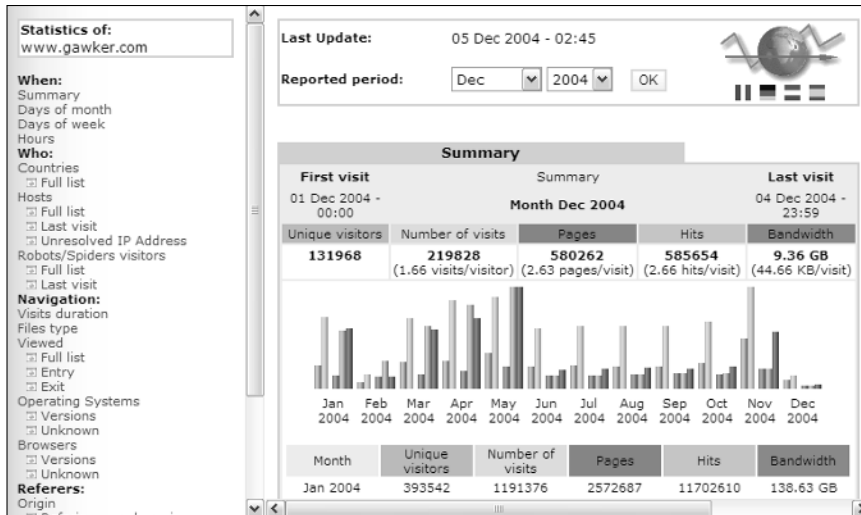


Figure 7-1:
During
November
2004,
Gawker
served
3,981,801
pages to
833,288
unique
visitors.



As you look at the output of any Web traffic tool, you need to fully understand the terms being used to slice and dice the statistics. Three measurements are commonly associated with Web site traffic: hits, pages, and visits. Each has its own hidden pitfalls and uses, and none is a sure-fire way to compare your site with another. Most, but not all, statistic-measuring tools give you all three figures.

Bringing on the hits

The number of *hits* a Web site gets is always a big number, but it's essentially a meaningless one and can even be misleading to those who don't really understand what's being measured. Here's why: When someone views a single page on your Web site, their browser actually makes several requests for the Web server. The browser asks for every element it must have in order to display the page: the HTML, external style sheets, external JavaScript files, and each unique image.



For a basic blog, elements can add up quickly. Most blogs have a logo, a background image, an image used for spacing content, and sometimes a graphical navigation bar or graphic advertising banner. The server also counts Flash files, audio and video files, and even incomplete or erroneous Web requests (for example missing files).