

L♥VES DATA



Google Analytics Checklist

A checklist for configuring Google Analytics by Benjamin Mangold

Planning Checklist

- Website objectives have been defined
- Goals that reflect the website objectives have been identified
- Google Analytics features and configuration options have been selected based on business needs (for example, event tracking, user ID, ecommerce tracking, etc.)
- A concise measurement plan has been created to ensure the Google Analytics implementation reflects business and website objectives
- New Google Analytics features and configuration options are reviewed periodically

Implementation Checklist

- If there is no existing Google Analytics property for tracking the website, then a new property has been created
- The Google Analytics account is only being used to track related websites (unrelated websites should be tracked in dedicated accounts)
- The tracking code has been implemented using Google Tag Manager (or implemented directly on the website)
 - If Google Tag Manager is not being used, then the latest version of the tracking code (called gtag.js or the 'Global Site Tag') has been added to all the pages of the website
- Data is being sent to a GA4 (Google Analytics 4) property and a standard property simultaneously (GA4 properties provide benefits if you have a website and an app, but also allow you to access extra reports even if you are only tracking a website) **NEW**
- The implementation has been checked using the Google Tag Manager debug console (using the 'Preview' mode)
- Google Tag Assistant has been used to check that the tracking code is correctly installed

Setup and Configuration Checklist

- The reporting time zone is correct
- The reporting currency is correct
- The default page has been configured
- Filters to exclude internal traffic have been applied
- Filter to only include appropriate hostnames have been applied
- Existing filters have been reviewed and are up-to-date **NEW**
- Bots are excluded in the view settings
- Appropriate data retention has been set for the property

- The referral exclusion list for the property has been reviewed
 - Domains using the property's tracking code have been added as referral exclusions
 - If the domain name extension is made up of three or more elements (for example, '.service.gov.uk' for the domain 'www.example.service.gov.uk', then the referral exclusion list has been reviewed and modified if necessary
- There is a raw (unfiltered), a primary, and a testing view for each property
- The number of properties and views is appropriate (for example, properties are only used to track entirely separate websites, and the number of views isn't excessive) **NEW**
- User-based reporting has been enabled (in 'Property Settings')
- Personally Identifiable Information (or 'PII') like email addresses and full names are not contained in the reports (however, other identifiers, like from a CRM or email platform are allowed)
- The Demographics and Interests reports have been enabled
- The Benchmarking reports have been enabled

Technical Setup Checklist

- Cross-domain tracking is implemented if users can travel between multiple domains
- The tracking code hasn't been accidentally duplicated on pages
- The latest version of the tracking code has been implemented (if Google Tag Manager is not being used)
- Social sharing options are being tracked into the Plugins report (under 'Social')
- If appropriate, User ID has been implemented to track users across multiple devices
- Content grouping has been configured
- There are no self-referrals (website being tracked does not appear as a referral)
- 404 error pages are being tracked
- If appropriate, Google Optimize has been linked to Google Analytics
- If appropriate, Google Tag Manager or the tracking code has been correctly configured to work with Google Optimize
- If appropriate, the anti-flicker snippet has been implemented if using Google Optimize

Campaign Tracking Checklist

- Google Ads and Google Analytics are linked
- All Google Ads accounts are linked
- Clicks from Google Ads approximately match sessions in Google Analytics
- No campaign tags are used in URLs inside Google Ads
- Campaign tags are being used for other inbound marketing
- Campaign tags use a consistent naming convention
- No campaign tags are used for internal links within the website
- If appropriate, custom channel groupings have been configured

Ecommerce Checklist

- Ecommerce tracking has been implemented
- Enhanced Ecommerce is being used on the website
- Ecommerce data is accurate

Events Checklist

- Event tracking has been implemented for outbound links, mailto links, and downloads
- Event tracking has been implemented for internal campaigns (for example, promotional banners within the website)
- Event tracking has been implemented for interactive content, like embedded YouTube videos
- A consistent naming convention is being used for events (categories, actions, and labels)
- If appropriate, events have been set as 'non-interaction', so that bounce rate is not impacted
- Event tracking is being used selectively so that the Google Analytics hit limit is not being met

Goals Checklist

- Goals are configured
- Values have been assigned to goals (for example, actual, calculated, or symbolic values)
- Macro and micro conversions are being tracked
- Steps in goal funnels have been defined and are appropriate

Site Search Checklist

- Site search reports have been configured
- If appropriate, site search categories have been configured
- A lowercase filter has been applied to site search keywords

Integration Checklist

- Google Search Console, Google AdSense, Google Optimize, and any other Google platforms being used, are linked
- Audience lists have been created (for reporting and remarketing campaigns)
- Google Signals has been enabled to provide cross-device insights automatically
- Appropriate data is being imported (for example, advertising cost data from third-party platforms, refund data, etc.)
- If appropriate, custom metrics and custom dimensions have been implemented

Analysis Checklist

- Emphasis is placed on analysis and insights, not just reporting
- Reports that provide the most value to the business have been identified
- Repetitive reporting tasks have been automated
- Opportunities for improvement have been identified (for example, landing pages, website content, website navigation, marketing campaigns, etc.)
- Experiments are continually being created and run (for example, using Google Optimize)

Extra Resources

- Google Analytics glossary: <https://lovesdata.co/nmCyu>
- How to master Google Analytics: <https://lovesdata.co/YNDvP>
- Tracking campaigns with Google Analytics: <https://lovesdata.co/dhKuk>
- Setting up site search reports: <https://lovesdata.co/RTIIs>
- Configuring goals: <https://lovesdata.co/Tkowk>

Wrap Up

This checklist is designed to cover the most important components of setting up and configuring Google Analytics. Once you have a complete set of data, you'll be in a better position to take action based on your reports.

I encourage you to make this checklist your own and I'd love to hear how you're using it and adding to it. You can contact me at hello@lovesdata.com – I'm looking forward to hearing how you're improving your Google Analytics implementation.

When you're ready to learn more about Google Analytics, Google Tag Manager and other important platforms, join me in my courses. You can find details at <https://lovesdata.co/v1XGM>

– Benjamin

