

## Introduction

*You can't manage what you don't measure.* This is an old management adage that is even more important today as there are so many more ways for customers to engage and interact with you – and most of these channels are digital. Which channels are the most important, what do they want to do, what information do they need, which messages resonate with what audiences, what do they want to do, and are you spending your time in the right places?

This document is an introduction to analyzing the metrics for your website using Google Analytics – the most widely used website analytics tool with more than 52% of all websites using the tool.

At a high level, analyzing the metrics from your website is important to:

- Help you get to know how much traffic you're receiving
- Alert you to any sudden changes
- Know where traffic is coming from
- Help you decide what your visitors want

Website analytics can help you to answer these detailed questions:

- Who is coming to your site
- When are they coming to your site
- Where are they coming from
- What device are they using to view your site
- How do they get to your site
- What are they looking for
- Where are they looking
- How many pages do they look at
- What path do they take through your site
- How long do they stay

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## Basic Google Analytics Definitions

Source: [WhereOWare](#)

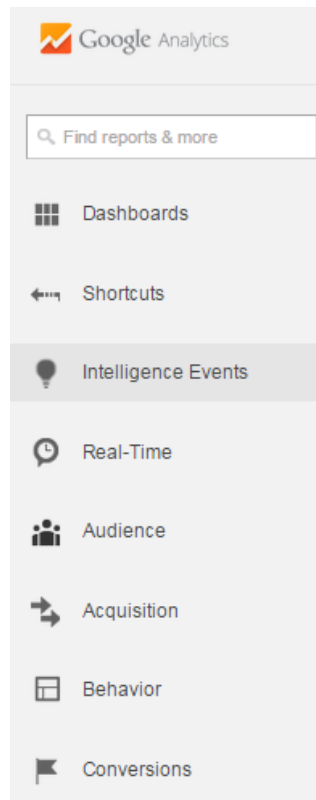
Item	Definition
Sessions	<p>Included on multiple reports, sessions track how often your site was visited, and what actions were taken during each visit. (Sessions were previously called "Visits.") Sessions measure interactions one visitor conducts on your site within a set time frame. GA sets the time frame to 30 minutes, so anything your visitor does on your site within those 30 minutes will be counted in the same session.</p> <p><i>How to use it:</i> Keep tabs on the volume of traffic to your site. Compare month over month or year over year to see changes over time, or analyze how an individual marketing effort (sale, email blast, social media campaign, etc.) impacted the number of people visiting your site.</p>
New Sessions	<p>Included in most reports, new sessions measure first-time site visitors.</p> <p><i>How to use it:</i> Separate the new visitors from repeat visitors and identify pages that are more important to each group. Does your content need to be changed or could you add more content to attract more new or repeat visitors?</p>
Users	<p>Measures how many people visited your site (previously unique visitors). Repeat visitors are only counted once, differentiating it from sessions.</p> <p><i>How to use it:</i> The specificity of this data allows you to track your true audience size. It is a great way to identify if your marketing efforts are increasing your audience with fresh faces.</p>
Pageviews	<p>Found under Behavior, measures how often a specific page is visited. If a visitor visits Page A, goes to the homepage, and then comes back to Page A, it's counted as two page views.</p> <p><i>How to use it:</i> Page views is a great tool for calculating how well individual pages on your site are performing. Breaking your whole site down into smaller segments (like pages) is useful in identifying elements that are most or least successful.</p>
Pages /Session	<p>Included in most reports, measures how many site pages were viewed during one visitor's single session.</p> <p><i>How to use it:</i> Gauge how well your site captures visitors' attention and keeps them interested. In general, higher pages/session, means more engaged visitors, however, you must put everything into context. If you have a lot of pages/session that don't end in a conversion (goal or e-commerce), then you may have a problem.</p>
Average Session Duration	<p>Measures how long customers spend on your site. Average session duration is the total duration of all website sessions divided by the number of sessions.</p> <p><i>How to use it:</i> The average session duration shows the overall engagement level of your visitors on your site. Longer visits may indicate a more captivating site for your visitors.</p>

Item	Definition
Bounce Rate	<p>Measures the percentage of site visitors viewing only one page on your site before leaving. (They enter and leave on the same page without any type of interaction.)</p> <p><i>How to use it:</i> Generally, a high bounce rate indicates that website visitors are losing interest in your site, because they aren't exploring content past the initial page. Warning: Keep context in mind. A high bounce rate on an information page, like your contact us page, doesn't necessarily indicate a problem. Visitors might have needed your phone number, found it, and left</p>
% New Sessions	<p>Included in most reports, measures how many site pages were viewed during one visitor's single session.</p> <p><i>How to use it:</i> Gauge how well your site captures visitors' attention and keeps them interested. In general, higher pages/session, means more engaged visitors, however, you must put everything into context. If you have a lot of pages/session that don't end in a conversion (goal or e-commerce), than you may have a problem.</p>
Source	<p>A traffic dimension, states the origin of a website visit, or how the visitor got to your site. Sources include google (the name of a search engine), cnn.com (name of referring site), and direct (users that type in a URL directly).</p> <p><i>How to use it:</i> Identifying the origin of your website traffic is a great way to determine where to focus your marketing strategy. Which source brought the right kind of visitors? Did you traffic from CNN bring "hot" visitors? Great, consider doing a PR reach with CNN, along with a paid ad.</p>
Direct Traffic	<p>Visitors who arrive on your site by typing in your URL or via a bookmark, instead of being assisted by Google, paid searches, social media, etc.</p> <p><i>How to use it:</i> By identifying the number of visitors that convert directly, you can assess word of mouth traffic, number of existing customers, people familiar with your brand, and offline campaigns. A big spike in direct traffic may indicate that one of your offline campaigns performed particularly well.</p>

## Google Analytics Navigation Menu

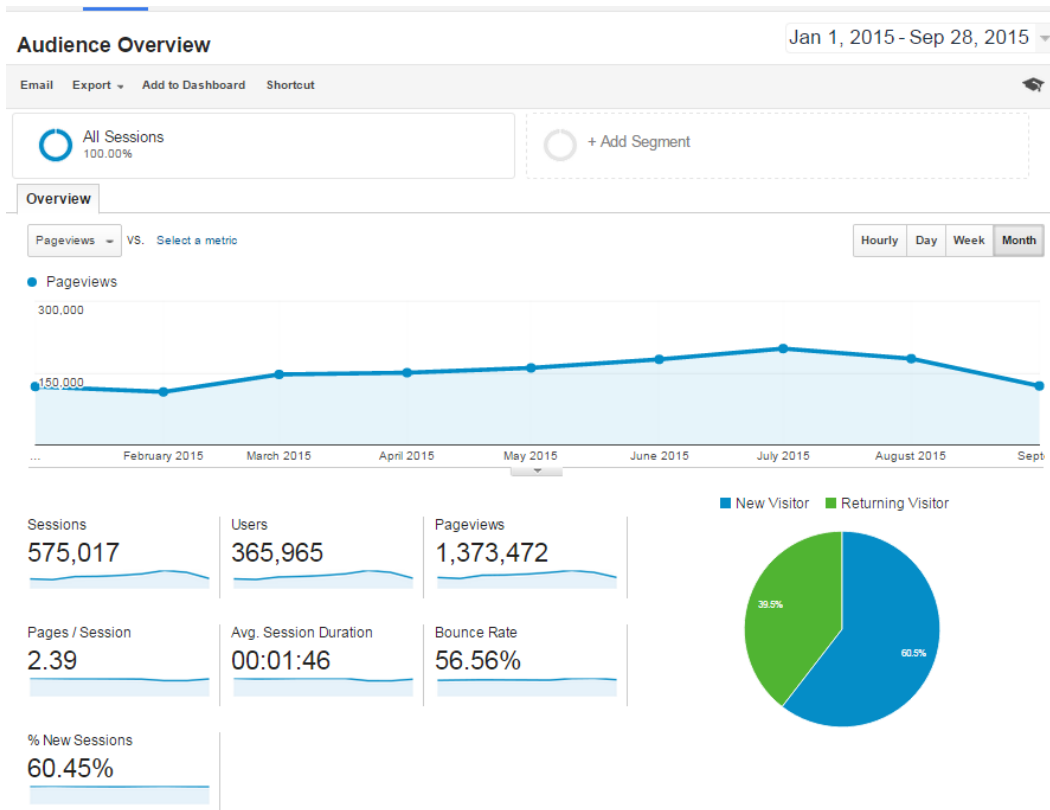
The first thing you need to know about Google Analytics in the left hand navigation menu. This is how you will access various reports. For beginning and intermediate users, you will most likely be looking at the following areas:

- **Dashboards** – Dashboards are a collection of widgets that give you an overview of the reports and metrics you care about most.
- **Shortcuts** - *Shortcuts* remember your settings so you don't have to reconfigure a report each time you open it.
- **Audience** - Summarizes how your site is doing over time across key metrics
- **Acquisition** – Shows where your site traffic is coming from
- **Behaviors** – Highlights what content is important and where people are clicking on your site



### Audience Overview

Summarizes how your site is doing over time across key metrics. You can select the time period and the frequency for the graph – Day, Week or Month.

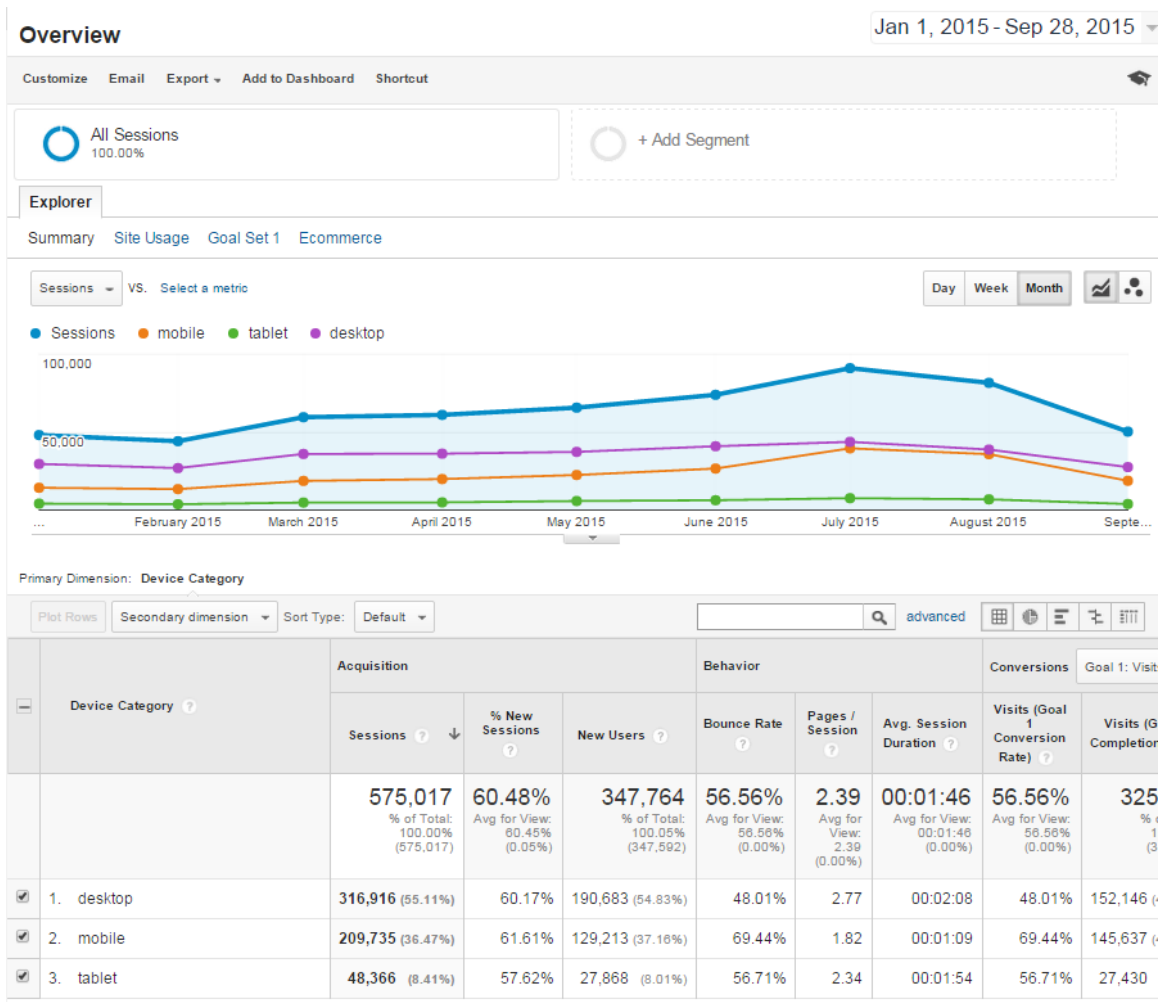


At the bottom of this page, you can also view information by Demographics, System or Mobile.

Demographics	Operating System	Sessions	% Sessions
Language	1. Windows	222,927	38.77%
Country	2. iOS	192,634	33.50%
City	3. Macintosh	95,612	16.63%
<b>System</b>	4. Android	58,194	10.12%
Browser	5. Chrome OS	1,851	0.32%
Operating System	6. Linux	1,774	0.31%
Service Provider	7. Windows Phone	933	0.16%
<b>Mobile</b>	8. (not set)	609	0.11%
Operating System	9. BlackBerry	403	0.07%
Service Provider	10. Series40	15	0.00%
Screen Resolution			

## Audience Overview – Mobile

Under the Mobile section, you can see how the traffic is coming to your site whether on Desktop, Mobile or Tablet

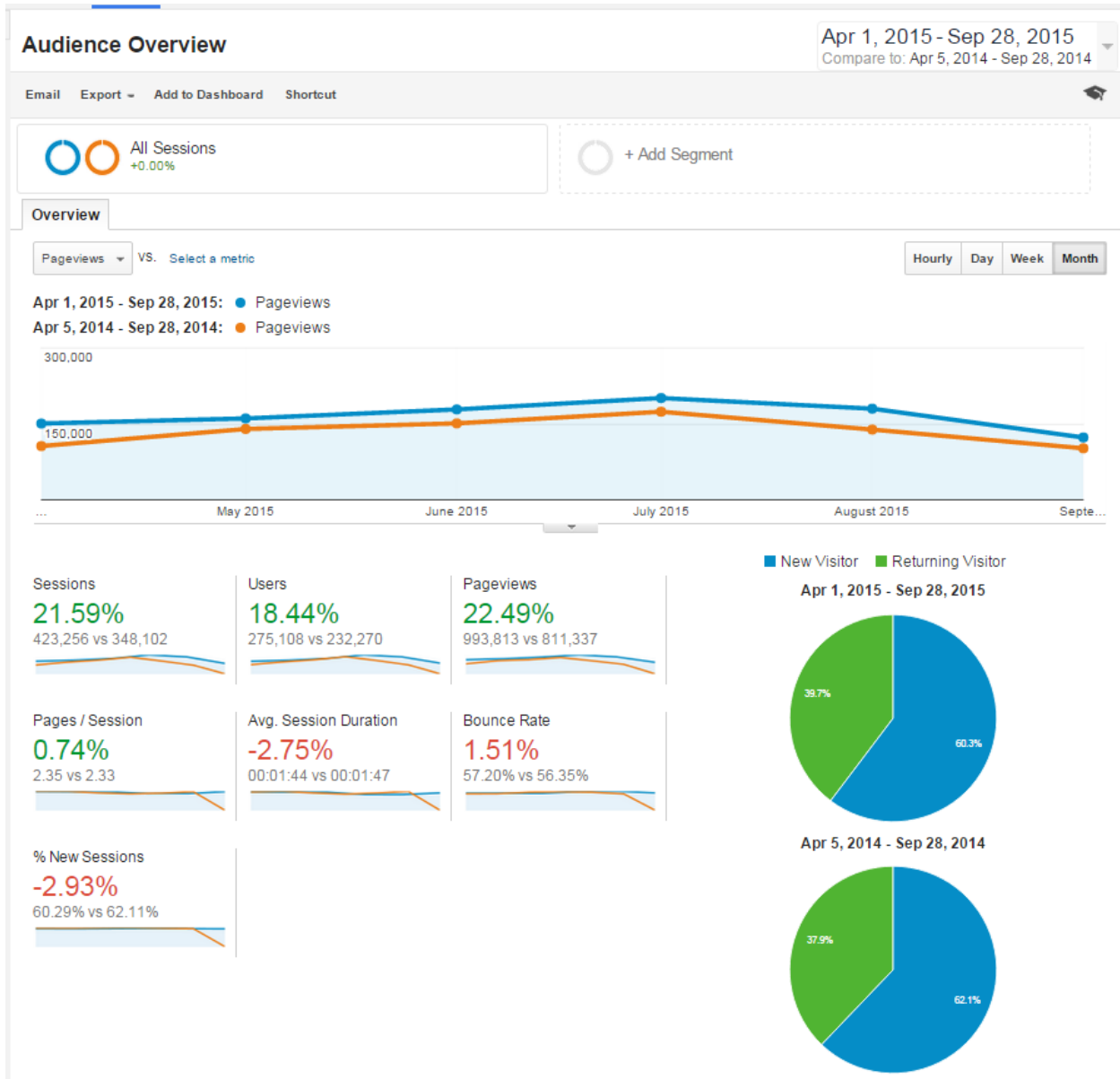


Looking back a year ago at the month of September 2014, you can see that the % of visits from mobile and tablet has gone from 36% to 45%.

Device Category	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions	Goal 1: Visits
	Sessions	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Visits (Goal 1 Conversion Rate)	Visits (Goal 1 Completions)
	41,729 % of Total: 100.00% (41,729)	60.25% Avg for View: 60.21% (0.05%)	25,140 % of Total: 100.05% (25,127)	52.80% Avg for View: 52.80% (0.00%)	2.44 Avg for View: 2.44 (0.00%)	00:01:54 Avg for View: 00:01:54 (0.00%)	52.80% Avg for View: 52.80% (0.00%)	22,034 % of Total: 100.00% (22,034)
1. desktop	26,585 (63.71%)	58.75%	15,618 (62.12%)	47.07%	2.69	00:02:09	47.07%	12,514 (56.79%)
2. mobile	11,247 (26.95%)	63.70%	7,164 (28.50%)	65.72%	1.89	00:01:19	65.72%	7,392 (33.55%)
3. tablet	3,897 (9.34%)	60.51%	2,358 (9.38%)	54.61%	2.29	00:01:54	54.61%	2,128 (9.66%)

### Audience Overview - Comparison Period

If you have been running analytics for several months, you can use the comparison tool to compare similar time periods – week, month, quarter or year.





## Audience Behavior – Frequency & Recency

The Frequency & Recency reports shows the count of sessions (how frequently people are visiting your site) and the days since last session (how recently people have visited).

### Frequency & Recency Sep 5, 2015 - Oct 5, 2015

Save Email Export Add to Dashboard

All Sessions  
100.00%

+ Add Segment

#### Distribution

Count of Sessions Days Since Last Session

Sessions

**52,716**

% of Total: 100.00% (52,716)

Pageviews

**130,363**

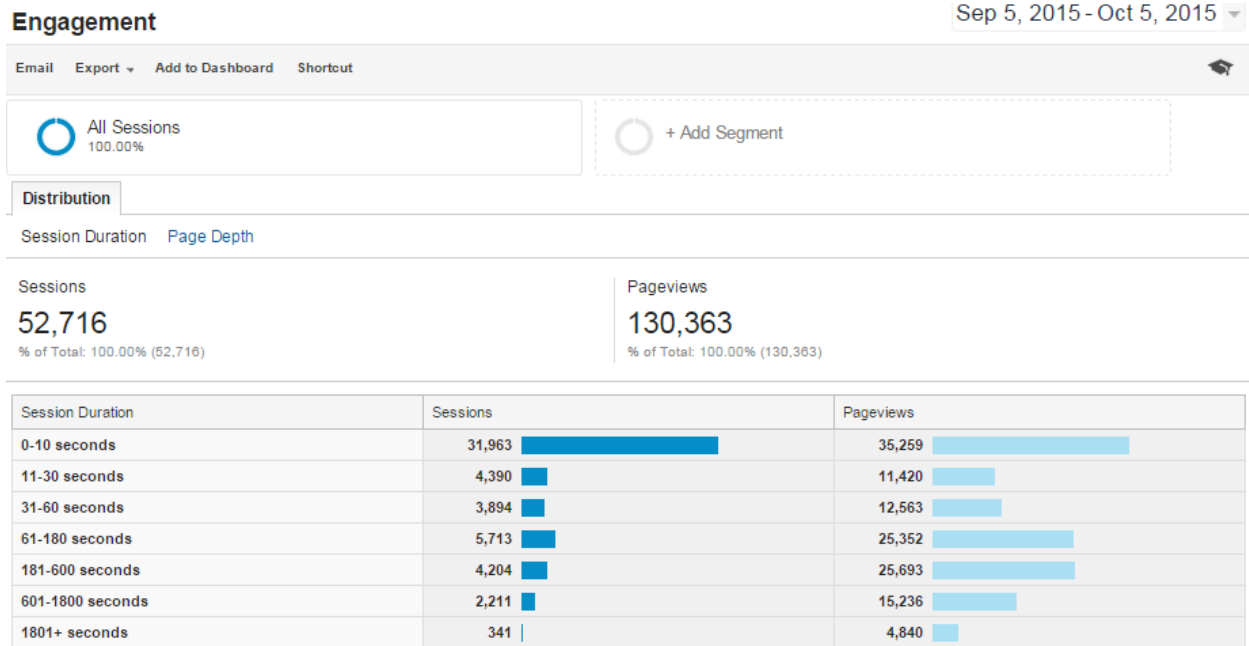
% of Total: 100.00% (130,363)

Count of Sessions	Sessions	Pageviews
1	31,949	78,222
2	6,360	15,032
3	2,864	7,084
4	1,742	4,213
5	1,205	2,980
6	853	2,012
7	692	1,706
8	556	1,402
9-14	1,799	4,423
15-25	1,313	3,324
26-50	967	2,440
51-100	853	2,591
101-200	754	2,193
201+	809	2,741

## Audience Behavior – Engagement

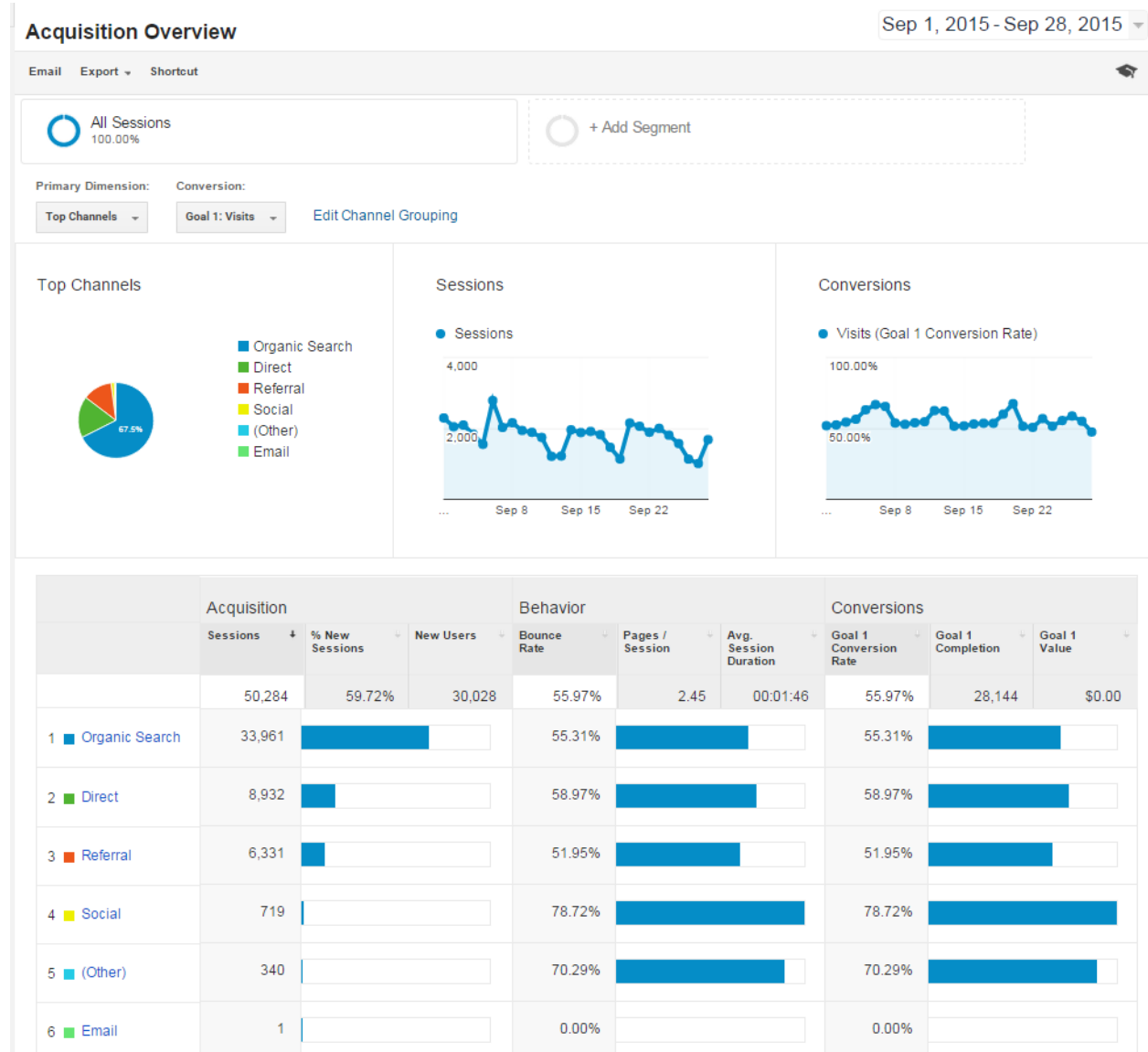
The Audience Behavior – Engagement report analyzes session duration (how long a visitor was on your site) and page depth (how many pages a visitor viewed). The more pages that your visitors go to during a session, the more engaged they might be. If you can increase the number of pages your average user clicks to, this suggests that you are improving how engaging your website is.

The majority of sessions are less than 10 seconds and these are likely people ended up on the page and exited because they were looking for something else. They could also be Bots or Spiders who crawl your site and inflate your traffic, but that is a more advanced topic.



## Acquisition Overview

This view looks at how traffic is coming to your site. In this example, 67% of traffic is coming from Organic Search, 18% from Email and 13% from Referral.



## Acquisition – Channel Drilldown

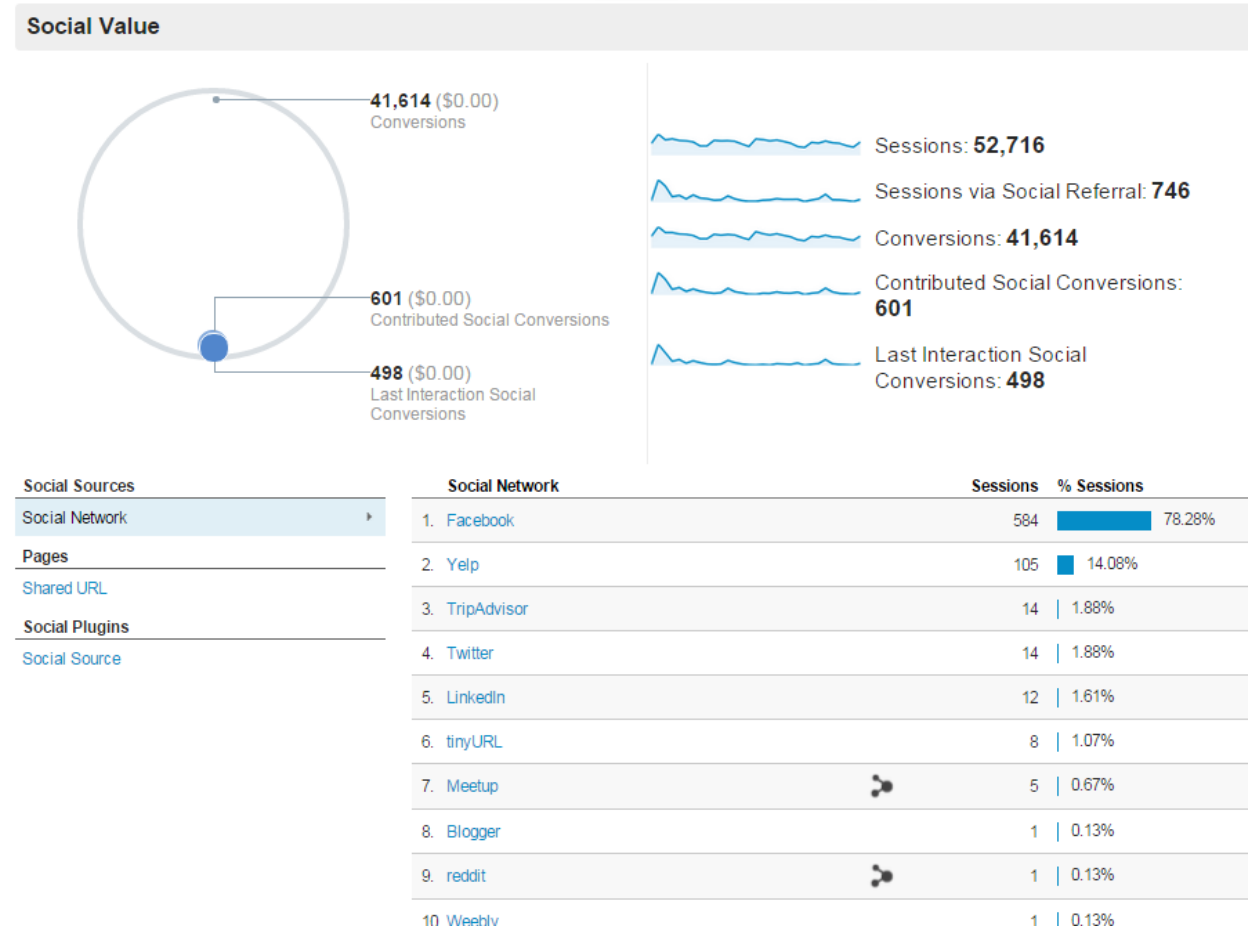
Clicking on the Organic Search drills into what keywords people are using to access your site. Unfortunately, 93% of the traffic does not have a source in this example.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword <sup>?</sup>	Acquisition		
		Sessions <sup>?</sup> ↓	% New Sessions <sup>?</sup>	New Users <sup>?</sup>
		<b>33,961</b> % of Total: 67.54% (50,284)	<b>61.37%</b> Avg for View: 59.72% (2.76%)	<b>20,841</b> % of Total: 69.41% (30,028)
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. (not provided)	<b>31,786</b> (93.60%)	61.90%	19,674 (94.40%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. city of manhattan beach	<b>227</b> (0.67%)	37.00%	84 (0.40%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. manhattan beach	<b>164</b> (0.48%)	73.17%	120 (0.58%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. city of manhattan beach jobs	<b>106</b> (0.31%)	37.74%	40 (0.19%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. manhattan beach ca	<b>43</b> (0.13%)	95.35%	41 (0.20%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. polliwog park	<b>36</b> (0.11%)	44.44%	16 (0.08%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. citymb.info	<b>33</b> (0.10%)	21.21%	7 (0.03%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. manhattan beach california	<b>29</b> (0.09%)	79.31%	23 (0.11%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. manhattan beach police department	<b>24</b> (0.07%)	58.33%	14 (0.07%)

Unfortunately, the majority of organic traffic currently comes back with a keyword of "(not provided)". This is because Google is now encrypting organic search traffic and most search terms will not appear in this list. Google suggests that you set up and use Google Webmaster Tools instead to analyze your keywords.

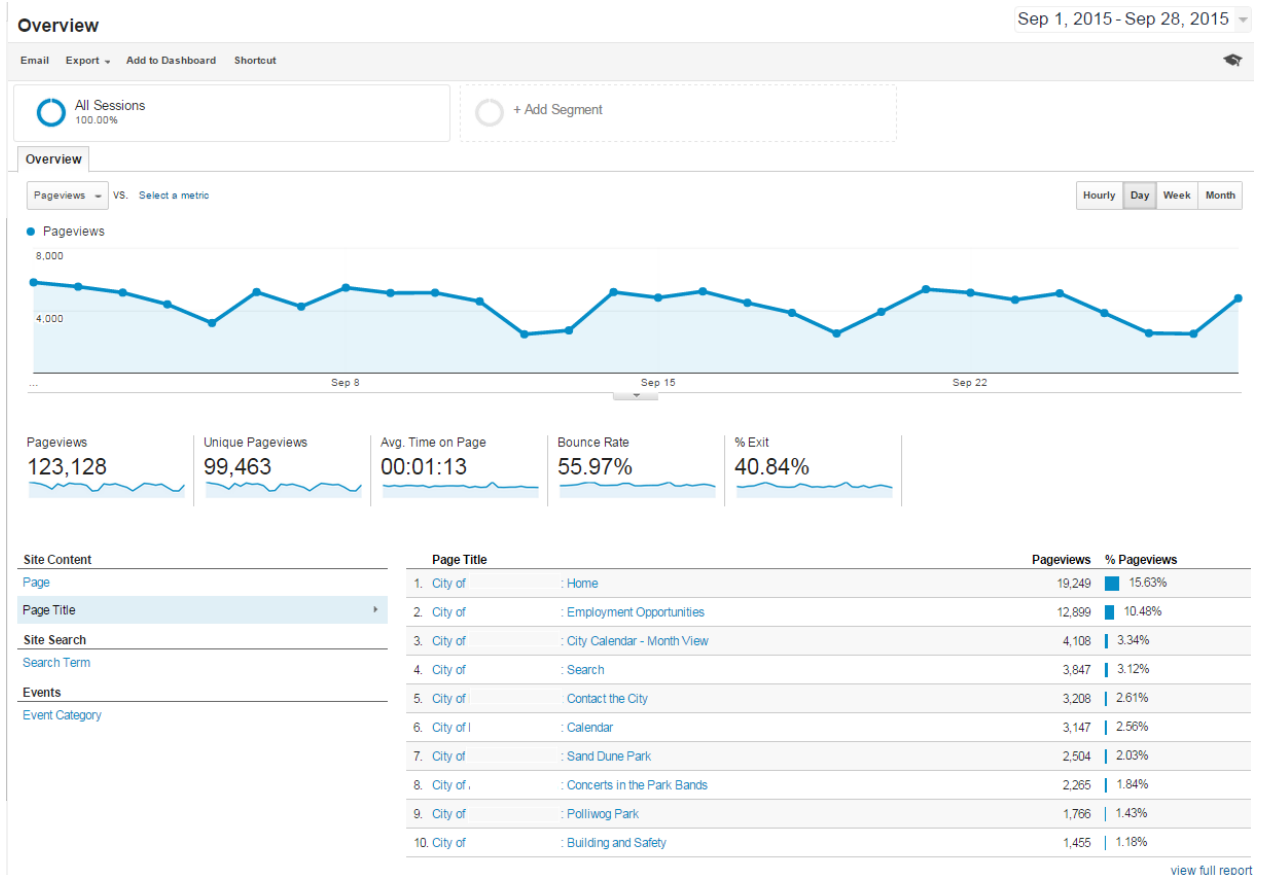
### Acquisition – Social

Social analytics provides you with the tools to measure the impact of social. You can identify high value networks and content, track on-site and off-site user interaction with your content, and tie it all back to your bottom line revenue through goals and conversions.



## Behavior - Overview

The Behavior Overview shows the top 10 pages accessed by visitors. In this case, 10% of visitors are looking at employment opportunities and other popular pages getting more than 2% of the traffic include City Calendar, Search, Contact the City, Calendar and Sand Dune Park.



## Behavior – Site Content All Pages

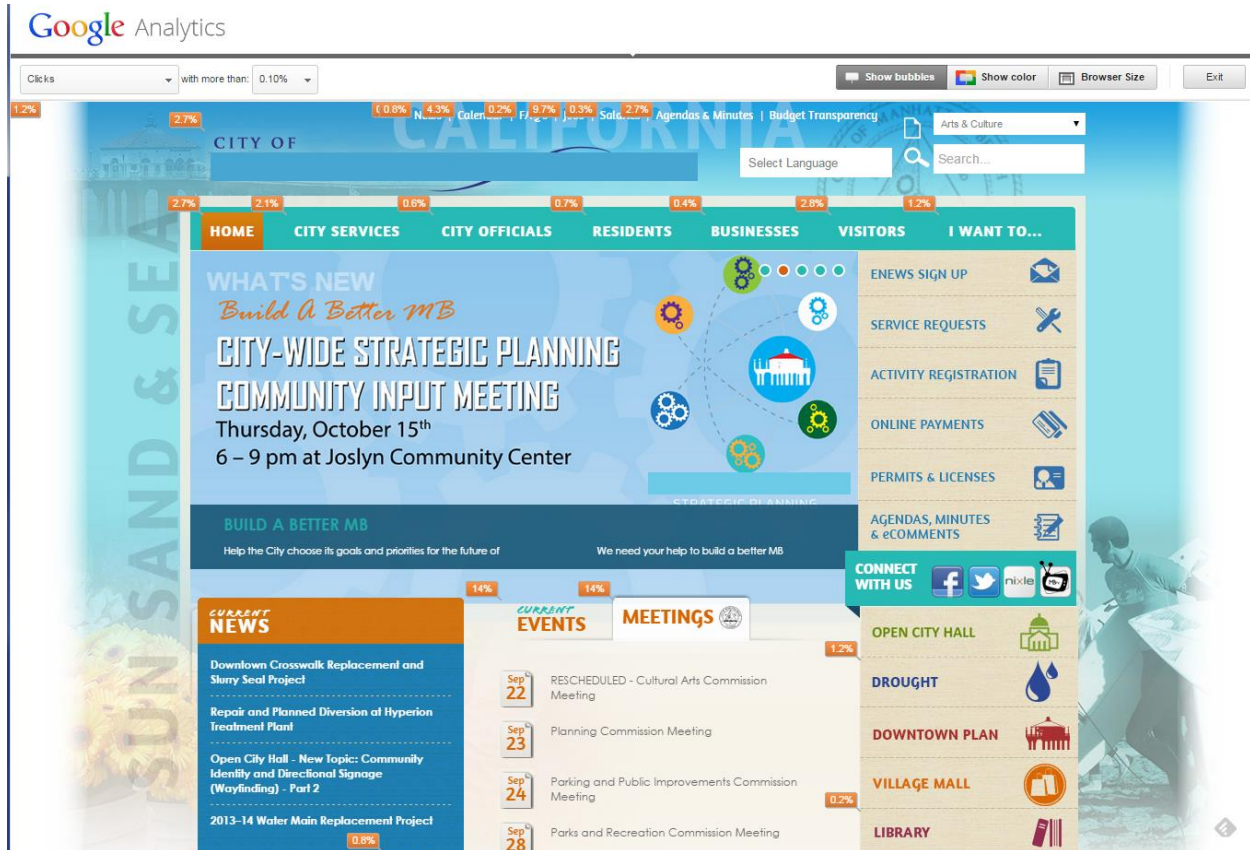
The Site Content All Pages lets you see the popularity of all your pages. You can flip between page title which may be easier to understand and the actual page URL.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Page Title <sup>?</sup>	Pageviews <sup>?</sup> ↓	Unique Pageviews <sup>?</sup>	Avg. Time on Page <sup>?</sup>
		<b>123,128</b> <small>% of Total: 100.00% (123,128)</small>	<b>99,463</b> <small>% of Total: 100.00% (99,463)</small>	<b>00:01:13</b> <small>Avg for View: 00:01:13 (0.00%)</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. City : Home	<b>19,249</b> (15.63%)	14,978 (15.06%)	00:00:57
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. City : Employment Opportunities	<b>12,899</b> (10.48%)	9,741 (9.79%)	00:01:10
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. City : City Calendar - Month View	<b>4,108</b> (3.34%)	3,427 (3.45%)	00:00:49
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. City : Search	<b>3,847</b> (3.12%)	2,925 (2.94%)	00:01:13
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. City : Contact the City	<b>3,208</b> (2.61%)	2,602 (2.62%)	00:01:11
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. City : Calendar	<b>3,147</b> (2.56%)	2,569 (2.58%)	00:01:01
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. City : Sand Dune Park	<b>2,504</b> (2.03%)	2,168 (2.18%)	00:04:00
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. City : Concerts in the Park Bands	<b>2,265</b> (1.84%)	2,097 (2.11%)	00:03:25
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. City : Polliwog Park	<b>1,766</b> (1.43%)	1,417 (1.42%)	00:02:05
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. City : Building and Safety	<b>1,455</b> (1.18%)	1,094 (1.10%)	00:01:02
<input type="checkbox"/>	11. City : Open City Hall	<b>1,415</b> (1.15%)	1,233 (1.24%)	00:03:43
<input type="checkbox"/>	12. City : Parks and Recreation	<b>1,403</b> (1.14%)	1,176 (1.18%)	00:01:09
<input type="checkbox"/>	13. City : Pay Water Bills	<b>1,376</b> (1.12%)	1,118 (1.12%)	00:02:18
<input type="checkbox"/>	14. City : Police Department	<b>1,370</b> (1.11%)	996 (1.00%)	00:01:02
<input type="checkbox"/>	15. City : Bid Opportunities	<b>1,359</b> (1.10%)	1,220 (1.23%)	00:00:54
<input type="checkbox"/>	16. City : Electric Utility Services	<b>1,323</b> (1.07%)	1,089 (1.09%)	00:03:48
<input type="checkbox"/>	17. City : Concerts in the Park	<b>1,243</b> (1.01%)	1,050 (1.06%)	00:01:01
<input type="checkbox"/>	18. City Minutes : City Council Meetings Agendas and	<b>1,077</b> (0.87%)	845 (0.85%)	00:03:50
<input type="checkbox"/>	19. City : Community News and Updates	<b>1,040</b> (0.84%)	931 (0.94%)	00:01:10
<input type="checkbox"/>	20. City : Aquatics	<b>1,034</b> (0.84%)	835 (0.84%)	00:01:19

### Behavior - In-Page Analytics

The Behavior – In-Page Analytics identifies where people are clicking on your site and percentage of clicks. This is an interest page to review on a regular basis to make sure you have optimized the content on your homepage to deliver what your customers are looking for.

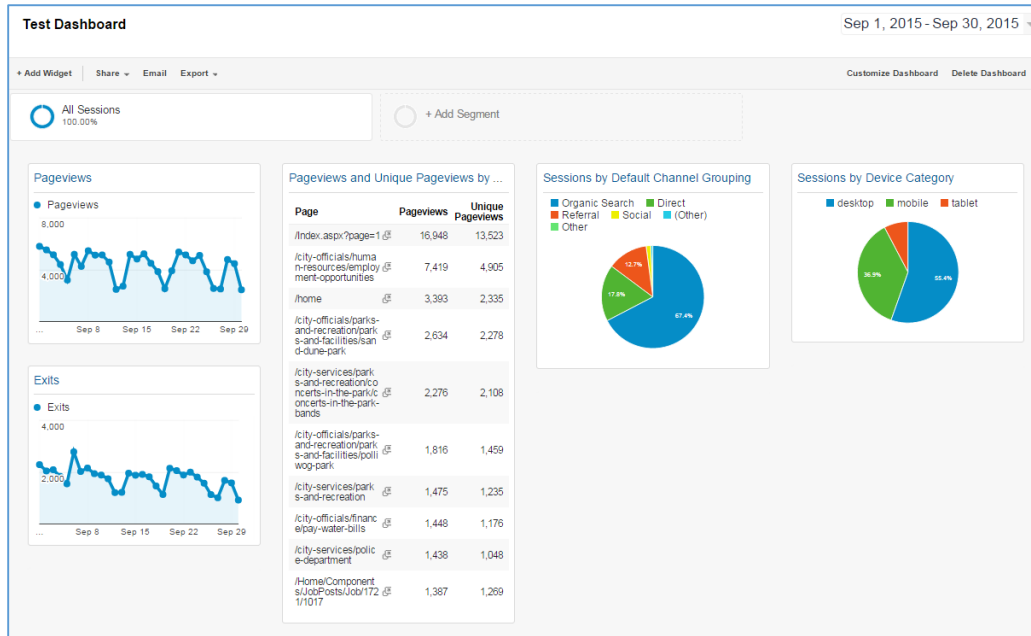
You can access this feature by going to Behavior section and select In-Page Analytics.



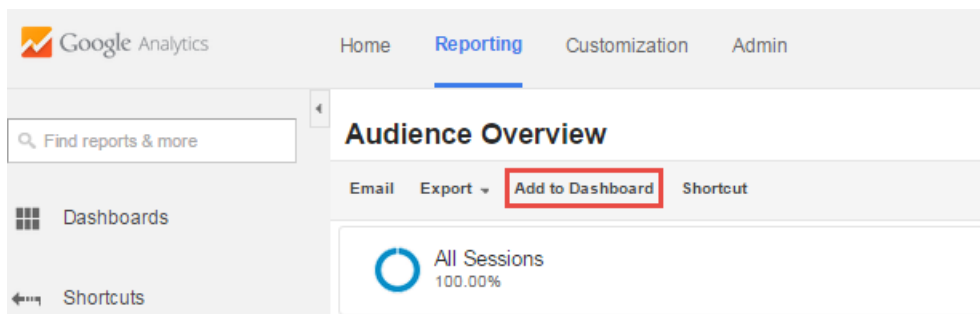


## Google Analytics Dashboard

Dashboards are a collection of widgets that give you an overview of the reports and metrics you care about most. Dashboards let you monitor many metrics at once, so you can quickly check the health of your accounts or see correlations between different reports.



To add a report to the Dashboard, select Add to Dashboard while you are viewing a report that you would like to see on your Dashboard.



## Google Analytics Shortcuts

Shortcuts remember your settings so you don't have to reconfigure a report each time you open it. Any setting you apply to a report, like adding an advanced segment or a new metric, stays applied in a shortcut until you manually change the settings.

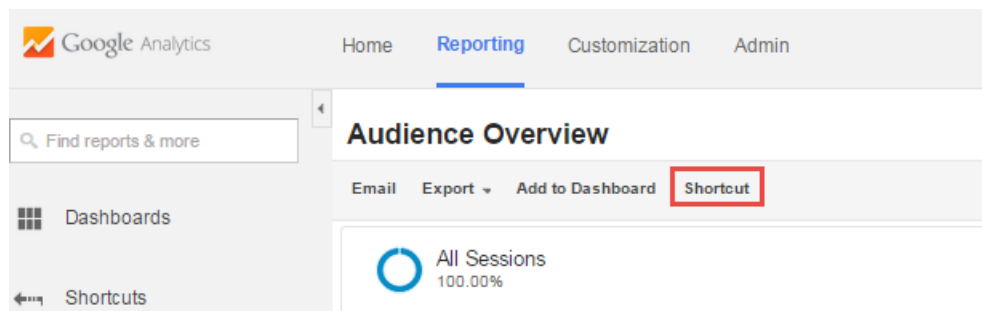
To access a report, click on Shortcuts which gives you an index of the Shortcuts that you have saved. Here is a list of the key reports that should be in your shortcuts.

### Shortcuts

<input type="text" value="Search"/>		
Name	Creation Date	
<a href="#">Audience Overview</a>	Oct 8, 2015	Actions
<a href="#">Audience Overview - Mobile &amp; Tablet</a>	Oct 8, 2015	Actions
<a href="#">Audience - New vs Returning</a>	Oct 8, 2015	Actions
<a href="#">Audience - Frequency &amp; Recency</a>	Oct 8, 2015	Actions
<a href="#">Audience - Engagement</a>	Oct 8, 2015	Actions
<a href="#">Acquisition Overview</a>	Oct 8, 2015	Actions
<a href="#">Acquisition - Channels</a>	Oct 8, 2015	Actions
<a href="#">Behavior - Overview</a>	Oct 8, 2015	Actions
<a href="#">Behavior - Site Content All Pages</a>	Oct 8, 2015	Actions
<a href="#">Behavior - Landing Pages</a>	Oct 8, 2015	Actions
<a href="#">Behavior - Exit Pages</a>	Oct 8, 2015	Actions

Show rows 25 | Go to  1 - 11 of 11

You can add a report to your Shortcuts by clicking on the Shortcut link whenever you are viewing a report you would like to save to your Shortcuts.



## Social Media Tracking

Another important source of analytics for your digital communications efforts is to track performance metrics from your social media accounts. Each platform provides some great information, but unless you are willing to invest in an analytics solution it is cheaper and more efficient to summarize the information manually.

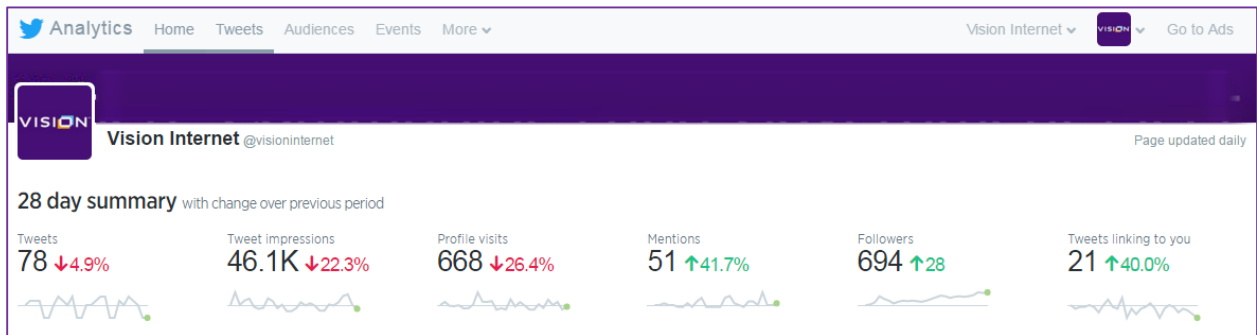
Here is a template for creating a monthly worksheet for tracking both website and social media metrics.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Trend
<b>MARKETING</b>													
<b>Website</b>													
Sessions													
Pageviews													
Pages Per Session													
Average Session													
Bounce Rate													
Mobile & Tablet Visits													
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>													
<b>LinkedIn</b>													
Impressions													
Clicks													
Followers													
<b>Twitter</b>													
Tweets													
Impressions													
Engagements													
Profile Visits													
New Followers													
Mentions													
Total Followers													
<b>Facebook</b>													
Likes													
Engaged Users													
Reach (Impressions)													
<b>Total Impressions</b>													

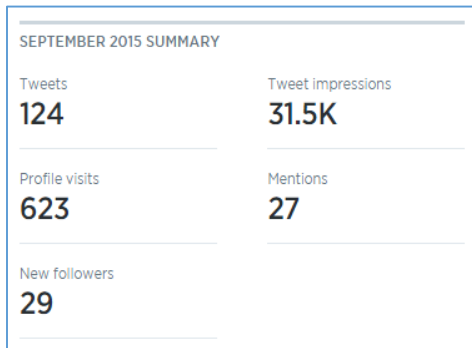
## Twitter Analytics – analytics.twitter.com

You can access a great deal of information from the analytics provided from by Twitter. When you are signed in to your Twitter account, go to <https://analytics.twitter.com/> to access your Twitter Analytics dashboard.

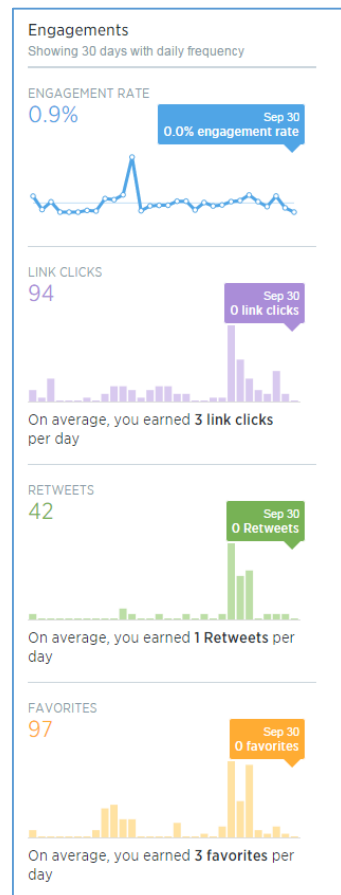
The Home page summarizes your activity over the last 28 days, and then summarizes your activity by month. The Tweets activity page lets you analyze your analytics over different time periods and examines how each individual tweet has performed.



The Monthly Summary is available in the right nave on Home tab

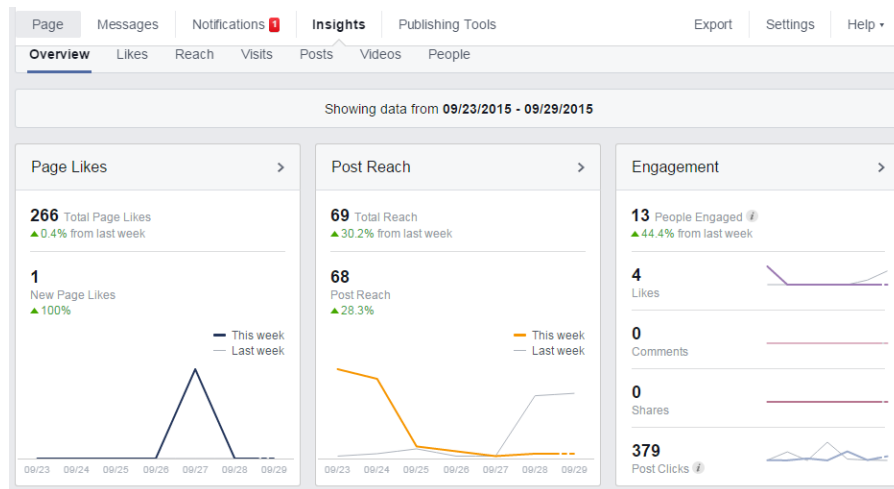


The Engagements Detail is in the right column of the Tweets tab

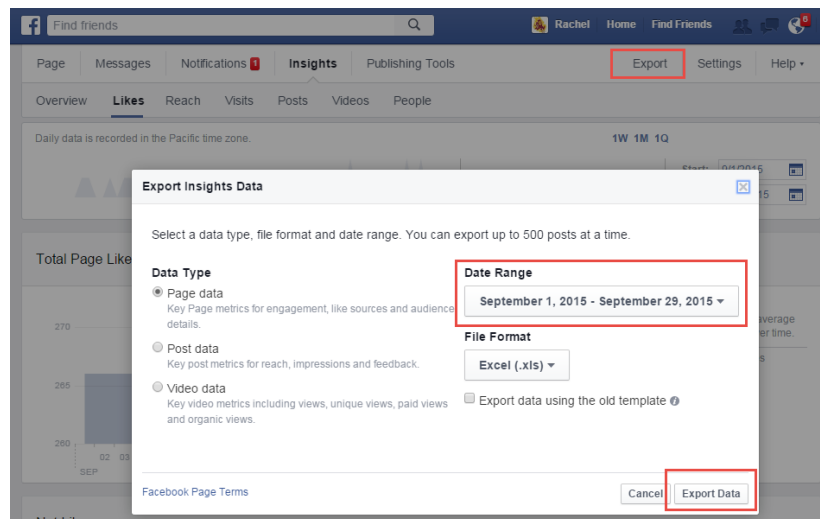


## Facebook Analytics

Facebook has some summary insights for your page, but it only shows information for the last week.



To access the best data source for your Facebook page, it's best to export the insights data. You can define your own date range (typically a month) and then click on the Export Data to export an Excel file with your data.



There is a ton of information in the downloaded data export, but here are the most relevant columns that provide the best measures of your activity:

- Column B – Lifetime Likes
- Column E – Daily Engaged Users
- Column H – Daily Total Reach
- Column AM – Daily Total Impressions

Sum the numbers in the Daily columns to get the total for the month (or whatever period you are downloading) and add them to your tracking sheet.

### Other Digital Metrics

The City of Grand Forks, North Dakota issued their first [Digital Media Annual Report](#) in August 2015 which covered the time period from August 2014 through July 2015 and summarized metrics on the following dimensions:

- Website
  - Page views
  - Top web pages
  - Desktop vs. mobile and tablet
- Social
  - Facebook Reach
  - Twitter Impressions and Engagement
- 311
  - Top 5 requests
  - Where did request originate from
  - Who is reporting
  - By area of city

What other metrics could your city be tracking and reporting?

## Additional Resources

[Google Analytics Help Center](#)

[Google Analytics for Government – Second Edition, May 2014](#)

[Digital Media Annual Report, Grand Forks, ND – 2014-2015](#)

[Annual Report Infographic Template](#)

[Digital Metrics Guidance and Best Practices](#)

[How to Use Google Analytics Behavior Reports to Optimize Your Content](#)

[How to Use Google Analytics to Measure Engagement on Your Blog](#)