An Introduction to Analytics

Using analytics in your business is essential if you want to monitor and target your audience, but so many people either don't use them, or use them incorrectly. We wanted to highlight the best practices for utilising your analytics and give you hints and tips on when, how and why you should be incorporating analytics into your business practice.

Why should you be using analytics?

As a business, it is key that you have a good clear understanding of your customer.

Who are they?

Where do they come from?
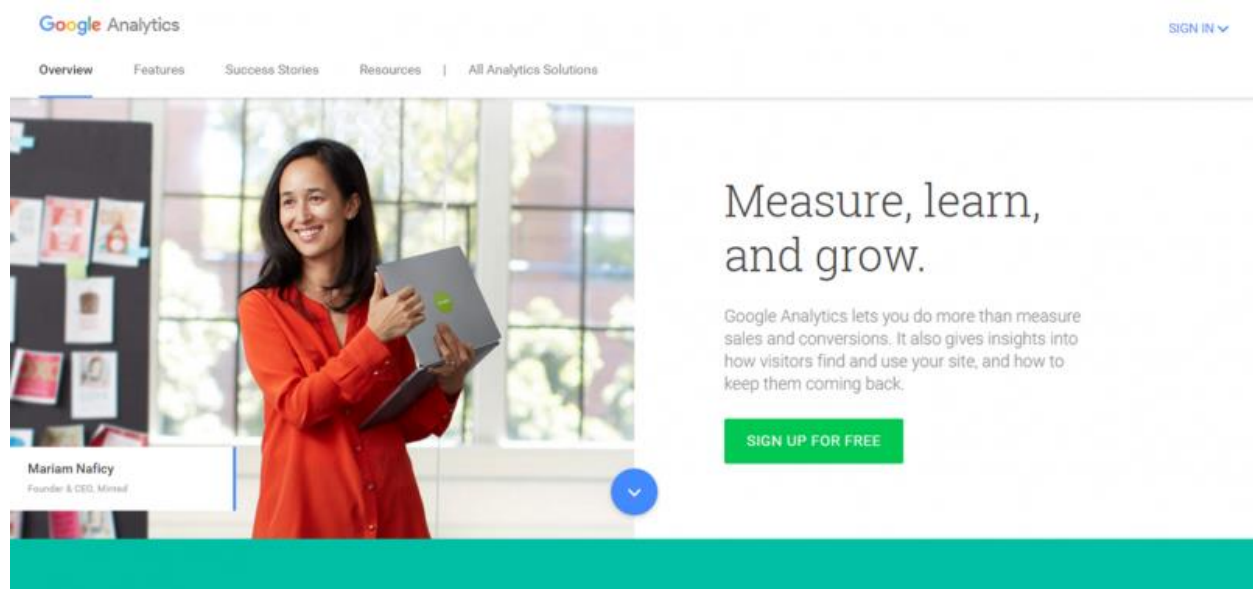
What do they want to read?

How long do they stay on your site and what have they searched to get there?

Without this information, how else will you be able to tailor your content to suit and retain them?

By using analytics not only can you measure and track these results, you can also get a very clear picture of the whole customer journey. You can then see how you can convert future visitors into customers. By creating clear goals through your analytics you will be able to understand how your visitors

and your customers use your site. And therefore, you can build on that and really utilise that information to gain more and more visitors and customers to your site.

Google analytics are the best, and easiest way to access this information. They are free to use, and just requires you to sign up and register at **www.google.com/analytics**. You will then need to add a code to each page of your website, and depending on what platform you use this is simple to do. You may need to ask your web builder if you aren't confident in doing this yourself, but Google answers your questions in a straightforward manner if you feel you are tech savvy enough to give it a go.

So what kind of questions can Google analytics answer for you?

Well, what questions do you want to ask? What do you need to know? Google can help you discover...

- How many people visit my website?
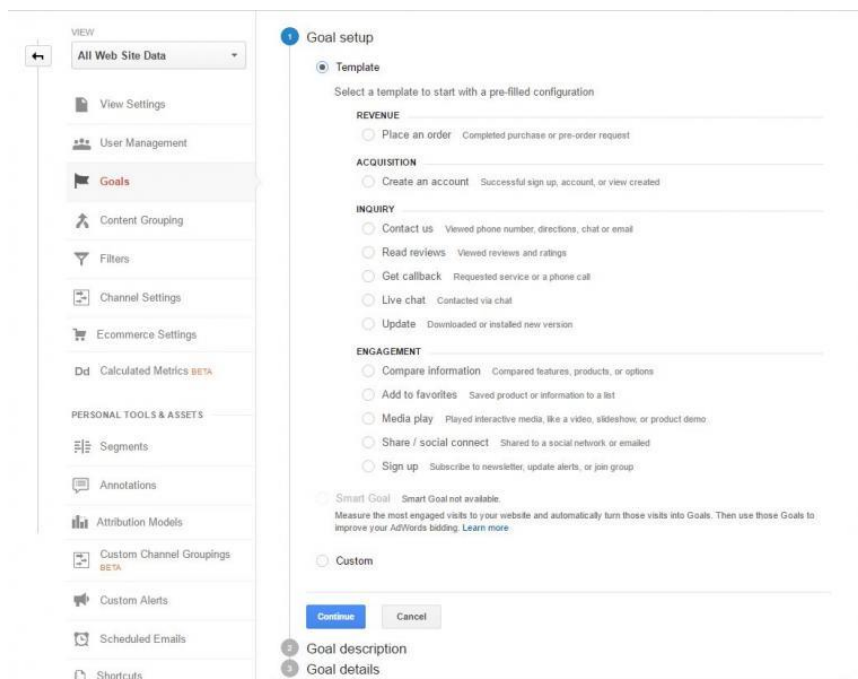- Where do my visitors live?
- Do I need a mobile-friendly website?
- What websites send traffic to my website?
- What marketing tactics drive the most traffic to my website?
- Which pages on my website are the most popular?
- How many visitors have I converted into leads or customers?
- Where did my converting visitors come from and go on my website?
- How can I improve my website's speed?

- What blog content do my visitors like the most?

And so much more…!

Google allows up to 100 Google Analytics accounts under one google account, up to 50 properties (websites) under one Google Analytics account, and up to 25 views per property – however it is more than likely that you will just need the one!

Once you have set up your Google account and added your code into each and every page of your website (this is fundamental as you will be able to track your customer journey throughout your site), you can start to add goals. Goals are useful if you want to send a thank you email to a customer after subscribing to your newsletter for example. It means you can not only monitor your goals, but also personalise your service to your visitor. You can add up to 20 goals per account, and it is a simple process to follow once you have a clear idea of what goals you want to set up. You can however leave this part and set up goals once you have familiarised yourself with analytics a bit further, to see how you want the functionality to work later on down the line.

Something else to consider while you are setting up your account is if you have a search facility on your website. If you do, it is worth switching on your Site Search Settings which can be found in your Admin page of your analytics. By having this facility on, you can see what your visitors are searching for within your website. Again, this is crucial when looking at your customer journey and what they want to find.
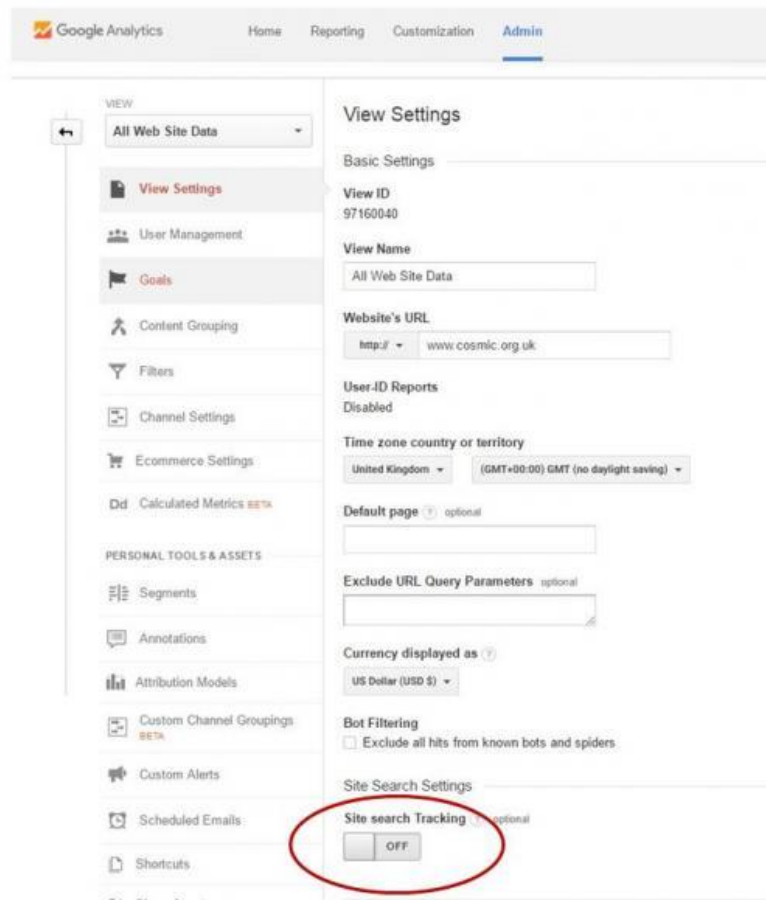
Setting up your Google analytics account correctly may take some time and effort, but it is well worth putting this effort in the beginning as you will then be able to monitor everything that will help you grow your business.

It is a good idea to get familiar with all of the aspects of your analytics dashboard once you have signed up to Google analytics, and get to see what it can actually show you and where. There are many different functions that you can access, including customer demographics and customer journey so it is worth having a good look round your dashboard to familiarise yourself with everything. When you open up your analytics account you can see a general overview of your website audience – where they live, whether they are new or returning and how many sessions you've had on your website.
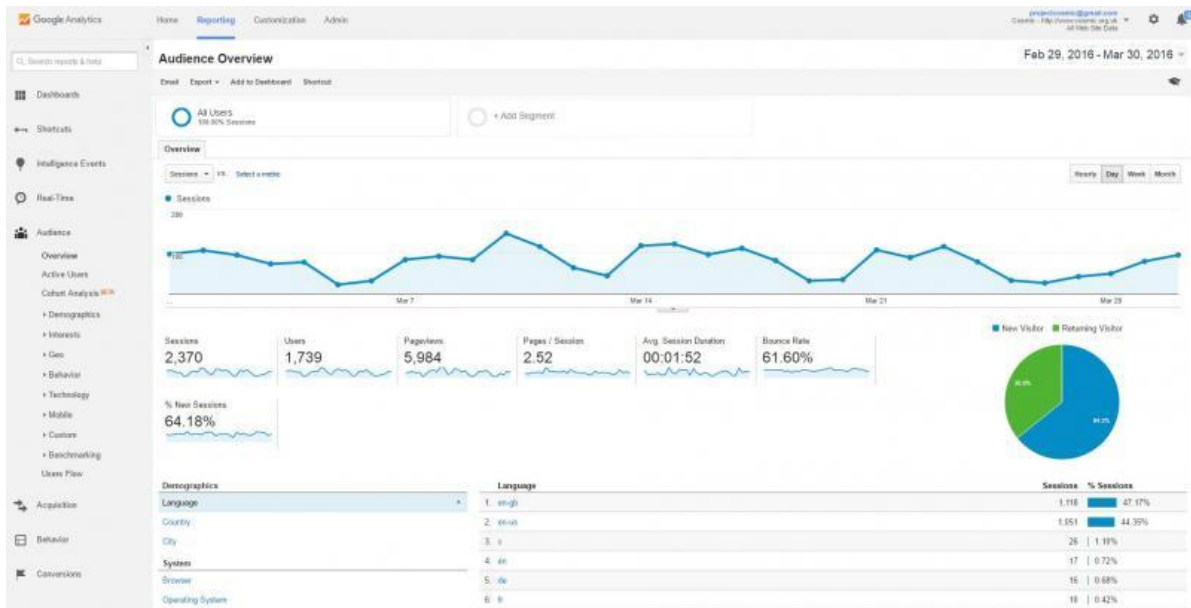
You can delve a bit deeper into your audience by clicking on each of the buttons on the left hand side. You can look at their;

- Demographics
- Interests
- Geo
- Behaviour
- Technology
- Mobile

And more, including custom searches and also the 'flow' – which is customer journey through your site.

By looking at all of these details of your visitor, you can get a true understanding of those people who are visiting your site. It is important to realise who they are so that you can target them in the right way, and tailor your content to suit your demographic. You might be surprised at what you find, so go in with an open mind!

You can also compare any of your analytics to a previous period of time, for example you may want to look at how your visitors compare with those at the same time last year. What are you doing differently (if anything) and have your views gone up or down. It is so important to be reviewing your activity at regular intervals and this will really help you understand that.
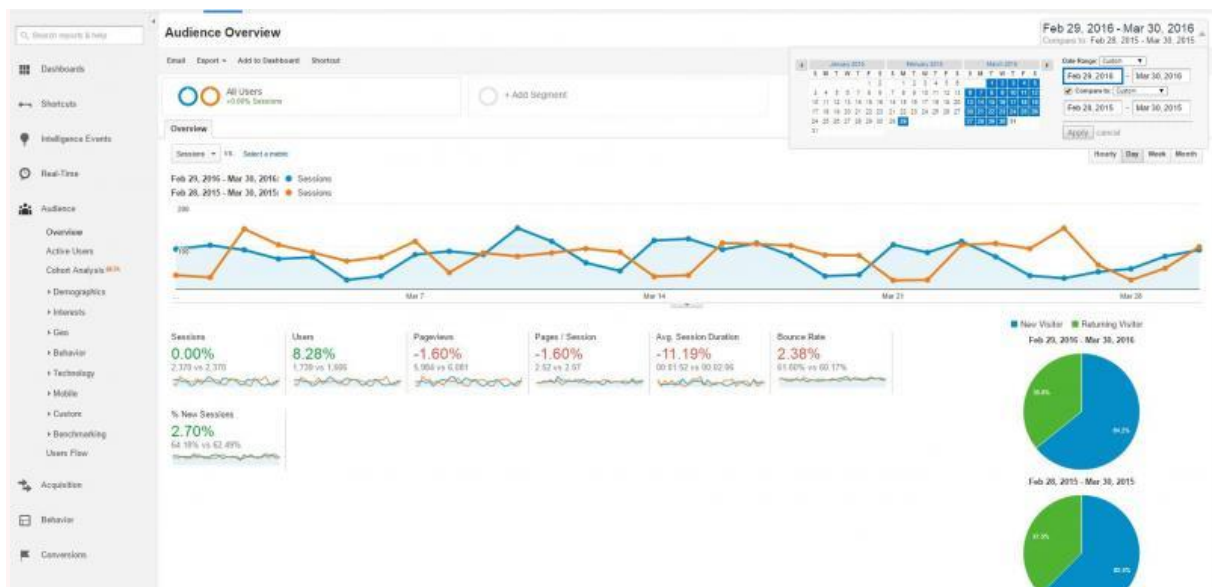
So what can our audience insights show us?

- How many people have visited in a given timeframe?
- How popular is your site – are visits increasing or decreasing?
- New visits vs return visits – are they loyal or new?
- Where do they come from – is it where you expected?
- What is their age, gender, interests – any surprises?

An important factor to consider within all of this is your bounce rate. You may be getting a lot of visitors, but how long are they staying? Your bounce rate will tell you this – the higher the rate, the less time they are staying on your site. A bounce is a single interaction with a page on your website, and then leaving. There are a number of bounce rate scenarios;

- The visitor clicks the back button (this is the most common)
- The visitor closes the browser (window or tab)

- The visitor types a new URL
- The visitor does nothing – and the session times out after 30 minutes

Either way, what this shows us is that either your website isn't of good quality, or it isn't what they were looking for. This is where your SEO is important to consider. They may have found you through a search on google, where you have appeared but after clicking on your website it isn't what they were looking for after all. So is it the quality of your site, or the quality of your optimisation that isn't working for you?

You can look at the behaviour of your visitor – how long did they stay on the site, how many pages did they visit, and which pages? Also, does the time they spent on your site correlate with the number of pages they visited? And if not – does this mean the quality of the pages isn't up to scratch? You can see if your visitor jumped from page to page staying just a few seconds on each one, and if this is the case then your website content isn't relevant or compelling enough for them. Think about how you can address this.

It is also important to understand what device your audience is viewing your site on, and whether your website works on all platforms. Are they staying longer or not whilst viewing on a mobile device? And if the bounce rate is higher via a mobile does this mean your site isn't optimised well enough? Again, by understanding all of these analytics you can focus on keeping your visitors on your site and converting them into customers.

Take a look at the behaviour of your site. By looking at the overview you can see the pages that people have stayed on the most, but interestingly by looking at your behaviour 'flow' you can monitor the journey of your visitor. Which page did they land on and where did they go after that? How many interactions did they make on the site? What was the bounce rate of each page – and which pages did people stay the longest on?

There is so much to cover about Google analytics that it is hard to contain it all to a few blog posts, but that is why it is so important to get to grips with it all in your own time.

It is really important when looking at your website activity to understand how people have arrived at your site. This is where not only your SEO comes into play, but also any PPC campaigns or Adwords that you have currently underway. Also, you may have external links on other sites which are directing people to your site, so it is good to have an understanding of all of this. You can therefore optimise this by using promotions in other places, or expanding on relationships or collaborators to build on that reach.

So this is where you look at your Acquisition on your analytics dashboard. You can then see where people have found you. What does this tell you – do you need to work on anything, or is there one dominating referral site?

	Default Channel Grouping	Acquisition		
		Sessions ↓	% New Sessions	New Users
		2,370 % of Total: 100.00% (2,370)	64.22% Avg for View: 64.18% (0.07%)	1,522 % of Total: 100.07% (1,521)
☐	1. Organic Search	1,144 (48.27%)	69.76%	798 (52.43%)
☐	2. Social	444 (18.73%)	46.85%	208 (13.67%)
☐	3. Direct	443 (18.69%)	79.46%	352 (23.13%)
☐	4. Referral	329 (13.88%)	49.85%	164 (10.78%)
☐	5. Email	10 (0.42%)	0.00%	0 (0.00%)

What are the sources?

- Direct – your website address typed into a search bar
- Referral – visitors have clicked on a link
- Organic – a key word or term has been typed into a search engine
- Social – visitors have clicked on a link from social media
- Other

It is good to have a balance of each of the referral sources, unless your strategy is for one specific route. Try not to have too much direct traffic, this can be a worry as it means that no-one knows about you outside of your customers and you are hard to find.

If they have come from social, look at what posts you put out that day – what worked in directing people to your site? Was it a link to a blog post or was it a product or special offer that you promoted. This will help you get an understanding of what your social followers are interesting in seeing.

If they have clicked on a link, you can find out which of your external links are directing people to your site. Where is that link and what does it say? Who are the businesses or people that are sending people your way? Do you already have a good relationship with them or can you build on that? Are there any directories that you could be looking at to include your details on? More and more links into your site from other quality sites will not only improve your analytics but it will massively help your SEO.

|	Source	Acquisition		
		Sessions ↓	% New Sessions	New Users
		329 % of Total: 13.88% (2,370)	49.85% Avg for View: 64.18% (-22.33%)	164 % of Total: 10.78% (1,521)
☐	1. esender.cosmic.org.uk	113 (34.35%)	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
☐	2. pavilionsteignmouth.org.uk	22 (6.69%)	90.91%	20 (12.20%)
☐	3. 1stwomenuk.co.uk	17 (5.17%)	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
☐	4. socialenterprisemark.org.uk	11 (3.34%)	54.55%	6 (3.66%)
☐	5. adtiger.tk	8 (2.43%)	100.00%	8 (4.88%)
☐	6. nci.org.uk	8 (2.43%)	87.50%	7 (4.27%)
☐	7. uk.search.yahoo.com	8 (2.43%)	75.00%	6 (3.66%)
☐	8. pluss.org.uk	7 (2.13%)	100.00%	7 (4.27%)
☐	9. somerset-chamber.co.uk	6 (1.82%)	83.33%	5 (3.05%)

Your organic referral is where it gets a little trickier as many of those search terms are hidden from google because of people's privacy settings, and so you can't see which terms people are typing in. Google webmaster tools can help you discover some of the keywords people are searching but it still doesn't show you everything. The key here is to keep an eye on your SEO and keyword search terms separately.

Another way of understanding your customers is by monitoring your social media analytics.

Facebook and Twitter have great insights into your visitors and by exploring these you can get a really solid idea of which posts are working for you and getting the most engagement. You can then compare this to clicks to your website to see if those posts are not only getting people involved, but also getting a good ROI with regards to website activity. Do the popular posts

correlate with sales? Do clicks from social correlate with time spent on your site? Are the engaging posts saying the right thing to encourage people to buy? There are lots of questions to ask here, but the key is finding the right answers so you can concentrate on putting out the best possible posts throughout your social channels.
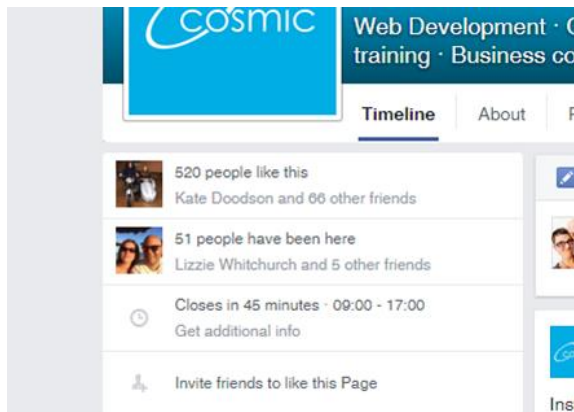
It is easy to see how many followers or likers you have on your social media, but let's look deeper into that and, like google, check out the demographics of your followers. Are you surprised at what you see? Are you aiming your content correctly?

Which posts are getting the most engagement? Is it what you expected? And if not, how can you change that?

You can also find out when your followers are online, and post accordingly to achieve maximum reach for your posts.
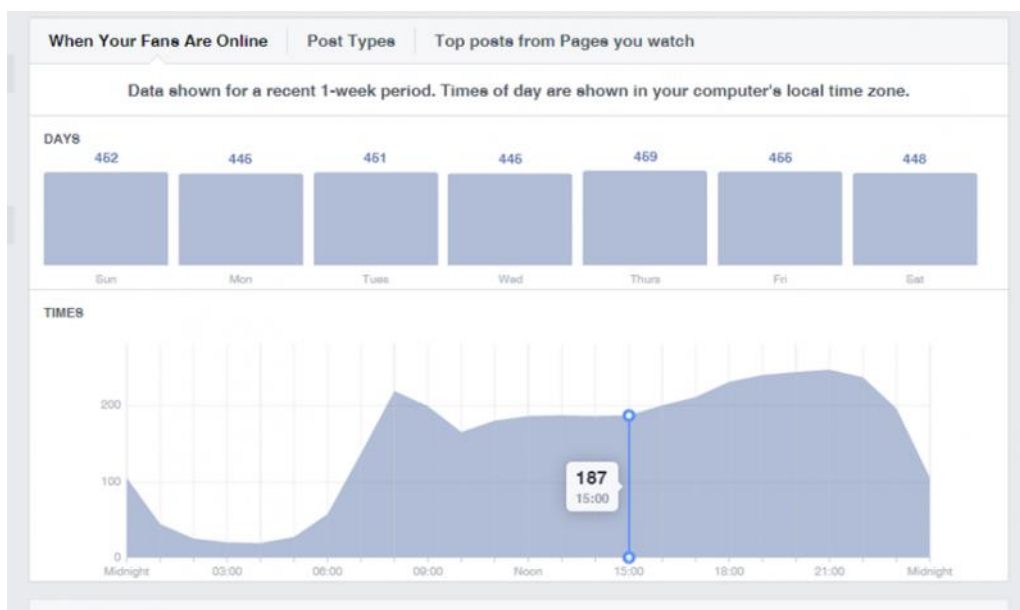
Also, are they curious about you or have they just clicked 'like' on your page out of habit? Are they clicking on any of your 'about' links in your bio? Do they want to find out more about who you are and where they can buy from you?

By going back to your 'flow' on Google analytics you can see which social platform they came from and how long they stayed on your site. What links have you put on Facebook to hook them in, for example?

It may seem that we are asking you more questions than you are asking yourself, but what we want is for you to understand how important it is to get a true picture of your customer. Through analytics you can find out how your customer found you, what they responded well to, who they are and where they live. And through these discoveries you can focus your marketing strategy on how to attract others just like them, and how to retain them.

If you have any questions about your analytics or would like us to support you in setting up your analytics accounts please get in touch with us.