

Data and analytics

Data and analytics can provide valuable insights into the behaviour of supporters and beneficiaries of your charity, as well as being a useful method to measure return on investment of your campaign efforts.

Using analytics platforms such as Google Analytics or Adobe Analytics you can track your users' behaviour, get real-time data and measure the success of your campaigns. This information can then be used to optimise the performance of your charity website in the future.

Why it's important to understand data and analytics terminology

- **User behaviour and demographics:** It is important that your charity website reaches the right people, whether they are showing support or benefit from your services or both. Your data can provide valuable insights into how users are interacting and can highlight areas where your website may not meet user needs.
- **New opportunities:** Your data can help you identify new opportunities to optimise your donation funnel, increase newsletter sign ups etc. Often, there are simple changes that can make a big difference to your online success.
- **Data-driven decision-making:** More informed and strategic decisions can be made when your choices are backed by data. Google Analytics can show you where your traffic is coming from, where users are leaving, and which campaigns are effective. You can use this to guide your ongoing marketing strategy.
- **High-performing content:** Find out which content that resonates with your audience by analysing the pages that users engage with most. Use this, for example, to inform your content strategy and create more of the content users love. This will improve user experience and can lead to much higher engagement.

Using data and analytics to understand your users is vital for optimising your website's performance. Being familiar with the terminology used is the first step to optimising your charity's online presence and digital marketing efforts.

Data & analytics glossary of terms

Acquisition

A set of reports that show you where your users are coming from. This is typically reported by 'channel', for example Organic Search, Paid Search, Paid Social or Email.

Action

An interaction on your website you would like to track, including a newsletter sign-up, page view, or purchase.

Active users

Number of distinct users who visited your website and engaged with the content within the period you are looking at.

Adobe Analytics

Adobe Analytics is a web analytics platform that helps businesses measure and analyse traffic and engagement across their websites and apps. It can be used to track a wide range of metrics, including page views, visits, unique visitors, bounce rate etc.

Audience

A group of users who share similar characteristics, such as demographic, age group, or those who have watched a specific video. You can create, segment and target audiences.

Behavioural targeting

Using a user's previous behaviour to target them. For example, showing them products they have viewed when they previously accessed your site.

Big data

A very large data set that allows you to research questions or help with predicting demand. Google Analytics data alone is usually not considered big data.

Bounce rate

The percentage of people who have visited your website and not interacted, leaving after viewing just one page.

Channel

Top-level groupings of different mediums and sources through which your traffic is obtained. The default channels in Google Analytics include organic, direct, referral, social, email, and paid.

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Client ID

A randomly assigned unique ID assigned to everyone who enters your website. Google uses this to recognise returning users, provided they have not deleted their cookies.

Conversion rate

The percentage of users who took an action on your site. For example, if one in ten users are signing up to your emails, that is a 10% conversion rate. You can track this for most actions on your website.

Cookie

A small file/set of files that are stored on a user's browser or computer when they use your website, these can be used for targeted marketing.

CPC

'Cost per click' - the cost to you when a user clicks on a paid search link.

Data import

You can import data into Google Analytics to join your online and offline data. This can enhance data quality and reporting.

Data retention

By default, data on individuals, such as client ID, are stored for two months. You can change this to up to 14 months. Data in summary form will remain available for reporting.

Default channel grouping

Medium and Source combinations will automatically be classified by Google Analytics. For example, if a user clicks on an organic listing from a Google search, it will be classified as 'Organic search'.

Demographics

User demographics allow you to filter and report on characteristics such as gender, age, and interest. This data is modelled and not actually captured from users.

Dimension

Attributes of your data that can be used to segment, sort, and organise. For example, country, medium, and language.

Direct traffic

Those who have come to your site directly, either by typing in the URL or clicking a bookmark on their browser.

E-commerce purchase

E-commerce tracking can be enabled within Google Analytics to track shopping activity and purchases on your site. Information that can be tracked includes revenue, transaction data, and products sold.

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Engaged sessions

A session is 'engaged' when it lasts over ten seconds (you can change this), includes a conversion, or includes at least two page views.

Engagement rate

Your engagement rate is calculated by the number of engaged sessions divided by the number of sessions. If there was a total of 100 sessions and 60 were engaged sessions, the engagement rate would be 60%.

Event

An interaction with your site or app, including page loads, clicks, or purchases. Google Analytics uses this data to create reports.

Funnel

The journey a user takes through your website, from finding your site to making a purchase or taking an action. You can analyse your funnel to increase conversions or find any stopping points for your users.

Google Analytics 4 (GA4)

GA4 is the latest version of Google's popular web analytics platform. It is designed to help businesses measure and analyse traffic and engagement across websites and apps. Google Analytics can be used to measure a wide range of metrics, including audience behaviour, traffic, conversions etc

Google Ads

This is Google's pay-per-click platform. It uses a bidding system where you put the maximum amount you are willing to pay for a click on your advert.

Google Signals

Session data that allows for cross-device reporting and marketing when a user is signed into their Google account. Use of this functionality is disputed in Europe due to privacy concerns.

Google Tag Manager

A tag management system with a simple interface. You can instantly deploy tags on your website or app without the help of developers.

Google tag (Gtag)

A way of connecting all your online services, such as Google Analytics and Google Ads without adding multiple scripts to each page of your website. One tag to rule them all.

Impressions

The number of times a page or piece of content has been viewed. This can apply to your website, or an advertising campaign on social media.

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Landing page

The first page a user lands on when visiting your website, also the destination page you set for your advertising campaigns.

Lifetime value

Metric that allows you to view the value of users and customers based on their lifetime visits to your site. The quality of this data depends on recognising individual users reliably so this data is often flawed.

Looker Studio

Previously called Google Data Studio, this is a tool for visualising your data in easy-to-read reports and interactive dashboards. It is a useful tool for presenting data from any source.

Medium

The type of traffic being referred to your site, such as organic, referred, or paid.

New user

A user that has not visited your site before. Recognising a returning user relies on cookies so if a user did not accept cookies or wiped them since their last visit, they will be counted as 'new' during the date range you are looking at.

Organic traffic

All traffic that has come to your site through a search engine results page (SERP). Not including any paid ads.

Page view

Called 'Views' in GA4. When a page is viewed on your site is it recorded as a page view. This also includes when a page is reloaded.

Parameter

Information collected around an event in Google Analytics, such as page title or session ID. You can create custom parameters and collect almost any data you want.

Personally identifiable information (PII)

Information that can personally identify a person, such as a phone number, a name or email address. This data must not be collected in Google Analytics.

Referral

Sites your traffic has been referred from, this could be other websites or social media sites.

Sampling

When you segment and analyse large sets of data in GA4, it may sample the data. This uncovers the meaning of the data with faster processing. To minimise sampling, you can select a smaller date range. Sampling is indicated with a little warning icon, look out for it.

GLOSSARY

Search query

The exact string of words a user typed in a search engine to click through to your website.

Segment

You can segment your audience by characteristics you find important. This could be someone who has visited your site a specific number of times, or who has previously made a purchase or a visitor using a specific type of device.

Session

The metric for counting visits to your website. A session is counted from the second a user lands on your website, to after 30 minutes of inactivity.

Source

The 'origin' of your traffic. These are the domains sending traffic to your site, such as 'Google', a referring site, or a social site.

Tracking URL

These allow you to track where specific traffic originated. It is a normal URL with UTM parameters or a campaign ID attached in the query string.

URL builder

This [tool](#) allows you to add campaign tags to your URLs. This way you can measure your campaigns in Google Analytics.

Users

Any individual that views or interacts with your site.

User engagement

Engagement is calculated using a combination of time on site, number of pages viewed and any other interactions with the site, such as purchases or events. This is shown as the metric 'engaged sessions' or 'engagement rate'.

UTM parameters

UTM stands for 'Urchin Tracking Module'. This is a string of text you can add to a URL to track the exact source of your traffic. These can be used to track the performance of a campaign with details including the source, medium, content, and keyword.