Google Analytics Implementation Checklist

Updated for Google Analytics Universal

Note: this checklist relates primarily to Google Analytics tracking for websites (vs. mobile apps).

Tracking Code

☐ **New implementation**
Use the Google Analytics Universal tracking code or Google Tag Manager with a Google Analytics Universal tag.

☐ **Existing (Google Analytics classic) implementation**
Upgrade to Google Analytics Universal or to Google Tag Manager with a Google Analytics Universal tag.

☐ **Page templates and standalone pages**
Include the same Google Analytics tracking code or Google Tag Manager container code in your site templates/master pages and any standalone pages.

☐ **Create a Google Analytics account before adding Google Analytics to Google Tag Manager**
If you use Google Tag Manager instead of the direct Google Analytics tracking code, you still need to create a Google Analytics account/property in which Google Analytics can record site data.

Subdomain and Cross-domain Tracking

☐ **Tracking two or more subdomains within a single property**
Supported by the default tracking code in Universal; configure if using Google Tag Manager.

☐ **Tracking two or more separate domains within a single property**
Configure cross-domain tracking in Universal or Google Tag Manager.

☐ **Add hostname plus request URI**
To distinguish between request URIs on the different domains, apply an advanced filter to your working view(s) that prepends the hostname (that is, the domain) to the request URI.

☐ **Filter by hostname**
To easily view activity on a single domain or subdomain that you're tracking with other domains or subdomains in a single property, create additional views that are filtered to include only one hostname.

Goals and Ecommerce

☐ **Track form submissions**
Set up a goal for each form submission.

☐ **Track purchases**
If purchases on your site vary widely in price, product, etc., work with your developers to implement Ecommerce tracking. If you can't set up Ecommerce tracking in the short term, or if the variation in purchases is very limited, you can track purchases as a goal.

☐ **Specify Goal Value**
If you don't have Ecommerce set up, assign an actual, estimated, or even arbitrary value to your goals so you can use the Page Value metric to gauge the contribution that each page on your site is making towards goal completions.

☐ **Configure Funnels**
Wherever feasible, define a funnel along with your goal so Google Analytics can calculate goal abandonment rate and populate the Funnel Visualization report.

Events, Virtual Pageviews, and Social Actions

☐ **Record on-page user actions in addition to pageviews**
Code or configure events or virtual pageviews for each of the following types of user actions:

- off-site links
- mailto: and tel: links
- Opens/downloads of PDFs and other file types
- Significant Flash / Ajax / jQuery / HTML5 interactions
- Video plays, pauses, and completions

☐ **Record social actions**
Code or configure social actions for clickthroughs on your social buttons.

☐ **Distinguish between types of social actions**
Distinguish between follow and like content types of social actions, either through the social action parameter or the social target parameter of the social tracking method.

☐ **Use callback for tracking like content social actions**
You can use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn callbacks to verify that the like/tweet/share action was actually completed before you record a social action in Google Analytics.

☐ **Consistent naming**
Use a consistent naming convention for your events, virtual pageviews, and social tracking.

Content Grouping, Custom Dimensions, and Custom Channel Groupings

☐ **Content Groups**
Set up Content Groups to aggregate pages within the Site Content reports by specified characteristics (such as authorship, subject area, or product type). Content Groups are especially useful if these characteristics are not expressed consistently in the request URIs or the page titles.

☐ **Custom Dimensions**
Set up Custom Dimensions to capture visit/visitor characteristics (such as login status, CRM data pulled from the back end after login, or drop-down selections on a form) so you can use these characteristics when defining custom reports or advanced segments. (You can also use Custom Dimensions to capture page characteristics such as those cited above for Content Groups.)

☐ **Custom Channel Grouping for Multi-Channel Funnels Reports**
To display a more specific set of traffic channels in the Multi-Channel Funnel Reports, define a Custom Channel Grouping in the admin screens for your view.

Views, View Settings, and View Filters

☐ **Three views for each property**
For each property that you're tracking, create a minimum of three views:

- Raw/unfiltered
- Test
- Working

☐ **Exclude internal traffic**
In your working view(s), apply an advanced view filter that excludes traffic originating from your organization's IP address range.

☐ **Exclude traffic to development servers**
In your working view(s), apply an advanced filter that includes only your production server as the hostname (so activity on your development and staging servers does not appear).

☐ **Default page**
In the view settings, specify a default page (such as index.php) to prevent both / and /index.php from appearing as separate request URIs for the home page in your Site Content reports.

☐ **Consolidate query parameters**
If your URLs contain query parameters (such as a session ID) that do not determine significantly different page content, specify them (separated with commas) in the Exclude URL Query Parameters field. (Note that this setting does not exclude any request URIs; it just

consolidates them.) For an assessment of the query parameters used in your URLs, see the Crawl > URL Parameters report for your site in Google Webmaster Tools.

☐ **Configure Site Search tracking**
If your site's internal search generates a URL in the format below, specify q as the Site Search Query Parameter in the view settings:

`www.mysite.com/searchresults.aspx?q=my+search+term`

Campaign Tracking

☐ **Use campaign tags for clearer attribution**
For more accurate traffic attribution, add manual campaign parameters (or "tags") to inbound links from:

- Emails (including signatures)
- Banner ads
- Retargeting banners
- Pay-per-click (except AdWords)
- Affiliates
- Press releases
- Standalone documents (such as PDF)
- Mobile apps

☐ **Campaign Tag Format**
To minimize errors in your campaign-tagged inbound links, use the E-Nor URL builder.

☐ **Consistent naming**
Use a consistent naming convention for your campaign parameters.

☐ **Autotagging**
For AdWords, avoid manual campaign tags; instead, enable Autotagging.

Intelligence Alerts and Dashboards

☐ **Basic Intelligence Alerts**
Set up the following custom Intelligence Alerts:

- 10% weekly increase/decrease in visits
- 10% weekly increase/decrease in conversion rate and/or value for each goal
- 10% weekly increase/decrease in (Ecommerce) revenue (or product revenue, which does not include tax and shipping)

☐ **Monthly dashboard delivery**
Set up monthly (or more frequent) delivery of a default or custom dashboard to stakeholders in your website's performance.

Additional

☐ **Country-specific versions of search engines**
To track organic clickthroughs from country-specific search engines such as google.co.uk or mx.search.yahoo.com (and prevent Google Analytics from simplifying them to just google and yahoo as sources), add the country-specific search engines to the Organic Search Sources list in the admin pages for your property.

☐ **Adjusted bounce rate**
If you're tracking a blog or another type of site that doesn't necessarily warrant a clickthrough to another page, you can more meaningfully measure bounce rate by using the setTimeout or scroll approaches. If you're using Google Tag Manager, you can adjust bounce rate by setting a Timer Listener to generate a Google Analytics event.

☐ **Single view for annotations**
Annotations are not shared among views, so decide on a single view in which you and your team will keep your annotations consolidated for each property that you're tracking.

☐ **Google Webmaster Tools**
To partially address the (not provided) issue*, and for a great deal of other very relevant information such as broken links, set up Google Webmaster Tools for each website you're tracking with Google Analytics.

For further discussion on many of the implementation tasks included in this checklist, see

Google Analytics Universal Guide: Best Practices for Implementation and Reporting

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Tracking Product Journey from Carting to Purchasing - 15 Secrets for Perfecting your Online Store

Download eBook

For ongoing tutorials and technical updates, visit the E-Nor blog.

*The Google search engine no longer provides the keywords that generate organic clickthroughs to your site; in their place, Google Analytics displays (not provided).