



Google Analytics Training | Understanding GA4



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How GA4 is different from UA (GA3)

- Data is collected differently; GA4 is event based rather than session based.
- Data is not stored for as long with GA4 (2 months default, up to 14 months possible).
- UA tracks mobile screen views in separate properties, whereas GA4 combines both web and app data in the same property.
- Some metrics have changed. For example:
 - Engagement rate - a new metric. An engaged session is one where the website visitor has either:
 - spent 10 seconds or more on the site/app OR
 - viewed a second page OR
 - had a conversion event
 - Note: it is very easy to mark an event as a conversion in GA4. However, this should be given careful consideration as it will have a direct impact on both engagement rate and bounce rate.

Event name ↑	Count	% change	Mark as conversion
click	214	↓ 25.4%	<input type="checkbox"/>
file_download	1	-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
first_visit	2,871	↑ 24.4%	<input type="checkbox"/>
page_view	4,954	↑ 13.5%	<input type="checkbox"/>
scroll	1,065	↑ 16.3%	<input type="checkbox"/>
session_start	3,735	↑ 17.1%	<input type="checkbox"/>
video_complete	3	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
video_progress	18	↑ 800.0%	<input type="checkbox"/>
video_start	5	↑ 66.7%	<input type="checkbox"/>
view_search_results	0	↓ 100.0%	<input type="checkbox"/>

How GA4 is different from UA (GA3)

Automatically tracked events includes:

ad_click	app_store_subscription_convert	firebase_in_app_message_dismiss	notification_send
ad_exposure	app_store_subscription_renew	firebase_in_app_message_impression	os_update
ad_impression	app_update	first_open	page_view
ad_query	click	first_visit	screen_view
ad_reward	dynamic_link_app_open	form_start	scroll
adunit_exposure	dynamic_link_app_update	form_submit	session_start
app_clear_data	dynamic_link_first_open	in_app_purchase	user_engagement
app_exception	error	notification_dismiss	video_complete
app_remove	file_download	notification_foreground	video_progress
app_store_refund	firebase_campaign	notification_open	video_start
app_store_subscription_cancel	firebase_in_app_message_action	notification_receive	view_search_results

Key

App only

Web only

App & Web

Full list and additional detail found [here](#).

How GA4 is different from UA (GA3)

- GA4 also has the option to set up predictive metrics - for example, 'purchase probability' if there is a large enough body of sample data. This allows the creation of predictive audiences - for example, an audience of likely purchasers.
- From what we have seen, we believe that ecommerce data can generally be set up to be more accurate in GA4 than UA (in particular via Shopify).
- Attribution modelling has changed. GA4 options include*:
 - Data-driven
 - Last click
 - First click
 - Linear
 - Position-based
 - Time decay
- It is free to connect GA4 to Google's BigQuery - this will help us to conduct deep-dive analysis on data as well as storing data for longer than GA itself.

*Find out more about [attribution modelling](#) and how each option will impact your data.

Reporting attribution model

Cross-channel data-driven model ▾

Cross-channel

-  Data-driven (recommended)
-  Last click
-  First click
-  Linear
-  Position-based
-  Time decay

Ads-preferred

-  Last click

Retaining historic data

UA owners using GA360 Enterprise can export UA data to BigQuery, which can then be stored appropriately. For UA users without GA360 Enterprise, it's a much more manual process, but it is possible to export particular reporting data from UA before storing it elsewhere. We have also been working on sample Google Data Studio (*Looker*) reports mapping historical UA data, creating bespoke data sources using the exported UA data (filtered appropriately within Google Sheets depending on the desired metrics and dimensions). Setting this up before UA reports and associated data are deleted, will allow you to keep a record of historical data.

All GA4 property owners can now enable data export to BigQuery, (no longer just available for Universal Analytics users with GA360 enterprise properties). In GA4 the data export is free for everyone to use, you only pay for the actual data storage and data querying when you exceed the limits of the Google Cloud free tier. Whilst this will enable users to keep a backup of statistics as time progresses, thus storing historical data, BigQuery also has a number of additional benefits:

- Store your data in BigQuery (Google Cloud) and/or send it to an alternative storage method
- Join and enrich your data with other marketing tools, CRMs or additional data
- Visualise your data in tools like Data Studio (*Looker*) or similar
- Perform advanced analysis on your data
- Leverage your data as input for machine learning models

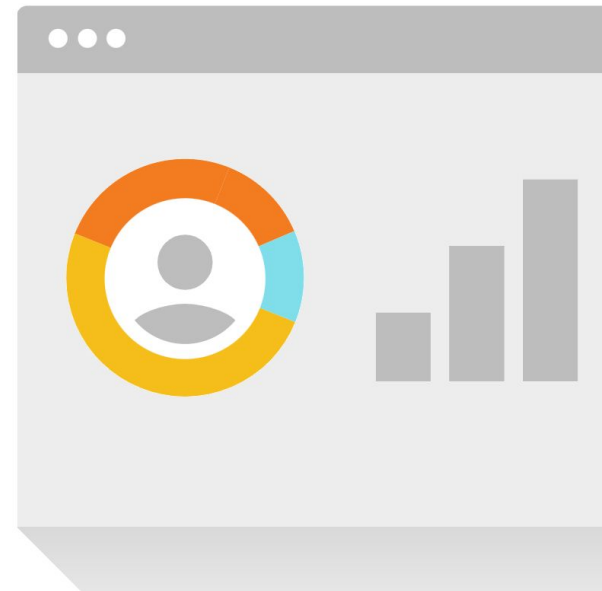
Key TakeAways

- UA properties will stop receiving data from **July 2023**.
 - If you haven't already - you need to get set up on GA4 as soon as possible. It is already too late to have a full year's back data in place before the change!
- UA properties will be deleted in **January 2024**.
 - We can help to pull historic data from old UA properties so that this will not be completely lost.
- GA4 is generally agreed to be harder to use/learn than UA. Less information is available out-of-the-box. It is generally easier to set up an interface using a third party tool to pull the most important data from GA4. There is a report-builder within the GA4 interface itself, but we use Google Looker/Data Studio. We can set up custom dashboards as needed.
- Stats from UA and GA4 will not be directly comparable, as data is collected differently.



Useful resources & articles

- Useful Brighton SEO talk: [Why SEO's should love, not fear, GA4](#)
- Predictive metrics in GA4: [What are GA4 Predictive Metrics?](#)
- GA4 Attribution options & definitions: [Attribution Modelling](#)
- Automatically collected GA4 Events: [GA4 Event Details](#)





Questions?



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