

Google Analytics



Basic Metrics Defined

Visits

The number of times your visitors has been to your site (unique sessions initiated by all your visitors). If a user is inactive on your site for 30 minutes or more, any future activity will be attributed to a new session. Users that leave your site and return within 30 minutes will be counted as part of the original session.

Pageviews

This field indicates the total number of pageviews for your site when applied over the selected dimension. For example, if you select this metric together with Request URI, it will return the number of page views over the returned result set for the Request URI for your report.

Pages/Visit

Average number of pages viewed by visitors. Total number of pageviews divided by total number of visits.

Bounce Rate

The percentage of single-page visits (i.e. visits in which the person left your site from the entrance page).

Avg. Time on Site

Average amount of time spent on the site by visitors. Total time spent on the site divided by total number of visits.

New Visits

The number of new visits by people who have never been to the site before.

Unique Visitors

Yes or no question looking at if a visitor has visited your site prior to the selected date range or not.

Tracking Document Downloads

For many organizations it is helpful know all the information about page visits, bounce rates, etc. However, many organizations also offer a lot of high quality resources via downloaded documents. Since these documents are not pages within the template that contains the Google Analytics code they are not captured by default. There is a way.

The best breakdown I have found to detail the process of tracking document downloads was over at the [Blast Advanced Media](#) blog. He gives a detailed breakdown of exactly what to do to track the following types of downloads on your website.

- PDF in new window
- PDF in same window
- How to automate it for your entire site (slightly more technical)

The following description is taken directly from the [Original Blast Advanced Media Blog Post](#)

Tracking PDF Download (in new window/tab)

If you are linking to a PDF that opens in a new window (by using `target="_blank"` for example), then the tracking code is fairly simple to implement.

Your link will look something like: `Download my file`

To properly track this in GA, add the following code to link tag:

- `Download my file`

When a user clicks to download your file, a tracking pixel is requested and recorded in GA's database. Problem solved!

Tracking PDF Download (in current window)

If you do not use the link tag's `target` attribute to open the PDF in a new window and instead you have it opening in the same window, some browsers will interrupt the tracking request and send the visitor straight to the download. When this happens, you won't see the event recorded in GA.

Your link will look something like: `Download my file`

To properly track this in GA, add the following code to the link tag:

- `Download my file`

We have to give the browser enough time to make the request, and this is done by using the **setTimeout()** javascript function to delay the request by a fraction of a second. We typically do 200ms (that's 1/5 of a second), but if you have more requests, you may want to increase this. You can use [debugging tools](#) to understand if you need to increase this value.

The nitty-gritty details of how to automate throughout your website can be found over at the [Blast Advanced Media Blog](#). This site is a jackpot for those looking to get more advanced in your use of Google Analytics.

Annotations

There is nothing worse in metrics analysis then having that "Ah Ha" moment when you make a connection between various bits of info only to come back a week later and forget what it was. Or even worse if you are part of a team of folks and those "Ah Ha" moments never get shared until it is too late.

Enter Annotations. Annotations are notes that you can save, publicly or privately, that are associated with a particular day.

Create An Annotation

On the main dashboard click on a particular day you wish to add an annotation to and then select "Create Annotation" from the popup window.



Annotation Details

Fill in the information that you want to capture. Remember, this is information you want to make sure makes sense later when you look back so include as much detail as you can, even a bit of interpretation not just what happened but why you think it had what impact.



Use Annotations

Whenever you include this date in the range of data in the chart the annotation will show up at the bottom of the screen. Develop good habits around when and how to incorporate these moments of insight and action into your review and analysis process. You do have a review and analysis process right? If not, no worries as long as you make that part of the new habits and processes you are developing.

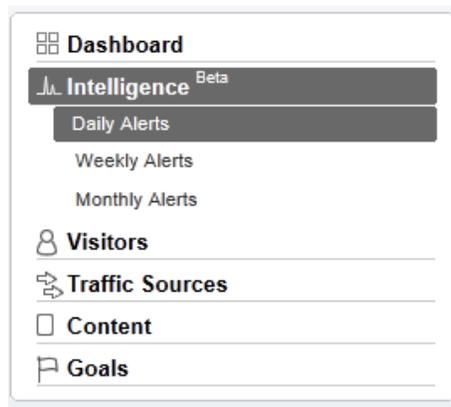


Alerts

I love it when technology does the work for me. Google Analytics has the ability to track certain activities and send you an email when something significant has happened. Nothing improves efficiency like only having to go check in on my analytics when there is something significant to check in on, other than my usual monthly scan that is.

Where are Alerts

Alerts can be found under the Intelligence section of the main navigation in the upper-left. You will notice is still in beta but Google has a habit of keeping features in beta for a very long time. I have yet to run into issues with anything in this area. You will notice you can set the criteria for different intervals as well.



Create The Alert

As with everything else in Google Analytics you can create and monitor things at a very broad level as well as dig in pretty deep into segmented data sets if you so desire. I encourage you to play around with the various options you can set in the conditions. There is a lot of power in what you can set up.

Create an Alert

Alert name:

Apply to: and

Period:

Send me an email when this alert triggers. Also include

Setup your mobile phone to receive a text message about Intelligence Alerts

Alert Conditions

This applies to

Alert me when	Condition	Value
<input type="text" value="Visits"/>	<input type="text" value="Is greater than"/>	<input type="text" value="150"/>

Better Information to Make Better Decisions

These are a few of my favorite tricks in Google Analytics for nonprofits. They really help take you beyond the basic numbers on the main dashboard and help find the greater level of value from the tool that most organizations need, better information and more efficiency from their technology.

What are some of your favorite tricks and tips to go beyond the basics?