TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Google Analytics Changes

Universal Analytics to Google Analytics 4

SUMMARY AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Universal Analytics (UA) will be sunset on July 1, 2023.
- Only Google Analytics 4 (GA4) will be available for new data capture/metrics reporting beginning July 1.
- *UA data will be available for 6 months after the deadline has passed.*
- UA and GA4 can run simultaneously until the UA sunset on July 1, 2023.
- UA data cannot be imported into GA4.
- Reference the GA4 Decision Tree to help guide your implementation of GA4.

KEY DIFFERENCES

Gathered Reporting

GA4 allows staff to gather metrics from applications *and* websites under a single property. This allows you to collect and analyze data from multiple sources and track customer engagement across devices.

A single GA4 tracking code can also be placed across multiple websites allowing staff to gather data about user movement between sites. For example, movement from the UIUC Tech Help Center to the Tech Services site, to the Research IT site.

Measuring Events

UA measured hits including events, social interactions and page hits. GA4 measures events.
UA measured data by session where GA4 measures every type of activity as an event. Events on GA4 fall into four categories:

- **Automatically Collected**: Collected by default when you switch to GA4
- **Enhanced Measurement**: Collected when the enhanced measurement option is turned on. Once activated, GA4 will track things like scroll, click, and page_view (along with others).
- **Recommended**: Suggested events by Google, which are based on data that has been collected on your website or app. These are manually implemented.
- **Custom**: Events that site admins define.

Added Event Parameters

UA provided three parameters: category, action, label. GA4 provides 25 event parameters such as gender, campaign, page title. This allows for more flexibility and customization in reporting.

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UA History

Data is not imported from UA to GA4. Once a site's analytics are switched from UA to GA4, we can view new information moving forward, but will not have history prior to the change.

UA data can continue to be captured until July 1, 2023 so it's a good idea to maintain both until UA is sunset. Gathering both sets of data will allow us to review UA metrics as we learn to use GA4 to its full potential.

Terminology

User Metrics

UA: Two metrics – Total Users, New Users
GA4: Three metrics – Total Users, New Users, Active Users

UA focuses on Total Users for the reports whereas GA4 focuses on Active Users.
To understand sessions better, review the Marketers Guide to Sessions in GA4.

Sessions

Modern computing habits include users opening multiple tabs in a browser, visiting a tab, then navigating away from it, returning minutes or even hours later. UA would count these as page view sessions. GA4 counts the initial viewing as a page view session and every re-visit to the page as a user engagement session.

UA would time out after 30 minutes of inactivity. GA4 starts with a session_start and does not time out.

Engagement and Bounce Rates

In UA, the Bounce Rate is the percent of sessions that are not engaged sessions.

GA4 does not report Bounce Rates. Rather, it reports on Engagement Sessions. An Engagement Session lats longer than 10 seconds, has a minimum of two page views, and undergoes a conversion.

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Two new metrics in GA4 include Average Engagement Time per Session and Engagement Rate.

Real-Time Reporting

In GA4 real-time reporting you can view metrics such as:

- Users that visited a site in the last 30 minutes
- Where visitors come from (platform, medium, campaign)
- If visitors are users or new users
- Events triggered by visitors
- The content/pages they've engaged with
- Conversions

UA real-time reporting showed user metrics based on the last five minutes. GA4 has significant changes to real-time reporting. GA4 updates data two-to-three times a day so the most reliable data will be to review the previous day.

SOURCES

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