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Google Analytics
actionable insight

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Measure Creative

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Some top tips on how to apply Google Analytics in an impactful way to benefit your campaigns and decisions.

This short guide presumes you already have a working knowledge of Google Analytics and focuses on top tips for harnessing the true power of analytics and using them in meaningful ways to better measure your organisation's digital goals.

"Look at the leaf, not the forest"

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1. Ask Questions, Test Hypotheses

– Don't just open Google Analytics and click around seeing what you find

– Develop a list of specific questions you want to answer

– Have a list of hypotheses you wish to test or disprove

– Search for the data to test these questions and hypotheses

Some questions you may wish to ask your data...

Do most people enter my website via the homepage or are there other key landing pages that introduce users to my organisation?

What percentage of my website visitors are coming from within/ around my city? For everyone else, do the pages they're looking at tell me anything about why they're on my site?

How could I make the content people are searching for on my website more prominent or create new content to fulfil those search requests?

2. Look at the leaf, not the forest

– When testing your hypotheses, focus completely on one data point - use less data

– Strip away any visitors that aren't relevant to your question then dive into the details on the small number of visitors that remain. You can do this by creating Advanced Segments. Think about who you want to learn more about. It could be:

– · Visitors from social media who also bought a ticket

– · Visitors who look at a performance page but don't purchase a ticket

– · Visitors who read a certain category of blog posts
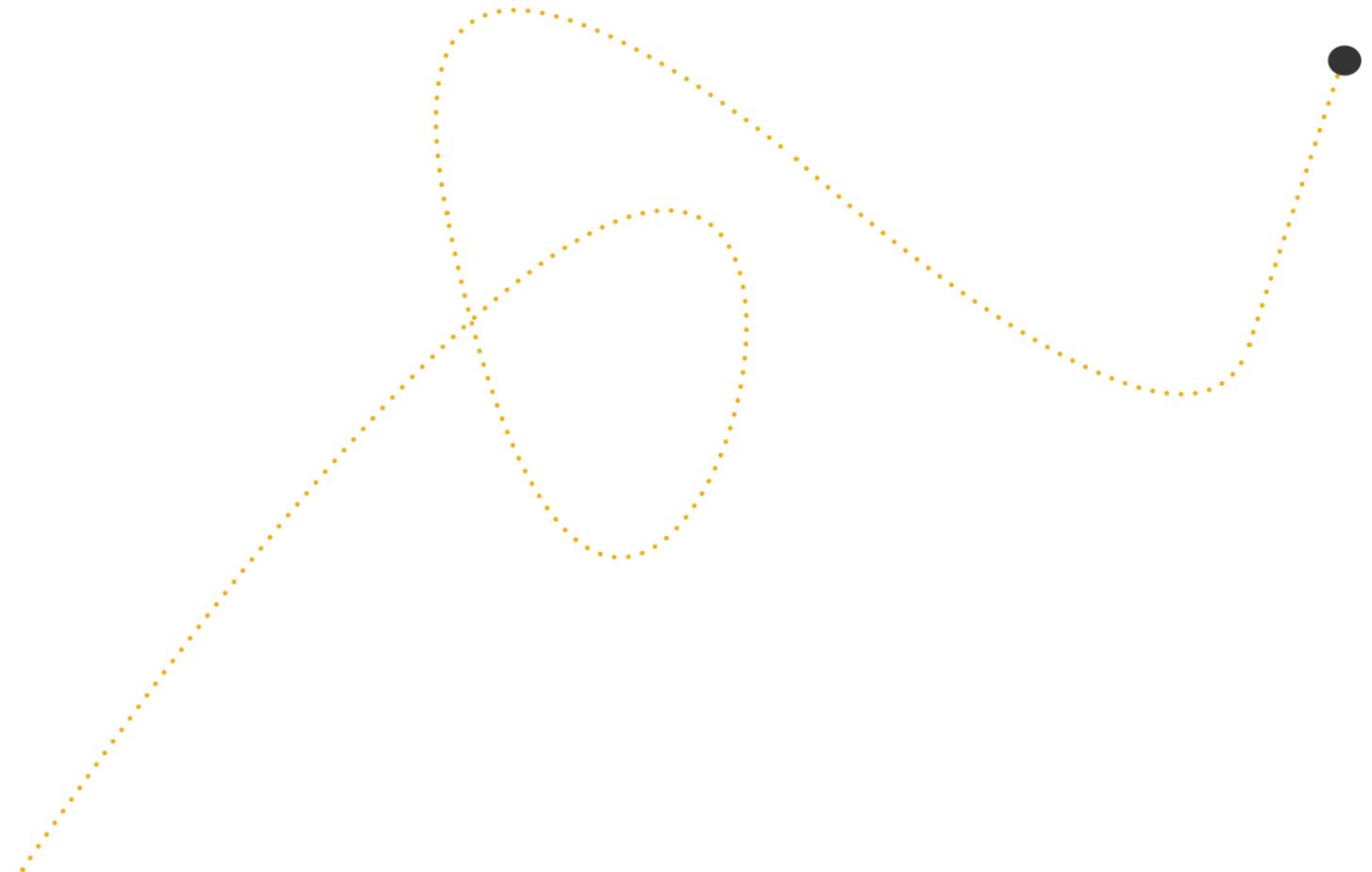
3. Add insights

Google Analytics only tells you what is happening, it cannot tell you why. It won't tell you how you should change your approach.

Every report you deliver to stakeholders using Google Analytics data should include a section on what you will do differently, based on the analytics.

A rough rule of thumb is to spend:

· 10% of your time on planning — thinking about your questions and any data you might need to add to Google Analytics to answer those questions

· 40% of your time diving into the data, configuring reports, creating advanced segments, applying filters and such

· 40% of your time analysing the data to identify trends, picking out the bits that are useful, determining what to do next and packaging the findings in a way that's meaningful to other people

· 10% of your time discussing the findings and recommendations with other people

It's easy to get consumed with all of the interesting things that you're finding. Stay focused, think about what you can do with the data and share the most relevant information with your colleagues. It will reduce the amount of time you need to spend on Google Analytics and help you achieve better results from your website and for your organisation.

4. Stop Visiting Google Analytics so much

Google Analytics doesn't have to be an onerous task and findings needn't sit solely within the marketing team. There's valuable data that could be applied to fundraising, programming and other aspects of your organisation's work.

Google Analytics reports and custom alerts are useful for sharing information across the wider team and limiting the number of times you have to log in.

Schedule a report to be emailed to yourself or other team members. You could send your fundraising manager the geographic breakdown of everyone who visits your donation page on a monthly basis. Or perhaps your education manager would like to see the top 10 education resources downloaded from your site each week. Invest time upfront in setting up reports and save yourself time in the long-term. Schedule a custom alert to be emailed to you if an event happens. You might want a heads up if your local newspaper starts sending traffic to your website or if your traffic increases by 20% relative to yesterday. Custom alerts enable you to track specific events without logging in every day.
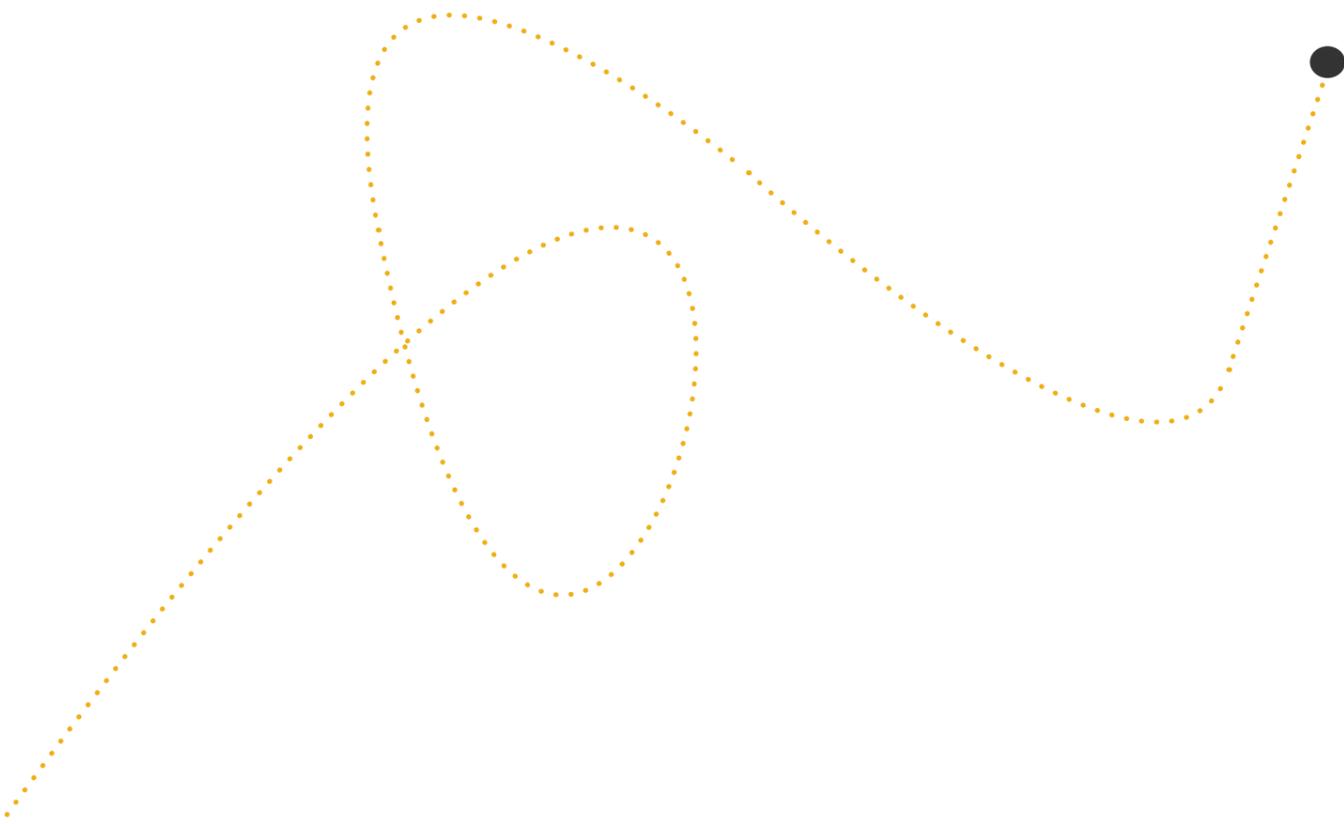
5. Top Tips

Intelligence Events
You don't have to be constantly logging into Google Analytics
Manage your time effectively by setting up Google Analytics alerts — or, as GA calls them 'Intelligence Events'.

Google Data Studio
Google Analytics isn't the easiest interface to navigate but it's worth it. Google Data Studio allows you to create your own reports that use all the same components as Google Analytics but in an easier to digest format. It has a drag & drop interface and you can add your own annotations and schedule these to be sent on a regular basis to stakeholders

Top Tools to investigate
Advanced Segments
Custom Dimensions
Custom Alerts
Slack Statsbot
Event Tracking
Google Data Studio
Google Optimize

Top Reports to investigate
Audience: Network Audience: User Explorer Audience: Demographics Acquisition: Referrals
Acquisition: Campaigns
Behavior: Site Search Terms Behavior: All Pages
Conversions: Goals
Conversion: eCommerce

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