



# GA4 Guide

# What's in the deck?

- What is Google Analytics 4 (GA4)?
- Navigating GA4
- Core Reporting Features
- Key Metrics
- Helpful Resources

# Introduction.

# Beginner's Guide To Google Analytics 4

The long-awaited day is nearly here, UA is on its way out and GA4 is here to stay!

We've compiled (almost) everything you need to know about GA4 so you can stay ahead and get up to speed quickly with all the data that's now at your fingertips.

# What is Google Analytics 4 (GA4)?

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**GA4** is Google's new-and-improved version of Universal Analytics (UA).

In short, it's an upgraded analytics tool that allows you to measure traffic, monitor engagement and better understand user behaviour across your website. A big plus is that it's highly customisable.

## The main differences between GA4 vs. UA?

- **New data:** Unlike UA which uses session-based data, GA4 uses event-based data.
- **Different measurement model:** UA is based on page, event and ecommerce hits. In simple terms, a hit is a particular interaction, such as page view, email click or online transaction that results in data being sent to Analytics.  
GA4, on the other hand, looks at events and parameters. If you're feeling brave, you can read up on the extent to which you can compare UA and GA4 metrics, but if you boil it down, what were once 'hits' in UA are now 'events' in GA4.

- **No more bounce rate:** This UA metric has been replaced by 'engagement rate', focusing on the number of engaged interactions. In UA a "bounce" is defined as a single-page session on your site. So, even if a user spends even several minutes on a single page and then leaves the site without navigating to another page or triggering any other events that you're tracking, it would still be considered a bounce in UA.

Newly introduced "Engagement rate" counts a session as engaged if it lasts more than 10 seconds, the user triggered a conversion event or moved to another page. It allows you to measure user engagement more effectively, especially when it comes to long landing pages or SPA websites.

If you consider 10 seconds is not enough for a session to be "engaged", you can increase this time up to 60 seconds in your GA4 settings. If you do find yourself missing the good old bounce rate, this will simply be the percentage of sessions that were not engaged sessions (i.e. the ones that lasted less than 10 seconds).

- **No more Category, Action, Label:** In UA, events were structured with a hierarchy of Category, Action, and Label. These values were predefined, with each event needing to be assigned these attributes. In GA4, events are simply named, and any additional information is sent as parameters within those events. So, while UA had a rigid, pre-defined structure for events, GA4 provides a more flexible, configurable system.

**For example, a video play event in UA might look like this:**

**Category:** Videos

**Action:** Play

**Label:** Fall Campaign

**The same event in GA4 might be named 'video\_play', with parameters like this:**

**video\_name:** Fall Campaign

**video\_duration:** 120

You can add as many parameters as you want, which means you can add more granular data and meaningful insights.

## What is an event?

Events allow you to track, measure and better understand meaningful actions that take place on your website and/or app.

For example, you can use an event to measure when someone loads a page, clicks a link or completes a purchase.

GA4 automatically tracks certain events like page views, page clicks and scrolls. You can also create your own custom events if needed. You can also mark an event (e.g. a form being completed) as a 'conversion', which is an analog of 'goal' in Universal Analytics.

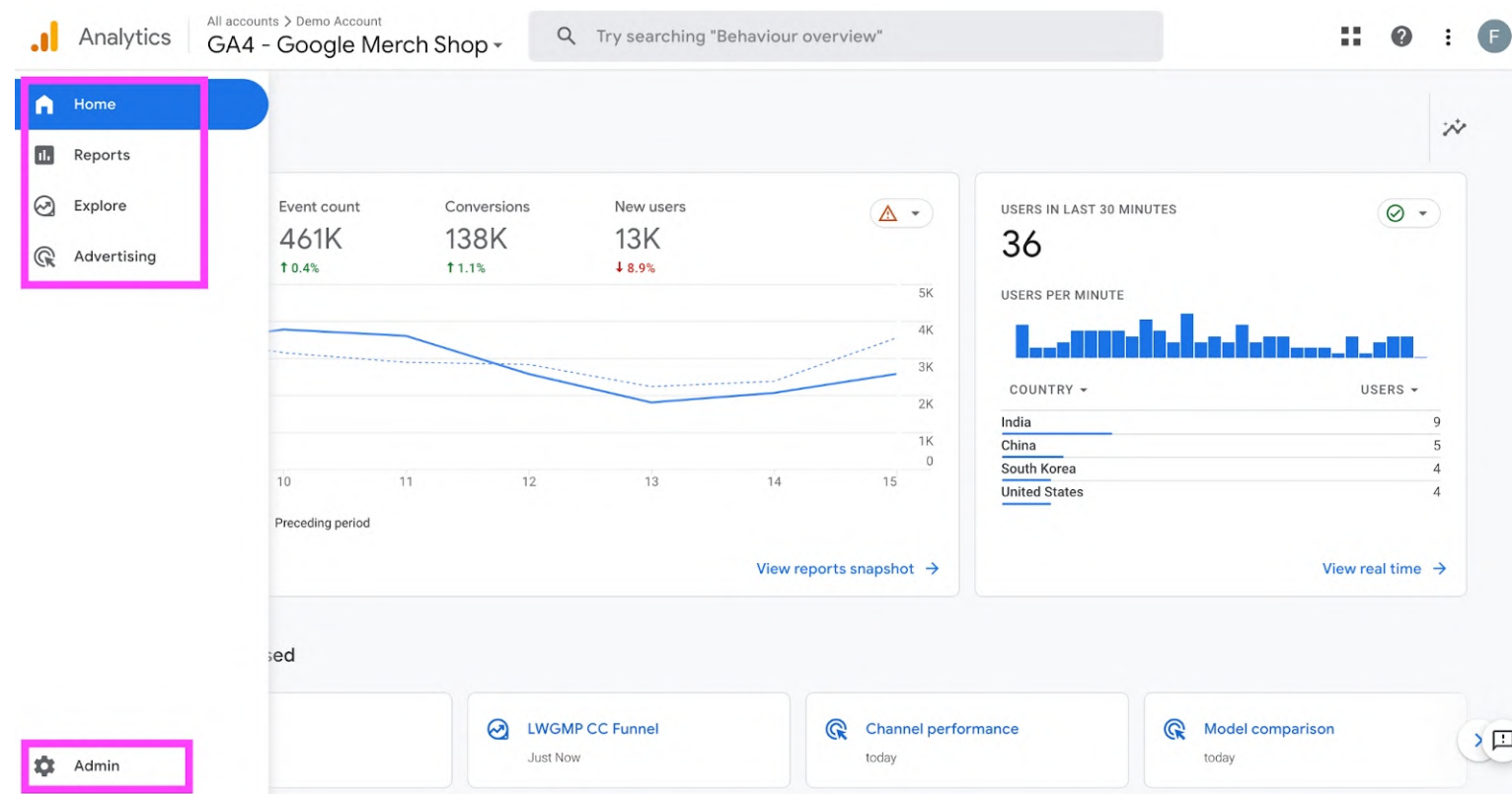
# Navigating GA4.



# Navigating GA4

## Navigating GA4

The first change you'll come across is the brand new home dashboard and navigation bar on the left-hand side.



## Home

This provides an at-the-glance view to your most important metrics as well as insights Google has highlighted for you. For a full view of these metrics and dashboards, head to the 'Reports' section.

At the bottom of the page, you'll see 'Insights and recommendations', which are predictive analytics based on Google's AI.

## Reports

Here you'll find all of your analytics and data. Aptly named, the 'Reports' section contains various reporting features – more on these later (under 'Core Reporting Features' below).

## Explore

Here you can create ‘explorations’, which is Google’s fancy way of saying visual reports. You can create advanced charts, tables, funnels and more. You can also create audiences based on these explorations. While you still can access your old data in the usual ‘reports’ section, the ‘explore’ section will provide you with much more granular, flexible and insightful data. It might look complex in the beginning, but don’t hesitate to give it a try. A bit of practice and you will love it!

## Advertising

We won’t go into this here, but as you’ve probably already guessed, this section offers a more detailed insight into your advertising.

## Admin

Expect all the standard admin stuff like account settings, adding new users, adding events and linking to other Google apps.

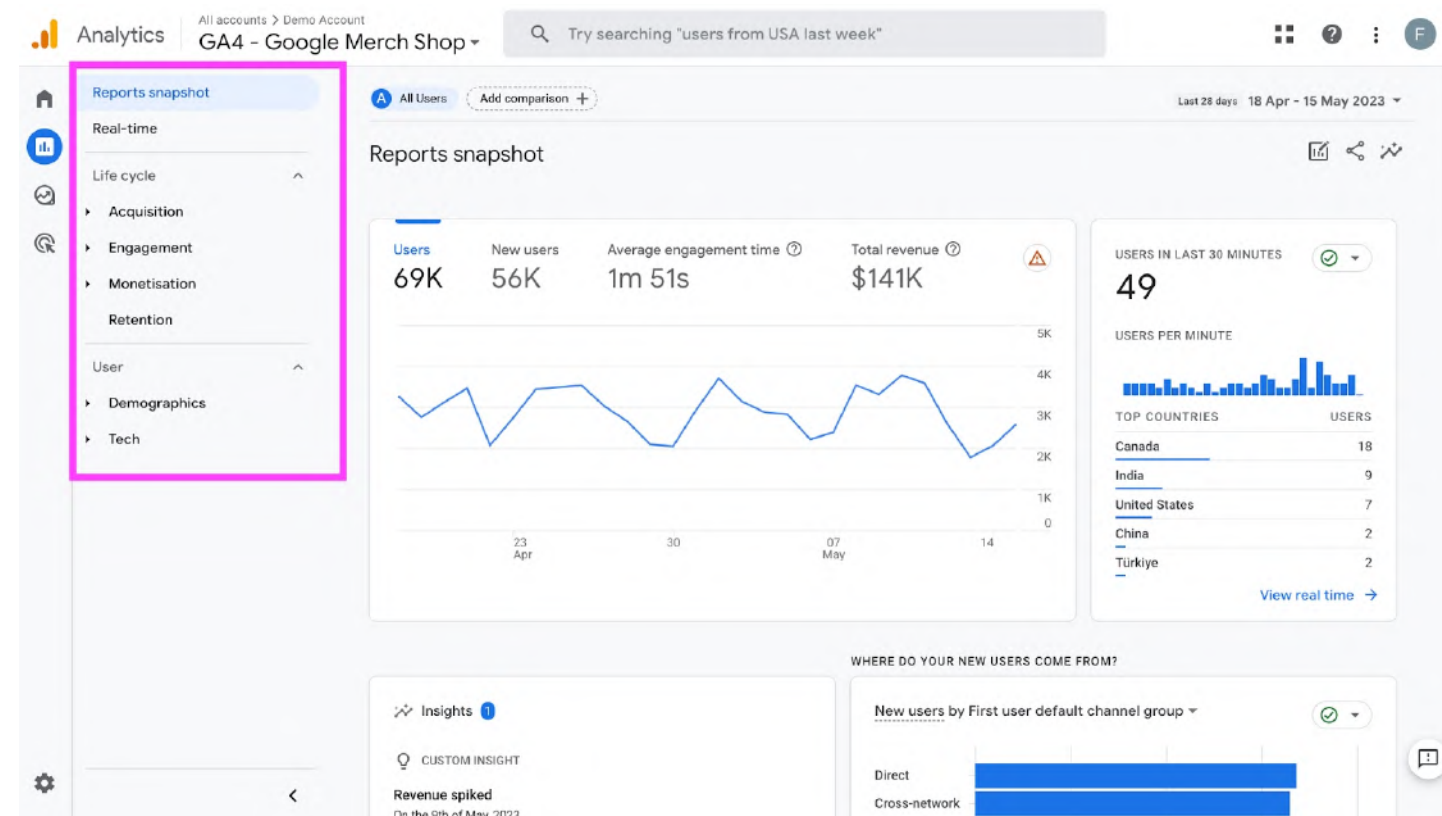
## Search Bar

You can use the search bar to ask a question about your data, search for specific reports or search for help. For example, you could ask ‘how many users this month vs. last year?’ The search bar is pretty advanced and is well worth using if you need help finding something.

# Core Reporting Features.

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If you click on 'Reports' from your home screen, you'll be taken to your 'Reports Snapshot'. That's where you'll also see 'Real-time', 'Life Cycle' and 'User' sections on the left-hand side.



## Reports Snapshot

This is an overview of important data about your users and their engagement with your website and/or app. You'll find most of the data you've been used to seeing on UA.

## Real-time

This page gives you the real-time data from visitors on your website in the last 30 minutes. This can be especially useful for new product launches, new campaigns and so on.

## Acquisition

This page shows how users got to your website. You can customise the cards that are shown to be relevant to your business. You might want to look at metrics like user age, location, language, the device they're using or search queries.

In this section, you can also see the channel users came from. For example, metrics like 'New users by First user default channel group' shows you the channel new users came from, e.g. organic search, referral, email, etc.

In addition to all of this, this section also lets you see how specific campaigns you might be running (e.g. Facebook Ads) have performed in terms of new users, engagement and goal completions.

## Engagement

This shows how users interact with your website. Again, you can customise what's shown here and really filter down to the specific information you're looking for.

Some important things you might want to track here are average engagement time, engaged sessions per user and average engagement time per session.

There's a really valuable dashboard in this section that shows you a breakdown of different engagement metrics for each page on your website. You can use these insights to make changes on your website. For example, if one particular page has a comparatively low average engagement time, that's a sign that users aren't finding what they're looking for and some tweaks ought to be made.

One last thing to note about Engagement – this is where you'll see your conversion events. Be aware that you'll need to mark events as a conversion for data to populate in this section.

## Monetisation

E-commerce brands, this one's for you. See all your purchase metrics such as add to carts, total revenue, average order value, items purchased, coupons used and much more.

## Retention

See how well you retain customers on your website over time. The main metric to look at here is New Users vs. Returning Users.

## Demographics

This shows you the demographics of your visitors – everything from city to gender and interests to age. These metrics can be really helpful when trying to better understand your users, especially when combined with other data on GA4.

## Tech

This is your go-to section for information about your users' devices, browser, screen size, operating system and more. The main thing to look at here would be mobile vs. desktop, and using this to compare with other metrics, like engagement rate. For example, if a page had a low engagement rate on mobile but a high engagement rate on desktop, it's probably the case that the page isn't optimised for mobile.

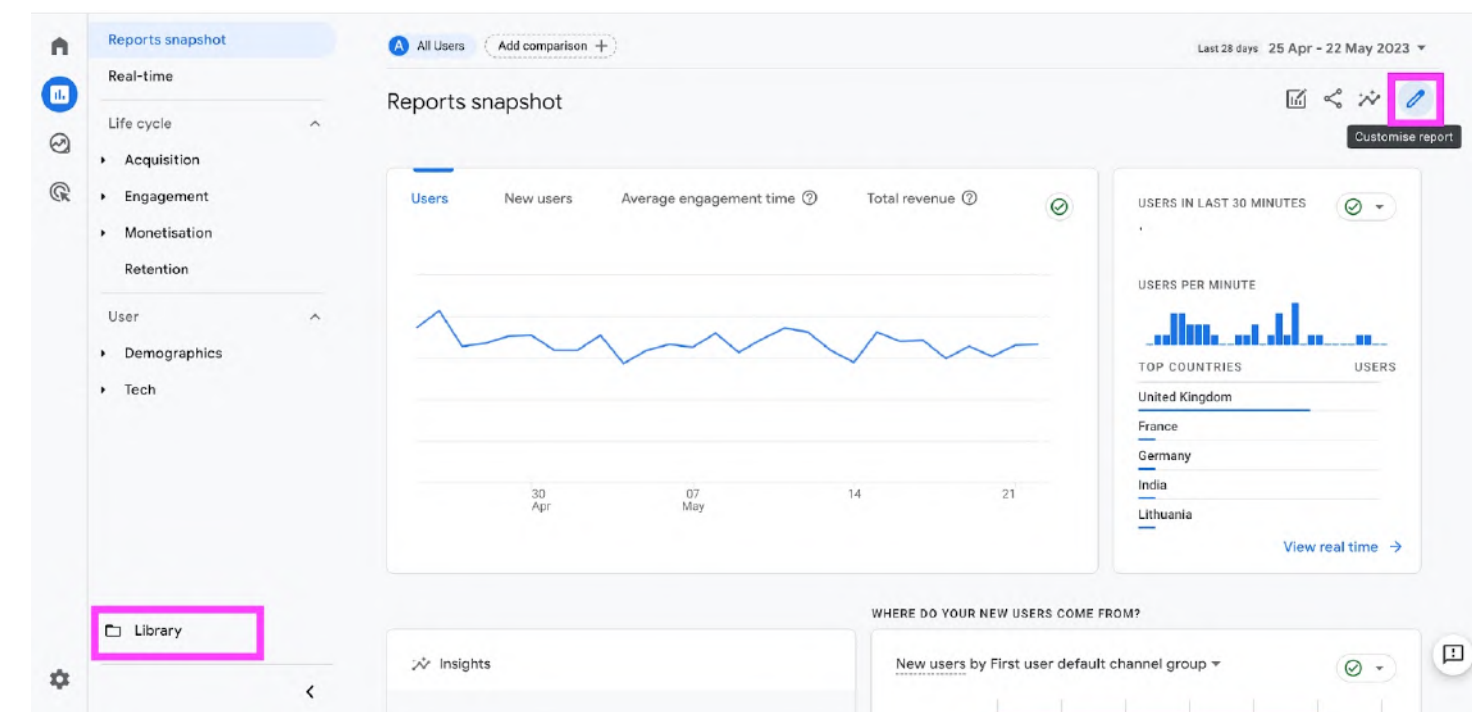
## Customisation

A real benefit of GA4 is the enhanced customisation. All of the cards shown can be customised and filtered to suit what you're looking for. You can also compare with other data or different time periods.

If there's certain analytics you'd like to see regularly but it's not set-up as standard on GA4, for example, the performance of your email campaigns or how a certain page is performing. You can edit your standard reports permanently or save the edit as a new report.

You can manage your standard reports via the 'Library' section by adding or removing them from the standard interface. And don't worry if you're missing something you used to see in your old UA reports. Google is constantly adding new features to GA4, so it might not be long before it gets added!

Also make sure to change the date to the time frame you're looking for on the top right hand side.





# Key Metrics.

# Key Metrics

## GA4 vs. UA Metrics

GA4 has introduced some new metrics to replace certain metrics in UA, most of which concern **engagement**. Google defines an engaged session as:

- lasting 10 seconds\* or longer; or
- had a conversion event; or
- had 2 or more screen or page views

If a user doesn't meet this criteria, they will count as having bounced.

\*10 seconds is the standard timeframe Google has set for all accounts, but you can extend this if you want to use a longer timeframe.

UA Metric	GA4 Metric
Bounce Rate	Bounce Rate Engagement Rate (i.e. opposite of Bounce Rate)
Ave. Session Duration	Ave. Engagement Time per Session
Ave. Time on the Page	Ave. Engagement Time per User
Pages / Visit	Pages / Visit Events per Session
Page Views	Views (i.e. the same metric, but renamed)
Goals	Conversions



## Key Metrics, explained

Here's a quick overview of what GA4's key metrics actually mean.

Metric	Description
Users	Total <b>active</b> users.
New Users	Total new users.
Sessions	Total sessions.
Engaged Sessions	Total engaged sessions.
Ave. Engagement Time	Average engagement duration per session/user ( <i>depending on the report.</i> ) ( <i>All engagement time ÷ Sessions</i> ) Or ( <i>All engagement time ÷ Users</i> )
Engaged Sessions per User	Number of engaged sessions per user ( <i>Engaged sessions ÷ Users</i> )

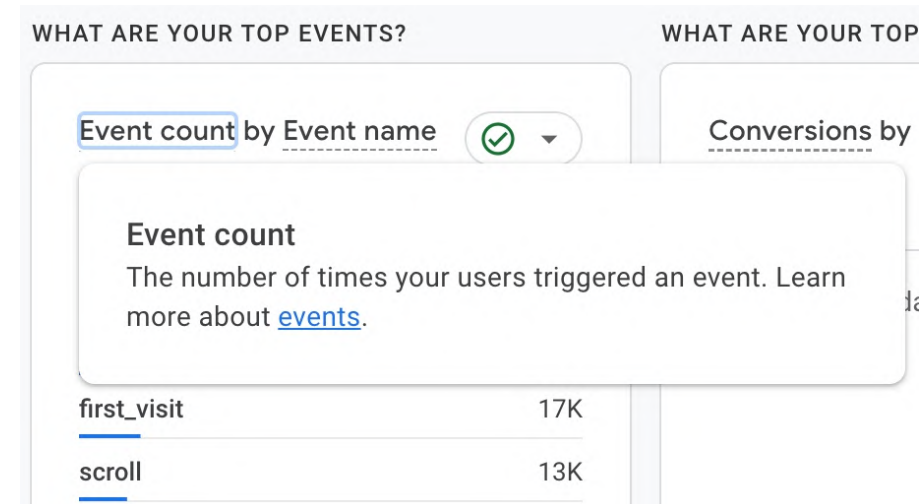
Metric	Description
Engagement Rate	The % of engaged sessions. (Engaged sessions ÷ Total sessions) A generic benchmark would be above 50-60%
Event Count	Total number of times users triggered an event.
Event Count Per User	The average number of events triggered per user.
DAU/WAU/MAC	Daily/weekly/monthly active users.
User Stickiness	Compares engagement by active users over a narrower time frame with their engagement over a broader time frame. The ratios can help you understand how well you retain users over time.  Higher ratios suggest good engagement and user retention.

Metric	Description
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Conversions	The number of times users triggered a conversion event.
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*Note: conversions (previously goals) are now event-based. For this to populate, you'll need to mark the event as a conversion, e.g. form completion, add to cart, purchase, etc.*

If you're ever unsure what any of the metrics mean, you can hover over the titles with a dotted underline and Google's official definition will appear, along with a link to learn more, shown below. We've also included a link below to Google's detailed definitions of all the metrics.



# Helpful Resources.

# Helpful Resources

- **GA4 Walk-Through Video** - really helpful for a top level overview.
- **GA4 Demo Account** - access to Google's demo GA4 account if you want to have a play around.
- **GA4 Analytics and Metrics Definitions** - detailed definitions of all analytics and metrics.
- **Understanding The Reports** - links to explanations of all the reports.



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