Google Analytics Manual

Version: 18-07-2024
You can find the most recent version at
https://www.ru.nl/en/staff/services/campus-facilities/work-and-study-support-services/communication-and-promotion/communication-channels/web-statistics

Please note: Google Analytics 4 is still very much in development. It is therefore possible that the screenshots in this manual no longer correspond to reality and/or that functionalities have been changed or added.
If you have any questions about Google Analytics, you can also ask them via onlinemarketing@ru.nl.

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1. Getting access to the account

Radboud University employees who need insight into the statistics of our website may access Radboud University's Google Analytics account.

To gain access, you must first link a Google account to your email address. This may be a personal e-mail address from Radboud University (initial.lastname@ru.nl) with which only you have access, or a group/department address (for example, department@ru.nl) with which various colleagues can log in.

It is NOT allowed to log in with a private address, such as a Gmail or Hotmail address. This rule has been introduced because we want to be able to monitor who has access and to be able to remove former employees from the account in a timely manner. After all, we cannot trace the owner of an address such as 'pete83@gmail.com'.

Google accounts can be used to log in to various Google services; in addition to Google Analytics, for example, also Google Ads. If you already use your Ru.nl address to log in to Google services, you do not have to go through this step again.

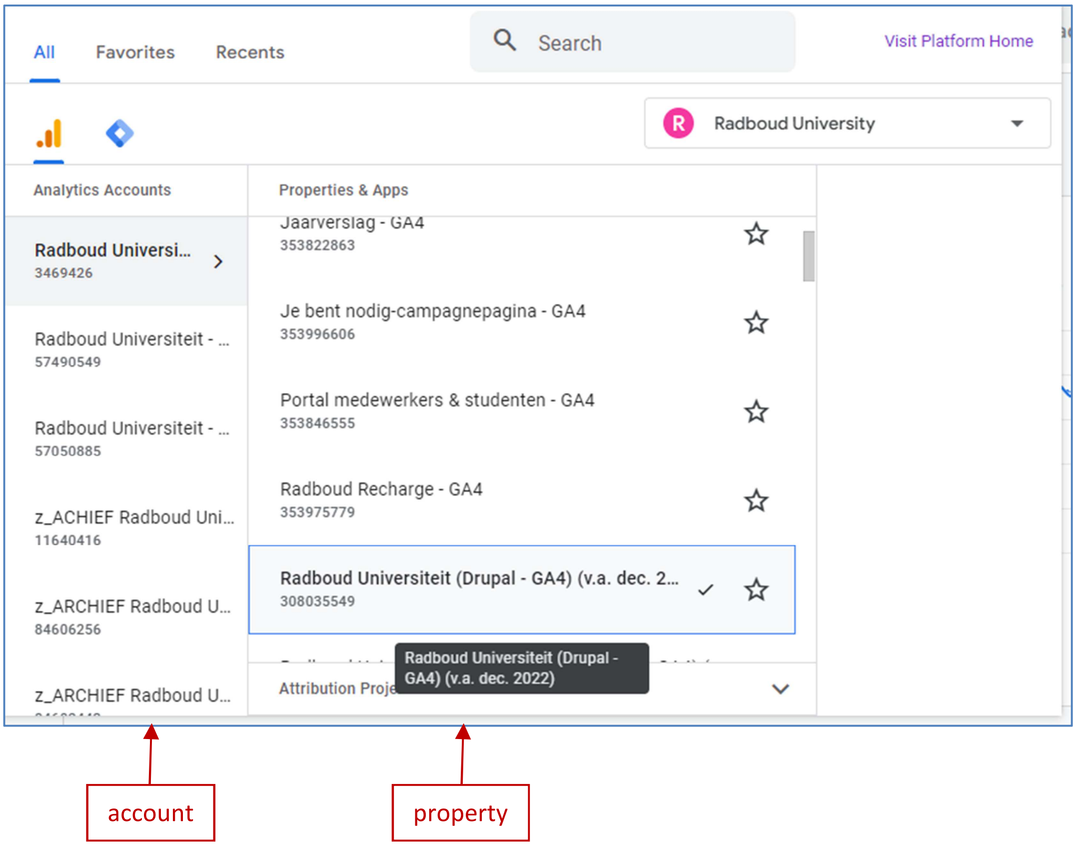
To turn your email address into a Google account, go to the following form:
https://accounts.google.com/signup
You can use this form to create a Google account without also creating a Gmail account. Make sure you are not logged in to another Google account (for example with your private Gmail address) when you open the form. Enter your RU email address and choose a password. You can log in later with this information.

Then send a request to onlinemarketing@ru.nl to add your email address as a Google Analytics user.

You can then log in to Google Analytics via the URL http://www.google.com/analytics

2. Accounts and properties

After you have logged in to Google Analytics, you can choose in the top left corner which website you want to see data from (provided you have access to multiple overviews). Click on the arrow to see an overview of all accounts and websites ('properties') that are linked to the relevant account, to which you have access.

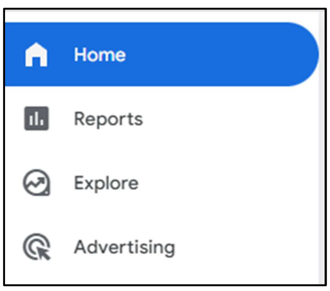


Click on the property of your choice to request its reports. The property with the data from our Ru.nl main website is called 'Radboud Universiteit (Drupal – GA4) (v.a. dec. 2022)'.

3. Types of reports

On the left side of the screen you will find a main menu. Clicking on any of the last three items displays an additional menu, showing all available reports grouped by type. For some accounts, the reports have been adjusted and you will see different items in this menu.

These reports are still subject to change at the time of writing this manual. It may be that a described report no longer exists or works differently, or that a new report has been added. It therefore does not make much sense at this point to describe all reports in detail. Below you will find a description of the layout of the reports, which type of detailed reports you can find where and a detailed description of only the most relevant reports.



Home: a global dashboard

Reports: the standard reports

Explore: custom reports

Advertising: standard reports related to your advertising campaigns

3.1 Reports

If you click on 'Reports' you will see the following menu:

Reports snapshot: a general dashboard

Real-time: a display of all visitors currently visiting the site

Acquisition: reports on how visitors found the website. For example:

- Search engine (and the keywords used)
- Link on other site
- Directly typed the URL into the browser, other sources, immeasurable sources
- Social media
- Campaign (advertisements, mailings, banners, etc)

Engagement: reports on how visitors used the site. Including:

- Pages visited
- Goals achieved (conversions)
- Events such as link clicks, scrolls, form submissions, searches, etc.

Retention: reports on how often/how quickly visitors returned to the website.

Event details: reports focused on specific events, to make this data easier to view than via the standard event report. Like:

- Downloaded files
- Clicks to external websites
- Use of the internal search functions

User attributes: reports with demographic data about visitors, such as:

- Country of origin
- Browser language used
- Age, gender, interests (note: this can only be measured in very limited cases; usually this data is not available)

Tech: reports on the browsers and devices used by visitors (such as desktop, tablet or mobile phone)

3.1.1 Acquisition

The most useful reports in the 'Aquisition' section are the following:

Traffic acquisition: an overview of the channels and sources of visitors, in other words: how did visitors arrive at my website / page?

Queries: the search terms that visitors entered into Google, after which a page from our site appeared in the search results. You can see what the average position of our page was, how many people saw it in the search results, and how many times someone clicked on it. This data is imported from our Google Search Console account.

3.1.2 Engagement

The most useful reports in the 'Engagement' section are the following:

Events: Google Analytics 4 measures many visitor actions in the form of an event. For example, there is an event for 'page_view', 'scroll', 'search', 'form_submit', etc. Most data can therefore be found in the form of an event, possibly with 'parameters' that display more details about the event (for example: the event is 'external_link' and the associated parameters are 'link_text' and 'link_url', so you know what external link was clicked). Goals can also be found in the form of events.

Conversions : an overview of all events that are goals. Goals are events whose names start with 'goal_'. For clarity, this report does not display the event name, but the textual description of the event (the 'goal_name' parameter).

Pages and screens: An overview of all visited pages on the site.

Landing page: An overview of all pages on the site that were the first page of the visit and therefore the page of entry, for example the page that appeared in the search results or the page to which an advertising campaign linked.

3.1.3 Event details

These reports are tailor-made for the university. In principle, you can also find this data in the 'events' report, but to make it easier, reports can be found in this section for only these specific events, so that you have to filter less manually.

Downloads: An overview of all files downloaded via our site.

External links: An overview of all links clicked that do not lead to pages on our site.

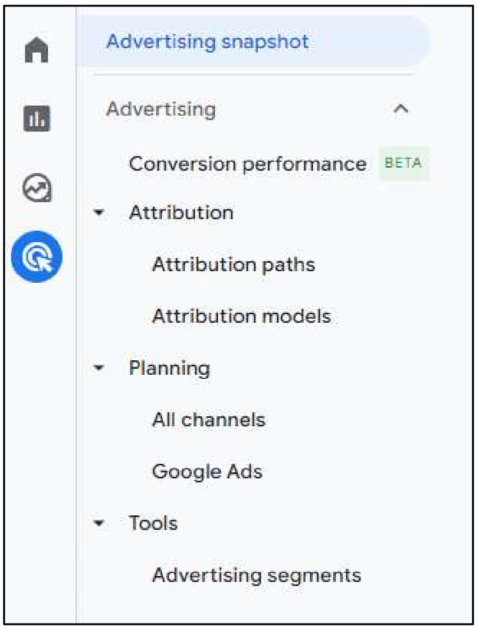
Keywords and search scope: An overview of all search terms entered into our site. The search scope indicates the type of overview used: 'algemeen zoeken' is the search function at the top right of the site, the other options are overview pages for a specific subject (such as an overview of master's programs or an overview of project pages).

3.1.4 User attributes

Demographic details: The location (such as country or region) the visitors come from and their language setting.

3.2 Advertising

If you click on 'Advertising' you will see the following menu:



These reports are specifically aimed at campaigns in general and Google Ads campaigns in particular. You can find out what your campaigns have cost and delivered.

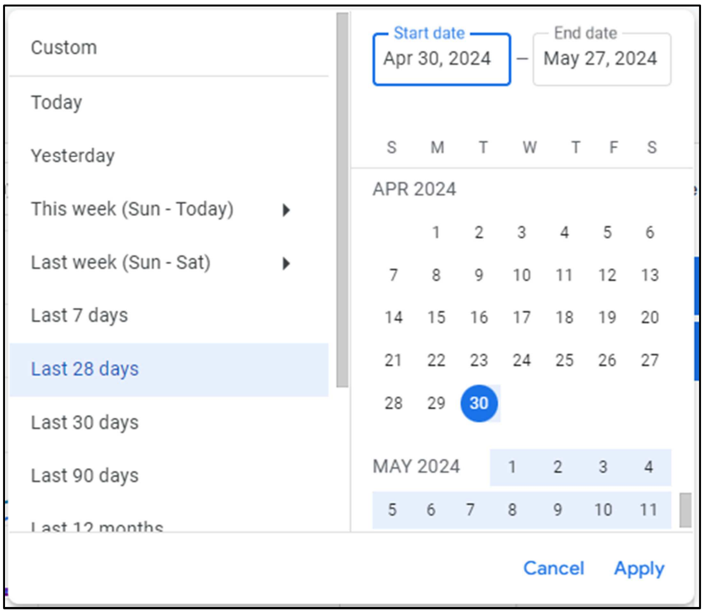
You will also find attribution reports here, which allow you to see all sources of a customer's visit from the first visit to the conversion. A campaign does not always immediately lead to a conversion: someone can first click on an ad and later return via unpaid search results or a bookmark and only then convert. With these types of reports you can map the complete process.

3.3 Explore

In this section you will find custom reports that you can compile yourself. You can read how to do this in chapter 9 of this manual.

4. Choosing a time period

By default, the reports show data from the past 28 days. If you want to view data over a broader time period or a specific period, or compare two periods, you can set the start and end dates at the top right:



5. Definitions of important data

There are various measurement units that you regularly see in reports. Below you will find an explanation of the most important measurement units.

Sessions : The number of times users have visited the website.

Engaged sessions: The total number of sessions, minus the number of sessions in which only 1 page of the site was viewed and at least one of the following conditions was met:
- the visit lasted less than 10 seconds
- no 'key event' took place

Engagement rate: The percentage of engaged sessions compared to the total number of sessions.

Users: The number of unique visitors who have been to the website. One visitor may have had multiple sessions in the selected period (have visited the site several times in that period). In this metric, visitors are only counted once per selected period, even if they have visited multiple times. A user is not necessarily the same as a person. If you change browsers or devices (e.g. from desktop to mobile phone) you will be counted as a new user.

Active users: The number of users with an engaged session.

(Page)views : The total number of pages viewed by all visitors during all their sessions.

For example: the selected period is August 1 to 31.
Visitor A arrives on August 1 and views 3 pages.
Visitor B visits on August 2 and views 1 page. Then he return on August 5 and looks at 12 pages.
→*The number of sessions is then 3, the number of users 2 and the number of page views 16.*

Event: an action by a user, such as clicking, scrolling, searching, viewing a page, filling out a form, etc.

Key event/important event: an action by a user that is extra important to us and we want to be able to measure in, for example, Google Ads, such as sending an application form or registering for an open day.

Bounce rate/bounce rate: The percentage of users who started their visit on this page and did not view any other pages on the website before leaving. The landing page was therefore also the last page of the visit.

New & returning visitors: This indicates how many users came to the site for the first time and how many users have been to the site at least once before. This depends on the selected period: if a visitor has already been to the site before the selected period, he is considered a returning visitor in the selected period.

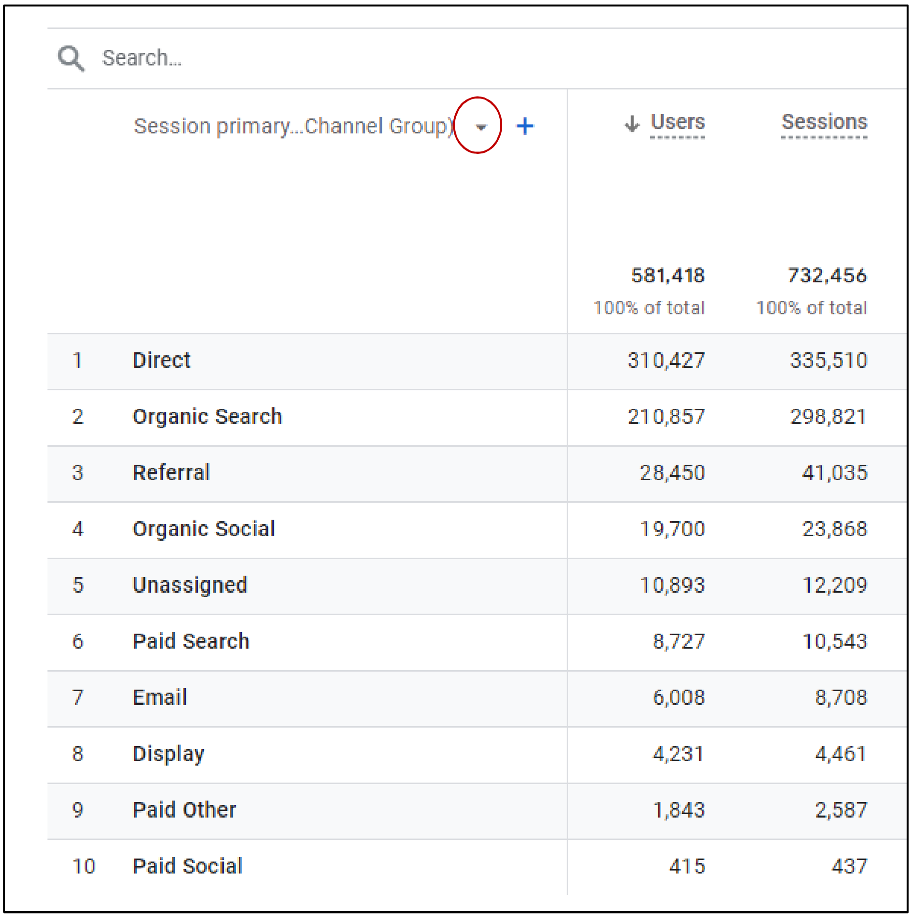
<u>For example</u>: the selected period is August 1 to 31.
Visitor A visits on July 29 and August 1.
Visitor B visits on August 2 and August 5.
Visitor C visits on August 3 , August 6 and August 10.
→Due to the selected period, the first visit of visitor A is not counted as a session. However, he is registered as a visitor who has previously been to the site. Visitor A is therefore counted as a returning visitor on his second visit.
Visitor B is counted as a new visitor during his first visit and as a returning visitor during his second visit.
Visitor C is counted as a new visitor during his first visit and as a returning visitor during his second visit. On his third visit, only his session is counted, because he was already registered as a returning visitor on his second visit.
So the stats become:
- *Sessions: 6 (A on Aug 1, B on Aug 2, B on Aug 5, C on Aug 3, C on Aug 6, C on Aug 10)*
- *Users: 3 (A on Aug 1, B on Aug 2, C on Aug 3)*
- *New visitors: 2 (B on Aug 2, C on Aug 3)*
- *Returning visitors: 3 (A on Aug 1, B on Aug 5, C on Aug 6))*

6. Using reports

6.1 Selecting the type of data

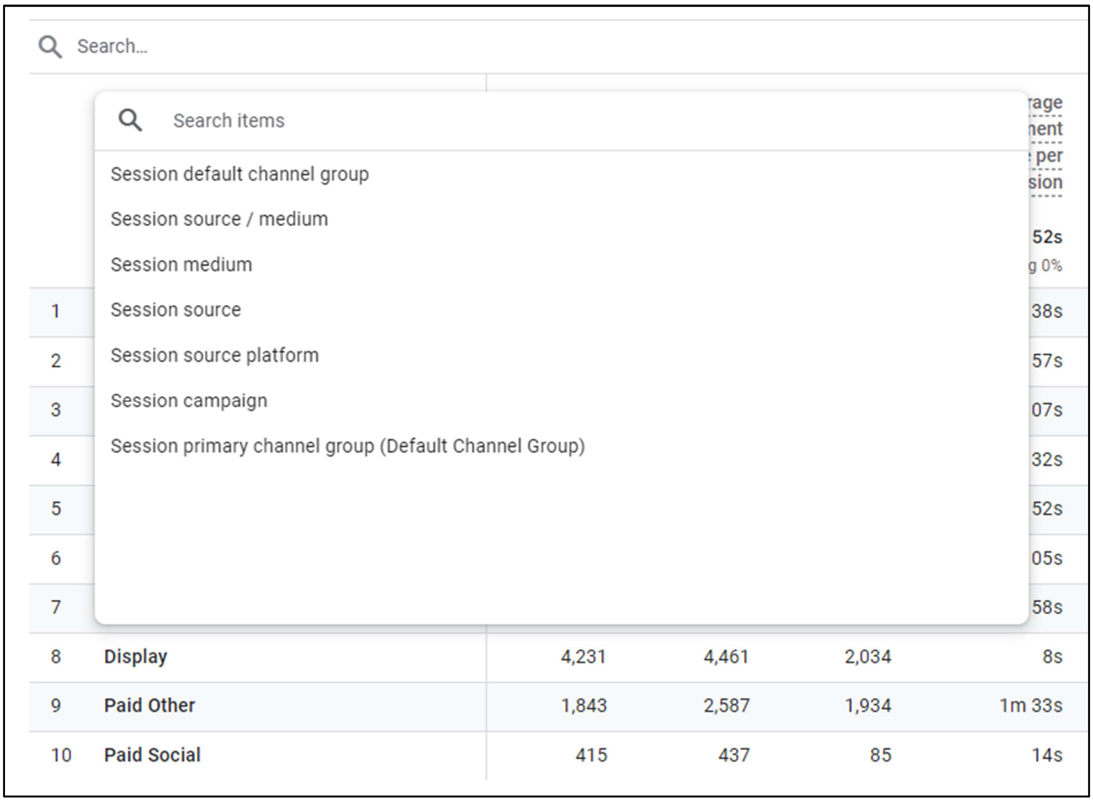
Most reports are structured in the same way: the type of data (the primary 'dimension') in the first column, and the associated data ('metrics') in the columns behind it.

You have several choices regarding the primary dimension. You can change it via the arrow behind the name of the dimension. You will then see a list of options to choose from:

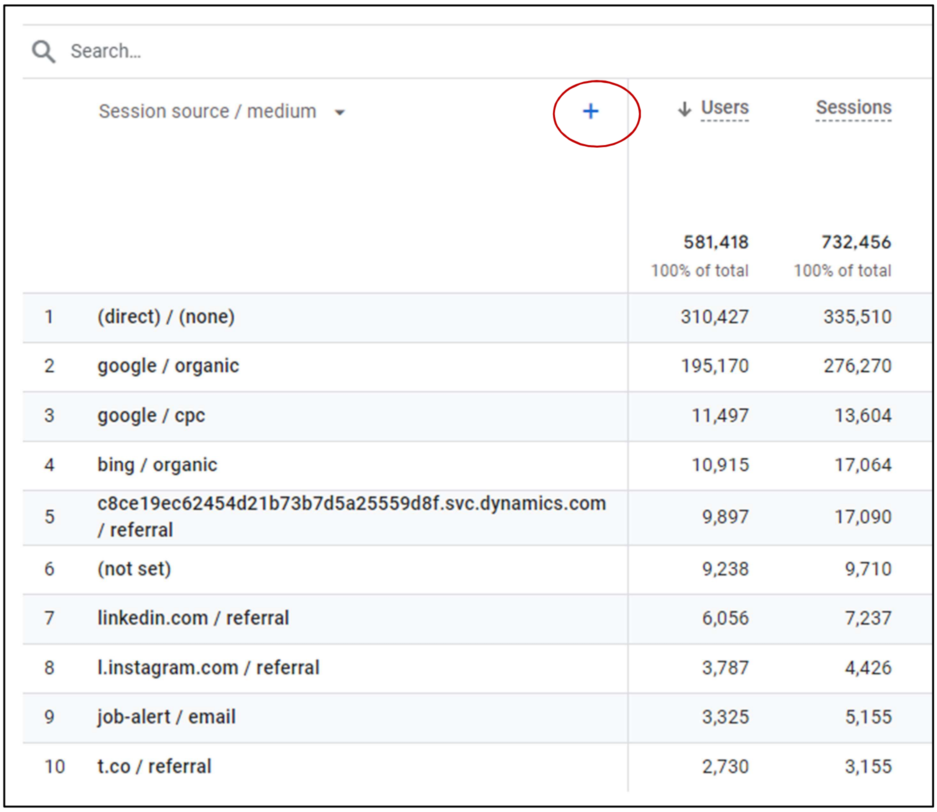


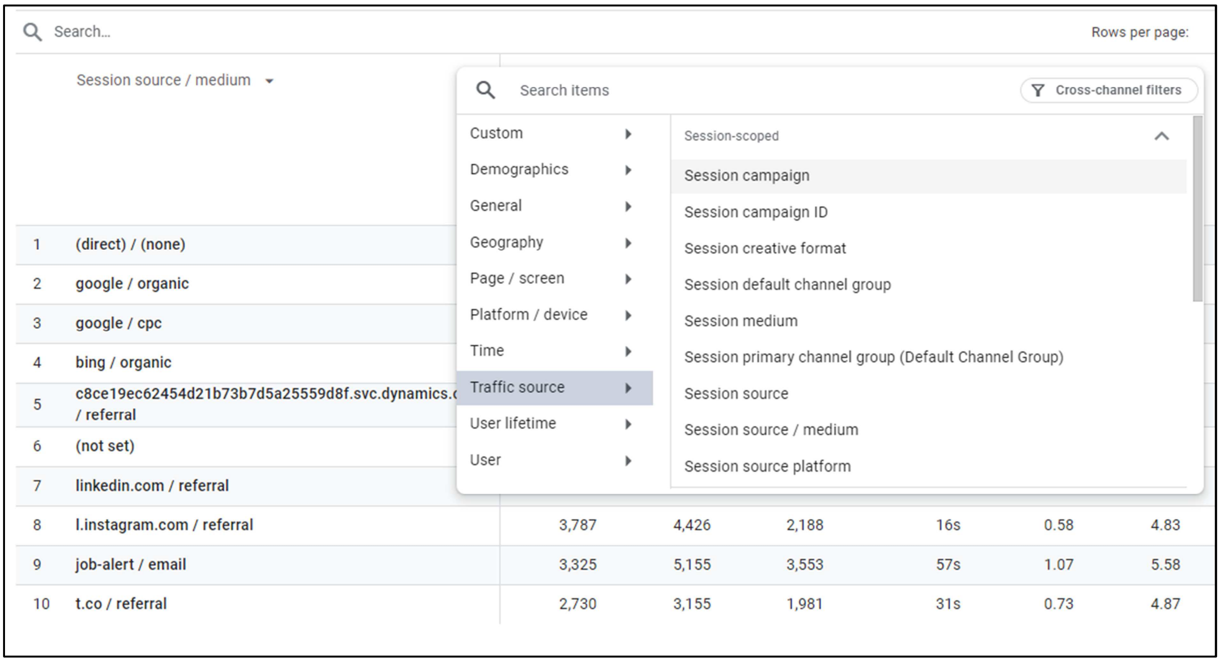
Search...

	Session primary...Channel Group)	Users	Sessions
		581,418 100% of total	732,456 100% of total
1	Direct	310,427	335,510
2	Organic Search	210,857	298,821
3	Referral	28,450	41,035
4	Organic Social	19,700	23,868
5	Unassigned	10,893	12,209
6	Paid Search	8,727	10,543
7	Email	6,008	8,708
8	Display	4,231	4,461
9	Paid Other	1,843	2,587
10	Paid Social	415	437



If you want more detailed data, you can also add a second dimension, which provides a refinement on the first dimension. You do this by clicking on the plus sign next to the primary dimension and selecting the desired dimension from the list or searching for it via the search bar:





You will then see that the first column is further broken down. You can remove the secondary dimension using the cross next to it.

Search...

	Session source / medium	Session campaign	Users	Sessions
			581,418 100% of total	732,456 100% of total
11	scholarshipportal.com / referral	(referral)	1,732	1,788
12	duckduckgo / organic	(organic)	1,663	2,150
13	LinkedIn / Vacaturebank	Mimir	1,596	2,123
14	google / cpc	Apr24 - Werken als Projectcontroller - YouTube campagne	1,398	1,449
15	m.facebook.com / referral	(referral)	1,398	1,492
16	academic-positions / paidlink	employerbranding	1,309	1,975
17	google / cpc	Vreemde talen Nijmegen	1,177	1,273
18	google / cpc	Apr24 - Werken als Projectcontroller - Display campagne	1,154	1,218
19	instagram.com / referral	(referral)	1,067	1,146
20	lm.facebook.com / referral	(referral)	1,039	1,130

In the metrics section you can choose which events you want to see data for: all events or a specific event. You can choose a specific event by clicking on the arrow behind it:

Rows per page: 10 Go to: 11 11-20 of 2235

Event count All events	Key events All events	Total revenue	Session key event rate All events
4,978,778 100% of total	322,662.00 100% of total	€0.00	31.91% Avg 0%
23,626	1,602.00	€0.00	31.68%
9,902	407.00	€0.00	20.41%
13,246	721.00	€0.00	27.53%
12,821	1,028.00	€0.00	37.12%
7,080	213.00	€0.00	13.35%
16,896	1,616.00	€0.00	51.17%
5,539	190.00	€0.00	16.23%
5,281	173.00	€0.00	14.58%
23,221	1,602.00	€0.00	43.14%
6,604	344.00	€0.00	23.98%

6.2 Viewing more data

By default you see the first 10 results in the table. To see more data, you can increase the number of lines at the top right of the table, or you can page to the next lines:

Rows per page: 10 Go to: 11 11-20 of 2235

Events per session	Engagement rate	Bounce rate	Event count All events	Ke goal_potentia
6.80 Avg 0%	69.55% Avg 0%	30.45% Avg 0%	4,978,778 100% of total	
7.20	69.09%	30.91%	23,626	
5.54	72.43%	27.57%	9,902	
6.16	69.21%	30.79%	13,246	
6.04	58.64%	41.36%	12,821	

6.3 Sorting

By default, the table is sorted by the first metric, from most to least. If you want to sort by a different metric or by the secondary dimension, hover your mouse over the name of the item. A downwards pointing arrow will appear. Click on it.

	Session source / medium +	↓ Users	Sessions	↓ Engaged sessions
		581,418 100% of total	732,456 100% of total	509,418 100% of total
11	ecosia.org / organic	2,259	3,280	2,266
12	scholarshipportal.com / referral	1,732	1,788	1,295
13	duckduckgo / organic	1,663	2,150	1,488
14	LinkedIn / Vacaturebank	1,596	2,123	1,245
15	m.facebook.com / referral	1,402	1,498	646
16	academic-positions / paidlink	1,350	2,044	1,571
17	instagram.com / referral	1,067	1,146	613
18	lm.facebook.com / referral	1,040	1,132	501
19	radboudnet.nl / referral	992	2,049	1,662
20	corporatelinkedin / social	910	1,101	753

7. Filtering data

There are three methods to filter data:

1. Search by keyword
2. A report filter
3. A comparison

Which one you use depends on your goal.

7.1 Search by keyword

You use this method of filtering to find specific lines in a table. You search the dimension column of the table based on a keyword. You can do this by entering a keyword in the search field directly above the table:

Search...

	Session primary...Channel Group)	Users	Sessions
		581,418 100% of total	732,456 100% of total
1	Direct	310,427	335,510
2	Organic Search	210,857	298,821
3	Referral	28,450	41,035
4	Organic Social	19,700	23,868
5	Unassigned	10,893	12,209
6	Paid Search	8,727	10,543
7	Email	6,008	8,708
8	Display	4,231	4,461
9	Paid Other	1,843	2,587
10	Paid Social	415	437

email

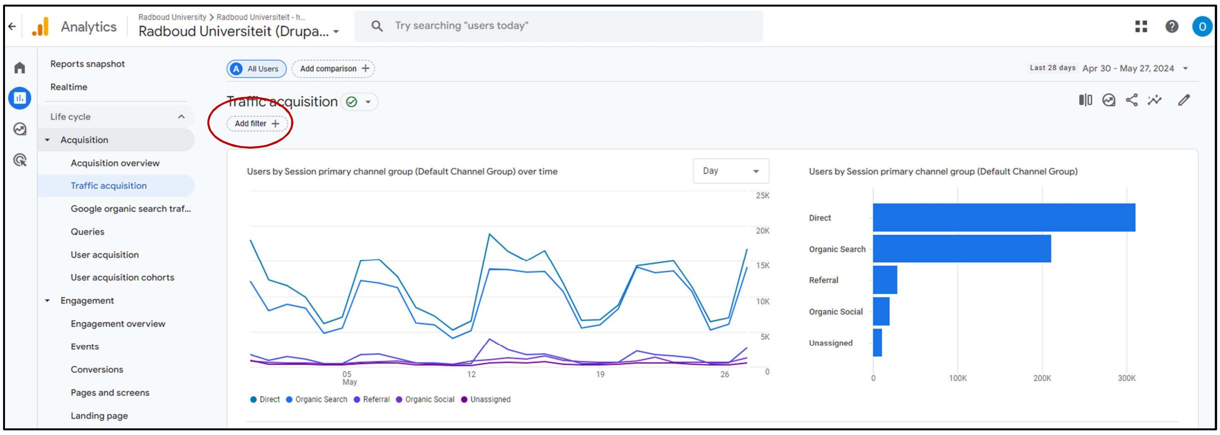
	Session primary...Channel Group)	Users	Sessions
		6,008 1.03% of total	8,708 1.19% of total
1	Email	6,008	8,708

Click on the X at the end of the search field to remove the search filter.

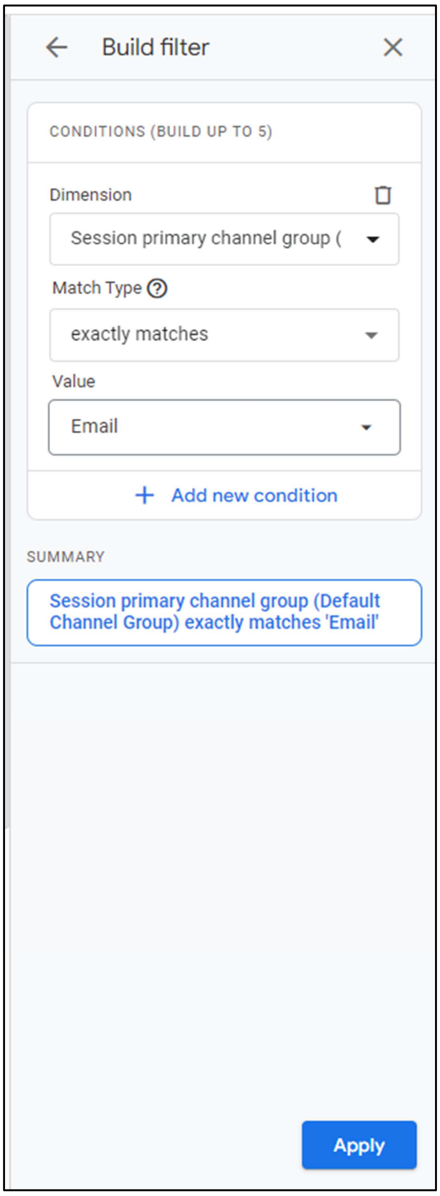
7.2 A report filter

You can filter your report based on various criteria. You only set this for the report you are currently viewing. The filter is removed as soon as you click to another report. The filter is therefore suitable for filters that you use occasionally.

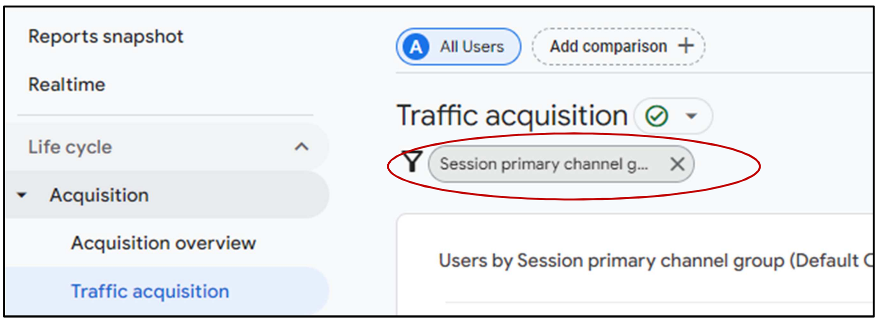
You apply this type of filter via the 'add filter' button under the title of the report:



As soon as you click on it, a window will open on the right side of the page where you can create your filter. Select the dimension you want to filter on, the criteria the result must meet, and click 'apply' to apply the filter:



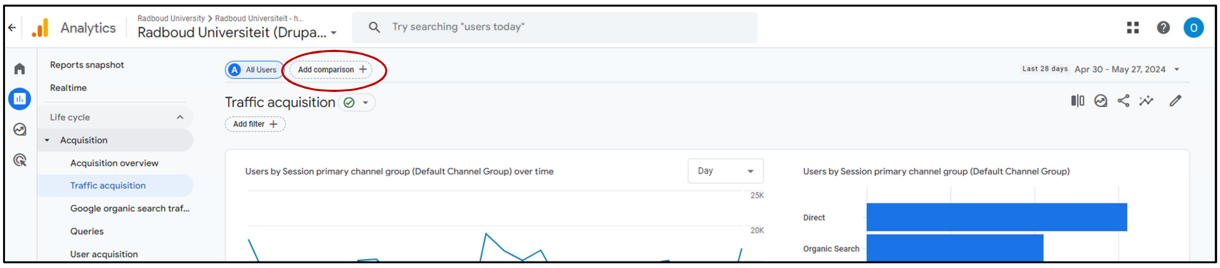
Below the title of the report you will now see that a filter has been applied. This disappears when you navigate to another report. Click on the X behind it to remove it. Click on the name of the filter to edit it.



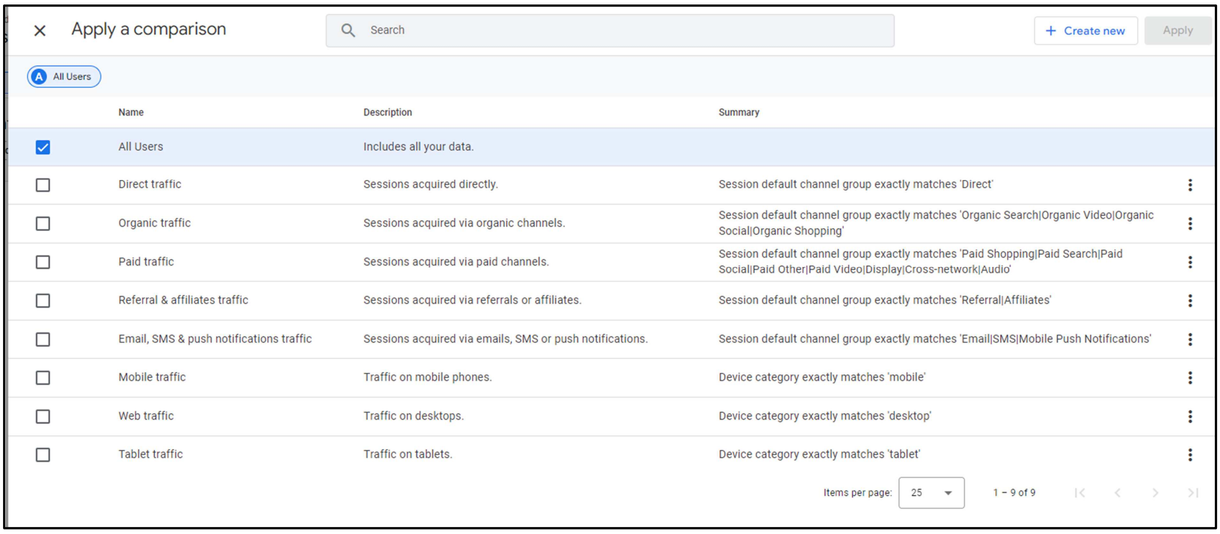
7.3 A comparison

You can apply comparisons to different types of reports. Optionally, you can save them for later reuse. This option is therefore suitable for filters that you want to use regularly and/or for multiple reports.

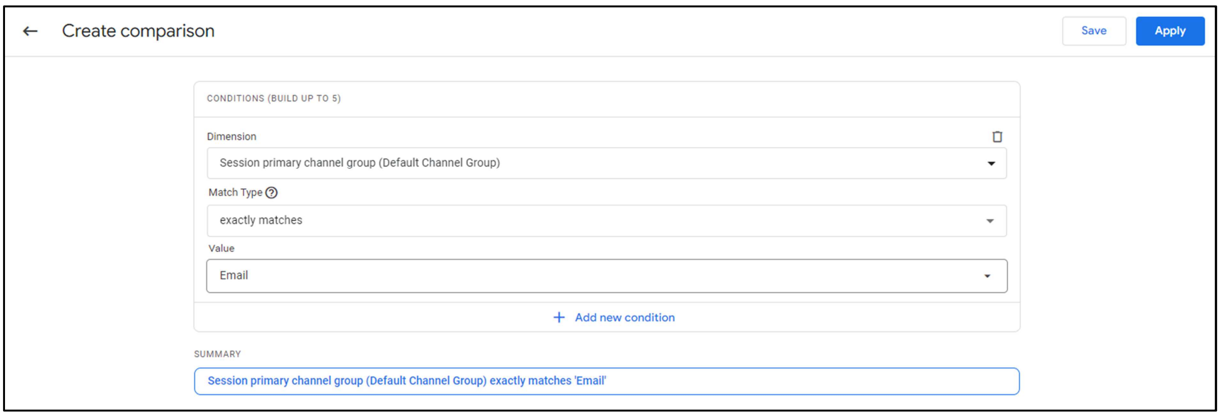
You set up a comparison by clicking 'add comparison' above the report title:



After clicking, a screen will be displayed where you can apply previously saved comparisons. By default you see 'all users', which means that no filter has been applied.

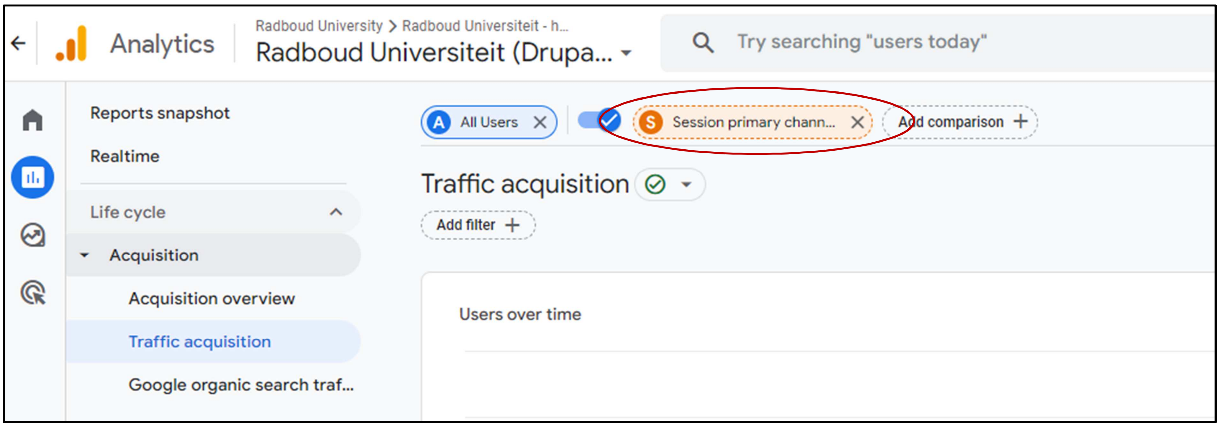


If there is no suitable comparison, click on 'Create new' at the top right. Select the dimension you want to filter on, the criteria the result must meet, and click 'apply' to apply the filter, or 'save' to save the filter for later reuse:



If you save the equation, give it a clear name and description so that you understand what happens when you apply the filter when you see it in the list of saved filters.

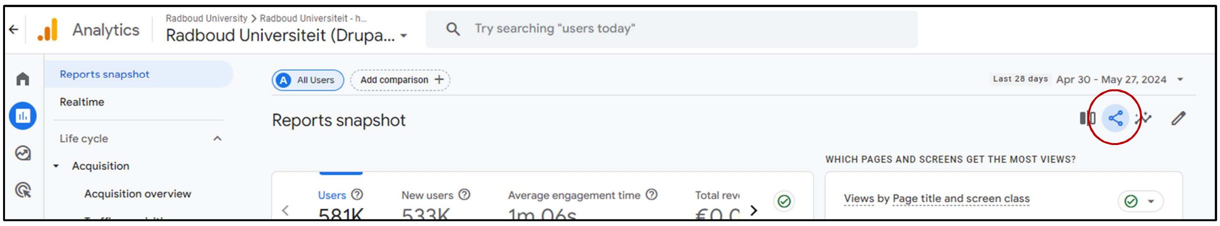
Above the title of the report you can now see that a comparison has been applied. This also remains applied if you navigate to another report. Click on the X behind it to remove it. Click on the name of the comparison to edit it.



8. Exporting or emailing data

8.1 Exporting data

Data in reports can be exported in various formats. You can export via the 'share' button at the top of the page:



In the window that appears, select 'download file'. You will then be shown the available formats in which you can download the data: PDF or CSV, or you can choose to save the data online in a Google Sheets document on your Google Drive account.

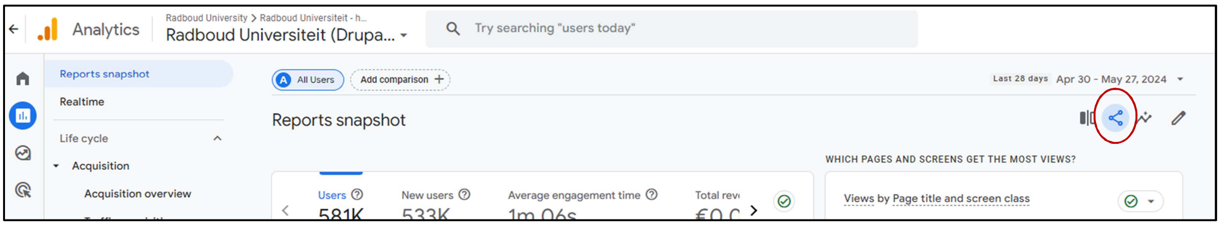
8.2 Receiving (periodic) reports by e-mail

If you do not want to always log in to view your statistics or export your reports manually, you can also have reports emailed to yourself periodically. Or you can send a one-time report to someone.

Periodic reports are mainly interesting for identifying trend breaks, not for in-depth analysis. For example, if you see that the number of newsletter registrations this week has fallen sharply compared to last week, you can log in to find out the cause via more detailed reports. That is why it is, for example, interesting to periodically report the number of visitors and conversions, but not to have an overview of your funnel (the step-by-step process from, for example, the first page of a form to the confirmation page) emailed. After all, you use the latter overview to identify specific problems with your form, but it tells you little about the performance of the site in the past period.

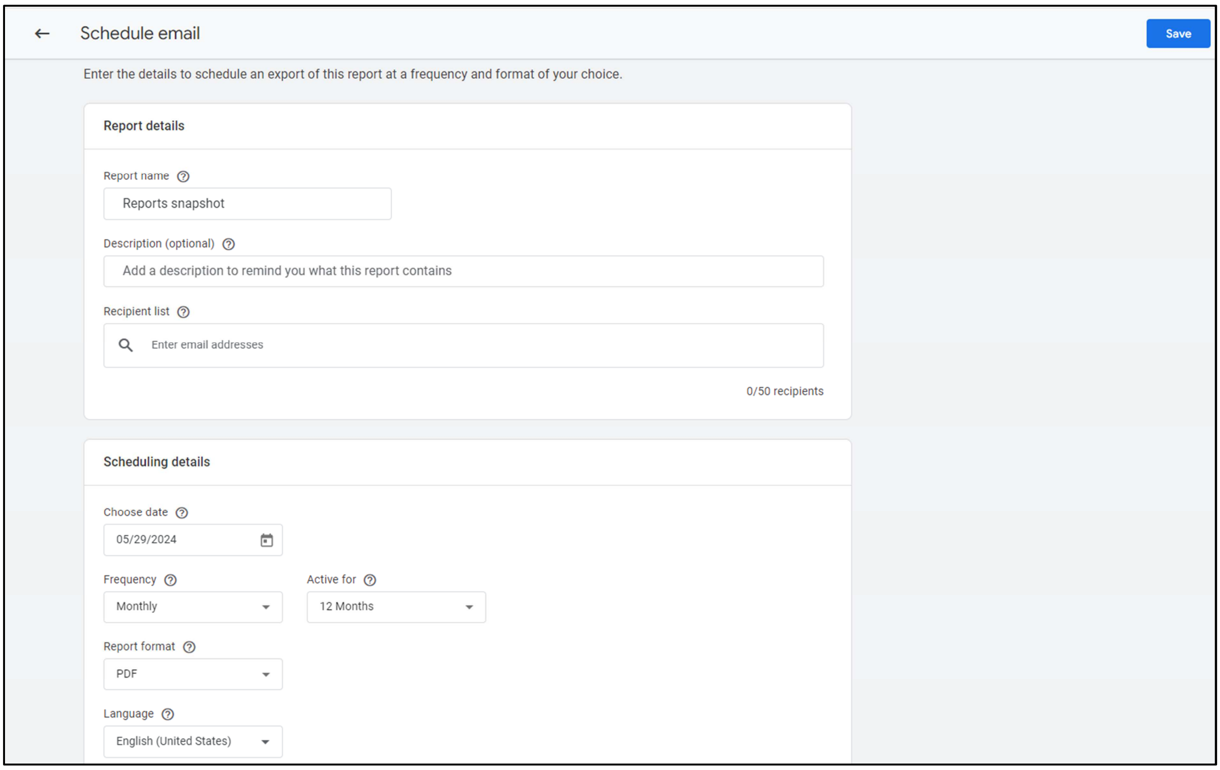
You can only send reports to email addresses of people who have permission to log in to the relevant Google Analytics account.

To have the report sent by email, click on the 'share' icon at the top right:



After clicking, a screen with options will appear on the right. Choose 'Send Email' to send a one-time report by email. Choose 'Schedule Email' to schedule the report to be automatically sent to recipients periodically.
(If you do not have this option, you do not have sufficient rights for this. You can then submit a request via onlinemarketing@ru.nl to set up a periodic report by e-mail.)

You will then arrive at a screen where you can specify what should be sent, to whom, and (optionally) when:



The name of the report will be the subject line of the email that is sent, so make sure it is clear.

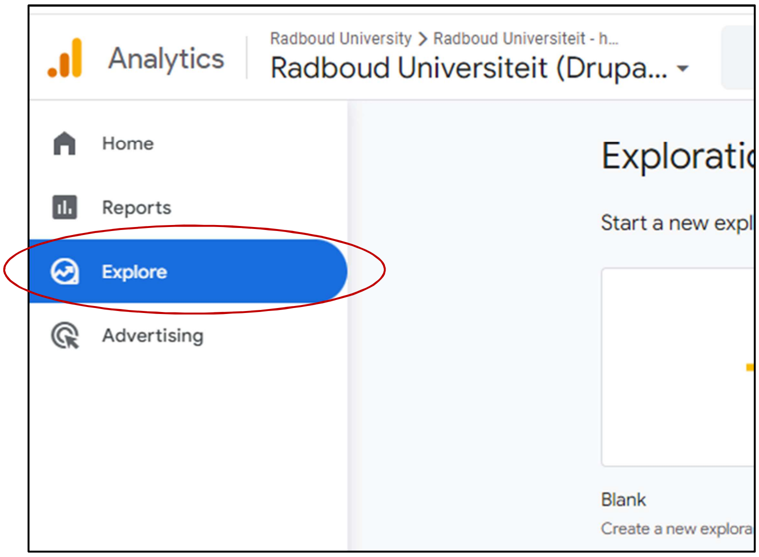
You can choose, among other things, in what form the report will be sent: PDF or CSV. The first also contains graphs, the second is suitable if you want to be able to edit the data.

The duration of a scheduled email is a maximum of 12 months. After that, it expires and you will no longer receive reports. You will then need to reactivate the scheduled email report. Send an email to onlinemarketing@ru.nl to have this done for you.

9. Compiling reports yourself

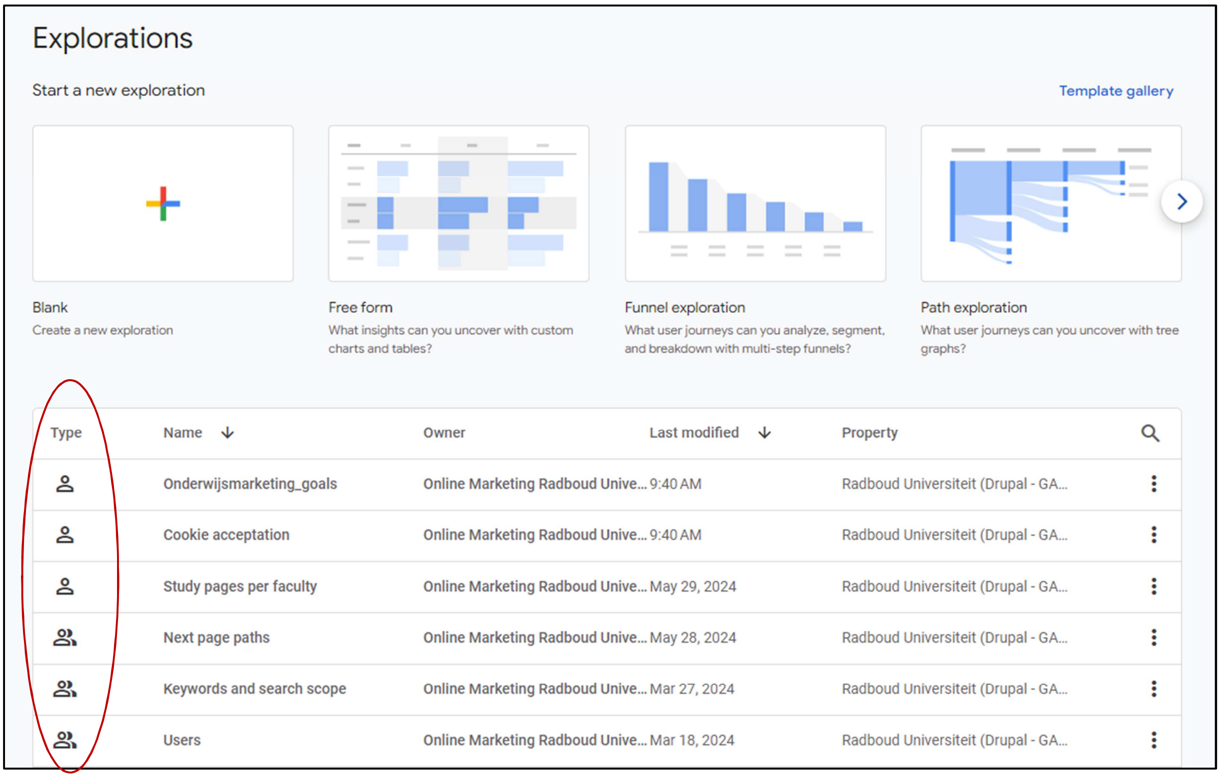
If the standard reports from Google Analytics are not sufficient, you can also compile reports yourself. The way the data is interpreted in these reports is slightly different than how it is interpreted in the standard reports, so even if you recreate one of these reports exactly, you may see small deviations in the data.

You can compile your own reports in the left menu via the 'Explore' item:

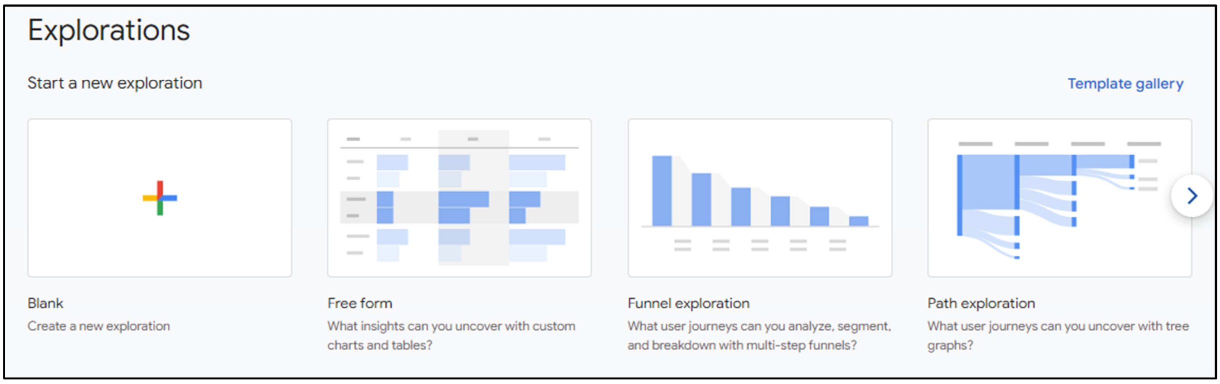


In this section you will find a number of sample reports that are accessible to everyone. You can copy and further edit them for yourself if desired.

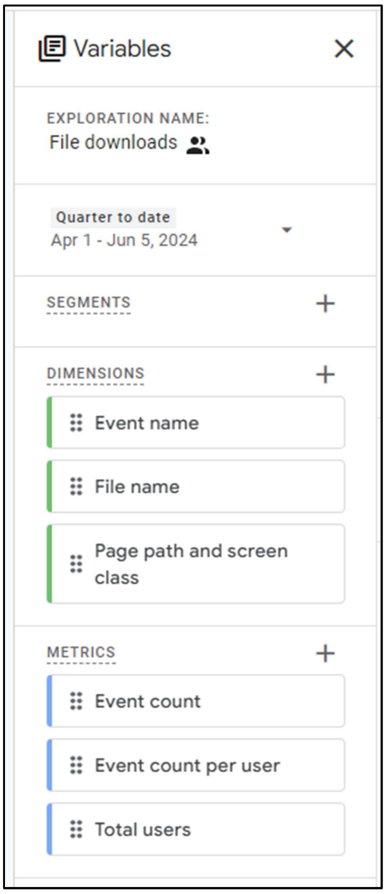
When you create a report, it only appears in your account by default. It is preferable not to share it, as the report will then become visible to all users of the account and the list will become overwhelming. If you need to share a report with colleagues, give it a clear name and share it temporarily so they can view and recreate the settings, and then set it to private again. The icon for the report shows whether it is a private or shared report:



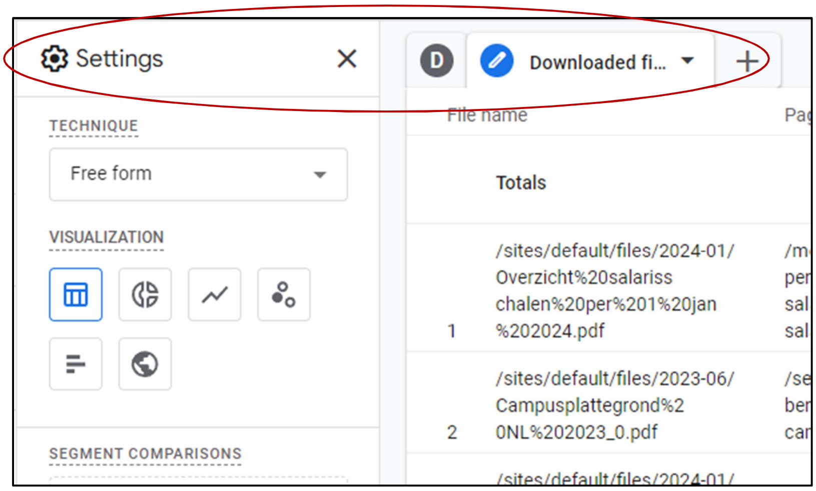
If you want to create a new report, you can choose from a number of templates or a blank report:



In the leftmost column ('variables') you can give the report a name, choose the date period and select which data (dimensions and metrics) you want in your report. Using the plus sign next to 'dimensions' and 'metrics' you can look up the relevant items in a list or via a search bar. You can select several and then add them to the report via the 'import' button at the top right.

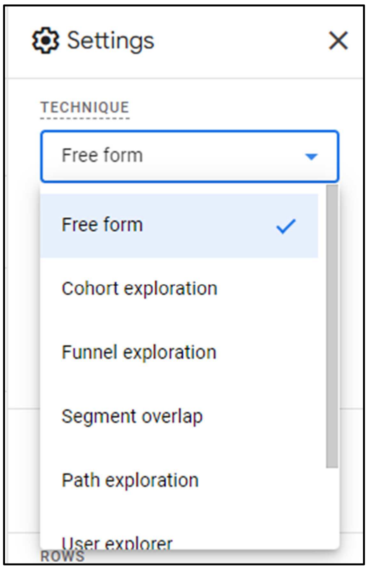


In the second column ('settings') you can actually compile the report. In the right section you can see the results of the report. You can create multiple tabs with reports; the settings column applies to the report in the tab you are currently viewing:



You can add dimensions and metrics from the left column by dragging them to the desired location in the second column, or by double-clicking them.

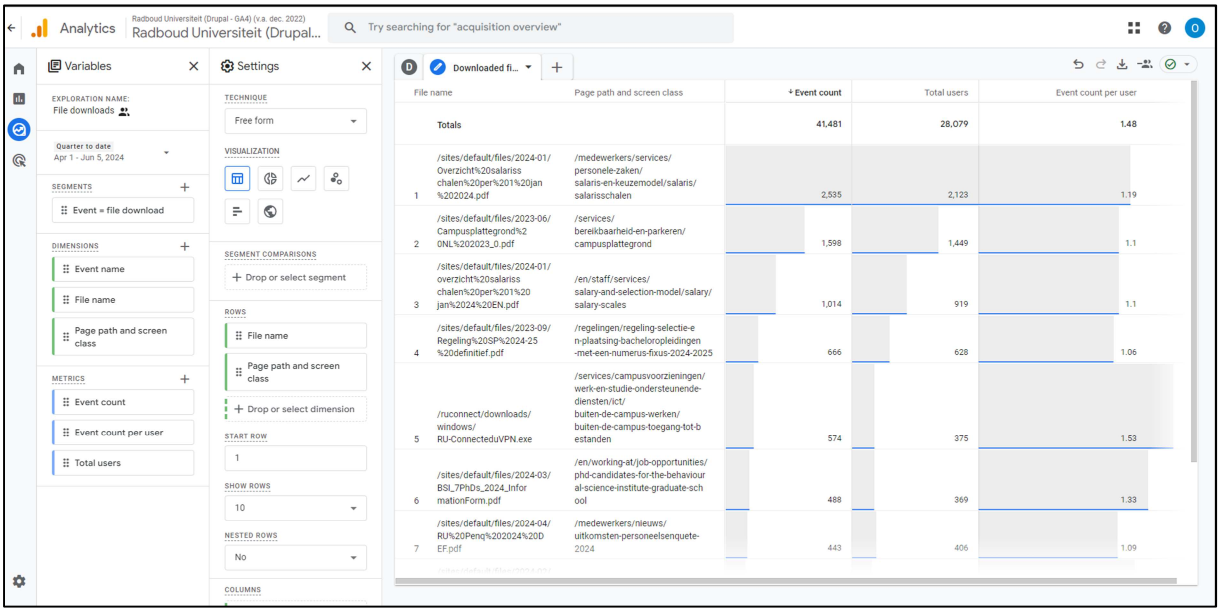
You can choose the type of report via the 'technique' field, if you have not already done this via a template:



Under 'visualisation' you choose what the report should display: a table with data, a graph (and which one), etc.

In the column you can also choose other settings, such as the number of rows and columns to be shown.

Under 'filter' you can filter the data in the report so that you only have the desired data. You can only filter on dimensions and metrics that you added in the left column.



10. Setting goals

10.1 Why set up goal measurement?

Every website has one or more goals. Such as persuading the visitor to register for an open day, register for a course, sign up for a newsletter, send an application form or download a PDF brochure.

By defining these goals in Google Analytics, you can easily relate your visitor data to these goals. In other words: how many and which visitors achieved these goals? This information helps to make your website and your communication more goal oriented.

You may be investing a lot of money in your Google Ads campaign and it may attract many visitors, but relatively few of these visitors actually register for your open day. Is the campaign worth the money?
And if you have to choose between posting your vacancy on vacancy website A or vacancy website B, it is useful to be able to analyze which of the two sites has sent the most applicants in the past.

But to be able to know that, you first have to tell Google Analytics how it can be registered that someone is an applicant, or that someone has signed up for something. Because Google Analytics keeps track of all page visits by default, but it does not know which page is more important to you than other pages, or which page on your site has a special function. Google Analytics only sees a URL, not whether the page in question is a form, for example.

10.2 Setting up a goal

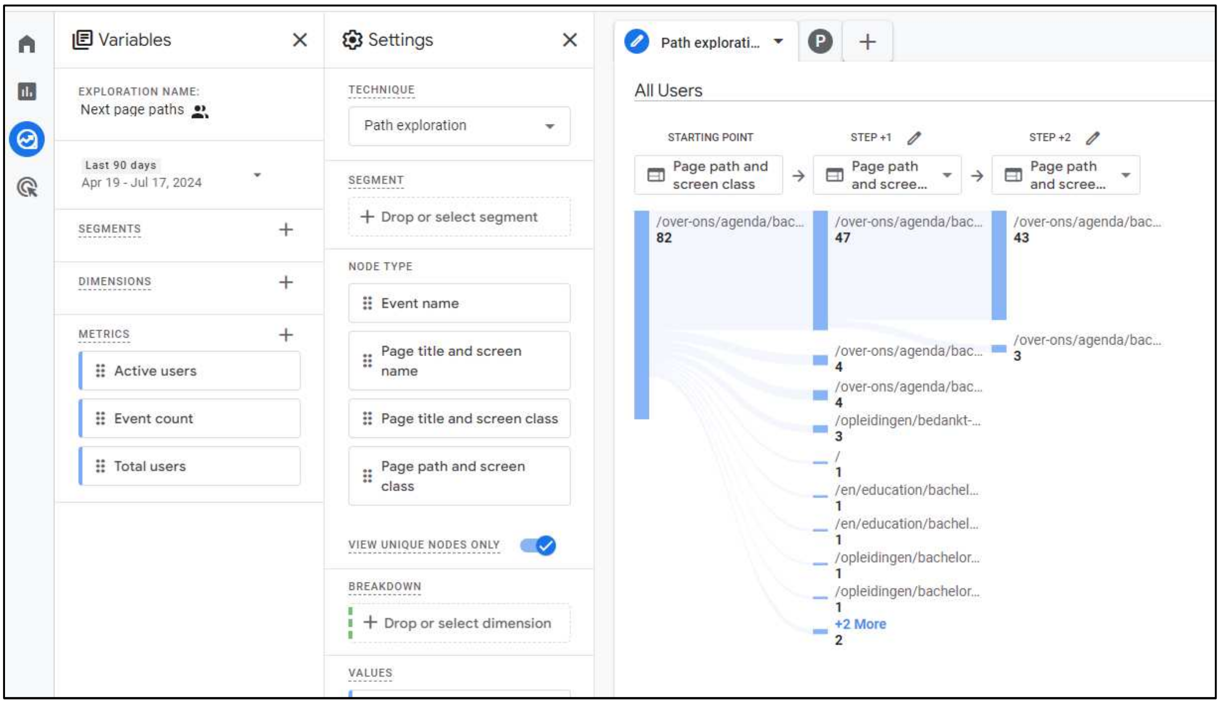
In the past, you could set goals yourself via the admin section in Google Analytics, if you had sufficient rights to do so. In theory, this is still possible, but since the transition to Google Analytics 4, we no longer set up goals directly in Google Analytics, but via the Google Tag Manager. This gives many more options for setting the desired measuring points.

You can't access the Google Tag Manager to do this yourself. If you want to make a goal measurable, please contact onlinemarketing@ru.nl. We will then set it up for you.

10.3 Goal reports

You will find the data associated with the goals in the 'Engagement > Conversions' report.

Google Analytics 4 does not have funnel reports as was the case in the old version. If you want to know whether visitors dropped out at a certain point in the conversion process before reaching the end goal, you can create a custom report in the 'Explorations' section, based on the 'Path exploration' template. You can choose the start, middle and end pages and see how many visitors completed the path to the goal or clicked somewhere else in between.



You can now also easily select the set goals in a report table, so that you can see how many of your visitors have achieved this goal:

Search... Rows per page: 10

	Session source / medium	Engagement rate	Bounce rate	Event count goal_job_alert_signup
		60.88% Avg 0%	39.12% Avg 0%	320 <0.01% of total
1	(direct) / (none)	63.47%	36.53%	178
2	google / organic	65.66%	34.34%	43
3	(not set)	0.07%	99.93%	43
4	google / cpc	57.3%	42.7%	0
5	c8ce19ec62454d21b73b7d5a25559d8f.svc.dynamics.com / referral	74.92%	25.08%	3
6	bing / organic	71.76%	28.24%	4
7	grabscholarship.com / referral	81.65%	18.35%	0
8	facebook / display	35.21%	64.79%	0
9	linkedin.com / referral	57.78%	42.22%	1
10	ecosia.org / organic	72.48%	27.52%	2