Google Analytics

Kathleen Weiss • Instruction & Technology Librarian • kweiss@vapld.info

Introduction

Google Analytics (GA) is a free web service provided by Google. An added snippet code to your website tracks and stores all kind of useful information about how people find and use your website.

In the days before the internet, small businesses wishing to entice potential customers into their stores had to rely heavily on traditional advertising, word of mouth and impressive window displays to lure in passers-by. More often than not, we had to make assumptions and they weren’t very accurate.

In the Twenty-first century, your website is your storefront. GA is a tool that lets you know who is stopping in and what they are looking at. With this information you can confidentially make educated decision on how to improve your website.

If you are following along at home, access the GA presentation at: http://bit.ly/2bE1rOY and the handout at http://bit.ly/VAPLDclasses in the Google Analytics folder.

Navigating Google Analytics

The Home Screen

When you log into GA you will be greeted by the home screen. From here you may access your analytics and set your date range for reporting.

1. Dashboard is used to navigate between Home, Reporting, Customization, and Admin tabs. Reporting is where you’ll go to access your analytics. Customization is where you can add custom reports.

2. Core Reporting is where you’ll choose the date range for your analytics. (The default is the last 30 days.)

3. All Web Site Data takes you to the Reporting page for your website.
Reporting

*Reporting* is used to run reports on your web traffic. To access Reporting, click on *Reporting* from the Dashboard or *All Web Site Data*.

You can navigate Reporting by using the options along the left sidebar.

1. **Real-time** displays the web traffic that is on your site in real time.
2. **Audience** displays visitor demographics, length and frequency of visit, along with information about how your site was accessed.
3. **Acquisition** shows where visitors came from.
4. **Behavior** displays what people did when they were on your website.
5. **Conversions** displays the degree to which people did what you wanted on your website such as making a purchase. Conversions is mostly used for e-commerce websites.

Navigating the Left Sidebar

The left sidebar displays the various report options in a sidebar with submenus. Throughout this packet, I will refer to different menus by linking the options with arrows. For example: **Audience ➔ Technology ➔ Browser & OS** means:

1. Click on **Audience** to view different Audience reports.
2. Click on **Technology** to view Audience Technology reports.
3. Click on **Browser & OS** to view Audience Technology related to web browser and operating system use.
Audience ➔ Overview

The Overview option nested under Audience gives basic information about how visitors have interacted with your site. This information is expressed as a line graph, pie chart, and individually listed.

Click the drop down and Select a metric options to view your metrics on the line graph.

1. **Sessions** is the total number of times a user is actively engaged in the site within the date range
2. **Users** is the total number of users that have visited the site
3. **Page Views** is the total number of pages looked at
4. **Pages / Session** is the average number pages each viewed per session
5. **Avg. Session Duration** is the average time a user spends on your website
6. **Bounce Rate** measures how often someone comes to your site and does not look past the first page
7. **New Sessions** measure how many session involve new v. returning visitors
Audience ➔ Geo ➔ Location

Geo shows where people are when they are accessing your website. **Location** breaks this down by country and city.

View geographic data in a chart. Use the **Primary Dimension** options to narrow your geographic area by city.

A graphic world map and chart let you know from where people have visited your website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>% New Sessions</th>
<th>New Users</th>
<th>Pages / Session</th>
<th>Avg. Session Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>82.00%</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>00:08:37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>19.77%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>00:06:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(not set)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>00:06:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Audience ➔ Behavior**

Audience behavior measures the number of new v. returning visitors, the number of visitors, and how long visitors are spending on your website.

**Audience ➔ Behavior ➔ New vs Returning**

This measures the number of people who are visiting your website for the first time and those who are repeat visitors.

**Audience ➔ Behavior ➔ Engagement**

This displays how long people are spending on your site how many sessions fall into each time span.

**Audience ➔ Behavior ➔ Frequency & Recency**

This displays the total number of Sessions and Pageviews.
Audience → Technology → Browser & OS

Technology displays what web browsers, operating system, and mobile devices visitors are using to access your website. Access this information by clicking on the Browser & OS option nested under Technology.

Click on Browser & OS. This displays what web browser users are accessing your website.

Audience → Mobile

Mobile lets you know how many people are accessing your site from a desktop computer, mobile device (cell phone), or tablet.

Audience → Mobile → Overview

This breaks out how many users are connecting to your website on various devices.

Audience → Mobile → Devices

This displays the types of device people used while accessing your website.
Audience → Users Flow

User Flow displays how people actually move through your website.

Use the green drop down in the upper left corner to select a segment of web traffic. The best way to do this is to select Users. Under Users, select Country.

You create a visual representation of the traffic flow for your website.
Acquisition → Overview

The Overview option nested under Acquisition gives basic information about where your visitors came from. In other words, how did this person find you?

Acquisition Overview breaks out where your visitors came in four categories:

1. **Referral** occurs when somebody comes from another website that is not a social media website or search engine.
2. **Direct** occurs when somebody types you web address into the web browser and come directly to your website.
3. **Organic Search** occurs when search engine results direct a person to your page. This does not include any advertising from a search engine.
4. **Social** occurs when somebody is directed to your website via social media.

Using the pie chart or bar graphs above you can view where most of your traffic is coming from. Moreover, you can view whether this traffic is coming from first time or repeat visitors.
Acquisition → Social → Overview

Social Overview shows where people came from within social media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>% Sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Facebook</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Yelp</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Twitter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Behavior → Overview

Behavior overview displays what people are doing once they are on your page.

1. **Pageviews** is the number of pages viewed by users in all sessions.
2. **Unique Pageviews** is the number of pages viewed by users. This does not include pages viewed more than once during the same session.
3. **Avg. Time on Page** is the amount of time a user typically spends looking at a page.
4. **Bounce Rate** is the percentage of people who view the home page and leave.
5. **% Exit** is the percentage of people who leave after two pageviews.
6. **Page Ratings** shows the most commonly viewed pages.
**Behavior ➔ Behavior Flow**

Behavior Flow displays how traffic flows through your website.

The flow chart starts by displaying the most common landing page and subsequent movements throughout the website.

**Behavior ➔ Site Content**

Site Content displays the most popular parts of your website.

**Behavior ➔ Site Content ➔ All Pages**

This lists the most visited pages on your website. This is very helpful for finding out what information people are looking for when they visit your website.

**Behavior ➔ Site Content ➔ Landing Pages**

This lists the most common points of entry for your website.

**Behavior ➔ Site Content ➔ Exit Pages**

This lists the most common points of entry for your website. Most often you want people to exit your page after placing an order or viewing a page that confirms interest in your product.

**Behavior ➔ Site Search ➔ Overview**

This feature is useful if you have a search feature on your website. From here, you can view the words most often searched for on your website.
Behavior → In-Page Analytics

Analytics data is overlaid on top of a picture of your website.

![Analytics data](image)

Conversions

Conversion displays the percentage of people who do what you want such as making a purchase. This feature works best with e-commerce sites where you’ve set up sales goals in GA. From here, you can also set up goals for your site.

Custom Reporting

GA allows users to set up reports to share with stakeholders on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Select the dimensions and metrics and decide how they should be displayed. You can create a custom report or create a report from any Analytics page found beneath the Reporting tab.

Create a Report

1. From any page found beneath the Report tab, click the Email button at the top of the page.
2. Enter your Recipients.
3. Select an Attachment file type, Frequency of reporting, and Day of Week to send out the report.
4. Click Send.
Create a Custom Report

1. Select the **Customization** tab, at the top of any page in Analytics.
2. Click **+New Custom Report** from the top of the table.
3. Enter a **Title**.
4. (Optional) Click **+add a report tab**. Every report has at least 1 tab, but you can add more. When you add more tabs, all the following information applies to the tab that’s currently highlighted. Click the image to expand and see what this looks like.
5. You can customize the report types in each **Report Tab**.
6. **Select a report type: Explorer, Flat Table, or Map Overlay**.
7. Define your dimension and metrics.
8. The options for each report type vary because each type displays data in different ways.
9. (Optional) Click **+add filter** to limit the report to specific dimensions.
10. Click to expand and learn more about these filters.
11. (Optional) Select where this report should appear. Use the dropdown menu to select specific views, or select All views associated with this account to allow this report on all views you have access to.
12. Click **Save**.

4 Essential Weekly Google Analytics Reports

(Adapted from 4 Weekly Google Analytics Reports Every Business Owner Should Set Up from Forbes)

**Acquisition Overview**

The Acquisition Overview report is a snapshot of the performance of your overall campaign. A pie chart segments your incoming audience into four main channels: organic traffic, social traffic, direct traffic, and referral traffic. Organic traffic is the number of visitors who came to your site after finding it through a search. Social traffic is the number who came to your site through a social media platform. Direct traffic is the number who entered your site directly into the web address bar of their browser. Referral traffic is the number who found your site through an external link.

**Acquisition Channels**

Find this report by clicking Acquisitions → All Traffic → Channels. The specific Channels report is an in-depth version of the Acquisition Overview report. The overview is useful for seeing how each channel compares to the others, but the Channels report will give you more details on each type of user.

On this report, you should be able to see detailed information about average user behavior for each of your four main traffic channels, including the percentage of new users who are coming to the site, the bounce rate, and conversion rates if you have goals set up. You’ll learn about the types of visitors you’re getting, and if there are any flaws in your demographic targeting for each individual channel. For example, if you notice that your social traffic channel tends to generate a much higher bounce rate than the others, take a look at the types of links you post and consider whether it has an effect on the person’s interest once he/she arrives at his/her intended destination.
Behavior – All Pages

Find this report by clicking Behavior → Site Content → All Pages. You will find a breakdown of the top ten most popular pages on your site. For each page, you’ll be able to view the number of total pageviews, the unique pageviews (filtering out repeat visitors), the average time a user spends on the page, the number of domain entrances the page was responsible for, and the percentage of people who exited your site after seeing the page.

This report is useful for measuring the relative worth of each of your pages. For example, if your blog is ranking very low in terms of total pageviews, you may want to make some changes to make it a more prominent feature of the site. It is also valuable because it presents the bounce rate, so you can determine how effective each page is at keeping your audience’s interest.

Goals Overview

Before you can take advantage of the Goals Overview report, you’ll need to set up some goals, which you can do under Admin → Goals. You can set up goals for almost any conversion action on your site—whether that’s making a purchase, signing up for an email blast, or filling out a “contact us” form.

Once you’ve set up all your goals, you can use the Goals Overview report to get a snapshot of how well each is performing. If you assign dollar amounts to each theoretical conversion in your goal sets, you can even get a hypothetical estimate of how much revenue your campaign is generating, making it an ideal metric for estimating ROI.

Installation

If you are interested in installing GA on your own website, check out one of the tutorials below. Before you install GA you will need to identify what type of content management system (Drupal, Joomla, WordPress, etc.) your website uses. After that, follow appropriate tutorial to get started. I highly recommend using this guide to get started:
http://goo.gl/my9rKd

Additional Resources

Lynda.com offers over 100,000 courses at all skill levels covering everything from computer programming languages to design software. Courses are taught by experienced and knowledgeable industry professionals through videos. Students have access to class files and transcripts of the lesson so they can follow along. Access Lynda.com with your library card number by visiting www.vaplinfo → Research → Lynda.com.

Book an individual help session for 45 minutes with a librarian by calling (847) 634-3650.