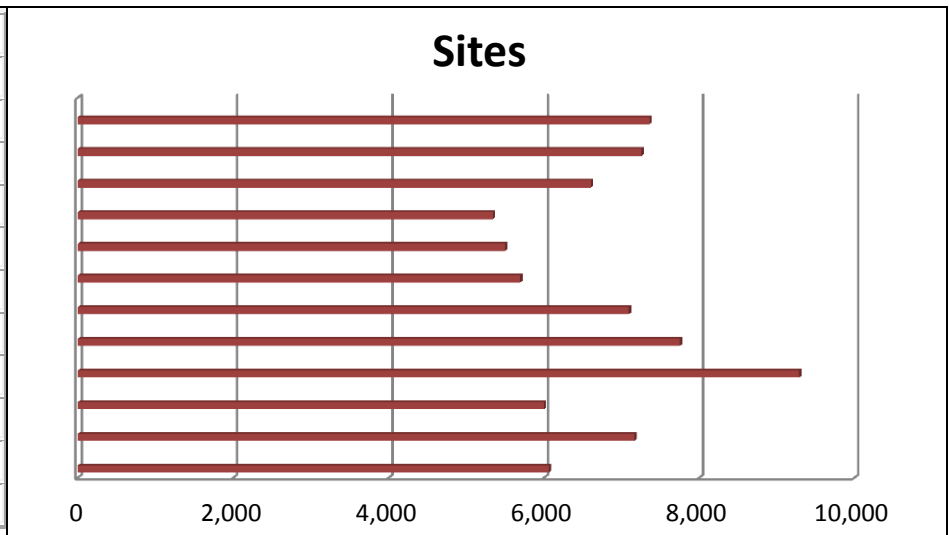
One of the most salient observations that can be made when considering the figures to follow, is that “unique sites” are consistently more numerous (with ratios as high as 2:1) than “visits” Which may mean that readers download PDF files and do not stay on the journal's

website more than thirty minutes, or that many requests originate from search engine “spiders”, i.e., programmes designed to scour the Web looking for links and such.

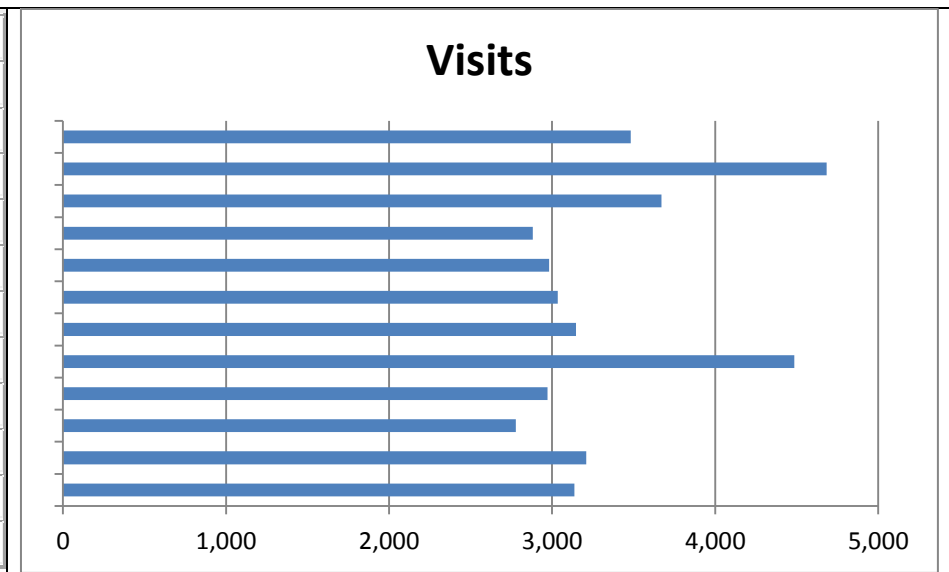
However that may be, here are the brute (monthly) facts as generated by Webalizer on 29 November 2011:



Nov 2011	7363
Oct 2011	7260
Sep 2011	6608
Aug 2011	5342
Jul 2011	5501
Jun 2011	5696
May 2011	7096
Apr 2011	7755
Mar 2011	9292
Feb 2011	6000
Jan 2011	7168
Dec 2010	6065



Nov 2011	3482
Oct 2011	4684
Sep 2011	3670
Aug 2011	2882
Jul 2011	2982
Jun 2011	3034
May 2011	3147
Apr 2011	4485
Mar 2011	2971
Feb 2011	2777
Jan 2011	3209
Dec 2010	3137



In conclusion, the only safe (but uncomfortably imprecise) assertion is that *Res Militaris* has several thousand readers – somewhere between monthly averages of 3,300 visits and 6,700 unique sites (with extremes of 2,777–4,684 and 5,342–9,292, respectively). That is, *if* “visits” and “unique sites” are indeed the best approximations of “real people” numbers.

The distribution by country shows requests emanating from between 74 (August) and 100 (March) different nations – with (in that order) France, North America, and the rest of Europe in the lead. A myriad of other countries from all other continents are represented further down in Webalizer’s monthly top-30 lists.

Such data were unexpected, to say the least. The editorial team anticipated a few hundred visitors monthly – a reasonable bet for any new scholarly journal, especially if it is bilingual. It hardly hoped for a readership spanning nearly half the world.

This is certainly a source of editorial self-confidence and pride. But, presumably, open access makes a difference. And sheer novelty may play a role. So that, while the data presented above augur well for the future, it is too early to rejoice. If quality has anything to do with them, our charge is to keep it up and hope for the best. Meanwhile, thanks are due to our readers for taking an interest in *Res Militaris* in such large numbers.