

Getting Started with Website Analytics

“How do I know if my website is working?” We often get this question soon after we launch a new website AND when a business comes to us with an older website they are concerned about. Understanding and tracking website analytics is a great way to answer that question.

Web analytics is the collection and analysis of website data. We all know that data is important, but what can website analytics tell you? It can help you understand how to:

- Improve [campaigns](#) that drive traffic to your site – Marketing
- Make your site [content](#) better (more engaging, more converting) – Site Performance
- Help find your site organically – [SEO](#)

You can turn analytics data into actionable information by understanding what you want your website to do. What are your goals for your website?

- Increased awareness?
- Increasing engagement?
- Lead generation
- Conversions?

While there are many tools for website analytics, the most basic is Google Analytics. It is a great place to start and can be customized to deliver in-depth information. For now, we'll start with the basics.

Set Up Goals

While most people understand that they should create a Google Analytics (GA) account, their configuration of the tool stops there. If you do nothing else in GA, take a few moments to set up conversion goals for your website. Goals measure how often users complete specific actions. Each action is a specific activity related to what you want your website to do for you. GA has 4 types of goals that you can set:

URL destination goal – measures how many users visited a specific page. If you are running a campaign and you ask people to “click” to learn more, one way you can measure your success is how many people come to that landing page.

Duration goal – lets you know how many people spend a certain amount of time on your site. This can give you an idea of how engaged people are with your content.

Pages/ visits goal – looks at the number of pages each visitor sees before they leave the site. Another measure of engagement.

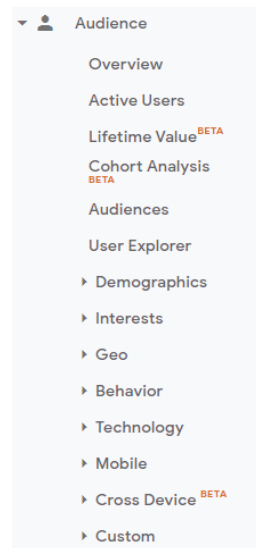
Event goals – measure events like downloads, clicking on links, filling out forms. Some of these events take a little set up to track, but they can help you understand your sales funnel and your website’s ability to convert prospects.

Get started by clicking into Admin in your GA account. Look under “View” for “Goals” and click “New Goals. For more instruction on how to set up goals, see [Google’s help doc here](#).

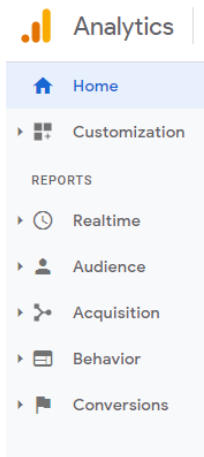
Understand Reports

Your GA account has a left navigation bar that includes several types of reports. These reports have a great deal of customization available!

Audience reports

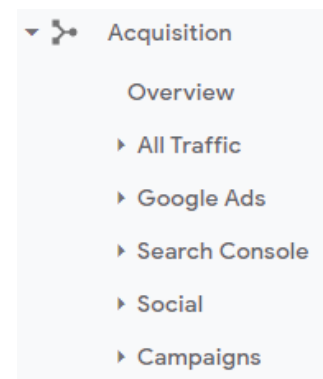


Tell you about your visitors. There is tremendous detail here that can help you understand the visitors to your site such as age, gender (demographics), affinity categories (interests, geography, what language they speak, how often they visit your site, what technology they use (browsers and devices).

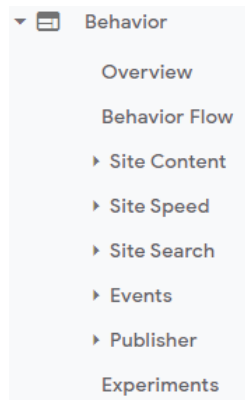


Acquisition reports

These reports will tell you everything you want to know about what brought visitors to your website (All Traffic). Channels (direct, organic, social or referral) or get more specific with Source/ Medium (google/ organic, Facebook/referral etc). You can learn details about traffic from social networks (Social). You can also connect Google Analytics to AdWords to learn more about PPC campaigns and to Google Webmaster Tools / Search Console to learn more about search traffic (Search Engine Optimization)



Behavior reports



These reports help you understand how users interact with content. You can learn which are the most visited pages on your website, the top points of entry (landing pages), where people leave your site, and more. Definitely take a look at Behavior Flow as it tells the story of your user's flow through the site so you can improve navigation and placement of information.

If you have a search function on your site, you can set up Site Search so that you will be able to see what terms are searched for and the pages they are searched.

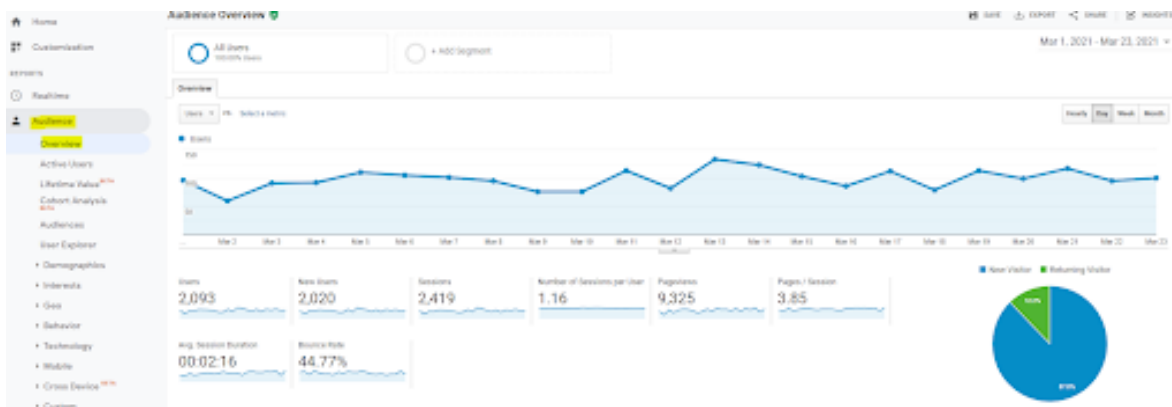
You can also learn how fast your website loads (Site Speed) as well as find specific suggestions from Google on how to make your website faster.

Choosing Key Metrics

Now, you are ready to choose metrics. The key is to understand what each of these metrics measures and to choose the ones that most closely measure your success toward your goals.

Traffic

At its most basic, traffic is the number of people that see your site. Google Analytics offers a number of different types of measures of traffic.



1. **Sessions** – this is the number of times your site has been accessed. An individual user could have multiple sessions. Say someone looks at your website, leaves it, and comes back to it later to look at something else – that is 2 sessions, one user.
2. **Users** – tells you how many individual people have visited. It actually counts devices, so if someone visits your site from their phone and then gets on their laptop, that will be 2

users. New users – people who have never visited your site before. Returning – people who have visited your site before and have returned for another visit.

3. **Pageviews** – the average number of pages a user has viewed in one session.

Why measure traffic? Traffic measures give you an overview of the success of your site and of your campaigns. If very few people are visiting your site, you know you need to work on your SEO and on campaigns that drive people to your site. For example, if your website’s goal is to serve and retain existing clients, you’ll want to see a high number of returning users. On the other hand, if your goal is to have your website attract NEW clients, you’ll want to see a lot of new visitors.

Bounce Rate

A bounce is when a user visits a page on your site but does not engage with it (click) in any way before leaving. If your bounce rate is high (over 80%), don’t despair until you take a deeper look. Check the Behavior > Site Content > All Pages report to see which pages have the highest bounce rates.

- If you share a lot of content via blogs and resources, your bounce rate is likely to be high. People will come to your site to read that blog and leave. Your goal is to think about how to entice people to click from your blog into the rest of your website.
- Really look at any page with a high bounce rate to see how you can improve the content and any connection/ links to additional sections of your website.

Why look at bounce rate? It is a measure of the success of your design/ the quality of your web presence and your content. Most people will look at the overall bounce rate for a site as an indicator of the [site’s overall success](#).

Engagement

Pages per session gives you a measure of how “engaged” people are with your site. If the pageview total is low, it tells you that you need to hunt down what the problem is. Did users look at your home page and go? Then maybe you need to improve the content on that page to bring people further into getting to know you. Did they come into a blog and go nowhere else? Then you should consider providing crosslinks to other related information and [calls to actions \(CTAs\)](#)

Average session duration: In most cases, you want to see people spending more time on your site – the longer they are there, the more they are engaging with your content.

Sources

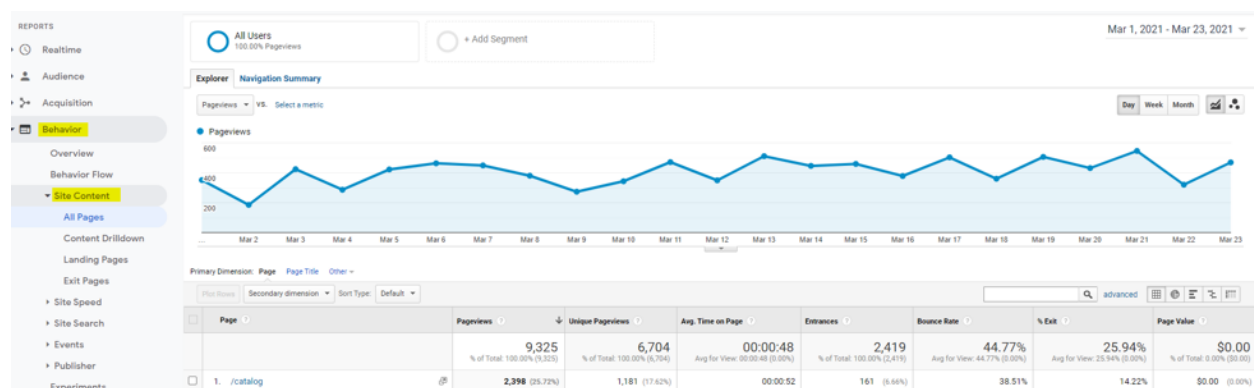


These measures tell you where your traffic is coming from. You find them in the Acquisitions report in Google Analytics.

1. **Organic Search:** Visitors coming from [search engines](#) (Google, Bing, etc.)
2. **Referral:** Web traffic from another website
3. **Direct:** A user types the exact domain URL into their computer browser
4. **Social:** Website traffic coming from [social media](#) networks ([Facebook](#), Twitter, [LinkedIn](#), etc.)

Why look at source? Source helps you understand if your marketing campaigns are bearing fruit. Let's say you are spending a lot of time and money building your social media presence. You'll want to see that people are coming to your website from social as one measure of the success of those efforts.

Site Content



There are several measures in the Behavior section of Google Analytics that can help you understand how people use your site. Reviewing these measures can help you diagnose problems and recognize strengths that can be repeated.

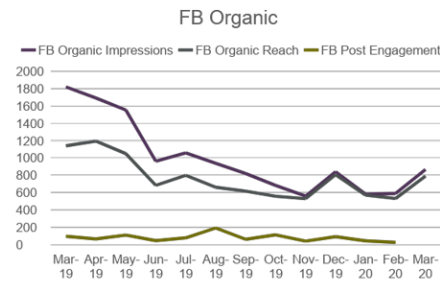
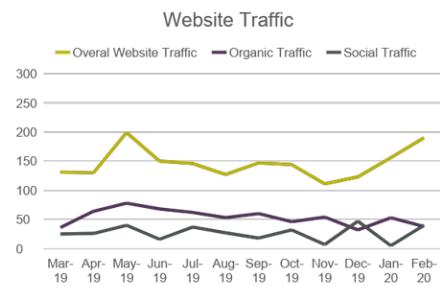
1. **Top Pages** – the overview report in this section will tell you the most popular pages (in terms of pageviews) in order. It is a great indicator of where people are finding the most value on your website.

2. **Landing Pages** – these are the pages that people enter your site. Looking at this report can confirm that your campaigns are working properly and which campaigns are doing the best.
3. **Exit Pages** – these are the pages that people leave your site from. A page that has a lot of drop-offs is a good place to make changes!

Tracking

Now that you have goals and metrics, don't forget to set up a system for tracking them. Your system could be as simple as an Excel spreadsheet. Add the most important measures as graphs to give a visual reference for your c-suite.

Marketing/Sales Key Performance Measures		Jan-19	Jan-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20
Website Traffic	How to Track															
Overall Website Traffic	Google Analytics - Audience - Overview - Users - Unique visitors to website	145	106	131	130	199	150	146	127	147	144	111	123	156	190	240
Organic Traffic	Google Analytics - Acquisition - Overview -	65	50	36	64	78	68	62	53	60	46	54	32	53	38	50
Social Traffic	Google Analytics - Acquisition - Overview -	38	19	25	26	40	16	37	27	18	32	7	47	5	40	56
Top 3 Pages visited (Pageviews)	Google Analytics - Behavior - Site Content - All Pages - Pageviews total count for top 3	162	183	150	204	220	223	179	164	208	191	189	132	244	215	308
Contact Form	web admin - content webforms-submissions	3	1	0	3	5	5	5	8	3	4	5	0	7	9	9
Make an Appointment		3	4	5	10	6	3	4	4	8	1	6	6	6	8	3
Total Conversions		6	5	5	13	11	8	9	12	11	5	11	6	13	17	12
Facebook																
FB Followers	FB Insights - Followers	207	207	208	208	206	207	207	206	207	208	207	208	209	215	215
FB Impressions	FB - Insights - Impressions - the number of times your post was served	1337	995	1820	1692	1553	962	1058	937	820	682	559	841	581	589	867
FB Organic Reach	The number of unique people that saw your post	88	619	1140	1194	1049	683	799	661	616	557	529	807	571	531	790
Effective Frequency	Divide total impressions/ total reach = the average number of impressions per user															
FB Paid Impressions		1597	1756	1215	1205	293	2630	496	718	788	1836	322	1021	0	235	3789
FB Paid Reach		1234	1454	1047	1035	1913	2153	466	643	716	1631	305	958	0	29	348
FB Total Impressions		2934	2751	3035	2897	1846	3592	1554	1655	1608	2518	881	1862	581	824	4656
FB Post Engagement		84	49	95	64	109	45	77	191	60	112	39	91	42	25	120



[Your CRM](#) may have tracking and reporting capabilities that you can take advantage of. Some are quite sophisticated with attribution models and ROI estimates build in. Either way, understanding the changes over time is an important aspect of measuring the success of your website.

In our digital world, your website is one of your most important business assets, but it isn't a "one and done" kind of thing. Website analytics can help you understand what is working and what is not so that you can make informed adjustments that optimize its contribution to your bottom line.

These three steps will start you on your way:

1. Start with defining what you want your website to do for you – set your goals.
2. Choose your metrics – what measures will help you decide if you are reaching those goals?
3. Monitor and track those results.

Make changes, rinse and repeat!