

Dr Dave Chaffey, CEO, Smart Insights (Marketing Intelligence) Ltd *Using Google Analytics to get better results from your marketing*

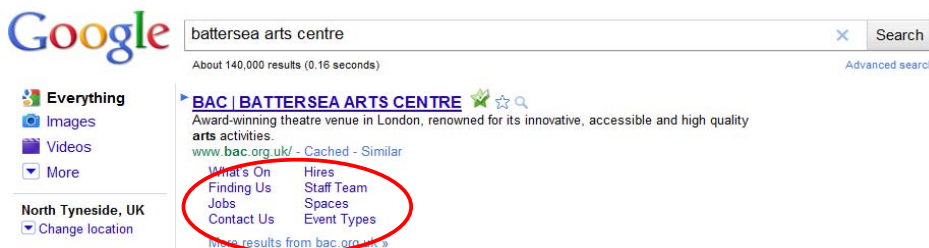
Smart Insights is a digital marketing portal and consultancy that provides advice and software to help businesses succeed online. Recognised by the Chartered Institute of Marketing as one of fifty gurus to have shaped the future of marketing, Dave Chaffey has been working in the field for twelve years. His session was to explain how to maximise the use of Google Analytics (GA) to improve marketing campaigns and website experience.

This was a complex and dense session, so the slides are available here, to be looked at alongside this report, and containing many links for further information:
www.a-m-a.org.uk/images/downloads/DaveChaffeyDdayPresentation.pdf

The session was based on the assumption that attendees were already using GA – a great tool, so this was about getting more and the best out of it. It's incredibly easy to use in one sense, but you need to know the right questions that you're asking and where to look to find the answers. There are many reports and options that can be used in GA, so this session concentrated on knowing what the right tools and reports are.

Dave explained that he's going to use the Barbican as a case study, with whom he worked about a year ago, setting up their GA and customisations.

He started by Googling a couple of the attendees' websites (commenting with Battersea Arts Centre on the importance of Google places). He also mentioned sitelinks and suggested Googling that to see how to set them up, if you don't have them or you are not happy with what is listed:



GA could be compared to a penknife – lots of different tools. Customisation is important before starting, to tailor GA to your needs. The session covered six steps to customisation.

1. Working smarter with reports

- Advanced filter/weighted sort
- Pivot tables
- Analytics intelligence

4. Marketing campaigns

- Campaign tracking for email
- Campaign tracking for social
- Adwords funnel and match types

<p>2. Advanced segments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium dimensions • Time period dimensions • Value metrics 	<p>5. Profile and filter setup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing conversion rates • Goal setup and segmented funnels • Improving on-site search
<p>3. Dashboards and custom reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACE Digital Marketing Framework • Time-based custom reports • Value and engagement custom reports 	<p>6. Advanced server-based technique</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event tracking • Virtual page views • Custom variables

Goals

To start with, goals are important, as many people start work on their website and e-commerce without goals – and monetary value can be put on goals. Not many people use advanced segments: they are a very good way of looking at which visitors use social media, come via a search engine, are returning visitors, etc.

In dealing with the topics that are covered today, the ones on the left hand side (above) are simpler, the ones on the right-hand side might need further investigation and research.

It is important to have a whole strategy and create a digital marketing plan – what are we trying to do with digital media and how do we achieve it – and at Smart Insights they have developed a framework for this based on a standard plan, where are you now, what are the goals, and what are the tactics (SEO, PPC, site design, email marketing etc.). It starts with a RACE framework (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) for goal-setting: with GA having so many measures, it is vital to pick the critical few that will make a difference. With **Reach**, it's not about hits (which Dave calls 'how idiots track success'), it's about visitors and visits (if you have a page with ten different images, that counts as ten different hits even though it's only one person visiting the website, so it's better to measure by unique visitors). **Act** is about what people are doing on your site. Bounce rate is one thing to look at in GA: this is whether people disappear straightaway from a page (100%) or 0% if everyone hangs around. 30% is a good rate for the homepage. If your ad words are getting people to your homepage but they are immediately leaving your site – say a bounce rate of over 50% – then the money spent on those is effectively wasted. **Conversion** is about what value visitor numbers mean to your business (more on this later). The final area is keeping existing customers **engaged**: GA is not very helpful for this. In fact, this can be tracked more usefully through email marketing, and checking open and click-through rates. There is something called 'emotional unsubscribing' – when people don't actually unsubscribe but never open the emails from a company. Some retail companies have found about 70% or 80% people never opened their emails or clicked through.

Now to go back to the six different areas (in the table above) and look at some key questions :

Where do visitors enter your website?

The landing pages or entrance pages are where people come onto the site – and that is often not the homepage. Often there is a fixation on the homepage, which can often come from a ‘HIPPO’, which stands for the Highest Paid Person’s Opinion’. Analytics can prove to the HIPPO where people actually enter a site and what the most important landing pages are. There is what’s considered a typical customer journey, where they are funnelled down to the ticketing page, but in reality many or even most people come into the site already at a deeper level. Landing pages are vital for improvement, putting key messages and brand information, which is often only on the homepage, on those pages.

How popular are different content types?

Within GA, Content Drilldown is helpful to find the bigger picture of which areas of the site are important and popular. Looking at an example (for a retail site), it shows content grouped into sub-folders, and shows that the homepage is relatively unimportant, and the browsing product pages are most important. The example also shows the Bounce Rate for each content section, and shows that one area (products) is showing a high bounce rate, so that would be worth looking into. There is also a section for \$ index value which is usually 0 if you haven’t got a value attributed to a page, but some pages can be given a value rate. One company he worked with didn’t sell online, but they worked out that every person who downloaded a brochure from their site was worth £10, so they could input that into GA and then analyse which bits of their website were having an impact on getting those downloads, and so that money. It’s worth setting up a nominal amount even if you can’t make an exact calculation, as it still shows which bits of the site are working hardest.

You can also set up value per visit, if you have ticketing on your site or some other kind of e-commerce. These measures can be broken down into different sources and pages, so you can see how much value the social media is contributing or the email marketing.

Other reports include trend lines: if you have a large site, you can filter these to show only, for example, the most trafficked pages. GA now has pivot tables which give you a way of breaking down results so – in the example shown in the presentation – it doesn’t just show total traffic, but shows it by Google and other sources as well.

Which calls to action are effective?

There is also a way of showing visually which marketing messages and visuals are working to persuade people to click through for further information. There used to be something called Site Overlay, but it’s now a new function called In-Page Analytics. It easily shows you which buttons and links people like, so that those can be used on other pages, but it doesn’t show you the source – so for instance if you have the same thing on the same page twice, but displayed differently, it doesn’t differentiate between them, so you can’t tell which placement or button or visual is working harder to achieve the same thing. Another practical tip: if you have body copy about an event with links within it, it helps people to ‘sniff out’ what is interesting (they are called ‘sense trails’). These links help with SEO as well: the ‘anchor text’ is the text that the reader sees as a hyperlink (rather than seeing the often-messy actual URL).

Just changing one word in the top navigation can prove very successful: the example given was Skype, where they changed the button Shop to Accessories, and sold 20% more, because people could understand better where it was leading.

Other tools

Annotations is a basic tool, adding a flag into GA allowing you to mark up the different marketing activities, so you can see what happened when, matching a peak for instance to an email campaign or when an offer started.

The other option is Intelligence, which takes more setting up, but once it's set up GA alerts you, you don't have to keep going in there. It sends you an email about any issues like a fall in traffic.

Driving traffic to the site (traffic sources in GA)

This is where advanced segments are used. Segments are just a way of grouping people. The main way we use segments is the way to identify traffic sources, and to work out which marketing efforts are driving people to your site, and split down between natural searches and paid Google adwords. This can be set up for returning customers, which is helpful to see where they come into the site and for finding out which content they are using, so you can learn from that. These segments can be found when you click on Advanced Segments and it expands to show standard default segments, but you can also set up custom segments. In the example shown, search marketing has been set up, as a lot of visitors will have searched using the brand name, so you need to be able to see results with and without the brand name. For example, at the Barbican, they get a lot of visits from searches for 'Barbican' or 'Barbican shows', but they want to see how they are doing on 'London theatres' or 'London arts', so they set up advanced segments to show the difference. You can also isolate social media sites and visits. You see a lot of people using their mobile phones and browsers such as Firefox, but if your site is more than a year old, it may not work well, so you should check to make sure you are not losing people because of lack of accessibility through mobile devices.

Search marketing

Using Traffic Sources, we can look for keywords or key phrases (as it's the combination of keywords that can be important to understand how people are searching). There are two main options – paid listings – and then there are organic listings. On limited budgets, it is worth concentrating on free listings, though Google used to offer a not-for-profit rate, which may still be running. To test, type into Google 'Site:' and then name of your site. This allows us to see results restricted just to that site, showing the brand messages that visitors and potential visitors see. This is worth looking at against a competitor as well. Using site:www.wigmore-hall.org.uk as an example, it shows that the brand messages are quite strong, but it easily shows that it doesn't say anywhere where the Wigmore Hall is, so adding something about central London or near Oxford/Bond Street would be helpful to show instantly how accessible it is. You can also add in other words to see what comes up like 'site:www.wigmore-hall.org.uk guitar'. The descriptions are written through the content management system. One thing to note is that Google looks at the words, in terms of matching searches, to the left of page most, so to give an example, when searching 'london classical music', Time Out's title comes up, as the title tag is 'Classical music concerts and shows in London – Time Out London'. Another thing

that Google looks at is the number sites that have links back to your site (backlinks). There is a tool to test this: www.majesticseo.com and look at backlink history to compare your links to a competitor's – you have to register for free.

Custom segments

Custom segments are created by a drag and drop process. You have to use what is called 'regular expressions', which just means you have to use a pipe symbol | to separate different version of your brand name (i.e. your correct name and the other things people call you). You can use this for social media too, saying how many traffic sources are Facebook, Twitter and so on. There is a more advanced way of looking at it, if you are using paid searches via Google adwords, overlaying natural and paid with the Google keyword tool and looking at your share of the market.

Dashboards

When you first log on to GA, you get a dashboard which can be customised, so you can click the 'Add to Dashboard' button for instance for a report that you want to be easily accessible. The generic reports cover many things, but it is possible to do a Custom Report too to drill down. In the example given, you could show your visitors by country, and then drill down and see the different keywords used in those different countries. You can also group your performances through time, say by week or by month.

Marketing campaign tracking

GA is not so good at tracking email marketing and social media – it does take some setting up. For instance, you add a parameter or coding to the link, and then it can be tracked – you need to tell Google the medium for the source. Email service providers often have their own tracking systems, where you can add in medium=email. If you don't use this tracking, Google will treat click-throughs from an email just as another visitor, and will not identify that the visitor has come from an email that has been sent by the organisation. See the link on that page for further details, as this is quite technical. The example given in the slide shows the coding used for an email the Barbican sent out (where internal_email means one of their own lists from their database, even though it was sent out externally).

Social media tracking

Again, this needs a certain amount of setting up, creating advanced segments for each social medium, and you can report on, say, Twitter against Facebook. For advanced results though, you need to set up segments for every application that Twitter in particular can be viewed through, as the original URL is often lost if people are monitoring it say through Tweet Deck. That's incredibly complex though. In the example show, he uses the pipe symbol to separate the various social media sources.

Modifying profile setup within Google Analytics settings

From this point on, these things will need a developer to make changes on the server. So this can show how many, of all the people that visit your website, go on to do something like buy tickets and check out. It's not just about how many people start at the top and get to the check out, but the journey they take on the way. Usually conversion rates are around 10% for a good brand like Amazon, so it's pretty

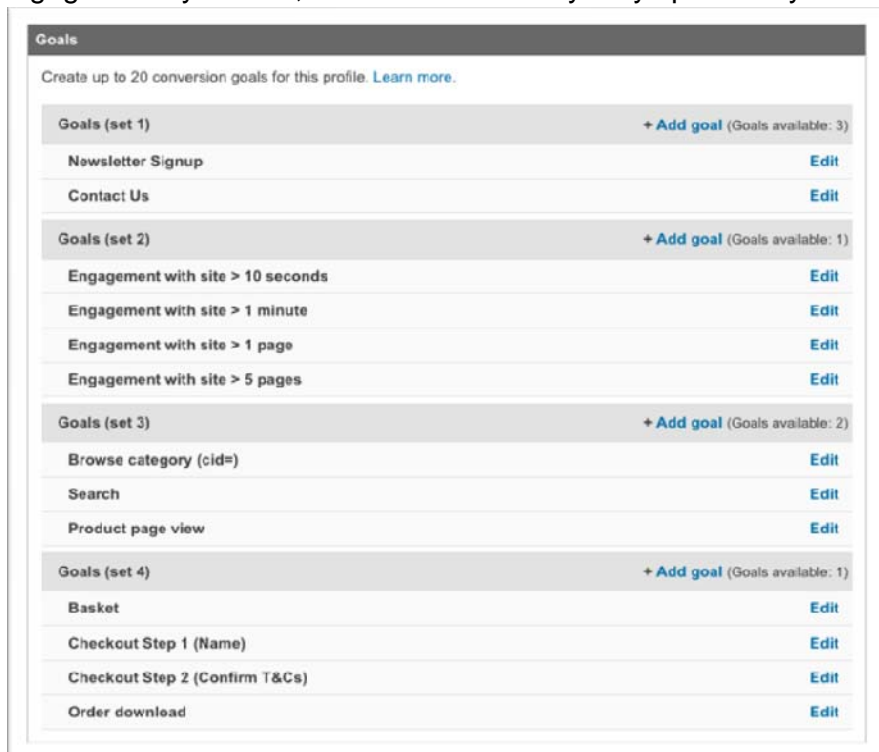
low. The old rule of thumb was that about 2% convert: of people that add things into a basket, even then only half of them go on actually to pay.

Profiles and filters

This is mainly useful for large organisations and sites. You can set up separate profiles which only certain staff can access. This is also helpful if you have blogs on your website, so you can set up a filter that just pulls results on the traffic on the blog. You have to make sure that your ecommerce tracking has the same directory structure. Sometimes you need to use Regular Expressions (RegExs) to set this up – the more IT side of things, and again there are more details if you follow the link on the relevant slide in the presentation.

Goals

There are many regular goals that can be set up – for example, newsletter sign up, contact us, support us and so on – which can then be attributed a value. They can also be grouped, for instance to sets of goals that are to do with how long someone engages with your site, or how much money they spend on your site.



You can also look at conversion with some of these goals, like how many people go to your newsletter sign up page versus how many then actually sign up. Funnels in GA show where and how many people are dropping out, and where they are going to from there (e.g. leaving site or moving to another page). The goal set up is all on one page, and includes sections on where people go after they've achieved a goal, e.g. a thank you page. This is also where you set values: so for instance, you can attribute even a nominal value for someone who downloads a brochure, based on an average or even a guess of how much ticket revenue you think that will generate.

On-Site search engine

About 30 or 40% of site visits involve a search (especially for straightforward retail site), so you may want to investigate what people are searching for and if they are dropping out of the site after the search. You can see the phrases that people are searching on. The way your search engine is set up, there's usually a parameter like q or s that's used within the web address to show the search engine what the query is, so you look in the browser tool bar and see what the relevant parameter is for you.

Event tracking

This can be used for tracking results that aren't things like booking a ticket, so a result like becoming a fan on Facebook and moving across to Twitter, i.e. tracking call to action buttons. Any link that you want to track, you have to set up a particular form of code, telling Google when that 'event' has occurred. The simple way to do this is to add coding that GA recognises – in 'proprietary format' – to the external hyperlink.

Custom variables

This can allow you to collect information about seemingly anonymous visitors: when someone registers or buys something – i.e. does something on the site that entails filling in data fields about themselves – you can write that to a cookie (with their permission), e.g. the area of the country they are in, what type of thing they've bought. Then you can analyse what is popular with who, what type of person is looking at which section of the website and so on. It's advisable when someone actually buys something to write to the cookie to say this is actually a booker rather than a more general visitor.

Beyond GA...

Why people are on site?

Why they buy?

Why they don't?

You can install feedback forms on your site: the system recommended is called 4qsurvey, to show why people are on the site and if they are going on to buy: it's just four questions (and you don't have to show it to everyone – it could just be 5% of visitors). Working with existing customers, it can be as simple as choosing one key question, and putting that on the website – like a mini focus group – e.g. what would improve our service. Uservice or Idea Scale are things which allow you to do this. Google Website Optimiser: you can use A/B test for, say, two design options for your landing page to test which one gets better results and/or is more popular.

Books suggested for further reading are:

Advanced Web Metrics by Brian Clifton

a/b Always Be Testing by Bryan Eisenberg, John Quarto-vonTivadar with Lisa T.

Davis

Landing Page Optimization by Tim Ash

There is also further information on www.smartinsights.com