

Google Analytics Cheat Sheet

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With so much good stuff to glean from your Google Analytics, how do you know what to focus on as a busy business owner? Well, here are some of the important metrics for you and your team to pay attention to.

VISITORS

The “Overview” page gives you a great snap shot of what’s going on. For some of you, this may be enough information. You can click deeper into the tabs to get some further insights.

Good stuff:

- Number of visitors
- How many pages they looked at
- How long they spent on your site
- What your bounce rate is
- What percentage of your visitors are new, and what percentage are returning

Dig deeper:

- What country your visitors are in
- What city your visitors are in
- How frequently visitors come to your site

Strategic questions:

- Is my traffic going up or down?
- Is my site engaging visitors, encouraging them to look at other content and spend time reading?
- Do people often come back to my site, or is it mostly new visitors?
- How many visitors get to my site and leave immediately without going further into my content?

TRAFFIC SOURCES

This is one of my favorite parts of GA. Clicking on this section gives you specific insight into which site sources sent you traffic. This is especially important to gauge the online marketing strategies you have in place.

Good Stuff:

- Percentage of search traffic
- Percentage of referral traffic
- Percentage of direct traffic (brand traffic)

Dig deeper:

- All the keywords that have brought you traffic
- Which sites sent you traffic

Strategic questions:

- How do my visitors find my site?

- Which keywords are people using to find me? (pay attention to this)
- Which other websites are sending me traffic?
- Which social media is sending me the most traffic?
- Did that online ad I bought send me any traffic?
- Did that guest post I wrote bring me any new visitors?

CONTENT

This section gives you insight into which pages your visitors checked out.

Use this information as an indication of the type of information that people want and need from you.

Good stuff:

- Which are the top viewed pages on my site?
- What is the first page that people see?
- From which page do people leave my site?
- Where do people click on my site?

Strategic questions:

- Are visitors looking at the content that I want them to?
- Which are the most popular pages on my site?
- What's the most popular type of content on my site?
- How do visitors engage with the content on my site (navigation, links, sidebar etc...)?

COMPARING DATES

By changing the dates in the top right hand corner, you can get a broader picture of the activity on your site.

For example, you can compare your current site stats to this time last year.

You can do this easily by going into the dates area and ticking the “Compare to Past” box. This will allow you to compare 2 different date ranges and see at a glance how they compare.

GOALS

You can set up goals to answer the question of how many of your visitors actually do what you want them to.

Do you want them to buy something? Sign up for your list? Contact you?

Whatever your goal, all you need to do is determine the URL that would equal an action completed, usually a ‘thank you’ page. Then insert that URL into your Analytics (Conversions > Goals).

You now have the key metrics to be able to discern if your online marketing strategies are working!

Key Phrases & Terms

The following are some of the most relevant terms and marketing considerations for small business owners. Keep this document handy when you're diving into your Analytics and never feel overwhelmed again!

Unique Visitors vs. Visits

Unique visitors refers to the number of visitors to your site. This number is not duplicated. So if Sally visits your site 100 times, she will only count as 1 unique visitor.

Visits are the number of visits. So in the example above, Sally's activity would count as 100 visits.

Marketing consideration: These metrics will let you know the extent to which your website visitors return. If you hope to be a consistent source of relevant information, you would want to see visitors returning.

Pageviews vs. Unique Pageviews

Pageviews refer to the number of times a page is viewed.

Unique pageviews refers to the number of times a page is viewed in one session.

So let's say that Sally is reading a blog post. She then clicks on a link you've given to another post. She then hits the back button to return to the original post. This counts as 2 pageviews and 1 unique pageview for this post. If she closes her browser, and then returns to your post the next day, she will be counted again.

Marketing consideration: To get a better understanding of how much reach your content is actually getting, look at the unique pageviews number.

Bounce rate

Bounce rate refers to the percentage of people that leave your site from the page they landed on. In other words, they don't dig deeper into any of your content.

They arrive, and then they leave.

Marketing consideration: If your website is based around a blog, and your blog posts are on your homepage, your bounce rate will be VERY high (around 80%), and that's fine. Visitors come to read the latest post, and then leave.

If your website is not based on a blog, and your bounce rate is high, something is going on. Are you not delivering the content they want? Is your outdated design or vague copy throwing them off?

Bounce rates vary quite dramatically from industry to industry, and will also vary from page to page. If you have a dramatic shift in bounce rate over time, you'll want to look into why.

Average Time on Site

The average time in minutes that visitors spend on your site.

Marketing consideration: If your site is light on content and is used by visitors to quickly grab contact information for example, your time on site will not be very long.

If you have created a site chock full of content that you want your visitors to

peruse, you will want to see more time spent.

Frequency (or Count of Visits)

Looking at the frequency of visits to your site can be a little confusing. The “count of visits” column refers to the number of visits to your site. The “visits” column refers to the number of visitors that visited that many times.

This is how Google explains it:

- Visitor 1 visited the site 1 time during the time frame.
- Visitor 2 visited the site 2 times during the time frame.
- Visitor 3 visited the site 3 times during the time frame.
- The first row of the report (1 under “Count of Visits”) has a count of 3 “Visits” (one each for visitors 1, 2, and 3).
- The second row of the report (2 under “Count of Visits”) has a count of 2 “Visits” (one each for visitors 2 and 3).
- The third row of the report (3 under “Count of Visits”) has a count of 1 “Visits” (one for visitor 3).

Marketing consideration: When you compare the count of visits to your number of visits, you can see how many of your visitors actually come back for more and how much content they take in (pageviews).

Search traffic

This refers to the amount of traffic that you get from search engines.

Marketing consideration: This helps you understand the extent to which your business depends on search engine traffic.

If you're working on your search engine marketing, this metric lets you see whether your efforts are actually doing anything. If they are, you should see your search traffic increasing.

Referral traffic

Here you can see which websites sent you traffic and how engaged visitors from these sites are. Remember that thousands of hits from a site with a very high bounce rate and low number of pages per visit is not necessarily success. You might get less hits, but tons of engagement from other sites.

Marketing consideration: If any of your marketing efforts revolve around getting traffic from other sites, you can see if it's working and where you should focus your efforts.

For example, you now know...

- which social media drives the most traffic.
- whether that online ad you bought actually sent you any traffic.
- what words people are using to search for your business and can adjust your content to reflect that.

- whether that guest post you wrote sent you visitors truly interested in your offering.

Direct traffic

This refers to visitors coming directly to your site, either by:

- typing in your URL
- via autocompletion in your address bar (when you start to type a web address, and you are prompted with options)
- via bookmark (when your site is saved for future reference).

Marketing consideration: This gives you an indication of how many visitors already have considerable knowledge about what you do and are coming back for more!

Keywords

This refers to the specific search terms that people used to get to your site.

Marketing consideration: This is a really valuable area. If you're trying to optimize for certain keywords as part of your search marketing strategy, you can see whether it's working. You can also learn how people are finding your site, which can be really enlightening.

Landing page

This refers to the page that your visitors arrive at first.

Marketing consideration: The homepage is the most common landing page.

It can be interesting though to see other pages where people enter your site. Remember that people can enter your site through any page, as most search results will indicate a specific page within your site that is not your home page. So it's very important to make sure that your opt-in and other important information is on each and every page.

This is also an important metric if you have any sort of campaign or promotion where you are not sending people to your homepage but to a page deeper within the site.

In-Page Analytics

This is a great area to get some really good information about what your visitors are engaging in. Bubbles pop up that show the percentage of visitors that clicked on specific elements (navigation tabs, links in post, links in the sidebar).

Marketing consideration: You can really get into the brain of your visitors here. You can see what they are interested in, what information they need and want, and where they actually read certain information.

Important Note:

This is just a snapshot of the power of Google Analytics, but should give you a great place to glean some valuable info from your site to boost your business!