

5 Google Analytics 4 questions, answered by an expert

Article

Google Analytics 4 (GA4), which permanently replaced Google's Universal Analytics in July, **introduced ecommerce dimensions and metrics, improved audience insights, and better app measurement.**

In order to unleash GA4, you need to understand it, said Colleen Harris, director, product manager at Ansira. Here are five questions to get you started.

1. How is GA4 different from past iterations?

GA4 treats everything as an event, which allows you to **track each specific interaction** such as page views, link clicks, or purchases.

- This is a contrast to Universal Analytics, which focused on page views and static data, rather than dynamic touchpoints of events that tell a larger story.
- Marketers can now see what people did on a page and the links they clicked, rather than the simple fact that they viewed the page, offering “a broader and a much richer story,” said Harris.

The change from static page view data to event-based data “is just a fundamental shift about how you have to think about your data,” said Harris. She noted that marketers weren’t prepared to have so much new data available to them and still aren’t sure of how to best use the new information.

2. Who is most impacted?

GA4 impacts everybody, but marketers who are well-versed in Universal Analytics are most impacted because they essentially have to relearn how to collect and analyze their data, considering the new consumer activities they can now track.

3. What are potential benefits?

Investing time and energy into GA4 upfront is worth it, Harris said, because of the high-quality insights to the early-, mid-, and late-stage touchpoints across the customer journey. For example, GA4 can offer insights into if a customer came from an email campaign, or if that customer clicked multiple links without purchasing and should be retargeted.

“For so many of those same people who might be using a couple of tools just like a small agency, there is so much more reporting. And there’s so much more of a robust look at attribution,” she said.

GA4 is also a chance to reset which data matters to marketers, Harris said. Conversion will be the most important event, but other actions like how many product photos a consumer has

viewed matter too. “How many times do we get the chance to look at our website and say, ‘What are the most important actions?’”

4. What are potential pain points?

The biggest challenge is change. Performance marketers need to familiarize themselves with the new look and feel of GA4. They also need to reassess which data matters most to them, and which is just noise. That’ll require an adjustment period.

5. What action should marketers take now?

Make a list of what information matters to you. Only after you do that planning can you configure the events, said Harris.

“I have learned from experience, if you don’t do the planning first, you just end up in a game of Whac-a-Mole of never really getting the full potential out of it.”

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