

KEO Marketing MARKETER'S GUIDE



TOP 10 CHANGES IN GOOGLE ANALYTICS



Insight
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EDUCATION MARKETING



Inbound
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MARKETER'S GUIDE: TOP 10 CHANGES IN GOOGLE ANALYTICS

For many marketers, Google Analytics is a goldmine of valuable information about their campaigns, their visitors and how the two correlate to each other, as well as to success metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs).

Analytics data is particularly vital in helping you plan your campaigns, improve their performance and gauge their success. The insights you get from Analytics helps you tailor the message in your ads and related web pages to get the best results from your campaigns. You get valuable information about your traffic and visitors, which lets you make strategic decisions about which tactics would be most effective for you. By studying your data, you can tailor both the content and delivery of your ads and content to increase the likelihood of engaging with your target audience. This data also helps you gauge your results so you can see what's working and what isn't.

Analytics data is very useful for your Paid Search campaigns as it also helps you formulate your bidding strategy and decide the smartest approaches for how to invest your ad budgets.

Google is always expanding and upgrading its Analytics offerings. While this is great for marketers, it also means you must constantly watch for updates so you don't miss out on the latest additions and so you'll be aware of how to take advantage of the tool to provide important insights related to your success metrics, so you can see if your strategy is working.

In this report, we'll review the 10 most notable changes in Google Analytics.

1. SECURE SEARCH

It's no coincidence that we put this at the top of our list. For many marketers, this was the most earth-shattering (and upsetting) change in Google Analytics over the past year. This change actually happened as a two-part process. Google first stopped sharing Keyword Referral data for secure searches (when users were signed into their account), which resulted in a portion of your traffic being unable to report on keyword data. Then Google changed all search to default to the secure search mode, which cut off this data availability across the board.

This eliminated the ability to track users by their keyword searches. Instead of identifying specific keywords, your organic search category now simply gives you the dreaded “not provided” message. (Google still supplies keyword-level referral data for paid campaigns, such as those managed with Google AdWords.)


Without access to this keyword data, it is virtually impossible to track the origins and motivations behind your organic traffic—at least, at the very granular keyword level.

A solution to this problem is to view traffic to specific pages, which can give you some idea of what people are interested in and looking at. In addition, thanks to Google Analytics' integration of Webmasters Tools (which you enable by linking your Analytics and Webmaster accounts), you can view data based on landing

page or search query. This can provide helpful insights into Keywords and Pages. Also included are some metrics which are unique to Webmaster Tools, such as Click Through Rate, Average Position, and Impressions which can be very useful in monitoring your strategy and campaign's success.



2. BETTER SEGMENTATION




Thanks to improved segmentation features, you now have lots of options to better segment your visitors. Advanced segments let you drill down into your metrics so you can isolate very specific information about your visitors. For example, it might be interesting to look at first user interaction from organic search. This can help you see how much of your traffic can be originally traced back to organic search, even if there were a few steps between that and the user's last click. While Advanced Segments aren't new, they have been updated to include more functionality. The user interface has been improved, for starters. It's now easier and more convenient to see your advanced segments (both standard and custom) all in one view.

The options of what segments you can create and view have also been expanded. For example, you can now use behavior to group repeat users, so you can look at data for those who take a certain action within a specific period.

To help you get started, the user interface will guide you to create custom segments by a few general categories, such as Traffic Sources and Demographics.

You can also import pre-defined segments from the Google Analytics Gallery, comprised of custom segments created both by Google teams and other users. If you have some favorite or frequently used segments, you can also star those and limit your view only to those if you like.



3. REMARKETING FEATURES

Remarketing allows companies to continue communications with previous customers or visitors. In other words, remarketing is following up with a prior connection. It's important to seize the opportunity created when someone has already shown interest in your brand. Remarketing is a way for you to continue the interaction, increasing your odds of conversion by carefully tailoring your message and delivery approach according to the particular individual or group you wish to connect with. This happens when you advertise to these prior connections via Google AdWords across the Google Display Network.

It's now easier to create lists that can support your remarketing efforts. Google has expanded its Remarketing features designed specifically to help you in this area. Your Remarketing metrics can be filtered by demographics, origin and behavior. This way, you can specifically target your message and pitch in a way that's most likely to interest those connections. Your odds of converting these visitors are better if you can show them ads that would be relevant to them.



For example, if you know that certain visitors were “window shopping” at specific product pages, you can then create Remarketing campaigns that show them the very best products you have in that category, so your message will be as tempting as possible. Likewise, visitors who fall into a certain age group will likely have different motivations or goals than those in a much different age group—so you can highlight specific products or features that would best match their priorities.

Google wants you to use these metrics to tailor your paid advertising campaigns to best target your specific users, but this information can also be useful to you in planning your overall marketing strategies because you can get some valuable insights about the people who are most likely to engage with your brand.

4. NEW DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Demographic information—and the more specific, the better—is the key to specifically targeting your message to best appeal to the specific people who will be seeing it. This is what separates very general, all-purpose campaigns from those that can connect most personally with someone you want to engage.

Google now offers more specific and detailed data about your users and their characteristics and likes. These metrics are found in the Audience section of your dashboard, under the new Demographics and Interests categories. As you can probably guess from the name, you now see information about your visitors' age, gender, preferred content type, interests and more.



You can use this information in all sorts of combinations to create test scenarios—say, by looking at whether female users of a certain age group who are interested in fitness tend to convert more often, or by analyzing the types of content favored by users of a specific age and gender. Incorporating this information into your A/B testing, you can get some interesting findings as to how different demographic categories react to specific tactics and campaigns.

5. TAG MANAGER AUTO-EVENT TRACKING

This new option lets you measure clicks or other calls-to-action through trackable tags without any code adjustments. Tag Manager is an Analytics feature that lets you create and update the website tags that you use for tracking purposes. This helps you track user actions, based on certain triggers—say, if they watch a video or use an interactive element. Tag Manager can be used with both mobile websites and mobile apps.

Google promoted Tag Manager as a simple tool that marketers could use themselves “without bugging the IT people.” Some people quibbled with that assertion, saying that was a bit of an ambitious (and perhaps not totally realistic) promise.

But the addition of Auto-Event Tracking makes that promise more of a reality. The process enlists something called the Event Listener, which “listens” for a specific event and then triggers an automatic tracking-related action, based on whatever directions you establish.

The appeal of this tool is that you can add and adjust tracking actions without changing any code (which is particularly helpful for non-IT types who may know how to adjust the code even if they wanted to).



6. NEW ACQUISITIONS REPORTING FEATURES (THE ABCS)

You can now view data that essentially lets you follow your users/visitors throughout their conversion process. These pieces of data are collectively known as ABC—for the Acquisition, Behavior, Conversion cycle. In other words, how you acquire users, what behaviors they have once they arrive on your site and their conversion trends or patterns. Of course, tracking acquisition sources has always been possible, but this new functionality allows you to see the data for all channels in one report.

Using these metrics, you can determine which channels are most effective in getting people to visit your site, engage with you and then convert. For each specific channel, you can follow users through the process to see



7. DATA-DRIVEN ATTRIBUTION AND THE ATTRIBUTION MODELING TOOL

It can sometimes be tricky to determine exactly what motivated a user to keep engaging with you at particular points along the route to conversion. After all, an individual may have several interactions with a variety of different ads before they ultimately convert—yet marketer usually only look at the keywords and campaigns related to the last click.

To provide some helpful (and perhaps enlightening) information about keywords and their impact, Google launched the Search Funnels Attribution Modeling Tool. This tool lets you see which keywords or campaigns may have played an important role in the conversion process, even if they may not have directly preceded the last click.

The screenshot shows the Google Ads interface with the 'Tools and Analysis' tab selected. Under 'SEARCH FUNNELS', the 'Attribution Modeling' option is highlighted. The main content area displays 'Attribution Modeling' with a status of '0 of 0 total conversions (0.00%)'. Below this, there's a comparison between 'Last Click' and 'Select model'. The 'Primary Dimension' is set to 'Campaign', with 'Ad Group' and 'Keyword' as secondary options. A table is partially visible with columns for 'Path Length' and 'Campaign'.

This tool is designed to better help you understand a buyer's path to purchase. You can look at five different AdWords attribution models, which can provide some valuable insights that may help you adjust your campaign strategy to be most cost effective and profitable for you. Google points out that you will be able to see how different bids for undervalued keywords can help you reach customers earlier in the purchase, driving even more conversions while allowing you to spend less.

8. SPEED SUGGESTIONS REPORT

If you asked people to name the things that annoy them most about a website, slow load times would likely be very high on the list. Sites that seem to take forever to load can be a big turn-off to visitors. Many people will quickly grow impatient with a sluggish site and will often just give up and go somewhere else. This can be fatal to your conversion rate because it won't matter how great your offer or message is if visitors don't wait around long enough to see it.

The Speed Suggestions tool, located in the Content area of your dashboard, can help you identify speed-related issues with your site. Even better, the tool gives you specific tips that can help your page load faster. By increasing your site speeds, you greatly improve the user experience.

This feature supports Google's goal of providing the best results and best experience to those searching on Google.com. In order to motivate businesses to optimize site speeds, Google has incorporated site speed as a ranking factor in their algorithm, so sites that load slowly and provide a bad user experience can actually be negatively impacted and not rank as well.



9. SECONDARY DIMENSIONS

Google recently expanded the secondary dimensions options available in standard reports. Using this feature, you can first establish a primary dimension and then further slice and dice the data by a secondary dimension. For example, if your primary dimension is a specific source of traffic and your secondary dimension is a city, you can see how many visitors from that source are in that location.

There are many different ways you can configure this two-item combination to provide you with valuable data—some of which may reveal changes you would want to make with your campaigns. For example, comparing Match Searched Query data with keywords may reveal some unexpected keywords or phrases that are erroneously directed people to your site. Custom Dimensions is a new (and, according to Google, much requested) element of secondary dimension. As the name implies, Custom Dimensions lets you specify your own particular criteria that are important to you. To provide some examples, Google says a custom dimension can be used to collect things like “friendly page names, whether the user is logged in, or a user tier (like Gold, Platinum, or Diamond).”



This is a situation where it's sometimes possible to have too much of a good thing. You can track up to 20 custom dimensions. (If you use Google Analytics Premium with Universal Analytics, the possibilities are nearly endless, as you can track up to 200 custom dimensions.) With that type of capability, it's easy to get overwhelmed with all of the many different types of data you can collect. To avoid information overload, think about what data is truly important to helping you plan your strategy, refine your tactics or evaluate the success of your efforts. Then focus on creating custom dimensions that will help you track those metrics.

10. INTEGRATED REPORTING FOR WEB AND MOBILE APP DATA

People can connect and interact with your business electronically in a variety of ways, using an assortment of devices. Most likely, you would prefer to see the metrics from all of your visitors at one glance, with the data compiled in one handy package.

That's why Google launched integrated reporting, which brings together all of your Web and mobile app data in the same reporting view. (This applies if you currently send data from the Web and a mobile app to one property. Otherwise, this won't affect you and you won't notice any change.)

This integration makes it easier and more convenient to see all of your data in one place. There are other improvements that are also designed to make things simple and consistent. Metrics, segments and dimensions previously had different names depending on whether they involved Web or mobile data, but now they have been unified and each have one name that encompasses both channels. Google combined what you previously knew as Visitors and Active Users into one category, now called Users. Visits are now called Sessions.

If for some reason you want to be able to view your Web and mobile app data separately, you can set up custom filters or take advantage of other tools Google offers, such as those that let you customize reports and dashboards.



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For more information and to request a complimentary marketing audit visit keomarketing.com.



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