

DIGITAL BOOST

power up your business

GUIDE TO WEBSITE DATA ANALYTICS

Intermediate Level

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1** Matching your conversions to your goal hierarchy
- 2** Advanced set up - properties, views and filters
- 3** Advanced campaign tagging
- 4** Analysing onsite behaviour
- 5** Applying segments for deeper analysis
- 6** Demographics and interests
- 7** Conversion rate optimisation
- 8** Example scenarios - what to do if ...

SECTION 1

MATCHING YOUR CONVERSIONS TO YOUR GOAL HIERARCHY

In our Intermediate Guide to Digital Marketing Strategy, we looked at making sure your business objectives, marketing objectives and KPIs were all set out clearly in a goal hierarchy.

By advancing your digital marketing strategy to beyond the basics it becomes even more important to track and measure your activities along the way as your business grows and your strategy expands to include more channels. When your strategy itself becomes more advanced, therefore so does your ability to measure and understand the analytics behind it.

In our Basic Guide to Website Data Analytics we covered initial set up of Google Analytics, glossary of terms, an overview of conversions, goal types and how to set up a basic goal and accompanying goal funnel. If any of this sounds new, or you might need a refresher, [check out our basic guide first \[to be linked\]](#).

Following on, we look at the various ways that will enable you to better track and measure your activity in relation to your goal hierarchy and how you can ensure your digital strategy is moving in the right direction.

SECTION 2

ADVANCED SET UP – PROPERTIES, VIEWS AND FILTERS

When you initially set up your site for Google Analytics, you will likely have set up one single property within your account into which all your traffic is fed in to.

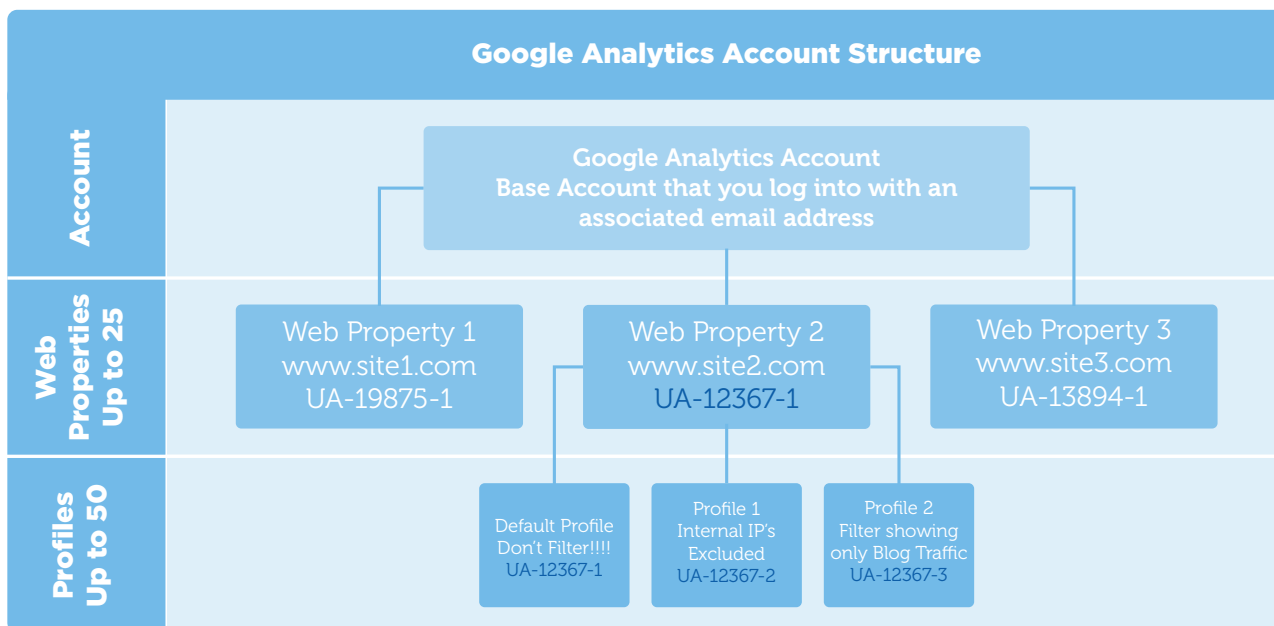
However this may not give you enough granularity to analyse specific areas of your site or business. You can therefore utilise the different set up options available within GA to cut up the data as required.

PROPERTIES

In Google Analytics, a property is a website, mobile application or blog that is associated with a unique tracking ID. It is possible for your Google account to contain one or more properties, for example if you had more than just your core branded website, each further site, or “property”, would be contained within the same account.

How you set things up in GA depends on how your business is organised and what your long-term reporting goals are. If you have multiple sites that are part of the same business unit and share the same strategic goals (and hence the same broad measurement requirements), it can make sense to include them within one Account, but as different Properties in Analytics. This allows you to view each one in isolation but also gain an overview of all activity.

See below for an example account structure of GA:



FILTERS AND VIEWS

A 'View' within GA is the level in the account set up where you can see your reports. GA automatically creates one unfiltered view for each property where all of your data is collated. However you can create a number of different views with different filters applied to view a specific subset of your data. This can be incredibly useful when you need to analyse specific subsets of data in isolation.

Applying a number of 'Views' to see specific subsets of data allows you to see all of the GA reports (total traffic, traffic sources, conversions, etc) for that subset.

Below is a list of example Views and their associated filters that can help with your data analysis.

EXCLUDE INTERNAL IP ADDRESS

You can filter out specific IP addresses, i.e. your own and/or those of your staff, as they will likely be on your website enough that it could potentially skew the data that GA provides, since internal traffic tends to exhibit different patterns from external traffic.

To do this, firstly you need to find out your IP address. A simple Google search for "what is my ip address" will be able to take you through this process of contacting your network administrator to find out what IP addresses and subnets your company uses.

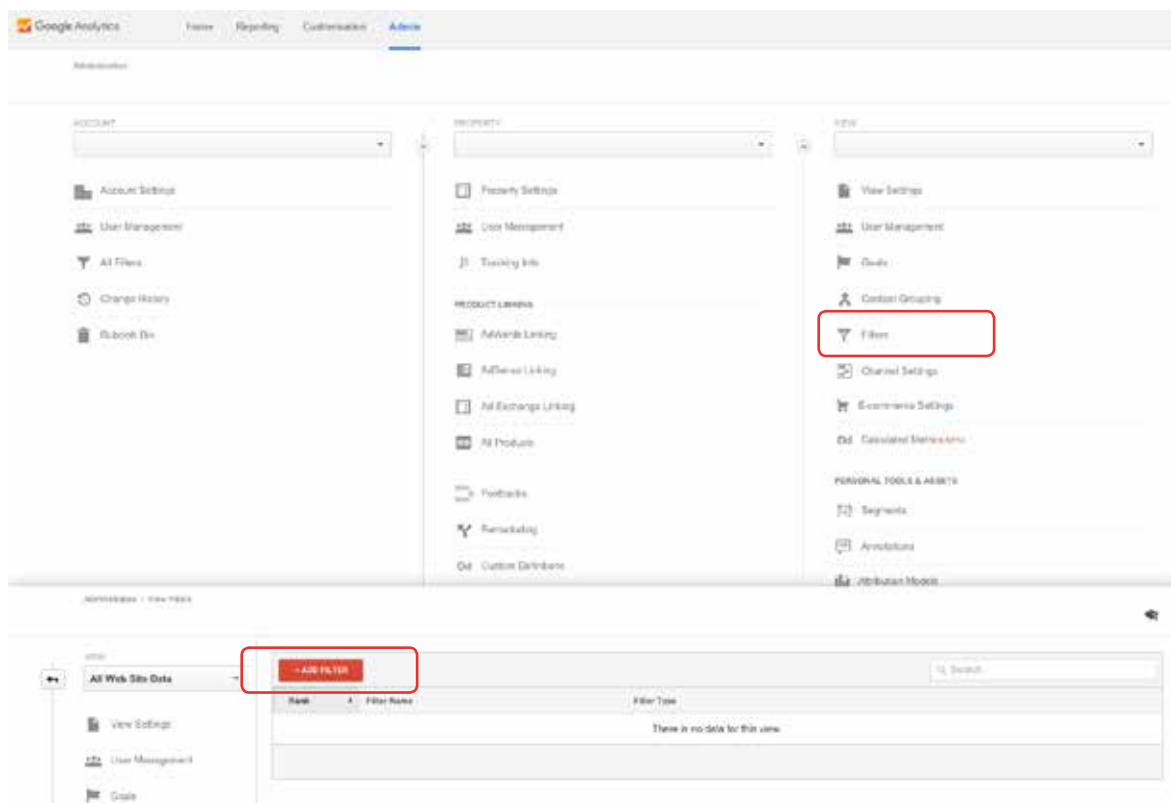
See how to exclude this information in the example screenshots below.

INCLUDE SPECIFIC SITE SECTION

Similarly, if you want to see only traffic to a specific site subdirectory, all traffic to this section could also be separated out as a specific filter, for example: /cars or /mens-jackets.

These two example actions are popular filters, so much so that Google has predefined filters set up already. See below:

1. Navigate to the Admin tab in your GA header; and click Filters in the third column under **View**; and click to **+ Add Filter**



2. Select **Create new Filter** and enter the **Filter Name**; use something descriptive as this is how the Filter will be displayed in your Analytics dashboard
3. Filter Type: **Predefined**
4. Select filter type: [**Exclude** for IP address filter // **Include** only for subdirectory traffic]

5. Select source or destination: [traffic from the IP addresses // traffic to the subdirectories]
6. Select expression: [for IP exclude this will either be that are equal to for a single IP address, or that begin with for a subnet (multiple) IP addresses // for subdirectory traffic, select that begin with]
7. Click Save

The image displays two side-by-side screenshots of the 'Add Filter to View' dialog box in a web analytics tool. Both screenshots show the 'Create new Filter' option selected. The left screenshot shows a filter named 'IP Exclude' with the 'Filter Type' set to 'Exclude'. The expression is configured as 'Exclude' > 'traffic from the IP addresses' > 'that begin with' > '123.456.0'. The right screenshot shows a filter named 'Mens Jackets' with the 'Filter Type' set to 'Include only'. The expression is configured as 'Include only' > 'traffic to the subdirectories' > 'that begin with' > '/mens-jackets'. Both screenshots include a 'Filter Verification' section with a note: 'Analytics cannot provide a preview for this filter: previews for advanced filters and location'. At the bottom of each dialog are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

You may only be able to service a specific region, therefore you may want to create a View where you see only traffic from that specific region.

This process is the same as the previous example, with the only exception that this would be a Custom Filter Type rather than Predefined.

1. Filter Type: Custom
2. Include: In the Filter Field dropdown, select Country

3. Filter Pattern: if it is a single country you want to include, then all you need is to enter the country name as it appears in GA reports, i.e. United Kingdom (*not* Great Britain or UK); if there are several countries you want included enter the *Filter Pattern* as follows: "Denmark|Norway|Finland|Sweden"
4. Click Save

Add Filter to View

Choose method to apply filter to view

Create new Filter
 Apply existing Filter

Filter Information

Filter Name
United Kingdom traffic only

Filter Type

Predefined Custom

Exclude
 Include

Filter Field
Country

Filter Pattern
United Kingdom|Ireland

Case-sensitive

Lowercase
 Uppercase
 Search and Replace
 Advanced

[Learn more about regular expressions](#)

Filter Verification ?

[Verify this filter](#) See how this filter would affect the current view's data, based on traffic from the previous seven days.

Save Cancel

If you do break out some of your website traffic into separate Views and Filters, always remember to keep one default profile that has your raw, master, unedited data.

SECTION 3

ADVANCED CAMPAIGN TAGGING

In order to continue tracking as many activities or interactions on your site as possible, there are a number of more advanced campaign tagging and integrations that can be implemented to optimise your measurement and reporting.

These are essential in enabling you to see all of the results of your digital marketing activities and in generating data accurate and specific enough to help you analyse what is working for you and what is not so you can alter your strategy accordingly.

LINKING ADWORDS AND ANALYTICS

Linking these two platforms is highly beneficial for your data measurement by helping to analyse user activity on your site that occurs after an ad click from Adwords for your search ads, or the Google Display Network, for your display ads. You can match up specific Adwords campaigns, ad groups and keywords directly to your conversions in GA.

This will allow you to analyse how traffic from any given advert, ad group, campaign or keyword performs on your site. You can see specifics such as: whether they convert, where they drop out of the funnel, what pages they view, how they perform on the landing page. This can let you know what is working and can also highlight what you need to change to improve performance.

See below for instructions for linking Adwords and Google Analytics, as specified by Google.

Remember when you link an Adwords account to a GA view, anyone with access to that view will be able to see your imported Adwords data. Likewise if you select to import Analytics data into Adwords, anyone with access to that Adwords account will be able to see your imported Analytics data.

1. Sign in to your Adwords account
2. Click on the “Billing, Account settings, and Help” menu, then select **Linked accounts**
3. Under “Google Analytics”, click on **View details**
4. You’ll see a list of the Google Analytics properties to which you have access. Click on **Set up link** next to the property that you want to link to Adwords
 - If you have already linked a property, you’ll see **Edit** instead of **Set up link**
 - If you can’t see one or more of your Analytics properties, check that you have “Edit” permissions to those properties
5. You’ll see one of the two screens described below:
 - If the property you chose only has one view, then you’ll see the name of that view. Under it, select whether or not to import site engagement metrics
 - If the property has multiple views, then you’ll see a list of the views from this property you can link. There are two settings:
 - i. **Link:** Link as many views as you like. This will make Adwords click and cost data available in Analytics, and Analytics goals and transactions available in Adwords
 - ii. **Import site metrics** (recommended): Select one view from which to import site engagement metrics. While this is optional, Google would recommend choosing one view that will be used to show website engagement metrics in the GA reporting columns of your account.
6. Click **Save**

FACEBOOK PIXEL TRACKING

Just like you can match your Adwords campaigns and ad groups to your onsite conversions, you can do the same with Facebook ads. To date Facebook has used what is known as a “conversion pixel”, a small snippet of code that is placed on your website and in your Facebook ads so you know exactly which ads led to conversions.

Facebook also has a “**custom audience pixel**” that doesn’t track conversions but allows for audience retargeting and the creation of lookalike audiences, which enables Facebook to find similar users most likely to take the actions you want and only shows ads to this audience segment.

In the latter stages of 2016 Facebook will be upgrading their “conversion” and “custom audience pixel” to the “Facebook pixel”, which will combine all the capabilities of pixels into the one. To avoid any forced changes to your ads in a few months time, we would recommend moving straight onto using the new Facebook pixel if you are not currently tracking your Facebook ads.

The Facebook pixel is used for three main functions:

1. Building custom audiences from your website for remarketing purposes – how many times have you looked for a flight or hotel on Expedia and been targeted with ads after? This is the pixel in action!
2. Optimising ads for conversions
3. Tracking conversions and matching them back to your ads

To install your Facebook pixel to benefit from these functions:

1. Create your pixel
 - Go to your **Facebook Pixel Tab** in Ads Manager
 - Click **Create a Pixel**
 - Enter a name for your pixel. There’s only one pixel per ad account, so choose a name that represents your business.
 - Accept the terms and conditions, and click **Create Pixel**
2. Add the pixel to your website
 - Go to your **Facebook Pixel tab** in Ads Manager
 - Clicks Actions -> **View Pixel Code**
 - Highlight and copy the full code
 - Click **Done**
 - Paste the code into your site’s HTML. The entire code needs to be placed between the **<head>** and **</head>** tags of your webpage.
 - Part of the code called the “standard event code” needs to be edited based on the goal that is relevant to your page – purchase, add to cart etc.

3. Standard event code

- a. On the particular pages of your site you want to track and optimise ads for, there are 9 standard events. Copy and paste the relevant goal-related event code under fbq('track','StandardEventName'):

Website action	Standard event code
Key page view	fbq('track', 'ViewContent');
Search	fbq('track', 'Search');
Add to cart	fbq('track', 'AddToCart');
Add to wishlist	fbq('track', 'AddToWishlist');
Initiate checkout	fbq('track', 'InitiateCheckout');
Add payment info	fbq('track', 'AddPaymentInfo');
Make purchase	fbq('track', 'Purchase', {value: '0.00', currency: 'USD'});
Lead	fbq('track', 'Lead');
Complete registration	fbq('track', 'CompleteRegistration');

If you are using the current pixel version, your ads will still work, see this [full description from Facebook](#) on any changes to expect.

What all this information does is help you direct advertising spend much more accurately when you can break down conversions and conversion rate according to a specific ad. When you can establish the granular details of a relationship like this, beyond a "Facebook drove 30% of all conversions", you then develop greater insight into your customer's demographics and interests and what really makes them convert.

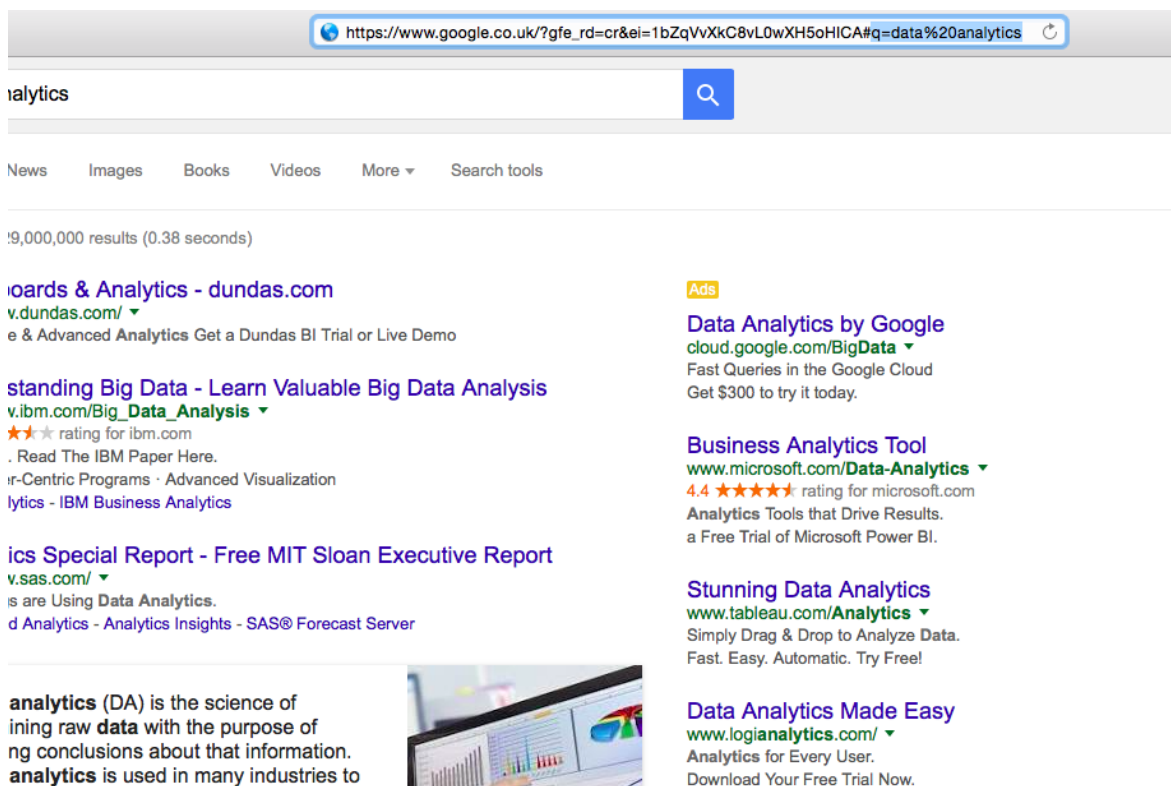
All vital information to optimise your marketing activities and inform your digital strategy moving forward.

INTERNAL SITE SEARCH

If you have search functionality on your website, it is useful to have site search tracking turned on to be able to easily identify what users are searching for on your site. This information provides another layer of insight and customer research to inform marketing strategy.

** If you have multiple reporting views set up as per Chapter 2, site search needs to be set up for each reporting view.*

1. Sign in to Google Analytics
2. On the **Admin** tab, in the third column select the relevant view you are looking to set up site search for, and click on **View Settings**
3. Under **Site Search Settings**, slide the button from OFF to ON
4. Identify your site query parameter, which can be found by looking in the URL when a site is conducted. In the example below from a Google search, their search parameter is “q=”:



5. In the **Query Parameter** field, enter the word(s) that designate an internal query such as “term,search,query”, which can just be a letter like the above example
6. Select whether or not you want Google Analytics to strip the query parameter from your URL. This strips only the parameters you provided, and not any other parameters in the same URL.

7. Select whether or not you use categories, such as drop-down menus to refine a site search. If you select No, you are finished, and click Save Changes.
8. If you select Yes:
 - a. In the Category Parameter field, enter the letters that designate an internal query category such as 'cat, qc,'
 - b. Select whether or not you want Google Analytics to strip the category parameters from your URL.
 - c. Click Apply

Once set up, you can now see what people are searching for on your site. Go to Behaviour -> Site Search to view this data, where you can see insights such as Total Unique Searches, Time After Search and the all important search terms people use.

You could use this information to identify key gaps in your product or service offering, opportunities for cross sell, insights to inform future advertising or email campaigns based on real search data.

You can also take instant actionable learnings from these reports. For example, are a number of your users searching for information on a specific theme? You may want to make the content pages related to that theme more prominent on the homepage or key gateway pages.

GOOGLE TAG MANAGER

If your business is starting to grow and you find the resources to expand your marketing strategy it might be quite likely that you have multiple code additions with which to track your analytics platform – Adwords campaigns, Facebook ads, floodlight tags, GA events, remarketing tags etc. In this case Google Tag Manager (GTM) might be an option for you.

As the name suggests, GTM gives you one central place to manage all the different tags and events going on behind the scenes to track your marketing.

Just one coding addition to your site can give you the ability to add or change tags whenever you want, without bothering the tech guys and giving you the peace of mind that everything will continue to run smoothly by taking away the element of risk of breaking your site if you do not fully understand HTML.

Much like your initial set up of Google Analytics, there is still a snippet of code required on your site, but after this you have the ability to manage all your marketing activities.

Get started - https://www.google.co.uk/analytics/tag-manager/get-started/#?modal_active=none

VANITY URLS TO TRACK OFFLINE ACTIVITY

Tracking any offline ads has always been a bit of a tricky process given the obvious drawback of the fact there is no click to a website that has the appropriate tag to identify a certain source as such.

In the Basic Guide to Data Analytics, we covered how to set up tracking URLs using [Google's URL Builder](#). To make that jump between offline and online, you can use this same tactic, but instead of placing this complex URL on a print ad for example, which wouldn't be very memorable, you could create a shortened vanity URL that is more memorable that points to your complex URL built with the Google tool:

- In your own content management system (CMS), you should have the ability/access to add a new page
- In creating this page, choose a short and memorable URL path: <http://www.yoursite.com/new-product>
- Place a 301 Redirect command from /new-product to your extended complex Google URL

For use in practice:

- Say you had a magazine print ad highlighting the launch of a new product; you would probably need a memorable URL that magazine readers could visit to find out more. But how do you know if someone came through from seeing that ad specifically?
- You could create a vanity URL that would display only on that magazine ad, along the lines of www.yoursite.com/new-product
- This URL should then redirect to http://www.yoursite.com/new-product?utm_source=Print&utm_medium=Offline&utm_campaign=NewProduct
- So from an offline source, when a magazine reader reads yoursite.com/new-product, arrives at your site via this unique URL, GA can track that visit under the Campaign Name = New Product

- Since your vanity URL will only exist in specific places, you can start to link your offline activity to website behaviour and conversions

It can still be challenging to connect offline marketing activities and consumer behaviour directly to online activity and even sales, but this simple process gives you that tracking connection between these two channels as a useful starting point.

SECTION 4

ANALYSING ONSITE BEHAVIOUR

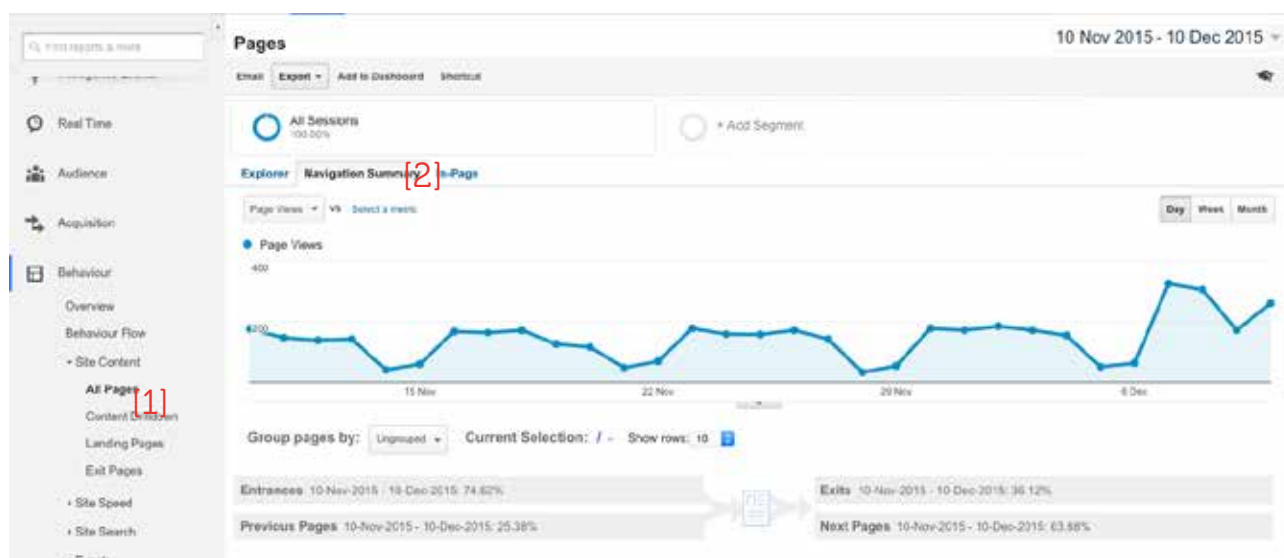
Google Analytics does not just provide you with insights into the success of your marketing activities through conversions; it can also be extremely valuable for determining how users consume information on your site and how they move through your site.

By understanding how visitors use your site, you can begin to establish opportunities for improvements in website usability and user journeys, and assist in optimising this journey to focus users on reaching a specific end goal of your site.

NAVIGATION SUMMARY

GA's Navigation Summary is a useful tool to see at-a-glance how people are moving to and from some of your key pages.

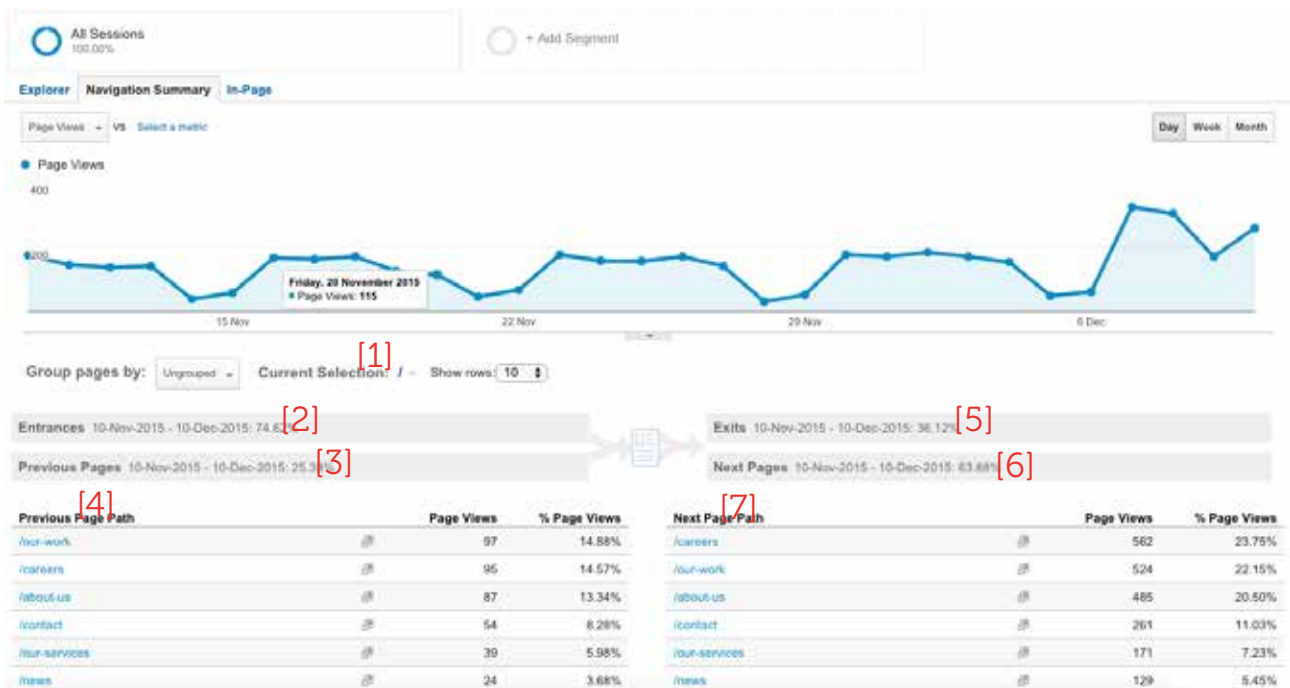
To access this report, go to Behaviour -> All Pages [1] -> Navigation Summary [2]. The default view is always on Explorer that lists all your site pages by page view volume.



Once on your navigation summary, where by default your current page being viewed will be your site's homepage, identified by "/".

From this report, you are able to work out:

- Where users navigate to starting from any page on your site, which you can specify through the Current Selection dropdown [1]
- Percentage of users who entered on the selected page from another site [2]
- Percentage of users who entered on the selected page from another page on your site [3], and which pages those were [4]
- From the selected page, the percentage of users that left the site [5]
- From the selected page, the percentage of users that continued onto another page on your site [6], and what those most popular pages were [7]



Is the movement of users from one page to another what you would expect? You can use this report to work out the effect of altering your site structure for example.

Are there any 'roadblocks' to conversion? You can use this report to see how users are navigating to key conversion points and if there are any specific pages that are causing a drop off.

If people are not moving through your conversion funnel enough then ask yourself why – Are there clear calls to action on the key pages? Are the offending pages too confusing or too long? If calls to action are all at the bottom of a long page, users may not be engaged enough to get there.

If your Blog page is linked halfway down your homepage, is not one of your top next page paths but is an important page for your site, you might want to consider elevating the link to your blog higher up the page or even move it into your primary navigation menu to enable users to get there quicker.

Perhaps one of your primary navigation menu options is not generating the pageviews from the homepage you were expecting? This might point towards the page title not fully explaining what that page does or is confusing to users so they avoid navigating to that page.

Like everything within Analytics, never take one single report or number as gospel. For example, a page that is apparently hidden on your site based on the navigation summary might have a good conversion rate from traffic that comes direct to that page from third party ads. By elevating the prominence of that page would increase traffic to that page and likely lower conversion rate.

Always consult other data where possible to make the most of the data you have available.

BEHAVIOUR FLOW

A good extension to the Navigation Summary report is the Behaviour Flow, found under the Behaviour dropdown in your Google Analytics primary menu on the left. Rather than viewing through the navigation summary individual pages and their previous/next page paths, behaviour flow visualises the most common paths users take to navigate through your site.



This report can help determine what content keeps users engaged with your site as well as identifying potential content issues.

- The grey lines show a connection between one step and another. The thickness of the connection indicates the relative volume of traffic in that segment.
- Similarly, the red lines highlight the relative volume of traffic that exited at that stage in the website journey.
- The thicker the lines, the more users/traffic that took that path.

ACTING ON BEHAVIOUR FLOW DATA?

As before, combine behaviour flow data with bounce rates and high exit pages to adjust your site content.

If you find people are not converting on your goals, then test your calls to action or your placement of promotional material. *Importantly, whenever you are making adjustments to any part of your marketing strategy, don't make too many changes at once, as then you will never know which change it was that really made the difference for your users.*

If you see that people are dropping off after viewing one page, or only reading one blog post, test changes to the layout of elements on these pages. In addition, look at the pages that drive the best engagement compared to those where people drop off. Is there anything on the engaging pages that can be replicated to the poorer performing pages?

Analysis will help inform content decisions for the site.

SECTION 5

APPLYING SEGMENTS FOR DEEPER ANALYSIS

By sticking with the standard reports that show visits, traffic sources, top content etc., you might be missing out on new ways to learn more about your traffic.

Advanced segments allow you to easily segment your user data based around any parameter within Google Analytics to highlight this specific data throughout the GA reports. By using the segment filters to select the precise data subset you want to look at you can create segments to explore specific aspects that matter to your business. Quickly and easily see how certain traffic sources performed, compare data sets, drilldown into deep data to improve channel performance or improve conversion data.

You can create segments to view the activity of specific data subsets around the following fields:

- Demographic
- Technology
- Onsite Behaviour
- Traffic Sources
- Ecommerce

Useful segments by which to analyse your data include:

- User age or gender
- Mobile traffic
- Specific browser traffic
- Users that viewed a specific site section (e.g. blog)
- Users that converted
- Traffic from a specific Traffic source (such as email, PPC, etc)
- Users who made a purchase

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VIEW FILTERS AND ADVANCED SEGMENTS

In some cases, Filters and Segments will return the exact same data, but the two features can be used to complement each other, and do have some key differences.

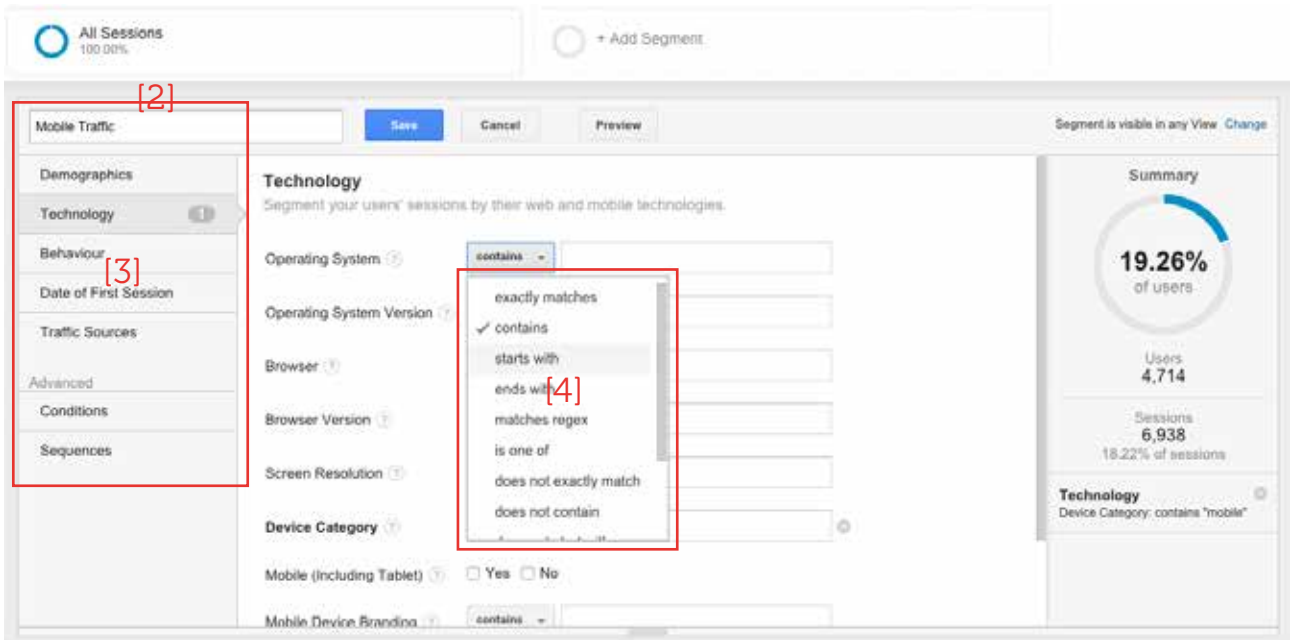
View Filters are a more permanent segmentation technique, used where a segment of your data is unlikely to change over the long term, and so would make sense to have the option to permanently remove it, for e.g. the IP addresses of internal traffic or a specific country office wishes to only see activity within their region. It is a control function, if you wanted to limit the level of access to your GA data, for example if you only wanted to provide Paid and PPC-related traffic to an external agency who manage that activity.

Advanced Segments are used to drill down into a specific data subset to further understand visitor behaviour. How does Referral traffic perform vs. Organic search traffic, mobile users vs. desktop users etc.? Segments should also be used to identify users who spent more than a certain amount of time on site or visitors who spend more than a certain amount per transaction.

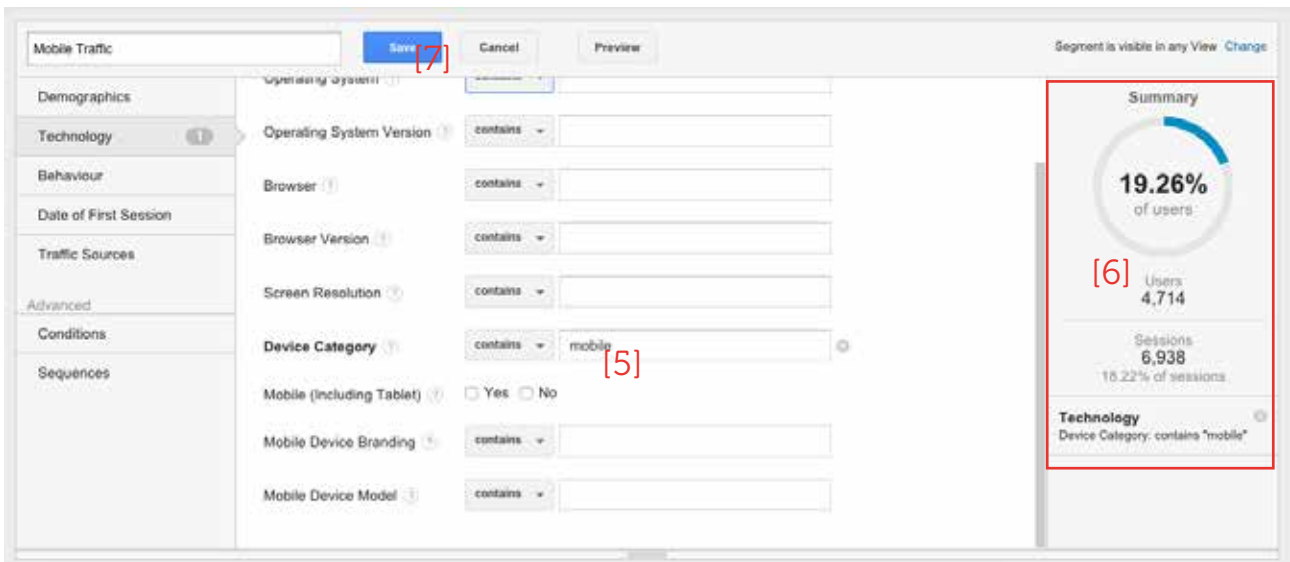
ADVANCED SEGMENTS: CONDITIONS & SEQUENCES

You can get even more granular with your segments by stating either conditions or sequences that a user must complete to be counted within the segment. The example below shows a simple example of segmenting out mobile visitors only.

- Click on **+ Add Segment** at the top of your reporting dashboard [1]
- Enter a name for your segment; you could potentially end up with a long list, so make sure the name is descriptive enough to tell it apart! In this case, we use Mobile Traffic [2]
- To configure the criteria for the segment, start by clicking a category of dimensions or metrics in the left-hand panel – use the options that appear in the right-hand panel to define the filters you want to apply to your data [3]
- Where relevant, use the dropdown menus [4] to select operators such as **contains, exactly matches** or **starts with**, and type in any specific strings you want to match.



- Here we would select *Technology*, and under *Device Category*, contains "mobile" [5]
- As you apply criteria to your segment, you can see how when applied it will affect site traffic [6]
- When satisfied with your segment, click Save by the segment name field [7]



It's possible to create quite complex configurations of criteria. If you apply multiple values within the same dimension, by default OR logic applies:

- For example data will be included if it matches either of the criteria Age 18-24 OR Age 25-34
- Otherwise AND logic applies, and data will be included if it matches both criteria – for example, "Demographics/Age 18-24" AND "Demographics/Gender: Female".

Conditions and Sequences enable you to build up more complex sets of criteria based on dimensions and metrics as we've seen, but with some additional options. Rather than being restricted to specific categories, they let you create filters for any dimension or metric:

- They can include or exclude specific data
- They can include AND OR conditions
- When you include user and session-based rules in the same filter, those are joined with AND logic – that is, data is included when it meets both conditions
- Sequences filters let you determine whether the sequence begins with the first user interaction or with any user interaction

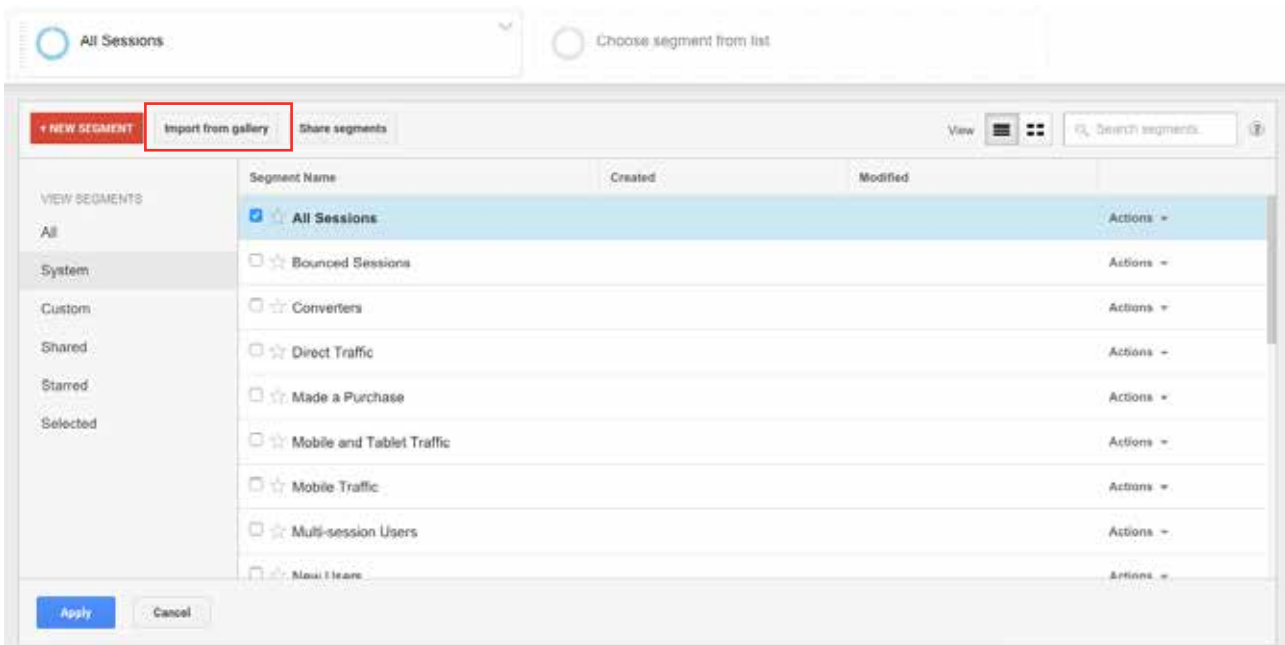
You can even share your custom Segments and import Segments created by other Analytics users from the Analytics Solutions Gallery.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS SOLUTIONS GALLERY

The Google Analytics Solutions Gallery is a freely accessible repository for custom reporting tools, saved as templates to apply to your own data. You can share your own Dashboards, Custom Reports, Segments, Goals and Custom Attribution Models in the Solutions Gallery (all without your own data, just the configurations), and import ready-made ones from it which have been created and shared by other users.

You can even use the Solutions Gallery as a starting point and customise further to ensure it is specific to your website and what you are looking to achieve.

To access the Solutions Gallery, when you click to add a new segment, select *Import from gallery*:



SECTION 6

DEMOGRAPHICS AND INTERESTS

When it comes to reporting on audience demographics and interests, you can analyse by several categories to learn more about your customers, deepening your insights and knowledge in knowing what makes them tick and importantly, what makes them convert.

There are 5 demographic categories available:

- Age: grouped into 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65+; it is not possible to specify custom age ranges
- Gender: GA identifies users as either Male or Female
- Affinity Categories: identifying users by various lifestyle-type categories;
 - Points of Passion (foodies, pet lovers, fashionistas etc.)
 - Active Lifestyle (sports fans, thrill seekers, outdoor enthusiasts etc.)
 - Travel Savvy (luxury travellers, family, snowbound travellers etc.)
 - Consumer Habits (bargain hunters, luxury shoppers, value shoppers etc.)
 - Arts & Entertainment (movie lovers, gamers, avid readers etc.)
- In-Market Segments: identifying users based on product-purchase interests:
 - Autos & Vehicles
 - Consumer Electronics
 - Home & Garden
 - Sports & Fitness etc.
- Other Categories: which identifies users in more depth; while Affinity Categories identify as "foodies", Other Categories includes Recipes/Cuisines/Asian for example

It is important to note that Demographics and Interest data is not automatically collected by the Analytics code that you initially set up your site with, it comes from a third party cookie for website traffic.

Therefore, before you can view Demographic or Interest data in your standard reporting view in Google Analytics you must enable Display Advertiser Features for your property, and enable the Demographics and Interests reports for the view you want to use.

[Read how to set up Demographics and Interests reports in Google Analytics](#)

There are several uses for this data both in GA, and within your wider marketing activity. Standard reporting allows you to see the breakdown of sessions, site behaviour and conversions by each demographic category mentioned above.

These reports can tell you the type of visitor your site receives, which can then inform audience targeting for marketing and advertising campaigns on Adwords, the display network or Facebook/Twitter PPC channels.

You can also use all this information in advanced segments too (once you enable the feature). You can create a segment of Men, age 18-24 who exhibit certain site behaviours (spent a certain amount of time onsite or view more than 5 pages for example) and use this segment to create a remarketing audience, who you can then target with a specific ad based on what you categorically know about them.

It is these kinds of insights that can begin to drive your marketing into the realms of world-class (or even just advanced)!

But knowing your audience is just the start. What you do with that knowledge can be the difference between a conversion or not! Which is where you need to look at your entire marketing process and optimise for conversions.

SECTION 7

CONVERSION RATE OPTIMISATION

In the basic guide to data analytics, we highlighted the importance of conversions. *Conversions are what should drive your data analytics activity, because it provides that statistical certainty the marketing activities you conduct are working or not.*

All your activities should be optimised with that conversion in mind, and the rate at which users are purchasing your product or service. As marketers, we need to be able to prove to management that all your activity is driving conversions and is generating revenue.

That's where Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO) comes into play. There is a common misconception that CRO is the process of optimising your landing page to maximise conversions – A/B testing form lengths, changing images, headlines, the colour of your call-to-action button etc. While these elements all play their part, much like micro conversions themselves, they do not represent the bigger picture, and in actual fact, are all part of your landing page optimisation technique.

But what use is your landing page if you cannot actually find and capture the right people?

CRO involves consideration of the entire customer journey from ad impression through to actual conversion. If you can't get impressions on your ad, you can't get clicks. If you can't get clicks you can't get landing page visits. If you can't get landing page visits, you can't get conversions. See where we're going with this?

Below we have broken down the CRO process into three steps to show what you should be focusing on at each stage to optimise your strategy for as many conversions as possible, and which reports and analysis you should be considering at each stage, and the actions to take to improve this process further.

The behaviour of the digital consumer today is much more complex, with so many potential touchpoints with your brand – an ad, your website, social media, competitor sites, review website, consumer forums, the list goes on.

Therefore it is more vital than ever to fully understand your own customers and how they behave on their journey to conversion.

STAGE ONE: ENSURING RELEVANT TRAFFIC

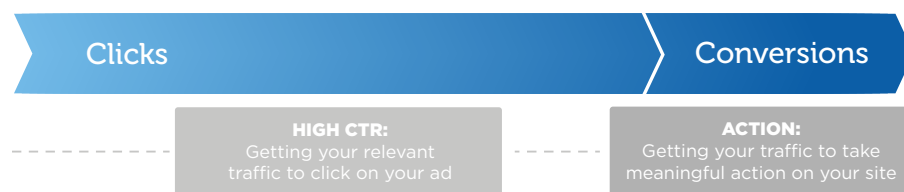


The first priority is to ensure you can find and capture the right people. Look at the traffic coming into your site. In GA you can use your standard Acquisition All Traffic reports, or for deeper analysis, use advanced segments to compare different traffic channels for how each source performs once they get to your site.

There are several key metrics you can look at here to determine this performance:

1. For Paid channels, check click-through-rate (CTR) on your ads themselves; a low CTR could mean your ad targeting is not quite right; use insights gathered from audience persona research and competitor analysis to ensure you are appearing in front of the same people
2. On all channels (paid and non-paid), in the initial stages look at how traffic behaves when they land on your site – bounce rate, time on site etc.
3. *But most importantly, always keep an eye on your conversion data, broken down by traffic medium and source*; which channels are returning the most value for the spend or activity on them; on the top performing sources, will increasing your activity lead to an increase in conversions and conversion rate? *If your paid channels are performing well, remember that simply increasing spend will not necessarily lead to a positive effect on your conversion rate – more spend will likely lead to more impressions and traffic, but if that traffic is unqualified and not targeted correctly, your conversion rate will suffer and may develop into a less valuable channel*

STAGE TWO: CREATE ACTION



Conversions follow clicks. The objective should be to turn as many clicks as possible into meaningful actions. Too many clicks and no conversions is bad. Few clicks with conversions is also not enough. The aim should be a lot of traffic with a high conversion rate.

At this stage you should be focusing on ensuring users take the desired action on your site. Do users behave the way you expect them to after they land on the site? Don't just look at visitor sessions and standard top line metrics, also utilise your navigation and behaviour flow reports to identify any points or trends where users might be happening to leave the site, or drop out of the conversion process for example.

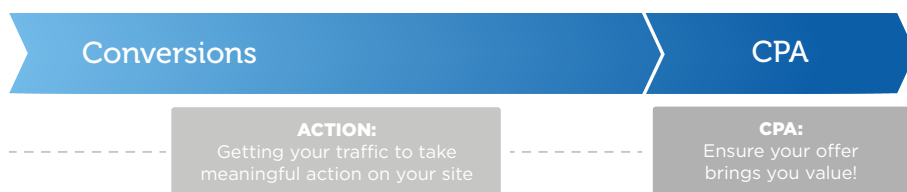
By using advanced segments, you can run these reports specifically for each channel by taking them in isolation, and really focusing on what it is about traffic from a specific source that is working or not.

Also look at how users get to your site from each channel. Does the click from an ad or social media post represent a logical step in the users journey? Does your landing page offer or expand on what the ad was telling them?

If conversion rates are not where you would expect them after this analysis, you might consider making changes onsite to better convert and engage users. Is there an additional step that can be removed, is your call-to-action on your landing page not obvious, or not what users are expecting?

Always approach from the point of view of the consumer, put yourself in their shoes – Would I click on this link? Is the information presented answering my query, addressing my problem or providing a solution?

STAGE THREE: GET VALUE



The last step in the cycle is to ensure that your conversions are coming in at an acceptable rate based on your sales/value. *Cost-per-conversion or cost-per-acquisition (CPA), not to be confused with cost-per-click (CPC) is calculated by the total cost you paid to get your conversions, divided by the actual number of conversions.* If you paid too much for a conversion and didn't make money, you have to optimise further – is your targeting correct, is your ad not captivating enough, does your landing page need refreshed?

When you are paying too much for your conversion, remember it's not a case of changing the colour of your landing page CTA. Consider the entire conversion rate process, and optimise where you see inefficiencies.

A useful report to run if you have several steps on your site before conversion is the Funnel Visualisation conversion report, which as the name suggests, visualises where visitors enter your funnel from, where they drop off, the % of people that make it through to each step and eventually convert.

Again, with advanced segments you can then work out which medium or source is the most expensive per conversion. Was this cost worth it based on what you spent to generate those conversions?

CLICK ATTRIBUTION MODELLING

Depending on your product/service, you might also want to consider click attribution. If you are selling something higher in value/cost that requires the customer to think about the purchase and research over time, the user might engage with several touchpoints before actually converting.

Attribution modelling looks at which click in the consumer journey is the one that gets credit for a sale or conversion. This [support article from Google](#) is useful for explaining the different click attribution models along with a good example of how this works in practice.

A real-life example below shows a comparison in Google Analytics between Linear and First Click attribution in the conversion of a full application

submission for a professional training course. In this example, due to the cost and nature of the course itself there is a relatively long journey to conversion, prior to submitting an application.

MCF Channel Grouping	Spend (for selected time range)	Conversions & CPA				% change in Conversions (from First Interaction)
		First Interaction		Linear		
		Conversions	CPA	Conversions	CPA	
1. Direct	---	61.00 (32.11%)	---	107.23 (66.44%)	75.79% +	
2. Organic Search	---	61.00 (32.11%)	---	29.71 (16.87%)	-51.30% +	
3. Paid Search	£10,372.04	21.00 (11.61%)	£493.91	59.38 (30.21%)	£534.86 -7.66% -	
4. Referral	---	19.00 (10.00%)	---	14.66 (7.72%)	-22.85% +	
5. Social Network	---	11.00 (5.72%)	---	7.93 (4.17%)	-27.92% +	
6. Display	---	8.00 (4.16%)	---	4.16 (2.18%)	-30.66% +	
7. Email	---	5.00 (2.61%)	---	3.78 (1.99%)	-37.07% +	
8. (Other)	---	5.00 (2.61%)	---	3.15 (1.68%)	-37.08% +	

In the screenshot, you can see that by crediting the conversion to the First Interaction source, then Organic Search traffic would account for 32% of all conversions (highlighted on the left). But for this product which requires consideration and research, it would probably be more accurate to apply a Linear model to reflect that the user will research and likely return to this business via different channels.

By using the Linear model, where credit for the conversion is divided equally among all channels, you can see in actual fact Organic Search traffic only drove 16% of all conversions (highlighted on the right).

Whether you implement a model like this is very much dependent on your product/service offering. It is relevant in helping determine what drove a full sale or conversion. Micro conversions such as email newsletter sign up or PDF download, where the step to conversion is usually much smaller, this can largely be attributed to the first click.

But if you have a conversion much like the example above, attribution modelling should be considered to ensure you are reporting on more accurate insights in finding your true conversion rate and cost-per-acquisition, which is our key takeout here – never take one number, figure or metric at full face value. Consider as many findings as you can for clear insights to action moving forward.

SECTION 8

EXAMPLE SCENARIOS - WHAT DO I DO IF...

Inform Your Marketing Activity: This intermediate level guide to website data analytics has introduced many slightly more advanced approaches to analysing your website data and marketing activity. While you may not feel it necessary to apply every tactic and technique, keep in mind that the more you can find out about your audience, their behaviour and how they interact with your various channels, the better you will become at running an informed marketing campaign in such a way that provides invaluable return on your investment.

Also don't forget the useful resources presented in our Basic Guide to Website Data Analytics, all of which also feature advanced analytics features, blogs and commentary to help you even further:

- analytics.blogspot.com
- google.com/support/analytics
- advanced-web-metrics.com/blog
- kaushik.net/avinash
- lunametrics.com/blog
- roirevolution.com/blog

DIGITALBOOST

power up your business

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS GATEWAY OFFICE

Get expert advice on this and a wide range of topics for free at your local Business Gateway office.

bgateway.com/local-offices

GLOSSARY

Advanced segments

A subset of Google Analytics data to enable a more in-depth view at a section of your site traffic.

AND logic conditions

Requires that all conditions are met to define an advanced segment.

Attribution modelling

The rule or set of rules that determine how credit for a sale or conversion is assigned to touchpoints in a user's journey.

Behaviour flow

This Google Analytics report visualises the path that users take to get from one page to the next. Can help you discover what content keeps users engaged and help identify potential content issues by analysing drop offs.

Conditions (advanced segments)

Conditions for advanced segments are the set of rules that allow you to create filters for any dimension or metric.

Custom parameters

Non-sensitive identifiable data that you can implement in custom-built URLs to filter out campaign traffic in Google Analytics.

Custom reports

A report you can create that includes dimensions and metrics that you choose and how they should be displayed depending on their importance to your objectives.

Facebook pixel

A line of unique code that is used to track conversions, build audiences and get insights about how people use your website.

Filter

Allow you to limit and modify the data that is included in a view.

First interaction (attribution model)

The first touchpoint in a customer's conversion journey would receive 100% credit for a conversion.

Floodlight tags

An HTML tag that you place on your site to track conversions.

Goal hierarchy

A hierarchical structure that links high-level business objectives to more details goals and KPIs.

Google Tag Manager (GTM)

Allows you to manage tags on your site without the need for IT or coding involvement.

Internal site search

Only applicable if you have search functionality on your site, internal site search in Google Analytics allows you to detect the exact search queries that users are entering to locate content on your site.

Last Adwords click (attribution model)

The last Adwords click would receive 100% credit for the conversion.

Last interaction (attribution model)

The last touchpoint in a customer's conversion journey would receive 100% credit for that conversion.

Last non-direct click (attribution model)

Direct traffic is ignored and 100% of the credit for a conversion goes to the last channel the customer clicked through from before converting.

Linear (attribution model)

Each touchpoint in a customer's conversion journey would share equal credit for the conversion.

Macro conversions

Those conversions that deliver on the business's main objectives and are the primary desired actions you should be looking for a user to take.

Micro conversions

Micro conversions provide a part of the overall conversion journey, but taken in isolation to the overall journey they generally do not drive revenue at their own point of conversion.

Navigation summary

Use to determine how visitors actually navigate your site and how clicks are distributed over different areas or site sections.

OR logic conditions

Requires that any of the specified conditions are met to define an advanced segment.

Pixel tracking

Code that is inserted into a custom or third party creative to determine performance such as conversions driven by that creative.

Position based (attribution model)

40% credit for a conversion is assigned to each the first and last touchpoint in a customer's conversion journey, with the remaining 20% distributed evenly to each touchpoint in between.

Property

Google Analytics understands a property as a resource associated with you unique tracking ID code. Performance data under this ID is collected into the corresponding property in GA. This is why each owned platform/website should have its own unique GA ID.

Search query parameter

Appear at the end of URL following a question mark. It could be q or s for example. This enables you to filter out internal search queries when this search query parameter is known.

Sequences (advanced segments)

Sequences filters allow you to determine whether the sequence begins with the first user interaction or with any user interaction.

Solutions gallery

Allows you to share or import custom built reporting tools and assets like dashboards and pre-determined advanced segments into your Google Analytics reporting.

Time after search (internal site search)

The amount of time users spend on your site after performing a search.

Time decay (attribution model)

The touchpoints closest in time to the conversion itself will receive more credit for that conversion than those that occur earlier in a customer's conversion journey.

Unique searches (internal site search)

The total number of times your site search was used, excluding multiple searches on the same keyword during the same session.

Vanity URL

A unique web address configured and branded for marketing purposes to help users remember and find a specific page of your website.

View

A reporting view is the level in a Google Analytics account where you can access reports and analysis tools.