

The Beginner's Guide To: Google Analytics



Foreword

Google Analytics is a tool with massive potential for organisations of all shapes and sizes. And the best part is... it's free!

However, without a clear analytics strategy and the correct implementation, it only delivers a fraction of its potential value.

By default it tracks a lot of data – over 400 dimensions and metrics in fact – and these dimensions and metrics can be combined in countless different combinations in a range of default reports.

Because of this, it can sometimes be very difficult to see the wood from the trees, and very often organisations end up overwhelmed, leading them to either:

- A. Abandon Google Analytics; or even worse...
- B. Report on the most visible or “easy to understand” (they think) vanity metrics and make decisions based on these metrics.

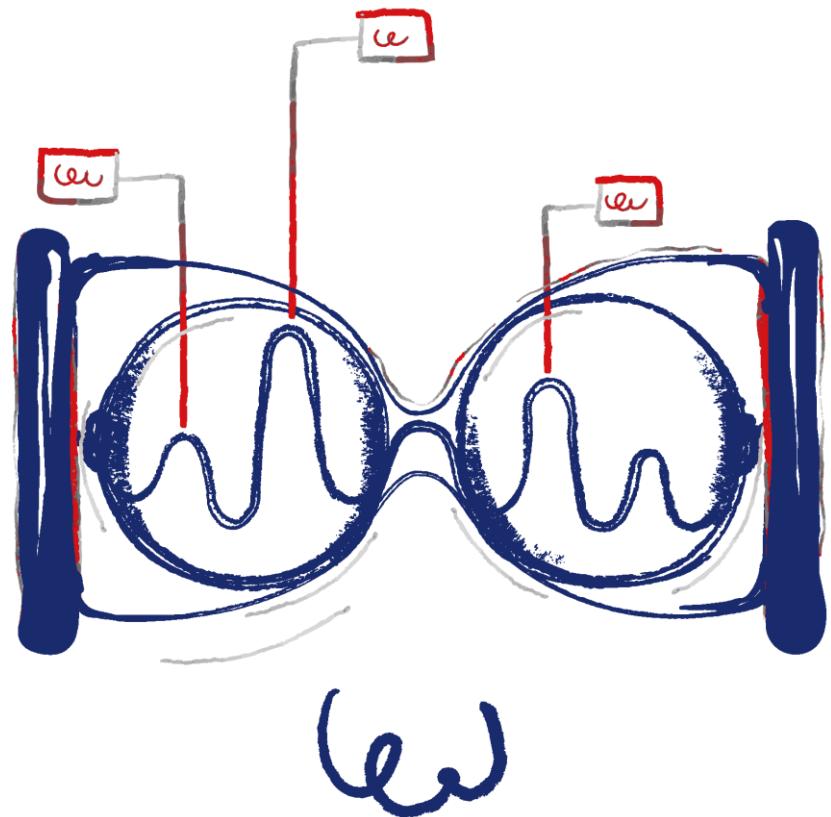
The purpose of this eBook is to explain Google Analytics as clearly and simply as possible and to provide small and medium businesses with the information they need to make Google Analytics work for them.

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Chapter 1:

What Is Google Analytics?



What is Google Analytics?

Web Analytics Explained

Web analytics can be defined as the “collection, measurement and analysis of digital marketing and website data”.

Web Analytics tracking offers detailed information in relation to:

- Your website **visitors**:
 - Where are they coming from?
 - What browsers are they using?
 - How do they interact with your website?
 - Are they new or returning visitors?
 - How do they navigate through your site?
- The **website** itself:
 - Is your website attracting visitors?
 - Is your website retaining traffic?
 - What are the number of site visits and page views?
 - Is your website encouraging users to “convert”?

What is Google Analytics?

Google Analytics Explained

There are a number of web analytics programs on the market.

By far the most common is Google Analytics – it's free, user friendly, easily integrated with other marketing tools (like Google Ads and Search Console) and easily customised with a tool called Google Tag Manager (which I'll discuss later).

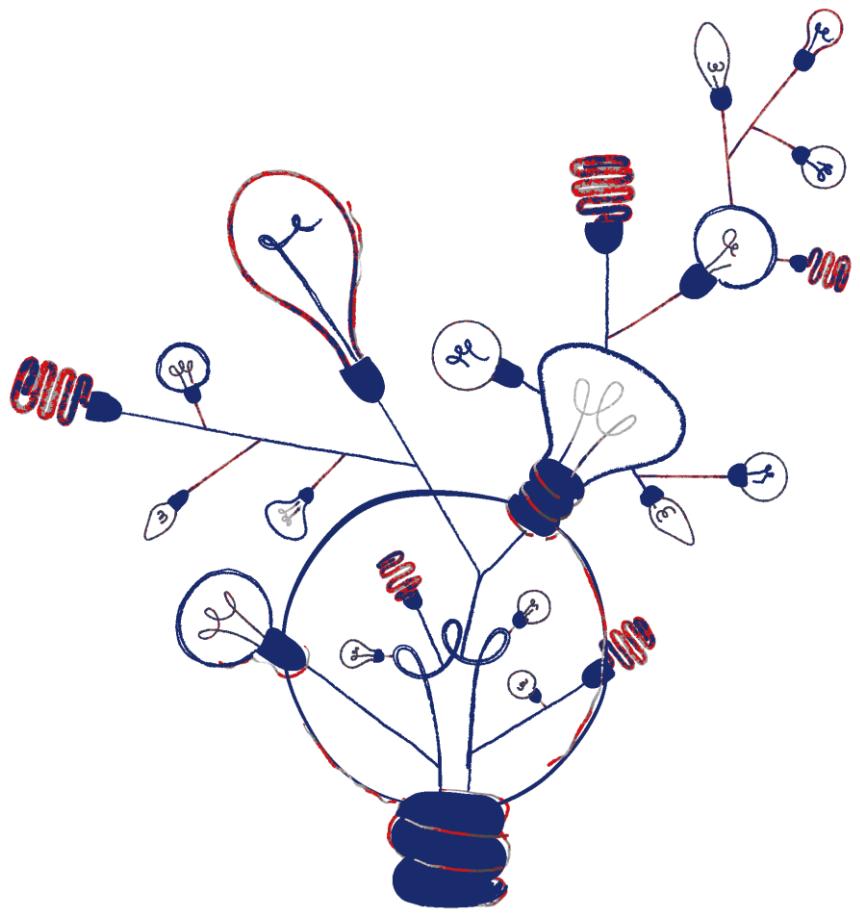
I've already outlined the types of information that web analytics tools like Google Analytics provide – so why should you care? What are the benefits of having access to this kind of data for your business?

Google Analytics analyses website visitors and their behaviour, allowing website owners to:

- **Optimise** their digital marketing strategies
- **Tailor** marketing campaigns to attract, retain and grow their client base
- **Identify** which KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) are appropriate for their website
- **Monitor** improvements / modifications to their website
- **Inform** and direct business decisions within the company

Chapter 2:

How Does Google Analytics Work?



How Does Google Analytics Work?

Google Analytics uses a small piece of JavaScript tracking code to collect data about your website, visitors and their interactions.

Website Tracking

Global Site Tag (gtag.js)

This is the Global Site Tag (gtag.js) tracking code for this property. Copy and paste this code as the first item into the <HEAD> of every webpage you want to track. If you already have a Global Site Tag on your page, simply add the `config` line from the snippet below to your existing Global Site Tag.

```
<!-- Global site tag (gtag.js) - Google Analytics -->
<script async src="https://www.googletagmanager.com/gtag/js?id=UA-XXXXXX-X"></script>
<script>
  window.dataLayer = window.dataLayer || [];
  function gtag(){dataLayer.push(arguments);}
  gtag('js', new Date());

  gtag('config', 'UA-XXXXXX-X');
</script>
```

The Global Site Tag provides streamlined tagging across Google's site measurement, conversion tracking, and remarketing products – giving you better control while making implementation easier. By using gtag.js, you will be able to benefit from the latest dynamic features and integrations as they become available. [Learn more](#)

Google Tag Manager

Our free tool Google Tag Manager can help you add tags to your site if you have many analytics and tracking tags. Consider using Google Tag Manager if:

- You use multiple analytics and ad performance tracking tools that require site tags.
- Adding tags to your website slows down your ability to run marketing campaigns.

[Learn how to get started with Google Tag Manager.](#)

Additional implementations

Global Site Tag (gtag.js) and Google Tag Manager are the recommended tracking methods for new implementations. Additional implementation options are also available including [analytics.js](#) and the

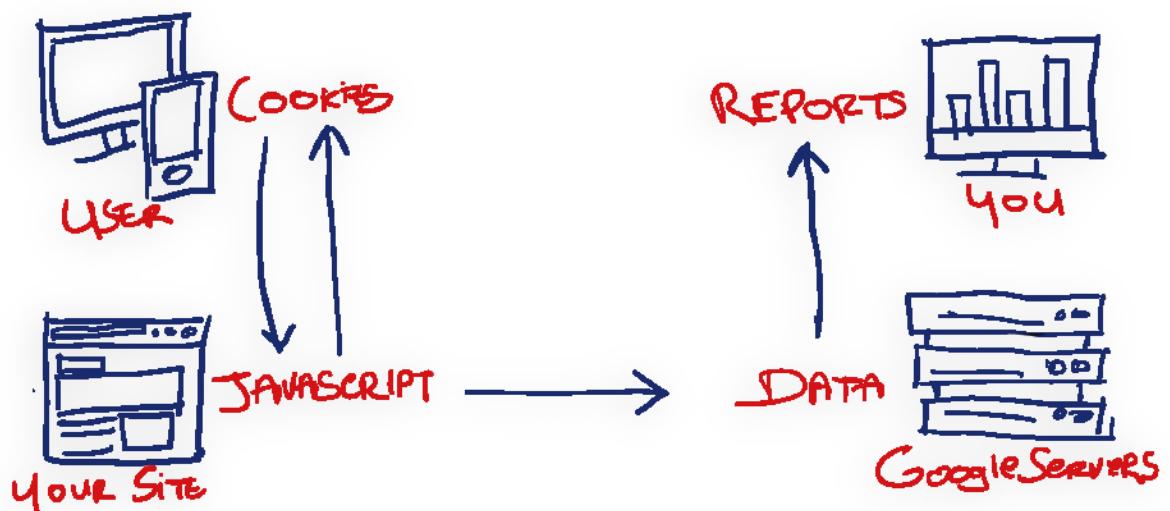
Once the code has been implemented on the site, Google Analytics will drop a cookie in the user's browser for your website to obtain user session and any ad campaign information from the page request

Aside from this cookie, Google Analytics also collects data from:

- The **HTTP request** of the user e.g. hostname, the browser type, referrer, and language
- **Browser/system information** e.g. Java and Flash support and screen resolution

How Does Google Analytics Work?

When all this information is collected, it is sent to the Analytics servers in the form of a **single pixel GIF request**. This data then gets processed and ends up in your reports.



The tracking code also reads a **3rd party DoubleClick cookie** to get information about the Display Features if these features have been enabled.

Chapter 3:

How To Install Google Analytics?



How To Install Google Analytics?

There are 2 steps to implementing Google Analytics tracking on your website:

1. **Set up your Google Analytics account and property** within the Google Analytics platform
2. **Install your Google Analytics tracking code** on your website (there are 2 main ways to do this)

How To Install Google Analytics?

Setting Up Your Google Analytics Account and Property

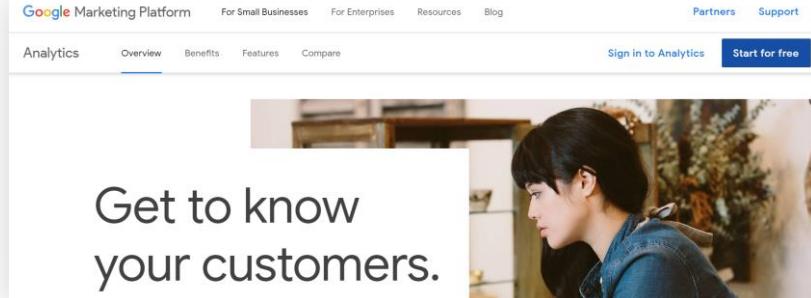
1. Visit google.com/analytics (See image 3.1 on next page)
2. To create an account, click “**Start for free**”. (3.2)
3. Set up your account and website information (e.g. account name, website name, website URL, industry category, etc). (3.3)
4. After setting up your account, your first property will automatically be created. You will be brought to the Tracking Code tab for that property where you will see the **Tracking ID** for that property. This is the code you will need to install Google Analytics on your website. (3.4)

Now you need to install this Google Analytics tracking code on your website...

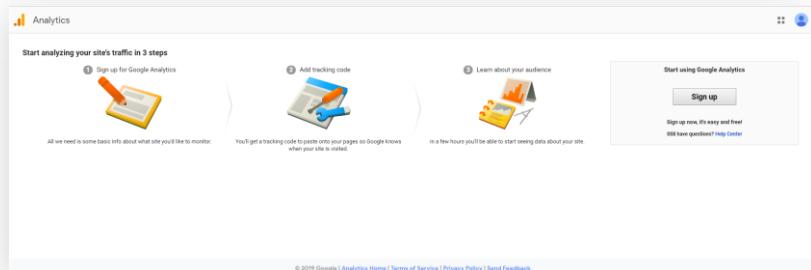
How To Install Google Analytics?

Setting Up Your Google Analytics Account and Property

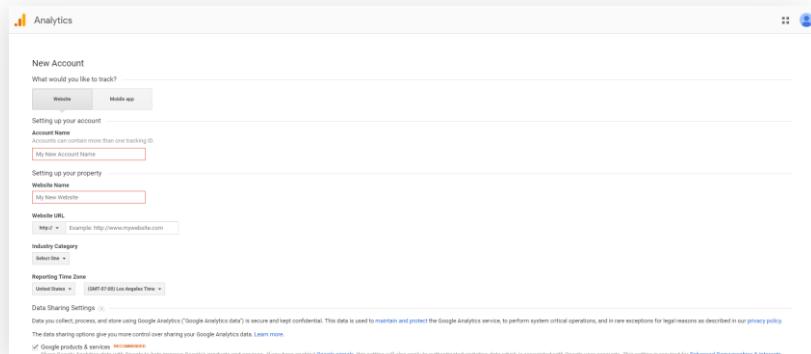
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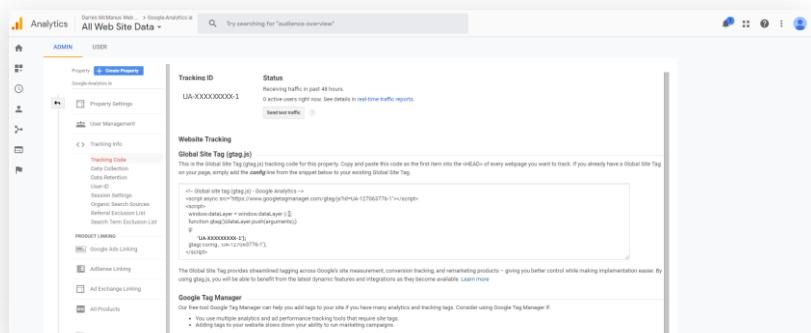
3.2



3.3



3.4



How To Install Google Analytics?

Tracking Code Implementation

Now that you have your Google Analytics tracking code, you have two ways to install it on your website and begin sending data from your site to your Google Analytics property:

1. Manually paste the code into each page of your site
2. Implement [Google Tag Manager](#) (GTM) on your website and install the code via the GTM interface (**Recommended**)

How To Install Google Analytics?

Manually Implementing your Tracking Code

Ask your developer to paste the tracking code (below) right after the <head> tag on each page / page template of your site. Replace UA-XXXXXXXXX-1 with your own Google Analytics tracking ID:

```
<!-- Global Site Tag (gtag.js) - Google Analytics -->
<script async
src="https://www.googletagmanager.com/gtag/js?id=GA_MEASUREMENT_ID"></script>
<script>
  window.dataLayer = window.dataLayer || [];
  function gtag() {dataLayer.push(arguments);}
  gtag('js', new Date());

  gtag('config', 'UA-XXXXXXXXX-1');
</script>
```

This method of installing Google Analytics may seem straightforward in the short term, but in the long term, installing Google Analytics via Google Tag Manager offers much more flexibility and allows for more efficient customised tracking.

How To Install Google Analytics?

Implementing your Tracking Code via Google Tag Manager

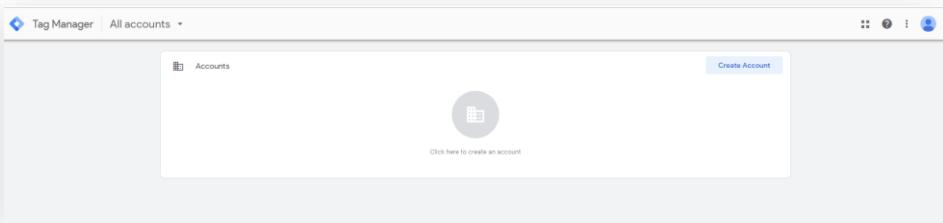
First, you'll need to set up and install Google Tag Manager on your site:

1. Go to www.google.com/analytics/tag-manager/ and ensure you are signed in with the same Google account that you set up your Google Analytics account with
2. Click “**Create Account**” in the top right hand corner (4.1)
3. Set up your account and container information (Account Name, Country, Container Name (you can use your website URL) and Container Type (“Web” for a website) (4.2)
4. After setting up your account and container, your first property will automatically be created. You will be brought to a “Install Google Tag Manager” screen where you will be presented with your GTM tracking code (in the form of 2 snippets) and instructions for implementing this code on your website. (4.3)
5. Ask your developer to place these two snippets of code onto every single page of your website, one in the header, and another in the body.

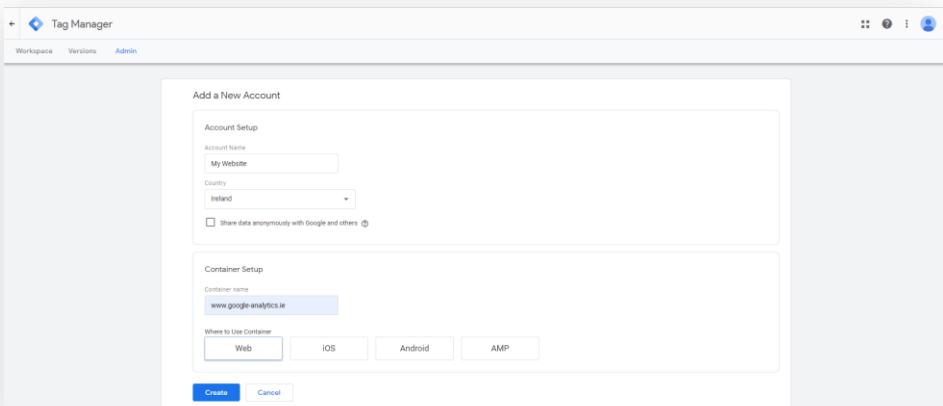
How To Install Google Analytics?

Implementing your Tracking Code via Google Tag Manager

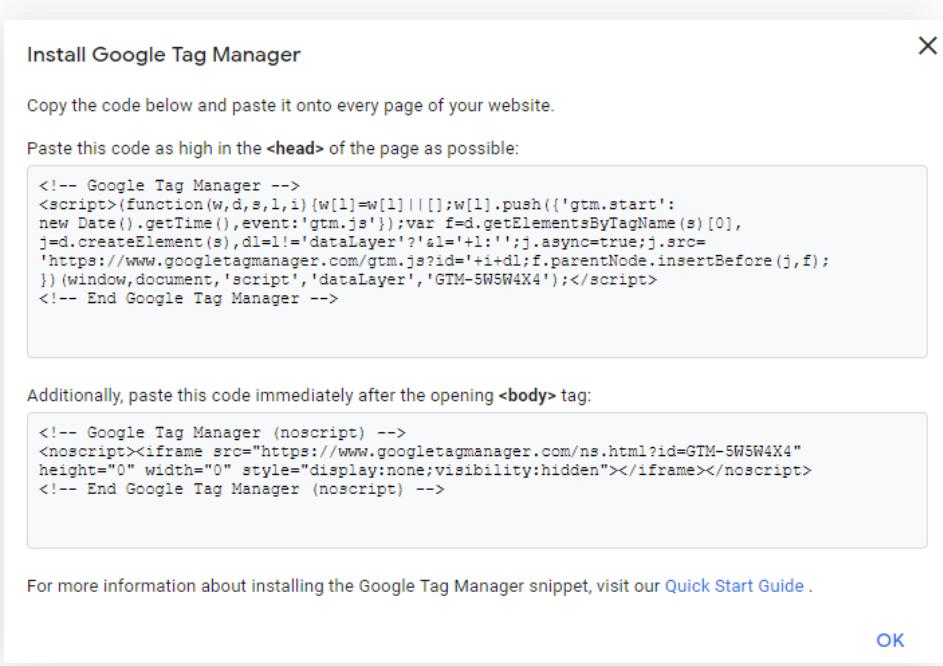
4.1



4.2



4.3



How To Install Google Analytics?

Implementing your Tracking Code via Google Tag Manager

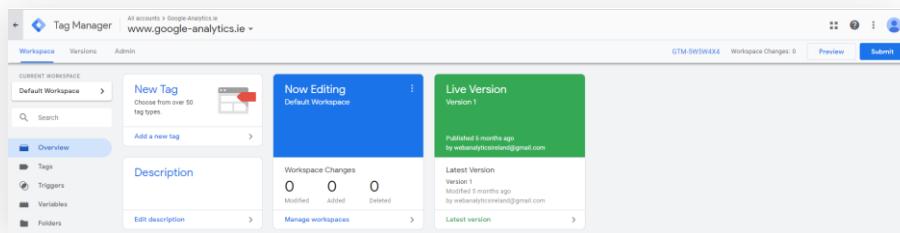
To create a Google Analytics tracking tag in Google Tag Manager:

1. Go to tagmanager.google.com, and select the “**New Tag**” button on the top left of the screen. (5.1)
2. Name your tag “Google Analytics Pageview Tag” (Figure 5.2)
3. Click anywhere in the “**Tag Configuration**” section. (Note: “Tag Configuration” essentially refers to the type of tag you are setting up - there are many different types of tags that you can set up in GTM to send data to different platforms) (5.2)
4. Select “**Universal Analytics**” from the list on the right hand side
5. Leave the Track Type as “**Page View**” (5.3) and select “**New Variable**” from the Google Analytics Settings drop-down (5.4).
6. Name the variable something like “Google Analytics Settings” and enter your GA Tracking ID in the Tracking ID field (5.5). Then save the variable configuration and you will revert back to the Tag configuration screen.
7. Now we need to add a trigger. Click on the “**Triggering**” section and simply select the default “**All Pages**” trigger (so that your tag fires on every page on your website, thus sending data to your GA property for all pages). (5.6)
8. Save the tag, then click “**Submit**” on the top right corner of the tag manager dashboard (5.7), then click “**Publish**” (5.8).

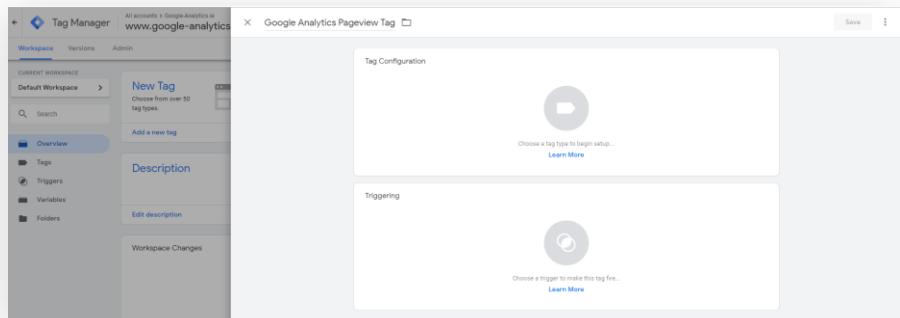
How To Install Google Analytics?

Implementing your Tracking Code via Google Tag Manager

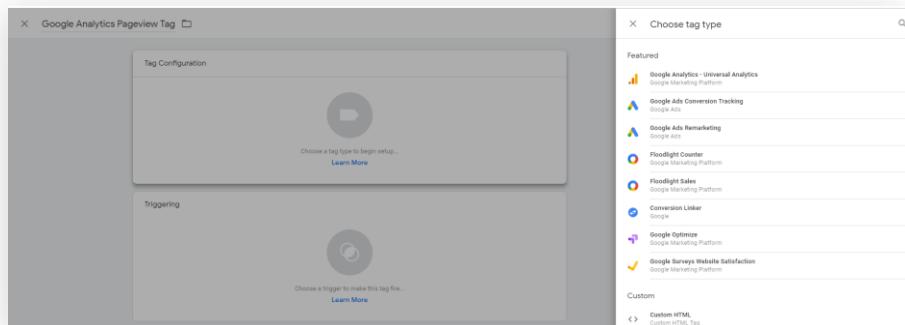
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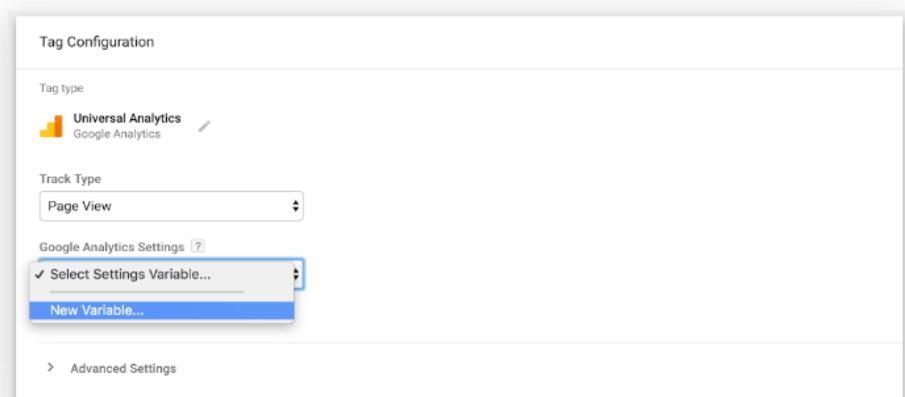
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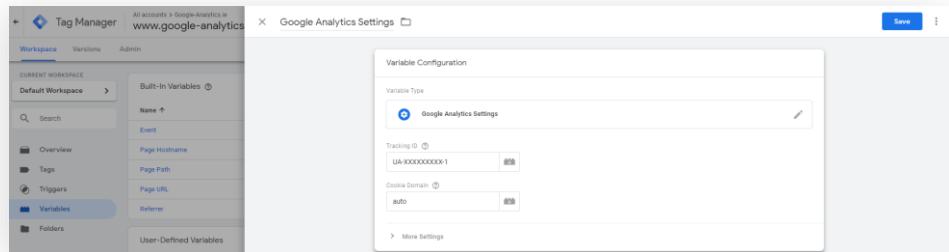
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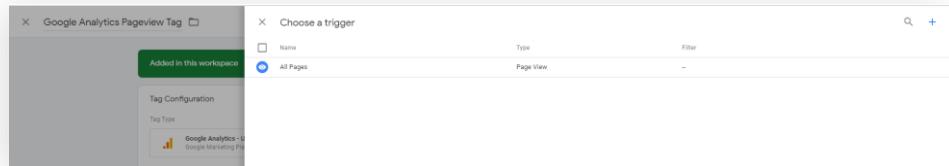
How To Install Google Analytics?

Implementing your Tracking Code via Google Tag Manager

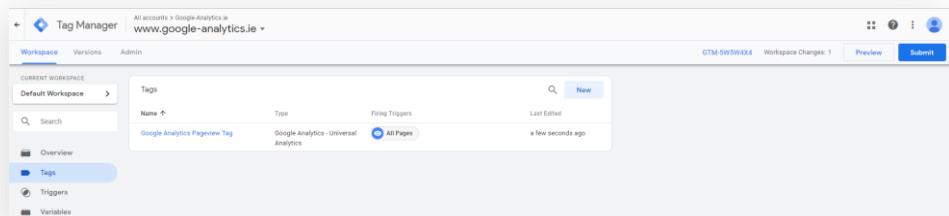
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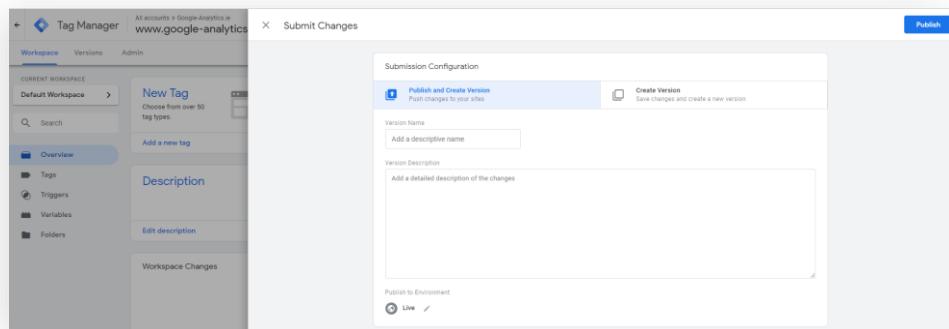
5.6



5.7



5.8



Chapter 4:

Google Analytics Account Structure



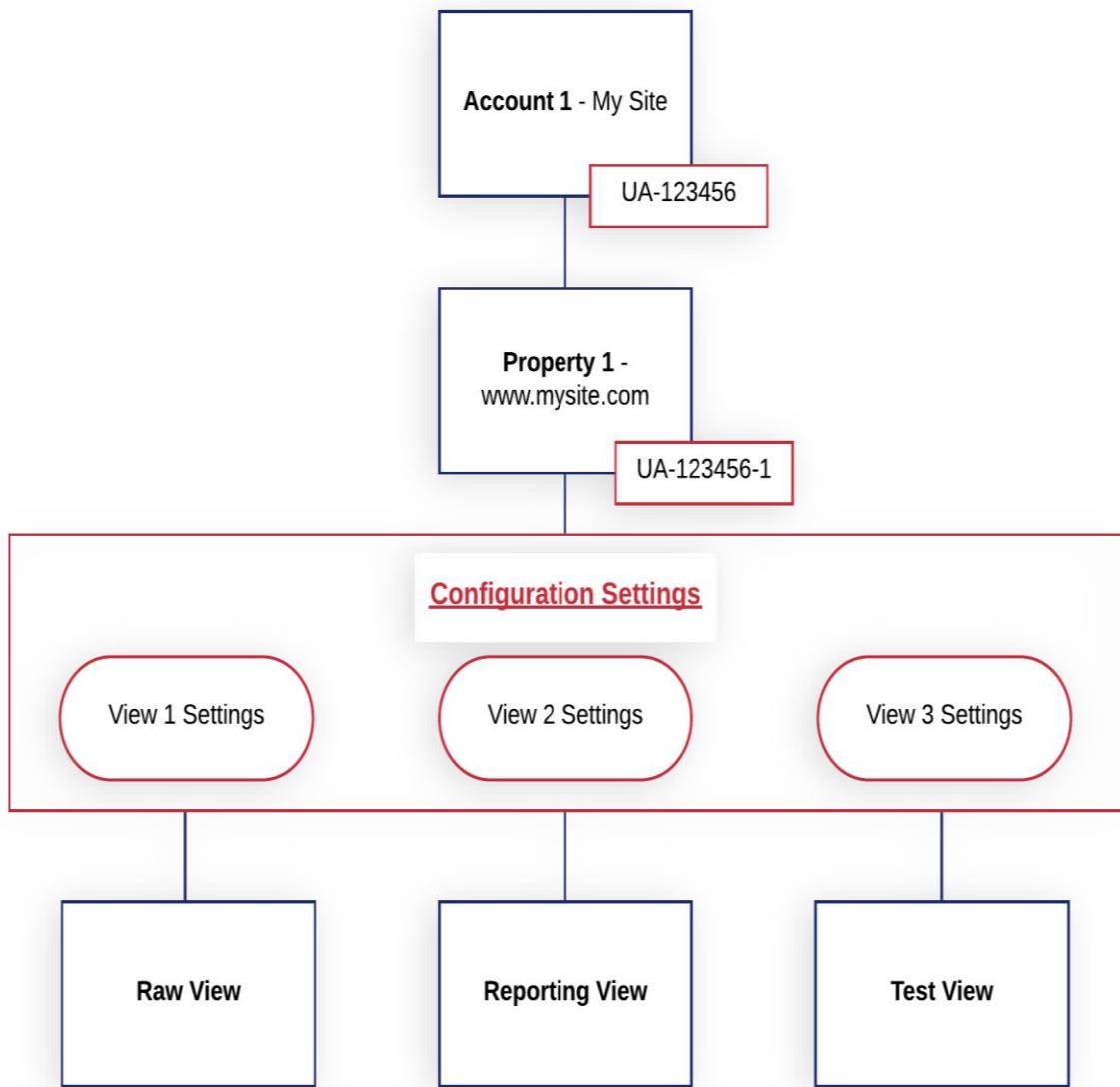
Google Analytics Account Structure Overview

A Google Analytics account is simply a logical way for a business to group data from all of its digital assets together (6).

- **Account:** Your access point for Analytics – top level of organization. One account can have many properties
- **Properties:** A property is a website (or an app or a device) – each property has its own unique ID that identifies the data from that property
- **View:** A view is your access point for reports
 - You can apply filters to views so that they each include the specific subset of data in which you're interested
 - Google recommends 3 Views minimum – Raw/Unfiltered, Master/Reporting & Testing.
 - Note: You can then grant access to different users to different views depending on business unit requirements. E.g. for larger sites if you have one business unit responsible for just one section of the site, you can grant access to that user for only the subset of data related to that section.

Google Analytics Account Structure

Overview



Google Analytics Account Structure

Google Analytics Account Structure

Filters & Views

Some examples of filters you can apply to different views.

- **Exclude internal traffic** so that you can get a true picture of your user behaviour without contaminating it with traffic from your own office
- **Force lower case** to avoid unnecessary fragmentation of your data for example
- **Include hostnames** in your report so that you can distinguish between pages on different subdomains with the same path

So, taking into account Google's recommended views, a basic property may have the following 3 views:

- Raw View: This view is completely unfiltered containing your backup data before any exclusion filters are applied
- Reporting View: The main view you will use for the analysis of your data with relevant filters applied e.g. exclusion of internal traffic, forced lower case URLs, inclusion of hostnames in reports to distinguish between core domain and subdomain data
- Test View: For testing filters before applying them to your Reporting View

Google Analytics Account Structure

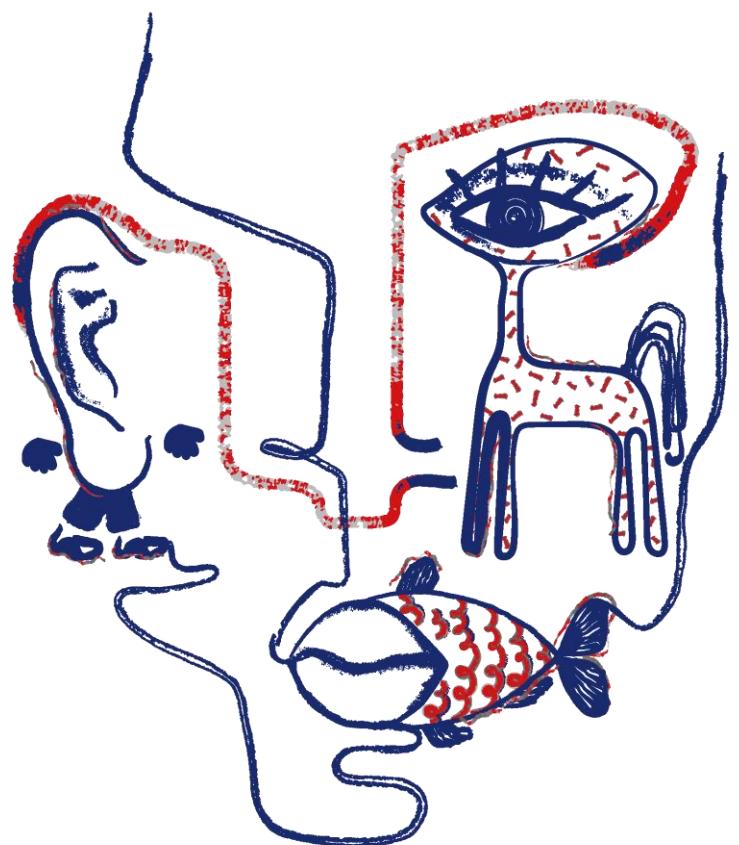
Filters & Views

So once you've set up your views, your Account should look something like this:

The screenshot shows the Google Analytics interface for account management. At the top, there are tabs for 'All', 'Favorites', and 'Recents'. A search bar and a 'Visit Platform Home' link are also at the top. Below the header, there are icons for creating new accounts, properties, and views. A user profile dropdown shows 'Darren McManus Web Analytics C...'. The main area is a table with three columns: 'Analytics Accounts', 'Properties & Apps', and 'Views'. Under 'Analytics Accounts', there is one entry: 'Google-Analytics.... >'. Under 'Properties & Apps', there is also one entry: 'Google-Analytics.... >'. The 'Views' column lists three views: 'Raw View', 'Reporting View', and 'Test View'. Each view has a star icon to its right, with 'Reporting View' having a checked mark next to it.

Analytics Accounts	Properties & Apps	Views
Google-Analytics.... >	Google-Analytics.... >	Raw View
		Reporting View
		Test View

Chapter 5: What Does Google Analytics Track?



What Does Google Analytics Track?

What's Automatically Tracked?

The standard Google Analytics tracking code, whether implemented directly or via GTM, tracks a lot of data – over 400 dimensions and metrics.

Dimensions are the labels in the rows of your reports. Think of a dimension as describing the “what,” as in “what keyword did they use” or “what city is the visitor from” or “what pages were viewed.” E.g. Gender, Age, City, Source/Medium, Keyword, Browser, Device Category and Operating System.

Categories of automatically collected dimensions include:

- Geography and Language
- Traffic Source
- Browser Technology and Page Load Speed
- Pages and Navigation
- Internal Site Search (if activated)
- Goal Completions (if activated)

What Does Google Analytics Track?

What's Automatically Tracked?

Metrics are elements about a dimension that can be measured. Think of a metric as answering “how many” or “how long,” as in “how many visits” or “how long a visitor was on the site.”

E.g. of metrics that could relate to a dimension (e.g. the Source/Medium dimension):

- Sessions
- % New Sessions
- New Users
- Bounce Rate
- Pages/Session
- Avg. Session Duration
- Goal Conversion Rate (if Goals are set up)
- Goal Completions (if Goals are set up)

What Does Google Analytics Track?

What's NOT Automatically Tracked?

But not everything is automatically tracked by default e.g.:

- **Page Information**
 - Content Categories and tags
 - Site-search (if not in the URL)
- **Clicks**
 - Outbound links
 - Downloads
 - Mailto links
 - Key buttons (add / remove from cart)
- **User Data**
 - Member / non-member
 - Logged-in status
 - User-provided demographic information
- **Marketing Campaigns**
 - Source, medium, campaign, term, ad copy (except for AdWords)
- **Actions and Events**
 - Social (Share, Rate Content, Comment)
 - Interactive (Videos, Flash)
 - Conversions (Form fills, Funnels, Transactions)

What Does Google Analytics Track?

The Solution? Google Tag Manager.

For those items / actions you cannot track automatically, you'll need to add custom Google Analytics events which send data to your Google Analytics property when a visitor completes a particular action on your website e.g. a form submission.

The most efficient means of adding custom event tags is via [Google Tag Manager](#) (which brings us back to my point earlier on GTM being the most flexible means of implementing Google Analytics).

Google Tag Manager also helps with common challenges in Google Analytics, such as Custom Dimensions, Cross-Domain Tracking for multiple sites that are tracked together in Google Analytics, and Enhanced Ecommerce that requires collaboration with developers.

Chapter 6:

Google Analytics Goals



Google Analytics Goals

What are Goals?

If you don't have any goals set up, your conversions reports will be blank. And without goals configured, it's almost impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of your online business and marketing campaigns. So your first priority when setting up your Google Analytics property should be defining, then implementing your Goals.

To determine what goals are worth tracking, you have to be clear on your website's purpose in the first place. The starting point should be asking yourself the questions:

- What is our website for?
- Why do we have it?
- Are there different objectives for different stakeholders?
- What do we want users to do on our site?

Google Analytics Goals

Examples of Goals

Some examples of possible website goals are:

- purchases
- lead data capture
- application form submissions
- subscriptions
- registrations

Although you can set multiple goals (up to 20 per view), you shouldn't go OTT – track only those goals that are directly beneficial to your organisation. Irrelevant goals can lead to a distorted picture of site performance at a macro level and lead you to make the wrong marketing decisions, costing you money.

The best way to ensure that you track only what's relevant is to undertake a Google Analytics Measurement Planning Workshop.

Google Analytics Goals

Types of Goals

The 4 types of configurable Goals available in Google Analytics are:

- **Destination** (A specific location loads): e.g. “Thank you for registering!” web page or app screen
- **Duration** (Sessions that lasts a specific amount of time or longer): e.g. 10 minutes or longer spent on a support site (these are not very reliable)
- **Pages/Screens per session** (A user views a specific number of pages or screens): e.g. 5 pages or screens have been loaded (these are not very reliable)
- **Event** (An action defined as an Event is triggered): e.g. form submission, video play, ad click

Google Analytics Goals

Setting up Goals in Google Analytics

In order to set up Goals in Google Analytics:

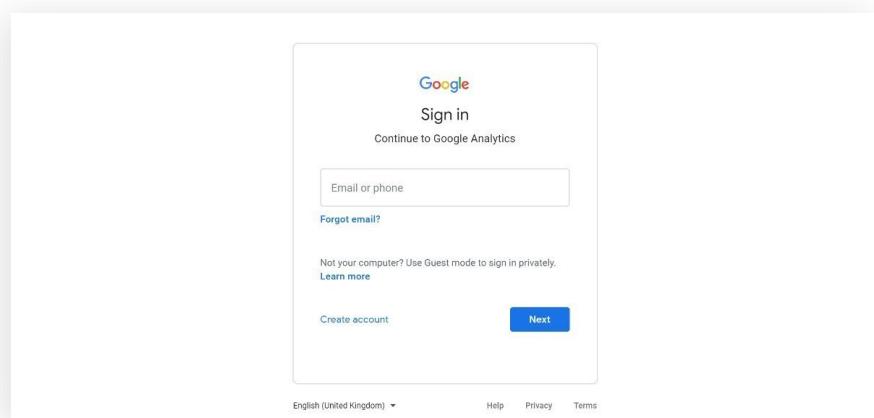
1. Sign into your Google Analytics property (8.1)
2. Click “**Admin**” in the bottom left hand corner (8.2)
3. In the ‘**View**’ column, click ‘Goals’ (8.3)
4. Click the red ‘+ **New Goal**’ button (8.4)
5. You will be presented with a number of Goal templates, but usually you will click “**Custom**”, then “**Continue**” (8.5)
6. Give your goal a name then select your Goal Type... (8.6)

The next steps depend on the type of Goal you'd like to create. In the remainder of this section I'll guide you through the process for both Destination and Event goals.

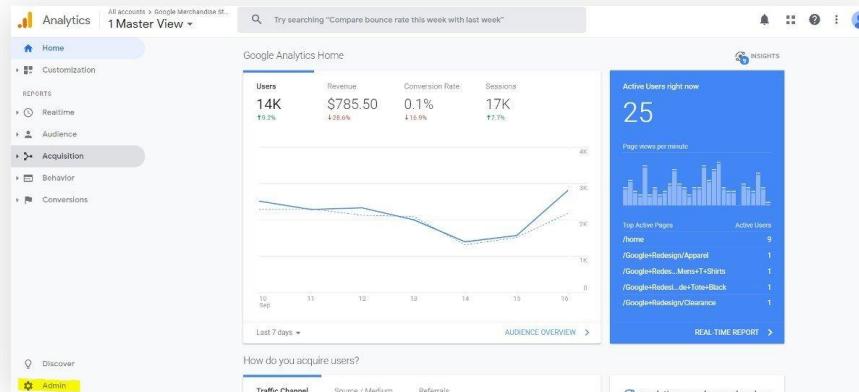
Google Analytics Goals

Setting up Goals in Google Analytics

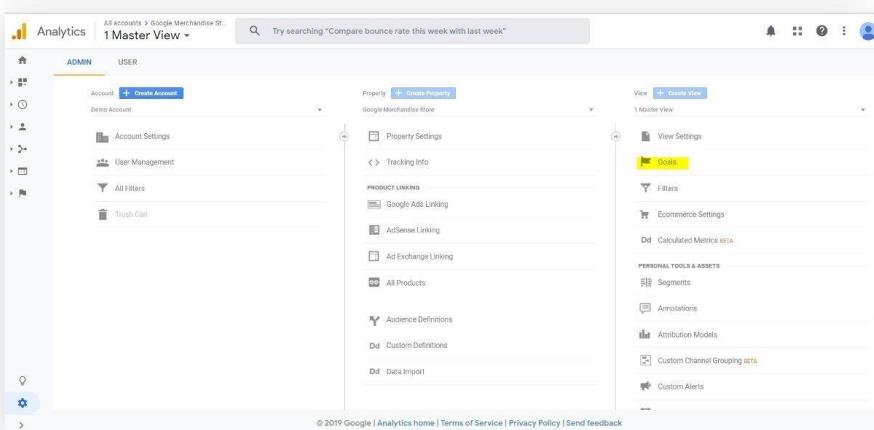
8.1



8.2



8.3



Google Analytics Goals

Setting up Goals in Google Analytics

8.4

The screenshot shows the Google Analytics Admin interface. On the left, the sidebar has 'ADMIN' selected. Under 'Goals', there is a red box highlighting the 'New Goal' button. A red arrow points from the top center towards this button. The main panel shows a table with one goal entry:

Goal	ID	Goal Type	Last 7 day conversions	Recording
Form Submission	Goal ID 1 / Goal Set 1	Event	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Below the table, it says '19 goals left'.

8.5

The screenshot shows the 'Goal setup' step in the Google Analytics Admin interface. The sidebar is the same as before. The main panel shows the 'Template' section with 'Custom' selected. It lists several goal types under 'REVENUE' (Place an order, Completed purchase or pre-order request) and 'ACQUISITION' (Create an account, Successful sign-up, visitor or view record). Below these are sections for 'PURCHASE', 'ENGAGEMENT', and 'PERSONAL'. A yellow box highlights the 'Custom' button at the bottom right of the template section. A red box highlights the 'Next Step' button at the bottom right of the entire setup panel.

8.6

The screenshot shows the 'Goal details' step in the Google Analytics Admin interface. The sidebar is the same. The main panel shows the 'Goal setup' step completed with a green checkmark. The 'Goal description' section has 'Newsletter Sign Up' entered in the 'Name' field. The 'Goal slot ID' dropdown is set to 'Goal M 2 / Goal Set 1'. The 'Type' section is expanded, showing options like 'Destination' (e.g., thank.html), 'Duration' (e.g., 3 minutes or more), 'Pages/Screens per session' (e.g., 8 pages), and 'Event' (e.g., played a video). A red box highlights the 'Continue' button at the bottom right of the 'Goal details' panel.

Google Analytics Goals

Setting up Goals in Google Analytics

Setting Up Destination Goals

Continuing from [step 6](#) above...

1. Give your goal a name, and select “**Destination**” then click “**Continue**” (9.1)
2. Simply select “**Equals to**” from the weekend and input the page path of the page you would like to use as the destination goal. Then click save! (9.2)

Google Analytics Goals

Setting up Goals in Google Analytics

Setting Up Destination Goals

The screenshot shows the Google Analytics Admin interface. On the left, the navigation menu is open, showing options like View, User Management, Goals, Content Grouping, Filters, Channel Settings, Ecommerce Settings, Calculated Metrics, Segments, Annotations, and Attribution Models. The 'Goals' option is selected. A modal window titled 'Goal setup' is open, showing the 'Goal description' section. The name 'Volunteer Page: Viewed' is entered, and the type is set to 'Destination'. Below this, there are several optional settings: Duration (less than 3 minutes or more), Pages/Screens per session (less than 3 pages), Event (e.g., played a video), and Smart Goal. At the bottom of the modal are 'Continue' and 'Cancel' buttons.

9.1

This screenshot shows the same Google Analytics Admin interface as the previous one, but the modal window now displays the 'Goal details' section. The 'Destination' field contains the value '/volunteering/'. There are dropdown menus for 'Value' (set to 'OFF') and 'Funnel' (set to 'OFF'). Below these fields is a 'Verify this Goal' section with a link to see how often the goal would have converted based on the past 7 days. At the bottom of the modal are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons.

9.2

Google Analytics Goals

Setting Up Goals in Google Analytics

Event Goals - What are Events?

Before we get down to setting up event goals, we need a bit of background on what events are...

By default Google Analytics can't track any event which does not generate page-view when it occurs. An event is essentially a user interaction/activity with a web-page element. e.g.

- Downloading a file
- Viewing a video
- Log-ins
- Scrolling down the page

To track these types of events that do not generate page-views, you need to use custom event-tracking. As stated earlier, the easiest way to set up event tracking is via [Google Tag Manager](#).

Google Analytics Goals

Setting Up Goals in Google Analytics

Event Goals - How Event Tracking Works

Essentially a snippet of custom code is set up to be fired by the action you want to track on your website (e.g. click of a download link) and when that action happens (e.g. the download link is clicked), it is tracked and displayed as an event within Google Analytics.

The event tracking code consists of four elements that you can define to describe the action on your website:

- **Category** (Required) is the name you give to a group of objects you want to track.
- **Action** (Required) is the type of interaction, such as downloading a document.
- **Label** (Optional) is useful for summarising what the event is about, such as clicks on navigation menu options.
- **Value** (Optional) can be used if you'd like to assign a numeric value to your file download.

When the event fires on your site, the 'Category', 'Action', 'Label' and 'Value' attributes are sent to your Google Analytics reports giving you details about the action you are tracking – e.g. number of downloads of particular documents.

Google Analytics Goals

Setting Up Goals in Google Analytics

Event Goals - How Event Tracking Works contd.

In the example (10), I have triggered an event to fire each time any file is downloaded from my website. This event passes the following data back to Google Analytics:

- **Category:** “File Download”
- **Action:** The URL path of the page that the file is downloaded from
- **Label:** The URL path of the downloaded document itself
- **Value:** null

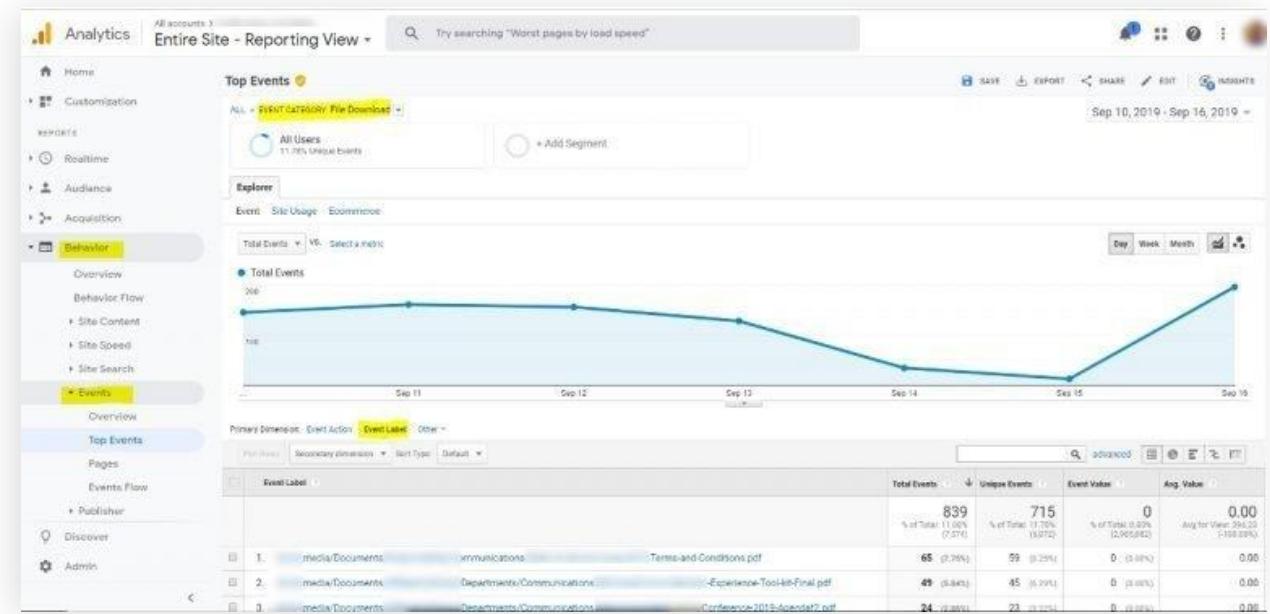
Event data is then accessible in the Behaviour – Events report. In the image below we see that report filtered by the Event Category **“File Download”**, which lists the names of all the documents downloaded from our site as the Event Labels and tells us the amount of times each file was downloaded.

Crucially, once we have set up our events, these **Events Can Be Used As Goals** – e.g. you can set up a Goal to track downloads of a particular document, allowing you to easily analyse the number of conversions (downloads), the conversion rate (users who downloaded / all users) and which channels drove the most conversions (downloads).

Google Analytics Goals

Setting Up Goals in Google Analytics

Event Goals - How Event Tracking Works contd.



10. Event Goal Example

Google Analytics Goals

Setting up Goals in Google Analytics

Setting Up Event Goals

Continuing from [step 6](#) above...

1. Give your goal a name, and select “Event” then click “Continue” (11.1)
2. Here you have the opportunity to be as broad as you like (e.g just setting **Category = File Download** to track all downloads of all files as a Goal) or as narrow as you like (e.g. setting **Category = File Download** and **Label = “/annual-report-2019.pdf”** to track only downloads of that specific file as a Goal). Then click save! (11.2)

Google Analytics Goals

Setting up Goals in Google Analytics

Setting Up Event Goals

The screenshot shows the Google Analytics interface under the 'ADMIN' tab. In the left sidebar, 'Goals' is selected. A modal window is open for 'Goal setup'. The 'Type' section is set to 'Event' (radio button selected). The 'Event' dropdown shows 'File Download'. The 'Goal description' section has 'Name' set to 'File Download' and 'Goal ID' set to 'Goal ID 2 / Goal Set 1'. Below the goal setup, there's a 'Goal details' section with an 'Event conditions' table:

Category	Equals to	Action
File Download	Action	Action
Label	Equal to	/annual-report-2019.pdf
Value	greater than	Value

At the bottom of the modal, there are 'Continue' and 'Cancel' buttons.

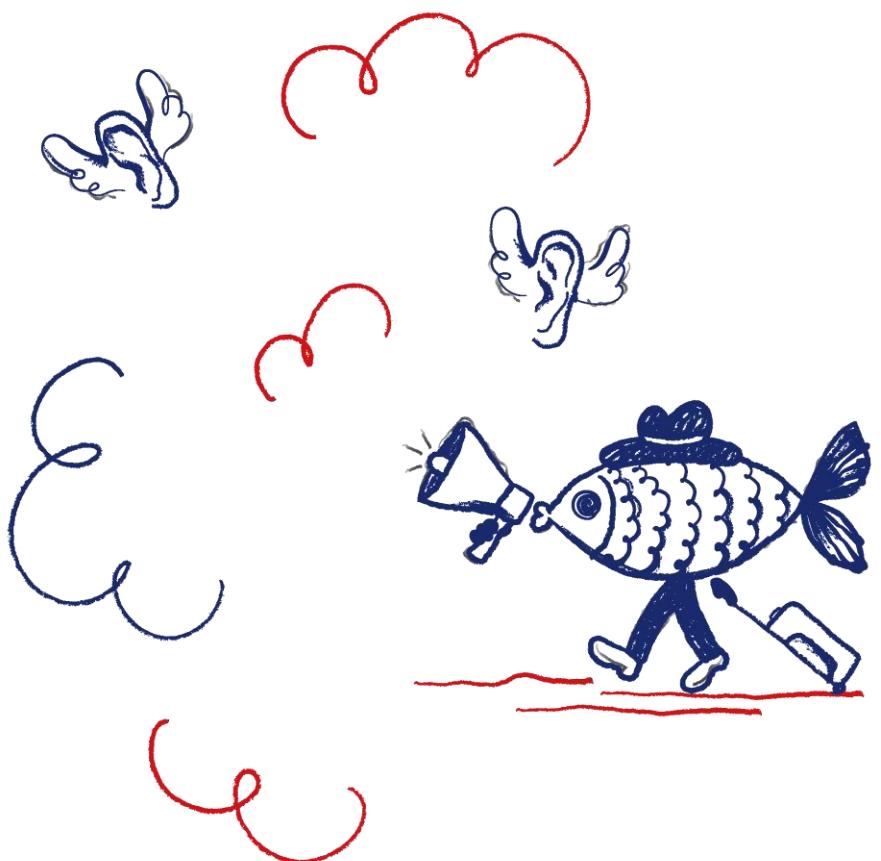
11.1

This screenshot shows the same Google Analytics interface and modal window as the previous one, but with a key difference: the 'Event value' field in the 'Goal details' section is now populated with 'File Download'. The rest of the configuration remains the same, including the event conditions table and the 'Use the Event value as the Goal Value for the conversion' checkbox being checked.

11.2

Chapter 7:

Google Analytics Standard Reports



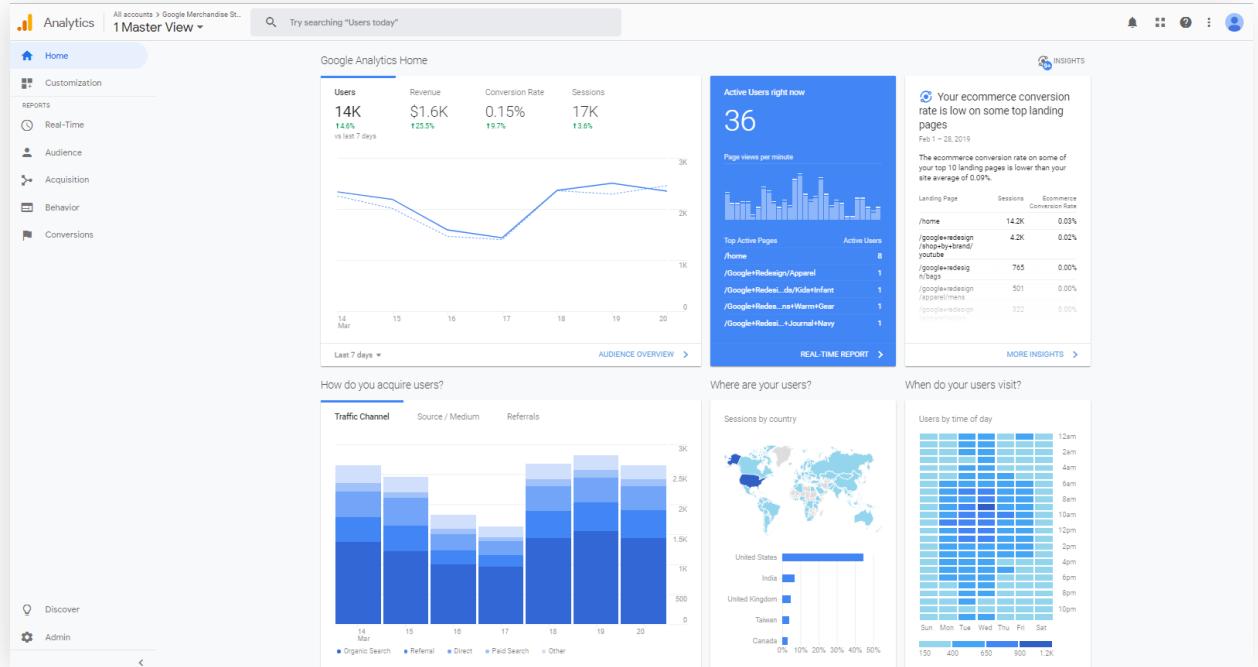
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Once you've installed even the most basic configuration of Google Analytics, without any custom event tracking, you will have access to a huge selection of standard reports within your Google Analytics account.

This sheer amount of data and reports in Google Analytics can be overwhelming for many users and there's a significant risk of getting "lost in the data". To counteract this, I always recommend having a goals-focused approach to your Google Analytics reporting. A goal-focused approach will help you pick and choose which data is pertinent to you, and present it in a streamlined, non-cluttered manner that is specific to your organisations analytics needs. I'll discuss further in the [Google Analytics Measurement Planning](#) chapter.

It's good to have an understanding of the standard reports to help you with your every day ad hoc reporting and requests however, so in this chapter I'll give an overview of some of the main ones.

Google Analytics Standard Reports Home Screen



This is your Home Screen once you select a particular property and view. The dashboard gives you an overview of topline statistics for the past 7 days (by default, though you can choose any date range you want).

Along the sidebar you can toggle between your other report categories – Real Time, Audience, Acquisition, Behaviour and Conversions.

7.1 Real Time Reports

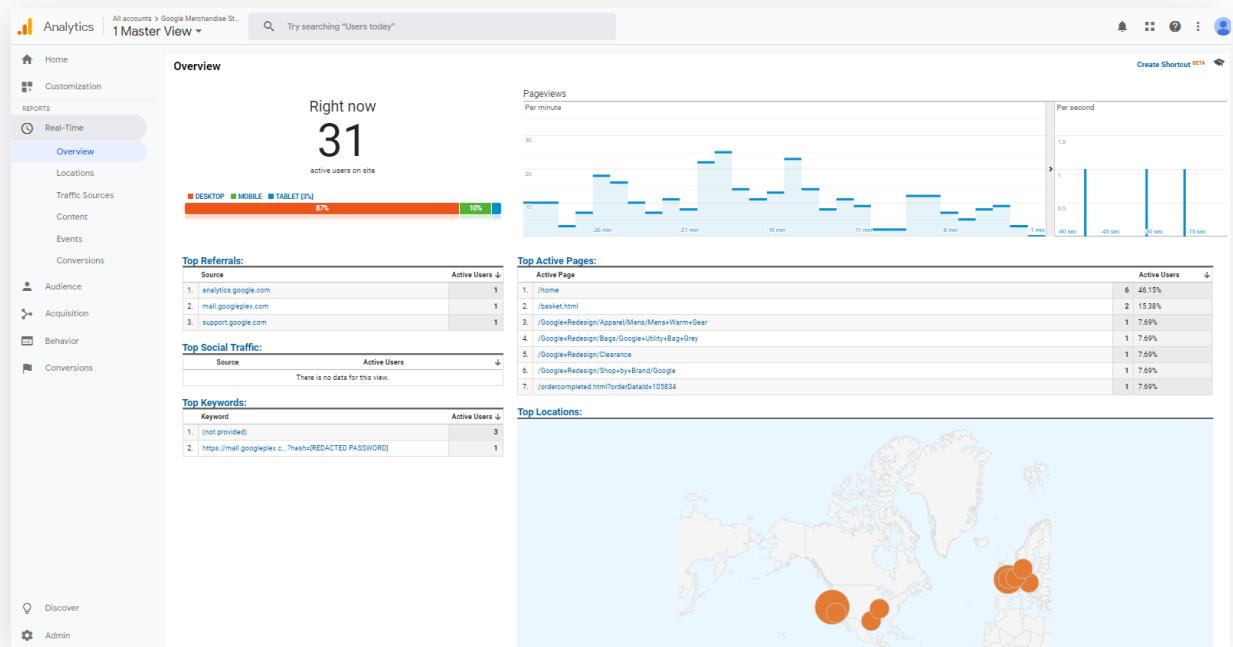
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Real Time Reports

Overview

The Real Time report has information about who's on your website **right now** – where they came from, what they searched for, where they are, what pages they are on.

It's interesting for debugging and testing or if but not particularly useful for reporting purposes.



7.2 Audience Reports

Google Analytics Standard Reports

Audience Reports

The Audience Reporting section of Google Analytics is used to identify the types of visitors that have visited a website.

Specific reports are used to break down visitors by age, gender, geographical location, device type, browser, operating system, and much more.

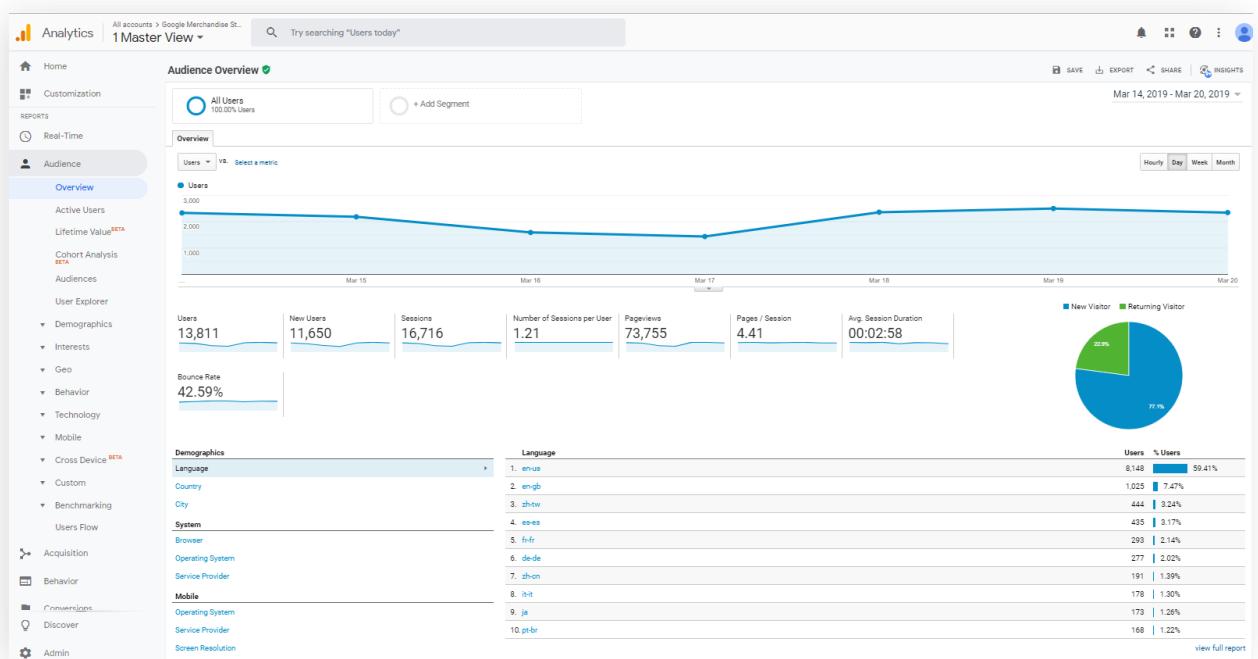
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Audience Reports

Overview

The Audience Overview Report provides high level insight into:

- Demographics of your audience (e.g. age and gender)
- Interests of your audience
- Geographic location (language and location) of your audience
- Mix of new and return users and engagement levels of users
- Browsers and networks being used to access your site
- Devices being used to access your site



"Users" in Google Analytics

A word of caution...

In order to associate traffic with a particular user, Google Analytics associates a unique identifier with each user and sends this with each hit. This identifier is usually a single, first-party cookie named `_ga` that stores a Google Analytics client ID.

This will help distinguish the person as a “new user”. When the same user visits your site at a later time, they will be counted as a “returning user”.

This method of identifying users is, unfortunately, inherently flawed — if a person clears their browser cookies, uses incognito mode in their browser, or if they use a different browser or different device for a subsequent visit to the site, they will appear as a ‘new’ individual user each time.

In advanced implementations of Google Analytics, you can reduce that problem by implementing a cross-device User-ID tracking. Without that advanced implementation, some of your ‘new’ users are in all likelihood actually returning users. So the total Users count in any report is probably over-inflated a bit.

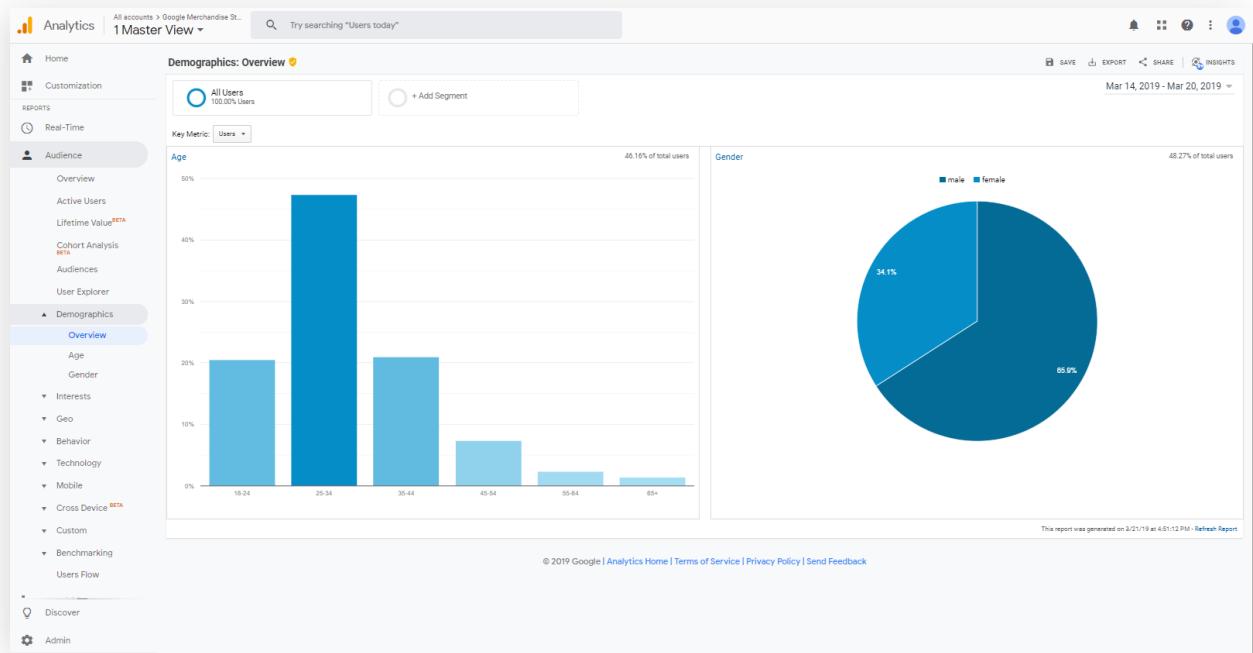
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Audience Reports

Demographics

Demographics reports at their most basic show the age and gender breakdown of your visitors.

It's possible to segment data by these groupings in order to compare how well different ages and gender combinations convert – this data helps you to build customer personas of high value and lower value customers when combined with other data.



Google Analytics Standard Reports

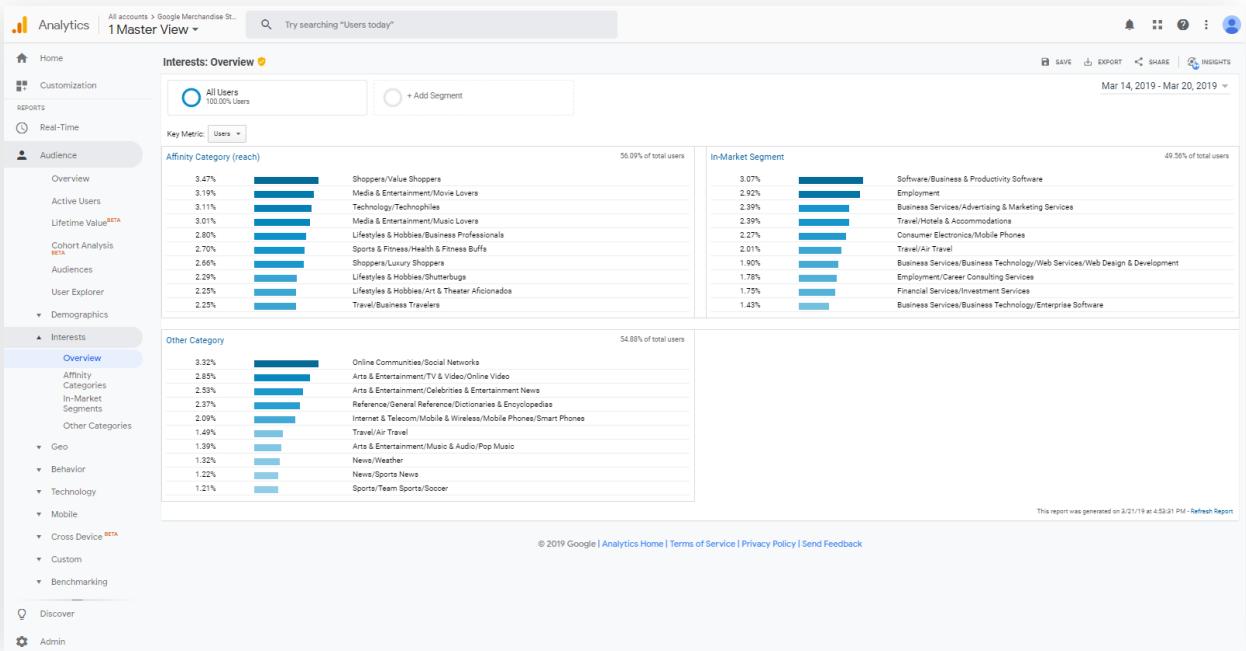
Audience Reports

Interests

The Interests reports are useful for assisting in the development of personas and judging the value user types.

Data gathered via DoubleClick cookie, Android Advertising ID, iOS identifier for Advertisers.

- **Affinity Categories:** Google's view of a users overall interests, passions, and lifestyle
- **In-Market Segments:** Individuals in this audience have indicated (according to Google) that they are actively in-market to purchase a product in a specific category
- **Other Categories:** Provides the most specific view of your users. E.g. Whilst Affinity Categories includes Foodies, Other Categories includes Recipes/Cuisines/East Asian

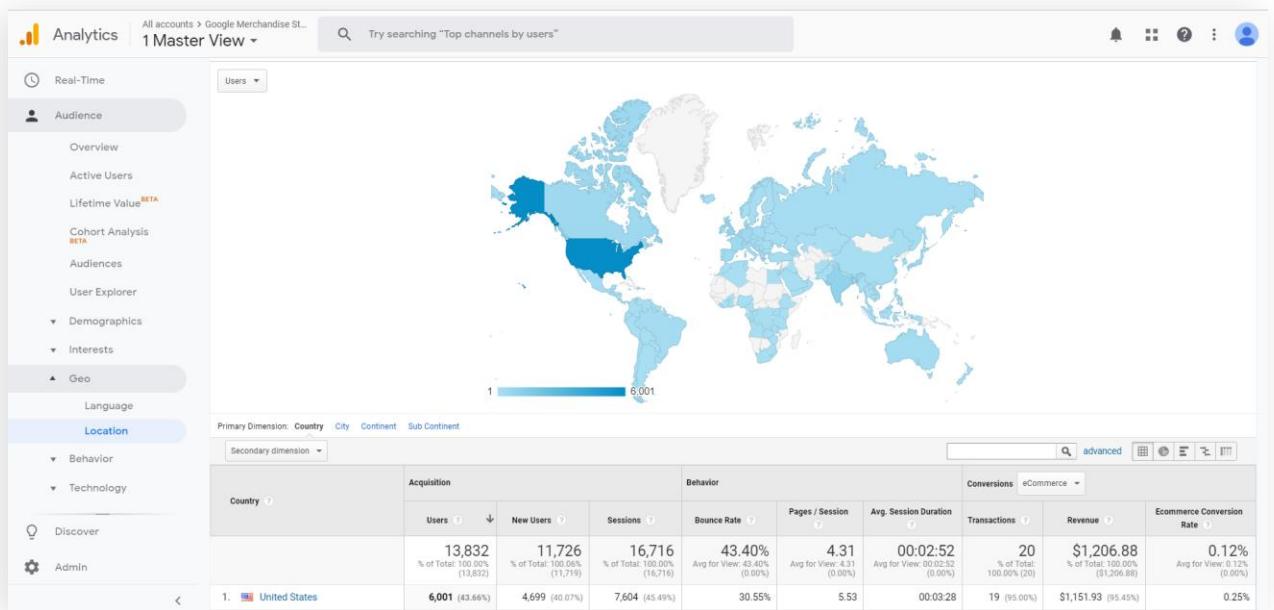


Google Analytics Standard Reports

Audience Reports

Geography & Language

Allows you to compare country and language of your website users and compare engagement and conversion rates. Are there untapped opportunities in other countries? Do you need to look at creating a multi-lingual site?

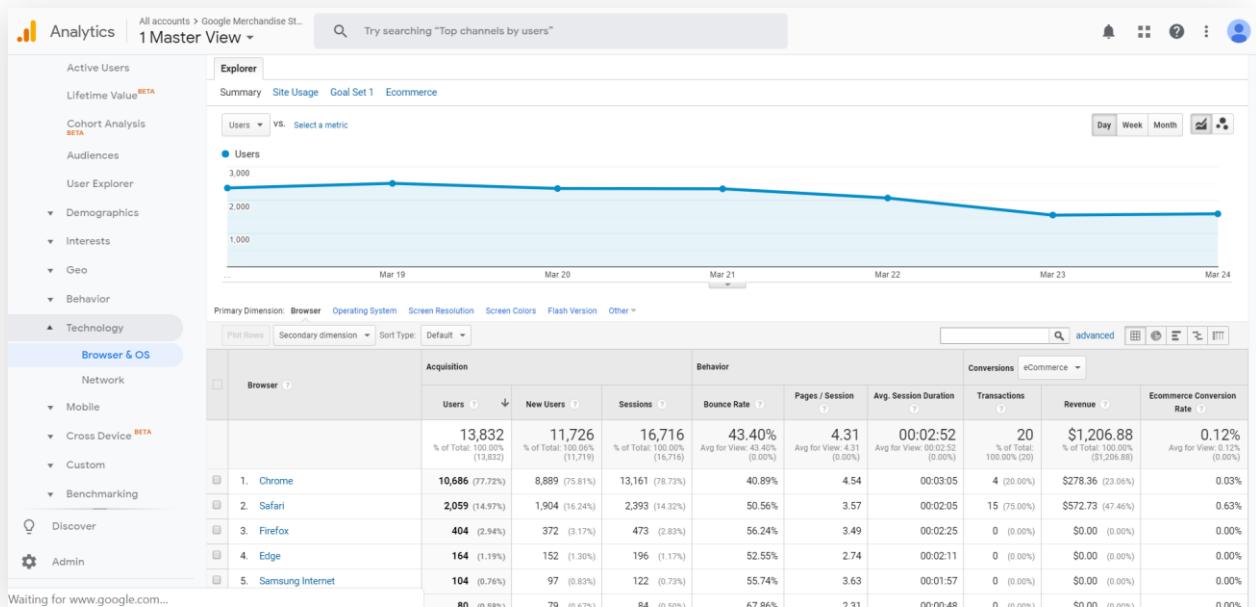


Google Analytics Standard Reports

Audience Reports

Technology (Operating System, Browser, Network)

Which browsers and OS combinations do your users use?
Optimising your site or the appropriate technical capabilities makes your site more engaging and usable and can result in higher conversion rates and sales.



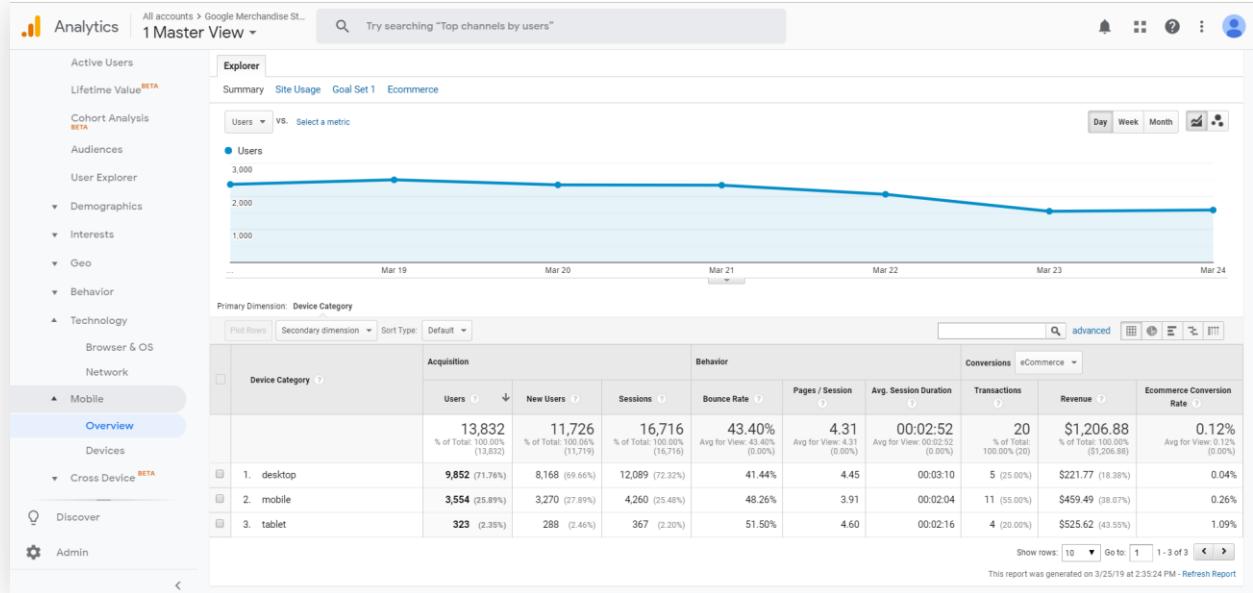
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Audience Reports

Mobile

Understanding which devices your audience use, the input methods they use to interact with content and the screen sizes on which they're viewing your content lets you tweak current versions and plan for future development.

Again, you can segment by Device category to compare conversion rates and engagement on different device types, actual mobile devices, etc. to either A. focus marketing on over-performing devices or B. optimise the site for under-performing devices.



7.3 Acquisition Reports

Google Analytics Standard Reports

Acquisition Reports

The Acquisition Reporting section of Google Analytics is used to identify how users arrive at your website.

Specific reports are used to learn more about your traffic - if they arrive directly to your site or use a search engine - and how successful certain marketing campaigns are in attracting users.

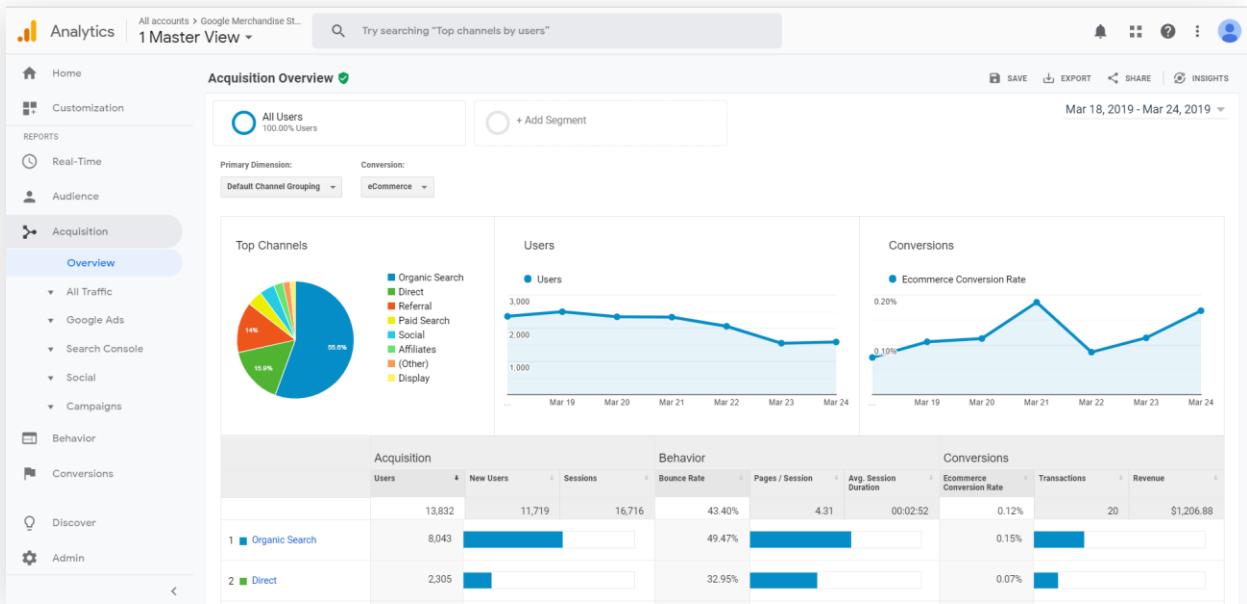
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Acquisition Reports

Overview

The Acquisition Overview Report provides high level insight into:

- What channels drive the most users to your website
- The default engagement metrics for each channel (e.g. Bounce Rate, Pages per Session and Average Session Duration)
- The number of conversions per channel and conversion rates per channel (if Goals or E-Commerce tracking have been enabled)



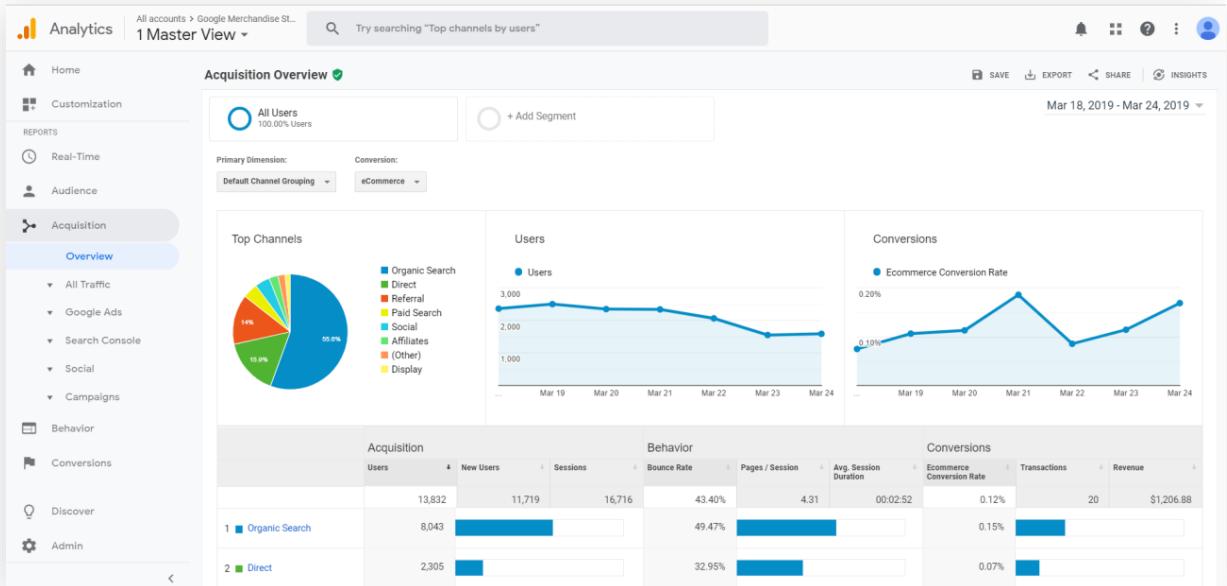
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Acquisition Reports

Channels

Channels gives an overview of what type of mediums are driving traffic to your site at a high level. You can **click any of the channel links to see related standard reports with more details.**

Organic Search takes you to the Keywords report; Direct takes you to the top landing pages for direct visitors; Referral takes you to your top referring websites and Social takes you to your top-referring social networks.



Google Analytics Standard Reports

Acquisition Reports

Source / Medium

More detail on the sources that are driving traffic to your site at a more specific level – i.e. what search engine drove organic, what sites drove referral, what networks drove paid search, etc.

Lets you quickly **analyze where most of your traffic comes from**—it may be a particular search engine, a publication you contribute to or even a directory you advertise with.

The screenshot shows the Google Analytics interface for the 'All Traffic' report. The left sidebar is collapsed, and the main area displays a line chart of 'Users' over time from March 19 to March 24, 2019. Below the chart, a table provides detailed data for 'Source / Medium'. The table has columns for Acquisition (Users, New Users, Sessions, Bounce Rate, Avg. Session Duration), Behavior (Pages / Session, Avg. Session Duration), and Conversions (Ecommerce Conversion Rate, Transactions, Revenue). The data shows two main sources: 'google / organic' (13,832 users) and '(direct) / (none)' (7,847 users).

Source / Medium	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions		
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Ecommerce Conversion Rate	Transactions	Revenue
google / organic	13,832 % of Total: 100.00% (13,832)	11,726 % of Total: 100.00% (11,719)	16,716 % of Total: 100.00% (16,716)	43.40% Avg for View: 43.40% (0.00%)	4.31 Avg for View: 4.31 (0.00%)	00:02:52 Avg for View: 00:02:52 (0.00%)	0.12% Avg for View: 0.12% (0.00%)	20 % of Total: 100.00% (20)	\$1,206.88 % of Total: 100.00% (\$1,206.88)
(direct) / (none)	7,847 (54.17%)	6,677 (56.94%)	8,874 (53.09%)	49.27%	3.79	00:02:31	0.16% Avg for View: 0.16% (0.00%)	14 (70.00%)	\$986.80 (\$1.76%)
	2,306 (15.92%)	2,008 (17.12%)	2,696 (16.13%)	32.94%	5.07	00:03:34	0.07% Avg for View: 0.07% (0.00%)	2 (10.00%)	\$104.75 (\$8.68%)

“Direct” Traffic in Google Analytics

(It's not as straightforward as it seems)

It's often assumed that traffic counted under the “Direct” channel in Google Analytics is traffic that arrived on your site either by a user typing your website URL into a browser or through browser bookmarks.

This kind of traffic is indeed attributed as “Direct”, however it's not the only traffic that's attributed as such - traffic that doesn't truly arrive at your site directly, but is attributed as “Direct” in Google Analytics is known as “Dark Traffic”.

The reason “Dark Traffic” exists is down to how Google technically identifies “Direct” traffic - i.e. it's traffic that doesn't bring referral data with it via the HTTP header as it arrives on your site.

Channel	Description
Direct	Source exactly matches direct AND Medium exactly matches (not set) OR Medium exactly matches (none)

Over time a number of different types of “Dark Traffic” have emerged.

"Direct" Traffic in Google Analytics

What is "Dark Traffic"?

Dark Traffic:

Traffic that arrives to your website and is incorrectly labeled by Google Analytics (or other web analytics tools) as “direct”

There are a lot of types of dark traffic that are commonly mislabeled as “Direct” including:

- Traffic via chat apps such as WhatsApp and Messenger
- Traffic via e-mail clients like Outlook / G-Mail
- Traffic via native mobile apps
- Traffic via improperly tagged digital advertising
- Traffic via “Dark Search” (In-app searches, image searches, secure searches)
- Referral traffic from a secure (HTTPS) site to a non-secure (HTTP) site

"Direct" Traffic in Google Analytics

Combat falsely attributed Direct traffic with UTM Parameters

Unfortunately, given the way that Google Analytics tracks source and medium of traffic, it's unlikely that you'll ever **fully** eradicate dark traffic from your reports.

However, you can give yourself the best chance of minimising it by using **UTM Parameters** (also known as "Campaign Tracking URLs").

UTM parameters are simply a little string of text that you append to a URL. When your link is clicked, the information from this string is sent back to Google Analytics and used in the Acquisition reports.

With UTM parameters, you could manually "tag" URLs that you will be using, in an e-mail marketing campaign for example, to explicitly tell Google Analytics that this traffic should be tracked under the "Email" channel (and "email" medium), rather than the "Direct" channel (and "none" medium).

"Direct" Traffic in Google Analytics

An Example of UTM Parameters

So here's an example of UTM parameters that I would add to a link in my e-mail newsletter which drives users to my SEO Audits page on www.google-analytics.ie .

(A) below is the actual URL of the page I want to send traffic to.
(B) below is that URL with UTM parameters added to it in order to explicitly tell Google Analytics that it should attribute this traffic to the Source:January-Newsletter and the Medium:email.

A <https://www.google-analytics.ie/seo-audits>



B https://www.google-analytics.ie/seo-audits?utm_source=january-newsletter&utm_medium=email

Both of these links ultimately point to the exact same page, but if I use (A) instead of (B) in my email links, that email traffic is likely to be mis-attributed by Google Analytics as "Direct" rather than "Email" traffic.

"Direct" Traffic in Google Analytics

An Example of UTM Parameters

When UTM parameters are used, you now know where your traffic is really coming from and you can correctly attribute conversions to the actual source e.g. the January Newsletter in the example below:

	Source / Medium <small>?</small>	Acquisition		Behavior			Conversions			
		Users <small>?</small> <small>▼</small>	New Users <small>?</small>	Sessions <small>?</small>	Bounce Rate <small>?</small>	Pages / Session <small>?</small>	Avg. Session Duration <small>?</small>	Form Submission (Goal 1 Conversion Rate) <small>?</small>	Form Submission (Goal 1 Completions) <small>?</small>	Form Submission (Goal 1 Value) <small>?</small>
		33 % of Total: 100.00% (33)						6.35% Avg for View: 6.35% (0.00%)	4 % of Total: 100.00% (4)	€0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (€0.00)
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. (direct) / (none)	18 (50.00%)						11.11%	2 (50.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. google / organic	7 (19.44%)						0.00%	0 (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. january-newsletter / email	3 (8.33%)						14.29%	2 (50.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. linkedin.com / referral	2 (5.56%)						0.00%	0 (0.00%)	€0.00 (0.00%)

You can easily add UTM parameters to your links with Google's [Campaign URL Builder](#).

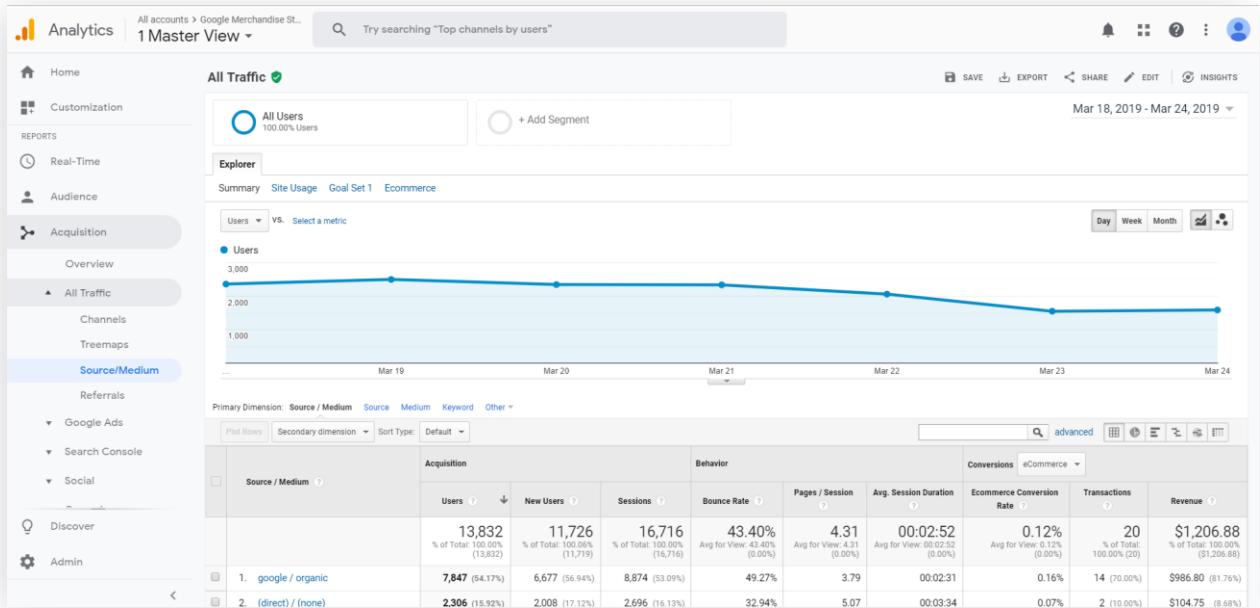
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Acquisition Reports

Referral

The Referrals report gives you more detail on what other websites that “referred” visitors to your site by clicking a link. This category excludes advertising visits, as well as organic search, in most cases.

When you click on any of these source domains in the main report, you see the specific pages where people found your links on a 3rd party website and clicked on them. These are the referral paths.



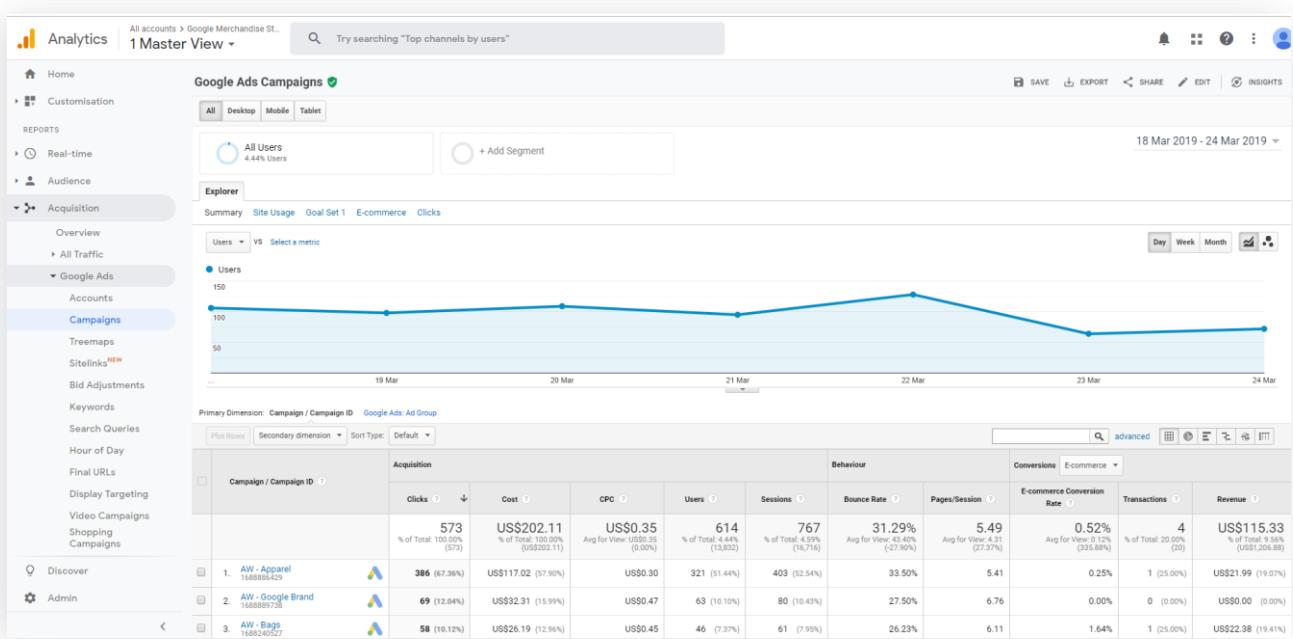
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Acquisition Reports

Google Ads

It is possible to link your Google Ads (formerly AdWords) account to your GA reporting to get a full picture of how your paid search and display traffic is performing.

This report allows you to look at campaign performance, keyword performance, landing page performance and optimise your campaigns accordingly.



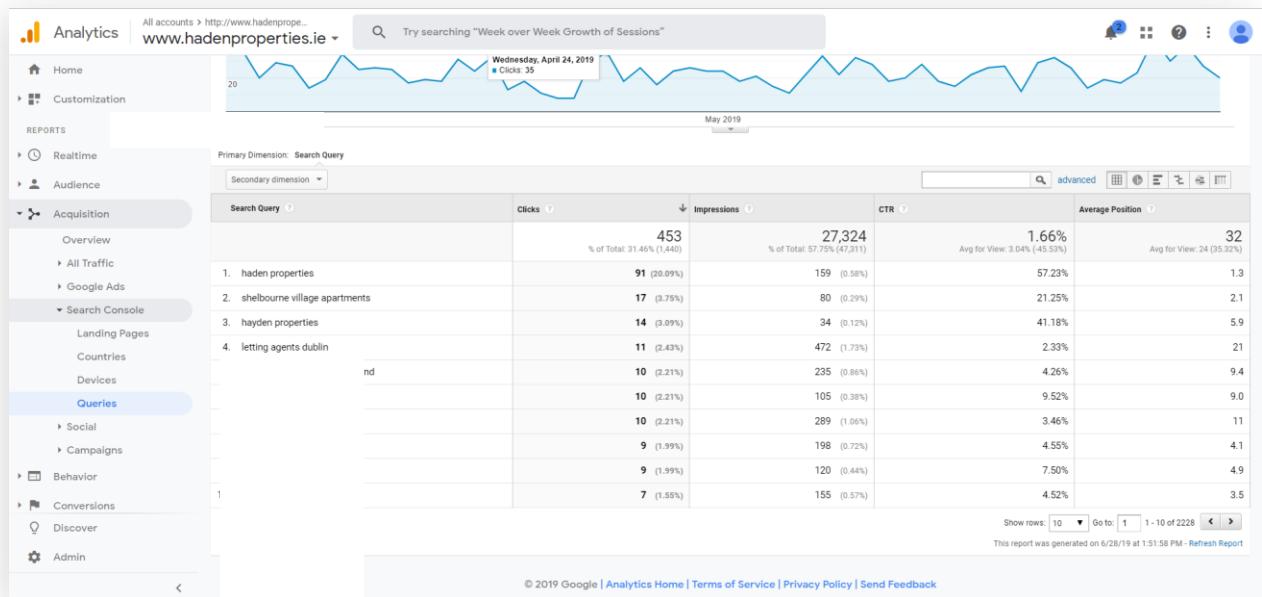
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Acquisition Reports

Google Search Console

It is possible to link your [Google Search Console](#) account to your GA reporting to get a much more detail on how your organic search traffic is performing.

This report allows you to look at organic keyword performance, landing page performance and optimise or add content accordingly.



7.4 Behaviour Reports

Google Analytics Standard Reports

Behaviour Reports

The Behaviour Reports give you an overview of how users behave on your website. They show you what your users view and how they navigate through your site and what content they engage with.

All of this information can help you optimize your website performance and conversions.

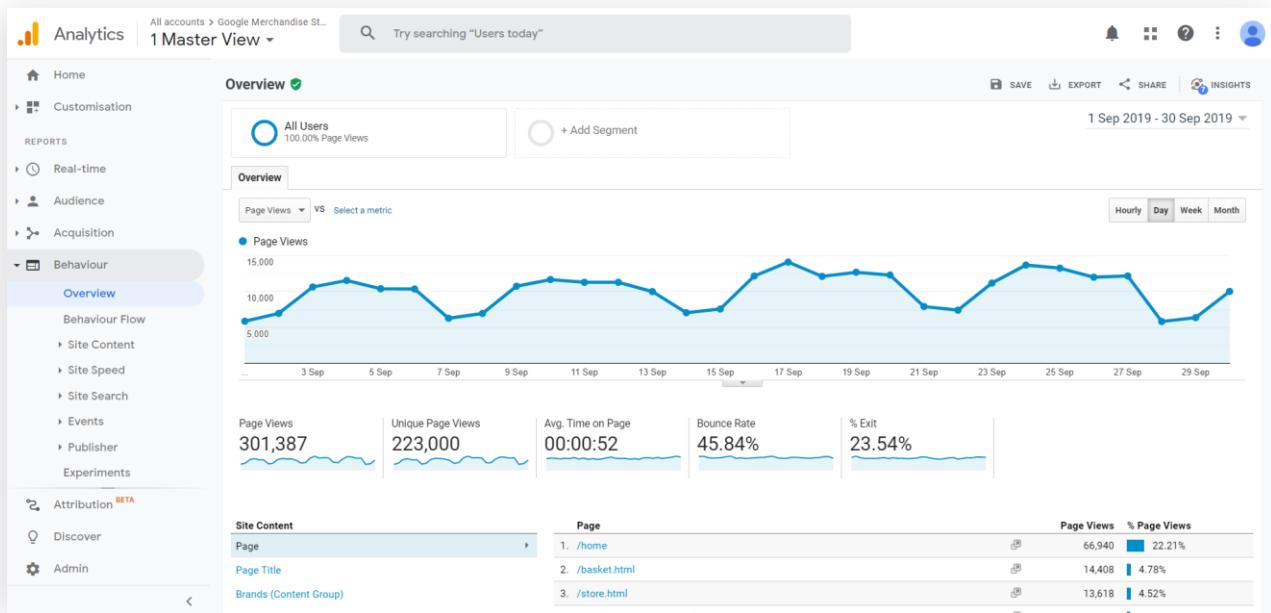
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Behaviour Reports

Overview

The overview report shows you a high-level overview of key behavior related metrics in a visual format including:

- Total Pageviews
- Unique Pageviews
- Average Time on Page
- Bounce Rate
- % Exit
- Pageviews for the top 10 most-viewed pages
- Search Terms data from Site Search
- Event categories from the top five Unique Events



Google Analytics Standard Reports

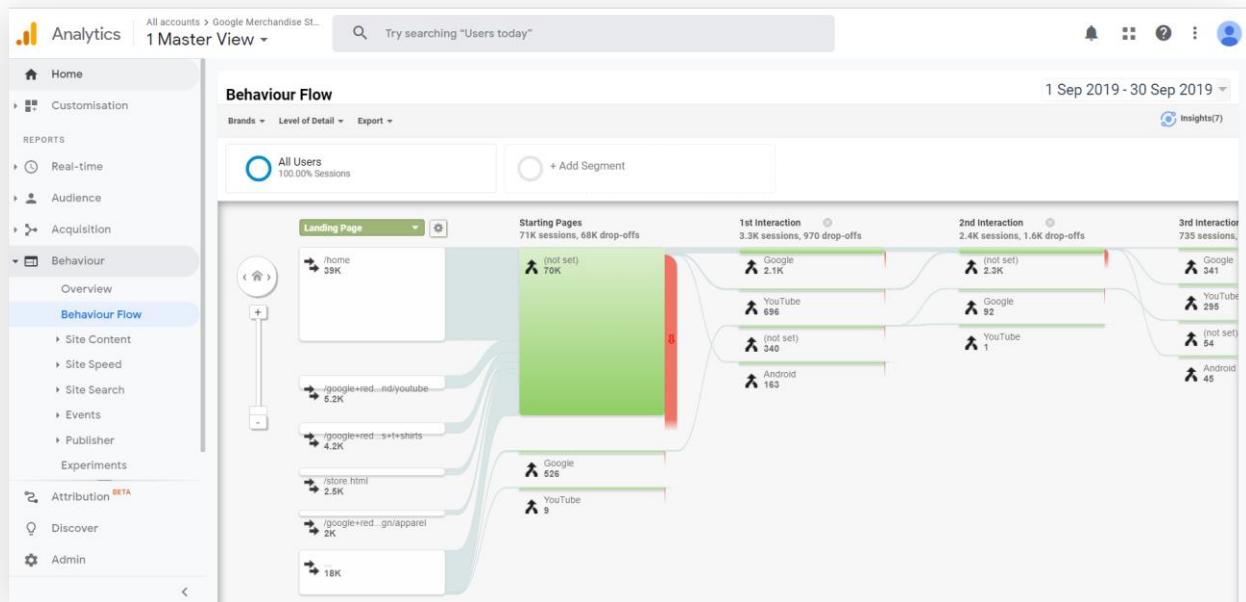
Behaviour Reports

Behavior Flow

The Behavior Flow report shows a flow diagram of the paths your website users take on your website.

By default it starts from the landing page they entered into our site , moves on to their most popular starting pages through 1st, 2nd, 3rd interaction, etc. on the site and ends at the page they exited from. You are also able to adjust the level of detail in the connections.

You can toggle a drop-down to view traffic behavior based on dimensions other than “Landing Page” including Source, Medium and Campaign.



Google Analytics Standard Reports

Behaviour Reports

Behavior Flow contd.

This report allows you to gain a better understanding of user behavior through the site and determine if different sets of users are doing what you want them to do.

It can act as the starting point for determining what you can do to influence user behavior - e.g. add CTAs where users are veering off your expected path, add internal links to pages that see high exits from particular flows.

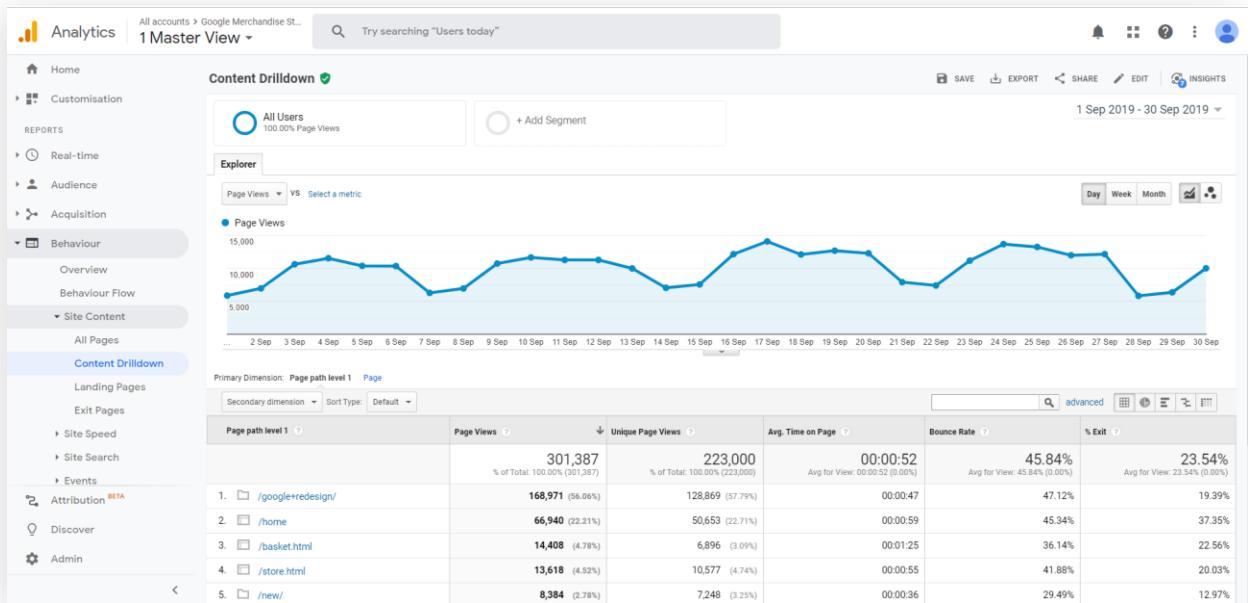
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Behaviour Reports

Site Content

Site Content reports are a series of reports that show how users interact with your site content. The sub-reports are:

- All Pages — Shows the best performing and least performing content by URL in terms of high level metrics
- Content Drill-down — Shows the top folders of content on your website and allows you to drill down into each folder to see the top performing content within that folder
- Landing Pages — Shows the best performing and least performing landing pages in terms of high level metrics
- Exit Pages — Shows pages where users most commonly exited from



Google Analytics Standard Reports

Behaviour Reports

Site Content (Continued)

While the metrics in these reports are pretty high level, it will help you to identify the content that your website visitors want from your website, particularly if you have not yet configured more specific website goals based on a Google Analytics Measurement Plan.

The **Content Drill-down** sub-report allows you to determine website section popularity, in terms of pageviews and topline metrics. This report can prove valuable in deciding what types of content to add to your current site, or for making Information Architecture decisions for a website redesign.

The **Landing Pages** report allows you to analyse Bounce Rate and Exit Rate which is valuable information to feed page design, particularly for campaign landing pages which you are paying to drive traffic to.

The **Exit Pages** report can help you to quickly determine which pages need to be optimised to engage users and drive them towards consuming more content or converting. Some pages, e.g. thank-you pages, will obviously appear high in this report which is to be expected.

Google Analytics Standard Reports

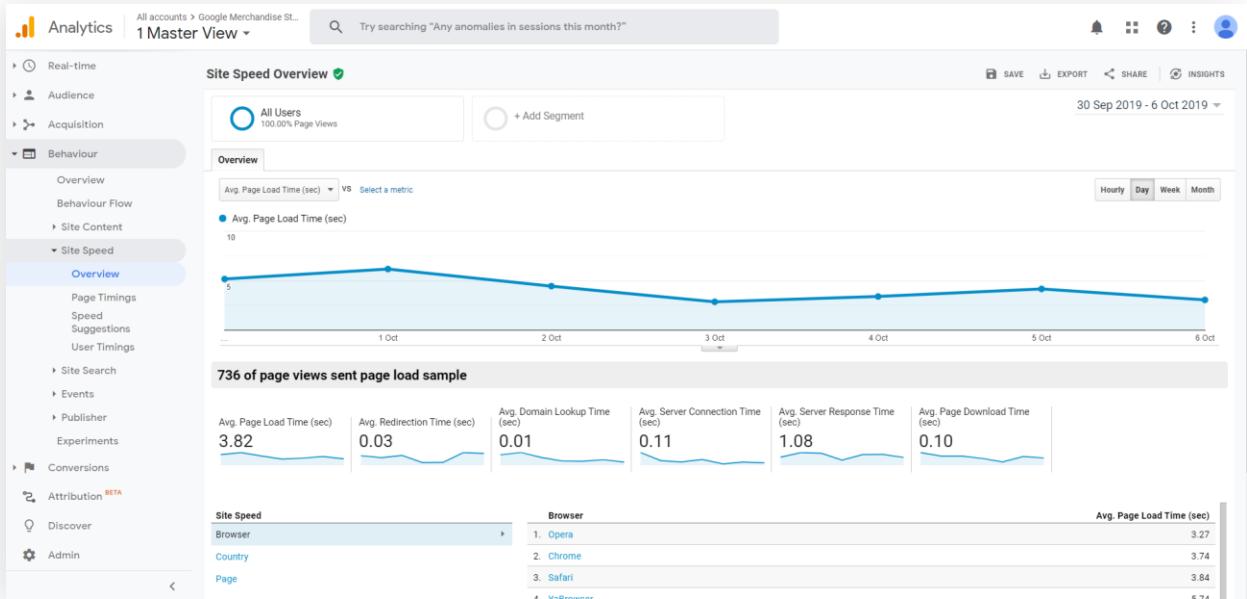
Behaviour Reports

Site Speed

Site Speed Reports is linked to Google's Pagespeed Insights tool to highlight areas of the site that may need optimization.

The Page Timings report tells you how long pages took to load and compares this to the site average. The Speed Suggestions report offers automated tips from Google on how to optimize pages.

These reports are invaluable in identifying slow loading content on your site and give you an indication of what you need to fix to improve both User Experience and SEO performance (as site speed is a recognised ranking factor).



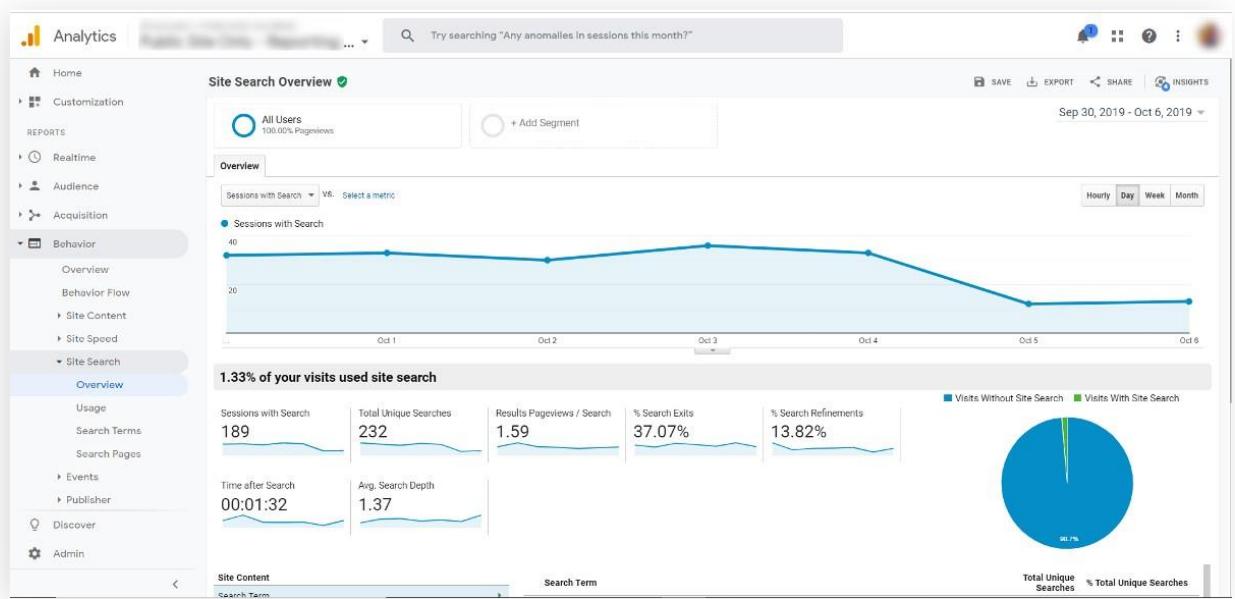
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Behaviour Reports

Site Search

The Site Search reports is another report that is not automatically populated in an “out-of-the-box” Google Analytics configuration - it needs to be configured (based on the search query parameter of your site) in your View settings (another blog post on this to follow).

Once this has been set up, these reports show you what your users are searching for on your website. It reports when a visitor uses your website search bar to look for information.



Google Analytics Standard Reports

Behaviour Reports

Site Search contd.

This report can offer invaluable insight into what content users are having difficulty finding on your site, what types of content users expect to find on your site that isn't there and gives you an idea of the words and terminology they are using.

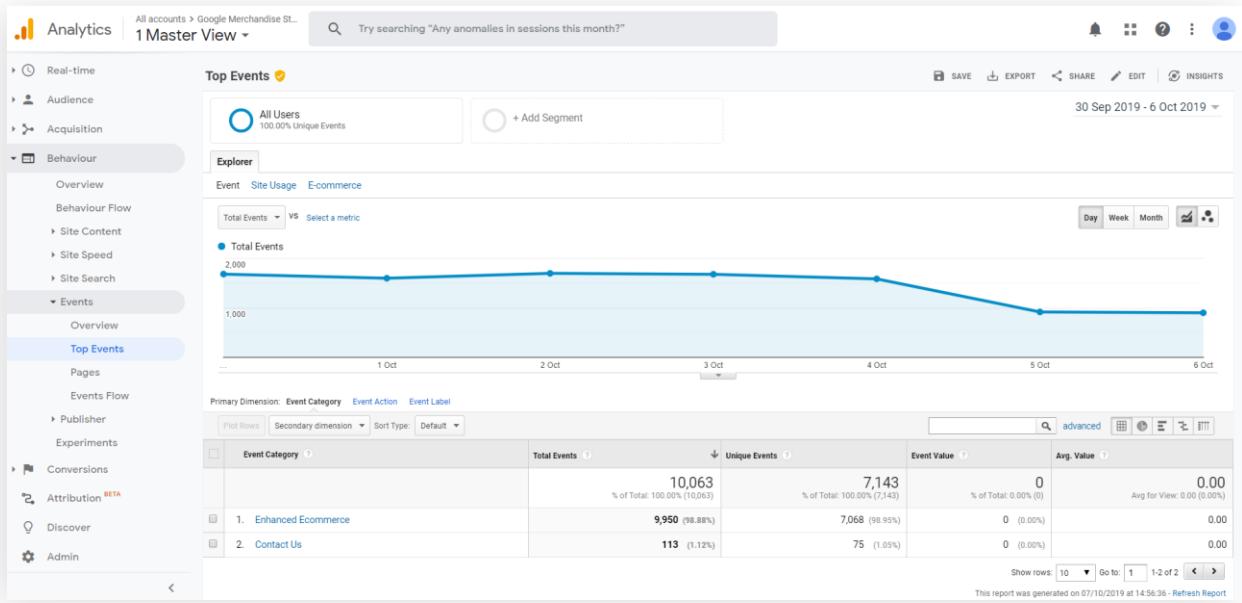
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Behaviour Reports

Events

Event tracking requires additional implementation beyond the standard Google Analytics tracking. Basically any actions on your site that aren't automatically tracked by Google Analytics (e.g. Downloads, Video Plays, Scroll Depth, Button Clicks, Form Submissions, Widget Interactions) you can set up custom event tracking.

Each event is defined by a Category, Action and Label. By setting your own custom events, you can get a deeper look into content performance and user behavior and these Events reports is where your new data will appear.



7.5 Conversion Reports

Google Analytics Standard Reports

Conversion Reports

Is your website helping you to meet your overall business objectives? Conversion reports are arguably the most useful reports for most businesses. These reports show you information about how well your site performs in encouraging users to meet predefined goals (or “conversions”). Conversions like orders, and sign-ups are actionable metrics that indicate whether or not your website and marketing tactics are working for your business.

Conversion reports can tell you how each goal that you are tracking on your website is performing. They allow you to:

- **Track user actions** on your site that indicate that a business objective is being met (e.g purchase, newsletter sign-up, contact form submission, etc.)
- **Analyse conversion rates** (# of conversion / # of users) of overall traffic or different segments of your audience (e.g. traffic via social vs traffic via SEO)
- **Analyse goal funnels** to identify at what stage users give up on completing a conversion

Google Analytics Standard Reports

Conversion Reports contd.

There are 3 categories of reports within the Conversion Reports section in Google Analytics:

- **Goals:** These reports offer you an overview of how your site is performing against specific goals that you have set up – showing you the amount of goal completions along with the conversion rate of each goal. Note: Goals are not set up in an out of the box Google Analytics configuration – you should set goals based on the specific objectives of your particular organisation using a Google Analytics Measurement Plan
- **Ecommerce:** When enabled on e-commerce sites, these reports offer information on your product sales and checkout flow
- **Multi-Channel Funnels:** Give you information on conversions based on different channel attribution models e.g. first touch, last touch, etc.

I've decided to assign 3 sub-sections here - one for each category of Conversion report.

7.5.1 Conversion Reports: Goal Reports

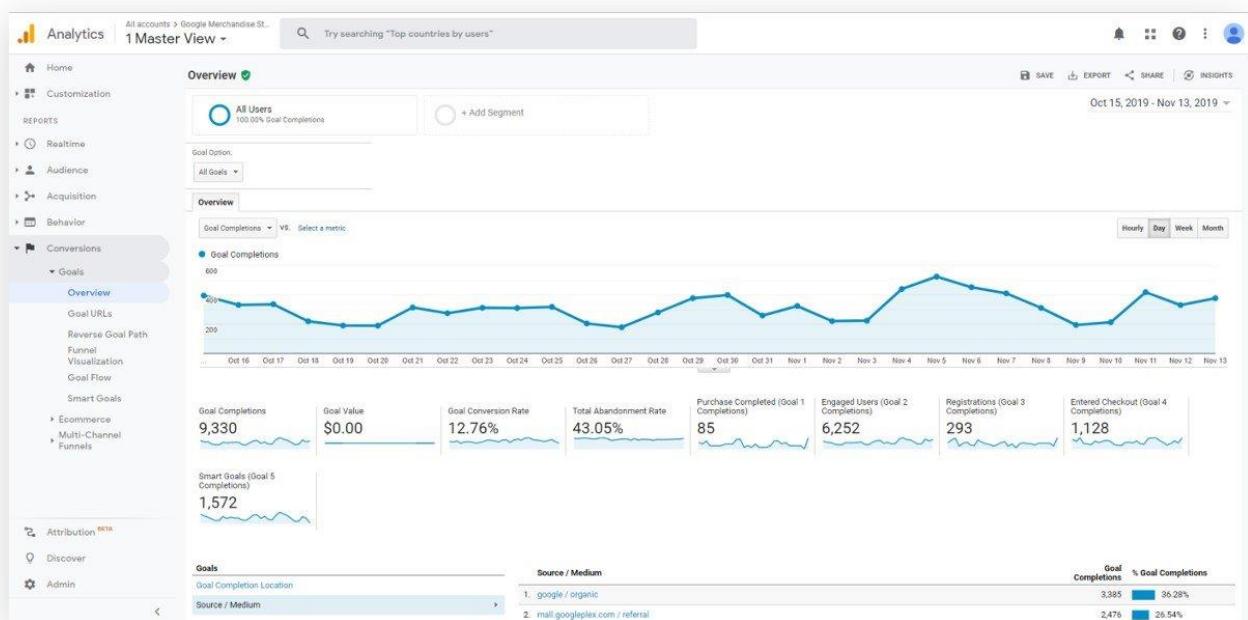
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Goal Reports

Goals – Overview

The Goals Overview report gives you topline data regarding how your site is performing against your defined Goals, including:

- Overall Total number of Goal completions (conversions)
- Overall Goal Value
- Overall Goal Conversion Rate
- Overall Goal Abandonment Rate (if you have funnels set up)
- Individual Goal completions for each Goal
- Top Goal Completion locations (I.e. the pages where Goals are most commonly completed)
- Top “source/medium” of Goals (e.g. “google/organic”)



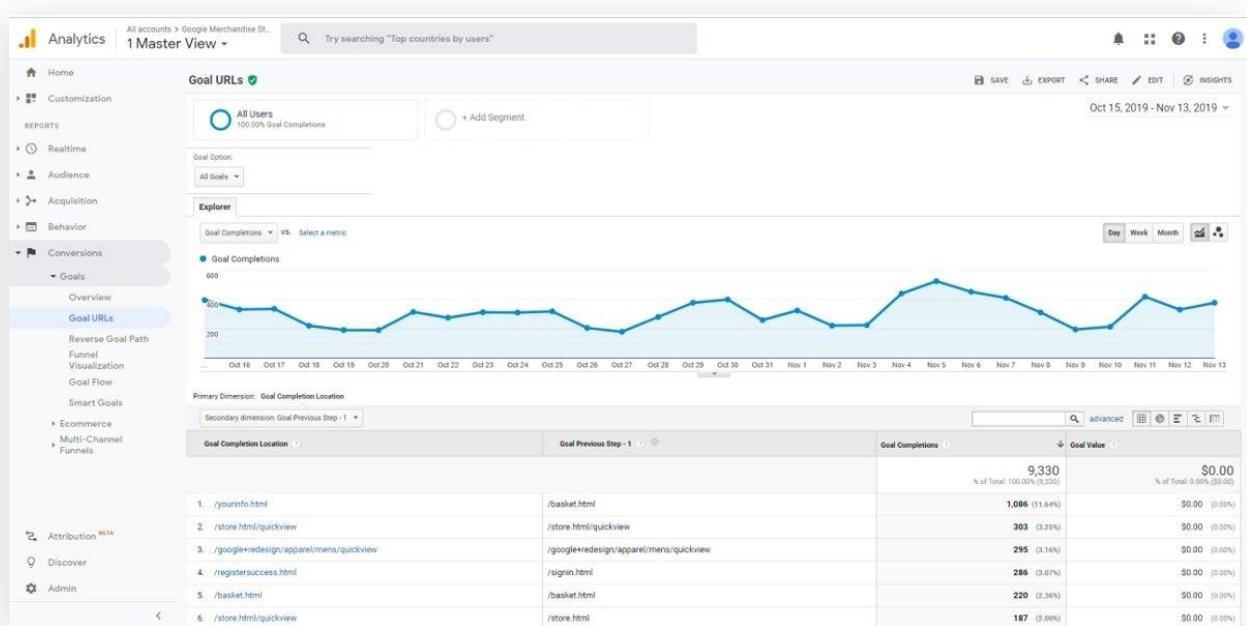
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Goal Reports

Goals – Goal URLs

This report simply shows you an expanded view of the Goal Completion location information you see on the Overview report. The difference here is that you can toggle between specific Goals (rather than the aggregated figure in the previous report) and see which pages of your website generated the most conversions and highest Goal value (if you have assigned values to your Goals).

The usefulness of this report varies amongst websites depending on goals and site structure. For example if you have the confirmation page URL for every goal completion (e.g. a lead gen form) then obviously that URL will report the most conversions and value. You can still get value from this report in that case by adding a secondary dimension of “Goal Previous Step – 1” for example.



Google Analytics Standard Reports

Goal Reports

Goals - Reverse Goal Path

This report shows you the most common paths that visitors took to a Goal completion by listing the URLs of the previous 3 pages prior to the Goal completion location.

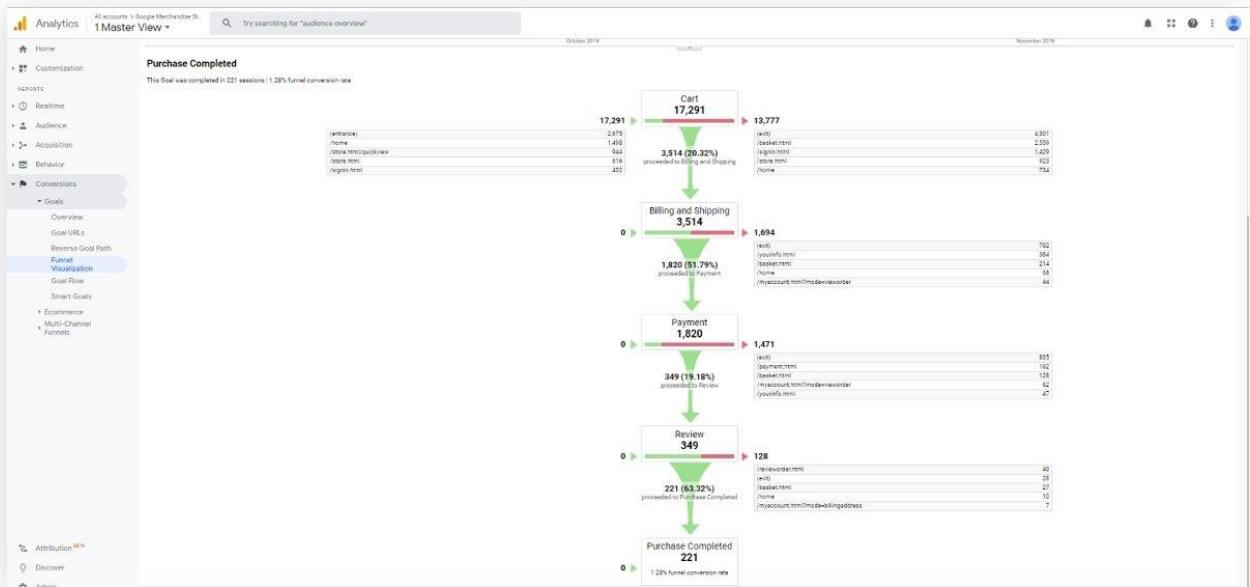
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Goal Reports

Goals – Funnel Visualization

When setting up goals, you have the opportunity to define a goal funnel. Traditionally, a “goal funnel” is the sequence of steps that a website user needs to go through in order to convert (e.g. buy a product, sign up for a subscription, request a callback, etc.). Google Analytics allows you to define each step of this funnel as long as each step is a unique web page with its own URL, which is a little bit limiting (note: there is a workaround to this by creating goal funnels with virtual pageviews – I’ll write a separate blog post on this at some stage).

So if you have configured a goal funnel or one of your goals, the Funnel Visualization report allows you to see how many people have gone through each individual step and how many abandoned their conversion at each step.



Google Analytics Standard Reports

Goal Reports

Goals – Funnel Visualization

If you have goal funnels set up, this report can be extremely helpful in determining what steps of a funnel (e.g. checkout process) users are dropping off at, allowing you to tweak those steps to improve conversion rates.

For example, if you find that users are moving through a goal funnel until they get to a sign-up form with a large amount of required fields – you can infer that the users are intimidated by the amount of data required, or don't have some required details to hand – you can then A/B test a version of that page with a more simplified structure, or auto-fill feature, or some other feature to simplify the process in order to see if the drop off rate decreases.

It's important to note that this report comes with some quirks like, for example, the fact that it back-fills between steps – counting visits for a step that may not have been touched upon by a user as long as the step directly before and after it were.

Google Analytics Standard Reports

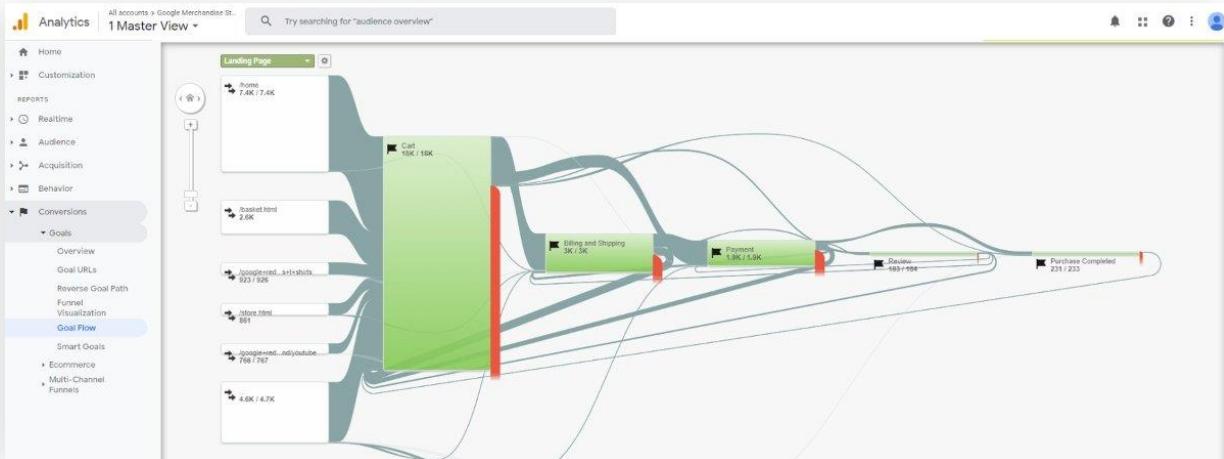
Goal Reports

Goals – Goal Flow

This report offers a visual representation of the actual path your site users took on their way to completing a Goal.

Sounds a lot like the Funnel Visualization but it's not quite the same - whereas the Funnel Visualization report requires you to define the series of steps a user must go to in order to complete a Goal, with the Goal Flow report, there's no pre-configuration of a funnel required – it simply shows you the actual route users took to completing your goal.

It's not quite as pretty a report, but it can actually provide much more insightful data than your Funnel Visualization by highlighting routes to conversions that you hadn't thought of. It's very often the case that a user won't go through your preconceived "standard" goal funnel before converting – for example, they might skip a step, loop back to a previous step, or take a detour via some other pages for more information.



7.5.2 Conversion Reports: eCommerce Reports

Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Google Analytics offers two different types of eCommerce tracking implementations. Depending on your configuration – Standard or Enhanced eCommerce tracking – you will see a different set of reports in the eCommerce section.

Both Standard and Enhanced eCommerce reports show you what products were purchased, how many of each and what revenue each product generated. However, Enhanced eCommerce reports offer much more information around the customer path to purchase, rather than just topline figures.

Neither set of reports is populated by default in a standard implementation of Google Analytics. So if you do sell products or services directly from your website, it's important that you have your web developer set up e-commerce tracking.

Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Standard eCommerce vs Enhanced eCommerce

Standard ecommerce tracking tracks only transaction and item data through the standard ecommerce plugin. For smaller ecommerce websites with only a few online products, this will generally work just fine.

The Enhanced eCommerce plug-in allows for the measurement of user interactions with products on ecommerce website beyond that information provided by the standard implementation.

It's important to state that whilst many eCommerce providers like Shopify, WooCommerce, EasyCart and Magento offer automatic integration with Google Analytics Enhanced eCommerce, if your eCommerce site is not built upon one of those platforms, there can be quite a lot of developer input required to set up the features correctly. Google offer plenty of information for developers in their Developer Guides but each and every implementation will be unique.

Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Standard eCommerce vs Enhanced eCommerce

Once you do manage to get this set up, the additional user interactions tracked include:

- Product impressions
- Product clicks
- Viewing product details
- Adding a product to a shopping cart
- Initiating the checkout process
- Refunds
- Checkout steps

Not all of these interactions are required to be set up, pick and choose those that are important to you.

Google Analytics Standard Reports

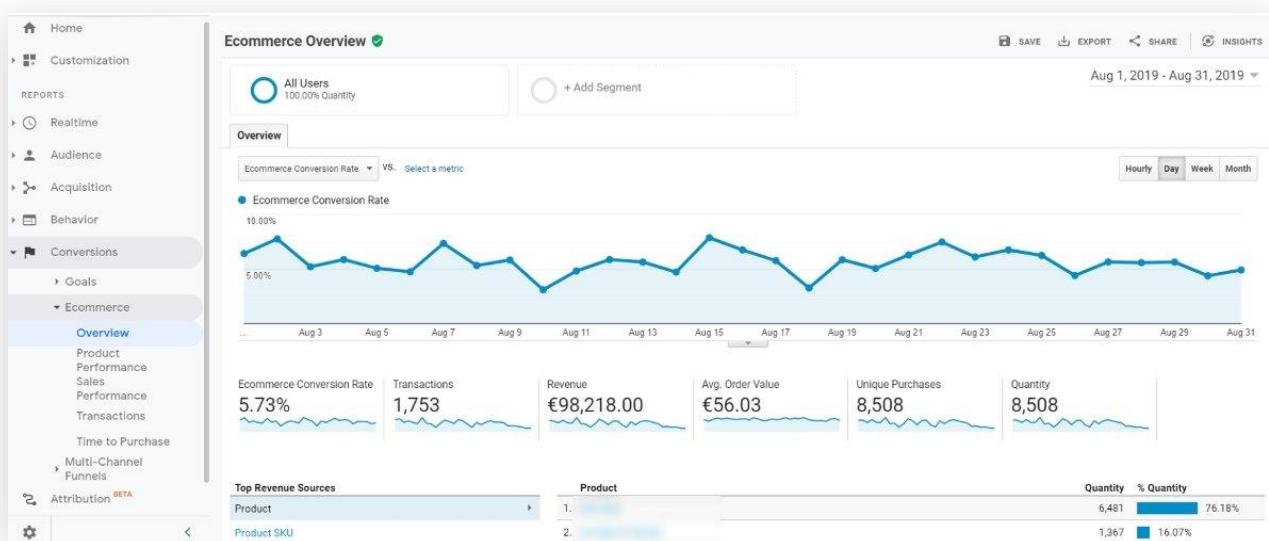
eCommerce Reports

Standard eCommerce – Overview

The Overview report shows your data in relation to your website sales including:

- E-Commerce Conversion Rate (i.e. Transactions / Sessions)
- # Transactions
- Revenue
- Average Order Value (i.e. Revenue / Transactions)
- Unique Purchases (i.e. purchases by unique visitors)
- Quantity (I.e. total amount of items purchased – differs from “Transactions” in that if a user completes one transaction in which they purchase 2 items, Transactions will be 1 but Quantity will be 2)

These dimensions can all be used to create custom segments which can be used in Google Ads as re-marketing audiences.

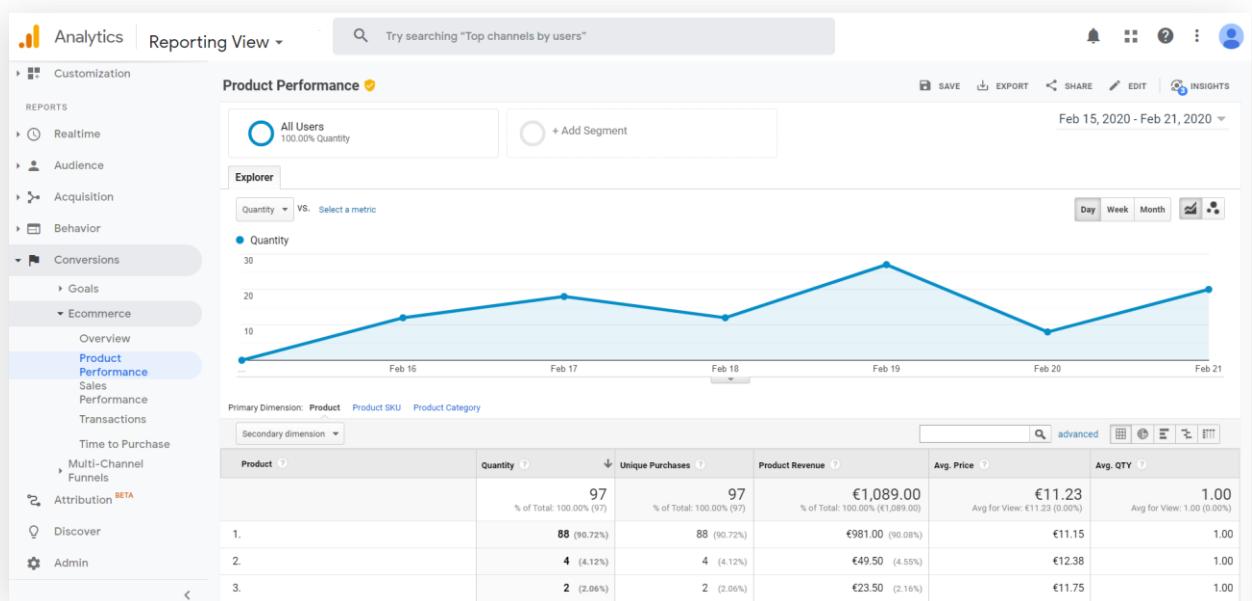


Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Standard eCommerce – Product Performance

The Product Performance report gives you more information on exactly which products your users purchase, the quantity of each purchased and the revenue generated by each product.



Google Analytics Standard Reports

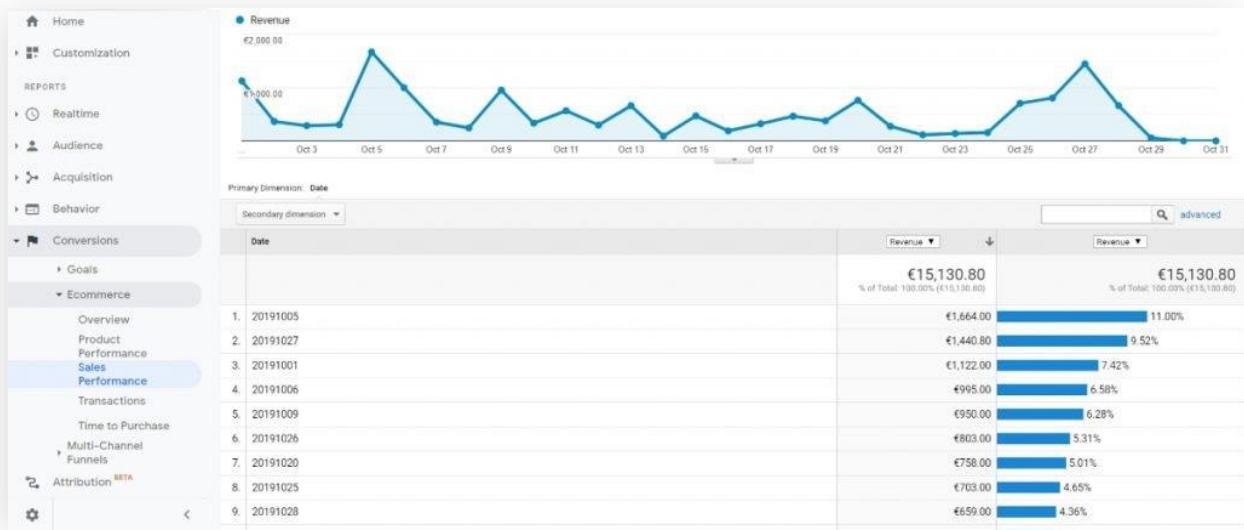
eCommerce Reports

Standard eCommerce – Sales Performance

The Sales Performance report offers a breakdown of sales performance by date, allowing you to review the best and worst performing days, for example.

You can use the data to optimise marketing activity for customers on high revenue days.

It's important to note that this data may not match up exactly with your other internal systems as refunds and offline behavior are not necessarily tracked.

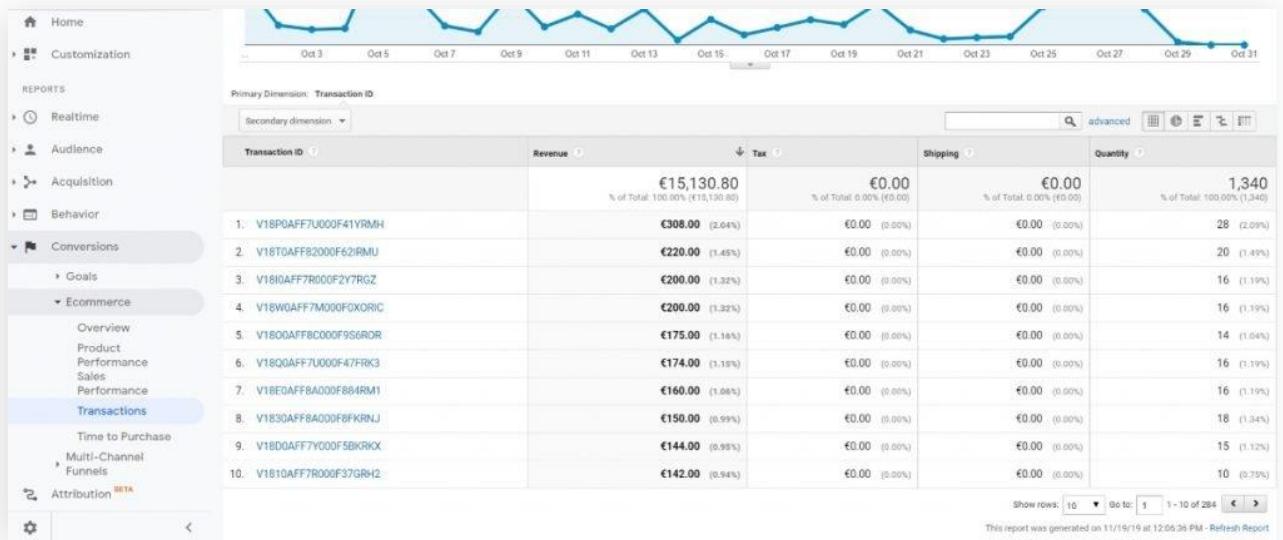


Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Standard eCommerce – Transactions

The Transactions report shows data of individual transactions by transaction ID showing revenue per transaction, tax, shipping and quantity information for each transaction.

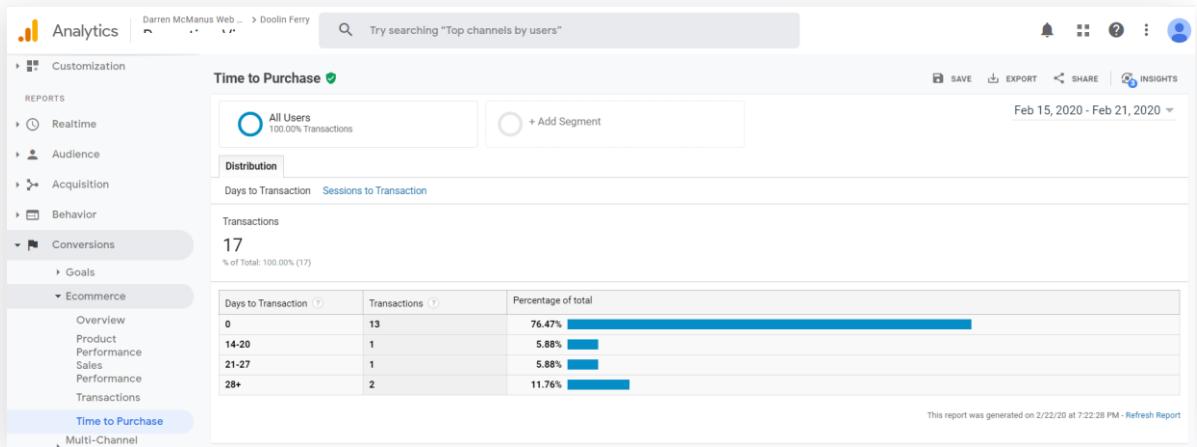


Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Standard eCommerce – Time to Purchase

This report shows you the average number of days and number of visits it takes users to make a purchase after visiting the site for the first time (based on GA cookie).



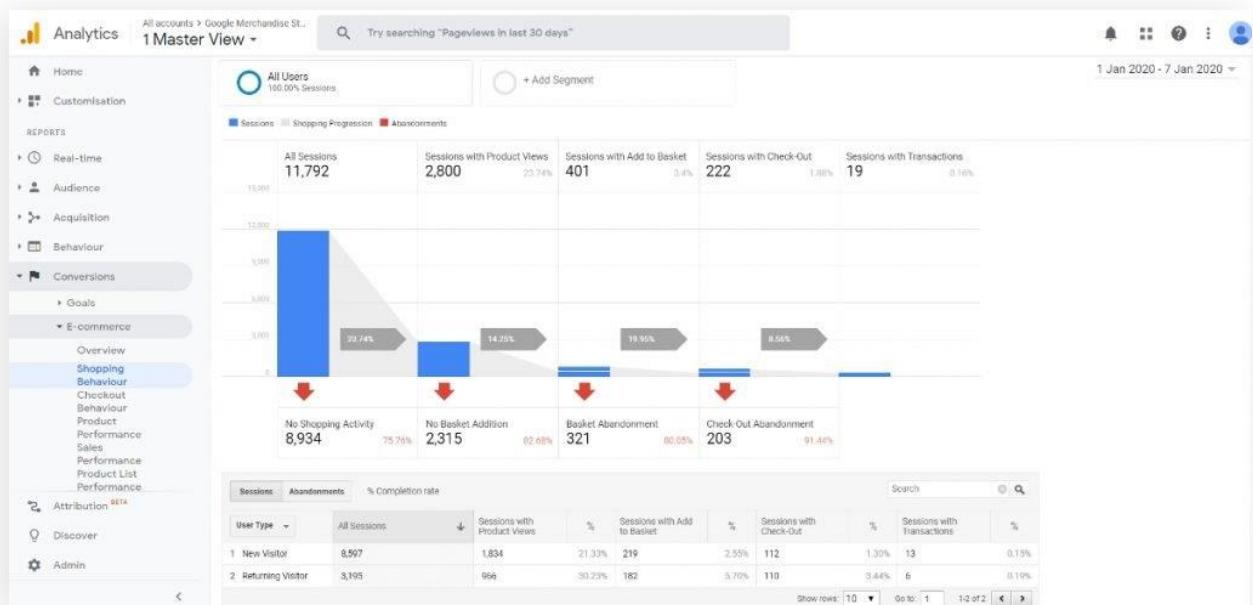
Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Enhanced eCommerce – Shopping Behaviour

The Shopping Behavior report shows the number of sessions that included each broad stage of your purchase funnel, how many sessions continued from one step to the next, and how many abandoned the funnel at each stage. The Shopping Behavior Funnel Report steps are:

- All Sessions
- Sessions with Product Views (visited a product page)
- Sessions with Add to Basket
- Sessions with Transactions



Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Enhanced eCommerce – Shopping Behaviour contd.

This report allows you to evaluate the shopping experience on your website and identify strengths and weaknesses in your purchase funnel. You can also create segments based on this Shopping Behaviour Funnel e.g. a segment of all users that abandoned the funnel at the Checkout stage. This segment can then be shared with Google Ads and used as a re-marketing audience!

Google Analytics Standard Reports

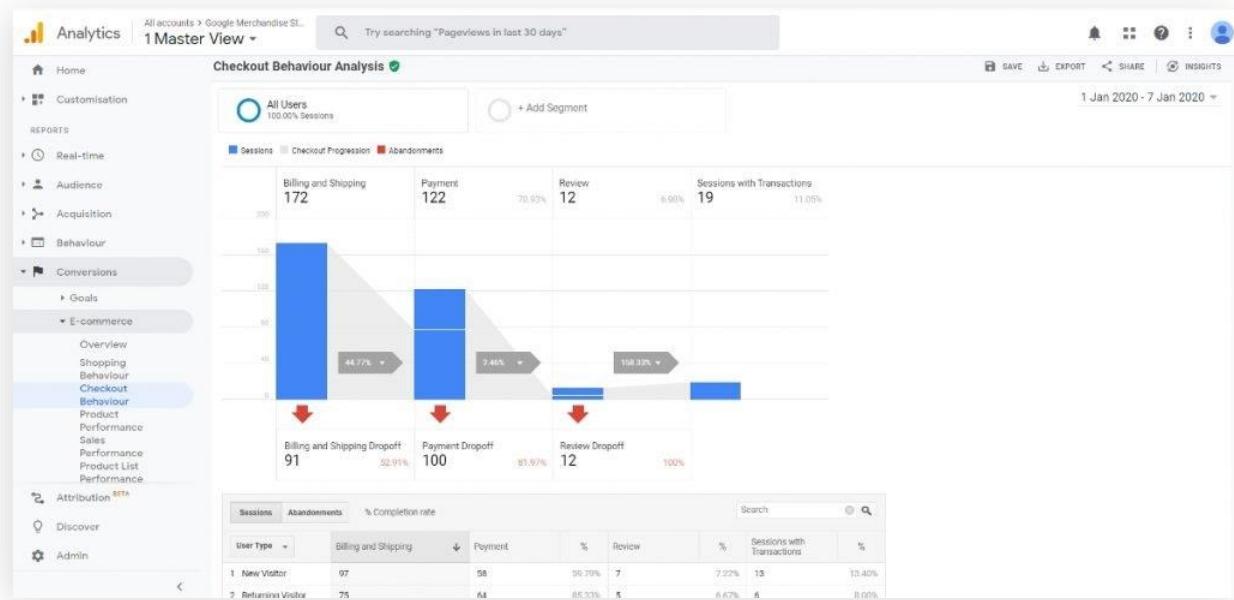
eCommerce Reports

Enhanced eCommerce – Checkout Behaviour

This is arguably the most useful report in Google Analytics.

Whilst the Shopping Behavior report shows you the number of sessions that included each stage of your purchase funnel, the Checkout Behaviour report breaks that 4th stage (Sessions with Checkout) further to allow you to evaluate the “lower-funnel” from the initiation of the checkout to the confirmation page.

When set up correctly, it can offer you data to identify the areas of your checkout funnel that need optimisation, and in turn considerably reduce cart abandonment rate. Often optimising your cart abandonment rate can provide a higher ROI than spending more of your budget on driving more traffic to your site in the first place.

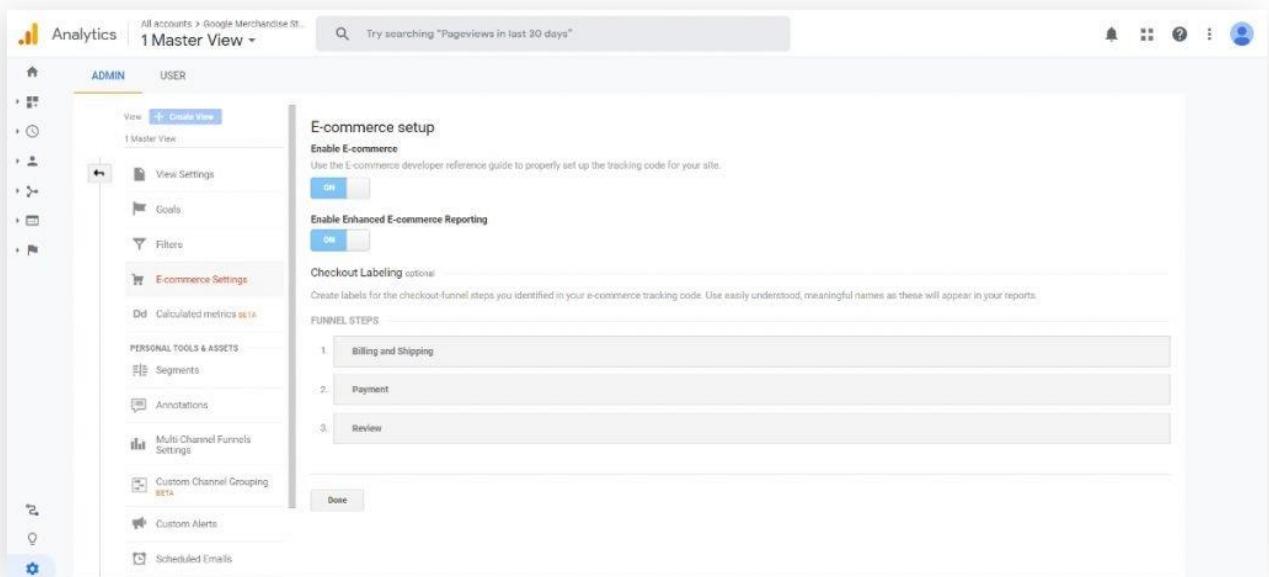


Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Enhanced eCommerce – Checkout Behaviour contd.

Checkout steps are configured by your developer through the dataLayer or through a Google Analytics function call. By default each checkout step is automatically given a generic name e.g. Step 1, Step 2, Step 3, etc. So the payment step for example might be automatically named “Step 4”. You can customise these names to make the report more understandable to the users in your View settings.



You can also create segments based on your Checkout Behaviour report to analyse the types of users that abandon cart at a certain stage or to re-market to a particular set of users. E.g. you might create a segment based on sessions that included the Billing and Shipping and the Payment steps but never followed through to make a purchase.

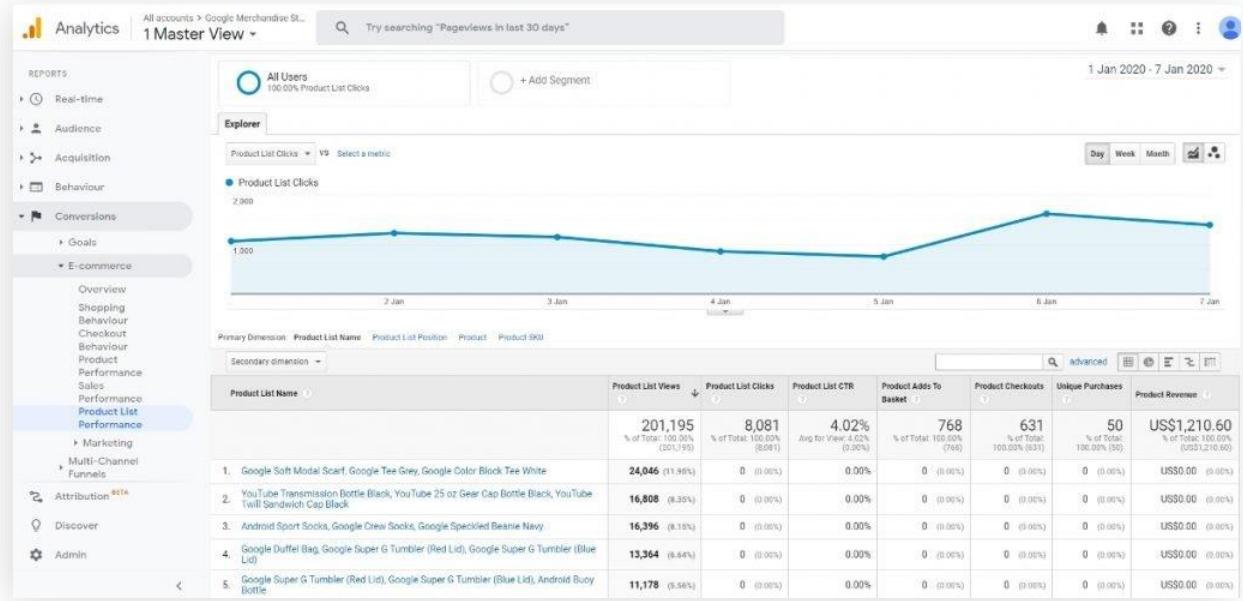
Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Enhanced eCommerce – Product List Performance

The Product List Performance report lets you see how the “Product Lists” on your site performed based on the following metrics:

- Product List Views (number of times users viewed products when they appeared in the product list)
- Product List Clicks (number of times users clicked products when they appeared in the product list)
- Product List CTR (number of clicks divided by the number of times the list appeared)



Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Enhanced eCommerce – Product List Performance contd.

But... what are product lists? Well, again, your developer will set up yours for you depending on your site, but basically a Product List is a logical grouping of your products on your site. For example:

- **Catalog Pages:** The simplest of the product lists, catalog pages allow you to compare how different catalog pages in your online store compare with each other. For example you might have a shoes catalog page, a t-shirts catalog page, a trousers catalog page, etc. This is the most common type of Product List, the most static and the most straightforward to implement.
- **Related Products / Cross Sell Blocks / Up Sell Blocks:** On product pages on your eCommerce site, you might have a block of suggested related or similar products. These can also be set as product lists allowing you to evaluate which suggested offering performs best.
- **Search Results Pages:** You can create a product lists based on search query results. For example, all of the products that are shown when someone searches for “shoes” could be made into one product list. This is a dynamic list, and naturally actual products listed in the list may be different depending on the search.

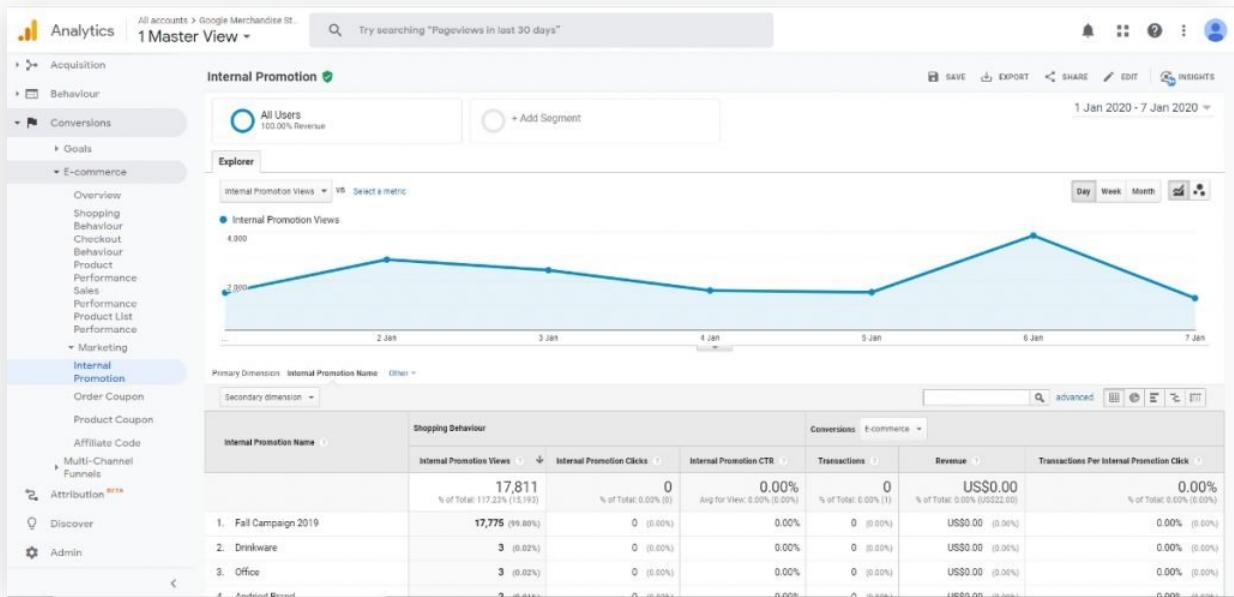
Google Analytics Standard Reports

eCommerce Reports

Enhanced eCommerce – Marketing Reports

Finally, there are 4 additional “Marketing Reports” with Enhanced eCommerce tracking. These reports are:

- **Internal Promotion:** details how your internal promotions (e.g. banners in Section A which promotes Section B) performed in terms of Views, Clicks and CTR.
- **Order Coupon:** details how your order-level promo codes performed in terms of Revenue, Transactions and AOV.
- **Product Coupon:** let's you see how your product-level coupons performed in terms of Revenue, Unique Purchases and Product Revenue Per Purchase
- **Affiliate Coupon:** let's you see how your affiliate sites contributed to your Revenue, Transactions and A.O.V



7.5.3 Conversion Reports: Multi Channel Funnels

Google Analytics Standard Reports

Multi Channel Funnels

What are Multi Channel Funnels?

In Google Analytics, by default, “Conversions” in the reports we’ve looked at so far, are attributed to the last channel/source that referred the user when they converted based on “last click attribution”.

This method of attribution does not tell you the role that previous visits via other channels played in the conversion, or how much time passed between the users first visit to your site and the visit in which he/she converted.

Multi Channel Funnel reports help you to get a better idea of this type of information by showing you how your different marketing channels work together to drive conversions.

It's important to note that, by default, Multi-Channel Funnels won't accurately report the behavior across multiple browsers and devices due to [the way in which Google Analytics defines an "individual user"](#).

There are 6 reports within the Multi Channel Funnel Reports section in total.

Google Analytics Standard Reports

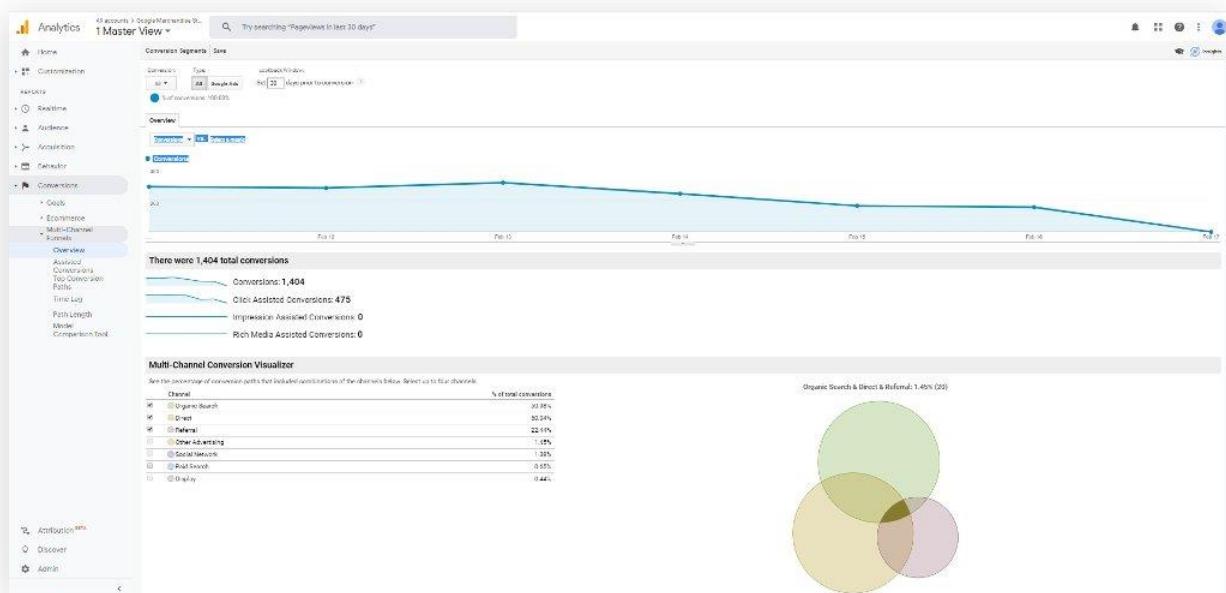
Multi Channel Funnels

Overview

The Multi Channel Overview report gives a quick visual overview of your conversions and the attribution of those conversions to each of your traffic driving channels.

The default “lookback window” is 30 days but can be updated up to a max of 90 days to see how your channels work together over a longer time period. Depending on the nature of your business, a longer lookback window may be appropriate – e.g. B2B business with a lengthy path to purchase.

The Multi Channel Conversion Visualizer at the bottom right hand side of the page allows you to view the overlap of different channels in driving conversions.



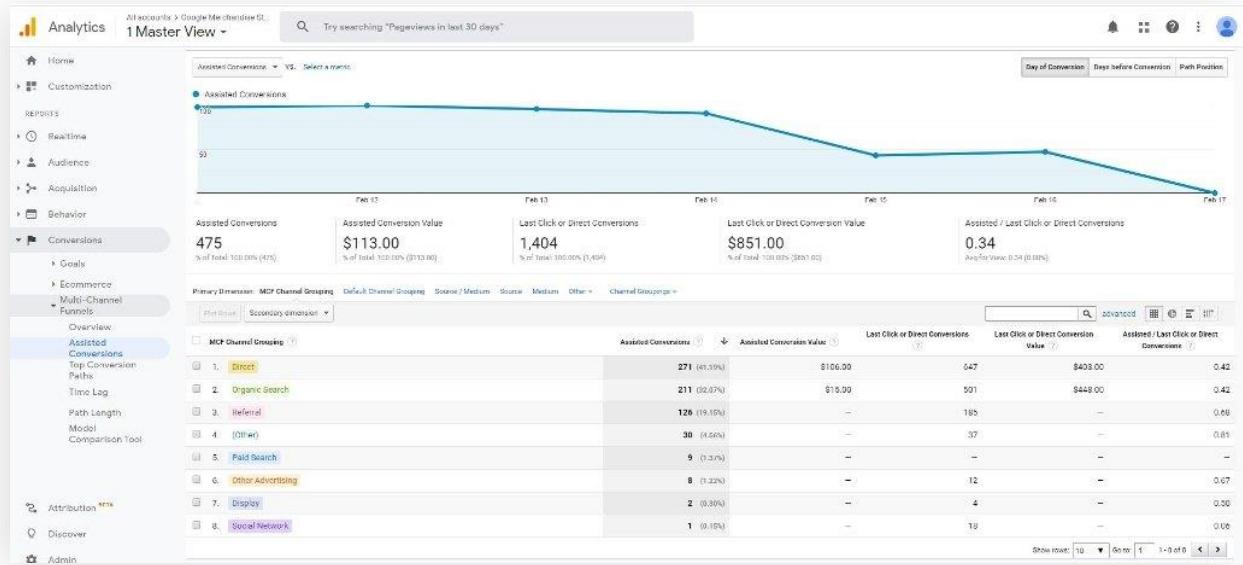
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Multi Channel Funnels

Assisted Conversions

This report provides in-depth information on the role of each of your channels and their performance.

Just because one channel is most commonly the last in a path to conversion, does not mean that it is the only contributing channel. So how do we determine the true contribution of all channels outside of their last click attribution value? Well...with this report!



Google Analytics Standard Reports

Multi Channel Funnels

Assisted Conversions contd.

Here's what the metrics mean:

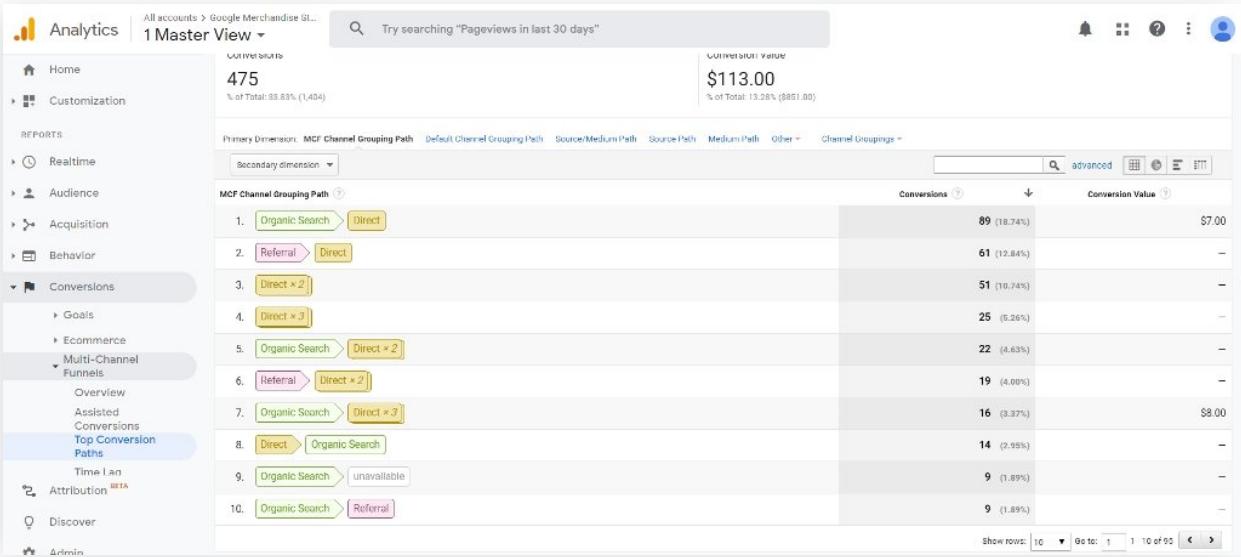
- **Assisted Conversion:** the number of conversions for which this channel appeared on the conversion path, but was not the final conversion interaction.
- **Assisted Conversion Value:** the value of the conversions assisted by this channel.
- **Last Click or Direct Conversions:** the number of conversions for which this channel was the final conversion interaction.
- **Last Click or Direct Conversion Value:** the value of the conversions for which this channel was the final conversion interaction.
- **Assisted / Last Click or Direct Conversions:** a value close to 0 indicates that this channel functioned primarily as the final conversion interaction. A value close to 1 indicates that this channel functioned equally in an assist role and as the final conversion interaction. The more this value exceeds 1, the more this channel functioned in an assist role.

Google Analytics Standard Reports

Multi Channel Funnels

Top Conversion Paths

The Top Conversion Paths report shows the path combinations (in chronological order) that drove the sessions leading up to the conversion (including last touch-point).



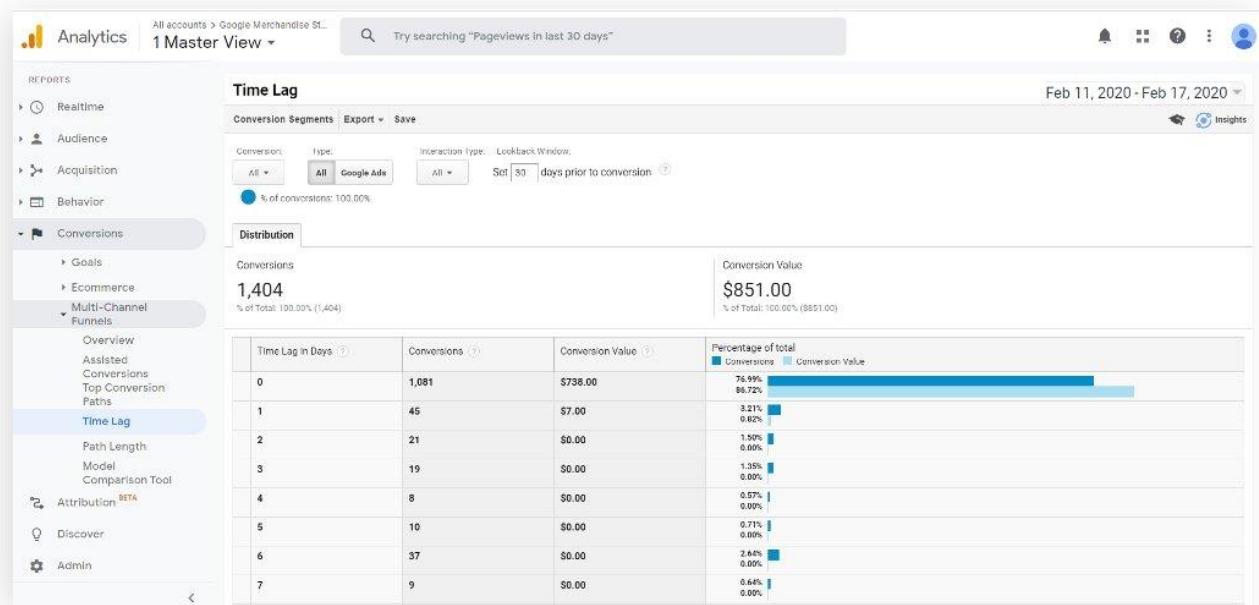
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Multi Channel Funnels

Time Lag

The Time Lag report tracks the number of days from when a user first interacts with your site to their final conversion.

This report can be useful for assisting with your re-marketing and email marketing tactics – e.g. If you know most customers convert within 5 days of clicking on one of your ads, you can test a 5/6 day re-marketing list in your Google Ads campaign, or send a reminder email 5 days after their first visit.



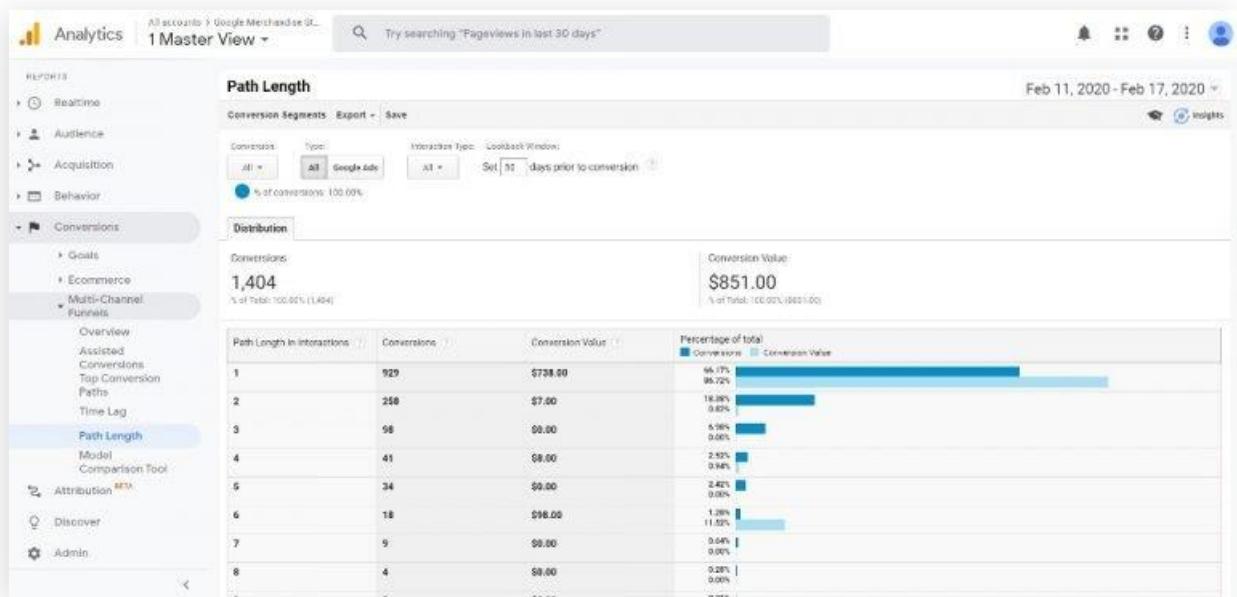
Google Analytics Standard Reports

Multi Channel Funnels

Path Lag

The Path Length report shows you how many times a customer needed to interact with your website before converting.

Most people will visit your site multiple times before converting, particularly for big ticket e-commerce items or for B2B services. This report gives you an idea of how many visits are required.



Google Analytics Standard Reports

Multi Channel Funnels

Model Comparison Tool

Google Analytics by default attributes the conversion value to the last click in the user journey – this report allows look at all your channels and compare three different attribution models.

This way, you can determine how a marketing channel can be valued from different perspectives.

There are 7 default attribution models that you can compare.

The screenshot shows the Google Analytics interface with the 'Model Comparison Tool' selected in the sidebar. The main view displays a comparison between three attribution models: Last Interaction, Last Google Ads Click, and First Interaction. The data is presented in a grid format with columns for Spend, Conversions, CPA, and % change in conversions. The rows represent different MCF Channel Groupings, including Direct, Organic Search, Referral, Other, Social Network, Other Advertising, Display, and Paid Search.

MCF Channel Grouping	Spend (for selected time range)	Conversions & CPA			% change in conversions (from Last Interaction)
		Last Interaction	Last Google Ads Click	First Interaction	
1. Direct	647.00	640.00 (+3.58%)	398.00 (-38.38%)	-1.08% -38.49% ▲	
2. Organic Search	501.00	499.00 (+0.54%)	644.00 (+41.87%)	-0.40% +28.54% ▲	
3. Referral	185.00	185.00 (+0.00%)	271.00 (+47.38%)	0.00% +46.49% ▲	
4. (Other)	37.00	37.00 (+0.00%)	44.00 (+18.92%)	0.00% +18.92% ▲	
5. Social Network	18.00	18.00 (+0.00%)	18.00 (+0.00%)	0.00% +0.00% ▲	
6. Other Advertising	12.00	12.00 (+0.00%)	16.00 (+33.33%)	0.00% +33.33% ▲	
7. Display	4.00	4.00 (+0.00%)	5.00 (+25.00%)	0.00% +25.00% ▲	
8. Paid Search	—	9.00 (+0.04%)	8.00 (-11.11%)	— —	

Google Analytics Standard Reports

Multi Channel Funnels

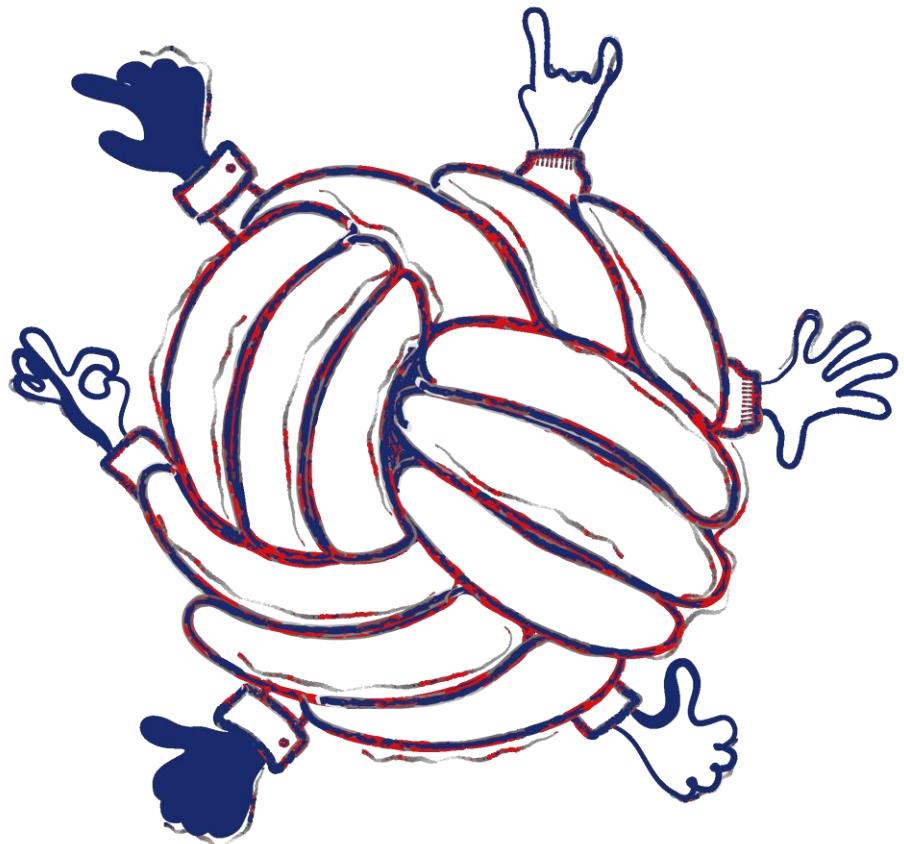
Model Comparison Tool contd.

The 7 default attribution models are as follows:

- **Last Interaction attribution model:** The final touch-point receives 100% of the credit for the conversion.
- **Last Non-Direct Click attribution model:** All direct traffic is ignored, and 100% of the credit for the conversion is attributed to the last channel that the customer clicked through from before converting.
- **Last Google Ads Click attribution model:** the click via a Google Ads advert receives 100% of the credit for the conversion.
- **First Interaction attribution model:** the first touch-point receives 100% of the credit for the conversion.
- **Linear attribution model:** Each touch-point in the conversion path share equal credit for the conversion.
- **Time Decay attribution model:** The touch-points closest in time to the conversion get most of the credit.
- **Position Based attribution model:** 40% credit is assigned to each the first and last interaction, and the remaining 20% credit is distributed evenly to the middle interactions.

Chapter 8:

Google Analytics Measurement Planning



G.A Measurement Planning

What Is A Google Analytics Measurement Plan?

A Google Analytics measurement plan is a document that outlines your main business objectives and aligns those real world objectives with metrics and dimensions you can measure on your website through Google Analytics.

This Google Analytics Measurement Plan document provides you with:

1. A clear **definition of your company's objectives, metrics and Goals** within Google Analytics that allow you to measure progress towards these objectives
2. A **road-map for a customised configuration** of your Google Analytics implementation (e.g. proper JavaScript and HTML tagging on your website via Google Tag Manager)
3. A **basis for a monthly report template** that covers the key metrics that relate to your specific business objectives and ignores the “noise” and hassle of rooting through tens of different reports within Google Analytics and getting “lost in the data”
4. A **vital cog in your wider digital marketing strategy** which allows you to judge which digital channels work best in achieving which objectives / KPIs (key performance indicators)
5. **Assistance in optimisations and improvements** on your website (e.g. improved UX or Conversion Rate Optimisation)

G.A Measurement Planning

Why We Need a Google Analytics Measurement Plan

In a broad sense, we need a Google Analytics Measurement Plan in order to ensure we are able to report on information that:

- A. Provides us with information on whether or not we are meeting our business objectives and;
- B. Allows us to make business decisions to improve performance (e.g. moving our marketing budget to a channel that results in our KPIs being met more efficiently)

G.A Measurement Planning

How to make a Google Analytics Measurement Plan

The best way to go about it is to organise workshop with some key people, namely:

1. Someone who understands your **business objectives**
2. Someone who understands **web analytics**
3. Someone technical who can **set up your custom tracking**

In this workshop, you should cover the following:

1. **Identify the business objectives** upfront – we are not talking about technical metrics here, we are talking about actual broad business objectives.
2. **Identify online KPIs** aligned to these objectives – in other words identify user actions on the site which indicate that the objectives we identified in step 1 are being met.
3. **Align this KPI to an actual metric** within Google Analytics, then set it as a Goal. If a suitable metric doesn't exist, we will need to create it (using Google Tag Manager)!
4. **Identify targets for each KPI**. Organization leaders play a key role here (especially marketing and finance). These can be revised up and down over time – it's difficult to set accurate targets at this stage without historic data
5. **Decide on reporting requirements, tools & process** – during the workshop an outline of a monthly report should be agreed based on the agreed objectives and KPIs.

G.A Measurement Planning

What a Google Analytics Measurement Plan Looks Like

Once this is all down on paper, we are in a position to set up the custom tracking required to measure our objectives.

Generally speaking during this workshop, you should draw out, on paper/whiteboard/flip-chart a table similar to the one below (A) and fill it out as the workshop goes on (B).

Analytics Measurement Plan							
Objectives							
KPIs							
Measurable metrics (Goals)							
Requires Event?							
Target							
Segment							



Analytics Measurement Plan								
Objectives	Consumer Education		Grow Lead Database				Loan Applications	
KPIs	Content Engagement		Newsletter Sign Ups		Gated Content Downloads		Loan Form Completions	
Measurable metrics (Goals)	Scroll Depth (Custom)	Video Tracking (Custom)	Thank You Page Views	Newsletter Conversion Rate	Successful Form Submissions (Custom)	Gated Content Conversion Rate	Successful Form Submissions	Loan Application Conversion Rate
Requires Event?	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
Target	50% users scroll > 50%	50% users watch 50% video	10 per month	5%	15 per campaign	15%	10 per week	10%
Segment	News Section Users	News Section Users	All Users	All Users	All Users	All Users	All Users	All Users

A

B

Chapter 9:

Custom Reporting With Google Data Studio



Custom Reporting With Google Data Studio

Why Do We Need Custom Reports?

Given the amount of reports we've just gone through, and the fact that this was just a fraction of the ways in which data can be presented within Google Analytics, it becomes very easy to get lost in the data provided by GA.

Which is why when it comes to reporting - 2 things are important:

- Having a clear idea of your website objectives and KPIs
- Having a suitable, flexible way to visualise and report on those KPIs

We've already covered setting website objectives and KPIs. With regard to visualising your data, I'm going to compare what I consider to be your two main (free) options, namely:

- **Google Analytics Dashboards**
- **Google Data Studio Custom Reports**

Custom Reporting With Google Data Studio

Google Analytics Dashboards

Google Analytics allows you to create Dashboards within the Google Analytics interface itself.

These dashboards are a collection of widgets that give you an overview of whatever reports and metrics you care about most.

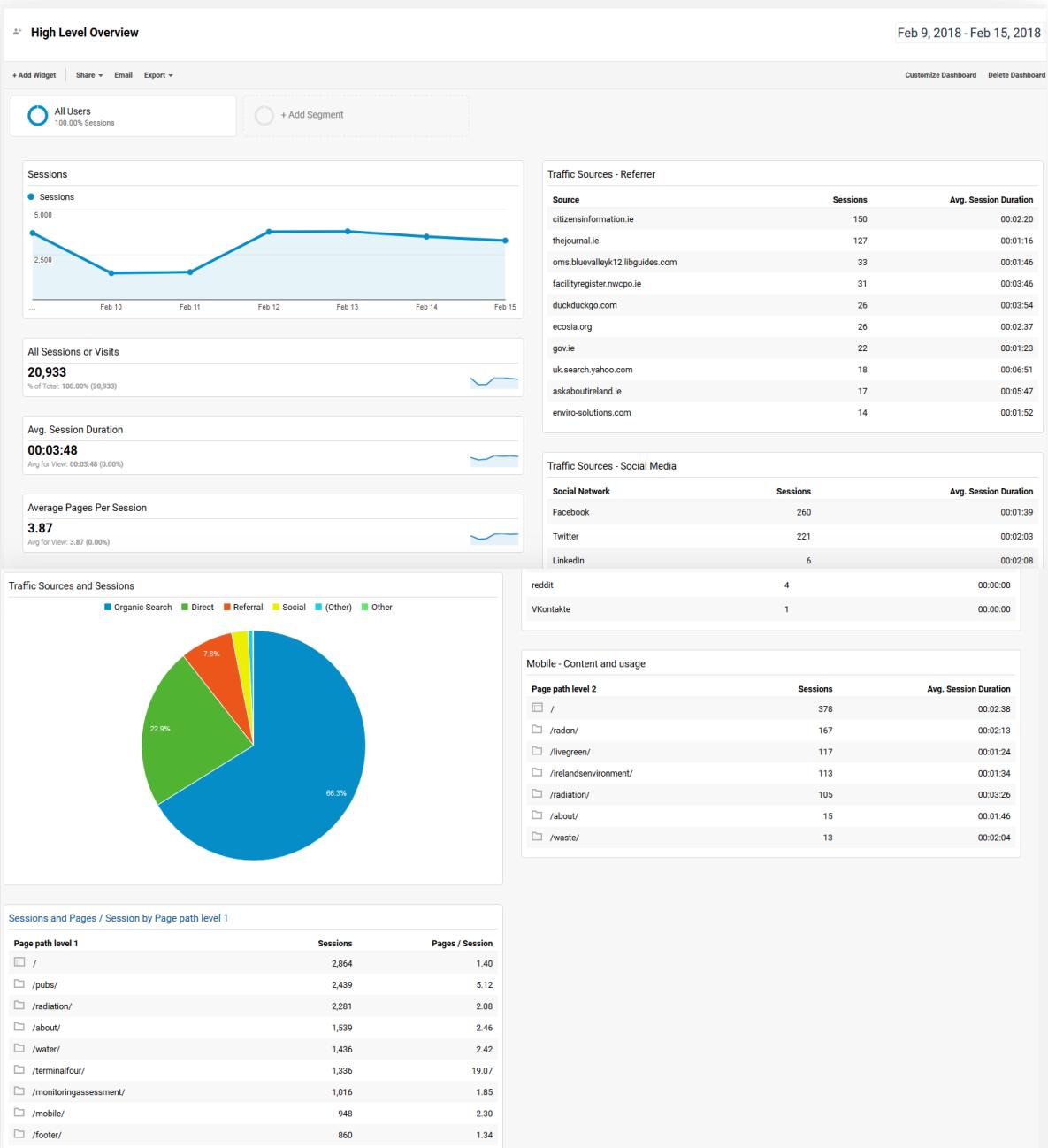
They let you monitor many metrics at once, so you can quickly check the health of your accounts or see correlations between different reports. Dashboards are easy to create, customize and share. Each view / property includes a default dashboard to get you started.

Google Analytics Dashboards...:

- ...**require Google Analytics access** - If your organization is not comfortable with everybody who needs to read a report having access to Google Analytics, then this isn't the right solution for broad sharing of analytics data.
- ... **are limited to reporting only on Google Analytics data**, no other sources.
- ...allow only a limited amount of data to be visualised - each Dashboard can only **contain up to 12 widgets**.

Custom Reporting With Google Data Studio

Google Analytics Dashboards contd.



Custom Reporting With Google Data Studio

Google Data Studio Report

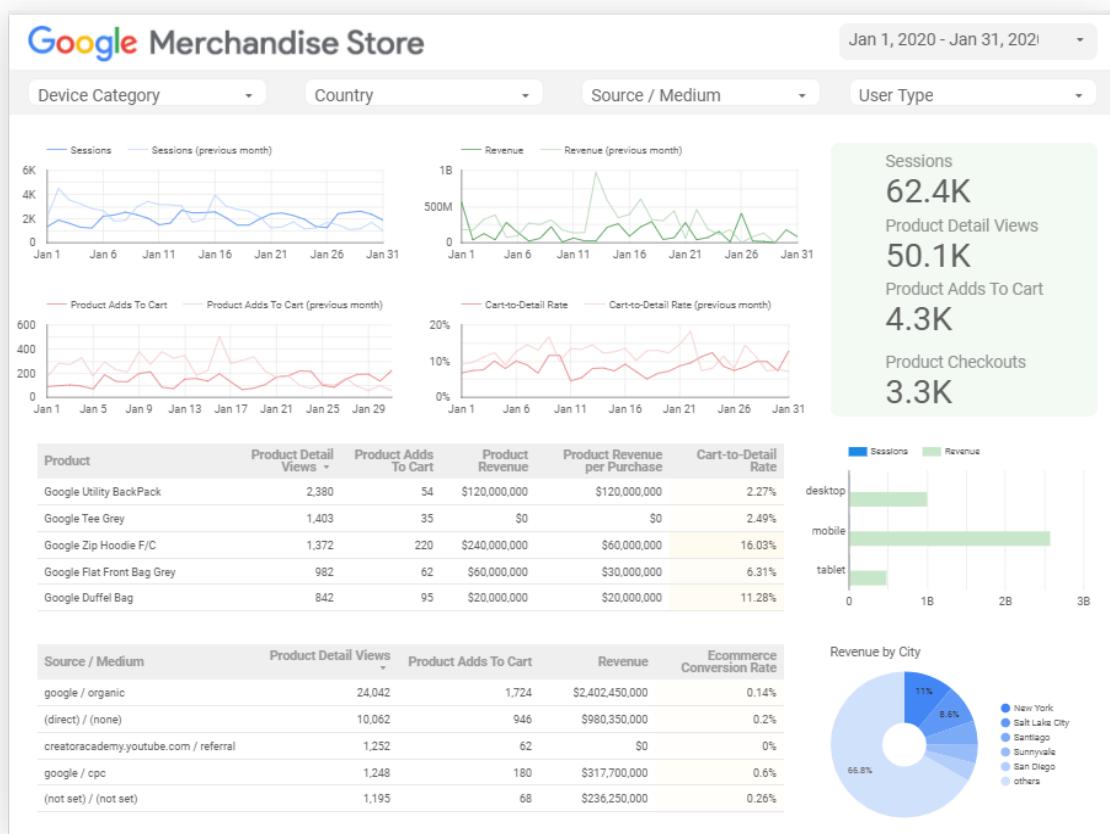
Google Data Studio is an easy to use dashboard and reporting tool, provided by Google, that allows users to turn Google Analytics data into informative and easy to understand reports through data visualisation. Some key benefits of Google Data Studio are:

1. **No widget limits** - Unlike Google Analytics Dashboards, there is no limit to the amount of “widgets” (e.g tables, charts, etc.) that you can view on one page or report.
2. **Calculated metrics** - You can create new dimensions and metrics based on existing fields to boost your reporting and analysis. (e.g. clean up inconsistent campaign parameters)
3. **Flexible design** - You can choose ready-made visual themes, create your own themes or choose a template from the [Google Data Studio Gallery](#). You can then make changes only to a specific widget or page on your selected template.
4. **Share-able** - With the click of a button you let other people view and edit reports. You can set view and edit permissions and, unlike Google Analytics Dashboards, you don't have to give or get permission to Google Analytics to find the reports.

Custom Reporting With Google Data Studio

Google Data Studio Report Contd.

4. **Consolidation** - Google Data Studio allows you to bring all your Google (Analytics, GSC, Ads) data together in a single place and also allows you to import data from lots of other sources through "[Partner Connectors](#)"
5. **Filters** - Users are able to filter data in many ways - and, unlike Google Analytics Dashboards, can filters to individual charts rather than the entire report.
6. **Interactive**– Google Data Studio allows users to alter data in real time with audience segments, filters and timelines.



Custom Reporting With Google Data Studio

My Recommendation

Google Analytics Dashboards are okay for topline stats, particularly if you're a one person team without a requirement to share website / marketing performance data with different business units / stakeholders.

However, as I've outlined, Google Analytics Dashboards have a lot of limitations which Google Data Studio does not.

Due to their flexibility, interactivity and the fact that data from multiple sources can be combined with Google Analytics data, Google Data Studio Reports are a clear winner for organisations, particularly those with multiple business units / stakeholders.

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About the Author

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I am currently based in Galway city and work mainly with small and medium businesses outside of Dublin. I help businesses primarily by focusing on the two fundamental building blocks of all good long term digital marketing strategies:

- a. Ensuring that their websites are found online by users looking for their goods or services (through Search Engine Optimisation)
- b. Understanding whether their website is working for them in terms of meeting their business objectives (through Web Analytics Measurement Strategies and Implementation)

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