

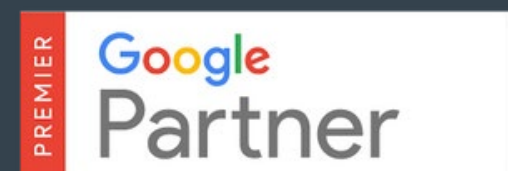
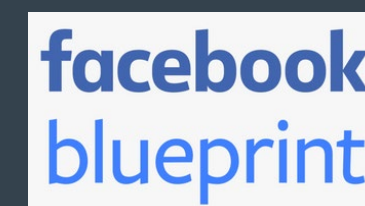
# Countdown to GA4 and the Event-Based Future of Measurement

BlackTruck Media + Marketing

# About BlackTruck

30+ years of digital marketing experience and recognized internationally for excellence in SEO, Digital Advertising, and Content Marketing across industry.

We aim to apply our craft to your industry, your challenges, and your goals for a positive outcome.



# Agenda

- (1) Universal Analytics (GA3) vs. Google Analytics 4 (GA4)
- (2) What you need to do to prepare
- (3) What this means for the future of attribution / measurement in digital marketing





It's Going Down July 1, 2023

# UA (GA3) **vs.** GA4

UA

GA4



meijer







# UA

Based on Sessions

Code Base 25 Years Old

Pre-Web 2.0, eCommerce, Mobile,  
Social, Broadband

Pre-Privacy Era

# GA4

Based on Events

Built for Current Environment

Multi-surface, eCommerce-dominant,  
Mobile-first Landscape

Privacy-Forward Era







Back



Forward



Reload



Home



Search



Netscape



Images



Print



Security



Shop



Stop

Location: <http://www.hollywoodweb.com/report/english/>

What's Related



## Site Report

Traffic

Snapshot

Summary

Hourly Graph

Daily Graph

Monthly Graph

Top Servers

Pages

Referrals

Domains

Browsers

Tracking

E-Commerce

Date Range

Site Report for: **hollywoodweb.com**

Date Range: 7/1/2000 - 7/31/2000

Hourly Graph

Visitors

Pageviews

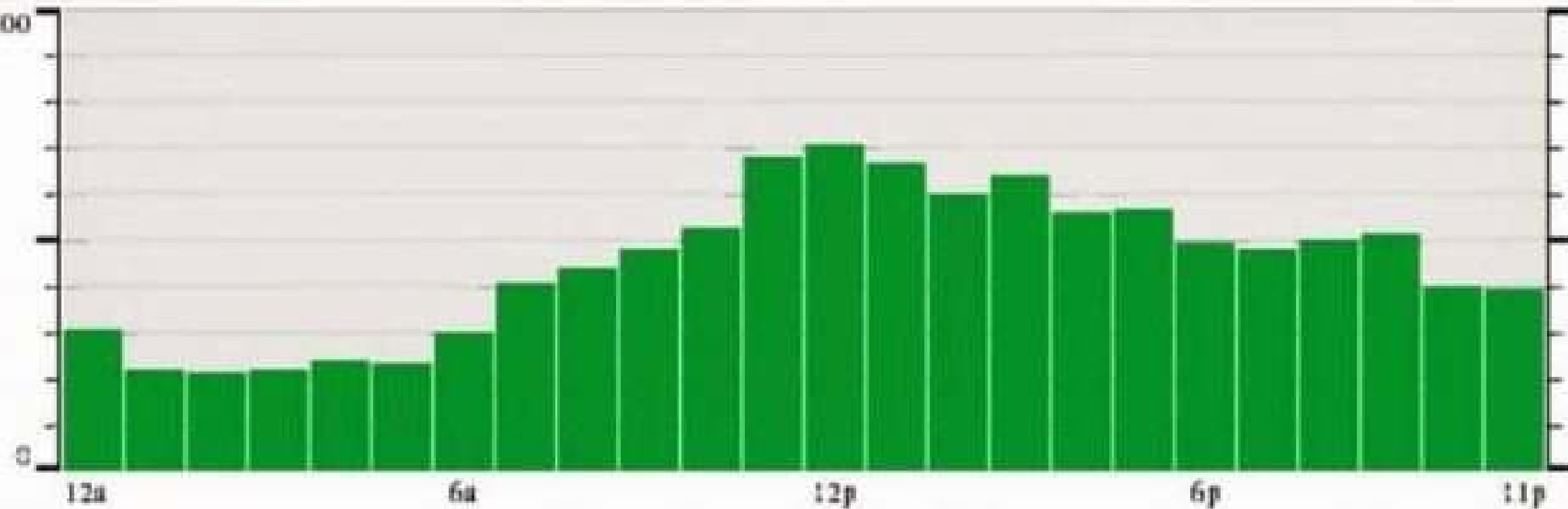
Hits

Bytes

Range Total: 16,168 Hourly Average: 673.67

Visitors

1,500



# UA Data

7 Types of Hit Data  
(pageview, timing, ecomm, etc.)

Session-based, Pageviews

Less Sampling/Modeling

Cookie-based

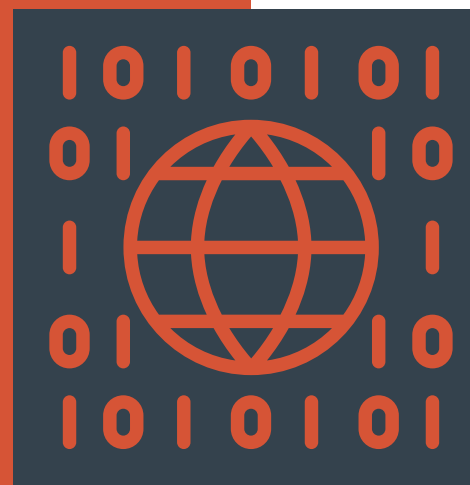
# GA4 Data

All Hit Data is an Event  
(event, event, event, event, etc.)

Event-based

More Sampling/Modeling

"Google Signals" + Cookies  
(1st Party-only When Chrome Blocks 3rd)





# UA Data Storage & Retrieval

Duration: Unlimited

Throttling: Not Really a Problem

# GA4 Data Storage & Retrieval

Duration: 2 months or 14 Months\*

Throttling: Big Problem  
(Affects Platforms That Access API - like  
DataStudio/Looker)

You'll Likely Need Data Warehousing



# Has Historical Data \*Actually\* Been Comparable Since 2020 Tho?





# UA Events

Not Tracked Automatically

Structure Limited  
(Category, Action, and Label)

Not Customizable

# GA4 Events

Automatically Tracked

Structure Flexible  
(Up to 25 Parameters for Each Event)

Highly Customizable



# UA Sessions

Group of Hits By a User  
in a Given Time Period

Less Accurate for International

# GA4 Sessions

Group of Events By a User  
in a Given Time Period

More Accurate for International





# GA4: "Engaged Session" Defined



Lasted At Least 10 Seconds

-OR-

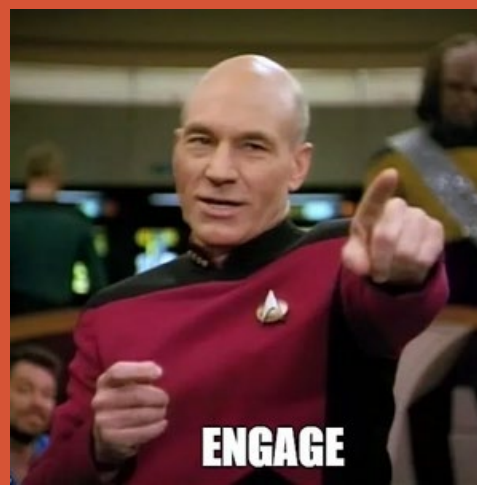


At Least 1 Conversion Event

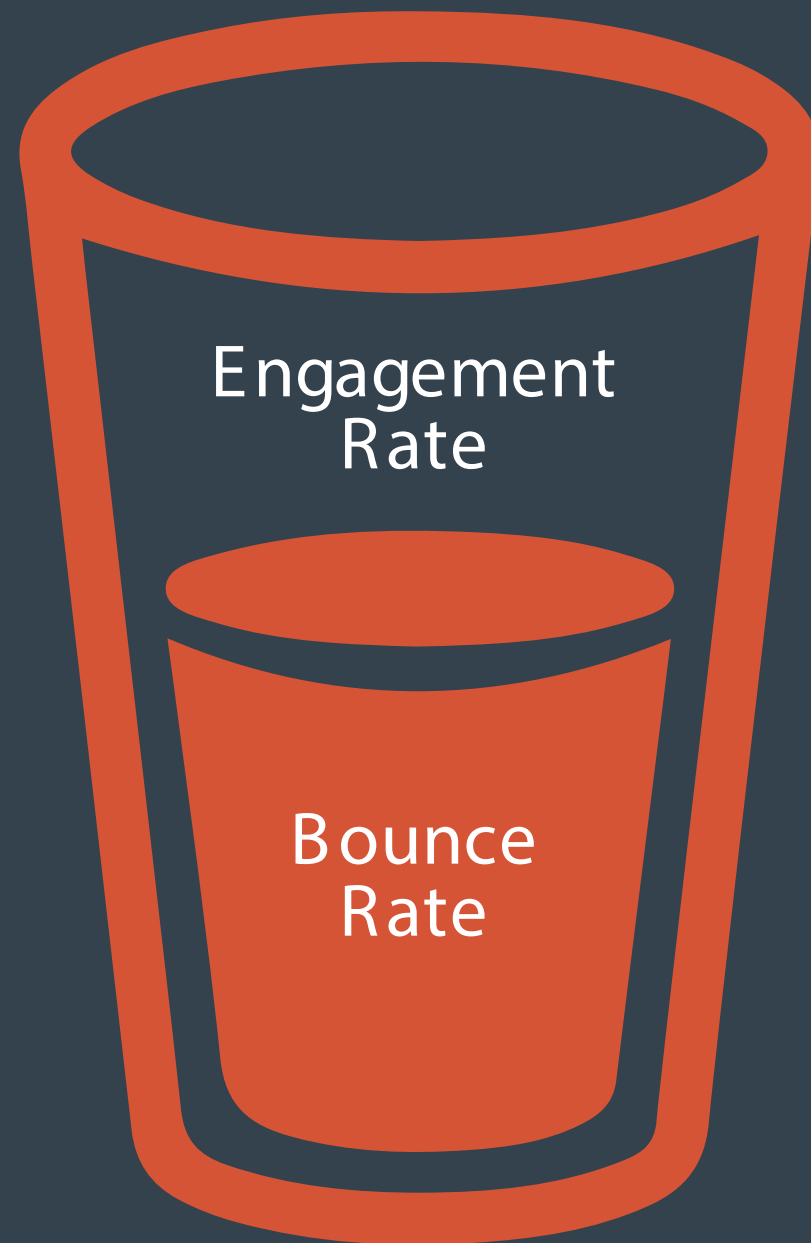
-OR-



Min. 2 Page/Screen Views



# Engagement Rate vs. Bounce Rate



User explorer 1		+	<div><div>↶</div><div>↷</div><div>⬇</div><div>👤</div><div>✅</div></div>			
App-instance ID	Stream name	Sessions	↓ Event co	Engagement rate	Bounce rate	
Totals		1,257 100% of total	1,257 100% of total	53.46% Avg 0%	46.54% Avg 0%	
1 312862367.1679066167	https://blacktruckmedia.com - GA4	14	127	78.57%	21.43%	
2 1145485011.1596558251	https://blacktruckmedia.com - GA4	10	126		30%	
3 393848864.1655921027	https://blacktruckmedia.com - GA4	16	94	62.5%	37.5%	
4 1535191203.1679074027	https://blacktruckmedia.com - GA4	9	51	77.78%	22.22%	
5 496376133.1676327189	https://blacktruckmedia.com - GA4	5	38	80%	20%	
6 1362101049.1674137874	https://blacktruckmedia.com - GA4	5	30	100%	0%	
7 2110782552.1678149667	https://blacktruckmedia.com - GA4	3	30	100%	0%	
8 1436423877.1670600741	https://blacktruckmedia.com - GA4	2	29	50%	50%	
9 1033204147.1680645985	https://blacktruckmedia.com - GA4	1	28	100%	0%	
10 207795218.1680105953	https://blacktruckmedia.com - GA4	5	28	100%	0%	



# UA Success Metric

Conversions Name: "Goals"

"Instant" Setup

Limit: 500 (20 per view x 25 views)

# GA4 Success Metric

Conversions Name: "Conversions"

Setup Requires Event Firing (<24 hrs)

Limit: 30/property



# UA Reports

Focus: PreBuilt

Philosophy: Analysis Happens In UA

Display: Expanded  
(Multiple Tables)

# GA4 Reports

Focus: Custom

Philosophy: Analysis Happens Outside GA4

Display: Condensed  
(Reorganized Into Single Tables)

TIP

Look for:

"Demographic Details" (1 table, 7 reports)

- and -

"Tech Details" (1 table, 10 reports)





# UA Acquisition Reports

Overview

All Traffic

- Channels

- Treemaps

- Source/Medium

- Referrals

Google Ads

Social

Campaigns

# GA4 Acquisition Reports

Acquisition overview

User acquisition

Traffic acquisition

(Note: this is likely a hint at the future of attribution, i.e. there won't be much)



# UA Losses

(Free) Historical Data Storage

Views

Scheduled Report Emails

Easy Date Navigation

Most Pre-formatted Reports

Annotations

Saved Segments



# GA4 Gains

DebugView

Predictive Analysis / Machine Learning

Anomaly Detection

Use Custom Dim. as Primary Dim.

Audience-based Conversions

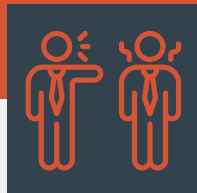
Elapsed Time to Convert

Forwards/Backwards Pathing

# How to Prepare for GA4



# A Proposal: Change Everything



## "Blame Google" Hall Pass

Once-in-a-generation  
opportunity to reset with  
stakeholders.



## Shed Your Technical Debt

We've adapted to a lot of  
change and had to carry a  
lot of baggage as a result.



## Measure What Matters

If you're not using a piece  
of data to shape decisions -  
  
- why are you measuring it?

# Get Comfortable With Looker Studio (Formerly Google Data Studio)



Looker

# Prepare: Turn On 14-month Data Retention

Admin > Data Settings > Data Retention



Analytics GA-4 Build https://blacktruckmedia.co...

ADMIN USER

Property + Create Property

GA-4 Build https://blacktruckmedia.co...

Setup Assistant

Property Settings

Property Access Management

Data Streams

Events

Conversions

Audiences

Custom definitions

Data Settings

Data Collection

Data Retention

Data Filters

Channel Groups

Data Import

Reporting Identity

User and event data retention

You can change the retention period for data you send that is a reporting, which is based on aggregated data. Changes to these

Event data retention 14 months

Reset user data on new activity

Save Cancel

© 2023 Google | Analytics home | Terms of





# Prepare: Don't Port Over UA Event Settings

Admin > Data Streams > [select your data stream] > Configure Tag Settings > “Collect Universal Analytics Events”



Google tag | Untitled tag  
G-VVG36QRSTN

Configuration | History | Admin

Your Google tag [Installation instructions](#)

Google tag ? Destinations ?

Untitled tag  
IDs: G-VVG36QRSTN

https://blacktruckmedia.com -...

Settings [Show less ^](#)  
Some tag settings apply only to specific destinations

- Manage automatic event detection**  
Configure which types of events your Google tag should automatically detect for measurement in associated destinations
- Configure your domains**  
Specify a list of domains for cross-domain measurement
- Allow user-provided data capabilities**  
Configure whether your Google tag should allow user-provided data to be included in measurement for destination products that accept such data.
- Collect Universal Analytics events**  
Collect an event each time a ga() custom event, timing, or exception call from Universal Analytics occurs on your website ☐
- Define internal traffic**  
Define IP addresses whose traffic should be marked as internal
- List unwanted referrals**  
Specify domains whose traffic should not be considered to be referrals
- Adjust session timeout**  
Set how long sessions can last
- Override cookie settings**

# Prepare: Avoid (or Use Sparingly) the Setup Assistant & Wizards



Analytics

All accounts > Black Truck Media

GA-4 Build https://blacktruc...

Try searching "trend of conversions from organi..."

?

B

ADMIN

USER

Property

+ Create Property

GA-4 Build https://blacktruckmedia.co...

←

Setup Assistant

Property Settings

Property Access Management

Data Streams

Events

Conversions

Audiences

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Data Collection

Data Retention

Data Filters

Channel Groups

Data Import

Reporting Identity

Attribution Settings

Property Change History

Data Deletion Requests

DebugView

PRODUCT LINKS

Google Ads Links

Ad Manager Links

BigQuery Links

Display & Video 360 Links

This is your new GA4 property. Your connected Universal Analytics property remains unchanged.

Open connected property

Setup Assistant

Connected to https://blacktruckmedia.com

Set up these features to get the most out of your new property. Your smarter, more advanced data analysis awaits. [Learn more about the Setup Assistant](#)

0 / 12 marked complete

Data collection

Collect website and app data

Collect event data by adding the Google tag to your web pages. [Learn more](#)

DATA FLOWING

Property settings

Turn on Google signals

Access aggregated data from people with Google accounts who allow Ads Personalization. [Learn more](#)

Not Started

Set up conversions

Identify the key user interactions most important to your business. [Learn more](#)

2 CONVERSIONS

Define audiences

Find, group, and remarket to your most engaged visitors [Learn more](#)

2 AUDIENCES

Manage users

Add users, user groups, and permissions. [Learn more](#)

2 USERS

Google Ads

Link to Google Ads

Connect to your Google Ads account, so your GA4 audiences and conversion-event data are exported to Google Ads by...

Not Started

Bid on GA4 conversions

Use Google Ads to bid on GA4 conversions [Learn more](#)

Not Started

Target ads to GA4 audiences

Go to Ads and bid using GA4 audiences. [Learn more](#)

Not Started

Advanced setup (optional)

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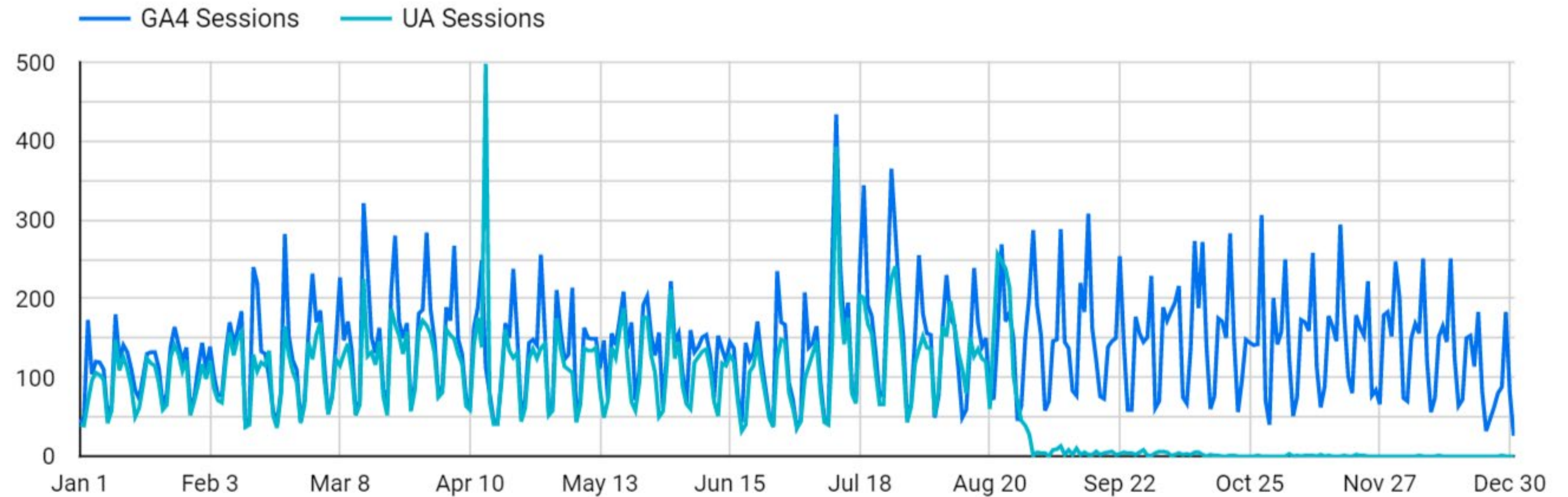
[Analytics home](#)

[Terms of Service](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Send feedback](#)





# Blending UA/GA4 in Looker Studio

(courtesy Dana DiTomaso, Kickpoint)



# Prepare: Consider Data Warehousing



Google  
BigQuery

# Prepare: Consider Paid Alternatives to Google Analytics



## Adobe Analytics

Starts at \$500/mo

## Amplitude

Growth plan \$995/mo

## Heap

Growth plan \$300/mo

## Kissmetrics

Starts at \$299/mo

## Mixpanel

Growth plan starts at \$20/mo

# The Future of Attribution





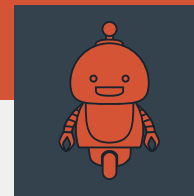
# Less User Data = Three Things



## Less Accurate Targeting

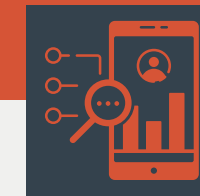
Fewer available targeting interests / features.

(Esp. health/medical, politics, race, religion, etc.)



## Less Machine Learning

Ad platform targeting (esp. social ad platforms) is heavily-reliant on learning from user behavior after encountering an ad.



## Harder Attribution

We know less (or in some cases, nothing) about what brought someone to our website.

# Privacy Impact on Digital Ad Targeting



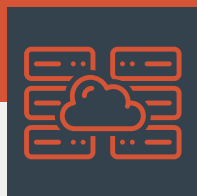
Custom  
/ User-Based

Contextual

# Privacy Impact on Marketing Attribution

Session source / medium ▾ +		Users	↓ Sessions	Engaged sessions	Average engagement time per session	Engaged sessions per user
		32,130 100% of total	38,251 100% of total	19,740 100% of total	0m 34s Avg 0%	0.61 Avg 0%
1	(direct) / (none)	10,804	11,782	6,093	0m 15s	0.56
2	google / organic	7,341	10,046	6,419	0m 55s	0.87
3	google / cpc	4,466	5,591	3,659	0m 48s	0.82
4	linkedin / paid	4,357	4,509	316	0m 01s	0.07
5	google / paid	1,307	1,515	1,062	1m 13s	0.81
6	linkedin / paid-social	1,106	1,110	48	0m 00s	0.04
7	bing / organic	709	953	704	1m 24s	0.99
8	Outlook / Email	509	512	46	0m 01s	0.09
9	linkedin.com / referral	301	392	264	0m 56s	0.88
10	yahoo / organic	141	190	130	0m 57s	0.92

# Current Attribution Band-aids



## Server-side APIs

Information is exchanged on the server side (not the client side like a cookie).

I.E. The Facebook Conversions API (CAPI)



## In-Platform Conversions

Changing the funnel so the conversion happens INSIDE the ad platform instead of on your site.

I.E. FB Instant Forms / Messenger Ads, FB/Insta Shopping, LinkedIn Lead Gen Ads



## Data Modeling

Extrapolating from limited data using new statistical models.

I.E. AI-driven solutions (you know, the ones that can't properly count human fingers at the moment)



# Navigating Reports to Stakeholders

## Multi-Touch Reality

A single ad does not cause a conversion.

Most have multiple points of contact.

All our channels work in concert,  
not unilaterally.



## "Trends, Not Absolutes"

(- Dana DiTomaso, Kickpoint)

We aren't going to know exact numbers  
(and, actually, we never truly did).

Focus on what trends tell us to (a) keep  
doing, or (b) change.



# Resources

## Articles/Tools

- Krista Seiden's [GA4 Cheat Sheet](#)
- [Google's GA4 "Announcements" Page](#) (for the latest changes to GA4)
- SparkToro Office Hours [Video]: ["The End of Attribution" with Rand Fishkin](#)
- Data Driven's [Periodic Table of Google Analytics 4](#)
- GA4Spy's [GA4 Dimensions and Metrics Cheatsheet](#)
- Orbit Media: [GA4 Versus Universal Analytics](#)
- New Perspective: [Google Analytics 4: How to Make the Switch from GA3 and Leverage 9 Great New Features](#)
- Google's GA4 ["Business Objectives" Collection](#)
- [GA4 Looker Studio Template – Year-to-Year Basic Looker Studio Template](#)
- [GA4 & UA Looker Studio Template – Comparing GA4 and UA Data in Looker Studio Template](#)

## Tutorials:

- Analytics Mania [Video]: [Acquisition Reports in Google Analytics 4](#)
- Loves Data: [Automatic, Recommended and Custom Events in GA4](#)
- Measure School: [Complete Google Analytics 4 Course for Beginners \(2023\)](#)

# Countdown to GA4 and the Event-Based Future of Measurement

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