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Measure. Analyze. Optimize.



Google Analytics Reporting Guide



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While a one-size-fits-all checklist would not be desirable for Google Analytics reporting, a few key metrics and techniques, as outlined below, can be considered part of best-practice reporting across the board. We have also identified special considerations by industry and team function.

Unlike implementation steps, many of which need to be performed once only during an extended period, reporting items should be reviewed at least monthly, or as needed on an ongoing basis.

Although the list below seems quite long, it actually is a streamlined, prioritized set of starting points for a relatively small number of reports and metrics. Also included are other best practices, such as custom segmentation, custom reporting, and annotation.

This guide does not directly follow the book's chapter order. You can use the chapter notations to refer to the broader discussions in the book.

You can use this guide in its current form or adapt it as a customized checklist for your organization or your clients.

Broad Framework for Reporting

In your reporting processes, always keep the following fundamental questions in mind:

- **Objectives:** What are your business objectives?
- **Initiatives:** Which initiatives (in marketing, content, and functionality) are you taking to meet these objectives?
- **KPIs:** Which metrics represent the KPIs that best reflect your performance relative to these objectives and initiatives?
- **Actions:** Which actions can you take for improvement?

Site Content Reports (Chapter 2)

Landing Pages

- **Entrances:** Which landing pages have the greatest number of entrances?
- **Bounce Rate:** Which landing pages are showing highest and lowest bounce rate?
- **Percentage entrances other than home page:** How many sessions do not begin on your home page? Do you need any critical messaging or functionality to other top landing pages or to your navigation?
- **Source/Medium as secondary dimension:** Which combination of Source/Medium and Landing Page are performing the best in terms of entrances, bounces, and the metrics below?

For Content Engagement:

- **Pages/Session and Average Session Duration:** Which landing pages are showing the best performance for these metrics?
- **Content Groupings:** If you have implemented content groupings, how are the different content groups performing in terms of entrances and bounce rate?

For Lead Generation or Signups:

- **Goal x Completions and Conversion Rate:** Which landing pages are showing the best performance for these metrics?

For Ecommerce:

- **Transactions, Revenue, Ecommerce Conversion Rate:** Which landing pages are showing the best performance for these metrics?

Exit Pages

- **% Exit:** Which landing pages have the highest Percent Exit?

For Lead Generation or Ecommerce:

- **Exit pages in conversion path:** What are the Percent Exits for pages in your conversion paths (such as payment pages).

Content Drilldown

If your URLs are structured very hierarchically, you can use the Content Drilldown report somewhat similarly to content grouping to view pageviews, bounce rate, and exit by directory.

Data Comparison

- **align by day of week:** If you have a month selected (such as March):
 - a. Avoid the Compare to Previous Period and Compare to Previous Year.
 - b. Select Compare to Custom
 - c. Align the comparison periods to contain the same days of the week (for instance, September 1-30, 2016 compared to September 3 - October 2, 2015).
- **compare your KPIs to:**
 - a. previous month (or previous 28-day period aligned by day of the week)
 - b. same month previous year (or most closely corresponding period last year aligned by day of the week)
- **change in the change:** instead of just comparing to the previous period or the same period in the previous year, compare trends over multiple years so seasonality is factored in. (That is, if your conversion rate rose by 0.2% from January to February this year but by 0.5% January to February last year, this February this may be showing a negative trend, even if it has a higher conversion rate than last February.)

Navigation Summary

Review the Navigation Summary tab for the top 10 pages in your pages report.

- **Previous Pages** - for the selected page, what are the top previous pages? What can you do to enhance continuity (in terms of messaging, calls-to-action, etc.) from the previous pages to the selected page?

- **Next Pages** - for the selected page, are users navigating to the pages you intended most users to navigate to? To which pages are they then navigating, or what is the percent exit?

In-Page Analytics

For Your UI Team:

- On your top 10 pages in the Pages report, what is the click percentage distribution for the link on the page?

Events Reports (Chapter 6)

Top Events

Depending on the event tracking that you have implemented, you can report on the following:

- offsite clicks
- video interactions
- social profile links*

For Content Engagement:

- page scroll
- tabs
- metrics
- PDF downloads
- anchor links
- print page
- social share links*

For Lead Generation:

- mailto: clicks
- tel: clicks

For Ecommerce:

- live chat
- popup help
- hover for different product perspectives/variations
- filtering

- get directions
- “Make This My Store”

Secondary Dimension: Page

- In the Top Pages report, apply Page as a secondary dimension. On which pages are the events occurring?

*If you have implemented social tracking as social hits instead of event hits, these interactions would appear in the Social > Plugins report rather than the Events reports.

Site Search Reports (Chapter 2)

Site Search reports are populated if you have implemented site search tracking.

Search Terms Report

- **Total Unique Searches** - which terms have the most searches?
- **% Search Exits** - which searches have the % exits?
- **Start Page** - add Start Page as a secondary dimension to view the pages where users are initiating searches

What content, SEO, or marketing opportunities do you see in the Search Terms report?

Site Speed Reports (Chapter 2)

For Your UI/Development Team:

Page Timings Report

- **Avg. Page Load Time** - which terms have the highest?
- **Speed Suggestions** - review with your UI and development teams.

Audience Reports

Locations Report (Chapter 2)

- Sessions, Bounce Rate, Conversion Rate by Country, Region, City, and (U.S. only) Metro

For Your UI Team:

Mobile Overview Report (Chapter 2)

- Sessions, Bounce Rate, Conversion Rate by Device Category

Demographics and Interests Report (Chapter 12)

Demographics and Interests reports are available if you have enabled them. (The Google Analytics terms of service stipulate a privacy policy update for Demographics and Interests reporting.)

- Age and Gender: how might these percentages influence your design and messaging?

Note: since you can use the same Demographics and Interests dimensions to target audiences in for AdWords display and RLSA, you can advertise to the Demographics and Interest groups who are already showing the highest conversion rates in Google Analytics.

Acquisition Reports (Chapter 7)

Campaign Parameters

Make sure that you're using a consistent naming convention for all types of traffic that require campaign parameters. Refer to the Google Analytics Campaign and Channel Guide and the Google Analytics Campaign Worksheet in the Chapter 7 resources at www.e-nor.com/gabook.

Channels Report, Source/Medium Report

- **Entrances:** which traffic sources are generating the most sessions?
- **Bounce rate:** which traffic sources are showing highest and lowest bounce rate?

For Content Engagement:

- **Pages/Session and Average Session Duration:** which traffic sources are showing the best performance for these metrics?

For Lead Generation or Signups:

- **Goal x Completions and Conversion Rate:** which traffic sources are showing the best performance for these metrics?

For Ecommerce:

- **Transactions, Revenue, Ecommerce Conversion Rate:** which traffic sources are showing the best performance for these metrics?

AdWords Campaigns Report

If you have configured AdWords Autotagging, you can access a wide range of AdWords-related reports and metrics within Google Analytics. Start with:

- **Clicks, Cost, CPC:** how are the AdWords Campaigns performing in terms of these metrics?

For Lead Generation or Signups:

- **Goal x Completions and Conversion Rate:** which AdWords campaigns are showing the best performance for these metrics?

For Ecommerce:

- **Transactions, Revenue, Ecommerce Conversion Rate:** which AdWords campaigns are showing the best performance for these metrics?
- **Clicks tab > ROAS (Return on Ad Spend):** which AdWords campaigns are showing the best ROAS?

DoubleClick Campaign Manager Report

For Lead Generation or Signups:

- **View-through, Click-through:** how many goal completions, View-through and Click-through, per DCM campaign?

For Ecommerce:

- **View-through, Click-through:** how many Ecommerce transactions, View-through and Click-through, per DCM campaign?

If you have arranged your Google Analytics 360 account representative to activate the Clicks tab in the DCM report and populate cost data, you can view the cost related metrics:

- **Clicks tab > ROAS** (Return on Ad Spend): which DoubleClick campaigns are showing the best ROAS?

DoubleClick For Publishers Report

- **Impressions, Clicks, CTR, and Revenue:** how are your pages performing for these metrics?
- **Secondary Dimensions, Custom Reports:** if you have implemented hit-level custom dimensions or content grouping for your pages, use secondary dimensions within the DoubleClick for Publishers report or create a custom report?

Campaigns > Cost Analysis Report

Refer to this report if you have imported cost data from other advertising sources (such as BingAds or Facebook).

- **Cost per Conversion** - what is your Cost Per Conversion by campaign?

Search Console > Queries Report

- If you have integrated Google Search Console with Google Analytics, you can refer to the Search Console reports within Google Analytics.
- If you have been validated for Google Search Console but have not linked to a Google Analytics view, you can access the Search Analytics report directly within Google Search Console.
- What are your top queries?

Goal Reports (Chapter 8)

Goal Overview Report

- Goal x Conversion Rate
- Goal x Completions
- Goal x Abandonment Rate (if you have configured a goal funnel)

Funnel Visualization & Goal Flow Report

- If you have configured a goal funnel, check
 - drop-off between the funnel steps

- Funnel Conversion Rate
- If you need to apply a custom segment or view looping through the funnel steps, refer to the Goal Flow report rather than Funnel Visualization

Reverse Goal Path Report

- For your Destination Goals, view that paths that users are actually taking to get to your goal destination page.
- To further isolate drop-off points to your goal, you can create additional goals with other funnels based on the Reverse Goal Path report.

Ecommerce Reports (Chapter 8)

Ecommerce Overview Report

- Ecommerce Conversion Rate
- Revenue
- Product Revenue
- Transactions

Product Performance Report

- Product Revenue
- Quantity
- Average Price
- Average Quantity
- Cart-to-Detail Rate (Enhanced)
- Buy-to-Detail Rate (Enhanced)

Internal Promotion Report (Enhanced)

- Internal Promotion Views
- Internal Promotion Clicks
- Internal Promotion CTR
- Transactions
- Revenue
- Transactions Per Internal Promotion Click

Shopping Analysis Report (Enhanced)

- Drop-off from step to step in shopping funnel

Checkout Analysis Report (Enhanced)

- Drop-off from step to step in checkout funnel
- Checkout funnel completion rate

Page Value (Chapter 8)

The Page Value metrics is populated in the Pages report if you have implemented E-commerce or have assigned a goal value to at least one of your goals.

For Lead Generation or Signups:

- **Page Value:** which pages have the highest relative page value?

For E-commerce:

- **Page Value:** which pages have the highest relative page value (i.e., average revenue generated after the page is viewed in a session)?

View Page Value for E-commerce or a Single Goal Only

Page value is based on cumulative E-commerce revenue and goal value within the view. If, for example, your view had E-commerce tracking and two goals with goal value, you could view Page Value just for goal 2 by applying the following custom segment:

Custom Segment Name: *No Goal 1 or E-commerce*

Filter - Sessions - Exclude - Transactions - Per Session > 0

Filter - Sessions - Exclude - Goal 1 Completions - Per Session > 0

This segment would also exclude session in which both goal 2 was completed with goal 1 or a transaction but should still be valid in isolating overall Page Value for goal 2.

Multi-Channel Funnel Reports (Chapter 8)

1. **Conversion:** analyze a single conversion type at a time.
2. **Type:** If you're running AdWords or DoubleClick Campaign Manager ads, do separate analysis for:
 - a. All
 - b. AdWords
 - c. DFA
3. **LookBack Window:** You extend the lookback window to 90 days back.

Assisted Conversion Reports

- Which channels are performing stronger for conversion assists than for last click conversions?

Path Length Report

- How many sessions is it taking for your users to convert? (Each assisting session before the converting session is lowering the reported goal conversion rate or E-commerce conversion rate.)

Custom Segments (Chapter 10)

You can define custom segments for different purposes.

(Note the terms *Constituencies*, *Behavioral*, and *Ad Hoc* do not appear in the GA user interface.)

Constituencies

1. Identify your audience constituencies. (How you already discuss/classify your users/customers/members?)
 2. Create segments (examples below) that map to these constituencies.
 3. Do most of your analysis within these segments applied rather than the default All Users segment.
- **logged-in users vs. logged out users**
 - custom segment definition:
 - logged-in users go to /welcome page: define segments based on Page dimension, e.g., *Filter - Sessions - Include - Page - exactly matches - /welcome*
 - logged-out users do not go to a welcome page: implement a custom dimension for login status, and define segment based on this custom dimension, e.g., *Filter - Sessions - Include - LoginStatus - exactly matches - /loggedIn*
 - **customer levels**
 - custom segment definition:
 - If you have back-end designations for your customers (such as platinum, gold, silver, etc.), record these values as custom dimensions and define your segments accordingly, e.g., *Filter - Sessions - Include - CustomerLevel - exactly matches - silver*
 - **qualified referrals**
 - custom segment definition:
 - If you have qualified referrals from a specific source (for example, you're a medical provider, and a portion of your audience is referred from a major health insurance site), define the segment based on source/medium, e.g., *Filter - Sessions - Include - Source - exactly matches - insurancesite.com*
 - **visitor interests**
 - custom segment definition:
 - If half of your hiking website is dedicated to hiking tours and half is dedicated to hiking equipment, define two segments based on visitor navigation, e.g., *Filter - Sessions - Include - begins with - /tours* and *Filter - Sessions - Include - Page - begins with - /equipment*

Behavioral

You can define segments based on user behaviors (that is, pageviews or events) apply them to the Conversions reports to see how they correlate with goal completions and E-commerce transactions:

- **promo page**
 - custom segment definition:
 - if yo've developed a promotional page to boost conversions, define a segment based on a pageview of that page, e.g., *Filter - Sessions - Include - Page - exactly matches - /promo*
- **video**
 - custom segment definition:
 - If you have embedded a video that's designed to boost conversion, define a segment based on the event dimensions that you're using to capture the video interactions, e.g., *Filter - Sessions - Include - Event Category - exactly matches - video AND Event Action - exactly matches - play AND Event Label - exactly matches - promovideo*

Notes on behavioral segments:

- **scope:** you change set the “scope” of your session from the default *Sessions* to *Users*. If many of your users, for example, watch a video in one session and convert in a later session, conversion rate will be higher with the segment above defined at *Users* scope than as *Sessions* scope. If, however, most of the conversions occur in the same session as the video plays, the segment defined at *Users* scope will show lower conversion rates, since its calculation will be based on more sessions for the same number of conversions.
- **Sequences:** you can build sequence segments to validate that the user behavior (such as promo page or video view) in fact preceded the conversion.

Ad Hoc

You can define any ad hoc segments for one-time or temporary use:

- **campaign** - based on a specific campaign that you're running
- **geography** - based in city, region, or (in U.S.) metro area
- **device** - based on a Mobile Device Marketing Name or Mobile Device Branding

Intelligence Alerts (Chapter 11)

As a baseline, you can configure the following custom intelligence alerts:

Settings

Period: Weekly

This Applies to: All Traffic, Custom Segments

Alert Me When: Sessions Increase/Decrease by More Than 10%

For Content Engagement:

Alert Me When: Average Session Duration Increase/Decrease by More Than 10%

Alert Me When: Pageviews/Session Duration Increase/Decrease by More Than 10%

Alert Me When: Pageviews Increase/Decrease by More Than 10%

For Lead Generation or Signups:

Alert Me When: Goal x Conversion Rate Increase/Decrease by More Than 10%

Alert Me When: Goal x Value Increase/Decrease by More Than 10%

(Note that Goal Completions are not available in Intelligence Alert configuration; if you have specified a goal value for your goals, you can use goal value as a proxy for goal completions.)

For (Enhanced) E-commerce:

Alert Me When: Revenue Increase/Decrease by More Than 10%

Alert Me When: E-commerce Conversion Rate Increase/Decrease by More Than 10%

Alert Me When: Transactions Increase/Decrease by More Than 10%

Urgent Alerts

You can also set daily or weekly alerts to notify you if a metric (such as Goal x Conversion Rate) drops to a zero due to a technical issue or a change (in URL) that prevents a match with the goal definition:

Period: Daily

This Applies to: All Traffic

Alert Me When: Goal x Conversion Rate Increase/Decrease by More Than 10%

Annotations (Chapter 11)

1. Within a property, decide a single view in which you and your team will make all annotations.
2. As a usual practice, create annotations as Shared. (If you can create private annotations only, you need Collaborate access to the view.)
3. Create annotations for any of the following types of occurrences that could affect your GA data:
 - redesign
 - new content
 - marketing campaigns
 - media mentions and news
 - downtime (planned or unplanned)
 - changes to your GA configuration

Dashboards (Chapter 11)

Dashboards configuration is very flexible. Configure dashboards according to your role and the roles of other stakeholders. A few recommendations are below.

For Content Engagement:

- Average Session Duration
- Pages / Session
- Pageviews, Time on Page by Page
- Session Duration and Bounce Rate by Landing Page
- Pageviews and Exit Rate by Content Group

- Pageviews and Sessions by Device Category
- Pageviews and Sessions by Channel

For Lead Generation or Signups:

- Goal x Conversion Rate
- Goal x Completions
- Conversion Rate and Bounce Rate by Landing Page
- Pageviews and Exit Rate by Page
- Sessions and Conversion Rate by Device Category
- Sessions and Conversion Rate by Channel

For (Enhanced) E-commerce:

- E-commerce Conversion Rate
- E-commerce Transactions
- E-commerce Revenue
- E-commerce Conversion Rate and Bounce Rate by Landing Page
- Quantity and Product Revenue by Product
- Pageviews and Exit Rate by Page
- Sessions and E-commerce Conversion Rate by Device Category
- Sessions and E-commerce Conversion Rate by Channel
- (Enhanced) Cart-to-Detail and Buy-to-Detail Rate by Product

Custom Reports (Chapter 11)

You can create custom reports with using the suggested metrics above for dashboards, or any other combination of dimensions and metrics, and filtering is flexible. The flexibility of custom reports offers enables countless configurations.

Use custom reports on an ongoing or ad-hoc basis wherever they would be more effective or more streamlined than the built-in reports, for yourself and especially for other stakeholders.

A few examples are below.

For Content Engagement:

- Sessions and Average Session Duration by Day of Week by Content Group

For Lead Generation or Signups:

- Sessions and Conversion Rate by Day of Week Name

For (Enhanced) E-commerce:

- Map Overlay format of Sessions and Revenue by Country

Custom Funnels (Chapter 18)

If you're using Analytics 360, you can create a Custom Funnel custom report type that can serve as a retroactive goal, span multiple sessions, and include events. You could configure a Custom Funnel for users who took the following actions across a single session or multiple sessions:

1. Watched a video to 50% completion (if the video is tracked as an event).
2. Access a lead generation form.
3. Submitted the lead generation form to be redirected to a thank-you page.

Automated Emails (Chapter 11)

For managers, executives, colleagues, and clients whom you want to keep engaged in your analytics program:

1. Ask for their approval to receive a monthly Google Analytics email.
2. Select a built-in report, or ideally configure a dashboard or a custom report that would best suit the recipient's role and interest, and automate a monthly email in PDF format.
3. If it's feasible, discuss the report or dashboard with the recipient each month.

Real-Time Reports (Chapter 2)

Know how to isolate yourself in Real-Time reports to check Event and Conversion implementations:

1. If you're excluded by IP address from your main view, access an unfiltered view or a test view to which this filter is not applied.
2. Access page on your site in one of two ways:
 - Dummy name/value pair:
 - i. Access the page as `http://www.mysite.com/?test=test`
 - ii. Access the Real-Time > Content report.
 - iii. Click into Page `/test=test`.
 - Dummy campaign parameters:
 - i. Access the page as `http://www.mysite.com/?utm_medium=test&utm_source=test&utm_campaign=test`
 - ii. Access the Real-Time > Traffic Sources report.
 - iii. Click into Medium `test`.
3. In both cases, the value that you click into becomes filter that isolates your actions in the other Real-Time reports.