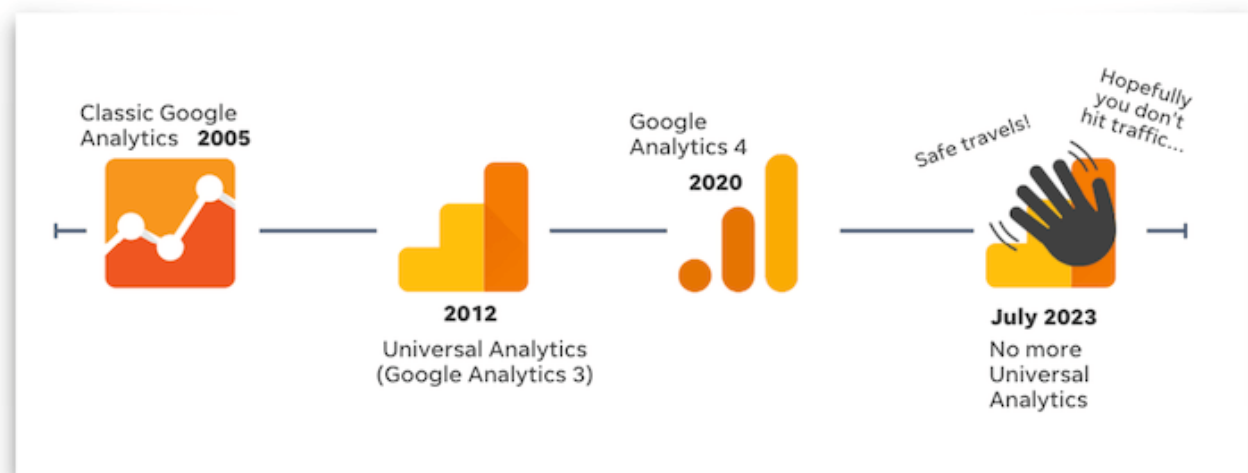


Google Universal Analytics Is Going Away: What You Need to Know

Since 2005, Google Analytics has been the gold standard for tracking website and marketing performance. While over the years, Google has made additions and improvements to the platform, it announced last week that it will be making a removal:

On 1, July 2023, one of its most common instances of Google Analytics (Universal Analytics) will be going away.



Now I'll admit that even though I use Google Analytics every day, I wasn't sure what any of this meant. Do we use Universal Analytics? What exactly is a "property"? How does Analytics 360 fit into this picture? Assuming I'm not alone in my confusion, I dove in to find out and that's what I'm sharing today.

Read on to learn:

- What's changing, why, and when
- How to tell if your account will be affected
- What you need to do

What's changing

- The simple version: Universal Analytics is getting replaced by Google Analytics 4 starting July 1, 2023.

- The official announcement: Google announced that “On July 1, 2023, standard Universal Analytics properties will no longer process data. You’ll be able to see your Universal Analytics reports for a period of time after July 1, 2023. However, new data will only flow into your GA 4 properties.”

Let’s break this down:

What’s a property?

This is the website or app that you are tracking with Google Analytics. If you are currently using Universal Analytics to track your website, this would be called your “Universal Analytics property.” Once you set up GA4, you’ll have a “Google Analytics 4 property” for that same website. Because UA and GA4 are different, different reports are available to you for each property. Learn more about [Google Analytics properties here](#)

What is Google Analytics 4?

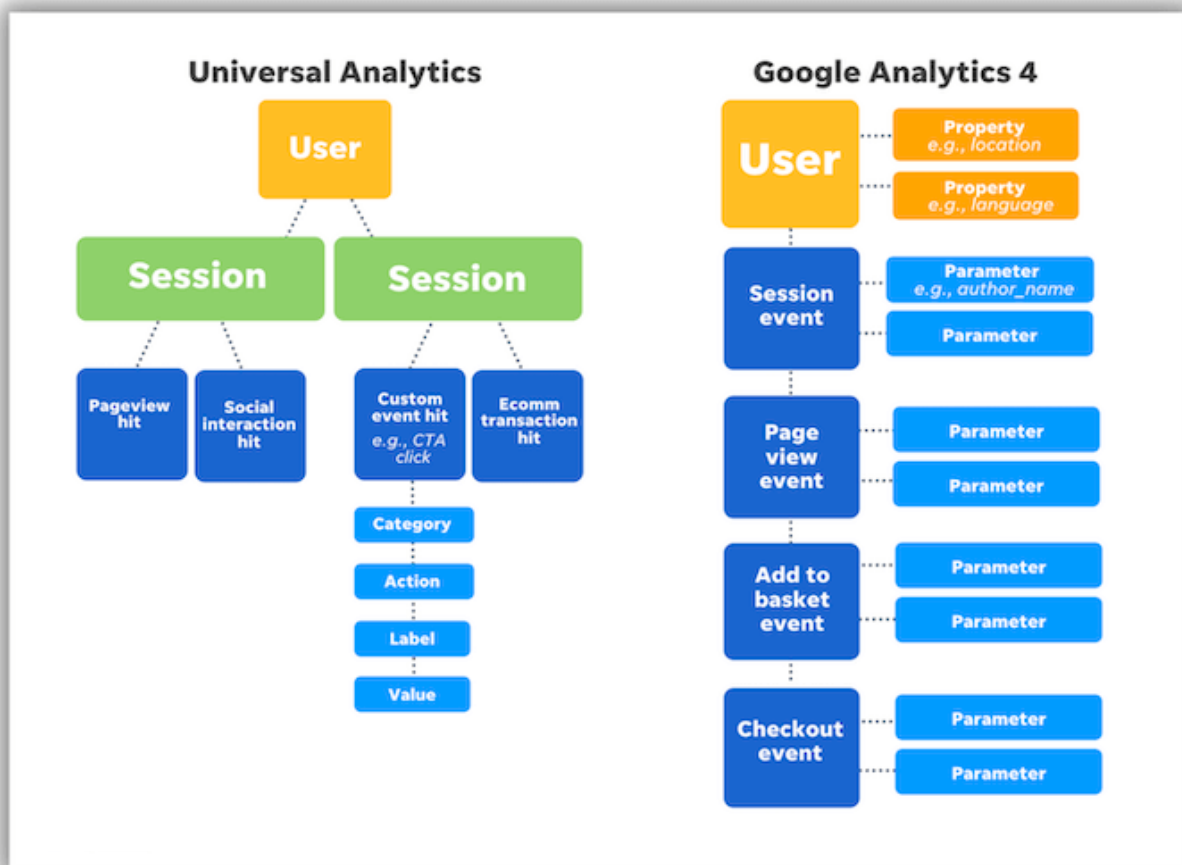
To understand exactly what GA4 is, a little [Google Analytics history](#) lesson is in order.

- Google Analytics: The very first instance of Google Analytics, which came out in 2005 (when you had a Razr flip phone with your favourite song as your ringtone).
- Universal Analytics (UA): The new and improved version of Google Analytics that came out in 2012 and became the default property type.
- Google Analytics 360: This is a software suite that, in addition to Universal Analytics, provides Tag Manager, Optimise, Data Studio, Surveys, Attribution, and Audience Center. Came out in 2016.
- Google Analytics 4: This is the latest version of Google Analytics, which came out on October 14, 2020.

What’s the difference between UA and GA4?

Google Analytics 4 doesn’t just offer more of what Universal Analytics offers. It’s built differently to align with current and future needs for reporting and privacy. Here are some of the differences and benefits.

- Event-based: Universal Analytics is session-based, while GA4 is event-based. In other words, the ability to track events like button clicks, video plays, and more is built in with GA4, while this requires advanced setups in UA. This comes from the premise that page views aren't the sole important metric.
- Cross-device tracking: UA was built around desktop web traffic, while GA4 gives businesses visibility into the customer journeys across all of their website and apps.
- Machine learning: GA4 uses machine learning technology to share insights and make predictions.
- Privacy-friendly: UA data relies heavily on cookies, GA 4 does not.

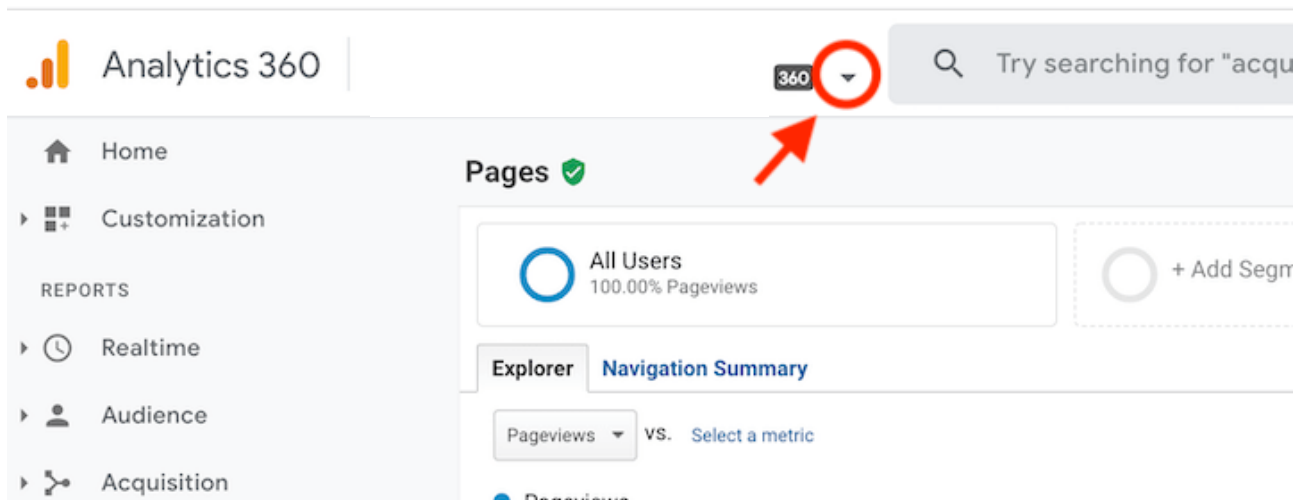


You can also read [Google's explanation of UA vs GA4 here](#).

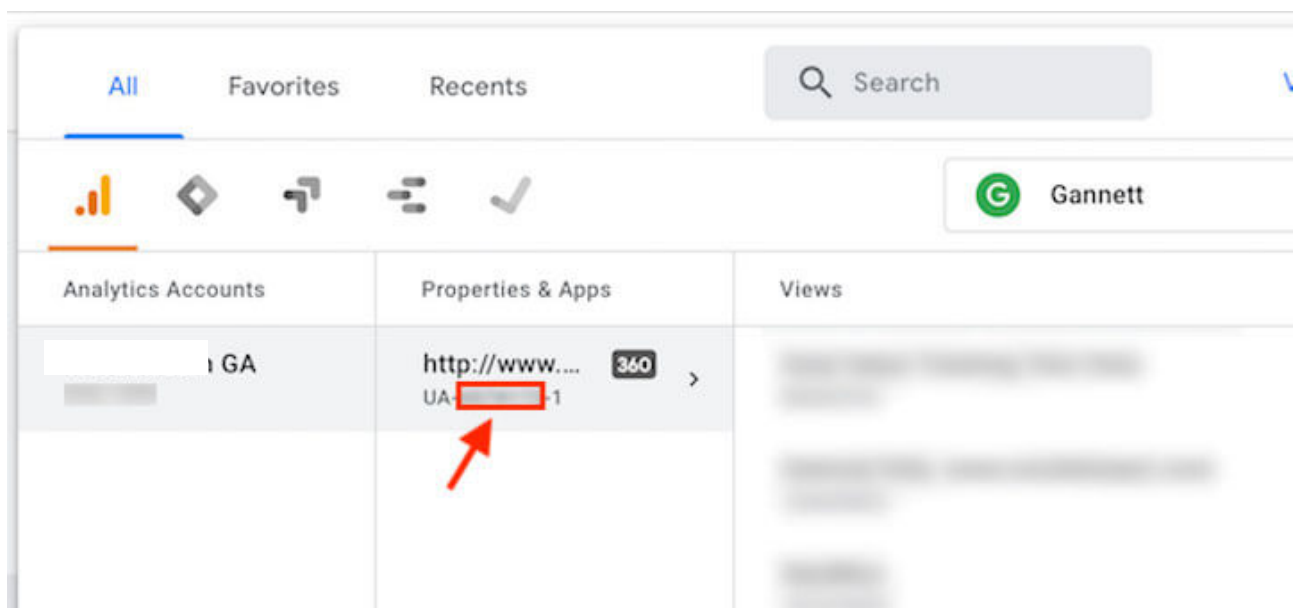
How do I know if I'm using Universal Analytics?

Google Analytics 4 came out on October 14, 2020 and became the default, so if you created your property after that date, you're likely using GA4. If you were using analytics prior to that date, you're likely using UA.

If you're not sure, you can [check your property type](#) by clicking on the down arrow in the top left of your account, next to your property name:



Then look at your property ID:



- UA property IDs start with UA and end with a number.
- GA 4 properties only have numbers.

What do I need to do?

If you're currently using Universal Analytics, there are three actions to prioritise:

1. Switch to GA 4 as soon as possible


While you have more than a year before this change takes place, it's best to make the switch now so your GA4 account can gather the data needed for automated insights.

If you are currently using UA, you'll want to set up a GA4 property alongside your existing UA property. Use [Google's GA4 Setup Assistant](#), which gives you the option to set it up with your existing tagging.

Google Analytics 4 Property Setup Assistant


You're currently using a Universal Analytics property. To join the future of Analytics, set up a Google Analytics 4 property below. [Learn more about GA4](#)

This Universal Analytics property remains unchanged and continues to collect data.



I want to create a new Google Analytics 4 property

We'll create a new Google Analytics 4 property based on this Universal Analytics property.



I want to connect to an existing Google Analytics 4 property

Connect an existing Google Analytics 4 property to take advantage of future tools to help complete your property configuration. You'll be responsible for tagging your site.

If you run Google Ads, have eCustom events, or use other advanced features, refer to [Google's page on how to switch to Google Analytics 4](#)—which breaks the process down into 12 steps with effort levels indicated for each step.

Get started	Finish migrating
1. Consider account structure (Effort varies)	7. Map Universal Analytics custom events to Google Analytics 4 (Effort varies)
2. Create a Google Analytics 4 property (Very low effort)	8. Migrate Universal Analytics goals and conversions to Google Analytics 4 (Medium effort)
3. Create data stream(s) (Very low effort)	9. Validate and bid to conversions in Google Ads (If applicable; medium effort)
4. Enable data collection (Effort varies)	10. Migrate audiences (If applicable; medium effort)
5. Activate Google Signals (If applicable; very low effort) Required for enhanced remarketing and reporting	11. Migrate ecommerce measurement (If applicable; high effort)
6. Link to Google Ads (If applicable; low effort) Import Google Ads links from Universal Analytics or create new Google Ads links	12. Add users (Medium effort)


Note: Account users automatically have access. You only need to add UA property (or view) users directly to your new GA4 property.


2. Adjust your Google Ads conversion tracking

Once your GA 4 property is set up, you'll be able to view Analytics data in your Google Ads account.

If you have conversion tracking set up, you should [import Analytics conversions into Google Ads](#) and remove any UA goals to avoid duplicates.


To import your Analytics conversions, in your Google Ads account, go to Tools & Settings > Conversions > Add new conversion action, and select Import:





×  | New conversion action

SEARCH REPORTS TOOLS AND SETTINGS HELP Notifications 

Start tracking conversions

Conversion tracking is critical to successful online marketing. It lets you see what people do - the conversion actions they take - after seeing your ad. You set up one conversion action at a time, but you can track multiple conversion actions at once. [Learn more](#)

Select the kind of conversions you want to track. 

- Website**

Track actions on your website
- App**

Track actions on your app
- Phone calls**

Track calls from your ads or website
- Import**

Import data from Google Analytics or another source

There you can select each conversion event you want to import.

3. Export historical reports

Google will allow access to your Universal Analytics data for at least six months after July 1, 2023, during which time you should export the data that is important to you. There are three ways to export:

- You can export individual reports
- Use the Google Analytics Reporting API
- Export to BigQuery

Google Analytics 4, here we come

I already mentioned this but it's worth mentioning again: Don't drag your feet with switching over to GA4. The sooner you start, the less historical data you'll need to export come July and the sooner Google's machine learning can start surfacing and predicting insights in your account. Stay tuned for more GA4 tips and tricks - www.andrewtalbotdesign.com/blog/

