



Ram Sankar

# The Beginner's Definitive Guide

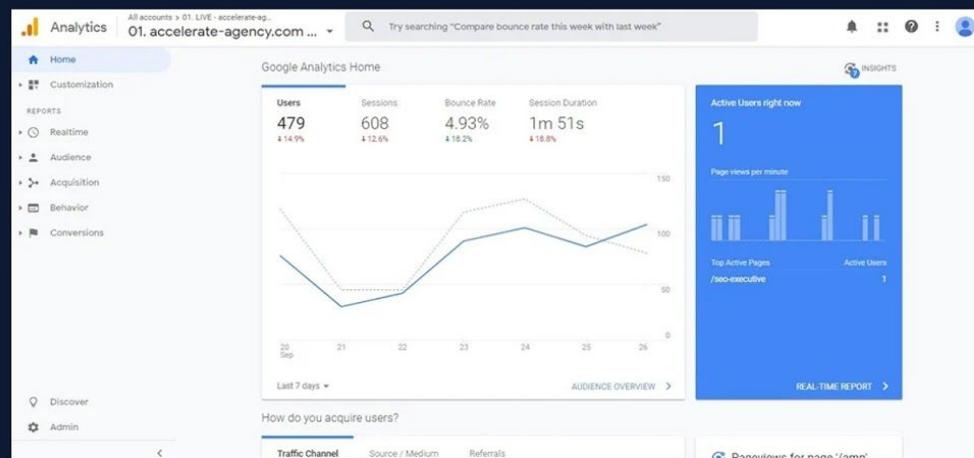


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# 1. What Is Google Analytics?

**Google Analytics is a free web analytics tool that tracks and reports all website traffic. It provides an in-depth look at your website's performance. It integrates with the range of tools Google provides including Google Ads and Search Console.**



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## 2. Data Collection

**The first element of Google Analytics is data collection. The platform can gather a broad range of data about your site and how visitors use it. The exact nature of the data collected will be discussed in depth later. It includes, most notably:**

- **How many visitors your pages get.**
- **Where visitors come to your pages from.**
- **How those visitors progress through your site.**
- **What visitors do on your pages.**
- **How visitors interact with elements on your pages.**
- **How long visitors spend on your pages.**
- **At what stage of a visit users leave your site.**



### 3. Why is Google Analytics Important?

If you're not using Google Analytics, you're missing out on a lot of valuable information. Being able to monitor your website allows you to review what's working and what's not. You can measure ad campaigns or simply traffic you're getting for certain pages. So let's briefly look at what makes Google Analytics so valuable.



## 4. Conversion Tracking

**Knowing where your traffic comes from is great, but if you're running an ecommerce site you care about conversions, too.**

**Google Analytics gives you the power to set up goals to track when users complete actions on your site. No matter how much traffic you're getting, you need to know if your traffic is converting.**



## 5. Customer Engagement

**The more you know about your users, the better equipped you'll be to make smart choices about your website. Google Analytics has many features to help you understand the behaviour of users as they interact with your site.**

**As a business, it's critical to understand how people use your website.**

**Understanding user behaviour helps you improve user experience, refine content, and build something useful to users.**



## 6. Device Overview

**With Google's mobile-first indexing, your website needs to be mobile friendly to be able to rank well. Google Analytics allows you to monitor which devices your users are coming from. This gives you an indication of how well your mobile site is working and how you can improve.**



## 7.(a) How to Install Google Analytics Step-by-Step

**Getting started with Google Analytics is simple. First, you need a Google account. If you use any other Google tool like Gmail or Google Drive, you already have an account. But, if you don't, it's easy to sign up for one.**

**Once you've created your account and signed in, you'll move on to the account setup.**

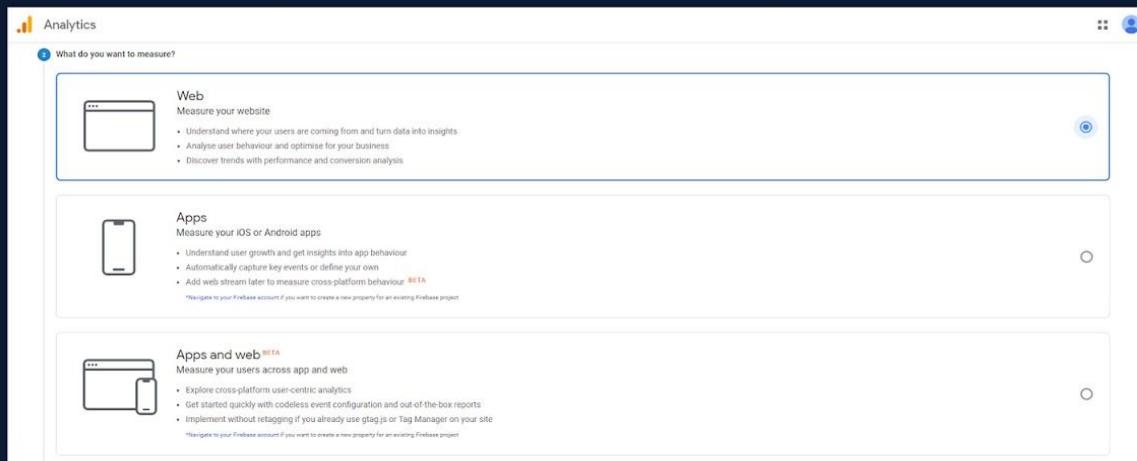
A screenshot of the Google Analytics 'Create account' page. The page title is 'Analytics'. Under 'Create account', it says '1 Account setup'. The first section is 'Account details' with a required field 'Account name' containing 'My New Account Name'. Below this is a note: 'Accounts can contain more than one tracking ID.' A red box highlights the 'Account name is required' error message. The next section is 'Account Data Sharing Settings' with a note: 'Data that you collect, process and store using Google Analytics ("Google Analytics data") is secure and kept confidential. This data is used to maintain and protect the Google Analytics service, to perform system critical operations and in rare exceptions for legal reasons as described in our privacy policy.' It shows two checked options: 'Google products & services' (RECOMMENDED) and 'Benchmarking' (RECOMMENDED). Both have small explanatory notes below them. At the bottom, there's a link to '© 2020 Google | Analytics home | Terms of service | Privacy Policy | Sending feedback'.

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## 7.(b) How to Install Google Analytics Step-by-Step

**Here is where you add your account name. Your account name should be something that describes the account like “Personal Account” or “Team Account”. Once you have chosen an account name, you will then select what you want to measure. Here you have 3 options but let’s say you have a website. It could be a blog or an ecommerce business.**



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## 7.(c) How to Install Google Analytics Step-by-Step

The last step in the setup process is to tell Google the details of your website you want to track. This includes the URL of your website and the website name. Your website's name can be the name of your company or something simpler like "My Blog" or "My Website".

A screenshot of the Google Analytics 'Create account' interface. It shows the 'Property setup' step with the following fields filled out:

- Website Name: My New Website
- Website URL: http://
- Industry Category: Select One
- Reporting Time Zone: Canada (GMT-05:00) Toronto Time

At the bottom are 'Create' and 'Previous' buttons.

Next, you will be given a tracking code to include on your website. You'll need to copy and paste this code on every web page that you want to track.



## 7.(d) How to Install Google Analytics Step-by-Step

A screenshot of the Google Analytics Admin interface. The left sidebar shows navigation options like 'Property Settings' and 'Tracking Info'. The main content area displays the 'Global Site Tag (gtag.js)' section. It includes a 'Tracking ID' (UA-19069123-1), a status message ('No data received in past 48 hours. Learn more'), and a large text box containing the gtag.js code. Below the code, a note explains its benefits and how it integrates with other Google products. A 'Connected Site Tags' section is also visible.

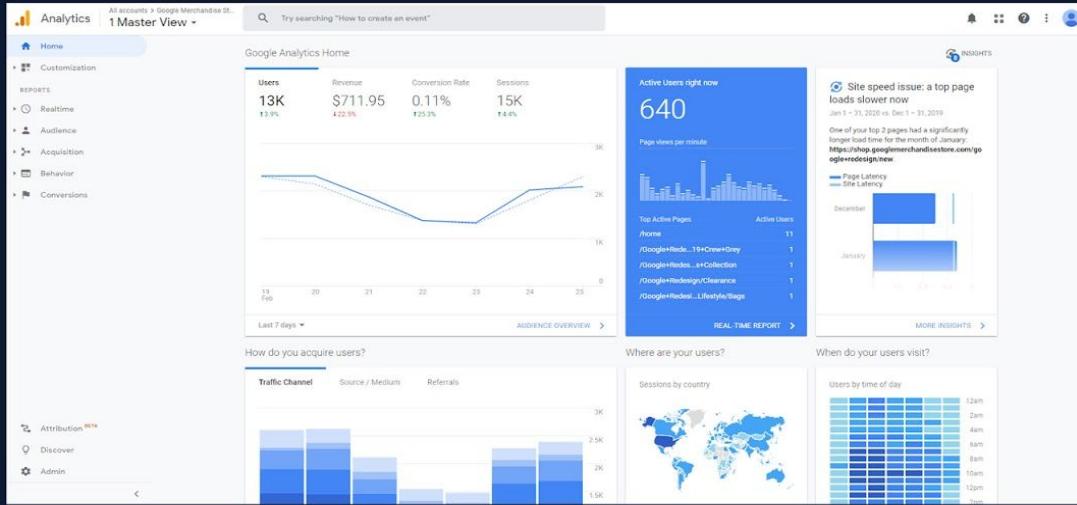
Your tracking code must be added after the < head > tag of the header on the page. If you're using a CMS like WordPress, you can also install a Google Analytics plugin. You only need to add the tracking code into the plug-in and it will automatically add it to every page.

Once it's set up, it will take about 24 hours for Google to collect data from your website. When you sign in again, you'll see something like this:

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## 7.(e) How to Install Google Analytics Step-by-Step

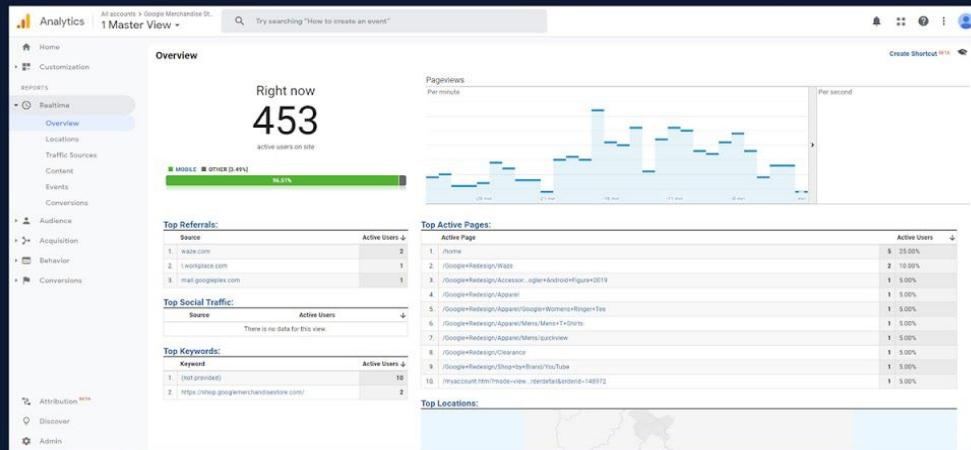


This is an overview of Google Analytics for your website. It shows overall users for the past week, along with how you acquired them. It also shows current active users and users by country.

You can view different reports from the left side menu, which we'll get into in a moment.

## 8. Google Analytics Realtime Reports

The first option you'll see on the left-hand menu is the Realtime reports. This looks similar to the main overview you see when signing in. The only difference is you'll only see real-time data of users currently on your site.



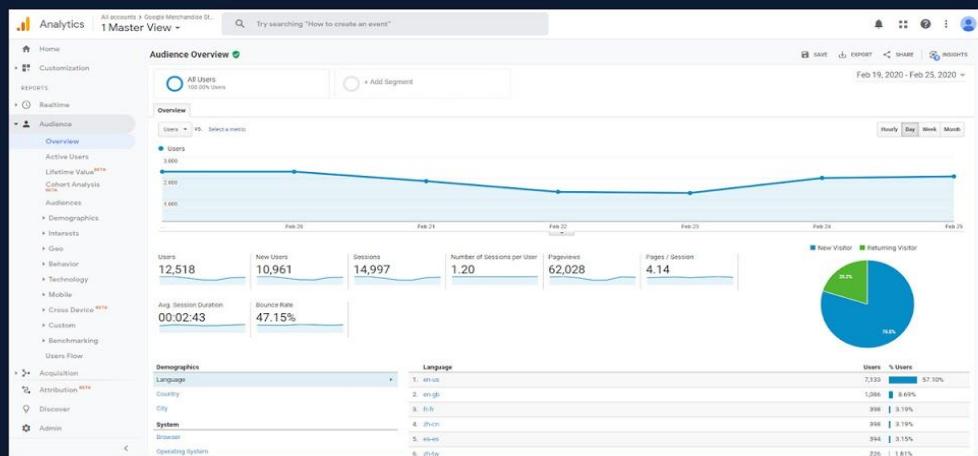
You'll be able to see which pages they're visiting, which social platforms they're coming from, where they're located, and more.

While helpful, you'll probably use this report the least. But, it can be valuable if you want to see how a new blog post is doing or how a one-day sale is driving traffic and conversions.



## 9. Google Analytics Audience Reports

The Audience reports are very valuable because it's where you can learn about your site's visitors. As an overview, you'll get metrics on how many users, sessions, pageviews, and more you've received.



The great thing about Audience reports is the depth you can go into to find more about your audience. They include:

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## 10. Demographics

**Demographics provide in-depth information about the age and gender of your users. For example, you can see what age group is spending the most time on your site. This information is valuable in tailoring content or ads for your site.**

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## 11. Interests

**Mostly used for remarketing campaigns, Interests reports will show your users' interests. Google Analytics sorts users based on three categories: affinity, in-market, and other. Affinity includes broad lifestyle categories like "Media & Entertainment", while in-market sorts by product-related interests. Other Category looks at more specific interests like "Soccer" and "Smart Phones".**



## 12. Geo

**The Geo report provides information about the language and location of your users. You can use this information to better target certain audiences.**

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## 13. Behavior

**The Behavior report is divided into three categories: New vs Returning, Frequency & Recency, and Engagement. New vs Returning allows you to see how many users are new and how many are returning. Frequency & Recency gives you insights at how frequent users are coming to your site. While Engagement looks at how long users' sessions are.**



## 14. Technology

**This report lets you learn more about how users are viewing your site. Users can be divided into browsers and operating systems. You can also see which network they use to connect to the internet.**

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## 15. Mobile

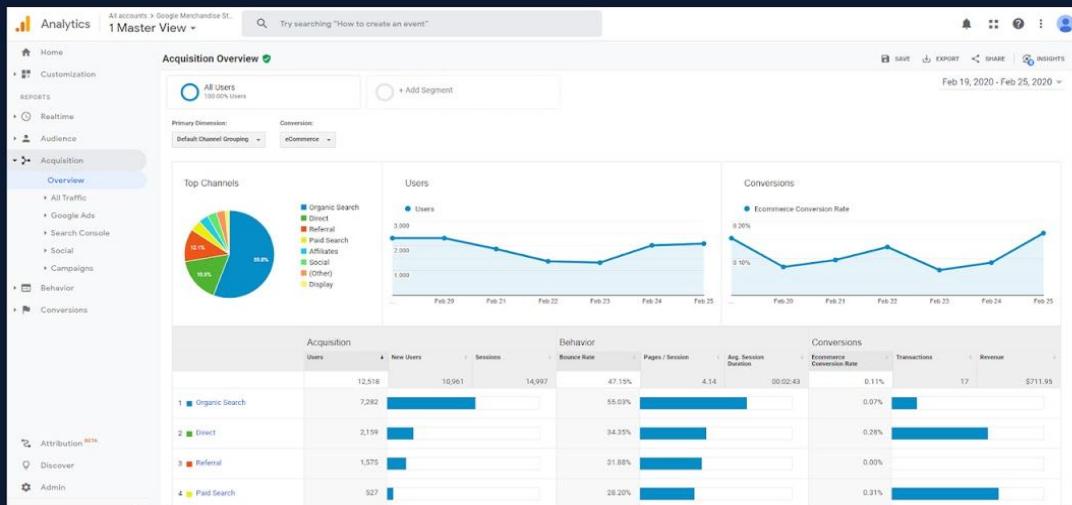
**The Mobile report helps to organize users by device type. You can see how many visitors viewed your site with a mobile phone, tablet or desktop. You can also sort the data based on the device brand.**

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# 16. Google Analytics Acquisition Reports

The Acquisition report provides insights on how your audience finds your site. This report breaks down your traffic by source: organic search, direct, referral, paid search, social, and display.



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## 17. Google Ads

**If you're using Google Ads, this data is important in understanding how your ads are affecting your site. You'll want to link your Google Ads account with Google Analytics to see this data. Once you do, you'll see insights on campaigns, keywords, and search queries related to your ads.**

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## 18. Search Console

**This report is vital in understanding how your site performs in organic search. You can see data like user queries and the number of times your site URLs appear in search results. It also provides post-click data about site engagement like bounce rate and ecommerce conversion rate. This combination of data is valuable in optimizing your site for the most profitable traffic.**



## 19. Social

**The Social portion of the Acquisition report will tell you how people are interacting with your content on social media. This information helps identify social media platforms your audience is already interacting with your content. It also measures how social media is impacting users' site behaviours.**

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## 20. Campaigns

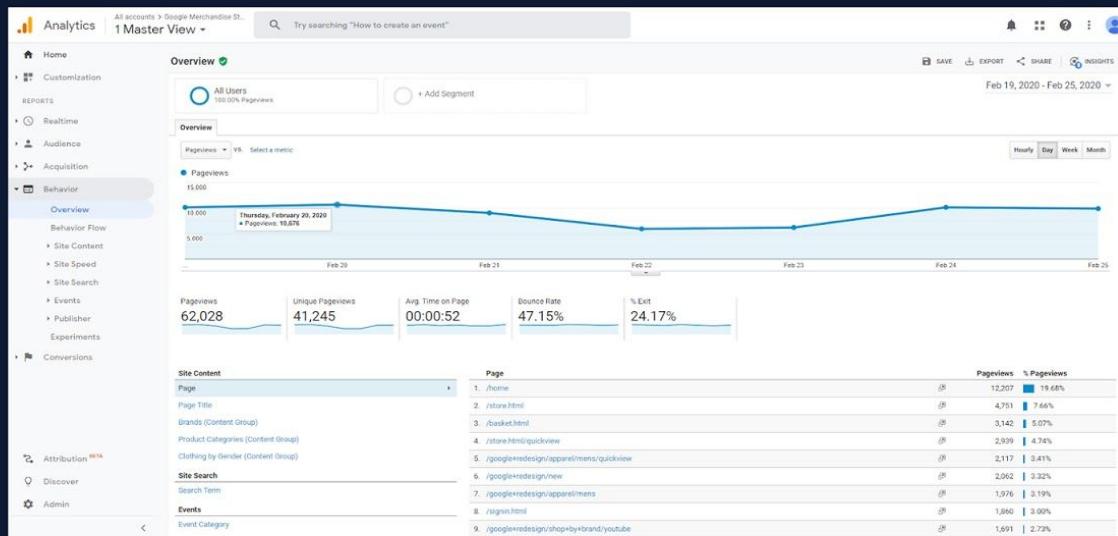
**The Campaigns report is directly related to any paid campaigns you have. Once Google Ads is integrated, you'll see how your campaigns are performing. You can sort data by paid keywords, organic keywords, and cost analysis.**

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## 21. Google Analytics Behavior Reports

The Behavior reports provide data about the behaviour of the users on your site. It tracks the type of actions users take like using the search function, how they view content, and how fast pages load.



The overview report shows you information on page views, session duration, and bounce rate, and other user behaviours.



## 22. Behavior Flow Report

**The Behavior Flow report visualizes the paths users travelled from one screen or page to the next. This can help you discover what content keeps users engaged with your site. The Behavior Flow report can also help identify potential content or usability issues.**

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## 23. Site Content

**Here you will find a list of all the pages of your site that have been viewed during a specific period. This data helps determine how each page is performing. It collects data on how many pageviews it has, average time on page, and its bounce rate.**

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## 24. Site Speed

**This report is pretty self-explanatory: it tells you how quickly each page loads. This data can be sorted by browser, country, and page. It also provides suggestions to optimize your site speed for a specific page.**

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## 25. Site Search

**The Site Search report shows how visitors use the search function on your site. This helps to determine which keywords visitors are using and which pages they're looking to find. You can use this information to optimize your pages or create content.**

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## 26. Events

**Google Analytics defines an event as “user interactions with content that can be tracked independently from a web page or a screen load”. Events include downloads of a PDF, views of a video, and form submissions. This means you can set up special tracking for a particular page to see how users are interacting with it. You can then decide if your video or content needs a refresh.**

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## 27. Publisher

If you monetize with Google AdSense or AdExchange, the Publisher report gives you data on impressions, clicks, and revenue.

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## 28. Experiments

If you monetize with Google AdSense or AdExchange, the Publisher report gives you data on impressions, clicks, and revenue.

**Now available on Google Optimize, you'll have the following capabilities:**

- A/B testing including redirects
- Multivariate testing
- Cookie targeting
- Geotargeting
- Browser, operating system, and desktop versus mobile targeting



## 29. Google Analytics Conversions Reports

**This section of Google Analytics is all about the goals for your website. It shows how visitors convert when on your site.**

**For an ecommerce business, you want people to subscribe to their mailing list or make a purchase.**

**A B2B business wants visitors to download a PDF, sign up for a newsletter, or call their business.**

**In the end, a conversion is a goal you set out for your business.**



## 30. Goals

**Here is where you'll find reports into conversions for different goals you have created. This shows your total goal completions for your site.**

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## 31. Ecommerce

**The Ecommerce reports allow you to analyze purchase activity on your site or app. You can see product and transaction information, average order value, ecommerce conversion rate, time to purchase, and other data.**

**Ecommerce reports can be sorted by:**

- **Overview: Summary of Revenue, Ecommerce Conversion Rate, Transactions, Average Order Value and other metrics.**
- **Product Performance: Revenue, Purchases, Quantity, Average Price, and Average QTY by SKU and Category.**
- **Sales Performance: Revenue by Date.**
- **Transactions: Revenue, Tax, Shipping, and Quantity by Transaction ID.**
- **Time to Purchase: Days to Transaction and Sessions to Transaction.**



## 32. Multi-Channel Funnels

**There are many ways you communicate with your audience. So, it can be hard to track when this is working and how.**

**The Multi-Channel Funnels reports show how your marketing channels (i.e., sources of traffic to your website) work together to create sales and conversions.**

**For example, many people may purchase on your site after searching for your brand on Google. However, they may have been introduced to your brand via a blog or while searching for specific products and services.**

**The Multi-Channel Funnels reports show how previous referrals and searches contributed to your sales.**



## 33. Which Kinds of Hits Does Google Analytics Track?

Google Analytics works with three different types of hits:

- 1. Pageview Hit – A hit that is sent each time someone visits one of your pages.**  
It contains information like what device and browser visitors are using. You can also find out which of your pages they visit.
- 2. Event Hit – A hit sent when a visitor does something on your site.** They might, for instance, fill in a form, click a link or play a video.
- 3. Transaction/Ecommerce Hit – A hit sent when a site visitor buys something.** Information such as which pages the visitor went to before buying can be contained in these hits. More straightforward insights, such as which products they bought or how much they spent, are also provided.



## 34. Data Processing

**Google Analytics doesn't present you with the raw data the platform collects. It first processes data and then generates reports. The first stage of data processing is the separation of data by users and sessions.**

- **User Data** – This is data on different, distinct visitors to your site. Google Analytics creates a unique, random user ID for each new visitor to your site. If the same user revisits your website in the future, Analytics recognizes the user ID. They will then be logged as a 'returning' visitor; this only works if they visit using the same device. The process can be subverted if they clear your cookie from their browser cache.
- **Session Data** – A session is a period of time that a user spends on your site. It begins with a pageview hit when the user first visits the website, and it continues until they ultimately leave the site. During each session, Analytics collects a host of different types of session data. That session data includes the pages visited, actions taken, and time spent on your site. You can use this data to gain insights into site user behavior. It can be critical to understanding site performance, as we'll talk about below.



## 35. What are Dimensions and Metrics in Google Analytics?

- **Dimensions** – these are basic attributes of the collected data. 'Country', for example, is a dimension that may be provided for user data. It would tell you which countries site users come from.
- **Metrics** – These are quantitative measurements; they tell you the number of something. The 'Sessions' metric, for example, tells you how many sessions took place on your site over a period of time.

**Google Analytics creates a range of default reports. We will look at many of them in-depth later. You can also create custom reports that combine different dimensions and metrics.**

**Not all dimensions and metrics can be combined into reports. They each have what is known as a 'scope' — that is the level at which their data is collected. The different scopes are 'user-level,' 'session-level,' and 'hit-level.' Only the dimensions and metrics of the same scope can be combined.**



## 36. Analytics For Marketing

- The insights you can gain from Analytics reports can be vital to improving your marketing. Data collected can help you answer a range of questions about your marketing efforts:
  - How much traffic is driven to your site by different marketing channels?
  - Which websites refer the most visitors?
  - Where do your site visitors live?
  - What is the conversion rate of visitors from different channels?
- The answers to those questions will help you better tailor your marketing efforts. They can show you the channels to invest in and those to move away from. They can also help you better define your target audience, amongst many other helpful insights.



## 37. Analytics to Improve Site Performance

**Analytics reports are also the perfect place to learn about your site and those people who use it. In this area, the questions which the platform help you answer are even more plentiful:**

- **Which of my pages get the most traffic?**
- **Where on my site, do visitors leave?**
- **How quickly do my site's pages load?**
- **Are load times longer for visitors using mobile devices?**

**Those kinds of insights give you practical ways forward for improving your site performance. Rather than a vague aim of improving traffic, you can have a more concrete objective. You might, for instance, learn that your blog posts get a lot of traffic—that could tell you that producing more and promoting them well could help boost traffic even further.**



## 38. Analytics to Aid Your SEO

**Google Analytics insights are also invaluable for informing your SEO. The platform helps answer an array of questions about how users find and interact with your site:**

- **How much search traffic is your site getting?**
- **Which of your landing pages gets the most traffic?**
- **What search queries do visitors use to find your site?**
- **What's your site's bounce rate for visitors from different sources?**

In SEO, as in many things, information is power. The more you know about your site visitors and your target audience, the better. Google Analytics is a platform that provides a plethora of data. Access and assess the right reports, and it can help boost the ROI you see from your SEO efforts.



## 39. How to Set Up Site Search

**One of the many valuable yet straightforward features of Analytics is Site Search Tracking. This feature lets you collect and analyze data on how visitors use your site's search function. Once set up, the feature can give you lots of handy information, including:**

- **Which queries site users search for.**
- **How many times searches are undertaken.**
- **Which pages searches most often lead to**
- **How often a visitor leaves your site straight after performing a search.**
- **Which pages visitors most often start searches from.**

**Getting site search setup is simple and shouldn't take more than a couple of minutes. As a starting point, perform a search on your site. You should take note of the URL which gets generated. Then head to your Google Analytics account.**



## 39.(a) How to Set Up Site Search

A screenshot of the Google Analytics Admin interface. On the left, the 'ADMIN' sidebar is open, showing options like Account, User Management, and Trash Can. A red box highlights the cog icon at the bottom of this sidebar. In the center, the 'Property' section shows '01. LIVE - accelerate-agency.com (was convertandleave.com)'. On the right, the 'View' section shows '01. accelerate-agency.com - MAIN'. A red box highlights the 'View Settings' link under the 'View' heading. A search bar at the top right says 'Try searching "Compare bounce rate this week with last week"'.

**Open the Admin menu by clicking the cog symbol at the bottom left. Then choose the 'View Settings' alternative from the 'View' column at the right-hand side of the page; that will open a new menu. Scroll down it until you find a section titled 'Site Search Settings.'**



## 39.(b) How to Set Up Site Search



**Toggle 'Site Search Tracking' to the on position. What you need to do next is to fill in the 'Query Parameter' field. That is where the search URL you generated earlier comes in. For example, maybe you entered 'Google Analytics' into your site search. If you did, the resulting URL might look like this:**

**www.website.co.uk/pages/search\_results?s=googleanalytics**

**In the 'Query Parameter,' there is an 's.' It's what indicates the part of the URL which displays the search query. If that was the URL you generated, you would enter 's' into the 'Query Parameter' field. Then, all you need do is click 'Done,' and the Analytics site search feature is set up.**



## 40. How to Set Up Goals

**Most websites exist with a specific objective in mind. It may be to get them to buy a product. Whatever your site's goals, Google Analytics Goals provide a way for you to assess how well it fulfills them. That makes it another useful feature to get set up.**

A screenshot of the Google Analytics Admin interface. The left sidebar shows 'ADMIN' selected, with options like Account, Property, View, and Trash Can. The main area shows 'Property Settings' and 'Goals' is highlighted with a red box. Other sections include Product Linking, Audience Definitions, and Personal Tools &amp; Assets. The URL at the bottom is https://analytics.google.com/analytics/web/#/property/01.accelerate-agency.com/outline/00000000000000000000000000000000/goals.

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## 40(a).How to Set Up Goals

**Your first stop is, once again, the Admin panel on Analytics. From there, select the 'Goals' option, as shown above. That opens a new page on which you should choose the '+ New Goal' button. You can then decide whether to use an existing goal template or create a custom goal.**

**Goal templates will satisfy the needs of most site owners. They are designed to let you track all the common goals which sites have. If you wish to create a custom goal, it is pretty easy to do so.**

**First, name the goal. This name will appear on any reports which include data on the goal, so pick something obvious and memorable. You then need to choose one of the four different types of goals that Analytics allows for:**



## 40 (b).How to Set Up Goals

A screenshot of the Google Analytics interface showing the 'Create Goal' dialog box. The left sidebar shows 'ADMIN' selected, with 'Goals' highlighted under 'View'. The main area shows a goal named '01. accelerate-agency.com - MAIN' with the ID '06. Complete Introducer form' and 'Goal ID 6 / Goal Set 2'. A red box highlights the 'Type' section, which includes options for 'Destination' (e.g., 'ex: thanks.html'), 'Duration' (e.g., 'ex: 5 minutes or more'), 'Pages/Screens per session' (e.g., 'ex: 3 pages'), and 'Event' (e.g., 'ex: played a video'). Below this, a note says 'Measure the most engaged visits to your website and automatically turn those visits into Goals. Then use those Goals to improve your Google Ads bidding. Learn more'. At the bottom are 'Cancel', 'Goal details' (with a green checkmark), and 'Edit' buttons.

**Every Analytics goal records a conversion when a site user performs a specific action. Which action that is, depends on the type of goal you choose.**

- **Destination – When a user visits a defined URL, a conversion is recorded.**
- **Duration – When a user spends a certain amount of time on-site, a conversion is recorded.**
- **Pages/Screens per Session – When a user views a pre-set number of pages in a session.**
- **Event – When a user performs a specific action. For instance, clicking a link or playing a video.**

Once you have chosen the type of goal you want to create, there are a couple of further steps. Google Analytics provides on-screen instructions. In general, you have to input the specific details of the goal you want to track. For instance, for a destination goal, you need to provide the URL to which a visit will trigger a conversion:



## 40 (c).How to Set Up Goals

A screenshot of the Google Analytics interface showing the "Goal details" configuration screen. The left sidebar is titled "ADMIN" and includes options like View Settings, Goals, Filters, Ecommerce Settings, Calculated Metrics, Segments, Annotations, Attribution Models, Custom Channel Grouping, and Purchases & Sales. The main panel shows a goal configuration with the following details:

- Goal destination:** "/introducer-account-page/\*(0|1|2|3|4|5|6|7|8|9)" (Case sensitive)
- Value optional:** 0 or 1 (Assign a monetary value to the conversion)
- Funnel optional:** On (Use an app screen name string or a web page URL, for each step. For example, use My Screen for an app and :thankyou.html instead of www.example.com/thankyou.html for a web page.)
- Step 1:** Name: Form, Screen/Page: "/introducer/Form/\*", Required? Yes
- Step 2:** Name: Form Interaction, Screen/Page: "/introducer/Form\_Interaction", Required? No

At the bottom right are "Export CSV" and "Add All Keywords" buttons.

**Duration and Pages per Session goals are simple to set up. There are just a few fields to fill in with information about the exact nature of the goals. Event goals are a little different. To set them up, you have to first set up 'Events' through Analytics. Google provides a comprehensive guide to doing so.**



## 40 (d).How to Set Up Goals

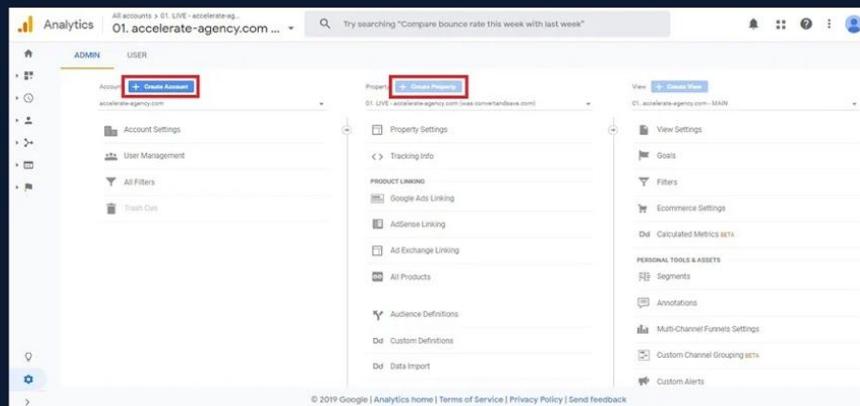
A screenshot of the Google Analytics Admin interface. On the left, the navigation menu shows "View" and "Create View" under "ADMIN", and "Goals" under "USER". The main panel shows a "Custom" goal configuration. The "Goal description" section has "Name: 02 tap to call" and "Goal type: Event". The "Goal details" section includes "Event conditions" which state "Set one or more conditions. A conversion will be counted if all of the conditions you set are true when an Event is triggered. You must have at least one Event set up to create this type of Goal." Below this are fields for "Category", "Action", "Label", and "Value", each with dropdown menus. A checkbox "Use the Event value as the Goal Value for the conversion" is checked. At the bottom right are "Cancel", "Export CSV", and "Add All Keywords" buttons.

**With events set up, things are once again simple. Choose the event you want a goal to refer to and then fill in the other simple fields shown above. Whichever type of goal you've set up, clicking on the 'Create Goal' button completes the process. Data related to the goal will then start being collected by Analytics.**



## 41. How to Add Additional Accounts and Properties

One final thing you may wish to know before getting stuck into the Analytics reports is how to add a new account or property. To do this, head to the main Admin menu on Google Analytics.



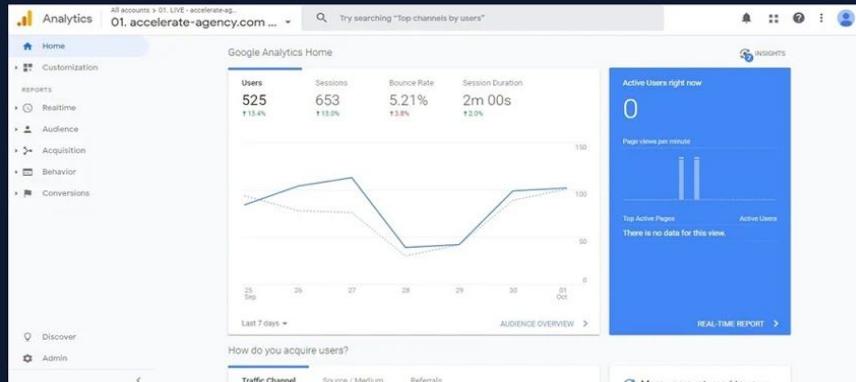
Two of the three blue buttons displayed there are 'Create Account' and 'Create Property'. Choose whichever is relevant to what you wish to do. You'll then be taken step-by-step through the process of setting up a new account or new property to track.

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## 42. Google Analytics Dashboard

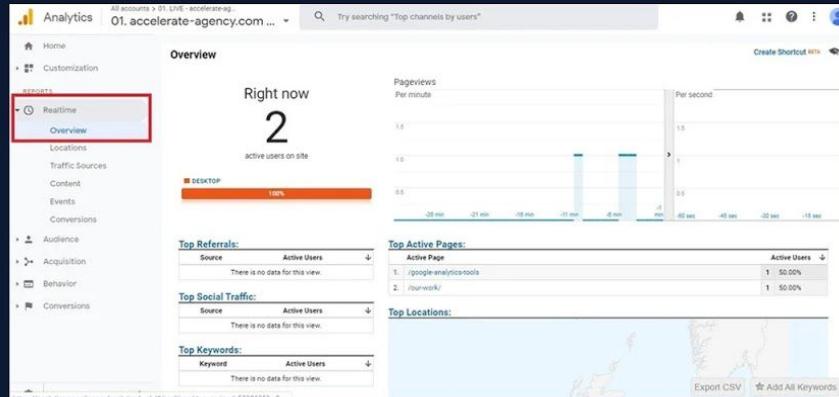
Once you've got Analytics and its features set up, you can sit back and relax. After 24 hours, the platform should have collected enough data for you to view your first reports.



You can access these reports through the Google Analytics dashboard. The home page of that dashboard is shown above and is also known as the Overview dashboard. It's where each of your visits to Analytics begins. On that page, you'll find everything you need to navigate through the platform.

## 44. Real-Time Dashboard

The Real-Time dashboard is the first option on the left-hand menu. It looks similar to the main overview dashboard. The difference is it only displays real-time data visualizations of users currently exploring your site.

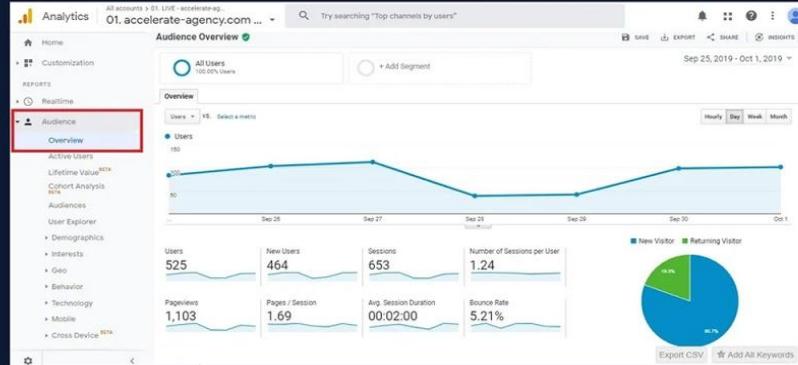


The Real-Time reports update as Analytics receives new hits. The dashboard shows how users are consuming content and provides insights into users. For instance, click the 'Locations' option, and you'll see where current site users are based.



## 45. Audience Dashboard

The Audience dashboard is where you go to learn more about your site's users. Not just those who are on the site now, but all of them. Open up the overview part of the dashboard, and you get a broad view of the data Analytics makes available to you.



For your chosen time period, you can see how many users and sessions your site has had. You can also view things like how long users stay on your website and how many pages they typically visit. Choosing any of the other reports in the Audience dashboard lets you dig deeper into the user data.

