

Life After Universal Analytics

Transitioning to GA4

Today's Agenda

What the heck is happening?

Key differences between UA and GA4

Implementing GA4

What you can expect

Benefits of GA4 (and potential cons)

What happens to our current data?

Analytics and transition strategy



Note! (Get these slides)


Curated list of GA4-related articles and videos included in the appendix. Covers:

- Full GA4 implementation process (events, reports, features, integrations, GTM, etc.)
- Differences between GA4 and UA
- Analytics strategy development
- Cookieless tracking and privacy-first analytics
- Ongoing training
- More



30,000,000

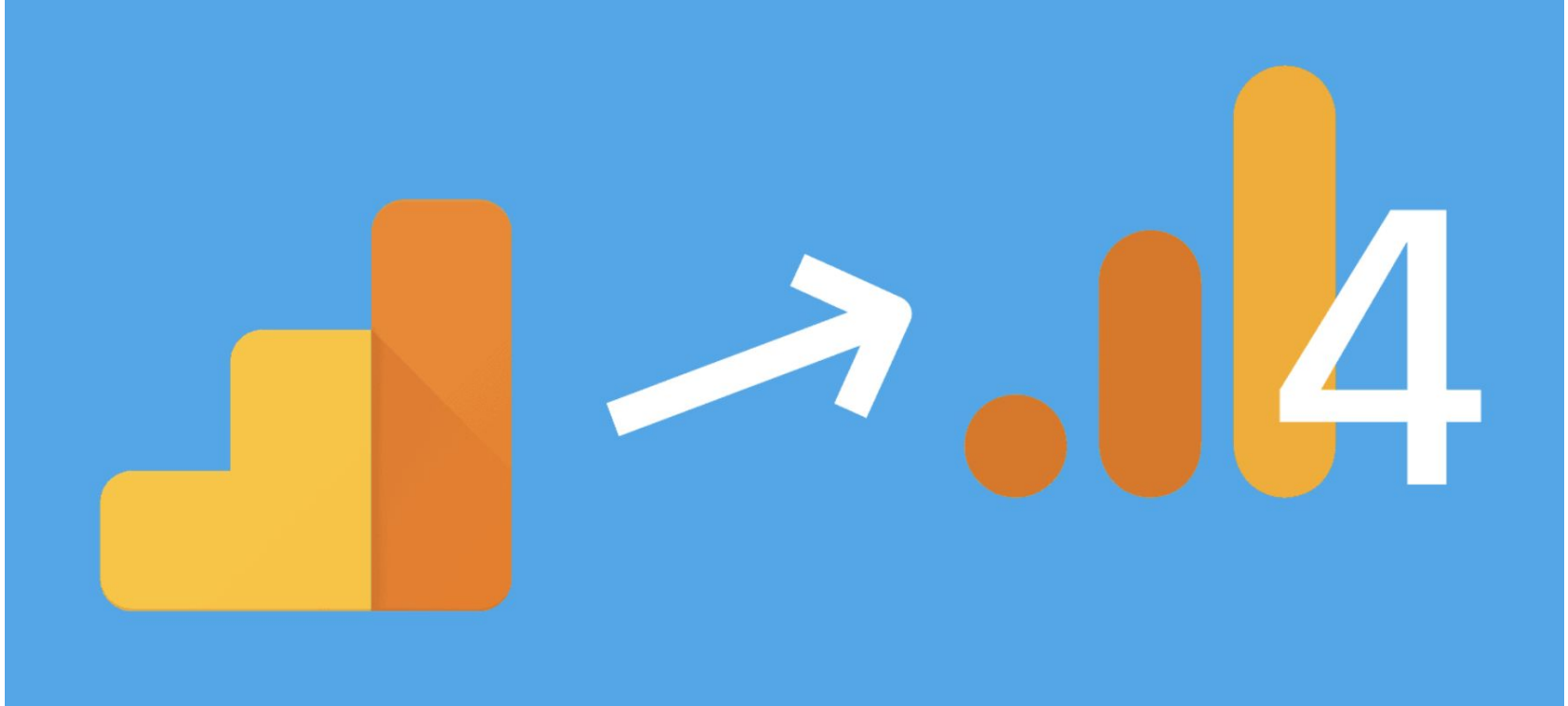
The number of live websites
that use Google Analytics



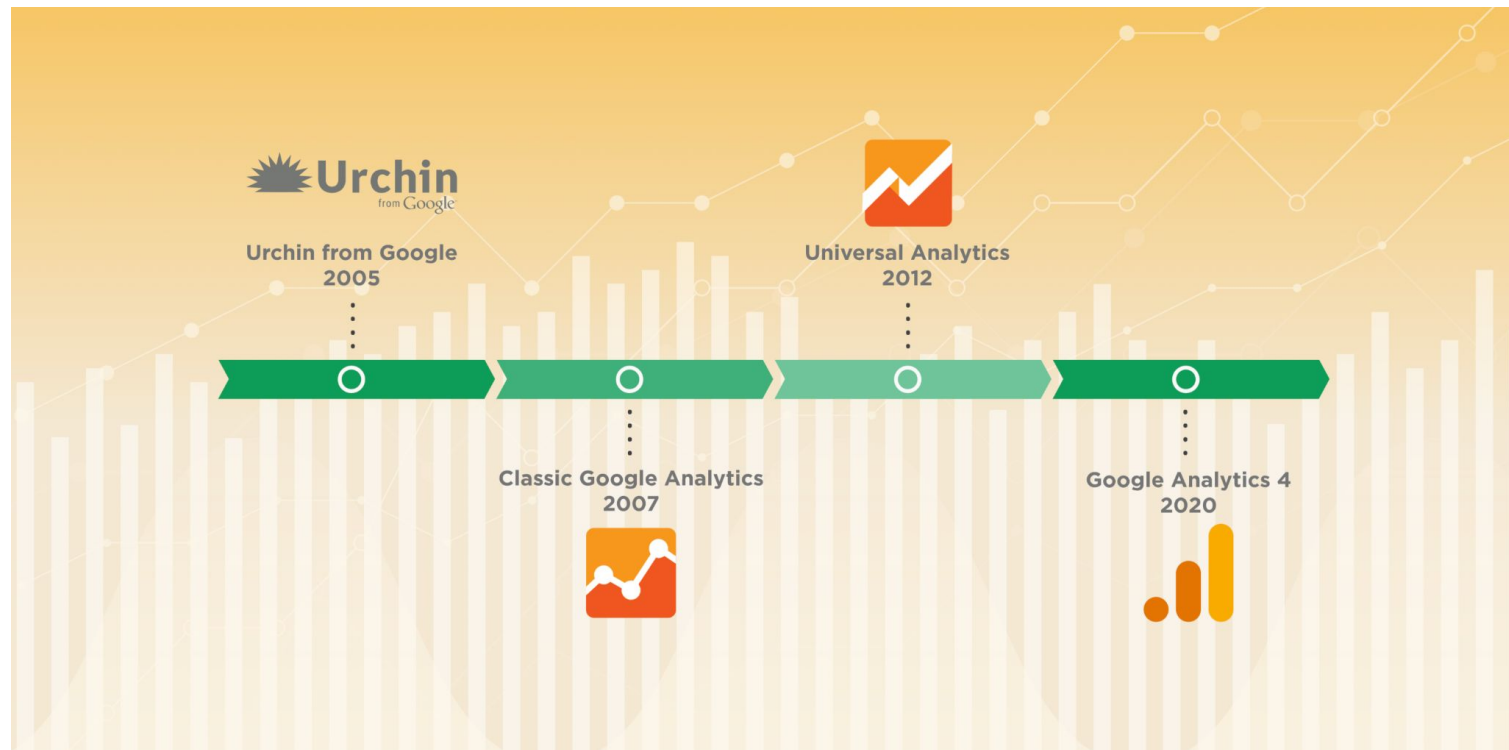
— THE SCOOP



Moving on UP!



A Brief History of Google Analytics



And then there's 360



Google Analytics 4 Google Analytics

- Free
- Limits to user-scoped custom dimensions, conversions, and audiences
- Unsamplerd explorations are *unavailable*
- Limited BigQuery exports (1m events)
- ***Does the trick for mid-sized organizations who need insights for their products and markets***

Google Analytics 360 Suite



- Not free! Starts at \$15,000/month
- Higher limits for data collection, reporting, retention and larger export limits to BigQuery (billions!)
- Built “on the foundation of Google Analytics 4 properties to address the measurement needs of large enterprises with more customizations, increased scale, and enterprise-level support”
- Part of a suite with a bevy of other tools, including some geared towards media buyers and advertisers



From Google:

Google Analytics 4 has the **flexibility** to measure **many different kinds of data**, delivering a strong analytics experience that's **designed for the future**. It allows businesses to see **unified user journeys** across their websites and apps, use **Google's machine learning** technology to surface and predict new insights, and most importantly, it's **built to keep up with a changing ecosystem**.

[Read the full announcement](#)



Timeline: What We Know So Far



PS: They are good.



THE KEY DIFFERENCES



The Key Differences

everything

The Key Differences

Element	UNIVERSAL ANALYTICS (UA)	GOOGLE ANALYTICS 4 (GA4)
USERS	The first difference is the way in which users are tracked. UA tracks using sessions (or a set period that includes everything a user does on your site).	GA4 is a switch to an events-based model . Rather than creating a new session when a user returns to a site, GA4 measures and records all events a user completes . The benefit is that Google deduplicates users and instead focuses on what users actually do on your site , rather than simply caring that users get there.
REPORTING	The second difference is the reporting. In UA, there are several set reports with only a few customizations possible. For the most part, only standard reports are used.	GA4 has only very “high-level” reports built . If you want specific reports, the tool gives you the ability to build custom ones in the “Reporting” tab. This functionality gives the user greater freedom in how their reports look and allows for deeper drill down to the data that’s most important to you. But...it’s manual.
SET UP	The third difference is how they’re set up. UA uses a property and view setup – and currently, many clients have multiple views based on segments important to their business.	GA4 allows you to mix data from your apps and website through one property and data stream - connecting a user across their journey .

(Very) different interface

of default reports in UA (110)

- Realtime: 6
- Audience: 32
- Acquisition: 26
- Behavior: 22
- Conversions: 20
- Search Console: 4

of default reports in GA4 (22)

- Realtime: 1
- User: 4
- Acquisition: 6
- Engagement: 4
- Monetization: 4
- Retention: 1
- Search Console: 2

Not apples to apples, but it gives you a sense of scale.

Custom reports and Explorations are powerful, but you have to build what you need yourself.

Poll Question:

**Who has started the process
of implementing GA4?**

— HOW TO TRANSITION TO GA4



Implementing GA4 - 3 Phases

PHASE 1: BASE SET-UP

Set up your stream. In GA4, a Data Stream can be a website, an iOS app, or an Android app. Data is now collected at the stream level, so changes to data collection can happen within the individual stream details or in the configuration tag, as well as the property settings.

PHASE 2: EVENTS + EVENT CONVERSIONS (FKA GOALS)

GA4 events are triggered as users interact with your site or app. Using the user interface, you can toggle on any events that contribute to the success of your business as conversions (like a form submission). Whenever any of these flagged events is triggered, a conversion is registered in your GA4 property.

PHASE 3: BUILD CUSTOM REPORTS

GA4 properties give you full control over what reports to show, the metrics and dimensions included in those reports, and the graphs within your reports. You can set up an entire report collection that is relevant to just a certain group, for example, the admissions, marketing, or media team.

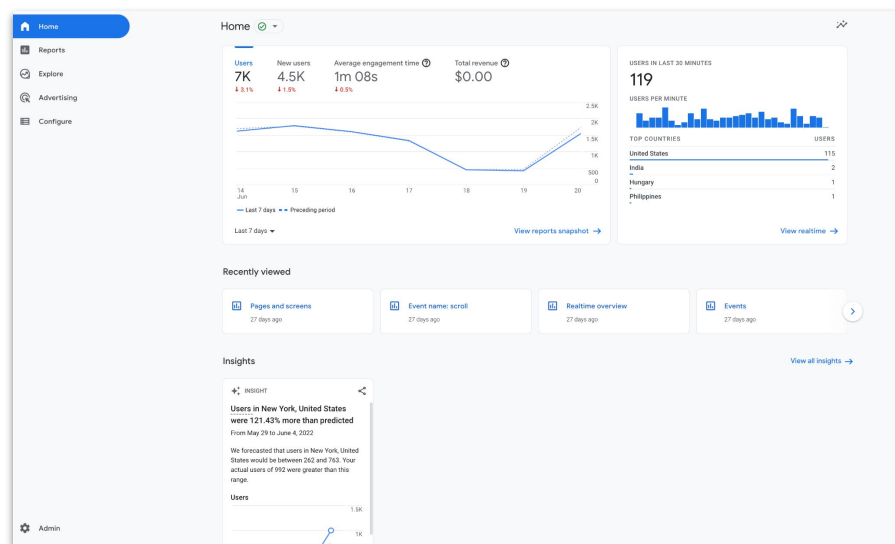
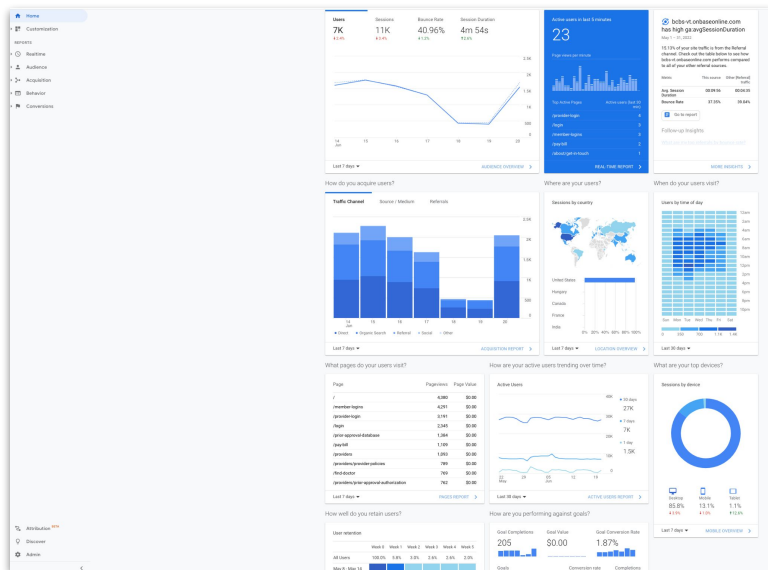
WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT



It's. All. So. Different: The Homepage

Universal Analytics  Google Analytics

Google Analytics 4  Google Analytics



What You Can Expect

But we think it will be okay...

BENEFITS OF GA4

(AND POTENTIAL CONS)



Benefits of GA4

- Improved data privacy
- Better automated event tracking
- More customer-centric
- Better integration with other Google marketing platforms (Ads, Search Console, etc.)
- New engagement metrics
- More accurate cross-device and cross-platform ID of users
- Anomaly detection
- Better machine learning for automated insights
- Free access to Google BigQuery

Potential cons

- Nowhere near as robust as UA *right now*
- Different interface – takes some getting used to
- Updates to custom events and dimensions take about 24 hours to appear in reports
- Limited dashboard functionality
- UA Views (up to 25 per property) were removed

— **WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR
CURRENT DATA?**



Universal Analytics

Tactic

Export historical data to
Google Sheets

Pros & Cons

- Preserves data beyond UA closure on or shortly after January 1, 2024
- Google Data Studio can source data from Google Sheets
- Unfortunately, must export data from each individual report in UA

Google Analytics 4

Tactic

Connect to Google BigQuery

Pros & Cons

- GA4 has a Data Retention Policy, meaning select data is only stored for up to 2 or 14 months
- This affects Explorations, *NOT* all GA4 reports
- Sending GA4 data to BigQuery and then to Data Studio can get around this, but it's very complicated
- Marketers are still learning how this works

Poll Question:

**How would you describe
the state of your web
analytics strategy?**



ANALYTICS AND TRANSITION STRATEGY





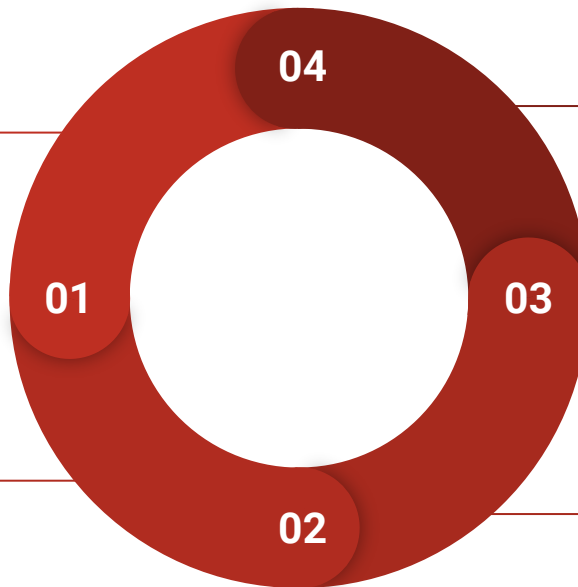
Our approach at RBS

Follow a 3-step execution process

Establish a training plan for staff

Revisit what we're measuring and why

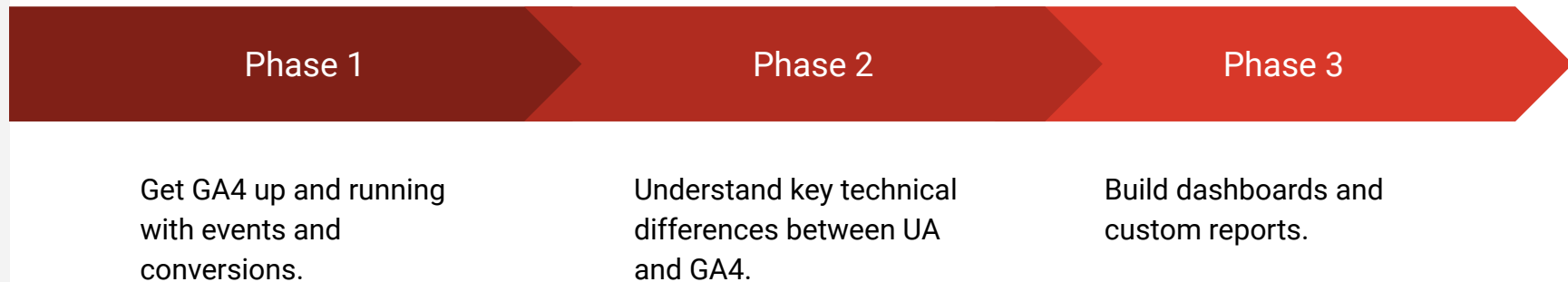
Define a single source of truth for our data



Follow a 3-step execution process

1. Find the **how**
2. Do the **work**
3. **Reflect** as a team

Then repeat, each time getting deeper into the subject. For example:



Follow a 3-step execution process


Benefits:

- Compartmentalizes complexity
- Provides multiple levels of learning
- Brings the team into the conversation
- Produces demonstrable progress


Review measurement frameworks

What are we trying to measure and why?

Business Goals	Website Goals (i.e., what do we want customers to do?)	KPIs	Data Sources
Increase enrollments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View academic program content • Download program factsheets • Complete request information webforms • Complete event registration webforms • Click out to the Rutgers Admissions website • Complete Executive Education contact webforms • Complete Executive Education program registration webforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of users • # of pageviews • # of file downloads • # of completed forms • # of outbound clicks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Analytics

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*No two analytics platforms work
exactly the same way.*

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Example of data differences

business.rutgers.edu – Feb. 14 to Mar. 13, 2022 (28-day period)

Platforms	Unique Users	Sessions	Pageviews
Universal Analytics	59,724	85,444	218K
Google Analytics 4	62,162	92,240	221K
Matomo Analytics	n/a	86,534	219K
Fathom Analytics	78,317	n/a	223K
Plausible Analytics* (*Custom installation to bypass ad blockers)	83,056	n/a	239K

Define a single source of truth

What to do with UA, GA4, and others?

Designate **one** web analytics platform as the single **source of truth**.

The source of truth is what all reports and all stakeholders should reference after an agreed upon **date** (e.g., July 1, 2023). Every other platform in use is for research and testing only.

Reporting and communication

Whenever a data source changes, make it clear:

- The data source changed from Platform A to Platform B starting on C date
- Pageviews and user comparisons before and after the switch should be valid *but may be influenced by slight differences in how the platforms collect, process, and report data*

Establish a training plan for staff

Develop a plan for how we're going to continue learning and growing in this area. That may include:

- Appointing an analytics leader to help move the team forward
- Regular team meetings focused on analytics
- Collaborating with partners to fast-track learning
- Setting loose milestones for where we'd like to be and by when



Recap

Our approach at RBS

- Follow a 3-step execution process
- Revisit what we're measuring and why
- Define a single source of truth for our data
- Establish a training plan for staff

Benefits

- Provides tangible next steps
- Helps address immediate need for GA4
- Confirms marketing tactics are supporting strategic priorities
- Streamlines internal communication
- Establishes an analytics growth path for the team
- Provides leadership opportunities for staff

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Thank you!

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APPENDIX: GA4 RESOURCES



What's Happening

- Official announcement: [Prepare for the future with Google Analytics 4](#)
- [How to export Google Analytics 3 data](#)
- [Google plans to block third-party cookies in Chrome browsers in 2023](#)
- [Cookieless tracking: The future of privacy-first analytics](#)
- [GDPR basics for marketers](#)
- [CCPA basics for marketers](#)
- [Difference between CCPA and CRPA](#)

GA4 Implementation

Platform essentials

- [GA4 implementation guide](#) (video)
- [GA4 implementation guide](#) (blog)
- [How to structure your GA4 account](#)
- [Google Tag Manager introduction](#)
- [Google Tag Manager vs Google Analytics: What's the difference?](#)

GA4 Implementation

Events

- [Enhanced measurement events](#)
- [Creating custom events](#)
- [Creating custom dimensions](#)
- [Tracking conversions](#)

GA4 Implementation

Reports

- [Creating explorations](#)
- [Creating a landing page report](#)
- [Displaying outbound links data](#)
- [Displaying file download data](#)
- [Displaying video engagement data](#)
- [Understanding channel groupings](#)

GA4 Implementation

Features

- [Creating custom insights](#)
- [Understanding audience triggers](#)
- [Testing data via the DebugView mode](#)
- [Using regular expressions](#) (very advanced)

GA4 Implementation

Integrations

- [Connecting Google Search Console to GA4](#)
- [Connecting Google Ads to GA4](#)

Development

- [Google Tag Manager module for Drupal 8^](#)
- [Google Tag Manager module for Wordpress](#)

Differences Between GA4 and UA

- [36 differences between GA4 and UA](#)
- [GA4's session-based measurement model](#)
- [UA Properties vs. GA4 Data Streams](#)
- [Bounce Rate vs. Engagement Rate](#)
- [Data Filters for GA4](#)
- [GA4's 14-month data retention policy explained](#)

Digital Analytics Strategy

- [Modern ways to measure the impact of content](#)
- [Building a measurement framework](#)
- [Another measurement framework example](#) (foolproof.co.uk)

Google Data Studio

- [Introduction to Google Data Studio](#)
- [The ultimate guide to Google Data Studio](#)
- [How to connect GA4 to Data Studio](#)

Professional Development Resources

- [OHO Interactive](#)
- [HighEdWeb](#)
- [Analytics Mania](#)
- [LinkedIn Learning](#)
- [The Higher Ed Marketer Podcast](#)
- [HubSpot Academy Certifications](#)
- Plus networking, public speaking, teaching others, and applying what you learn