



# **ANALYTICS WITH GOOGLE ANALYTICS**

Study Notes

# Analytics with Google Analytics

LESSON 1: WEB ANALYTICS FUNDAMENTALS .....	7
INTRODUCTION TO ANALYTICS .....	8
What is web analytics? .....	8
Value of web analytics.....	8
Web tools.....	8
BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS .....	9
Benefits of analytics.....	9
Benefits of Google Analytics.....	9
Limitations of Google Analytics .....	10
BASIC TERMINOLOGY .....	10
Common conversion metrics .....	10
LEGAL SITUATION.....	11
Understanding consent .....	11
LESSON 2: CREATING AND CONFIGURING A GOOGLE ANALYTICS ACCOUNT .....	14
ACCOUNT SET-UP .....	15
Google Analytics.....	15
Account set-up .....	15
TRACKING CODE.....	15
Google Analytics code .....	15
Test the code installation.....	15
Google Tag Assist .....	16
Sending data .....	16
Advanced coding and analytics tracking.....	16
KEY SETTINGS .....	17
Advanced coding and analytics tracking.....	17
Key Settings .....	17

Key settings.....	17
Adjust account settings.....	18
Views .....	18
Adding a new view .....	19
Creating a new filter.....	19
Applying multiple filters to a view .....	19
COLLABORATION.....	19
Collaborating effectively.....	19
Potential security risks.....	20
LINKING TO OTHER TOOLS .....	20
Linking to other products.....	20
Benefits.....	21
Linking Google Ads and Google Analytics .....	21
Linking Google Search Console to Google Analytics .....	21
LESSON 3: SETTING GOALS WITH GOOGLE ANALYTICS .....	24
INTRODUCING GOALS .....	25
Measuring actions .....	25
Why measure goals? .....	25
GOAL SET-UP.....	25
Setting up goals.....	25
Predefined goal templates.....	26
Goal types.....	26
Setting up a custom goal.....	26
Creating a URL Destination goal .....	27
Creating a Session Duration goal .....	27
Creating a Pages per Session goal .....	27
Creating an Event-Tracking goal.....	28

Importing goals .....	28
Smart Goals.....	28
GOAL FUNNELS .....	28
Benefits of goal funnels .....	28
Setting up a goal funnel.....	29
LESSON 4: MONITORING CAMPAIGNS WITH GOOGLE ANALYTICS REPORTS.....	31
THE KEY REPORTS .....	32
Dashboards.....	32
Google Analytics tabs.....	32
AUDIENCE REPORT .....	32
Audience tab .....	32
Reports .....	32
AQUISITION REPORT .....	34
Acquisition tab .....	34
Reports .....	34
URL Builder.....	36
Using the URL Builder.....	36
GOOGLE ADS REPORT.....	37
Purpose of Google Ads Report .....	37
Google Ads Search Query Report .....	37
Increase budgets for high-performing campaigns .....	37
BEHAVIOR REPORT .....	37
Behavior tab .....	37
Behavior Flow Report.....	38
Site Content Report.....	38
All Pages Report .....	38
Bounce rate.....	38

404-error pages.....	38
Content drilldown.....	38
Site Speed Report.....	39
Site Speed Sub-Report.....	39
Site Search Report .....	39
EVENTS REPORT.....	39
What is the Events Report? .....	39
Variables to consider .....	40
Overview sub-report .....	40
The Experiments feature.....	40
CONVERSION REPORT .....	40
Conversions Reporting Tab.....	40
Goal reports .....	41
Funnel Visualization Report.....	41
Goal Flow Report.....	41
E-commerce Report.....	41
Using the E-commerce Report.....	42
MULTI-CHANNEL FUNNELS REPORT.....	42
Purpose of the Multi-Channel Funnels Report.....	42
Multi-Channel Report Types .....	42
Attribution models .....	43
Perfect attribution model .....	43
LESSON 5: ANALYZING AND RECORDING GOOGLE ANALYTICS DATA.....	45
ANALYZING DATA.....	46
Real-time reporting .....	46
Intelligence Events.....	46
CUSTOM REPORTS, ANNOTATIONS, AND SEGMENTS .....	46

Custom reports .....	46
Custom report types .....	46
Annotations .....	47
Secondary dimensions .....	47
Custom Segments .....	47
Export and schedule reports .....	47
TRACKING DATA EFFECTIVELY .....	48
Tracking data effectively .....	48

# **LESSON 1: WEB ANALYTICS FUNDAMENTALS**

# INTRODUCTION TO ANALYTICS

## What is web analytics?

Web analytics involves the collection, measurement, and analysis of website data. Web analytics tools can provide lots of useful information about the origin of website traffic, how website users navigate and interact throughout a website, what content and web pages they're most engaged with, and how they exit the site.

## Value of web analytics

Here are some of the ways that web analytics adds value:

- **Data-led decision-making:** Marketers can use this data to optimize the performance of their channels and websites by taking data-led decisions. These are actions we take to improve performance based on our understanding of the data we've recorded; that is, the data is leading the decision. This is a very effective way to use rational thought to improve performance. While it's best practice to follow data-led decisions, we must always remind ourselves to 'trust but verify'.
- **Information source:** Apart from helping with decision making, web analytics is to help marketers report back to key stakeholders on how campaigns and websites are performing in relation to your digital marketing efforts. Ultimately, marketers are trying to recreate scenarios that lead to commercial outcomes for their organizations or clients. You can do this by measuring and acting on the data trends you observe using Web Analytics software.
- **Deduce the 'story':** One of the real values of web data analysis is that it allows you to deduce the 'story' behind the data in order to gain valuable insights and enhance business performance.
- **Understand customers better:** Web analytics can help you understand your customers better. It tells you who they are, where they're coming from, and what their interests are. It tells you about their demographics and location.
- **Reveal conversion challenges:** It also helps reveal any conversion challenges that might exist on your website.
- **Learn what customers like and don't like:** It helps you appreciate what consumers like or don't like.
- **Interactions with website:** You can gain insights into how they interact on your website.

You can use all this information to improve the experience on your site for the consumer and to optimize the channels that consumers use to visit your website.

## Web tools

There are a number of analytics tools available on the market today. Some of them are free, and some of them require a paid subscription. Paid analytics products and free analytics products will differ in terms of support, features, and functionality.

Some examples of analytics packages that are available include:

- Google Analytics and Google Analytics 360, which are part of the Google Marketing Platform
- Adobe Analytics
- Woopra



- Kissmetrics
- Webtrends
- Piwik

The market leader and most commonly used analytics program is the free version of Google Analytics, or GA as it is sometimes known. The paid version of GA, called Google Analytics 360, offers some additional functionality in terms of report validity and sample sizes. But it's mainly for websites that receive over 10 million page views per month. For the vast majority of websites, the free version of Google Analytics is perfectly fine.

Because of its functionality and widespread adoption in the market, Google Analytics is seen by many marketers as the *single source of truth* for website traffic, engagement, and conversion data.

## Mobile

Of course, websites aren't the only way people access the internet. We also must consider the importance of mobile consumers and mobile apps. Alongside websites, it's possible to collect data from mobile apps using Google Analytics SDK, or software development kit. You'll need to implement and configure additional code to view mobile app data in the Google Analytics interface. If you are tracking apps, you should note this requirement with your app development team. It's not a task that marketers generally do themselves, but it should be part of the brief to the app development team.

## BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS

### Benefits of analytics

We can track user behavior online. Why is this important? A fundamental benefit of using analytics as part of your digital marketing efforts is that it helps you make informed, data-led decisions, which in turn should help you run effective campaigns and drive better commercial performance.

Other benefits include:

- Ability to get closer to the customer
- Ability to understand your users
- Ability to gain insights from real customer activity
- Ability to forecast using trends and patterns in customer behavior
- Accountability of media spend and resource allocation
- Stronger focus
- Prioritization of resources
- Higher conversion rates and enhanced return on investment

### Benefits of Google Analytics

Google Analytics is the most commonly used free analytics tool, and it's an excellent choice for most marketing needs.

Some benefits of the standard, free version of Google Analytics include:

- It's free.
- It's easy to implement and easy to install.
- It has a user-friendly interface.

- It offers customizable reports, dashboards, and data collection.
- Both basic and advanced options are available.
- It offers seamless integration with other Google products.
- It offers post-click integration with non-Google traffic sources, including Facebook, Yahoo, and Bing.
- It provides extensive, valuable insights into web behavior.

## Limitations of Google Analytics

Google Analytics has a few limitations:

- It doesn't provide real-time data in downloadable historical reports.
- The free version is limited to 10 million hits per month.
- It offers limited customization.
- It defaults to last-click attribution.
- It's not always 100% accurate.
- It's not as comprehensive at measuring the performance of top-of-funnel campaign activities like display and Facebook, where there is limited user visit and conversion data from these campaigns

However, despite these limitations, Google Analytics is still a highly effective web analytics tool for marketers in most instances.

As we'll want to know as much as possible about how consumers interact on our website and use our apps, Google Analytics can track the user or consumer journey, providing rich data around channels used, locations, and devices. These journeys can then be tracked through to on-site activity, goals achieved, and exit point, as well as returning visitors, which indicates loyalty.

Gaining a return from Google Analytics data is an ongoing process of monitoring, analysis, and enhancement.

## BASIC TERMINOLOGY

### Common conversion metrics

The basic terminology for all analytics reporting can be summarized as dimensions and metrics:

- **Dimensions** describe data. They are things like country, channel, location, age, gender, and device used.
- **Metrics** measure data. Metrics might include visitor numbers, revenue, goal completions, and so on.

We segment metrics using dimensions – for example, visits by device type – to get a complete picture. So we can see the total visitor metrics for a website segmented by the device category dimension – that is, desktop, tablet, or mobile users. This allows us to better understand the effectiveness and scale of each device in driving visits and conversions on the website.

Some common dimensions within Google Analytics include:

- Channel name
- Month

- ↗ Country
- ↗ Device

Some common engagement metrics within Google Analytics include:

- ↗ Sessions
- ↗ Users
- ↗ Percentage new sessions
- ↗ Page views
- ↗ Pages per session
- ↗ Average session duration

You should explore the metrics that are available to you, and see how they can be segmented using dimensions to get a deeper understanding of your website traffic and customers.

Just a note on conversion metrics. Conversion metrics are an extension of standard visitor metrics. They focus on telling the story behind the valuable actions that users can take on your website. These are generally actions that impact commercial performance, such as revenue totals, conversion rates, and so on.

There are a number of common conversion metrics within Google Analytics. They can all be viewed in the Traffic reports, so you can see how much value each of the different channels is driving. Common conversion metrics include:

- ↗ **Goals:** This is the number of valuable actions taken on the site, including sales, leads, or downloads.
- ↗ **Conversion rate:** This is the percentage of visitors that complete a goal.
- ↗ **Transactions:** This is the number of individual sales or shopping basket items sold on an ecommerce website.
- ↗ **Revenue:** This refers to the monetary value of the ecommerce sales.

You can start to determine the value of the campaigns from your different digital marketing channels by looking at the number of goals and transactions from each channel, the conversion rates, and the cost per conversion. With these three data points, you can decide if a channel is profitable in relation to its time and cost investment.

## LEGAL SITUATION

### Understanding consent

You should be aware that there are several data protection considerations associated with web analytics.

As a result of regulations like **GDPR** in the EU, tracking personally identifiable information – or **PII** – now requires explicit consent from the consumer. For example, you need to get consent if you are collecting cookie data from website visitors for analysis or in order to personalize advertising experiences. Many analytics programs anonymize user names, IP addresses, and other PII, but you still need consent to share website visitor data anonymously with third parties, like Google Analytics, or with ad platforms.

In relation to GDPR, it is essential that personally identifiable information is managed correctly, and within the terms of the consent provided by your website visitors. Collecting PII as part of your analytics program, and then mismanaging the information, can risk a data breach for improper use of PII.

To ensure this doesn't happen, your company should have a clear policy or guidelines in place detailing how the analytics data you collect is used and managed. This should include explicit opt-in visitor consent to track user visits, collect anonymous cookie data, and share anonymously with third parties like Google and Facebook for personalization of ads.

# NOTES

# **LESSON 2: CREATING AND CONFIGURING A GOOGLE ANALYTICS ACCOUNT**

## ACCOUNT SET-UP

### Google Analytics

For the purpose of this course, and due to its ubiquity in the market, we'll be using Google Analytics, or GA, as our main source program for web analytics. You can find Google Analytics through a number of different websites, including the ones listed here:

- [google.com/analytics/](https://google.com/analytics/)
- [analytics.google.com](https://analytics.google.com)

### Account set-up

From there, you can sign up for Google Analytics.

1. To access GA, you will need an email attached to a Google account. A Gmail profile is fine. You can also use your Google Ads login, which is useful as you can sign in to all of your Google digital marketing products from one login and share data across the platforms more efficiently.
2. When setting up your Google Analytics account, you will need to add your account information, domain name, time zone, and other settings.
3. You also need to read and understand the Google Terms of Service, and know that 'accepting' means you must adhere to these terms when using Google Analytics.
4. You should also note that data sharing settings must be enabled to link other Google products – Google Ads, Search Console, and so on – to Google Analytics and share data across platforms.

Be aware that there is a demo account which you can use to get familiar with Google Analytics reports and to start to practice. When you sign up or log in to Google Analytics, simply click to add the demo account to your GA account list.

## TRACKING CODE

### Google Analytics code

How does Google track users from your website?

First, you'll need a piece of code, which must be put on your website to send data back to Google Analytics. This is the UA-code and it is provided during set up, but it can also be accessed later if required. This code should be given to your web developer to hard code directly onto every page of your website.

However, for more advanced users – and if you're using Google Tag Manager – you can add the Google Analytics UA-code into Tag Manager and it will fire the code on all pages of the website.

### Test the code installation

Testing is essential in all aspects of digital marketing, not least in analytics. So, it's important to test to make sure your code is installed correctly and that it's firing as it should on the website.

The steps to test that your code is installed correctly on the page are:

1. Right-click on your webpage and 'view source'.
2. Click 'Control + F' to find the UA number from your tracking code.
3. Locate the closing head tag and ensure the GA code is placed before it.
4. Then, double-check to see if you are receiving data in the Google Analytics interface.

## Google Tag Assist

Another way of investigating if the code is working correctly is to use Google Tag Assist, which is a free browser extension provided by Google. It makes sure your Google tags are installed correctly by checking all tags on the web page.

While it's not essential to use, Google Tag Assist is another way of checking that everything is working as it should. In most cases, checking the source code manually and verifying that you are seeing visitors in Google Analytics works perfectly well.

## Sending data

Now that you know that you need to install an analytics code on your website to track visitor behavior, let's deep dive into how the process actually works. In other words, how does the code send your data to the program?

It does so in the following way:

1. When a request is made to the server, a web page is served.
2. The Java script tracking code is executed every time the page loads.
3. A temporary or persistent cookie is dropped onto the user's browser, depending on the Google Analytics set-up.
4. Session data is sent to the Google server.
5. Data is processed by the Analytics tool.
5. Reports are accessed later by the site owner or analyst through the Google Analytics interface.
6. The cookie expires after the browser session finishes.

## Advanced coding and analytics tracking

In some instances, it may be necessary to customize the Google Analytics code as part of set-up based on the site structure. This is advanced coding and analytics tracking, and it isn't required for 99% of websites.

### Ecommerce websites

Let's talk specifically about ecommerce websites for a moment. If your site accepts transactions, your web development team will need to set up a special ecommerce code. This code will capture all revenue, product types, and transactions, and will share them directly with Google Analytics. Traffic sources, keywords, and campaigns are linked to these transactions to help you understand the revenue value of your channels. Personally Identifiable Information, or PII, about purchasers is not shared with Google Analytics.

Make sure you are using the latest version of the Google Analytics tracking code, and that you know how to check which version of GA a site is using.



There are two main types:

- **Classic Analytics:** Any users of Classic Analytics should be upgraded to Universal Analytics as a priority.
- **Universal Analytics:** Universal Analytics has been the standard since 2013.

## KEY SETTINGS

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#### Ecommerce websites

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## Key Settings

### Key settings

After you have set up your Google Analytics account, all settings should be checked to ensure the accuracy of your data.

Within Google Analytics, there are three levels within settings – Account, Property, and View – and every item within these levels should be checked.

To access these settings, click 'Admin', or the cog wheel in the bottom left of the screen.

#### Account

The Account is the highest level within settings, and it is the access point for analytics. Within this level are the properties you want to track.

#### Property

There can be many properties within one account. Usually, a website or app would have its own property, so a business with multiple websites could have one account, with a property for each website. The tracking code is generated at property level. It can be helpful to think of it like this. Your account is your client. Your client may have different websites for different products. Each website has its own property under the overall client account.

## View

Then within the property, you can segment the data into views. A property can have more than one view – usually there should be a raw view with unfiltered data, as well as a filtered view for main reports. There can be separate views for different areas of your business – for example, visitors from particular locations. So, you could segment your EU traffic into separate views for each country or region, such as UK and Ireland, Central Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, and Eastern Europe. You could also have an overall view, which tracks all visits to the website in one single view.

## Adjust account settings

There are several settings that can be adjusted at the property level, to ensure you are tracking the website effectively.

These include:

- **Default page:** This setting tells Google Analytics what your homepage is. Your domain might be DMI.com, but the homepage could be DMI.com/home. It drives better reporting to specify the correct homepage, if it's different from the domain name.
- **Exclude URL query parameters:** If you have site search active, you can exclude the dynamic URLs from being tracked as separate pages. For example, take the URL:  
DMI.com/search/?userquery=digital-marketing.  
In this case, you want to track visits to the search page – that is, everything before the question mark. You also want to cut out the search parameters – that is, everything from the question mark onwards.
- **Session timeout length:** Sessions count every visit and action on a website, and the default timeout length is 30 minutes. So, if a visitor is inactive for 30 minutes, the session will reset and count a new session when the visitor becomes active again. If you want to define a longer session length, you can change the setting.

## Views

A 'View' within Google Analytics helps to organize visitor data, such as origin, source, or pages viewed, into a defined view about a website, and you can use filters to create your views. Filters are more permanent ways to segment data, so you can see a particular type of traffic – for example, paid media – in one view location, and quickly understand the revenue, goals, or browsing patterns related to that key traffic source.

When we think about filters, we should consider how they can enhance reporting accuracy by classifying visitors, segmenting visitors, and removing unwanted traffic. All of this can help you understand more about your customers and website visitors.

Some commonly used filters include IP addresses, email campaigns, country, social traffic, PPC traffic, and search traffic.

## Adding a new view

You can add a view to your website's property by following these steps:

1. Click on the Admin cog at the bottom of the left-hand menu and choose 'Create New View' from the top right of the Admin area.
2. Choose whether it's a website or mobile app view; then enter the name of the view and the time zone where the website or business is located.
3. Modify aspects of the view in the View Settings at the top right of the Admin area.
4. Set goals and filters for your view by pressing the Goals or Filters button on the right side of the Admin page.

To make it easier for you to quickly understand the data, and to ensure it is well-organized and easy to locate, give the view a meaningful name.

## Creating a new filter

Now you can add a filter to segment the traffic coming into your view. To do this, click on the Filter section of the view on the right of the screen.

Filters can be set at an Account, Property, or View level in the Admin area of Google Analytics.

Create a new filter based on a view by following these steps.

1. In the filter area, choose Add Filter.
2. You can then choose to add an existing filter, which you may have previously created, or to create a new filter.
3. Name your filter, then choose whether to create a Predefined or Custom filter.
4. For standard filtering, like excluding IP addresses or including only traffic to certain parts of your site, choose a Predefined Filter.
5. For more advanced filtering, choose Custom Filter. However, this can require a working knowledge of Regex to implement successfully. Most segments can be created using the Predefined Filter section.

## Applying multiple filters to a view

Depending on the type of traffic you want to analyze, you can choose a series of filters to create your ideal segment. It's important to understand the implications of applying multiple filters to a view, and how the order that the filters are applied will affect the data shown in that view.

Filters work by segmenting the first filter on the view. Multiple filters work together by segmenting, including or excluding traffic from the first filter, and then applying the next filter to the segmented traffic from the first filter. This knock-on effect continues until you reach the last filter in the list.

# COLLABORATION

## Collaborating effectively

In order to collaborate effectively with team members, as well as with external agencies and clients, you need to have a **single source of truth** when it comes to data. In other words, you need to ensure that everyone is working from the same data source.

To do this, you can grant access to other users within your Google Analytics account, and apply different permission settings. You can do this in the User Management section at an Account, Property, or View level.

You can add a new user by completing the following steps.

1. Click on User Management in the Admin area.
2. Choose to add a new user by clicking the + button in the top-right corner.
3. Enter the new user's email address and choose their permission level. You can assign a high or low level of access to each person.
4. Choose from these four permission levels:
  - **Read and Analyze:** This is the minimum access level, where users can read and download existing reports, but cannot change any settings.
  - **Collaborate:** At this level, users can share assets, reports, and dashboards, and add annotations
  - **Edit Permission** – users can modify goals, reports, and filters, read and analyze reports, and share data, but can't add or remove new users.
  - **Manage Users:** This is the highest access level, which allows users to add and remove new users, edit settings, share assets, and read reports.

## Benefits

There are many benefits to allowing other users access your Google Analytics account.

This means that everyone is using the same reporting tool and seeing the same data as a single source of truth, so collaboration between teams and team members is enhanced.

Having various access levels means that you can control how much data people see and need to see, based on their seniority and ability to analyze data. So, for example, you don't need to overwhelm people – for example, senior executives – with data they don't have time to analyze or understand.

## Potential security risks

Likewise, you should be aware of the risks of granting access to your Google Analytics account to other users, either from within or external to your organization. Potential security risks include:

- Data breaches
- Unintended or purposeful deletion of user accounts or assets
- Incorrectly changing settings within the tool
- Incorrectly modifying custom reports, filters, segments, goals, and funnels

## LINKING TO OTHER TOOLS

### Linking to other products

One of the very useful aspects of Google Analytics is its ability to seamlessly link to other Google products and tools, so that you can supplement your reports with additional insights. The main tools available to link to are Google Ads, Google Search Console, and Search Ads 360, formerly known as DoubleClick by Google.

To link these additional tools, you need to access the product linking section within the Property settings. Each of the available tools for linking are listed there and you simply follow the instructions to link the tools. In most instances, you need to have Admin access to both tools in order to link them.

## Benefits

Let's look at some of the benefits of linking a Google Analytics account to other marketing tools:

- There is increased data availability.
- Google Ads imports cost and impression data from the Google SERP, so you're not just seeing visit data.
- Search impressions and keyword rank from users who aren't logged into Google when searching give additional SEO insights.
- You can assess the value of channels in more detail to understand conversion rates, CPA, and ROI.

## Linking Google Ads and Google Analytics

The steps to linking a Google Ads and a Google Analytics account are straightforward, as you're essentially sharing data between two Google products:

1. Log into Analytics and Google Ads at the same time.
2. Click the Admin area of Analytics – the cog at the bottom of the left-hand menu.
3. In the middle Property section, click on the property you want to link, and then click the Google Ads Linking button.
4. Press the +New Property Group button and select the Google Ads accounts you want to link.
5. Next, choose which Google Analytics views will be linked to; include Google Ads data by pressing the slider.
6. Choose to enable Google Display Network impression recording.
7. Choose to use Auto-tagging to get click, cost, and other data from Google Ads directly in Analytics.
8. It's important not to use UTM tracking on Google Ads and Auto tagging, as this will double count data.
9. Click the Link Accounts button to complete the linking.

## Linking Google Search Console to Google Analytics

Now that you have linked your Google Ads paid media source to Google Analytics, it's also important to understand how organic search, or SEO traffic, impacts website behavior. To do this, you need to link your Google Search Console to Google Analytics.

To link Google Search Console to Google Analytics, follow these steps:

1. Ensure your website is verified in Search Console – it must be verified in Search Console to link to Google Analytics.
2. Log in to Search Console and Google Analytics.
3. Click the Admin cog at the bottom left of the main Analytics menu.

4. Click on the Property settings in the center of the Admin area.
5. Scroll to the bottom of the Property settings page and click Search Console Settings.
6. Select which Google Analytics views to share Search Console data with.
7. Click Save to complete the link.

# NOTES

# **LESSON 3: SETTING GOALS WITH GOOGLE ANALYTICS**



# INTRODUCING GOALS

## Measuring actions

One of the key benefits of analytics tools is that they allow you to measure the valuable actions that people take on your website. It could be making a purchase or filling in a form that becomes a lead. These valuable actions can be tracked as goals in programs like Google Analytics. You can then attribute each goal to a channel, country, ad, or other dimension to learn more about the conditions that drive the goal. You can then try to re-create and efficiently optimize these conditions to drive more goals.

A goal within analytics is a defined conversion that allows you to measure the number of times or rate at which users take a desired action on your site.

Common goals include:

- A purchase
- Inquiry form completion
- Brochure request
- Newsletter sign-up
- File download
- Increased session duration
- Pages viewed per session

Goals can be set up around areas like visitors, content, leads, conversions, and so on.

## Why measure goals?

It's very important for marketers to measure goals in order to see if their campaigns are contributing to the commercial success of their organizations.

This can help determine:

- How much of your resources, time, and budget to invest in a channel
- What channels and campaigns work at driving different goals
- What content on the site works to drive goals

It also allows you to understand what doesn't work as well, so you can focus your efforts on high-impact activities, channels, and content.

# GOAL SET-UP

## Setting up goals

It's fairly straightforward to set up goals in Google Analytics. This can be done on a 'View' level.

To set up a goal:

1. Navigate to the Admin tab and find the Goal set-up area.
2. Click on the left-hand cog to enter the Admin area.
3. Navigate to the 'Goals' section on the right-hand side under 'View'.

4. Add a Goal by clicking +New Goal.
5. Choose to Add a Predefined goal or a Custom goal.

Google Analytics will guide you through the process. Click Save when you're done.

## Predefined goal templates

To help you choose the types of goals you should measure, there are four predefined or default goal templates in Google Analytics:

- **Revenue:** Choose this template if you are tracking goals like 'reservations made' or 'tickets purchased'.
- **Acquisition:** Choose this template for account creation goals.
- **Inquiry:** Choose this template for a goal like 'reading reviews'.
- **Engagement:** Choose this template for goals like adding to favorites, playing media, sharing content, and contributing to content.

If any of these goals represent an action that you would like to track, choose the appropriate goal template and name it appropriately. Alternatively, you can choose a 'Custom goal' and name it as you see fit.

## Goal types

Now that you've chosen the type of goal you'd like to measure, you need to choose how you'd like to measure that goal within Google Analytics.

To do this, choose one of the following goal conditions.

- **URL Destination:** The goal is measured when visitors reach a certain page on your website – for example, the purchase 'thank-you' page, registration complete page, inquiries received page, or subscription success page.
- **Time on Site or Session Duration:** The goal is measured by how long a visitor spends on your site.
- **Sessions per Visit or Pages per Session:** The goal is measured by how many pages each visitor sees before they leave your site.
- **Event:** The goal is measured by the on-page interactions taking place on your website. For example, video plays can be tracked by installing the event-tracking code in the video play button; calls can be tracked on mobiles when someone clicks the number on the page and calls directly from the phone.

## Setting up a custom goal

If you don't choose a template and would prefer to set up a custom goal, follow these three steps:

1. Add a goal name
2. Select a goal type
3. Add the goal conditions

Sometimes it's faster, easier, and more useful to use custom goals instead of goal templates. Ultimately, you need to decide which is most suited to your marketing activity.

## Creating a URL Destination goal

The first of our goal conditions is a URL Destination goal. This is for tracking 'thank-you' pages or purchase complete pages. These are the pages that a website visitor sees after buying something, signing up for a newsletter, or downloading a piece of content. It will say something like: "Thank you for downloading the whitepaper"; or "Thank you for your purchase – order complete".

Marketers track these 'thank-you' pages because the only time they are shown is when someone downloads something, contacts you, or purchases something. So we can measure the number of times that someone has downloaded or bought something by counting the number of times the 'thank-you' page is shown. We can set up thank-you pages as a goal in Google Analytics.

To create a URL Destination goal for 'thank-you' pages in Google Analytics, follow these steps:

1. Enter the screen name of the page you want to track. You don't need to include the full URL, just the URL directory name details that appear after the 'forward slash'. For example, something like '/purchase-complete'.
2. This will track any visits to that page as a goal.

Goal pages are only ever seen after someone buys a product or contacts you. They indicate that a valuable action has just happened. Counting the times these pages are displayed is important, as this can then be attributed to a channel or campaign to measure success and/or ROI.

If you have only one price for a goal, you can assign that price as a value. For example, if you only sell subscriptions at \$10.99, you can enter that as the value of your goal to estimate revenue. It's not as accurate as ecommerce tracking, but it provides an estimate where prices don't change.

This type of goal works off the principle that the more hits you get on your thank-you page, the more effective your campaign or digital activity will be.

## Creating a Session Duration goal

If you want to measure how long people are engaging with specific pieces of content on your site, like the spec of an automobile model or a certain blog, you can create a Session Duration goal.

You can also create a Session Duration goal to measure sessions which exceed a certain time duration. You could use this goal when user engagement with a site is important. For example, if you have a specific blog view in Google Analytics, visits to the blog of five minutes or over indicate a significant level of engagement, which could be a valuable goal to track. You can evaluate which channels drive most engagement on your site by using Duration goals.

Simply state the time of the session in the goal set-up to measure this goal.

## Creating a Pages per Session goal

Another engagement goal in Google Analytics is the Pages per Session goal.

You can create a Pages per Session goal to record sessions where the pages viewed exceed a predefined number. Again, you can use this goal when user engagement with the site is important. Like Session Duration, measuring the number of pages per visit allows marketers understand which

channels and what content drive longer user journeys through their websites. Simply enter the number of pages-per-session you would like to track as a goal.

## Creating an Event-Tracking goal

For non-standard goals on your website, you can create Event-Tracking goals.

You create an Event-Tracking goal when you want to track interactions with your site that cannot be tracked with standard analytics code. This could include actions like video views or PDF downloads.

In most cases, this requires some additional coding by a developer on your website. It can also be done using the advanced features of Google Tag Manager. Once these conditions are set up in Google Tag Manager or hard-coded by a developer on the site, you can enter these conditions in the event-tracking goal, and when they fire on the website, you can track this activity as a goal.

## Importing goals

In order to work off a single source of truth with your Google products and use the same conditions for a goal across channels and products, you can import goals and ecommerce transactions from Analytics into Google Ads. Simply choose the Import feature in Google Ads and select the goals you want to pull across.

It's important not to duplicate goals that are being counted in Google Ads by using both Google Ads conversion tracking and Google Analytics goals – choose one or the other. It can take between 30 minutes and a few hours for goals to be pushed from Google Analytics to Google Ads.

A best practice is to use Google Analytics goals instead of Google Ads conversion tracking, as you will have a single source of truth in relation to conversions. You can also import revenue transactions from the ecommerce section of Google Analytics into Google Ads. If you are also tracking the purchase completion page as a goal, you should choose either to import transactions or the purchase goal, but not both, as they will double count.

## Smart Goals

'Smart Goals' are an analytics feature designed specifically for Google Ads campaigns. They record the most engaged visits to your site.

They are mostly used for reference only. You should not track smart goals if you have other goals set up in Google Analytics, as this will overestimate your goal count significantly.

# GOAL FUNNELS

## Benefits of goal funnels

Marketers love to talk about goal funnels, as they add a lot of value when it comes to understanding the consumer journey. A goal funnel is often used when there are multiple steps in a transaction process. You can use metrics to measure each step in the process.

A goal funnel can provide marketers with valuable information. For example, it shows where visitors leave your website. It highlights places where information is unclear or inadequate, or where the

online process has good flow or bad flow. Marketers can use this data to better understand and optimize the customer experience on their websites and the overall consumer journey.

## Setting up a goal funnel

You can set up a funnel for a destination goal by switching on the Funnel Slider below the goal:

1. Enter the screen names of all the steps in your funnel. For example, add to cart, proceed to checkout, enter address, or add payment details.
2. Don't add the homepage as a step in the funnel – just add the action pages like adding to cart or entering details.
3. The last step in your funnel should be the thank-you page or destination page.

# NOTES

# **LESSON 4: MONITORING CAMPAIGNS WITH GOOGLE ANALYTICS REPORTS**

# THE KEY REPORTS

## Dashboards

Before we begin with reports, I'd like to draw your attention to the Google Analytics demo account, which you can use to get familiar with the report data and start to practice. When you sign up or log in to Google Analytics, simply click on the link [analytics.google.com/analytics/web/demoAccount](https://analytics.google.com/analytics/web/demoAccount) to add the demo account to your GA account list.

The first area we'll cover are dashboards. Transforming a complex report containing lots of data into an easy-to-read performance 'snapshot' is a very useful way of showing key trends to clients, managers, and other non-analysts. You can do this effectively in Google Analytics using the dashboard feature.

The Google Analytics dashboard is a collection of widgets that give you an overview of the most important metrics and reports for your campaigns. A benefit of dashboards is that you can share them with key stakeholders to give them a top-line view of visitor and conversion information. There are some predefined dashboards, which use your existing goal or ecommerce configurations to create stylish information displays. You can explore these dashboard templates in the Analytics Gallery within the dashboard section of Google Analytics.

## Google Analytics tabs

Dashboards provide you with a bird's-eye overview of campaign performance. But when you want to deep-dive into specific areas of website behavior, there are four main reporting areas in Google Analytics you can use to gain insights:

- The **Audience** tab: Who is coming to your website?
- The **Acquisition** tab: How are users getting to your website?
- The **Behavior** tab – What are users doing on your website?
- The **Conversion** tab – What actions are users taking to complete set goals?

Next, you'll look at each reporting area in detail.

# AUDIENCE REPORT

## Audience tab

The first major reporting category in Google Analytics tells you about the types of visitors who come to your website. This is the Audience reporting tab.

The Audience tab allows you to access audience overview information to identify top-line statistics and information about audience activity, including GEO locations and lifetime value.

Some of the main reports in this tab will now be explored.

## Reports

### Demographics Report

To find out about different user segments, you can look at the Demographics Report.



With this report, you can view demographics information, such as the age and gender of your visitors. It can be very useful to learn more about the types of people that visit your website.

## **Interests Report**

You can delve a little deeper into visitor motivations with the Interests Report. This report lets you view information about user interests. You can look at affinity categories, in-market segments, and other interest categories that help you understand the browsing patterns of your visitors. You can then look to target the most valuable visitor groups with interest categories from the Google Display Network, Search ads, or other channels with similar categories.

## **Geo Report**

The Geo Report is a key report. It's always important to know where your visitors are physically located, so you can use the Geo Report to view the language and location of your website visitors. Use this data to enhance your media targeting and to help you find clusters of high-value customers in different locations. This will help focus your efforts on high-value areas.

## **Audience Behavior Report**

Now that you know who comes to your site, you can start looking at how they engage with your site. You can do this with the Audience Behavior Report, which lets you see behavioral information about your users. For example, you could use this report to find information on new versus returning users, frequency of user visits, engagement levels, session quality, and conversion probability.

At this point, you should note an important distinction: the Audience Behavior Report shouldn't be confused with the Behavior Reporting tab, which details interaction and engagement with site content. These are different reports and they contain different metrics.

## **Technology Report**

Building on the behavior of your audience on your website, you can look at what browsers they use to visit and convert using the Technology Report. This report provides information about the browsers, networks, and operating systems being used by your audience. You can use the 'www.browsershots.org' service to check how a site renders in different browsers. This is a useful report for troubleshooting compatibility issues with certain browsers.

## **Mobile Report**

Given the nature of on-the-go, 24/7 web browsing, a very useful report is the Mobile Report. This enables you to view traffic and conversion data from mobile and desktop users, as well as the devices being used. This is particularly important for understanding how people search, browse, and buy or convert on your site on different devices. You might find you get a lot of visits from mobile, but more conversions or sales from desktop. The key will be to find the right balance of browsing and conversion-based traffic to drive the best results.

You can use the Google Mobile Friendly Test tool to see how a site renders on mobile. This tool also identifies ways to improve your mobile experience.

## **Cross Device Report**

As journeys may start and finish on different devices, the Cross Device Report aims to show you the overlap between mobile, desktop, and tablet devices in driving traffic and activity on your site. Once you've activated the cross device signals feature in Google Analytics, your Cross Device Report data will populate in time.

There are four main reports in the cross device area:

- **Device Overlap** shows the number of users who use multiple devices to access your website.
- **Device Paths** show the device journeys that users typically take.
- **Cross Device Channels** show the channels that drive traffic and conversions across devices.
- **Acquisition Device** shows the number of new users by device type.

The Cross Device Report can give a good indication of the total sales journey across devices, channels, and campaigns in a mobile-first world. You can use this information to help you better understand your consumer and to optimize your media mix.

## Benchmarking Report

Finally, look at the Benchmarking Report in the Audience tab. This report is sometimes useful for competitive analysis, as it allows you to see aggregate statistics for other sites in the same category as your website across channels, locations, and devices.

The only drawback is that it's category-based, so the results can be very broad and may not be specific to your particular industry.

# AQUISITION REPORT

## Acquisition tab

One of the most important tabs for marketers running digital marketing campaigns is the Acquisition Tab. This reporting area allows you to identify the sources of traffic to your website in a series of sub-reports based on traffic type. This can help you to discover which channels are most effective, and which are not performing as well as you'd hoped. You can then apply more resource to the effective channels, and pull back or aim to improve the performance of lesser performing channels.

## Reports

### All Traffic Report

A key report in the Acquisition Tab, and in all of Google Analytics, is the All Traffic Report. All marketers should become familiar with the All Traffic Report.

This report allows you to find visitor traffic, conversion, and engagement data for different predefined channel types, known as default groupings or channels.

Default Groupings or Channels include the following.

- **Direct:** 'Direct Traffic' is when the user types the website URL into the browser and directly accesses the website. You should understand the impact of offline activities on your direct

traffic, such as TV advertising, as well as other factors that influence direct traffic, such as short, memorable, or easy to spell domain names.

- **Organic Search:** 'Organic Search' refers to non-paid search visits from SEO sources.
- **Social:** 'Social' refers to traffic from social channels, as defined by Google Analytics, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and so on.
- **Email:** Tagging your email links as newsletters or email sources will allow Google Analytics to categorize this traffic as email.
- **Affiliates:** 'Affiliates' refers to traffic from other websites, with whom you have an agreement to drive sales of your product.
- **Referral:** 'Referral' is traffic from sites that link to content on your website.
- **Other:** 'Other' traffic is traffic whose dimension Google Analytics doesn't know how to define. This can be erroneously tagged email, social or PPC traffic, or new traffic sources.
- **Paid Search:** Paid Search refers to PPC traffic directly linked through Google Ads, Bing Ads, and so on.
- **Display:** 'Display' is traffic from banner display sources, and premium or Google Display Networks. It generally doesn't include social display.

## Source/Medium Report

To deep dive into the nuances of the different channels, digital marketers can look at the Source/Medium Report.

In simple terms, the Source tells us where traffic is coming from and the Medium is the type of traffic.

- **Sources** include Google, Bing, Facebook, Direct, and Twitter.
- **Mediums** include CPC, organic, display, social, and referral.

You can toggle between source, medium, or combined source-medium reporting dimensions in this report by pressing the blue links just below the graph on the left-hand side of the screen.

## Referrals Report

The Referrals Report shows 'referring' sites – these are sites that link back to your website. You can use the Referrals Report to identify the high-value links for SEO and for driving quality traffic or conversions. Factors that influence traffic from referring websites include the quality of the site that is linking to your site, and the relevance of its content to what you offer.

## Social Report

Marketers also have the option of looking into their social activity in Google Analytics. The Social Report enables you to view information about sources of social media interaction, social media conversions, and social plugins.

It is a limited report. Google Analytics is a Google product and, as a result, it doesn't have a native link to other social platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn.

## Campaigns Report

Another key report is the Campaigns Report. Digital marketers engage with consumers on multiple devices and channels, not all of which are Google channels. But you still need to track how these

channels drive value from your websites. To track non-Google traffic in Google Analytics, you can use the Campaigns Report.

This allows you to report on a range of other digital marketing campaigns within Analytics, such as email newsletters and banner ads.

The drawback of the Campaigns Report is that it only shows traffic sources and onsite engagement. You don't see cost data, impressions, CPCs, or other performance metrics. For this, you still need to refer to the individual channel interfaces – unless you schedule direct uploads of cost data to Google Analytics.

## Search Console Report

To get information on your organic search and SEO efforts, marketers can use the Search Console Report. This report allows you to view information regarding SEO performance in Analytics.

First, you must link your Google Analytics account to your website's Google Search Console account. Once linked, you can view SEO information on landing pages, countries, devices, and some search queries that are used in Google searches.

## URL Builder

Let's take a step back for a moment. Before you track non-Google channels in Google Analytics in the Campaigns Report, you need to add UTM URL parameters to your campaigns. This is done with a tool that's found outside of the Google Analytics environment called the Campaign URL Builder.

Use the URL Builder to configure a specific URL for the campaign you are creating.

## Using the URL Builder

With this tool, you can add:

- Your **traffic source** – for example, Facebook
- Your **traffic medium** – for example, Paid Social
- Your **campaign name** – for example, 'Summer Sale 2019'
- Your **ad content** – for example, '20% Off Summer Sale'.

When you input this data into the URL builder, it gives you back a string or parameter, which you can add to the end of your campaign URLs.

Understand the attributes of the URL that you can configure: source, medium, content, and term.

When you add this string, it pushes the source medium, campaign name, and ad name into Google Analytics.

Be able to identify new sources of traffic from campaigns that are tagged using the URL Builder.

Then you can see the names and sources of your campaigns in the Campaigns Report, as well as the amount of traffic or conversions that are driven from your non-Google channels. Remember, it is important to use a consistent naming convention for your campaigns, so you can easily analyze performance across multiple campaigns.

# GOOGLE ADS REPORT

## Purpose of Google Ads Report

Now let's take some time to talk through the Google Ads Report. You can use the Google Ads Report to gain insights on traffic, impressions, click costs, and other performance metrics from Google Ads. This report appears in the Google Analytics interface, side by side with all your other reports.

By integrating Google Analytics with Google Ads, you can identify high-performing campaigns, ad groups and keywords, as well as goal completions or ecommerce transactions by campaign.

## Google Ads Search Query Report

In the Google Ads Search Query Report, it is possible to view information on matched search queries. These are the actual words and phrases that people type into the Google Search engine to trigger your keywords. You can also see the position in which your ads appear on the Search Engine Results Page or SERP, and the hours of day most likely to drive traffic, engagement, and conversions. This data can be used to identify high-value search queries and the time of day for peak conversions.

As Google Ads offer multiple marketing options, it is possible to see Google Ads performance data for Search, Shopping, and Video campaigns directly in Google Analytics. All the channel options available within the Google Ads suite can be viewed in terms of their own specific metrics within these reports. All channels can be optimized and benchmarked against each other to maximize budget and performance.

## Increase budgets for high-performing campaigns

When you find out which campaigns and channels drive the most conversions, traffic, and sales, you may want to improve the budgets that are allocated to these high-performing campaigns.

To do this, identify your clusters of high-transaction, high-revenue, or high lead-generating times and search queries in Google Analytics.

Then, in Google Ads, increase the daily spend and keyword bids, or percentage bid modifiers, at peak times using ad schedules. This should drive more traffic at the most important times and from the most important keywords. In the same way, you can decrease the amount you spend on low-performing times and queries.

# BEHAVIOR REPORT

## Behavior tab

You can see who is coming to your website in the Audience Reporting tab, and how they got to the site in the Acquisition Reporting tab. Now, let's look at what your users did when they got to your website. You can discover the content they viewed and how they moved through the website itself using the Behavior Reporting tab.

Working out how users move through your website can be complex and overwhelming. You can begin to understand these user journeys better by using the Behavior Flow Report.

## Behavior Flow Report

The Behavior Flow Report gives a view of user journeys through a website, beginning with a landing page, then moving to their first, second, and third interactions with the website. By analyzing the Behavior Flow Report, marketers should be able to optimize their website content and improve the user journey, which should help drive users towards making more on-site conversions.

## Site Content Report

You might want to look at the individual pages on your website, and see how users interacted with each page. You can do this by using the Site Content Report. This reporting area allows you to view reports on how you can improve your content to achieve better results from users.

## All Pages Report

The All Pages Report is a sub-report in Site Content. It gives a list of page-name metrics associated with each page.

Using this report, you can see what pages drive the most engagement and what pages need improvement. It's a very straightforward way of seeing what's working and what's not.

## Bounce rate

When trying to evaluate how engaged people are with your content and landing pages, you can look at the bounce-rate metric. This is visible on the All Pages Report and shows what percentage of visitors landed on your website and left without looking at any other pages or content on the site. Think of it like visitors landing on your site and then bouncing away without looking at anything else.

A high bounce rate can be the result of irrelevant content, poorly structured pages, or badly rendered websites. However, it's important to consider the context when analyzing bounce rates. For example, a landing page could have a high bounce rate if the CTA is to a phone, or if the information required is on the landing page, and the user doesn't need to explore any further.

## 404-error pages

Here's a useful tip for digital marketers: the All Pages Report can help to identify any 404-error pages on your website by showing you the number of hits on your Error page.

To do this, click on the Error 404 page in the list of all pages in Google Analytics. Open a secondary dimension and select 'previous page path'. This will show you all the pages that led to the 404-error page, and you can investigate and fix the links on these pages.

## Content drilldown

Within the Site Content Report, you can also view information about content drilldown by page and page path, landing page, and exit page.

## Site Speed Report

You can view site speed information through the Site Speed Report. This data is particularly useful, as many website visitors will leave a website if it takes too long to load. That's why it's important to know the load time of your pages, and to see if it's having a negative effect on user experience.

The Site Speed Report helps web developers and marketers to better understand bounce rates, and detect any compatibility issues with browser types. It also helps them improve the overall web experience.

## Site Speed Sub-Report

The Page Timings Report is a sub-report in Site Speed that contains information on page views and the average load times for the various pages on a site.

Furthermore, the Speed Suggestions sub-report allows you to view speed improvement suggestions for pages on your site, while the User Timings sub-report allows you to view the average user timings on a site.

## Site Search Report

If you have a search bar on your website, then the Site Search Report could prove to be useful. The Site Search Report allows you to view the search terms visitors used. You can configure Site Search within the property settings by entering the query string for your website search feature.

Site Search is a useful data mining tool, as it allows you to track what users are typing into the search bar on your website. You can use this information to expand your keyword pool or to gain insight into what your website visitors are specifically looking for, which in turn can inform site improvements and even new product development.

# EVENTS REPORT

## What is the Events Report?

Digital marketers can use event tracking to track the non-standard actions that people take on their websites – actions like pressing the play button on a video, or clicking a button. Neither of these actions generates a 'thank-you page', so they can't be tracked using standard goal set-up methods.

However, these events are important, so they need to be tracked using another method. This method is called Event Tracking and it requires additional set-up or coding to implement.

The Events Report records how users interact with various elements of your website. This report will automatically track any Google Analytics events you have set up in your website code or through Google Tag Manager.

A benefit of event tracking is that it provides valuable insights into how users are interacting with your website and content. For example, it shows if they are clicking through to emails or external links, downloading brochures, guides or PDFs, viewing or partially viewing videos, and more. These insights can inform your website copy and layout, CTAs, and wider content strategies.

## Variables to consider

As event tracking is tracking non-standard actions, it requires some additional set-up. To set up event tracking, you will need to ask your web developer to insert a piece of code into the item you want to track, such as a play button on a video, or some other piece of functionality.

Ask the developer to push two essential Google Analytics variables when someone clicks or scrolls. These variables are 'eventCategory' and 'eventAction'. You might also want to include two other optional pieces of code, 'eventLabel' and 'eventValue'.

Once the developer sets the website up to push these pieces of code to Google Analytics – when, for example, someone presses the play button – Google Analytics will pick up the data and record the event in the reports.

As with all of your data tracking and planning, it is important to be consistent in the naming conventions you use, so that you can easily view event performance via the Category, Action, or Label reports.

## Overview sub-report

You can view website events overview information through the Overview sub-report. This report shows information on any event types and values you have coded into your website in one single view. If there are no events coded into your website, no data will appear here.

Once everything is tracked via the website code or using Google Tag Manager, you can view Top Events to see the most common events on your website.

## The Experiments feature

Another non-standard feature of Google Analytics is the Experiments feature. This allows digital marketers to view and manage A/B tests for page performance. You can use this feature to test new layouts, content types, and formats, and to measure them against KPIs.

To use this feature, follow the set-up guide in Experiments. Then, you can set up test landing pages on your website subdomain and dynamically serve them to website visitors, to test engagement or conversion data. You can also set the length of the test and the percentage of visitors to be tested.

When the test is complete, you will have a data table indicating whether the original or the test pages perform better. With this data, you can decide whether to introduce a new landing page or to stick with the original.

# CONVERSION REPORT

## Conversions Reporting Tab

You can use the Conversions Reporting Tab in Google Analytics to focus in on metrics relating to the valuable actions that users can take on your website. You can find out if you are meeting, exceeding, or missing your KPIs by using this reporting section.

KPIs can differ, depending on the type of business. For example, ecommerce KPIs typically include sales transactions, AOV, ecommerce conversion rates, cart abandonment rates, and repeat



purchases. Non-ecommerce KPIs for lead-generation sites might include cost per lead, total leads, trial sign-ups, conversion rates, unique leads, and comments submitted. All these KPIs can be tracked and measured in the Conversions Tab.

## Goal reports

Now, let's look at the Goals reporting area. The Goals reporting area can help you understand different goal-conversion rates over a particular timeframe. This, in turn, can help you to understand trends and how to optimize performance.

You can view goal overview information through the Goals Overview Report in the Conversions tab.

You can also view the goal URLs you have set up in the Goal URLs Report. Reviewing this report periodically allows you to quickly check that all your goals are tracking the URLs you expect them to track.

## Funnel Visualization Report

The Funnel Visualization Report is another report found in the Goals reporting area. This report should be set up during goal creation. It's very straightforward to use and it provides information about the various stages of the conversion process.

For example, you can track the flow through the different steps in the purchase journey, such as selecting a product, adding it to the cart, entering name and address, entering payment details, and confirming purchase.

If there is a drop-off at any point, you can investigate why, and then try to improve the user journey to get more people to convert.

A key benefit of the Funnel Visualization Report is that it allows marketers and web developers to look at the different stages of the conversion process as a goal funnel, which can help them enhance user experience and increase conversion rates through funnel optimization techniques and tests.

## Goal Flow Report

You can view goal flow information in the Goal Flow Report. This report shows the path your traffic travelled through a funnel towards a goal conversion. It allows marketers to see the source, medium, page, or other dimension that leads up to the goals set in Google Analytics.

## E-commerce Report

The E-commerce Report in Google Analytics enables you to view ecommerce overview information, shopping behavior, checkout behavior, product performance, sales performance, and product list performance.

The E-commerce Report requires certain specialist coding to link your website transactions to Google Analytics. But you don't need to be a coder to implement ecommerce tracking on many retail platforms.

Many out-of-the box ecommerce solutions, like WooCommerce, Magento, and Shopify have a user-friendly way of linking to Google Analytics. In most cases, you simply enter the Google Analytics UA

code and tick a box in the ecommerce tool to link to Google Analytics. However, if you have built your own ecommerce engine, you will need your developer to add the specialist ecommerce code. But this is only for bespoke sites; most sites will do it automatically. Check to see if yours is a bespoke or out-of-the-box ecommerce site to determine what actions you need to take.

## Using the E-commerce Report

The E-commerce Report is an excellent way to track revenue online and attribute it back to channels. It also contains details regarding transaction and product types, so you can understand which channels drive what transactions and order values. The report gives you insight into the time it takes to purchase a product, from first visit to sale, as well as details about transactions, sales, and product performance. It's possible to apply enhanced ecommerce settings to ecommerce stores, to assess other detailed ecommerce metrics, like discounts.

Within the E-commerce Report, it's possible to dive further into the traffic sources that drive sales, so you can focus your efforts on those channels that efficiently drive the most sales. You could also aim to improve channels that are less effective and pull back completely on poorer performing channels.

Furthermore, once ecommerce is set up on your site, revenue and transaction data will be available in most Google Analytics reports, so you can review many other data points and reports in relation to revenue value.

For example, in the channels reports, you can check how much revenue was driven by each channel.

Likewise, within page and content reports, we can see metrics like revenue per page, which estimates how much revenue could be attributed to a page, based on how often and where it appears in the conversion journey.

## MULTI-CHANNEL FUNNELS REPORT

### Purpose of the Multi-Channel Funnels Report

To help you understand the complex nature of a digital marketing conversion or purchase journey across channels, you can use the Multi-Channel Funnels Report. It assigns a value to each channel that played a role in completing a goal or transaction.

This allows you to see what each channel contributed to a purchase or goal, and helps you understand its value in the decision-making process. Once you know how much a channel contributes, and where it is most effective in the user journey, you can optimize that channel for success.

### Multi-Channel Report Types

In digital marketing, there are closing channels and assisting channels. Closing channels are the channels used just before a goal or transaction is completed. Some examples include PPC, SEO, direct email, or remarketing.

However, consumers use numerous channels as they move along their paths to purchase, and these are known as assisting channels. Some examples of assisting channels are display, social media, video, and other top-of-funnel awareness and consideration-driving channels.

## **Assisted Conversion Report**

The Assisted Conversion Report can help you understand the assisted value of channels and campaigns and provides insight into how different channels function at each end of the funnel, from awareness to completed conversion.

## **Top Conversion Paths Report**

For a very useful visualization of the typical journeys that consumers make on their paths to purchase, we can use the Top Conversion Paths Report within the Multi-Channel Funnels Report. This report provides more granular insight into the most popular journeys users take to conversion.

It shows the numerous steps and channels that drive conversions or transactions online. In this way, you can identify your opening and assisting channels, as well as your closing channels, in a visual and shareable way.

You can also view time lag and path length information.

## **Time-lag Report**

Time-lag reporting can help you understand how long it takes for a consumer to commit to purchase or signup, by showing the length of time between their first visit to your site and the day they complete a conversion.

## **Attribution models**

We have been talking about how channels interact with each other to drive conversions and sales, so we can assign credit to each channel along the journey for the part it played in the decision-making process. This is called attribution.

There are different models you can use to understand the value of your channels. By default, Google Analytics is set to 'Last Click' attribution, where the final channel before the conversion gets all the credit. However, there are several other attribution models that can be used, including Last Click, First Click, Linear, Time Decay, and Position-based.

## **Perfect attribution model**

There are many models to choose from, but none are perfect. The model you choose should be unique to your business and should depend on your website goals and KPIs. It's worth testing how your channels look with each model, to see which tells your consumer story most effectively.

To help you understand which models might be best applied to your activity, you can use the Attribution Report. This report contains a Model Comparison Tool. You can use this tool to view the value given to each channel in the path to conversion, based on the model chosen. It allows you to see what channels would look like if you applied different attribution models to them.

# NOTES

# **LESSON 5: ANALYZING AND RECORDING GOOGLE ANALYTICS DATA**

## ANALYZING DATA

### Real-time reporting

A nice feature in Google Analytics is the real-time reporting function. This provides a live snapshot of activity on your website related to visitors, content, traffic sources, and goals. It's very useful when you want to get a real-time view of campaign launches, TV appearances, and other activities that might have an immediate impact on traffic volumes.

However, it's not useful for historical reporting, because it only shows data in real time and it can't be downloaded. It just gives a view on what's happening right now.

Understanding traffic spikes both in real time and in reports can allow marketers to understand the ROI of awareness-generating activities like TV, print, and radio. By evaluating how many additional conversions, goals, or sales occurred as a result of a traffic spike, versus the cost of generating that traffic using offline channels, it is possible for marketers to assign an ROI value to their offline marketing investment.

### Intelligence Events

To help draw your attention to anomalies and spikes in unusual behavior, you can use the Intelligence Events feature. This sends an automated alert after there is a traffic spike or significant change in metrics, and it can alert you to larger-scale changes in your website's behavior.

## CUSTOM REPORTS, ANNOTATIONS, AND SEGMENTS

### Custom reports

There are a lot of predefined reports in Google Analytics, but there may come a time when the standard reports won't fit your needs. When this happens, you can create custom reports in Google Analytics.

With custom reports, you can create your own reports using a mixture of dimensions and variables. You can set these reports to only look at certain pages or channels, using filters.

Don't be afraid of creating custom reports. Remember, creating a new custom report won't break anything in Google Analytics; it simply allows you to see specific data and metrics filtered in a report that fits your needs.

### Custom report types

There are three types of custom report, which you can set up in the Customization tab in the main menu. To create a custom report, choose Customization and then Reports from the left-hand menu.

- **Flat Table Reports** allow you to have your dimensions on the left and metrics across the top in table format – these are the simplest type of custom report.
- **Explorer Reports** allow you to click into dimensions for further detail on the metrics – these reports are more complicated.
- **Map Overlay Reports** allow you to view a world or location map with a series of metrics you define.

## Annotations

In digital marketing we launch a lot of campaigns, make a lot of changes, and optimize our activity continually – be it over the course of a few weeks, months, or the entire year. As a result, when we look back, we simply won't be able to remember everything we've done, and when. Luckily, we can use Annotations to help us track or record our offline activity.

Annotations are small, written notes that appear as speech bubbles at the base of Google Analytics graphs. It's very easy to add an annotation. Simply press the triangle below the graph and click the new annotation button. Then, enter the details of your note. Mark it as public or private and press 'Save'. Now you will have a written record of what happened on a particular day, which you can look back on to see if it impacted traffic data over time.

For example, you can add notes about campaign launches, sites going down, or promotional offers, as they happen. Then, when you are reviewing the traffic to your site later, and wondering what caused a spike or a drop, an annotation relating to an event might provide insight into why it happened.

Leave yourself notes for all major or impactful changes to your digital marketing plan, as well as for external events that might have an impact. It's a great way of leaving a written historical record of your year's work for you to review as you need.

## Secondary dimensions

Alongside customization, it's possible to further segment your data. You can use Secondary Dimensions to do this. These are additional fields which can be added to standard or custom reports to get deeper insights into your data and trends.

## Custom Segments

A more powerful way of segmenting report data is by using Custom Segments to modify the data you are viewing across all the reports in Google Analytics. Custom Segments are temporary filters that are used to cut up data for deeper understanding and for making comparisons. It's important to note that Custom Segments differ from view filters.

Filters are applied to a view and are constantly active in segmenting your data. However, Custom Segments are temporary filters, which you can apply to data to understand how it looks under different segment conditions. They can be removed after use and the data will return to normal.

Custom Segments can be used in conjunction with Google Ads to help marketers make informed decisions about optimization. Try creating custom segments for your most important customer and conversion groups, as they are very powerful ways of getting insights from your data segments.

## Export and schedule reports

While all data can be presented, cut, spliced, and segmented on screen, much of the real data analysis happens when you export the reports. In Google Analytics and all other web analysis programs, it is possible to export and schedule all reports into Excel spreadsheets, Google Sheets, and PDFs for sharing and further analysis.

Most marketers use Excel or another spreadsheet tool for most of their analysis and data manipulation. You should use the format that works best for you.

## TRACKING DATA EFFECTIVELY

### Tracking data effectively

Let's take some time to look at the best practices for using Google Analytics, so you know you have all bases covered.

- **Tracking:** Firstly, tracking. You need to confirm that the analytics tracking code is applied across every page. You also need to ensure that it has been customized to cover all relevant domains, so you can track customer interaction with your website, ecommerce transactions, and so on.
- **Different Views:** You also need to confirm that different Views are implemented in order to maximize Google Analytics' tracking capabilities. Useful Views include time zone, default page, currency, Google Ads cost source, and site-search tracking.
- **Visits from inside company:** You shouldn't track visits from inside your company or from your partners, as this can skew traffic and conversion numbers. So your Google Analytics Views should include Internal IP filtering, so that data reports don't include employee or partner traffic.
- **Unfiltered view:** It's best practice to have an unfiltered view for reference purposes. This is usually called an 'All Site Data' view. It doesn't have any filters applied, so you always have a baseline to report against.
- **Define KPIs:** Remember, everything you are tracking in Google Analytics is to help you deliver on Key Performance Indicators or KPIs. So before you begin analyzing your campaign data, it's important to define your KPIs, so that the campaign's effectiveness can be benchmarked against these metrics. Likewise, it's essential that Goals are set up in Google Analytics as a way of measuring these KPIs.
- **Track offline marketing activity:** The final word on website analytics is to consider the importance of appropriately tracking offline, as well as online, marketing activity. Not all purchases or actions happen online, so it's important to track how offline factors can influence user behavior and conversions, so you can take the appropriate action and make more informed decisions.



# NOTES

