

Fun with Analytics

Chapter 4: Reviewing Performance of Campaigns

Introduction

Welcome to Fun with Analytics. If you’ve come across this material on its own – it has two homes – one is a site where you can download copies of the chapters or read them online, at <http://tinyurl.com/casa-mktg> - the other is a LinkedIn Group, Learning Google Analytics, where you can discuss the material and ask questions: <http://tinyurl.com/learning-ga>

In This Chapter

In this chapter, we’re going to take a light look at some of the ways you can see information about the performance of a website or campaign, as well as some related terms, and the idea of ongoing reporting. If you’re following along you can pick up some information just from reading the material, but I think it will be more compelling if you develop a blog or site as per chapters 1-3, so that you have your own personal data to look at – more exciting, and even fun!

Reviewing Campaign Analytics

Even though our focus is on Google Analytics, I think it’s still worth seeing how tools relate to each other. In the previous chapter, we looked at how to generate some traffic for viewing in analytics, and this would be representative of if you were doing an ad campaign, as well as looking at its impact. In many cases, you could be involved in both the execution of an ad campaign, as well as looking at the data.

It’s also helpful to see how an “ad platform” views things, vs how things look at your actual website or blog.

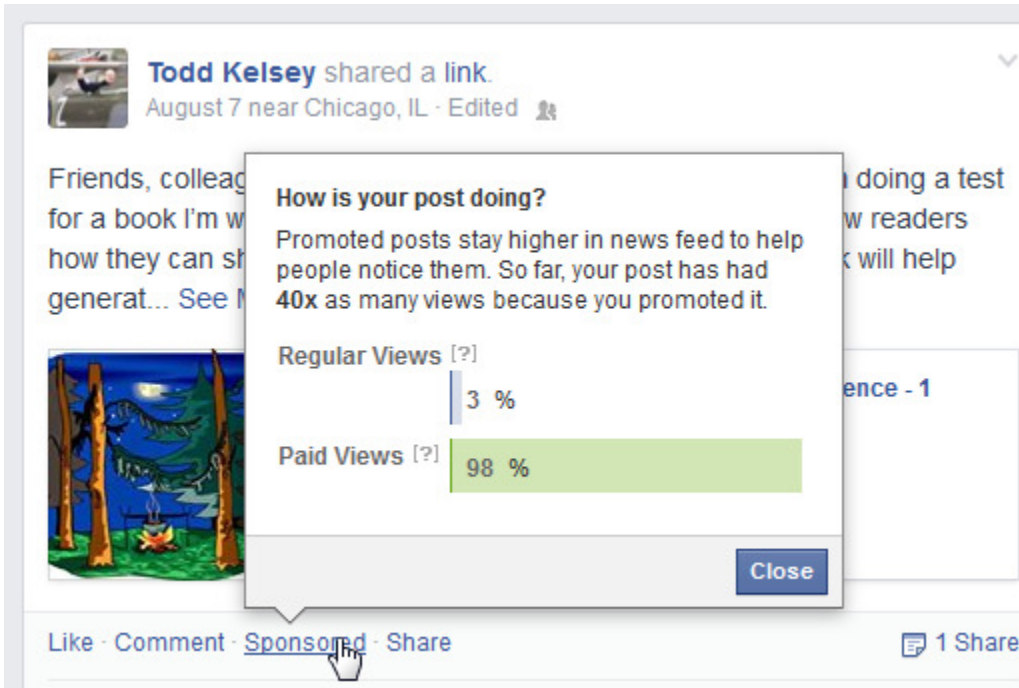
In other words, just the clicks from an ad isn’t the whole story. Without looking at Google Analytics at all, you can get some sense of the amount of traffic you’ll get – but it’s like sending someone to a house but not knowing what they do once they get there.

So if you’re following along, and tried a Facebook ad campaign, you can go to Facebook to see how things are going: <https://www.facebook.com/ads/manage>

At this end of things, you’re seeing the “outgoing” information – people on Facebook who see your ad, and hopefully some of them click on it and visit your blog or website:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Status ?	Campaign Name ?	Delivery ?	Results ?	Cost ?	Reach ?	Spent Today ?	Total Spent ?
<input type="checkbox"/>		npoex.blogspot.com/2014/07/... - Website Clicks	● Active	32 Website Clicks	\$0.58 Per Website Click	9,395	\$0.53 of \$5.00	\$18.81 of \$34.92 ⓘ

If you tried the promoted post idea, you can go back to it and click on the Sponsored link – at present, Facebook doesn't give good data on personal sponsored posts (because it's in their best interest not to give numbers?). All they give you is a relative picture:



Ok, so how many people actually clicked on the link in the Sponsored Post? And this is one limitation of the “personal promotion” platform – limited data. When you run facebook ads (or sponsored posts from a facebook page, etc.) – you get a bit more data.


But ultimately you can look at Google Analytics to see how many clicks arrived from various sources.

Reviewing Performance in Google Analytics

So let's go back into Google Analytics (assuming everything is set up, you're tracking visitors, you shared on social media and/or ran an ad, etc.):

<http://www.google.com/analytics/>

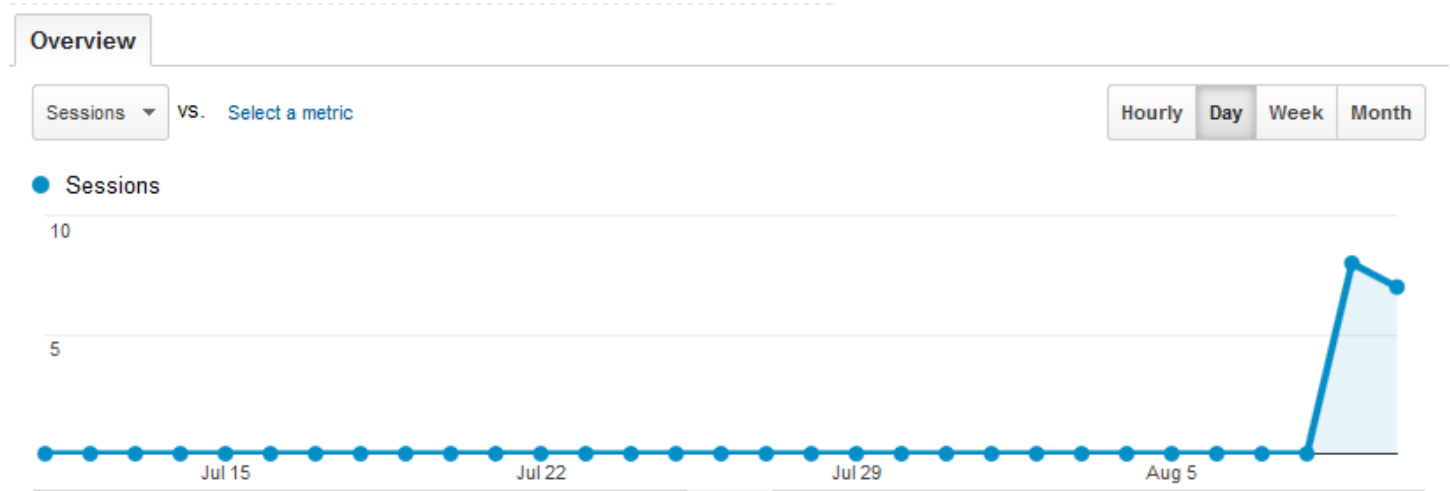
And you should see something like this – where you'd click on the link next to the little globe:

☆	NPOEx Blog (UA-6397232-9)				
☆	 All Web Site Data	15	00:00:08	86.67%	0.00%

Google Analytics has a lot of options, a lot of ways to “slice and dice”, but my recommendation is to approach it as if it were a tool – not one where you necessarily have to know every option from day one – but one where you can go with a specific question, and branch out from there.

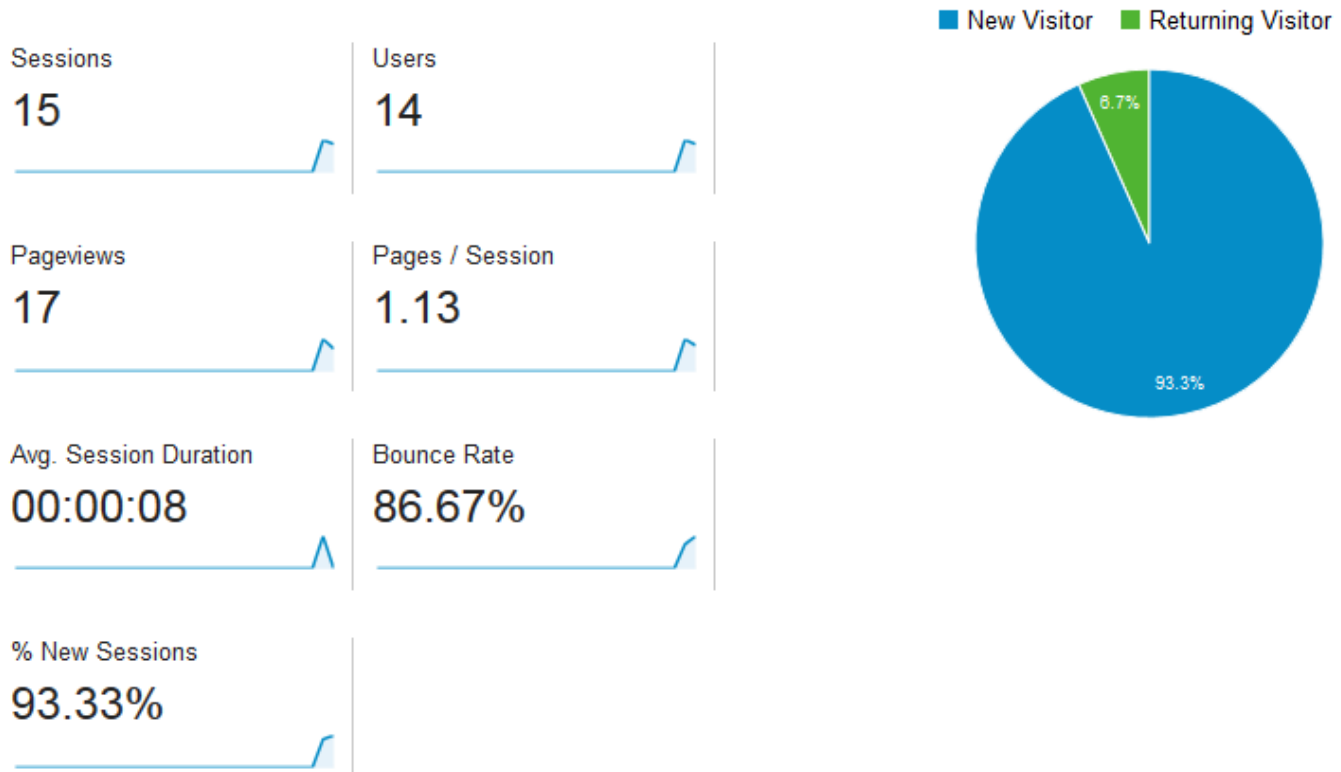
So to me, the fun part is just seeing the fact that there are visitors.

The Overview tab will open, and by default it will look back at recent data, based on “Sessions”:



Session is a technical term for a visit, and the thing to keep in mind is that you could view several pages while on a visit.

On the same page, there will be several additional items:



So while there might be 15 sessions, there were 17 pageviews – this means that some of the visitors viewed more than one page.

Another interesting thing is the amount of time someone spent during their visit – in this case, the average was 8 seconds.

One of the ways that people use information from Google Analytics is to view how performance currently is, and then set goals for the future. For example, a goal might be to look at the site or blog, and see if you can add more compelling content, so that over time, the average duration of a session increases.

“Bounce Rate” is a similar point, also called a “metric”.

Bounce rate (sometimes confused with exit rate)[1] is an Internet marketing term used in web traffic analysis. It represents the percentage of visitors who enter the site and "bounce" (leave the site) rather than continue viewing other pages within the same site.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bounce_rate

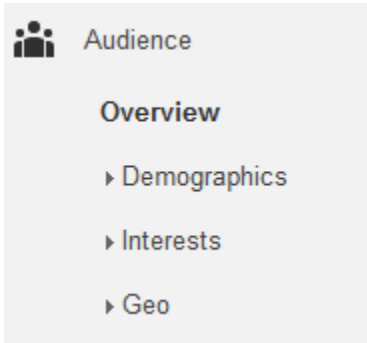
So another goal of reviewing performance and optimization might be to take note of the bounce rate, and see what you can do to decrease the bounce rate.

What might be some reasons people “bounce”? A good google search drill might be to search for “improving bounce rate” or “why do people bounce from a site”?

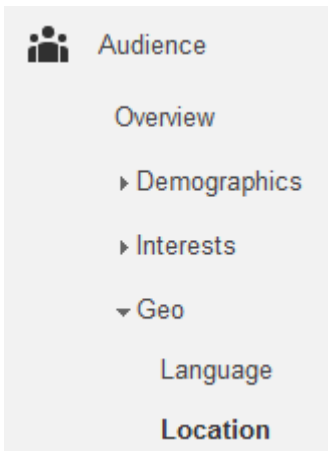
Location, Location, Location!

Another thing I think is particularly fun is to look at where people are visiting from.

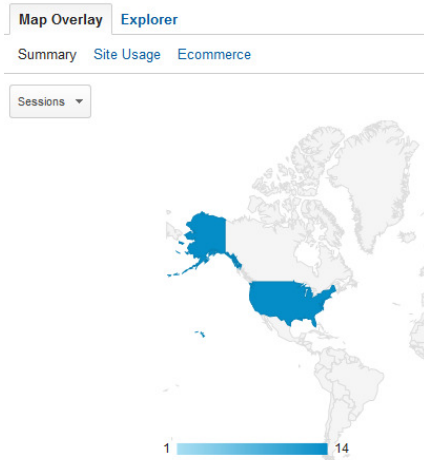
In Google Analytics, on the left, you can click on Geo:



And then location:



There is a map overlay, which will give you an instant visual sense:



And then there is also a breakdown of what sessions were from where:

Country / Territory ?	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions
	Sessions ? ↓	% New Sessions ?	New Users ?	Bounce Rate ?	Pages / Session ?	Avg. Session Duration ?	Goal Conversion Rate ?
	15 % of Total: 100.00% (15)	93.33% Site Avg: 93.33% (0.00%)	14 % of Total: 100.00% (14)	86.67% Site Avg: 86.67% (0.00%)	1.13 Site Avg: 1.13 (0.00%)	00:00:08 Site Avg: 00:00:08 (0.00%)	0.00% Site Avg: 0.00% (0.00%)
1. United States	14 (93.33%)	92.86%	13 (92.86%)	85.71%	1.14	00:00:09	0.00%
2. Cyprus	1 (6.67%)	100.00%	1 (7.14%)	100.00%	1.00	00:00:00	0.00%

For example, I'm not entirely sure why there was a visitor from Cyprus . . . but they didn't appear to stay on the site too long (and avg session duration of 0).

With analytics, it's probably fair to say that the best way to learn the value, and to learn how to optimize, is alongside an ongoing campaign of some kind, and/or a website that has an ongoing set of visitors. But if you're just starting out, exploring and playing with some of the options in Google Analytics can give you a few tools that you can keep in mind for when you're in that situation. And I personally believe that making an ongoing blog is a good general learning experience, as well as a source of traffic.

Dare I say that you can think of analytics as a party? Invite people from all over the world, give them something enjoyable, meaningful or relevant to experience, and then see what they do. That's analytics!

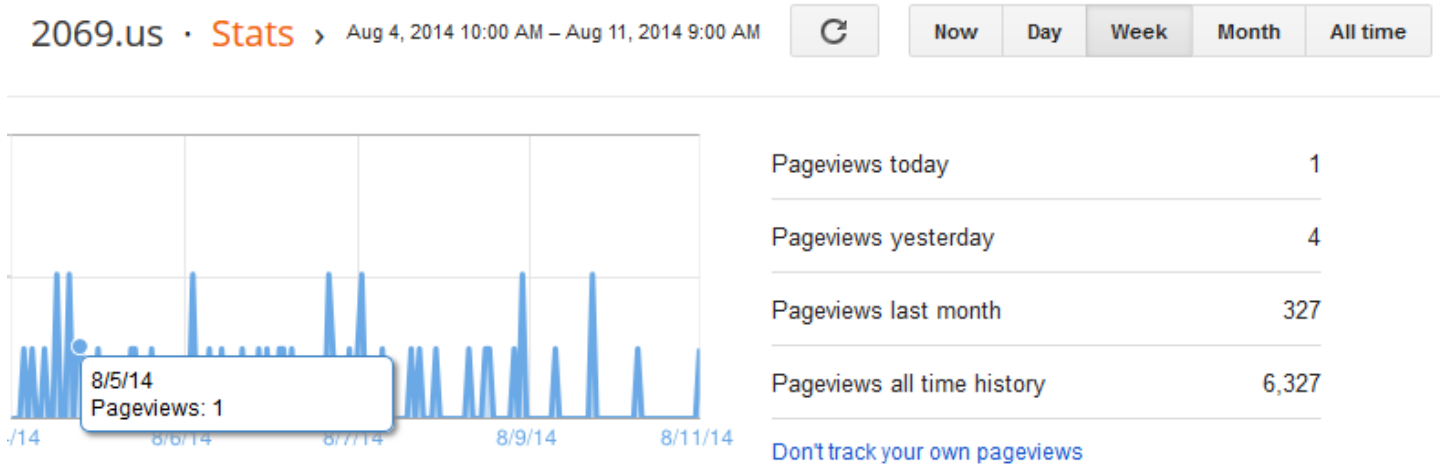
Trending

One concept in analytics that's helpful to explore, and file away, and burn in your synapses, is the idea of "trending". It basically means to look at how things perform, over time. To look at the trends. To get a sense of trending, an easy way is to go directly into Blogger, and click on the Stats link – a simplified set of analytics.

- Overview
- Posts
- Pages
- Comments
- Google+
- Stats
 - Overview
 - Posts
 - Traffic sources
 - Audience

So the 2069.us blog is one that's been around for awhile – it is a personal blog that hasn't been promoted extensively, but has seen some traffic.

The Stats function in Blogger opens up to the Week tab:



But if you click in the All time tab (upper right), it shows a longer view, and the longer your blog has been around, the more you may see a trend. In theory, with a consistent application of effort (adding quality content, making some effort to promote, hopefully getting listed on some other sites), then you will see a boost in the amount of traffic.

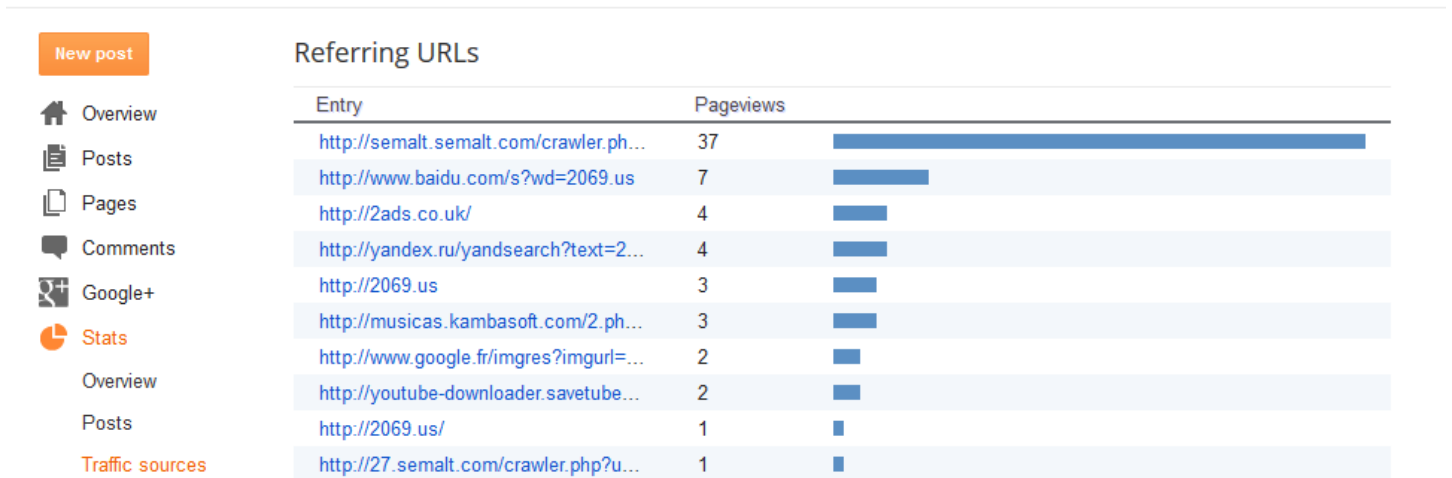


So on the left – since 2006 that is, we see that there has been a fairly gradual growth in the amount of traffic. This is a good trend – at least it's not going down.

Traffic in Blogger - Spam Traffic – Bots

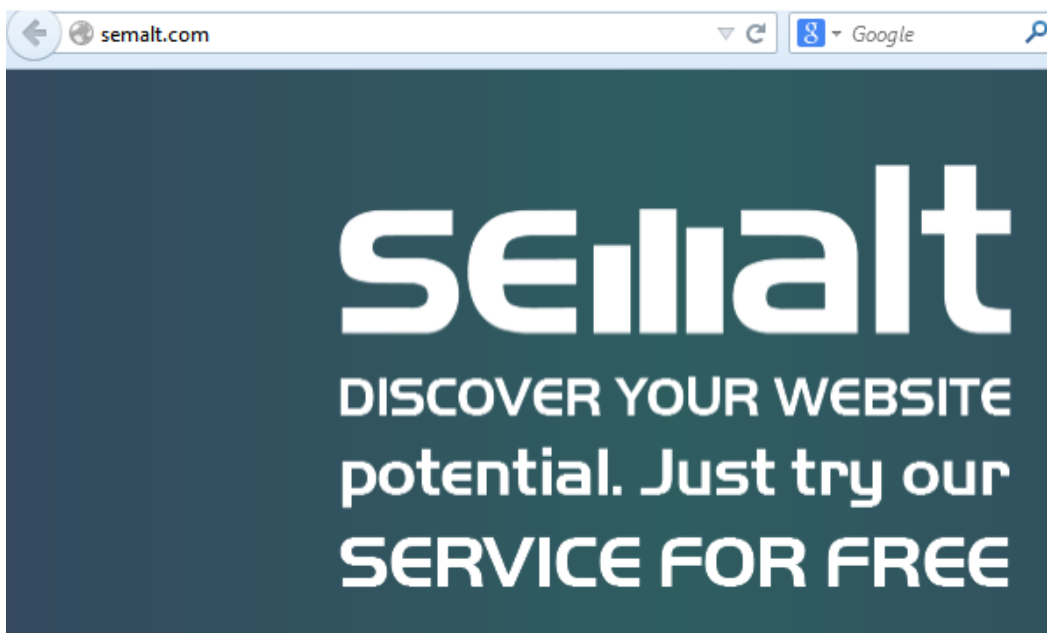
One thing to be aware of with monitoring traffic to websites and blogs is that sometimes there are automated “bots” that can appear like regular users. In theory, this traffic is filtered out, but part of the point is to think critically, and dig beneath the surface. In Blogger, in Stats, you can look at traffic sources, which is also an interesting way to learn more about your website – where are people coming from?

For example, it appears that a large proportion of traffic is coming from “semalt.com”. So what’s that?



And it looks like it is some kind of web promotion service. Like it’s not a news site or blog that said “hey I love this website, check it out”. In this case it looks like some kind of automated “Crawler” that would get noticed by an analyst. Naughty company – get my hopes up!

Ah well – better to know the truth.



The longer a website or blog is around, the more that some of those traffic sources listed above will likely result in websites that are “true” referrals – that is, where people have linked to your website or blog because they like it. So the idea is to keep an idea on traffic sources – and in some cases, you might establish a relationship with the traffic source, such as saying “hey I have a new blog post or product” kind of thing.

As it is, because 2069.us hasn’t been updated in awhile, it looks like mostly automated traffic. Another traffic source is baidu, a Chinese search engine.

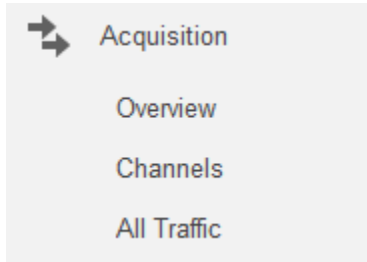


The screenshot shows the Baidu search engine interface. At the top left is the Baidu logo with the text "Baidu 百度". To its right are navigation links: "新闻 网页 贴吧 知道 音乐 图片 视频 地图 文库 更多». Below the logo is a search input field containing "2069.us" and a "百度一下" button. Below the search bar, a message reads: "没有找到该URL。您可以直接访问 2069.us, 还可[提交网址](#)给我们。 以下是网页中包含“2069.us”的结果:". Below this is a search result for "2069.us" with a thumbnail image of a green and yellow van. The text of the result says: "in this blog for more information about the goal of living until the year 2069, and fixing up a 1969 vw van - hopefully both of us will make it..". Below the text is a link: "www.2069.us/ 2011-07-19 - 百度快照 - 评价 - 翻译此页".

I have no idea of how the blog ended up on the site, or why people would visit it – but maybe it was just interesting enough to generate a few clicks.

Traffic in Google Analytics

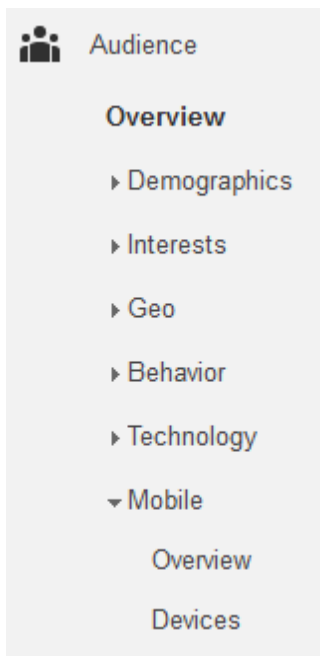
You can also look at traffic in Google Analytics (in a deeper way) – try clicking on Acquisition > All Traffic:



In general at this stage I just recommend exploring, trying. There will be plenty of time to dive into documentation and details later. For now I'd just try to imagine Google Analytics like an amusement park, where you try to find things that are amusing. Who said data can't be fun?!?

Mobile

For example, if you were starting to doze off in the previous sections, maybe the idea of tracking “Mobile” will get your attention. It's a hot, growing wildly successful area in consumer electronics, apps and website development. Everyone wants to “go mobile”. And analytics gives you a way to look at mobile. For example, in Google Analytics, go to Audience > Mobile:



It can be interesting to see what % of traffic is coming from different devices:

Device Category ?	Acquisition		
	Sessions ? ↓	% New Sessions ?	New Users ?
	15 % of Total: 100.00% (15)	93.33% Site Avg: 93.33% (0.00%)	14 % of Total: 100.00% (14)
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. desktop	11 (73.33%)	90.91%	10 (71.43%)
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. mobile	2 (13.33%)	100.00%	2 (14.29%)
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. tablet	2 (13.33%)	100.00%	2 (14.29%)

And this represents another way analytics can be used to deliver value to a business – do they know what % of their traffic is coming from mobile? And in terms of trending – what is the **trend**. Is mobile traffic increasing? This might mean that the business or organization needs to pay more attention to being “mobile friendly”.

And if you start doing things that are mobile friendly – such as making the site more mobile friendly, or doing mobile advertising – analytics can then help you measure the impact. The ROI. ROI is the Holy Grail!

So you could say, ok, let’s look at the trending on mobile device usage. Let’s see how it was before we started being mobile friendly, and after. Is there a difference? Hopefully there will be. But business owners, people in organizations pay very close attention to this kind of information. It is very, very valuable. Because you can see clearly what the impact is of initiatives, of spending the time and money on campaigns and improvements.

This is why analytics is so important. See how it works?

Just something to keep in mind as you’re playing. It’s an important playground.

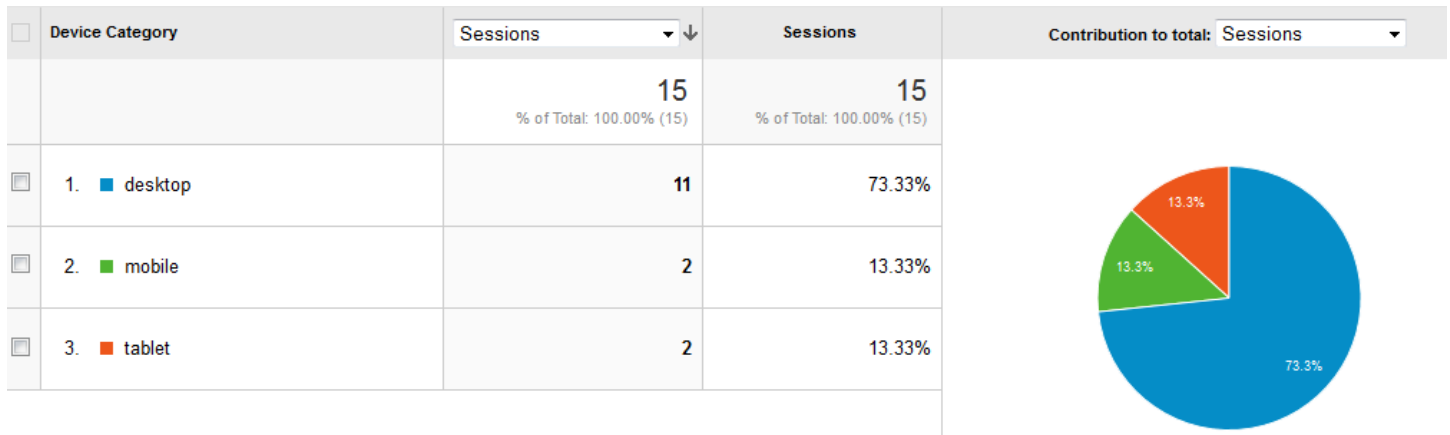
Another thing to play with is the way that the information comes across. For example, a chart is one thing, but why not a pie graph?

So in Google Analytics, you can click in the little row of icons to get a pie graph in this view of mobile:



And it opens up a color coded view that is easier to consume.

At a single glance, you see that overall mobile traffic is a quarter of the traffic (mobile devices + tablets, which are also technically mobile as well).



As you begin to learn the kinds of things you look at, you can start to ask interesting questions, in a kind of “mix and match” mentality.

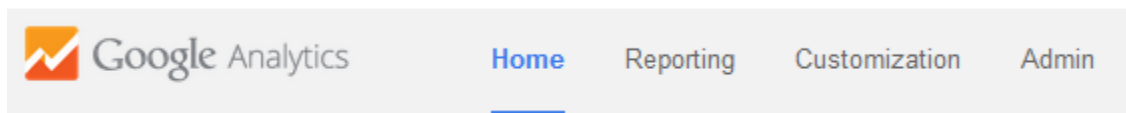
For example – what would the “bounce rate” for mobile traffic to our website be? A higher bounce rate for mobile would probably indicate that the site isn’t mobile friendly. But how would we even check this?

I think it’s important to learn how to learn, so I’d recommend starting by asking whatever questions you can think of, and then explore to see if you can figure out how to do it. And you can also cheat by googling. For example, “mobile bounce rate in google analytics”.

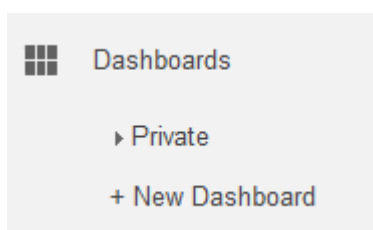
Dashboards/Reports

So when you’re in the position of looking at web analytics for your own site or for someone else’s, you can manually go into the tool and find items, but it can also be time consuming to do this, so there are “dashboards” and reports you can create, to make your life easier.

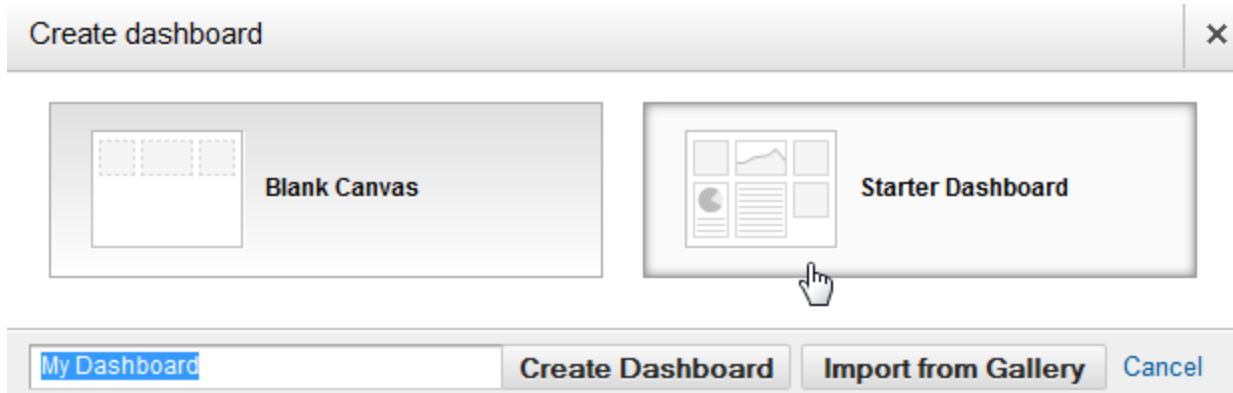
In Google Analytics, click on Reporting at the top:



And then Dashboards > New Dashboard:



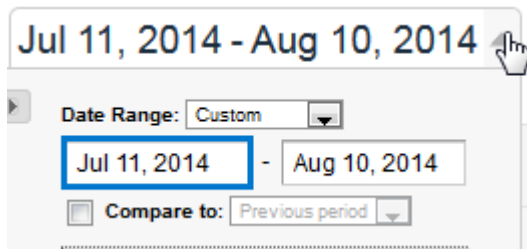
Then select Starter Dashboard, and change “Untitled Dashboard” to whatever name you’d like:



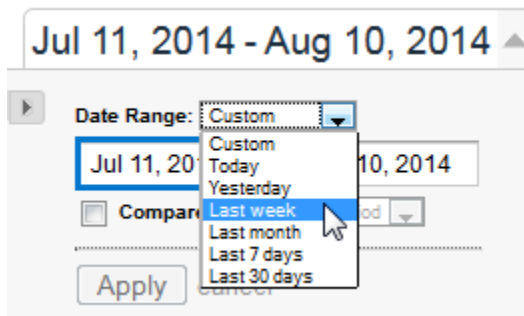
And click Create Dashboard.

Next, you will probably want to set a date range. There’s nothing wrong with the default, but setting date ranges is part of the way you get the information that’s most relevant, in analytics.

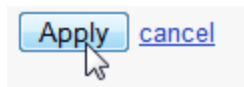
To change the date range, click on the little triangle to the right of the dates that show:



There are “pre-sets”, such as “Last week”, which might be a good date range for a regular, weekly report:



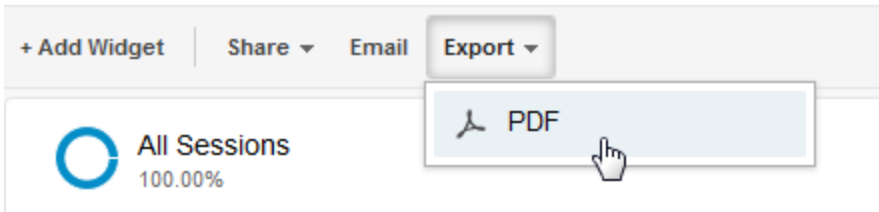
After you select a date range, click Apply:



Exporting and Scheduling

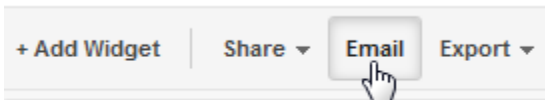
Next you may want to manually “export” a report, to share with colleagues or clients. Try clicking Export and select PDF:

My Dashboard

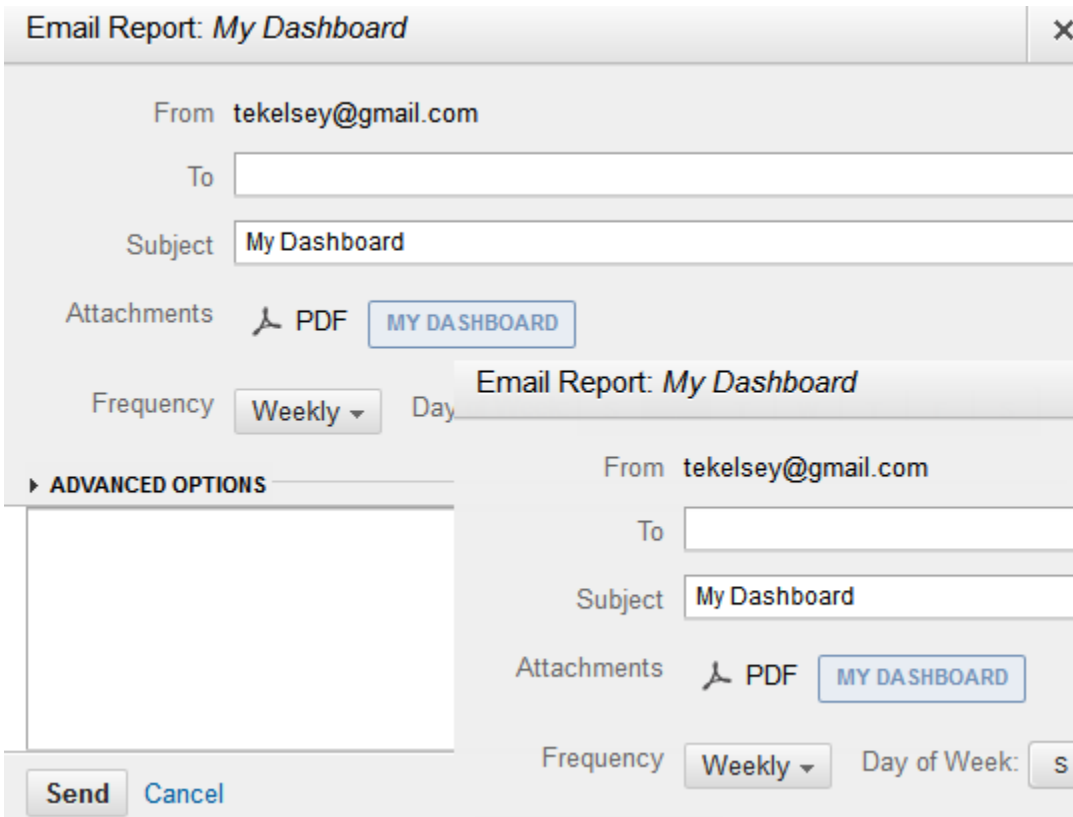


I also recommend trying setting up a scheduled report, via email. To do this, click Email:

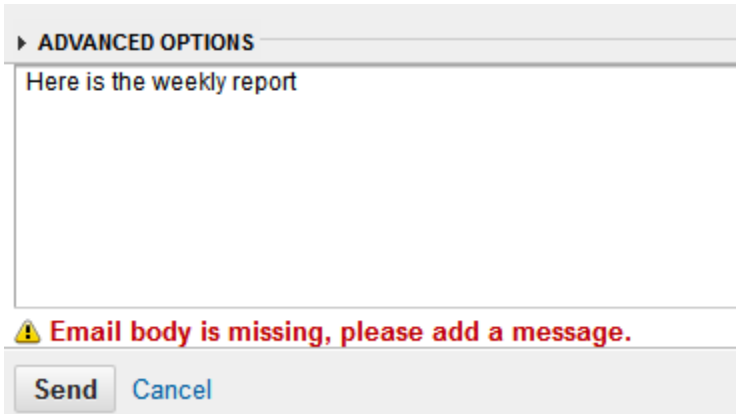
My Dashboard



Then enter in an email address to send the report to, and click Send:

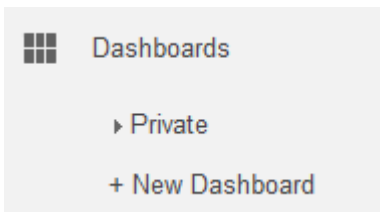


Doh! Then click in the main area and add a message, such as “Here is the report”. Then click Send:



The screenshot shows an email composition interface. At the top, there is a header with a right-pointing arrow and the text "ADVANCED OPTIONS". Below this is a text input area containing the text "Here is the weekly report". Underneath the text area is a red warning icon (a triangle with an exclamation mark) followed by the text "Email body is missing, please add a message." At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Send" and "Cancel".

You can always come back to “Dashboards” to adjust:



And in trying this, you have fully entered the world of web analytics. Because you took a look at traffic and performance, and then set up some reporting, so that you can monitor on an ongoing basis. Woohoo!

Learning More

Aside from the Google searches mentioned earlier, I recommend exploring Google Analytics, and when you come across something you’re interested in, try doing a Google search on the concept.

To synthesize your learning, I also recommend making a blog post, discussing what you’re learning, including the questions you have, and even asking people for comment.

You might also be interested in a little light viewing/reading:

Basic Concepts in Web Analytics

<http://ramonlapenta.com/blog/basic-concepts-of-web-analytics>

A Web Analytics slide presentation

<http://www.slideshare.net/mattPROv1/web-analytics-concepts-theories>

Bounce Rate

<https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1009409?hl=en>

Conclusion/Discussion

Congratulations! You just made it through a significant set of milestones. You broke through the data barrier, created some traffic, learned how to view data through various tools, experimented with multiple social media channels, and looked at behavioral data. Just getting your feet wet in these areas is impressive. Good job!

So if there's any way for you to have a mindset that will help you get through the material and master the tool, I do believe that fun can pave the way. Hopefully you can find something interesting in creating your own site, trying to promote it a little, and looking at how consistent effort over time can have an impact. And I'd argue that Web analytics is a critical part of marketing partly because of inspiration. That is, when you see the impact, you see the results of your effort, and it might inspire you to pursue things consistently over time.

This translates over into fiscal ROI and impact in a business setting. When you trace impact, you can show how important it is to make adjustments, and the importance of the online marketing efforts. It really helps, and it definitely gets attention. Instead of guessing and hoping, you get a clear sense of what's going on.

Best wishes!

Invitation

You are welcome to visit and join the LinkedIn Group at <http://tinyurl.com/learning-ga> - if you want to come on and say "huh?" or if you would like to set me straight on something, or just have some feedback.

Remember, there are NO DUMB QUESTIONS. If you have the question, someone else surely also did.