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digit **FastTrack**

YOUR HANDY GUIDE TO EVERYDAY TECHNOLOGY

to Google Analytics

- Introducing Google Analytics
- Setting up
- Understanding the UI
- Building reports and setting up views
- Analyse - Real time reports
- Analyse - Audience report
- Analyse - Acquisition report
- Analyse - Behaviour report
- Settings goals and tracking performance
- Tagging campaigns and analysing performance
- Advanced filters - Using Regex

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GOOGLE ANALYTICS
JULY 2018

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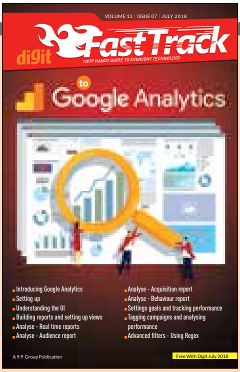

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Ensuring visibility

Easy to deploy websites are a dime a dozen. The way the industry is shaping up right now, if you have a complete profile on a social media website like Facebook, then you can simply provide that URL and get an automated service to build your new website within seconds. With so many methods to build websites out there, the need arises to make your website stand out from the rest of the million pages targeting the same niche. You can either hand it over to the professionals, who'll analyse your website and recommend changes. Or you can simply take matters into your own hands and analyse your website yourself and make the appropriate changes. Given that websites need to be dynamic and evolve on a periodic basis to remain relevant, going to an expert over and over again could turn out to be a really expensive affair and taking matters into your own hands is the obvious choice. This is where Google Analytics comes into the picture.

There is an umpteen number of tools out there to analyse your webpage. In fact, given how complex some of the tools can be under the umbrella of Google Analytics, it's better that you make use of those free tools till you get a hang of all that Google can offer. And boy, do they have a lot to offer. Google Analytics is just one part of the whole website-improvement toolkit that Google has, albeit, the most powerful one. It's not just the small websites and companies that stand to benefit from tools like Google Analytics, the bigger you are, the more you stand to gain. One of the popular examples of a big enterprise gaining from the use of Analytics is that of Accuweather, a weather media company. With Google Analytics, they were able to track previously untrackable metrics like email open rates, app downloads and even more statistics that were deemed ‘unmeasurable’. This allowed them to focus on certain aspects, such as mediums which didn’t use Javascript and thus couldn’t use the tracking code that’s essential for most analytics services. They needed to do all of this without compromising on the fast user experience, which remains one of the most important facets of the service.

Coming down to the slightly smaller use-case i.e. you, Google Analytics offers an extremely powerful and versatile array of tools for free. It’s easy to implement across a wide variety of platforms and the amount of data it collects automatically and presents across utilitarian views is what makes Google Analytics the go-to service for understanding user behaviour across your website. Moreover, you’re even allowed to build custom campaigns to track specific parameters which you’d ordinarily have to pay for with any other service. If all of this wasn’t compelling enough, then understand this, Google is the prime factor for ensuring visibility for your website across all platforms so it’s natural to value the statistics obtained from a Google tool than any other. This alone should make GA your prime focus when you’re starting out with your new venture.

Introducing Google Analytics

Exploring the 'what' and 'why' of Google Analytics and how you can use it for your business

For any business, data is the most important asset it can own. And no data is more important than consumer data. Sun Tzu, the famous Chinese general and peerless strategist said in his book, "Know your enemy". It was and remains the most important mantra of any warfare, be it on the battlefield or in the boardroom. Translated into business growth, the most important mantra is "Know Your Customer". What do they like? Where do they go? What motivates them? What do they buy and where and how? These are all pertinent questions to understanding them and using this knowledge to gain and grow a audience. An analysis of your consumers comes at the very beginning of deriving a growth hack for your business. Several successful startups directly attribute their success to a keen understanding of their consumer base. Many have pivoted or changed their strategy after an in depth analysis. Take Instagram. It originally started as Burbn, an app that allowed location-aware photo and note-sharing. After drilling down into what their audience was really interested in and what they were mainly using it for, they pared it down to the photo sharing app that everybody knows and most people love today. The questions remain- Where does this data come from? How to make sense of it?

If you do a simple Google search on the keywords 'How to earn money online' or 'How to make money from home', one of the popular suggestions you will see is to run your own blog or e-commerce website. Indeed if you have followed our previous Fast Track issues, even we've covered topics on how you can be a freelancer, run your online business etc. And it's all sound advice. You set up your website, run the marketing campaigns and are beginning to see a trickle of users flocking to your website. But how can this trickle be turned into a flood? And how many of them are actually regular followers or are converting into paid customers? Where are they coming from? Answers to all such questions lies in two words – Google Analytics.

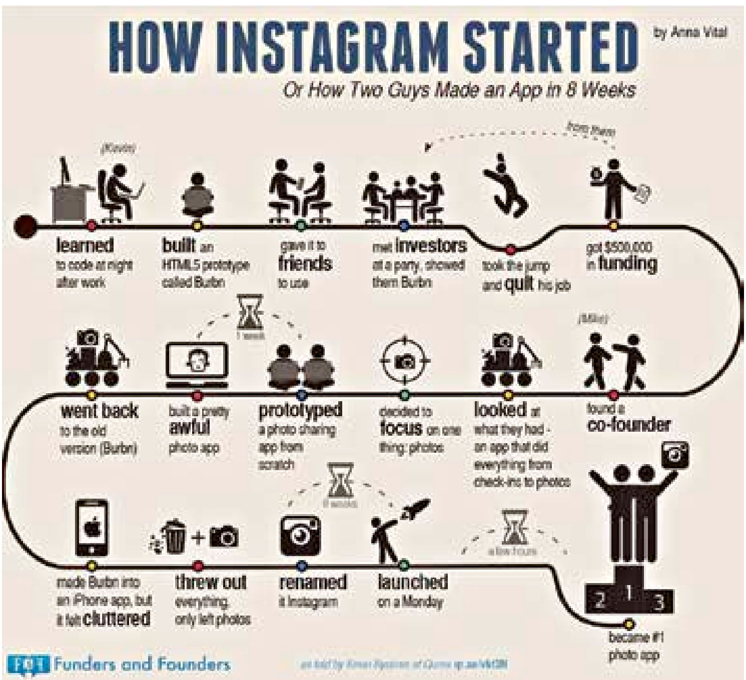
Even if you don't have an online business, don't make the mistake of assuming that you don't require GA. You probably have a website (and if don't, hello it's 2018! Get one ASAP) and you must be running online campaigns for your offline business. E.g. if you own a florist shop, you can use your website to promote it and raise awareness of your shop. A measurable goal for your business might be visitors downloading your brochure or filling up a form or even viewing the location page. With GA, you can track the effectiveness of your strategy and tweak it accordingly.

Google Analytics is a tool that allows you to monitor and understand your online viewership. As the name suggests, it analyses your website traffic and tells you where the visitors are coming from, what their behavioural patterns are, which marketing campaigns are working most effectively etc. Just a few sample questions that can be answered using analytics are:

- How many people visit my website?
- Where do my visitors live?
- Do I need a mobile-friendly website?
- Which websites send traffic to my website?
- What marketing tactics drive the most traffic to my website?

- Which pages on my website are the most popular?
- How many visitors have I converted into leads or customers?
- Where did my converting visitors come from and go to on my website?
- How can I improve my website's speed?
- What blog content do my visitors like the most?

GA is not the only tool available out there but it's definitely one of the best. And it's free. It also track a lot of data but we will get to that later. Data, by itself is meaningless. Unless it's shaped and presented in a format that can be understood and interpreted, it's just a bunch of numbers thrown together. This is where you see the real beauty of GA – it eats through the multitude of datasets and gives you patterns, trends and analysis. You also have the ability to customise the data and reports you want to see. So basically, it's the Swiss army knife of consumer analytics tools.



Did you know that Instagram started as an app named Burbn?
It was only a keen understanding of their consumers that led them to trim down the features and relaunch it as Instagram.

What Data?

We keep saying consumer data but what data is exactly available here? Let's examine some of the data points that you can see

- **How many people visited your site?** Within this, you will also see how many were new visitors, repeats, how long was the average duration of every visit, what was the bounce rate (somebody who closed the site in seconds of visiting) etc. This data is available for a period of time and you can examine the trends and tie it with your marketing campaigns to analyse them better.
- **Where are these visitors coming from?** You can see the various sources like direct traffic (people typing in the exact URL of your site), referring traffic (when people click a link to your website from another website), and search engine traffic. You can track which is the best medium or strategy for driving traffic to your website.
- **What are the visitors looking at?** So which is the most viewed page, how did they arrive there and where did they go from there. You can see the path that the visitors take on your website and you can focus your attention on the most viewed pages and improve the least viewed ones.
- **Additional information about visitors** like their geographic location, behaviour patterns, what do they like e.g. are they interested in technology, sports, fashion etc., the device(s) they are using, which browser, what's their operating system etc. is also provided. You may not use all of this data but it doesn't hurt to know that its available if you need it. E.g. if your site is mainly viewed from smartphones, you can focus on optimising it for a mobile screen.
- **"Goals" or "conversions,"** i.e. when a visitor completes a certain action, such as filling out a contact form or purchasing an item. This takes a little more effort to configure properly, but can be very useful. You might find that visitors who buy the most items are coming from a particular website or searching for a particular term in the search engines. With this data, you can target your marketing efforts more effectively, and you could improve your ROI dramatically.

What to do?

So now you have all this data, what do you do with it? Let's see the visitors' data. Over a period of time, analysing how many visitors you have and how many of them are new visitors, you can know whether you are achieving your goals. If you have a B2B website, selling ERP software, you need to reach as many businesses as possible. For such a business, once the customer visits the site and is sold on the product, the rest of the dealing is done offline. Customer retention is offline and through after sales service. So, to grow the business, you need to have a high rate of new visitors to the site. Conversely, for an e-commerce site, repeat business is very important. Customer retention is through online channels and repeat business is a pillar of growth. If the metrics are not lined up with the required objective, you need to rethink your strategy.

Make no mistake, big data is the way of the future. The road to success lies in analysing the data correctly.

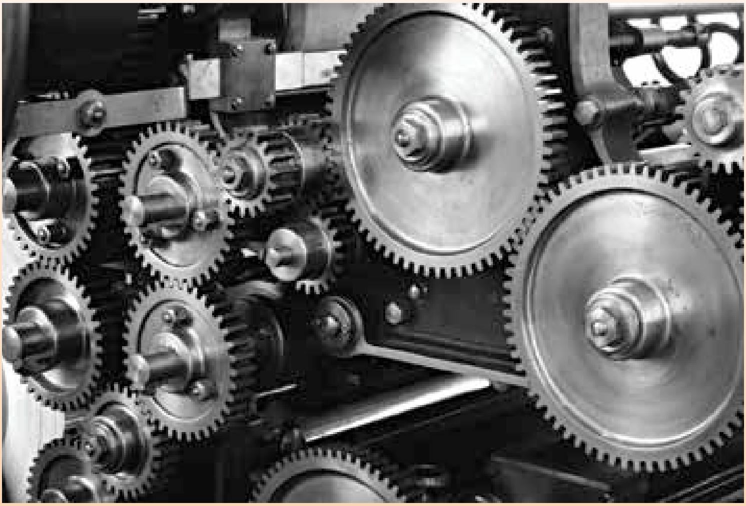
Similarly, if the bounce rate is high, you have a serious problem. People are coming to the site but logging off in a matter of seconds. In this fast world, attention spans are reducing to seconds. You have mere moments to engage the audience and keep them hooked to your website. If this rate is high, consider changing the layout of the site, the information presented etc. Visitors are not seeing what they need and are moving on to look for it elsewhere. It could also mean that the wrong kind of crowd is coming to the site and you need to analyse who are your visitors.

Behaviour data is one of the most interesting and datasets. If you have taken any marketing course, read through any guide or even heard any marketing guru, one advice always given is to prepare a customer profile. This profile outlines the characteristics, personality and behavioural traits of your ideal consumer. It outlines their likes and dislikes, behaviour patterns, lifestyle, income levels, aspirations and many more details (this is actually an important part of formulating any marketing and sales strategy. If you already haven't, you should read up on this more). So how can GA help you in analysing this? Remember you are dealing with Google – a behemoth of the internet industry and the most widely used website. Remember we were discussing why use Google Analytics? The first half of the name is the most compelling argument. Google has millions (maybe even billions) of users and it tracks all of them. It knows what they often search for and using their immense computing power and some of the best brains on the planet to infers what the users like (hey, we're just telling you what it is, data privacy is a topic for another debate).

PRO TIP:
"Never look at the metrics in isolation. Don't be happy looking at increasing website traffic, if your goal conversion is not increasing proportionately you may be attracting irrelevant traffic", says Tanuja Gaikwad of Paarami Digital Consulting, a leading digital marketing agency in Mumbai that has clients like UFO movies etc.

Understanding the visitor data, you know which pages to optimise on your website. You can see which are the pages that visitors spend the most time on and which ones lead to a profitable action. Last and most importantly, you can measure the success of your campaigns and strategy by the goals achieved. The goals can vary from making a purchase to filling a form or downloading a brochure. You can use this data to calculate the ROI of your ad spend.

Given all these capabilities, the question is not why use analytics, but rather, why not? d



Setting it up

Get the lowdown on the process to set up Google Analytics correctly to ensure you receive accurate data for your business needs

Google Analytics is integral to your marketing plan. You may have your website or blog in place, but how do you know whether all the content you are putting out there is reaching the right set of eyes? There is one way of ensuring you understand the magic of numbers - it's called Google Analytics.

You need to ensure that your website is designed in a way that attracts customers as well as gives them the right kind of information about your business. And this is exactly where Google Analytics comes into play.

So if Google Analytics is so powerful, why aren't most small to medium business owners not taking advantage? Research has proven that most of them get daunted by the task of installing it. Google Analytics is only going to run properly and give accurate information if installed correctly. Since this is a scary task for most, we have attempted to simplify the whole process with step by step information on how to set up Google Analytics for your business.

Getting the plan in place

While other guides or tutorials that you may have read will tell you how to directly set up Analytics, we are opting for another route. We will explain the 'how' and 'why' as we go along.

- Step one - Install Google Tag Manager on your website.
- Step two - Set up Universal Analytics via Google Tag Manager. This will allow you to track all the page views for your website.
- Step Three - Head back to Google Analytics to set up what are called your 'goals' and 'views'. This will ensure that the data, that you begin tracking from here on, is accurate as well apt and meaningful for the business you are looking to grow.

There is an immediate and visible difference in our approach as compared to the more conventional route of setting up Google Analytics. This is because we stress the importance of setting up Google Tag Manager right at the onset.

So what is Google Tag Manager?

Think of it as a data broker on your website. It is an in-house tag management solution developed by Google to take all of the data from your website and send it to numerous services like Facebook Analytics, Google Analytics, yada yada.

So why do we recommend the Google Tag Manager?

Reason one - setting up Google Tag Manager is the only time you will ever have to the ever-dreaded job for every non-programming soul out there. It's called touching the codebase of your website. Yikes! We know. It can be scary. So get it out of the way once and for all. Any time in the future when you look at implementing additional event tracking or applying analytical services such as Hotjar, you will not need to make edits to the code.

Reason two - We love the 'preview' function on Google Tag Manager. It ensures that all tracking on your websites are running at their optimum. And that is kind of the point, isn't it?

Getting Started with Google Tag Manager

Try to ensure that your webmaster or someone who has access to the codebase of your website is available while you attempt this step. Here's one important fact for you to understand and remember right at the onset. Google Tag Manager works on an 'account followed by containers' structure. You only need one account to manage multiple containers. Let's understand what this means. For instance if you run a company that makes apparel for women, you may choose to advertise and sell via an e-commerce store as well as easy-to-use mobile app. All you need to do is create a single account for your company. You can then create separate containers within that account for your app as well as your e-commerce store.

Fasten your seat belts, it's go time!

Accounts and Containers

Since both Google Tag Manager and Google Analytics are products of Google, you will need an account with them to operate both. If you already have a Google account, you can use that one. Or you can create a brand new Google account for this purpose.

To create a new account, go to *https://accounts.google.com/signup.*

Ensure that this Google account is permanent and that only you have access to it. At a later time or when deemed necessary you can grant access rights to others in order to edit or view items. Even if you trust your webmaster enough to handle your account for you, ensure that the account is primarily yours and he has shared ownership. What this means for you is the security of having your data intact even if the webmaster decides to stop working for your company tomorrow.

Once you have your Google account in place, visit *https://www.google.com/analytics/tag-manager* and click on the button on the top right corner that reads 'sign up now for free'. It will prompt you to sign in using your Google account. Once you have signed in, just follow the setup instructions on the screen as is. This will lead to you creating your tag manager account as well as the default first container. Do not forget to agree with Google's terms of service for a smooth ride through.

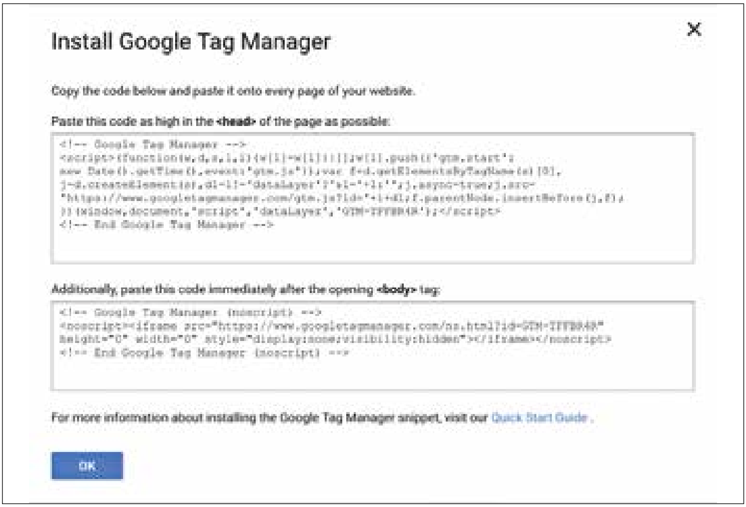
Get the Tracking Code

Once you have followed all the steps as mentioned above, you will see a screen with your Google Tag Manager code. At this point, you will need to insert some code into each and every page of your website. This code will have to go into the header as well as in the footer. While the very thought of touching the code on your website may seem daunting, it need not be. Especially with modern day platforms such as Wordpress or even Shopify, you need to make changes to a single file in your directory and that should do it. If you use a CMS other than Shopify or Wordpress, then your webmaster will be able to do the needful for you by adding the code to every single page of your website. As for your website, ensure that you have a reliable CMS to work with. It definitely makes life significantly easier.

Setting Up Google Analytics

So here we are, at what is the most important step in this chapter. You will need to use the same Google account that you used for Tag Manager to log in to Google Analytics. Visit *https://www.google.com/analytics/* to sign up. Once you have signed in, you can set everything from your account to your website information. Try and keep things simple. For instance, where you need to provide a name for your account, give it the name of your website. The most important aspect here is that you use the right time zone.

Once your account is set up, you will automatically be redirected to the next page. This page is where you will find the Tracking ID of your account. You need to keep this number handy during the next step, so you can either note it down on a piece of paper or copy paste it onto a word doc or just keep this tab open.



The code to be placed on every page of your website

Analytics Tag with Google Tag Manager

Go back to the Google Tag Manager page and set up the Google Analytics tracking tag. Visit *tagmanager.google.com* and look for a tab called ‘New Tag’. Every tag has two components - triggering and configuration. Configuration is the destination of your data - in this case it’s Google Analytics. As for triggering, it refers to the specific data that you are looking to send to a specific destination - for the sake of this exercise, it is all of our pageview data.

Next, click on the Tag configuration button, which will take you to the next page. Once here, select Universal Analytics and once the next screen shows up, select ‘New Variable’ as seen under the option ‘Google Analytics Settings’. Once you have done this, the next screen will pop up. Here, set up a variable called ‘Google Analytics’ and enter the Tracking ID. Hit save and you have completed the step of configuring the tag.

Now let’s move onto triggering. Click on the tab called ‘trigger’, and select the option ‘all pages’. From this point on, you are all set. Save the tag and hit the ‘submit’ button on the dashboard. And that’s it. You have configured Google Analytics on your website.

Digging deeper

Okay, so now that you have configured Google Analytics, let’s dig a little deeper to ensure that this tool works as intended for your business’ growth.

To ensure that your tracking is useful and, more importantly, accurate, there are certain settings that you will need to configure.

Setting up views

This setting will allow you to lay out filters through which you can view your data. The default setting for this is the Google Analytics view called 'All Website Data', which comes with no filters of its own. It is wise to keep the default setting as it is so that you have untethered access to all the raw data from your website.

Each business comes with its own views. In order to add new views for your specific business, you can visit the Admin tab. Click on the column dropdown and click on 'create a new view'. It is recommended that you add views in order to filter out certain pages on your website that will not count towards your eventual goals. For instance, you should have a filter in place that will avoid counting the views of your employees because these will give you a false-positive reading. What you want to count are the visits made by website visitors and not by your employees.

Setting up goals

So you have managed to count the number of pageviews on your website and a good number of people seem to be visiting your website. But what are they doing when they are on your website? Are they meaningfully interacting with your website? Setting up goals will allow you to track their sessions and understand where people are spending their time and if they are completing important tasks such as filling out a contact form, or is there a particular product page that is getting more attention as compared to the others, etc.

To set up goals, let's take an example. Let's say you want to track purchase completions on your website, measured by the number of times a website visitor sees a purchase confirmation (or thank you) page after their purchase.

To go to Goals, click on Admin > View (column) > Goals.

Click on the 'New Goal' button. Go through the drop-down list that appears. Check if they match the task you are looking for. If they do not, you can add a specific one by clicking on 'custom' and adding it in there. Don't forget to give your new goal a name that you can easily recollect. Select destination and click on the tab called 'next step'. From here on, look for the URL of your confirmation page. There is a part of your URL segment that needs to be copied into the destination field. Choose the segment after the '.com' (for instance - */confirmation.html*). After pasting it in the destination field, select 'Equals to' option in the dropdown menu. To quantify the monetary value each and every time the goal is completed, you can type in the amount (currency value) of that action. Then click on 'create goal'.

You can create upto a maximum of 20 goals per website property. Common choices for goals that Google Analytics can track for you include the following -

- Contact form submissions
- Sign-ups for email lists
- Completions of purchase
- Number of pageviews per session
- Visiting pages that display intent to purchase
- Amount of time being spent on the website per session

You can then use these goals in order to add the website visitors to your re-targeting lists for your Google Adwords Campaigns.

Google Analytics (GA) Integration With Various Products

A number of products and tools that you already use on a day-to-day basis are compatible with GA. All you have to do is integrate GA for those tools and you can begin seeing real-time reports for visitors interacting with you via these tools.

GA and WordPress

WordPress is arguably the world's most popular CMS. With over 75 million websites using it, it does seem like the leader in the world of CMS'. There are 2 methods to add GA to WordPress. Here's the lowdown on both -

Method 1 - Adding the code manually

While following the steps given below, it helps to have a basic knowledge of WordPress and its templates. Understanding how the templates are used to manage the content is a big plus.

Step 1

GA will supply you with a tracking code. Now log into your website using your wp-admin and access the dashboard. Look for the 'Appearance' tab in the menu bar, hover over it for a dropdown and choose the option 'Editor'.

Step 2

Once you have opened the 'Edit Themes' page, look at the 'Templates' section. You will find a file named ‘header.php’. If you want to speed things up, just press CTRL + F and search for the exact file name. Once you find the file name, click on it.

Step 3

Once you click on ‘header.php’, the ‘Theme Editor’ will open up and will be open for editing. Look for the html tag </head>. You can use the CTRL + F option to make this step faster.

Click in front of this tag, press Enter, and paste the Tracking Code right above it.

Step 4

Once you have pasted the code, click on the option ‘Update File’.

Step 5

To check if things are in place correctly, all you need to do is head back to the tab where you have GA open. After a couple of minutes, hit refresh to see if your GA is receiving data for WordPress. If you do not see any fresh data, you can run a force test by hitting the ‘send test traffic’ button.

After about 12 or 24 hours since you have updated your ‘header.php’ file, access the Reporting Tab in GA. You should now be able to check reports of the actual traffic data.

Method 2 - Installing GA for WordPress via the MonsterInsights Plugin

You can add GA to your website by using The MonsterInsights (MI) plugin which is very easy to configure. It is also an immediate way to start tracking the data from your website traffic.

Step 1

Hover over the Plugins option and select ‘Add New’. Some of the numerous WordPress GA plugins might let you track a higher number of elements on your site than others will, some of them are easier to set up, while some might provide analytics data to you from within your own WordPress dashboard. Add the analytics plugin.

Step 2

Move onto the search bar, type in ‘Google Analytics for WordPress’. When you find it, hit the ‘Install Now’ button and then click on ‘Activate’. Now all you need to do is configure the plugin you have just activated. To do so, access the settings by hovering over the 'Insights' option and then clicking on 'Settings'. This will open up the plugin settings page.

Step 4

Now it's time to connect your GA account to the plugin. To do this, you need to automatically authenticate it with your Google account or you could choose to manually enter the User Account Code.

Automatic Authentication - Sign into GA and click on the option that reads 'Authenticate with your Google account'. You will have to go through the entire setup procedure in order to connect your GA account along with the plugin. This is the recommended method because if you choose the manual method of entering the User Account Code, it will prevent you from viewing the dashboard or being able to use certain other features of the plugin.

WordPress powers around 25% of the internet at this point- imagine the number of sites out there and you will understand how popular it is

Entering The Code Manually - To use this method, click on the button that reads 'Click here to authenticate manually'. It's quite self explanatory that way. Link on the plugin settings page and follow the instructions. Go to your GA account and look for Tracking Code which can be found under Property>Tracking Info. Copy the entire code which is seen under the Tracking ID. Ensure that it contains the User Account Code as well.

Tracking ID Tag

Return to the tab where you have your plugin settings open, paste the code that you copied and click on the 'Save Changes' tab. Wait for about 12 to 24 hours before you check the website traffic data. If you opted for the automatic Authentication, you should have access to the MI Dashboard through your wp-admin panel. Here you will be able to view all the data which is automatically pulled from the plugin to your GA account. On the other hand, if you opted for manual method of entering the code, you will need to log into your GA account to review the data. In either case, now your data from your WordPress site will be available in GA.

GA and Shopify

As a thumb rule, remember that GA should be enabled on your Shopify account only once. Enabling it more than once could mean that the tracking and data provided from it can be inaccurate. So before you set out to enable GA, ensure that it hasn't already been enabled on your website. If you are absolutely sure that GA has not been enabled on your account and you already have a Google account in place, that you want you can use for tracking purposes, then you can skip right ahead to the step of installing Universal Analytics.

If you already have GA enabled on your Shopify store, then your *theme.liquid* file will have the following scripts contained within them -

- `ga.js`
- `dc.js`
- `analytics.js`

In case your file contains scripts, then retain them only if you are looking to upgrade from Classic Analytics to Universal Analytics, or if you have any other technical reason.

If you would like to check for any potential problems with your site's tracking scripts, install Google's Tag Assistant. If the Tag Assistant detects any issues, it will show an error message when you visit the site. For instance, you will see a message like the following -

```
Error: Multiple Google Analytics tags detected.
Error: Detected both ga.js and dc.js scripts which will make tracking ambiguous.
```

Shopify recommends that users opt for Universal Analytics, which is the latest version of GA. Although Shopify also supports Classic Analytics, you should use Universal Analytics unless you have specific requirements. Universal Analytics does everything that Classic Analytics can do, and more.

If you are currently running Classic Analytics, then the process to upgrade can be found in your Online Store under the 'preferences' on the admin dashboard. Here's how to do it -

- Open Shopify admin in a fresh browser window
- Shopify Admin>Online Store>Preferences
- Scroll down to the GA section, and select 'Upgrade to the latest version'

Enable Universal Analytics

To enable Universal Google Analytics:

- From the GA home page, click on 'Sign In'.

- Click on 'Analytics' in the drop down menu.
- Choose which account you want to sign in with, or you could click on 'Add Account' if you want to sign in with a new Google account.
- When the next page shows up, choose 'website' (not 'mobile app') and fill up the form that shows up. Enter the primary domain for the website URL. The checkboxes that you see at the bottom are not really relevant to the task at hand, so uncheck all of them.
- To complete the signup process, click on 'Get Tracking ID' at the bottom of the page.
- Accept the terms of service as per your country of residence or business. Use the dropdown menu to select the country if it is not already pre-selected.
- The next page that you are taken to will display a lot of information, the only one of which that is relevant to you is the Tracking ID Code snippet that is provided by Google.
- Copy the following tracking code

```
<!-- Global site tag (gtag.js) - Google Analytics -->
<script async src="https://www.googletagmanager.com/gtag/js?id=UA-110863774-1"></script>
<script>
```

Shopify is an extremely popular plugin for ecommerce sites and provides a host of features and benefits.

```
•     window.dataLayer = window.dataLayer || [];
•     function gtag(){dataLayer.push(arguments);}
•     gtag('js', new Date());
•     gtag('config', 'UA-110863774-1');
• </script>
```

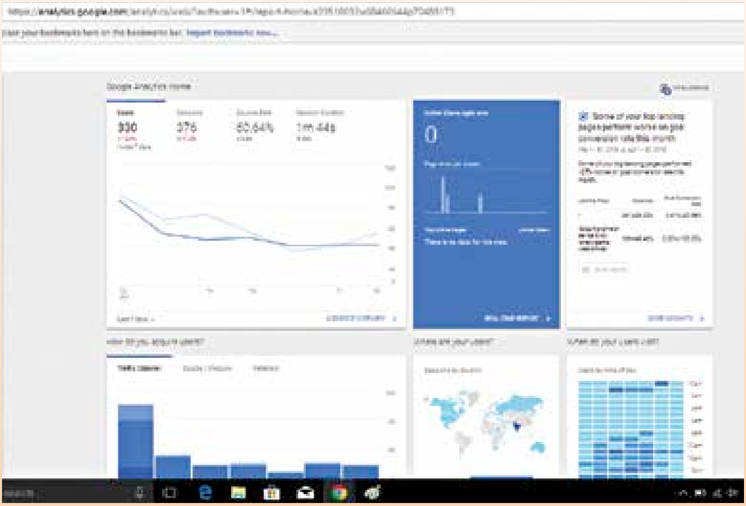
Paste this code in the GA account field. This account field is available under Shopify Admin>Online Store>Preferences.

Important Points To Remember

You see the field of 'Add Custom Javascript'? Do not make any changes here. This field is to be touched only if display advertising is to be supported. Ensure that you have disabled password protection from your Shopify store. In case you have not, GA will not be able to track visitors.

While setting up Google Analytics may not be child's play, it certainly does not need to seem like a herculean task. As long as you stick with the steps mentioned, things should get easier with time. d

CHAPTER #03



Understanding the UI

A look at the UI of Google Analytics and its various components

Google Analytics is but a data playground, and a pretty huge one at that. When there is so much data that needs to be plowed through. The User Interface (UI) of GA is what makes things easier when it comes to this. Google has always tried to make all of their tools relevant for the users. They have always kept the comfort and convenience of the user at the center of their products.

So why should GA be any different? The moment you log into your GA account, you will see reports that display all of your key metrics. And all of this is right at your fingertips just when you log in - which means you haven't even done anything as yet. For instance, if your business is running an ecommerce store and you have set up goals on GA for new purchases, the Home Dashboard will automatically add any and all data from the ecommerce to your dashboard. This combined view will now be your new Home dashboard when you log into your GA account.

Understanding the UI

If you were to sit down and explain everything GA is capable of and how you can use it to your business' advantage, it would probably fill up a book. Since we can't yap on for that long, this is a relatively shorter take on a general introduction to the UI of GA and a skim-over sort of overview of its main sections.

Home

The Home page in GA has changed from what it looked like a few years back. The new change may have seemed confusing at first. But now everyone has welcomed it with open arms. The Home page now offers an overview of key aspects from your business' digital presence. Here's a look at a few of the factors that you can see as soon as you log in.

- Excerpts or snippets from a curated set of GA reports which include everything from simple and streamlined controls of real-time data

You could run social media campaigns to increase traffic to your site. Real-time reports for this can be seen under Real Time>>Traffic Sources

- Preludes to each snippet come in the form of simple questions like 'When do your users visit?' or 'Where do your users come from?' which make the data easy to understand
- If you are looking to dig deeper, hover on any of the data points and get presented with more details or have the option to drill into the relevant report by clicking on the link that comes with each card
- Your setup automatically configures your 'home' and determines what it looks like. For instance, if you have 'goals', they will show up on your "Home" dashboard
- This Home dashboard is a new page in GA. This did not exist in the past. Those looking for features like 'existing reports' from the older UI need not worry. They still exist. The Audience Overview Report which used to show up on the default landing page will now be available under the option 'Audience'. Click on 'Overview'. Audience>>Overview

Real-time

As the name suggests, this is where all the live action is at. This is where you can see whatever is happening on your site as it is happening. It is a lowdown on your current traffic report. You can keep a tab on the users on your website as and when they come and go. You will also be provided with different sets of data that are related to the users on your website at that point in time. Think of it as a condensed version of the other sections, but the difference being that this section only and only focuses on active users. Active users, for the uninitiated, are the ones with active connections, which means that they have clicked on your page in the last 5 minutes. If they stay dormant (but still on your page), they will be considered a stale connection and will not show up in your real time reports after a while.

Locations - This is where you will find a detailed breakdown of the users on your website based on the country they are from. You will see this information alongside a world map. This section is how you can keep track of the number of users you see from each country. The visual representation on the world map is helpful in understanding whether or not you are seeing traffic from the regions your business is trying to target.

Traffic Sources - So you know that users are reaching your website. They could be getting here via a number of channels. Understanding where they are coming from can help you understand which one of your marketing methods is working and which ones need to be refurbished. Some of the categories of traffic sources are as follows:

- Direct - From another web page onto your site
- Organic - Came upon your website via a search engine
- Referral - Got linked to your website from another website
- Campaign - Linked back to your website from material that you have released via social media, emails or other such channels

The last one especially is extremely important when it comes to judging how effective your various campaigns are.

Content

This one is a simple, no-frills kind of section. It shows you how many active pages are there on your site. It then takes into account the total number of users on that page of your website, and will calculate the percentage of traffic that this page will represent when it is related to the whole of your site and all of your traffic.

Filling up a contact form can be considered an event

Events

Events will show you the data related to any event as predefined by you. So, Google will look out for these events for you. What comes under the category of events? Everything from clicking on specific links, a download, activating a specific page or even any kind of interaction with the content on your website. Really, it can cover a plethora of topics, as long as you set them up as events. In order to set up an event on your website, you will need to add javascript to your site so that it can communicate the details of the event with Google who can then track it for you.

Conversions
This is the section where you will monitor goals for your website. These goals are set up in the main Conversions section. An overview of the same will be provided below.

Audience

Think of this as the motherlode of all data related to your users. This is the section where you can see an overview of all your user data – total sessions, average session duration, number of pageviews, bounce rate, etc. You can also view information about the total number of active users on a daily, weekly or even monthly basis. You can track specific use data such as revenue, session duration, goal completion or any other cohort that you have defined. There are also a couple of beta options available currently.

Here's a quick look at the sub-menus of the Audience section. Most of them are self-explanatory in nature, but they are extremely useful.

User Explorer - The User Report helps you isolate and examine closely the individual user behaviour of visitors on your site. This becomes important while managing larger efforts. For instance, a campaign that you may be running to target larger geographic areas.

Demographics - User data basis gender and age

Interests - This will display the interests of your readers based on the data collected by Google on them while they browse the web.

- Affinity - This category shows information about the recreational interests of your website visitors. You can understand if they are movie lovers, technophiles or social media enthusiasts.
- In-Market Segmentation - It displays information about the professional interests of your visitors - technology, employment, hotel accommodations, web design and/or development.

It will also display behavioural data for each group on your website.

Geo - Location and language data on every user.

Behaviour - How often are users visiting? Do they return to your website more than once? How long do they spend when they visit? All the answers lie here.

Technology - You will know what Operating System users are on, what browsers they are using, even what ISP networks they are connecting from.

Mobile - Get the lowdown on desktop vs mobile vs tablet stats. You can even pinpoint the type of device that users are logging on from. Nexus 5 perhaps. Just saying!

Custom - This is the exciting one. This allows tracking of segments as defined by individual users. You can track any segment that you want by defining the segment as well as adding it. For instance, you want to track your site usage by females between the ages 25 to 30 living in Mumbai who are English speaking travel buffs and like browsing your site while using Google Chrome on their Samsung Tablets? You can get the exact numbers for those. How cool is that? (And maybe a little creepy too.)

Are your readers logging on via their desktops, mobiles or tabs?
Go to Audience>>Mobile to find out

Benchmarking - This feature is based on opt-ins. Once you opt-in for this feature, you can anonymously share data with Google who can then compare it to other data sets from companies that have also chosen to opt-in for this feature.

User Flow - This one's pretty straightforward. You can see a visual representation of your traffic flow from given sources that you have chosen. It could be screen resolution, country, age, browser, language or anything else.

Lifetime Value - This is one of the Beta options. This report will let you understand the value of different users for your business based on their lifetime performance. For instance, you can understand the value of users who came to you via paid search or an email campaign. Decoding this can help you determine a profitable allocation of your marketing resources.

Cohorts Analysis - Think of a cohort as a group of people who share a common characteristic attributed to them and this makes them identifiable as an Analytics dimension. For instance, all users who share an Acquisition date will then belong to one single cohort. This section allows you to isolate and study such cohort behaviour.

Acquisition

This is an extremely important section that focuses on all your traffic sources. While you do get data on traffic sources in your Real-time Reports as well, this one will give you the details of all users. Even the ones in the past. The real focus of the Acquisitions section is to give you the breakdown on how your visitors came to be on your website eventually. And more importantly, how did they behave once they got there. This is a very effective method of checking on the success or failure of your marketing strategies. This is how you get answers to questions like 'How many users came in via the last email campaign?' or 'How many people found us via social media vs search engines?'

All Traffic - This one is pretty self-explanatory. It gives you details on varying levels. How did the traffic get to your site? What pages are they interacting with while they are there? There are various tabs like Channels or Referral which can help you understand whether people are coming to you via referral sites and if they are, then which sites are these.

AdWords - If you are a Google AdWords user, then this is the place to link your AdWords account with your GA account. It will allow you to

AdWords users can link their accounts to Google Analytics for comprehensive reports on behaviour data analyse behaviour data, which will be similar to the traffic sources data that you saw above in 'All Traffic'.

Search Console - This is a Google Webmaster tool. But when linked to GA, it gives you access to data on your performance as well as the potential user behaviour in Google searches. Use this information to learn what techniques and strategies you can apply to ensure that you are optimising your exposure in search engine results.

Social - This tab will take all the social data from the 'All Traffic' section and expand on it quite considerably. This is where you can see the route what your traffic takes when it comes from the content you discuss on social media. How does this traffic then travel to your site? You can check the numbers on conversion goals from each of these sources and then identify which is the highest valued source in terms of social networks for your business needs.

Campaigns - This is the subsection where you can see traffic sources that are specific to AdWords referrals or custom campaigns. You can monitor and track those sources from here.

Behavior

This data here is what we call interaction statistics. What do the users search for, how long do they spend on each page, how long does it take for their destination pages to load, etc - all the answers are here.

Site Content - The summary data from each page on your site, including the landing and exit page, is broken down by sub-folders here. If you use a consistent sub-folder structure in your URLs, you will find this sub-section useful. You can check average time spent on a page, pageviews, bounce rate and a lot more.

Site Speed - You can check on the average time taken for server connection, page loads, server response, redirects if any, etc. This will also break down the data for each page on your website and give you advice on how to improve speeds on specific or individual pages.

Site Search - A lot of sites have search box fields built-in. This is the section where GA gives you information on how much traffic is using that search box and what are the terms that they are usually searching for. It will also give you information on the traffic that can result from any of those searches.

Events - While you do have an 'events' sub-section even under Real-time, this one will give you data that is more detailed. For instance, you can use this to keep track of how people are interacting with elements on your site for which details are not ordinarily logged. For instance, data on how many people are playing the embedded video on your website.

Publisher - If you are using Ad Exchange or AdSense, you can link those accounts to GA and this is where the data will be provided that can help you optimise your advertising strategies.

Want to know how long people are spending on which pages on your site and why are some pages doing better than others? Click on the Behavior tab on your GA account.

Experiments - Content Experiments has three main subsections - the experiment setup wizard, list of experiments conducted as well as individual reports for each experiment. GA recommends using Google Optimize as the free and preferred way to run experiments.

Conversions

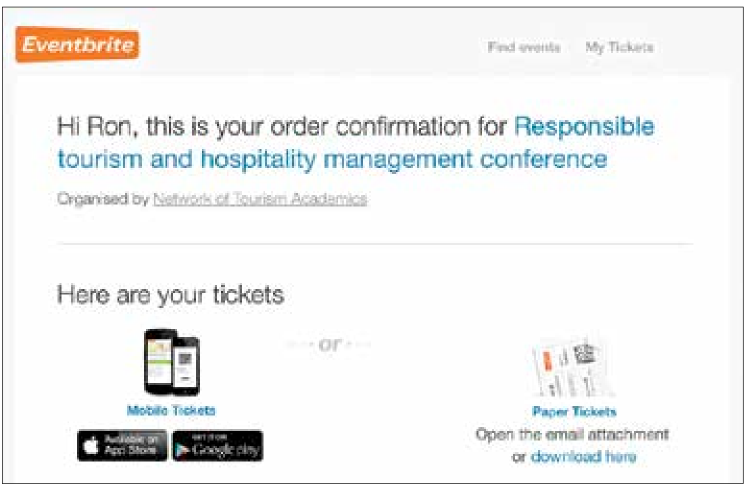
Every website has a purpose. It may either be to spread awareness or to get products sold, to name a few. The Conversions tab in your GA dashboard will help in setting up as well as analysing data on everything from conversion goals to e-commerce data. It can also keep tabs and view the paths on which customers have been led right up to the purchase. It will also give you data to analyse the behaviour pattern of users preceding a sale or before any event or goal has been completed.

Goals - There could be a varying number of goals:

- Destinations - how many users wound up on the registration page
- Page clicks - how many users visit a minimum of four pages before they leave the site
- Duration - how many users have spent five minutes or more on the product page
- Events - how many of the social media events were triggered and completed in the last 30 days

E-commerce - If you want to use this option in GA, you need to first set it up. The method to do is to enable e-commerce by entering the tracking code to your website. Once that is done, you will be privy to transaction data, summaries and averages of revenue, quantities, sales times and dates, conversions, etc.

Multi-Channel Functions - When a user lands up on a site, chances are very low that they will instantly make a purchase and head to the checkout page. People may chance upon your website via social media campaigns, ads, etc. They will then explore a little to see what kind of products you offer, some might even leave to do some further research. They may return, wander around some more and then finally make a purchase. This is the subsection where you get data on those intricate routes that the buyer takes before he/she finally makes the purchase. You can utilise this data to help



Are there any other pages that most users who get converted to stop at on their way to making their purchases? Visit Conversions>>Attribution understand the factors that lead to your users finally making up their minds about that purchase - which is, for you, a conversion goal.

Attribution - Here is where you get to investigate the commonalities, if any, between various users who finally went on to make a purchase. You can check on what impression they had of different pages or elements on a page. Was there a common page that most users stopped at before they finally went on to complete a conversions goal? Maybe you could chance upon a path through your website that is helping generate more sales than other paths.

Discover

If you are looking for the latest enhancements to the basic GA experience you will find them under the sub-section Discover. As the very name suggests, Discover is where you will find products and experiences that you will find useful while you work with your GA account. These include everything from the GA mobile app, Google Optimize, or other important and helpful features such as Custom Alerts or other useful educational material from the well-researched Analytics Academy.

There is a lot that the Google Analytics UI offers. It can get overwhelming for first-time users. While all or most of the data will be important for you, being bogged down by so much data can be counter-productive. Choose a few sections or sub-menus that you want to work with first. Understand how the data from these is helping you to better your business. Once you understand these better and have aced these, you can move on to the next subsection. d

Building reports and setting up views

Learn all about standard as well as custom reports and how they are important to collect data about traffic on your site

GA is awesome. There are no doubts there. But every good marketer should understand how to build good reports and set up views, otherwise this wealth of information will be nothing but a confusing maze for them and their clients.

GA reports can be confusing for even the most experienced marketers given the fact that some of the dashboards can get complicated with all the data that they provide. Here's our list of some excelled standard as well as custom reports that can help make maneuvering this labyrinth of data slightly easier and definitely more organised. This becomes of utmost importance to the marketer because eventually, if you or your client do not understand the reports, the data is going to be rendered useless.

BUILDING REPORTS

Mobile Performance Report

Ours is clearly a world where mobile phones have increased the number of digital users well over those who are accessing sites through the desktop. Mobile ecommerce is on the rise and in fact has become so important that Google is even said to be penalising websites that do not have a mobile friendly version of their site. It is imperative that marketers get onto the bandwagon and learn how their sites are performing on smaller screens as well, since it is vital to them staying alive and winning over new customers.

The mobile performance report gives you data on how well your site is optimized for the smaller screen, and will advise places where you need to make improvements. Note - this is going to give you data for the mobile version of your site and not for your app. That's a separate ballgame. You can further segment your report to see which devices or even browsers are being used by customers in order to access your site. This data can be used to see if your site is doing poorly on certain devices and can help you make the necessary changes to optimise the same.

Accessing this report - **Audience** >> **Mobile** >> **Overview**.

Metrics by Day of Week Name & Time of Day

Have you noticed that the traffic data that you receive is different basis the day of the week it is or the time of the day. Research has proven that users are more likely to use their free time while traveling to work or back from work or during lunch break to surf websites for personal use. As for clients in different time zones, the time difference comes into play. So depending on the product you are selling, understanding this data becomes important.

For instance, if you are an ecommerce store, knowing when to run a flash sale depends on knowing the best time to see the kind of target audience you want to see.

Understanding how their mobile website is doing is important for marketers

This custom report will give you insight into the behavioral changes that your users are prone to. If you switch the metrics out (which you can at any time), you can change the report to dive deeper every single time. If you would like to create the 'time of day' custom report, all you have to do is switch out the default 'Day of Week' dimension for the hour. For best results, you can combine the two 'Hour' as well as 'Day of Week'. This will be a more comprehensive report.

Remember, you can switch "Sessions", "Avg. Session Duration", "Pageviews" and "Bounce Rate" out for any other metric, including conversion metrics and goal completions.

Access to Report: **Import it from the Google Solutions Gallery** **https://goo.gl/SR6tqu**

Traffic Acquisition Report

So you have ads displayed on your site. But are people really clicking on them? You invited a guest post from another blogger - is that generating any traffic to your website? How about your strategy for SEO - is it doing your business any good? These questions are commonplace. The Traffic Acquisition Report will tell you exactly all this and much more. For a lot of marketers we know, this is usually the first step in the world of reports for themselves or clients.

Access to Report: **Acquisition**>>**Overview**

An important insight here is the tab titled 'Referrals'. This can tell you exactly which external sites are responsible for driving traffic to your website. All you have to do is click on a referring website and it will show you the exact page on that site that a visitor used in order to enter your site.

Visit Acquisition>>**Overview**>>**All Traffic**>>**Referrals**

Content Efficiency Report

If you are generating a lot of content on your website, the task of tracking all of it can get tiring as well as overwhelming. A Digital Marketing Evangelist at Google, Avinash Kaushik, realised just that and came up with a solution to combat this exact issue. The Content Efficiency Report tracks entrances, bounces, page views and even goal completions so that you have the answers to common questions like the following -

- Which of my content is engaging users the most?
- Which of the content is converting visitors to complete purchases?
- What type of my content performs the best with viewers - videos, images, GIFs, reviews, infographics, etc?
- What content gets shared the most by users?

Access to Report:**https://goo.gl/vXpxM3**

New vs. Returning Visitors

The feeling of getting a new visitor on your site is always great. When they visit for the second time, it is even better. After all, it is the returning visitor that needs to be celebrated. It is these visitors who will eventually turn into loyal followers, readers or customers. The New vs Returning Visitors report is a standard one on GA. It will provide you with data on the percentage of users who are coming back to your site. The metrics for returning visitors is usually very different from those

The content efficiency report will tell you whether your videos are doing better than your images or vice versa of new ones. The older ones are more likely to stay around on your site for longer and browse through perhaps more pages than one. They usually will have extremely low bounce rates too.

Access the Report: **Audience>>Behavior>>New vs. Returning**

Bounce Rate vs. Exit Rate Report

'Bounce rate' can be defined as the number of visitors who land on a certain page on your site and leave without taking any action. So they have effectively landed, done nothing, and left without exploring any of the other pages of your site. 'Exit Rate' on the other hand is the measurement of percentage of visitors who browse more than one page of your site before they decide to leave. This particular report will compare the bounce rate vs. exit rate for the numerous pages on your site.

Access the Report: **Behavior>>Site Content>>All Pages>>**
Select 'Bounce Rate' and '%Exit'

This selection will give you access to a visual representation of the comparison between the bounce as well as exit rate for all of the pages on your site. You can dig deeper and find more relevant data for each of your pages. One of the preliminary uses of this page is to detect pages that have low engagement levels. It can provide you with insight on UX problems if any on your site. For example, if you have a slideshow with 10 slides, and if people are exiting your site after reaching the 7th slide, then there is a serious problem. Either your copy lacks the spark to continue holding their attention, or there are too many bothersome ads popping up in the sidebar or as an additional dialogue box, etc.

SETTING UP VIEWS

If you were to name the building blocks of your GA account, what would they be? If your answer was anything other than 'filters' and 'views', then you are looking at things the wrong way (pun intended). Setting up GA views is important for any and every business. But where do you start?

To begin, understand that there are four levels that correspond with the GA account structure

1. GA account user (this is connected to your Google account)
2. Analytics Account
3. Property
4. View

Each user can create up to 100 accounts, 50 properties per account and 25 views per property. Google has made provisions for you to set up 25 views on one property, so ensure that you use them wisely!

The Three Must Haves

Regardless of whether you are creating it from scratch or configuring a GA setup that is already in place, you should always consider the needs that are specific to the business that you are working with. The most basic question and one that you most definitely should ask yourself before you start configuring anything is - What information do I need to procure from the GA platform?

Think of 'filters' and 'views' as the building blocks of Google Analytics

While most of the items in GA that are open to being configured will be dependent on the model or size of the business or even the end-user, there will always be a couple of rules that will apply to all websites. Think of these as thumb rules or blanket rules. These three views are exactly like that.

Main View

You may see marketers refer to this view by several names - main view, live view, primary view. Regardless of the name used, they are all referring to the same thing. This is the main GA view which you will use to analyze the overall performance of your site. Ensure that this view has all of the important filters applied. Some of them include internal traffic filters, spam exclusions, etc. The filters you choose to apply will depend on the business you are dealing with. As far as Google or third party products are concerned, this is the view that you should be using for all your custom reports and dashboards.

Raw View

Think of this as the unfiltered view. Set the most basic settings like the business name and change the timezone to the one you are in your business works out of. Avoid adding any other filters so that the data seen in this view is as free from manipulation as possible. This view is your backup. That's the only job it has. If you ever need to have a look at the data that is excluded in the Main View because of filters, this data here can be extremely helpful. And if in the worst case scenario, you have technical glitches with your Main View, you will need some data to fall back on.

Test View

Even though GA claims that it will take around 12 to 24 hours for the changes to show up in your data collected, it has been our experience that the effects of any and all new filters will almost always be directly visible in the GA data. It shows up under 'real time reporting', if nothing else. It is for this exact reason that we suggest starting off with this view so that you are not stuck with any bad data collected in any of the other views.

Test out a lot of new stuff with this view. You can play around with filters before you apply any of them to your Main View. You can apply a filter for this view, collect a little test data, check what the results look like and make sure that it works like you intended for it to. Once you are sure that it is in the clear, then you can add it to the Main View. Come to think of it, the settings you have in the Test View should be the same as the ones you will want to eventually apply to your Main View.

Business specific views

Once you have created the three must have views that we have covered in the previous section, the next most logical move will be to create views that are specific to your business type and your site. These business specific views will make life easier as far as insights are concerned. Think about it, there will be scenarios where you are looking for very detailed yet specific information, and you will be forced to comb through a lot of irrelevant data for that search. Having this kind of a business specific view will mean having access to a fraction of the data, data that has been customised basis your business needs.

Important Note - Regardless of whichever views you choose to create, always ensure that you still have the views that have data from all the pages and all the traffic that has ever come to your site.

Target Market

Hypothetical example - You run an ecommerce store that is based in Mumbai and ships across India. It does not, however, ship overseas. In such a scenario it makes sense to have a view handy that will include visitors only from India. If you do even have visitors from other countries, their chances of being potential customers is very low. Unless you are looking to expand your business to other countries any time soon, this traffic is not what you should be focusing your energies on.

As mentioned earlier, this is not the filter that you will want to apply to all of your views. But it will definitely help to have this view available.

Sub-Site

While you may have a primary website, it is common practice to have a number of sub-sites that help towards your eventual goal. It is also pretty commonplace for the sub-sites to sometimes see a lot more traffic than the main site. Usually the traffic as well as sources that the traffic take to get to these sites will be diametrically different from each other. And this is usually a good thing given the fact that the kind of actions you want them to take on your primary site vs. your sub-site are also different. Some of the most popular examples of sub-sites would be blogs or forums.

If you believe that your sub-site or part of your website has a very different audience or even purpose than the rest of your pages, then it would be a wise decision to create a separate GA view for that specific sub-site.

Traffic Source

So by now you have a lot of traffic coming onto your website and you know that they are generating a decent amount of visitors for you. You may have also noticed that all of this traffic is in some way or the other different from other traffic. If you are looking to do some real analytical work on your traffic sources and want to focus on a certain one or a few of them, it will help to have a view ready for it. But do keep in mind that to analyze this data, the view must be there in advance. It will only analyze data collected once the view was created. Some of the traffic sources that you should consider having a separate view for include paid traffic, organic traffic, social media traffic, referral traffic, etc.

Device

If you happen to glance at your GA devices report, you will notice that there are a number of different device groups such as mobile, desktop, tablet, etc. All of them will have very varying performance numbers attached to them. There might be times when you want to analyze the data separately for these devices. For instance, if you know that you want to optimize your mobile friendly website only. Things will be much easier if you have a separate view for all of these devices.

You could create a separate view for the traffic coming in via social media

User ID

There are Client IDs and then there are User IDs. The difference in data could having lasting effects on your understanding of the market. In order to use this view, you should have a website that has an identifier enabled that can identify the visitors it sees. If your site is capable of this, you should start using a GA User ID feature today. In order to use this feature, you will also need a User ID GA view.

When it comes to your normal reports, visitors to your site are distinguished on the basis of their Client ID. However, once you apply the User ID view, you can view users as someone who you have applied a specific User ID to. This option is the most relevant for websites that allow for registration as well as logging in.

What this means is that GA can now count the real number of users vs. the different browsers and devices the same user could have logged in from. For a session to be counted towards the final total, it will have to come from a user with a User ID defined.

Creating a New View

So now that you have read everything that we had to say about views, we are hopeful that you will want to add a few new views. Here is how you can create a new view with GA, as well a few tips to keep in mind during this task.

- Visit the 'Admin Panel' in GA and in the 'Views' dropdown search for 'Create New View'.
- Choose a name for your view. Try to make it as descriptive to ensure you remember what this particular view does. When you are ready, hit 'Create View'.
- Go to 'Settings' to check if everything is in order as per the view you have chosen.
- Apply filters that are relevant to this particular view

Yes, that's how simple it is to create a new View. We bet you are wondering why you haven't done it as yet. Of course remember the three must have views (Main, Raw and Testing). Try to get those up and running today. While creating any more Views, try and spend some time to think about the business you are working with. Once you know what you are looking for, you can create Views that will help you with expanding your business. d

Real Time Reports

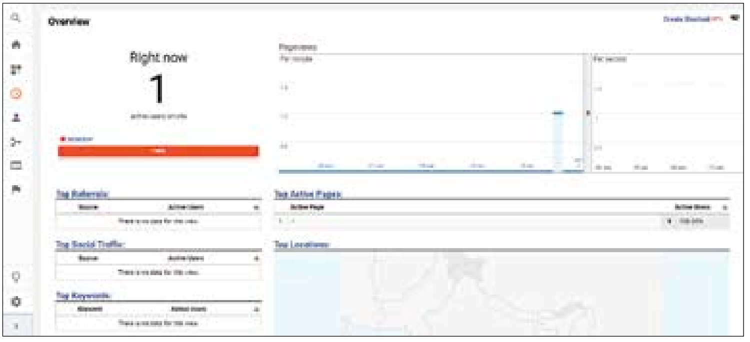
Monitor traffic and campaign effectiveness in real time

What could be more exciting than looking at visitors coming to your website? After all, it is why you created one. You could just spend hours looking at people coming in, filling forms, leaving contact information, downloading content or generally engaging with the site. We understand the excitement but real time reports give you much more than that.

When you log in to your analytics account, on the left side, in the reports section, the first one is Real Time reports. In this section, you will see the 'hits' or views that are active on your site. Active users are classified as those who triggered an event or viewed a page on the site in the last 5 mins. This report can be used for various purposes like checking the effectiveness of a marketing campaign, especially short ones like a one day campaign or checking on how a blog post or new content is being received. As with everything, the main purpose of these reports is to ensure that any changes or promotional campaigns are giving the intended results. Another benefit is that you can time your content. Post the latest content when the number of active users on the site is high, so that visibility is also high.

Report Types

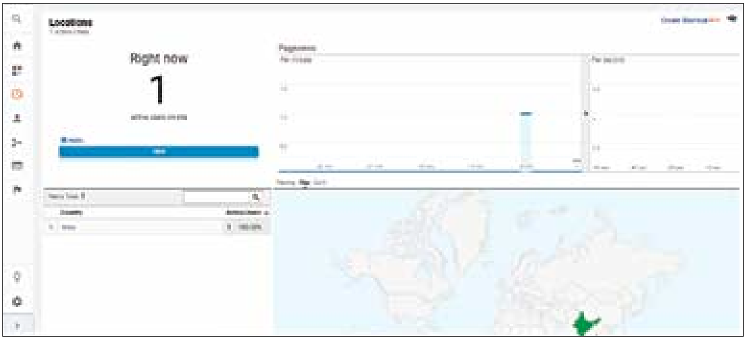
There are six reports or views here: Overview, Locations, Content or Screens if you are viewing for a mobile app, Events and Conversions.



The Overview report gives you the big picture

Overview, as the name suggests, gives you the big picture. You can see the number of active visitors, what pages they are looking at, which was their landing page, top referral sources routing traffic to your website, look at social traffic sources and geographic location of the visitors. You can also see page views over a 30 minute period. The data display about popular pages is especially important when you are looking at a one-day campaign. There should be a spike in the views for the page that is being promoted. And if that is the case, then your campaign is working .

If you click on the title of any section, it will take you to that report with the view filtered down. E.g. if you click on Top Referral, you will be taken to the Traffic Sources report with the inclusion of referral path in the data table. Click on Active pages to go to Content report and Top Locations to go to Locations report.



The Locations report is all about geographic information for your business

Locations report gives you (no prizes for guessing) location information in list and interactive map format. You can see the city the active users are located in. if your business is location specific or you are targeting a certain location then this data is very important for him. E.g. Dusane Infotech, a client of Paarami Digital Consulting is focused on African continent and their major traffic comes from African countries which proves that whatever their strategy is, its working.

In **Traffic sources**, the data is organised by medium, source and number of visitors. Sources are classified into organic, direct, referral, social, campaign etc. **Organic** is promotion through SEO and keyword search, **direct** is somebody entering the URL directly into the browser address bar, **referral** is when a visitor on a third party site clicks on your site link mentioned on that third party website. You can see the top sources out of all these that drive traffic to your site. This is important in a myriad of ways. You can

Traffic Sources report helps you understand where your traffic comes from analyse whether any promotional campaign you are running is working effectively. If you are working with any referral sites, their effectiveness can also be checked. If you have gotten an influencer to talk or blog about you, this will tell you how fruitful that promotion is. Click on a specific medium or source to drill down further into details. This option is available only if you are checking a website property.

The next option is **Content** which tells you which content is being consumed. Which pages are being seen the most is the information that can be gleaned from this data. You will be shown the page URL, the page title and the percent of active visitors that are on each page. You can toggle between active users and a list of pageviews in the past 30 minutes. You can also check what device is being used to view the site- desktop, mobile or tablet.

Contents report gives you information about which page performance

You can optimise your site accordingly. If you are looking at data for an app, this report is called Screens. Use this tab to check how the data posted today is being received.

Events report tells you if there is any actionable event taking place on your site. (Remember from the UI chapter that you need to add the appropriate code so that events are tracked). The list of events is hidden by default but click on the Event categories and you can see the list of events. Once you know the popular events on your site, you can optimise your strategy to funnel the visitors and turn them into consumers. An Event hit has the following components – Category, Action, Label and Value. The last 2 are optional but recommended. Category is the name of the object or the group of similar objects that is being tracked. You can see the metrics for the total number of events i.e. all events combined or you can see the individual events too. Action is the action taken on the event being tracked. For an event there could be multiple actions. E.g. in case of a video the various actions could be play, pause, stop, close or download.

The label is the title you assign to the event. E.g. it could be the name of the brochure or case study downloaded or video title. Action names across categories are aggregated and shown as a single value. E.g. you could have the action name 'Download' for both brochure downloads and case study downloads. Both of these will be totalled in the top action report and by clicking on it, you can view category breakdown for that action. You can see how many were brochure downloads and how many case study downloads. You can further break down the action by file type in the action name. Also, one action name will register only one unique action count. So if a visitor has downloaded a brochure and then downloads a case study, since both have the same action tag, it will be counted as only one unique action.

Value is the assigned value for an action. This is represented in numbers only. So you can assign value like video load time or download time or a monetary value when an ad is played during the video. The total value for the same action is computed and the average value for an action is also derived. Suppose you had 5 unique downloads for your website videos with download times in seconds as 10, 25, 8, 5, 5. Your reports would then compute these as follows, with the numbers in this example illustrating download time in seconds:

- Sessions with Events: 5
- Value: 53
- Average Value: 10.6

Conversions is the most important report of all. It is the culmination of all your efforts. It tells you how many of your visitors actually turned into customers. You can define a customer by any goal that you set. Your goal could be completing an enquiry form or making a purchase. This report will tell you how many of your active users are completing a desired goal. The table shows the top 20 goals that active users completed during their sessions, the number of users who completed each goal, and the percentage of total users who completed each goal. So it's the final and most important parameter to test the effectiveness of your marketing strategy. You can only see goal conversions and not any kind of transactional information or data. Information on type of actions used to complete the goals is also given so the site can be optimised for viewing. Essentially, the conversions report is what will tell you whether you are achieving desired results or not.

The Conversions report is all about your results

Using this data

Hindsight is always 20/20 and this is never truer than when analysing the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. But with real time reports, you can negate this disadvantage. You have the ability to change a campaign while it's running based on real time data analysis. This can give you a higher chance of success and improve your ROI.

> **PRO TIP:**
> You can create a filter on any report page by clicking on a particular hyper-linked parameter. Once applied, these parameters can be saved as customised reports by clicking on the create shortcut button located in the top right corner.

If the traffic from a social media post or a particular video is tapering off, you know it's time to either double down on it or to give up on it and put up the next post. On the the hand, if traffic from a specific social media platform is on the rise, it's a good idea to increase the marketing spend on that social media.

If there is something trending and it is in your space, you might want to capitalise on it. Run a campaign around it and check the real time traffic. If you see a particular blog or video or any content on your site attracting high crowd, you should focus your attention on that page and drive that traffic to your final goal. It's a handy method to adapt and improvise on the go and improve your returns.

UTM parameters are at the heart of Google Analytics tracking mechanism. These are tags attached to an URL. Rather than waiting for a period of time to check if they are working correctly, using the real time reports, you can debug them instantly. As soon as these tags are set up, click on the associated posts or events and check if the right data is passing through.

Now if you are running a high traffic volume site or an app, you can also run an A/B test to check some features. An A/B test means running two different versions of the same feature or layout for different users. Run this test for a few minutes or hours and then analyse the data. Depending on the results, you can decide to make the changes or stick with the original. Remember, you need to run this test only on apps or sites with high traffic to get enough data for it to be meaningful.

If you are launching a new site or app, you can use real time data to understand how are the initial users are adopting it. Are they following the route you would like them to take? Are they using the features? What features are being used? Where are the visitors dropping off? What is impeding them from reaching the targeted goal? Using real time tracking, you can improve the site or app to get the best results.

Limitations

Of course, nothing in this world is perfect. Even Google makes mistakes. Before you go ga-ga over real time reports, you should also know that they come with their own challenges. The biggest challenge is that some data points can be delayed. This is due to them being done in batch processing method which means that blocks of data is stored and then processed into the reports in batches. So unfortunately, real time is not always completely real time. Mobile app tracking with real time reports is always processed in batches.

Another issue is traffic source attribution. Sometimes, traffic and conversions are not correctly connected with the actual source in real time reports. This is rectified in the standard report however.

Overall, the limitations of real time tracking outweigh the benefits. Read, understood and used correctly, this report can vastly improve your conversions and marketing ROI. Think of it less as less analysis and more as monitoring. Always return to the standard reports to view the data in posterity and see the impact in depth. d

Audience Reports

Google Analytics helps you understand your customer profile through detailed audience reports

Customer is king and that's an open secret about any business. And with rising competition, it's a buyer's market. Your potential customer has many other suitors trying to woo him or her towards them. So how do you ensure that you come out on top? The basic principle of any successful dalliance – understand the other side, what they want and give it to them. Google analytics has just the just analytical tool for you to understand your customer and offer them what they desire. It's called audience reports.

Considering the importance of the customer for any business, it's no wonder that audience report is the most extensive report offered by GA. It has fifteen reports with many of them providing several reports under them.

The Reports

The first is the overview section which gives you a snapshot of your customers over a period of time. It provides you information on users, unique users, sessions, pageviews, bounce rate etc. The default period is a week but it can be changed from the calendar provided in the top right corner.

List of reports available

Active Users

This can show you how many users had at least one session on your site in the last day, seven days, 14 days, and 28 days. You can also add in a custom date range from the calendar option. You can gauge the success of any promotional campaign you might have run by seeing the number of visitors on the site. If any user has returned to the site, the active user number will see an increase. If you have a lot of short term Active Users, like one day only, but the numbers drop off for a longer period, you potentially have a problem. It can mean that although your marketing campaign is good enough to drive visitors to your site or app, there is not enough engaging content to keep them coming back.

Pro tip by Paarami Digital Consulting: Always look at data based on how metrics are performing over a period of time – generally on a horizon of 5-6 months for SEO & organic campaigns and 2 consecutive months for any paid campaign.

Lifetime Value

This report is useful only for an e-commerce website and it tells you how much a user as contributed towards your business by way of purchases made. So you can track how valuable a user is over the life of the user or site. Lifetime Value data is cumulative for users acquired during the acquisition date range you're using. You can filter by the date on which a certain user was acquired, making it possible to analyze users acquired during the most recent day-long, week-long or month-long campaign. It also allows you to compare various different Lifetime Value (LTV) metrics, including:

- Appviews per user (applies only to mobile app users)
- Pageviews per user (applies only to website users)
- Goal completions per user
- Revenue per user
- Session duration per user
- Sessions per user
- Transactions per user

You can also see where the users were acquired allowing you to focus your sales and marketing strategy on the most profitable channels.

The graph illustrates the lifetime value per user for the metrics over a period of 90 days, in increments of days, weeks, or months. For example, if you're working with the App Views per User (LTV) metric, during Week 1, the average number of views might be 16; during Week 3, it might be 22; and by Week 10, it might reach 35. In the table given below it, you can see the metrics distributed by the parameter chosen.

Cohort Analysis

One of the meanings of cohort as per the Oxford dictionary is 'A group of people with a common statistical characteristic'. So in this case, a cohort is a collection of users segmented and grouped by a particular parameter. As of now, you can only group them by acquisition date a.k.a the first session date. Although this feature is still in Beta so additional features might come out at a later date. The group size can be defined by date, week or month. So all users acquired on the same date or in the same week or same month are grouped together. Then select the metric you want to view like pageviews or revenue, or per-user metrics such as sessions per user or transactions per user (there are a host of dimensions available here), select the date range and presto! You can also segment the cohort table i.e. add in another layer to the acquisition date to help you to analyse the data further.

The first column in the table identifies the cohorts and the number of users in each cohort. So you will see the acquisition date for each cohort, and the number of users you acquired during that time frame (day, week, month). The rest of the columns reflect the time increments you choose for Cohort Size. For example, if you select by day, then each column includes one day of data. There are 13 time-increment columns, 0-12. The first row shows the


Cohort analysis lets you group your audience into statistical groups before analysis

total metric value for all cohorts for each column. For example, if the metric is Pageviews and the columns are daily data, then the first row shows the total pageviews for the day. The other rows show the values for the individual cohorts. The cells for time increments 0-12 hold the relevant metric values. For example, if you are using the Pageviews metric, then each cell contains the number of pageviews per cohort per time increment. Analytics uses a colour scheme spread over 5 colours to indicate of relative metric values: the darkest color is highest values and the lightest color is the lowest values.

The usage of this report is dependant upon the type of website or business you are running. Since the basic segmentation is done by date, select the appropriate date range for your business. If you are selling something online, use a shorter date period if your products are fast moving and cheap, and a longer date range if they are expensive. If you are running a blog that basically functions on attracting daily traffic, a daily cohort report would be ideal for you. If you want to check for an app, specifically in-app purchases, again a daily cohort report would be recommended. Select your metrics based also on your business type. If you have an e-commerce site, you might want to look at Revenue per User, Transactions per User and total Revenue.

Once you have setup the ideal report, save it as a shortcut. This saved report will appear in the list of reports under Cohort.

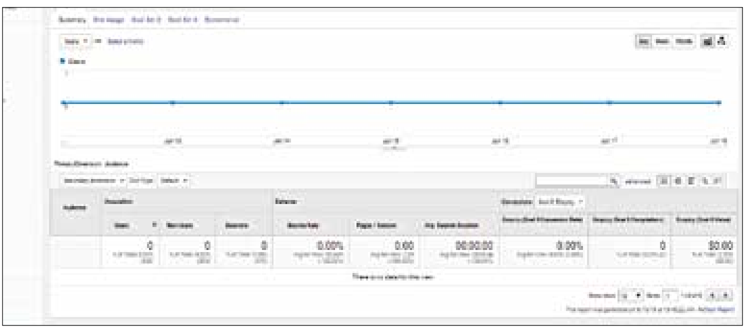
Overall, cohort analysis is useful to see how the user base and engagement has changed over a period of time since you acquired them. Do they keep coming back, are they engaging with your site, do they immediately taper off etc. You can also use this report to check the engagement metrics due to an ad. Say you run a Facebook ad in the first week of every month. Over the month, you see good acquisition data from the active report. But when you drill down week wise using cohort analysis, you see a steady decline in user engagement after the second week. So maybe you can run the same ad again in week 3 to buoy up your visitor numbers. Using this data, you know which is the typical period when users disengage from your site.

Audiences

Ummm....an Audience report within the audience report? Seems kind of redundant right? But this is a new report introduced by GA that lets you group users based on any combination of attributes. This group is known as an audience. So first you need to create and define an audience.

There are preset audiences available or you can create an audience group from scratch. Go to the admin section and navigate to the property in which you want to create the audience. Click on the property then click on audience definitions -> audiences -> new audience. Select an audience based on a variety of parameters like

- All Users: All users to your site or app who already have the necessary advertising cookies or mobile-advertising IDs.
- New Users: Any users who have conducted only one session on your site or app.



The Audiences report lets you define audiences and provides data on Acquisition, Behavior and Conversions for the same

- Returning Users: Any users who have conducted more than one session on your site or app.
- Users who visited a specific section of my site/app: Click the edit icon, and enter the URL of a page or directory on your site, or a screen in your app. This option uses the *contains match* type, and matches any URL that contains the string you enter here.

- Users who completed a goal conversion: Click the edit icon, and select a goal from the menu. This option requires that you have previously configured Analytics Goals.
- Users who completed a transaction: This is already configured to include any user with more than zero transactions.

Enter a name for the audience then add a destination for the audience created. Destinations include Google search and display advertising (like AdWords Display, AdWords RLSA, DoubleClick Bid Manager, and DoubleClick for Publishers), services like Google Optimize in which you use audiences for experimentation or personalization, and Analytics. If you have an AdWords manager account, that is also included as part of AdWords eligibility. If your audience includes Age, Gender, or any of the Interest dimensions, you can publish that audience only to AdWords (Display) and Analytics. If your audience includes sequences, you cannot publish that audience to Analytics. Click OK, then click Publish. When you create a new audience, Analytics populates the list with up to 30 days of data so that you can use the list in 24-48 hours. If you have fewer than 30 days of data available, then Analytics uses the data you have. To view data in audiences report, you need to have enabled Demographics and Interests under the property settings from the Admin tab. At any time, you can only have 20 audiences published to Analytics.

Now you can view metrics like Acquisition, Behavior and Conversions for the defined audiences. Acquisition metric provides information on the volume of users, Behaviour tells you the engagement patterns in terms of bounce rate (leaving after viewing only one page), number of sessions and most popular pages on the site the audience is spending time on and Conversions metrics lets you know whether the users are completing a goal (remember this is the final objective of it all).

Analysing your audience report, you can decide whether you need to

- Devote more of your marketing budget to bidding on ads for the users who are engaging with your site and actually converting
- Expand on the hours during which you bid on ads shown to those users
- Expand the number of sites on which you bid for ads shown to those users.

User Explorer

Sometimes, you need to see the details of a single user rather than a group. Suppose a loyal, repeat customer ran into some issues – you would want details. This is where the **User Explorer** report comes into play. First of all, you need to enable the User-ID feature from the admin panel in the specific property settings. If you haven't enabled User-ID, you will view the default client id in the report. After enabling User-Id, add in the code

```
• ga('set', 'userId', {{USER _ ID}}); // Set the user ID using signed-in user _ id.
```

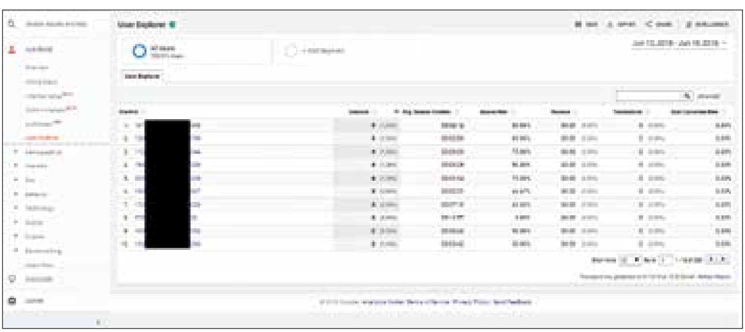
to your analytics tracking code. Next create a User-ID reporting view and you are good to go. In this report, you will see User-ID or Client-ID information on

- Sessions
- Avg. Session Duration
- Bounce Rate
- Revenue
- Transactions
- Goal Conversion Rate

This report will consolidate data from web and app sources. In fact, Google recommends that a consolidated view be used and further segmentation be applied to differentiate the traffic. Click on an ID and you can view further information about that client. Here you will see data like

- Sessions (LTV): Total sessions over the user's lifetime
- Session Duration (LTV): Average session duration over the user's lifetime
- Revenue (LTV): Total revenue over the user's lifetime
- Transactions (LTV): Total transactions over the user's lifetime
- Goal Completions (LTV) and Goal Value (LTV)

Additional client information is also given, like the Client ID/User ID, Date Last Seen (when the user last initiated a session), Device Category, Device Platform, Acquisition Date, Channel, Source/Medium, Campaign.

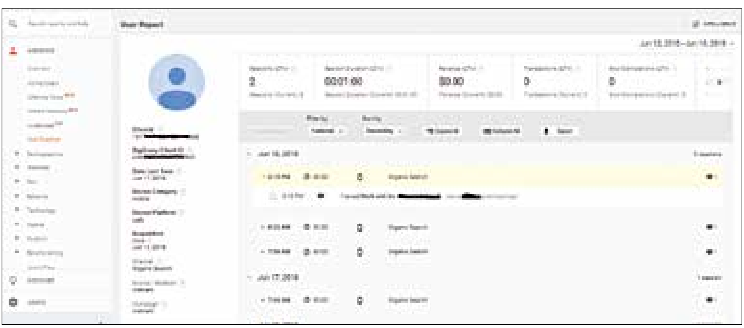


The User Explorer report gives drilled down data at a user level

You can filter the data by Pageview, Goal, Ecommerce and Event. Click on session time and you will be given a list of all pages visited and activities done during that session. Within a session, if you click on a row, another option titled 'Create Segment' gets activated. The selected row will become the action definition for the segment. Click on the Create Segment option and a Segment builder dialog box will open. Enter a name for the segment, modify the conditions if necessary, choose whether the segment is available in any view or only the current view and whether you want to apply the segment to the report after you save it. Then hit Save.

Analysing user reports is a great way to understand what exactly worked for your most valuable clients. Analyse their data and you can attempt to replicate this process en masse. The User Explorer report lets you examine how more valuable users engage with your site, the paths they follow, where they spend their time, which promotions they click. In this case, create two segments: one with your middle-tier customers and one with your top-tier customers. Apply the top-tier segment to the User Explorer report, and examine the session behavior to see how those users engage with your site – which content they interact with most, which content leads to conversions. Then apply the segment of middle-tier customers and export their IDs. Use that list of IDs to personalize their site experience to more closely match the experience of your top-tier customers.

You can also use this report to nudge those users who come close to making a purchase but stop just shy of it – think of someone who has added products to the cart but has not taken the final step of making the payment. Use this information to reinforce your product and re-market to the same consumers.



The User Report gives data at an individual user level

Demographics and Interests

The most important aspect of building up a customer profile is their demographic and interest data – their age group, gender, things they like, follow etc. All of this can be gleaned from the next two sets of reports. The Demographics and Interests reports should be enabled to view these.

To capture this data, analytics relies on sources like third party sites wherein data is collected from cookies and from Android and iOS apps which have the analytics tracking code updated.

An important part to remember here is that the data on demographics and interests might not be available for the entirety of your user base. In the top right corner of the bar chart or the pie chart in **Overview** section, you can see the percentage of uses for whom this data has been collected. The bar chart shows distribution of a metric across predefined age groups and the pie chart shows the gender distribution for that metric. You can toggle the metric from the drop down menu located above the bar chart.

In the **Age** report, you are provided with more information about the same users. Grouped across ages, you can see data points for acquisition, behaviour and conversion metrics. You can also compare two metrics across a period of time.

The **Interest** overview report shows you user profiles for affinity categories (reach), in-market segment and other categories. Affinity categories refer to a group of users who have an interest in pre labelled topic like shoppers/ value shoppers, technology/ mobile enthusiasts etc. In-market segments refer to users who have “product-purchase interests” in the topic in question, akin to a buyer who is at the bottom of a purchase funnel and ready to convert and Other categories provides a microscopic view of user interests. So the affinity category might state ‘Sports & Fitness/Health & Fitness Buffs’ and other categories will segment it further into ‘Sports/ Team Sports/Cricket’ and ‘News/Sports News’. Similar to the reports seen in Demographics, these individual reports also provide data for the given users on acquisition, behaviour and conversion data.

Using these reports, you can analyse the profile of the customer and create specialised ads targeting the segment you are interested in. It can also help you in determining the location of your ads e.g. if you see that a heavy percentage of your visitors are also cricket fans, you might be better off in displaying your ads on pages like ESPNcricinfo or targeting those keywords. By clicking on a category name, you can view the age distribution for that category and plan your marketing strategy.

Geo

This report contains information on the Language and Location of your visitors. In the Language report, you can view Acquisition, Behavior and Conversions for site users who speak different languages – particularly useful if your business covers regions with multiple languages. The Location report features a virtual map of your users' locations, which is useful for targeting search and social ads. You can zoom in on data at the city level, which allows local businesses to know if their marketing efforts are driving traffic and conversions from the right regions, and is also useful for publishers who want to create locally-focused content.

Behavior

This section is broken down into 3 reports: New vs Returning, Frequency & Recency and Engagement. Between these 3 reports, it tells you the number

Behavioural analysis is the most important aspect of customer profiling and percentage of new users and repeat users on your site, how many times users returned i.e. the number of sessions and how long did they spend on the site. Using this data, you can analyse the average amount of time spent by the users on the site and whether they are coming back.

Technology

Again this contains two reports: Browser & OS and Network. As you can imagine, these two reports tell you which browsers are being used to load your site and what operating system are they being run on. You can also know which network is being used to visit your site.

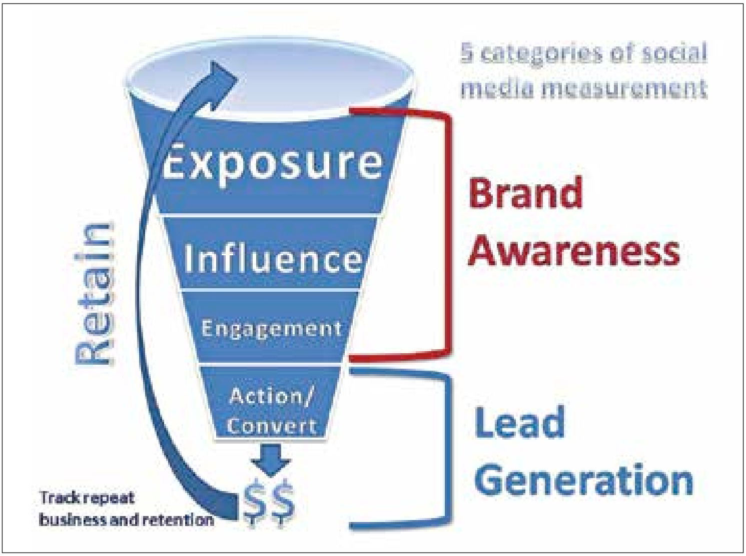
Mobile

In the overview section, you can see the acquisition, behaviour and conversion data spread across several metrics and categorised by mobile, desktop and tablet users. Within devices, you can see which devices are being used to visit the site. These two reports can detect high traffic sources at a device level and whether you are losing traffic from a particular source like mobile. Then you can optimise or improve your site for better viewing. Using the second report, you can glean an idea of the lifestyle and level of disposable income of your users from the type of device they use.

Benchmarking

You may have a 1000 visitors a day spending on average 1 minute on your site but if on average your competitor sites engage them for 3 mins, you have a serious problem. But how do you know how the competition is faring? This is where benchmarking reports come into the picture. You can compare data for your industry with the aggregate data from other companies who share their data. First, enable benchmarking from the account settings in the admin panel (this means that you will be sharing data anonymously with Google).

Choose your industry, country, size by sessions and see how you fare. In the table, you can see the data for Default Channel Grouping (i.e. Social, Direct, Referral, Organic Search, Paid Search, Display, and Email channels), Location (Country/Territory) and Device (i.e. desktop, mobile, and tablet). Across these categories, data is available for acquisition and behaviour spread across several metrics. The caveat here is that the benchmarked data is not for the whole industry but a representative sample of it – only those who have enabled benchmarking.



Repeat business is the pillar of any sustainable business

Users Flow

If you experience a high exit rate (visitors view pages but exit before doing anything meaningful or completing one of your goals) and you want to understand why, this is the report for you. This gives you a graphical representation of how your users access the website and which pages they visit. So it lays down a site path followed by the visitors. On every level of the path, you can see the number of users and how many dropped out at that page. Using this data, you can either optimise a page or include a call to action on the highest viewed page. This report can be segmented by location, language, browser, mobile device, and other custom data dimensions.

As we said, Audience report is the most extensive report on GA and you can see we were not kidding! The reports and data made available by GA here provides you with immensely useful insights into your customers and helps you improve user experience and hopefully increase the conversion rate. d

Acquisition Reports

Let us take a look at what is driving the traffic to your site and what sources you should focus on

Once you have understood who your customers are, it's important to look at where are they coming from- how did they hear about your site? Acquisition refers to gaining consumers or traffic. The Acquisition report tells you what or who is driving the visitors to your site- organic search (keyword search), direct (typing the URL in the address bar), referral (third party websites that have hosted your site link), social (social media), email, paid search (paid ads on search engines), other advertising. This report can help you analyse where to focus your efforts. It takes you through the entire Acquisition-Behavior-Conversion cycle of a consumer.

Overview

In this report, you will see a breakdown of the top channels your users are coming from. You will also see several metrics for the acquisition, behaviour and conversions of users. You can see how many total users or new users came through a channel, how many pages they viewed, their bounce rate and how did they engage with your content.

Traffic

Under traffic, there are 4 report: Channels, Treemaps, Source/ Medium and Referrals. Channels again gives you information on the channel or source of the traffic and provides acquisition, behaviour and conversion metric for them. Treemap is the same representation in pictorial format.

Source/ Medium tells you the not only the medium but also the source website. A source is the place that was last visited before reaching your website (e.g., a specific website or search engine), and medium is the method a visitor used to arrive at that source (by clicking on an ad or a link in an e-mail). You can see the website name along with its category. If you do ads on Quora.com, it will read as quora.com/ other advertising (source/ medium). This is a good way to identify specific websites that contribute the most to your traffic and deepen your relationship with them.

Referrals provides data only on referral traffic. In the earlier report, referral sources were also included but this one gives more insight into that traffic. If you weren't aware of the importance of building influencer relationships and with other websites to refer your site, the weightage GA gives to referrals should give you an idea.

Adwords

Again, there are a bunch of reports included in this section. As the name suggests, it draws data from any Pay Per Click (PPC) campaign you might be running. Google Analytics' AdWords reports give you post-click performance metrics for your paid traffic through AdWords. To see data in the AdWords reports, you first have to link your AdWords and Analytics accounts and ensure that you have enabled auto-tagging, either during the linking process or by editing your AdWords Account settings. These reports help you track campaigns, bid adjustments, individual keywords' performance, placement and keywords' positions and more. Analysing these reports, you can optimise your adword strategy and improve ROI. In the Campaign report, data will be grouped by campaign name and variety of user metrics for that campaign will be provided so you have the ability to analyse the efficiency of every campaign. When you click on a campaign name, you can see the source and medium from that campaign.

Adwords are a great marketing tool if used properly. The question is how do you know if your strategy is working

The new Sitelinks report helps you understand the performance of each sitelink in your AdWords account. Sitelinks help users go deep into your website, directly from an AdWords ad. These links are below the ad and with one click, users can go directly to the specific content page on your site. If one sitelink performs significantly better than another, you can choose to use the better-performing sitelink in more places across your AdWords account(s). Alternatively, if a sitelink performs significantly worse, consider replacing or deleting it. Only clicks on the sitelinks themselves are included in the Analytics Sitelinks report; clicks on the headline of the search ad in which the sitelink appeared are not shown.

The next important report in this section is Keywords. Suppose you have paid for a bunch of keywords and you need to know which keywords are working best for you. This report provides you data on how much traffic has been routed through which keyword. Another aspect you should look at here is the bounce rate — users might be coming through a keyword in hordes but exiting almost as soon as they land there. This means that the keyword is a false flag — it is closely related to another topic that users are interested in. I you have developed a payment gateway and have booked the keyword wallet, viewers who are looking to purchase a wallet will also be shown your ad and might erroneously click on it. If you see a keyword with a lot of revenue for the number of sessions, but the number of sessions is low, you may want to raise your bid for that keyword so that it generates more impressions of your ads. To see activity by ad headline, switch the Primary Dimension to Ad Content.

Hour of Day report helps you analyse keyword performance throughout the day by hour and day based on the time-zone settings for the relevant view. This is important if you know when your target audience is more likely to be online. If you are targeting 18-24 year olds, you might want to run ads late in the evening. If you are in the B2B business, you might want focus on office hours. Run the ads on these assumptions and then test them using this report. Final URLs helps you to understand how users react when they come on the landing page from the ad. So if you a high bounce rate, change your landing page ASAP or if the traffic is not moving in the direction you want it to, optimise it with the right call to action.

No one can deny the power of social media. It's one of the fastest growing marketing medium. Considering this, there is a separate report in GA for Social media traffic. The Social Overview report provides information about sessions and conversions from various social channels, broke down by social networks. The Social Value graph compares the number and value

With so many social media platforms, it gets tricky to keep track of them all and especially which ones are working for you. Fear not for analytics is here!

of all completed goals to the ones that resulted from all other channels. Network Referrals shows how visitors from social sources interact with your site grouped by social networks. Landing Pages tells you what content is shared and where. Conversions report provides a monetary value to the traffic generated from social networks. Another method of sharing is using social media plugins like the Facebook's famous 'like' button. The Plugins report provides data on this aspect. Again the User Flow report tells you how visitors navigate through your site.

Campaigns

In GA, you can see specific metrics to track the effectiveness of various marketing campaigns you are running. You have different reports available to see how paid keywords are faring compared to organic SEO driven keywords. The Cost Analysis report shows session, cost, and revenue performance data for your paid non-Google marketing channels. The report compares the cost of each campaign with its associated revenue (from ecommerce and/or goal value) to calculate ROAS (Return on Ad Spend) and RPC (Revenue per Click). You need to upload and import the associated cost data to run this analysis. For example, if you buy keywords on non-Google search engines, you can upload the cost and impression data from these search engines to Analytics.

Acquisition report is a very effective tool in tracking the flow of visitors and optimising your marketing channels to improve returns. d

Behaviour Reports

Ask any marketing person and they will tell you that buyer behaviour is the most important concept you should know. Let's take a look at how GA can help you understand the personas of your buyers

Do you have the answers to these questions?

- What path are users taking? Is it the one you intended?
- Which is the page or blog post or content that is most compelling to users and converting them from visitors to consumers?
- Which pages are people staying on for the longest and least amount of time?

- What are people searching for in your site?
- What events are people doing on your site?

If not, how do you know exactly what heck are visitors doing on your site? Don't be blind use Google Analytics. There is a separate section dedicated to understanding and analysing user behaviour on your site.

Overview

This report gives you an overview of pageviews, unique pageviews, average time spent on each page, bounce rate and exit rate. You can also various metrics in graphical form. Information about what pages are most viewed, search terms used for in-site search and events is also provided.

Behavior Flow

Behavior Flow report lets you visualize the path visitors traveled from one page to the next. You can see where visitors landed on the site and where did they go from there. If they exited the site before completing a goal, you can see which page they dropped off. Behavior Flow report can also be used to visualize pages and events.

Site Content

In the overview section, you saw a snapshot of the popular pages. With various sub-reports under this section, you can see detailed reports on what is the most engaging content and pages on your site.

All Pages report breaks down individual pages by pageviews (number of times that a page was loaded), unique pageviews (from first-time visitors), average time spent per page, number of entrances per that page, the page's bounce rate and exit percentage (how often people exit the website from that page), as well as page value (transaction revenue + total goal value)/ unique pageviews.

Content Drilldown report provides similar data to all pages report but groups the pages by parent sections. So you can see section wise the popular pages on the site like Products, Services, About Us etc.

Landing Pages report gives data on the first page that users access when they arrive on the site. In this report, you also have conversion metric so you analyse how much of a difference different landing pages have on conversions. Don't assume that your homepage will be the landing page. Users can come to your site by clicking on a ad that refers to the product page or through organic search for a particular topic and chancing on your blog or content. Your landing page should be interesting and engaging enough for the audience to hook them and reel them towards your goals.

The last sub-report, Exit Pages tells you on which page are users leaving your site. In a way, it is the opposite of landing pages. If the most popular exit pages are anything other than goal oriented pages like contact us or enquiry form page, there is a obvious gap in your website content strategy.

Site Speed

Research shows that your website can lose traffic at the average rate of 7 percent per second of wait time while your page loads. So your website loading time is obviously crucial. You may have the best content in your space but if doesn't load in time, nobody is going to see it. So no conversions. And the entire marketing exercise and expenditure goes down the drain. The site speed report let's you measure the load times exactly.

The Overview report shows your page load times broken down by components and across different dimensions (i.e., in different browsers and in different countries). These numbers will reveal what components of your website are slower and how the demographic is affected. Page timings provides a breakdown of the pages that are the slowest to load, so they can be optimized for better performance. Going beyond just telling you what's wrong, Google Analytics also gives you possible solutions in the Speed Suggestions report. User Timings report allows you to measure timing of specific events or user interactions. This report requires additional set-up that must be completed by your web developer.

Site Search

If your website has a search box feature, you should analyse the popular keywords being searched for. If you find any common terms, this is the content that users want to consume. You should consider putting a link to this content o the most popular landing page.

The Overview report tells you how many of your visitors search your site, the search terms your visitors use and how your visitors subsequently engage with your site. Usage report gives the Acquisition-Behavior-Conversion breakdown between visits that included an internal site search and those that did not. This gives you a great overview of the search features' effectiveness. If you want to see popular search terms, the report Search Terms is the one you want. It will also provide you with additional parameters like the number of times they viewed search results, exits from your site following search, time spent on the site resulting from search etc. Analysing this information, you can understand your user expectations. Pages report shows the breakdown of specific pages that visitors searched on your website. This data may reveal deficiencies where website users weren't able to find what they wanted on a particular page and resorted to using the search tool.

Events

As already discussed, events are various types of user interactions with elements on the site. Setting up events allows you to track actions within these pages. If there is some content that drives viewers to conversions, setting up this content with events can help you analyse if its working as intended.

The Overview report breaks down events by category, action and label. Similar to goals, you can assign arbitrary event values to measure their importance or impact. For example, a video play can be a value of one, and if the user viewed the entire video, it would rank a ten. Top Events report gives you event rank by the number of occurrences, total event value, average value, etc.

The Pages report gives a breakdown of pages where events took place with the number of occurrences, total event value, average value, etc. Similar to user flow, Events Flow report lets you visualize the steps visitors took prior to an event.

Experiments

The entire purpose of Google Analytics is to understand data and make appropriate changes. Once the changes are made, you would want to test them as an experiment. The Experiments feature allows you to do just that. You can conduct A/ B tests on your site and see the impact it has on the users. Another type of experiment is content experiment.

Content Experiments allows you to test several versions of the landing page in order to see which gives you the best results in terms of conversions. In this experiment, you can test up to 10 full versions of a page and not just a feature on the page. Different users will log on to the site with different URLs and view different pages. you cannot use different hostnames/ domains when you're creating variations. E.g., if your original page is *www.example.com/original_page,* then your variation pages must also be part of the *www.example.com* domain (e.g., *www.example.com/variation_1, www.example.com/variation_2,* etc.).

With Content Experiments, you can

- Compare how different web pages or app screens perform using a random sample of your users
- Define what percentage of your users are included in the experiment
- Choose which objective you'd like to test
- Get updates by email about how your experiment is doing

GA allows you to conduct experiments - tests on your site to see the impact it has on users

If you have a website selling organic food products, you can create multiple landing pages to see which ones make for the best sales conversions. You landing page might be the product catalogue page which provides a list of the various products, their benefits, price etc. On one version, you might have a brief paragraph on the benefits of organic foods while on the other you might want to highlight the cost difference between your products and your competitors. On another page, you could focus on the quality and packaging quality of your product whereas in another version, you might do away with the content completely and focus on product images to impress and entice the audience. Once this experiment is setup, random sample of visitors will see the different versions including the original landing page and you can analyse this data to decide which version works best for you.

To create an experiment, open the Experiment tab and click on Create Experiment. Next, choose the objective of your experiment. Select the goal for which you want to improve conversions, or the metric for which you want to improve performance, and the percentage of traffic you want to include. Enter the URLs for the original page you want to test and for up to 10 variations of that page. You will need to add the experiment code to one page and then click Next Step. GA will check to ensure that the original and variation pages are working correctly. Now you are ready to start the experiment.

You can see your experiments on the experiment list page. On this page you can see
- Important notifications about your experiments
- Which experiments are running
- Whether an experiment produced a winning page
- What date the experiment started
- What date the experiment ended

To view the detailed report of an experiment, click on the its name. You will be provided with the following information
- The status of your experiment
- How the pages in your experiment are performing
- Whether a particular page is clearly outperforming the rest

You can also take actions on experiments like
- Stopping an experiment
- Changing the percentage of your site's users who see the experiment
- Changing who gets notified by email about changes to an experiment
- Disabling a particular page

Behaviour reports might seem like a smaller section compared to the others but have you heard the adage good things come in small packages? This is very much the case for these reports. Understanding the psyche of your users is the key to converting visitors into consumers.

Setting goals and tracking performance

Setting up measurable goals and tracking the performance is a crucial post campaign activity

Usually users of GA use the tool to learn more about their website's performance. They are interested in understanding how many visitors have landed on their website, what is it that they are interacting with while there, how long do they stay around, etc. But GA will not always give you simple answers for all of these questions, unless you ask it to. GA is tuned to work the way you want it to work. So if you want specific answers, you will have to create specific goals.

What Are Goals?

"Goals measure how well your site or app fulfills your target objectives. A goal represents a completed activity, called a conversion, that contributes to the success of your business", defines Google. Put simply, a goal is how you can measure the number of times that someone has completed a specific action on your site. And every time that someone completes that action, you know that a conversion has occurred. The ideal way to measure the frequency of these conversions is through the conversion rate of your site. You calculate the conversion rate basis the percentage of site visitors who have completed a goal as specified by you.

Why Do You Need Goals and Conversions?

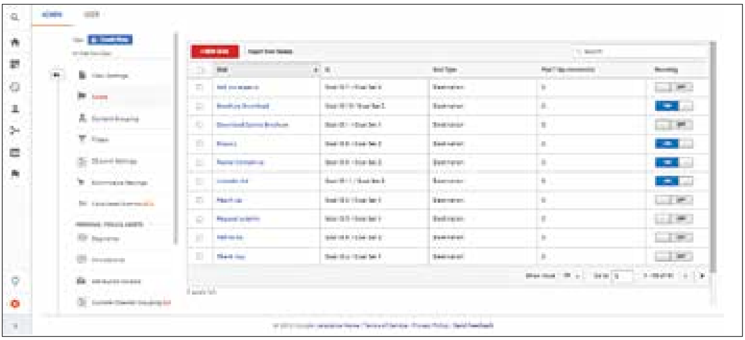
Goals will help you measure and even compare metrics that can be useful for your business. Yes, keeping tabs on metrics such as average session duration, pageviews as well as bounce rates can help you understand what is working for your visitors, but unless you are a business that is focused on generating revenues from ads, these metrics will not be the only ones that matter. If you learn how to set up Goals and use them to your advantage, you can measure metrics such as the number of clicks that have occured on your CTAs (Call to actions), the number of sales completed or the number of leads generated.

Goals can help you track a number of more metrics in comparison to the reports that you see by default on GA, but it also makes it incredibly easier to analyze, report on (to seniors in the company or your clients) as well as optimize your site to eventually lead to more conversions. If you have properly set up Goals, you will be able to use GA's default reports to see which one of your channels are providing you with the highest conversion rates. This information can be used to determine if the traffic that you are seeing from all of the other channels is also effective or not. Once you have Goals set up, you will be able to find out how much each of your pages or channels is contributing to the bottom line of your business. This will also make it easier to figure out the ROI on various of your campaigns. The best part for those looking for reports is that when you implement Goals, it will open you up to a whole new section of reports in GA - attribution modeling, deeper segmentation, funnel analysis, etc. Long story short, Goals will help you get a clear cut understanding of how well your site is doing, and it helps you understand this by using metrics that you have defined as being important for your site and business.

How To Set Up A Goal

1. Go to your GA standard reports
2. Hit the 'Admin' button
3. Select 'Goals'
4. From one of the Goal Sets, click on '+ Goal' to set up a new Goal

Goal sets are a way for you to easily group your Goals.



You can see a list of sample goals set up here. You can configure these to suit your requirements

Ensure that you choose a name for your Goal. It is important that the name of your Goal reminds you of exactly what is it that you are tracking with it because this name will pop up all over your GA.

You will notice options of 'active' and 'inactive' that you can control to see when your Goal is functional. If you ever decide to do away with a certain Goal, you will have to hit the 'inactive' button. This is because GA does not allow you to delete Goals ever. You can only ever deactivate them. The reason behind this is simple - Goals compile the data for your reports. Basically GA cannot go back in time and remove goals from historical data.

Now that you know how to set up a Goal, you need to decide which kind you want to build.

Types Of Goals

There are 4 types of goals are specified by GA

- Destination - When someone visits a page specified by you
- Duration - When a visitor stays on a page for a time longer than the one specified by you
- Pages/Screens per Session - When a visitor visits more than the mentioned number of pages in a single session
- Event - When an event is completed

Destination Goals

What is a Destination Goal?

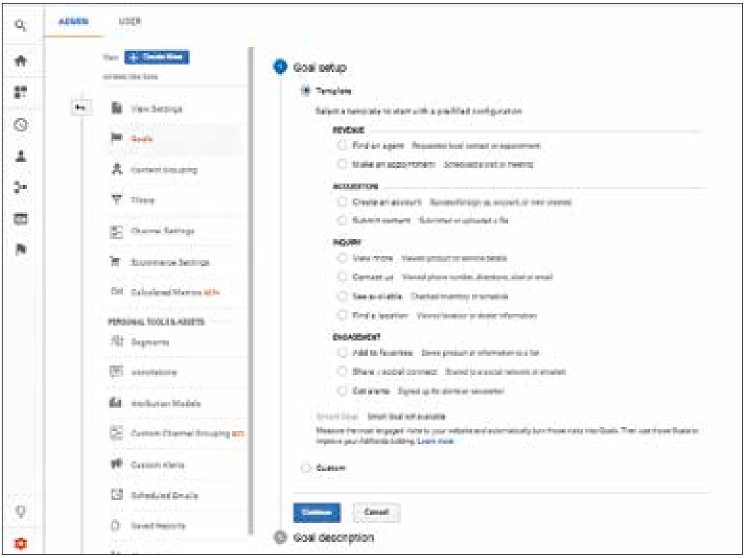
Destination goals are completed every time a user visits the page that you have specified as a goal. It is possible for a visitor to trigger this goal multiple times in the same session. So every time the visitor lands on the page that has been specified by you under 'Destination Goal' settings, it will land up in your conversion report. Tip - Avoid setting the Home Page as a Destination Goal, because this could flood your conversion reports with data that may not be of utmost value to you.

Destination Goals are usually used to measure the number of signups from newsletters, or downloads of resources like eBooks or whitepapers, track completed purchases or forms. Most sites will redirect visitors to a 'thank you' page when they complete one or many of these actions. To ensure that this is the right kind of Goal for you, try completing the action yourself. Check if you get redirected to a specific page. Ensure that there is no other way of chancing upon this page yourself. If that is the case, then Destination Goal is the correct type of Goal for you to choose. If not, then you can opt for an Event Goal.

Implementing A Destination Goal

Once you have descriptively named your goal and chosen which type of Destination Goal you are going with, the final step for you to complete is to fill in the goal details. You will need to fill in three details for Destination Goals - destination, value and funnel. The destination field is the one where you will specify the page(s) that will count towards being a completed goal.

Enter the slug of your URL (essentially it is the URL without the domain) For example, if you want to choose the thank you page, you will enter "/thanks-for-your-submission". If you are unsure of what your slug is, complete the action on your site and copy the slug from the URL you see. If the URL that you are looking to assign is seen as changing every time an action



Getting started with goal setting

is taken (for instance, if extra characters show up at the end of the url), then you will have to change the match type for your Goal.

Now you have to select a dollar value that you would like to associate with each of your goals. For instance, if you think that a new lead is worth $10 to your company, enter '10' as the value against this Goal. Each time someone completes this goal, GA will attribute a portion of this goal value to each of the pages that the visitor used to finally land up on this page and complete the goal. This action will happen for every Goal that has a monetary value attached to it. At the end of it, you will be able to see the sum of all the goal values on the page value column in reports. This will give you a fair idea of which pages are actually contributing to your eventual goals.

Duration Goals

How do Duration Goals Work?

When the session of a visitor lasts longer than the amount of time specified in the goal, it is considered as a completed duration goal. This goal is not as commonly used as destination goals, because it could mean multiple things for the site. If you are a publication and you are looking at ensuring that your readers spend a long time on the site reading more than one of your works, then the duration goal is a good way to measure your success. However, if you see people visiting your support site and spending hours there, it is probably because they cannot find what they were looking for, and this is not a desirable thing. So when you implement this goal, ensure you know what is it that you are using it for. It is also important that you choose the average session time wisely.

Implementing a Duration Goal

Once you have named your goal as well as selected the duration for your goal type, there are two fields that need to be filled - duration and value.

The duration field is where you specify the time for which a person needs to be on your site for the goal to be completed. Enter in your desired number of hours, minutes or seconds. The value field is available for Duration Goals as well and works exactly the same way it did for Destination Goals.

Pages/Screens per Session Goals

How do Pages/Screens per Session work?

A Pages/Screens Per Session (PSPS) goal is completed when a visitor visits more than the number of pages that you had specified as your goal target. If you are setting this Goal for your mobile app, you will have to choose the number of screens the visitors will have to visit in a single session. This is a less common goal and is usually applied by publishers who want to measure and see if readers are reading multiple stories on their site.

Implementing a PSPS Goal

You have to fill out two fields - Pages/Screens per session and the value attributed to these. Once you have entered the number of pages/screens that you want to keep as your minimum value, sessions wherein visitors have visited more than your specified value of pages/screens will count as being a completed goal. Once you attach a dollar value as well to the value field and hit ‘Save’, you have finished setting up this goal.

Event Goals

How do event goals work?

Event goals get fired when there is a specific event that gets fired on your page/site. The best part about events is that they can track almost anything and everything - forms that do not redirect to a destination page (like a ‘thank you’ page), number of views on a video, clicks on a button, and any other imaginable and quantifiable interaction between a visitor and your website.

Event Goals with GA are extremely versatile, but also can get complex, so ensure that you do a little more homework before you set out to implement them. Google has an entire guide to events. Make sure you read through it before you set it up.

Implementing an Event Goal

Once you have named your goal, choose the event goal type, and implement the goal on your site. The last step here is to determine the conditions under which this goal gets triggered. If you know the exact event that you want to set as a goal, all you have to do is input the category, action, label and value of the event in the fields of the event conditions. That's all it takes.

Not all of these aforementioned fields are marked as required. You can fill even just one of them in order to set up a goal. GA will count events that match all of the fields as a goal.

The last step in implementing this type of goal is the 'event field'. Unlike the other 3 types of goals, you can use the event value here as the goal value. If you do not use the event value as the goal value, you can choose to attribute a dollar value, just like all the other goal types. The simplest thumb rule to apply here is that if your event value is a dollar value, then it is best to use it as a goal value. Otherwise, it becomes confusing as mixes up different metrics.

What To Do With Goals Once They Are Set Up

Once you have set up your goals, you will be able to use the various conversion reports that are generated using these newly added metrics. You can now use goal completions as a dimension in almost any imaginable GA report. This will help you figure out which of your channels is driving the most conversions for your business, what type of user is more likely to complete a specified goal or task, or even how many dollars each page is worth. Goals are an extremely important and versatile feature that GA offers. If it is used correctly, goals can help you accurately determine how your website is doing based on the metrics that are meaningful to you and your business. d

Campaign Tagging

Decode the art of adding tags to your hyperlinks to ensure you always know where your traffic is coming from

In modern day marketing strategies, sites see traffic coming in from a number of sources. Multi-channel marketing strategies are commonplace and yield desirable results in terms of increasing traffic to your website. More visitors could eventually lead to more sales. But that is not what we are discussing here. With so many channels to choose from and so many campaigns being run simultaneously at most times, how do marketers measure the effectiveness of their strategies? Measurement is arguably one of the most important processes in any marketing cycle, and if you are unable to quantify which source is working out well for you, how do you know where to focus your energies?

When you use a basic GA setup, you will be able to track the performance of the preset default channel groupings:

- Direct – users who visit the website without coming through a specified source.
- Referral – users who come to your website via another website.
- Organic – users who visit the website via a search engine.
- Paid search – users who visit via paid search advertising.
- Social – users who have been brought to your site via social media platforms.

By default, GA is not going to identify the different marketing campaigns that send visitors to your site. If you want GA to show you relevant data for this, you will need to set up campaigns and indulge in a little campaign tagging.

What Is Campaign Tagging?

In simple words, campaign tagging is a process that allows one to add tags to their website links which get used in marketing campaigns. These tags are capable of passing information on to GA about the link that was clicked. This means that you have the power to determine which of your marketing campaigns are doing well and thus focus your energies on your marketing strategies accordingly.

The Basics

When you have clicked on the link of an ad you saw online and it takes you to a new tab, have you paid attention to the hyperlink? Have you ever noticed that in these cases, hyperlinks are usually one mile long and have the term 'utm' appear repeatedly.

UTM stands for Urchin Tracking Module. It is the system that allows users to tag hyperlinks so that they can track the origins of the visitor's journey up until their website. GA users can use UTM to figure out how people end up on their site and what they are doing once they get there. You also have the option of adding additional text to the ends of the hyperlinks that you are sharing and this will tag users of the link, as well as hit your site with information about the following queries:

- Where did these users come from.
- What did they click on or interact with while on your site.

- What was your plan for these users.

Where did your visitors come from? Did they come directly to your site or come via paid marketing efforts?

Understanding UTM Parameters

1. utm_source

In the general (digital) sense of the term, 'source' refers to where your visitors came from. It can tell you specifically where the referring link is based – a website, social network or an email segment.

Common sources include:

- Weekly-newsletter
- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Google
- LinkedIn
- The URLs of websites that refer you traffic

2. utm_medium

This parameter will tell you how is it that visitors actually landed up on your website. This also happens to be the highest level way to sort the data that comes with UTMs. It is usually seen to include the broadest categories. Some of the most common mediums include:

- Email
- Pay-per-click (PPC)
- Banner-ads
- Direct

3. utm_content

This is the parameter that describes the specific banner, email or ad that was used to share the link that finally brought people back to your site. This will help you understand which of the creatives you shared is working the hardest and best for you at promoting your offers or even distributing the content created by you. This could vary wildly based on the content type, platform, or even your offer. There is no real standard for nomenclature as far as utm_content is concerned. Our simple advice is to try and make things as descriptive as possible so that you instantly connect it with the ad or email that you are talking about.

4. utm_campaign

Campaign has its similarities to content. The primary one being that both of them are open-ended fields. The basic purpose of Campaign is to highlight any promotional offers or strategies for content distribution. This allows you to easily compare performance across platforms and time. Campaign links need to be consistent across the different sources you use it for. Any media that carries these links will also need to be consistent so that the campaign as a whole can provide for accurate data that can be easily analysed.

While the thought of creating properly attributed hyperlinks will take some getting used to, the data that you will be able to track will make all your efforts worth it. In order to ensure that you are being consistent in the hyperlinks you create, you can create and update a unified document where you track all of the hyperlinks you use. This allows you to refer back to them when you want to analyse them at a later date.

You can use campaign tagging to understand which specific banner ad led visitors to your website

Google also has provisions for building these links. They have a free URL builder. All you have to do is plug in your information into this URL builder and it will automatically generate the apt hyperlink for you.

Best Practices - Campaign Tagging

Once you have understood the parameters and how to use them, campaign tagging should be a rather easy process that you should start carrying out for all of your digital marketing efforts. That being said, there are some 'best practice guidelines' which when followed will ensure that all of your campaigns will be tagged appropriately and will be successful eventually.

Being Consistent:

To ensure that all of the reporting is being done accurately and easily, it is best to maintain a consistent approach towards all of your tagging efforts. What this means in simple words is that you should try and keep your source/medium consistent with the channel that they represent. The only parameter that needs to change will be the name of the campaign. If you ensure consistency, reporting will be accurate.

Lower Case Preferred:

When you create tagged URLs, it is essential that the same case is used every time you type the URL. The reason behind this is that GA is case sensitive. So any information that you pass on to GA needs to be absolutely the same, or Google might think it is for two separate campaigns. For instance, if you type Diwali_discount instead of diwali_discount, it will get accounted for as a separate campaign in GA. The simple way to avoid any confusion is to just stick with lower case through all of your tags.

Offline media

Campaign tagging does not need to stick only in the online space. It is possible to measure the effectiveness of offline campaigns too. There are methods that let you quantify this. Most offline media usually is based on the correct use of layouts. Lengthy tagged URLs are not at all apt for these. But there are solutions available. You can either use a URL shortening service like bit.ly or consider putting in a QR code, both of which will eventually send users to the intended hyperlink. You can utilise this method with the shortened link for SMS marketing.

Reporting

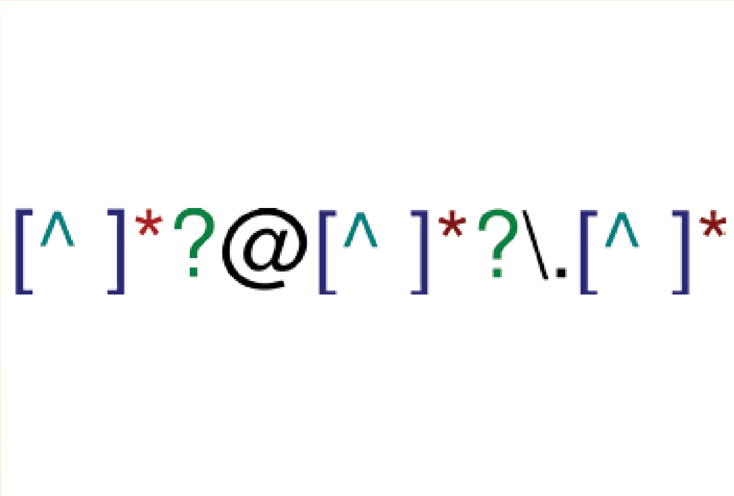
The next step is to see the highlighted traffic for your campaign in GA. To do so, you can either use the acquisition reports or you could create a custom segment. Segments are groups of site visitors who have characteristics or behaviours in common. These interactions between them are known as dimensions and metrics. These will include information like the pages visited, bounce rates of the sites, or the traffic sources.

Setting up a segment is easy. To do so you need to have admin rights within GA. Head to the Traffic Sources. Under the 'View' column, you can add 'Segments'. Once you have completed setting up the segment, you can apply it to any of the reports within GA. To view the reports from campaigns, you will need to navigate to 'All Campaigns' which is found under Acquisition. The basic report here will give you a list of the campaign names. If you wish to view the source or the medium of the data, all you have to do is add a secondary dimension by using the dropdown menu. You can use the conversions column to view how visitors have interacted with your GA goals.

QR codes are an excellent way to get your campaign's lengthy hyperlinks into offline media

This is pretty much the basic know-how on campaign tagging. You are now set to run your own campaign. There is a lot more that you can learn if you want in-depth knowledge on the subject, but a lot of that can also be done on the go.

CHAPTER #11



Advanced Filters Using Regex

Regular Expressions can help the whole world of advanced filters seem easier to navigate through

Google Analytics and Regex make for an interesting combination. When it comes to GA, you can use Regex to create filters. If you do not remember how to create filters, we would suggest you revisit the 4th Chapter (Building Reports and Setting up Views). Coming back to filters - there are a number of filters that need Regular Expressions. Regular Expressions (often used interchangeably with its compressed name Regex) helps you create a single goal that can match multiple goals.

Perhaps you have a 'thank you' page which has several names. But for you, all leads fall under the same category and are one and the same goal. You can then, in such situations, use Regex to "roll them up". Regex can also allow you to fine tune your funnel steps in such a way that you can get exactly what you need. But in doing so, do not forget that Regex can be extremely specific. Read on to understand why this specificity is important.

What Are Regular Expressions?

Regular Expressions are all about 'power matching'. If your task at hand is to create a goal which is capable of matching multiple 'thank you' pages, that can be considered power matching. Or if you need a filter which can match multiple URLs in a scenario where you only know a piece of each of these URLs, this will also be considered power matching.

A lot of folks argue that Advanced Segments will let you skip Regex when it comes to GA. This may not be wholly true. While Advanced Segments are a fantastic tool to have in your arsenal, they will never work the way filters do. And if you want to create complicated and extremely interesting goals, you will need Regex (especially if you have a non-GA friendly website designer). Sometimes you may even opt to use Regex in your Advanced Segments.

How Do I Get Started?

You can compare Regex to getting that elusive first job ever in your life. You cannot seem to get hired without the experience, and how do you get the experience without getting hired in the first place? Things are similar in the world of Regex. You cannot really understand them until you use them, and you cannot really use them until you understand them (well, at least a little bit of it at least). So you need to start off with learning a little bit, putting that to the test,

Understanding Regex may be confusing at first. Take your time to practice and you will get there.

making a few mistakes, and then heading right back to the books to learn some more. It will take some trial and error to get there.

The other problem that you might face while working with Regex is that each of the characters are simple when they are alone, but put them all together and they can wreak havoc for someone who does not know what to do with them. The more you work with the characters, the easier things will get. Practice until you have become a pro!

To understand Regex, you need to understand the characters. Here is a quick look at all of them -

Backslash \

It usually helps to start with the backslash because it is significantly different from all the other Regex characters, as you will come to see. The backslash provides a bridge between Regular Expressions and plain text. The backslash possesses the quality of being able to 'escape' a character. Escape in this sense means that it can turn the Regex character into plain text.

For example, Your goal page is

- `/folder?pid=123`

The primary problem here is that the question mark has its own meaning and value in the world of Regex. So we need it to be read as plain text (just an ordinary question mark). So what we will do with Regex is this -

- `/folder\?pid=123`

Now that there is a backslash in front of the question mark, GA will read it only as a question mark and not attribute any extra value to it, which is exactly what you set out to do.

Pipe |

The pipe is one of the most simple of all of the Regular Expressions. It is, therefore, one of the first ones that regular GA users like you and us should be aware of. The pipe means 'or'.

For instance, think about a blog that is based on packaged drinking water. They might use the terms 'Bisleri' and 'Aquafina' more than once. So instead of setting filters for both separately, the bloggers can use Bisleri|Aquafina with their GA keyword report. It will help them find all the examples of the searches that were made on their blog using either of the keywords.

Let's look at one more example. Many website may have more than one 'thank you' page. While they are named differently, they may want to count the leads as being in the same category. So if the first page is called 'thank you' and the second one is called 'purchase confirmation', you could create your goal with the term 'confirmation|thankyou'. This would match both of the pages. Remember that the pipe matches everything that is on either side of it.

Question Mark ?

The question mark stands for 'last item is optional'. This could mean the last character/characters are optional.

For instance, there is a company called Leggo and the CEO of Leggo is called Johann. This company is running a PPC campaign and they like to filter out their searches on Johann's as well as the company's name. A smart way to do that would be this -

Johan?n|Leg?go

This way all the PPC keywords that contain Johan, Johann, Lego, Leggo are included. Names are often misspelled. The smart use of Regex in filters can mitigate such simple human errors.

Using Regex smartly can help take into account searches that may contain spelling errors

Parentheses ( )

When it comes to using the parentheses, they work the same way in Regex as they do in mathematics. It is easier to explain this one with an example.

- `/folder(one|two)/thanks`

This expression will match two URLs on your site -

- `folderone/thanks`

as well as

- `foldertwo/thanks`

So what does this mean, you ask. Let's rewind to your 3rd or 4th grade mathematics lesson where you teacher told you that if you have to solve an equation that uses various parameters, always remember that division and multiplication needs to be performed before you get to the addition and subtraction part i.e. BODMAS rule.

- `3 + 5 x 2 = 13`

(5 times two equals 10, plus 3 equals 13)

If you wanted a different execution to the same equation, you would have to force it with the use of parentheses -

- `(3 + 5) x 2 = 16`

And that's the value of parentheses in mathematics. The same numbers can give you different answers, basis its use.

So what about Regex, how do we use parentheses here? So let's look at a Regex example -

Remember the example we used to explain pipes in Regex. Let's begin with that.

- `confirmation|thanks`

But what will happen when we want to grab everything on either side of the pipe.

/foldertwo/thanks and /folderone/thanks can then be represented as

- `/folder(one|two)/thanks`

Square Brackets & Dashes [-]

Square brackets and dashes are being explained together because they very often go together. They are useful in making simple lists. But these simple lists can help you save a lot of time in advanced filter searches.

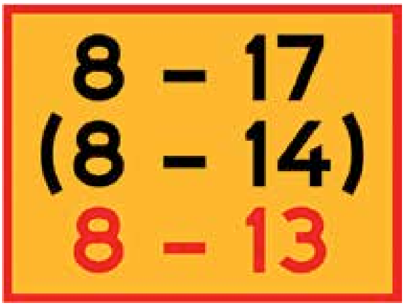
For instance, if you were to group [aiu] as a list, and use it in the following manner - b[aiu]n, it can be interpreted as ban, bin or bun. It will not use more than one alphabet inside the bracket while making these interpretations. Getting that to happen will need additional Regex. More on that later. The moment you add a dash, you make the list include everything that is between the start and end point of the characters mentioned inside the square brackets.

[a-z] is all the alphabets of the English language in lower case

[0-9] is all the single digit numbers

[a-z0-9] is a combination of the two above. Note - you do not use commas to separate the two lists within a square bracket.

Here's a Regex example. If a marketer is looking at a list of products and wants to create a filter that has to be applied only to certain products, the square brackets and dashes can come to their rescue. If the product numbers are 131460 onwards and the filters need to be applied until product number 131469, then the Regex would be 'product 13146[0-9]'.



Parentheses can be a useful Regex character to ensure you see accurate data

Braces { }

While braces may not be in Google documentation, it is supported by GA. Hence the inclusion in Regex. When you use braces (or the curly brackets), it means that the previous character has to be repeated the number of times as the number you mention inside the braces. Confusing? Here's the example form - {2} would mean that the last value before the braces needs to be repeated exactly 2 times. Braces can also take 2 numbers - {2,4} which would mean the last value can be repeated not less than 2 and not more than 4 times.

Here's a Regex example of how braces would work in real life. While applying filters, all companies will look at filtering out their own IP addresses because you do not want those corrupting your data by being logged as visitor counts. The IP addresses are usually a block of numbers. For instance, let's say that their addresses range from 123.165.145.0 to 123.165.145.99. Capturing this range with braces becomes easier. Here's a look at how we would use Regex to capture this -

123\.165\.145\.[0-9]{1,2}

Dot .

A dot matches any one character from the entire keyboard in your string. Note the emphasis on entire keyboard because that means along with alphabets, numbers, special characters and even spaces are included. So if you are looking for the word tyre which is also spelled as tire, you can use the dot to account for this. Searching for t.re will return the answer tyre and tire. Remember, it will also return t#re but chances of somebody writing that are close to zero.

Star *

Stars will match zero or more of the previous items. Items can be characters or even regex expressions. So if you are searching for a name say Robbie which is also spelled as Robie, you can use the expressions Rob*ie. This will match Robbie, Robbbbbbie and any more b's that can be put in there. So basically, it will look for instances where the previous character is repeated, in this case 'b' is repeated and return that as the answer to this search. It will also return Robie as the answer because it matches even zero instances.

Dot Star .*

This is a lethal combination and extremely useful. It means 'get everything'. So a dot will search for any character that can replace the dot and the star will repeat the previous item ad infinity. In this case the previous item is a dot so that regex will be repeated and the dot will look for any character that can fit in the string. So if you have various subcategories in your product portfolio but all fall under one category like men's wear. So subcategories could be:

- `menswear/t-shirt`
- `menswear/shirts`
- `menswear/jeans`
- `menswear/trousers`

A regex menswear/.* will return all the above categories i.e. it will get everything.

Plus Sign +

Similar to the Star, this also matches to the previous item. Again, the item could be a regex or a character. The big difference being, there has to be at least one repeated item present. For this reason, it's rarely used. Continuing the previous example, the expression Rob+ie will return Robbie, Robbie, Robbbie and so on but not Robie because there has to be at least one repeated character.

Using the caret (^) sign before the word 'shoe' will match 'shoe, shoes, shoes for winter'

The Caret ^

Using this sign, the expression is forced to match only strings that start exactly the same way your RegEx does. So the expression ^shoe will match shoe, shoes, shoes for winter, but it not winter shoe or winter shoes.

Dollar Sign $

Using the dollar sign means that the string should end where the dollar sign is placed. If it doesn't, it's not a match for the expression. So if the expression is jeans$, it will match 'slim fit jeans', 'baggy jeans' but not 'jeans for men'. You can use a caret and dollar sign to specify the start and end of the target string. So if you want to specify only the homepage which is denoted with '/' by GA, you can say ^/$ to specify the home page since there are many other URLs on your site that end with /.

Using Regex

There are several ways you can use regular expressions. As already stated, one use of regex is to create advanced filters. Other uses are creating one goal that matches multiple pages saving you the hassle of creating it again and again or to fine tune your funnel steps so that you can get exactly what you need.

Table Filters

You can use regular expressions in the filter section in lieu of advanced filters. So if you want to look at at all URLs that begin with google.com, type in the regex '^/google.com' in the filter section.

Goal Setting

GA has four different types of goals. We have discussed this in our chapter on Setting Up Goals and Tracking Performance. The four types are Destination, Duration, PSPS (Pages/Screens Per Session) and Event. When it comes to these, Regex can come in handy. Think of Destination goals for instance. When people land up on the confirmation or thank you page, it will be considered a Destination goal for you. Instead of creating separate destination goals for multiple pages that are similar, use Regex. For instance, think of the example we discussed previously in this chapter. You could employ 'confirmation|thankyou' instead of creating separate filters for the same.

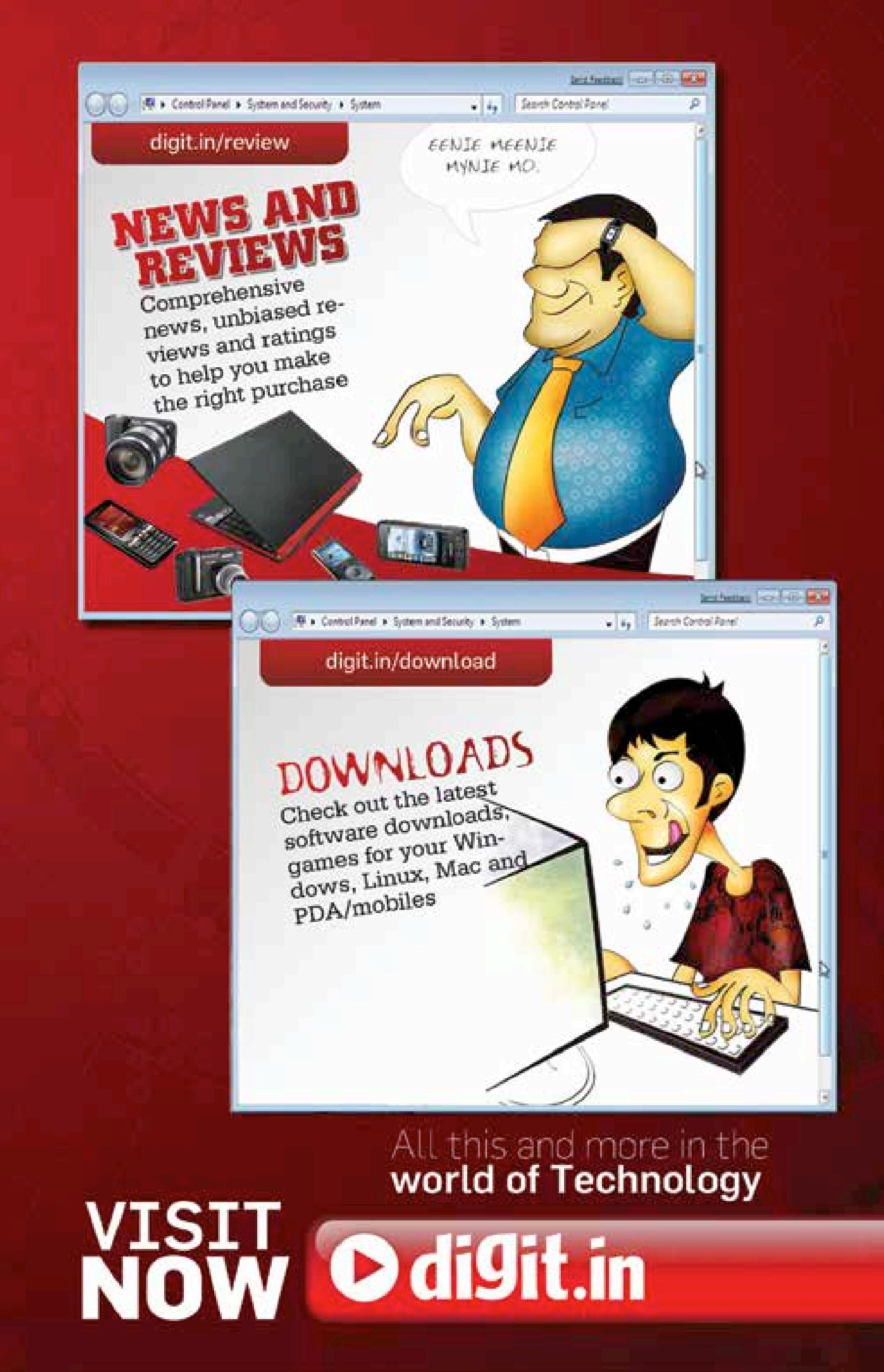
Defining Funnel Steps

When it comes to funnel steps, the shorter the better is the rule of thumb. You can use regex to define funnel steps and set a goal at the end of the steps. If you wanted to define the most used landing page on your site as one of the funnel steps, you can use the dot star expression to include all URLs that contain the landing page.

Segmentation

If you notice, in all the reports, on the top it says 100% users and add segments. So by default there is no segmentation applied. You can set up segments using regular expressions easily and it will help you to analyse the data better leading to better decisions.

Regular Expressions are a boon and anyone who wants to use Google Analytics at the optimum level should know regex. In spite of its various benefits, many marketers do not use or even know how to use regex. Using regex helps you in improving the quality of your data which leads to better and more in-depth analysis and eventually better decision making. Of course, it's natural that better decisions will also increase your ROI and deliver enhanced returns. d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