Google Analytics 101 for Travel & Tourism Marketing

A hands-on guide for digital marketers

CrowdRiff

In this guide:

Allow us to introduce ourselves!

CrowdRiff is a visual marketing platform that is used by over 600 travel and tourism brands to market themselves through the power of visuals across all marketing channels.

One of the main goals of our platform is to elevate and optimize web performance. From working with so many amazing travel marketers and doing a lot of homework in this area, we've gained a lot of expertise with Google Analytics that we're only too happy to share.

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA™

DESTINATION CANADA

G Adventures — Our world deserves more you.

HAKATOURS NEW ZEALAND

Holland.

Zürich, Switzerland.

Ever wonder how travelers are interacting with your website?
Who those people are? Or maybe if that new video you've implemented on your homepage has made a difference?

Not only is this information interesting, but tracking metrics like these helps you see which parts of your website are absolutely killing it, and which places can use a little more work.

In this guide we'll show you how to track everything from where your traffic is coming from to who your audience actually is. Learn how you can use this information to achieve your organization's goals, and become a more data-oriented marketer.

Ready? Let's get started.

Before we dive in, here are some basic terms that are good to know

Pageview: Whenever someone goes to a page of your website, that counts as a pageview.

Session: When someone is actively interacting with and browsing your website, everything they do within that time on your site is called a session. A session can contain multiple pageviews.

User: Another word for "web visitor". When someone comes to your site, Google Analytics drops a tiny piece of code called a "cookie" to identify it as an individual. One user can have multiple sessions.

1. Audience

*As a marketer, you always want to understand who you're marketing to.*

In this section learn how to track:

A. What region your web visitors live in

B. The demographic of your audience

C. What their hobbies, interests and buying behaviors are

Which countries are dreaming about visiting you the most?

You probably have a good grasp about where your tourists are coming from already, but Google Analytics can show you exact numbers.

By going under the Audience tab, Geo, and then "Location", you can see your traffic grouped by country, city, continent, and even sub-continent (e.g. Central Europe).

Where to go in Google Analytics

👤 AUDIENCE

Overview

Active Users

Cohort Analysis **BETA**

User Explorer

▶ Demographics

▶ Interests

▼ Geo

    Language

    Location

▶ Behavior

▶ Technology

▶ Mobile
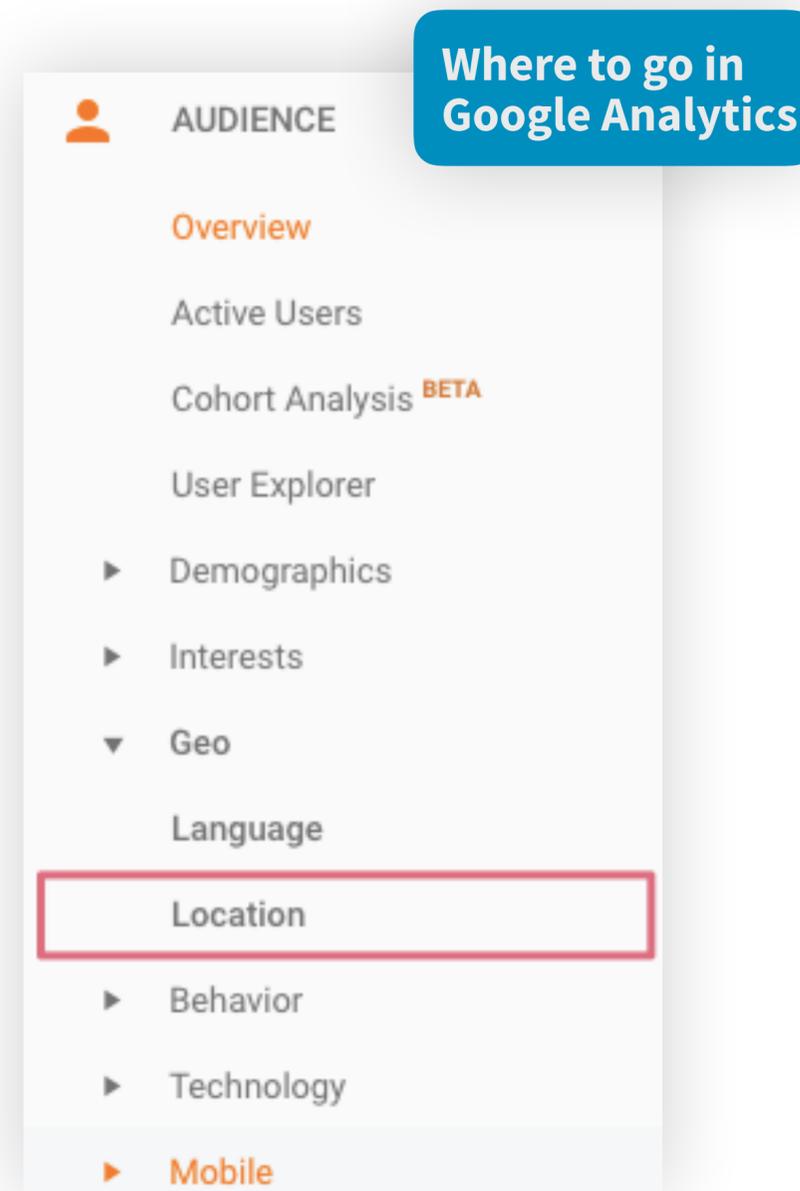
Which countries are dreaming about visiting you the most?

ℹ What can I do with this information?

You might find that for some reason, people in France keep coming to your website in the wintertime. Knowing this, you might alter your homepage with some French language options, or create specific blog posts with French travelers in mind (e.g. "10 Restaurants with Multi-Language Menus") come December.

If you're gaining momentum in one region, you might decide that it's time to ride the wave, and target a few more ads their way!
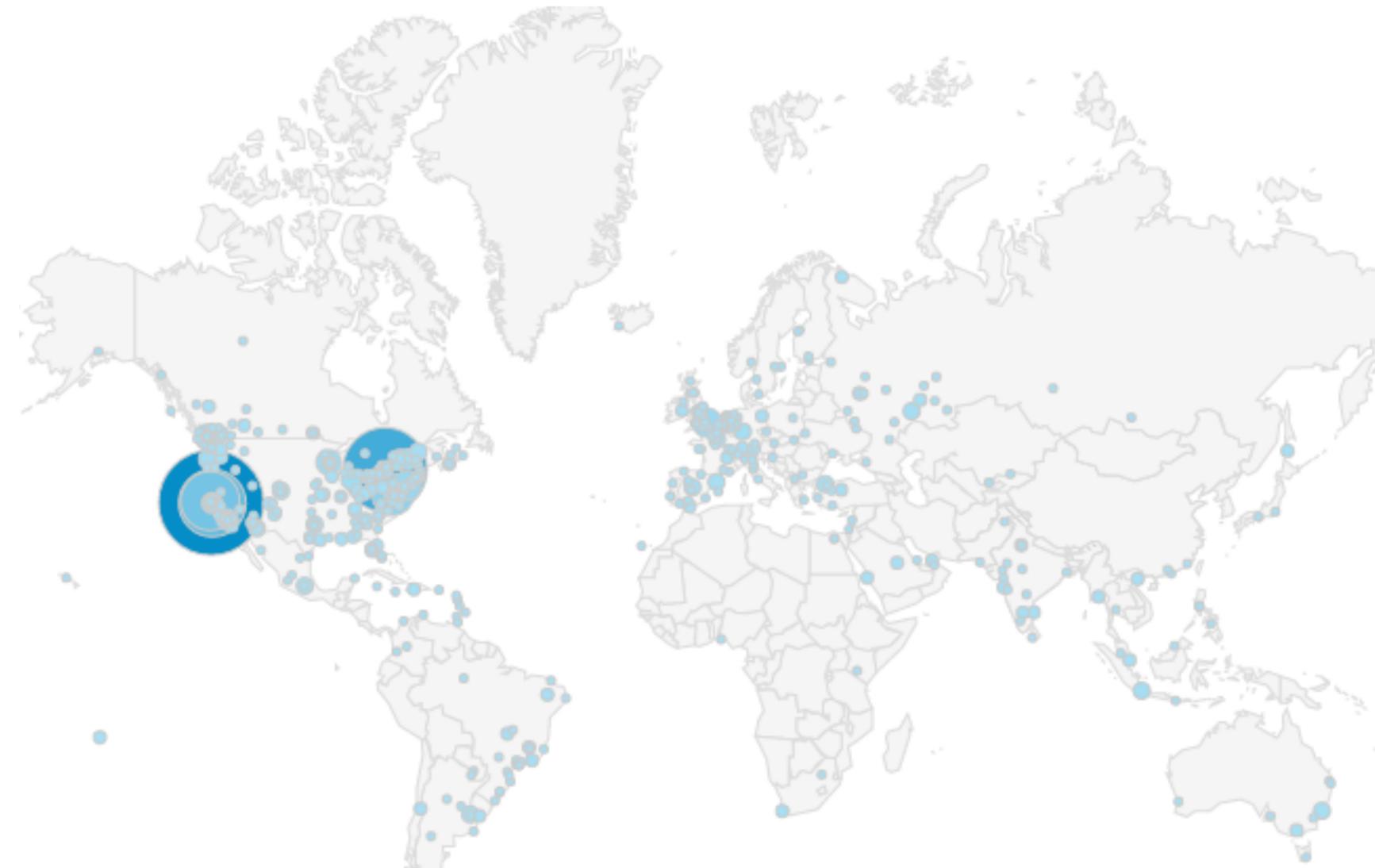
Example Use Case: Experience Kissimmee

This winter, Experience Kissimmee of Florida launched an ad campaign in Toronto, Canada, decorating local streetcars with vibrant Kissimmee promotions.

How would you track the success of a campaign like this?

One simple way to see if you're getting a boost in traffic from Torontonians would be to check Locations in Google Analytics. When the campaign is over, Experience Kissimmee can keep track of how lasting their brand impression was by continuing to pay attention to how many visitors come to their site from Toronto.

In this case, Experience Kissimmee also used a custom URL in their ad, which would tell them exactly who's coming to their website after looking at one of their bright Toronto streetcars.

What age group is the most interested my website?

Depending on your marketing strategy, you may be targeting different age groups. Google Analytics can sort your traffic into the following age groups:

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
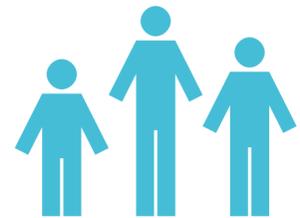
You can see this breakdown in Google Analytics by going to Audience, Demographics, and then "Age".

Where to go in Google Analytics
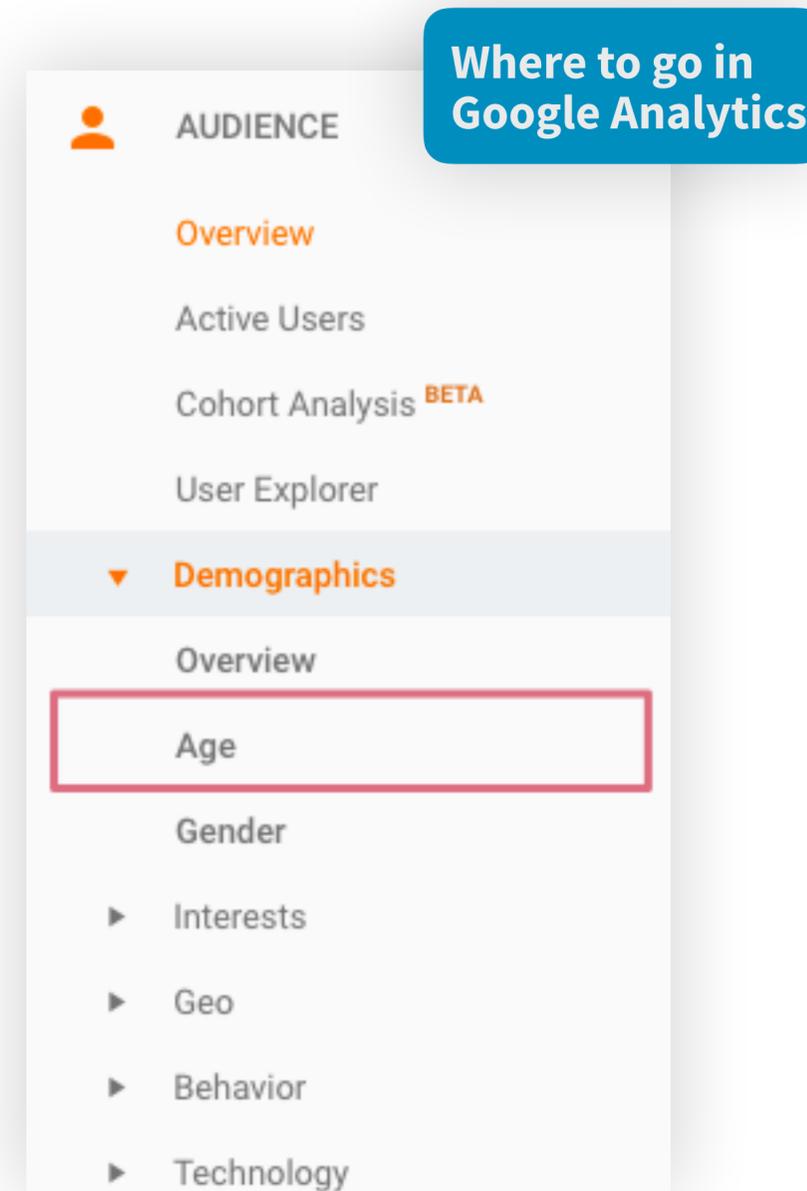
What age group is the most interested my website?

ℹ️ What can I do with this information?

By knowing who visits your site, you can display specific content to cater to your biggest demographic.

For example, if you have a wide millennial audience, you might decide to show more visuals of millennials enjoying themselves.

On the flip side, if you don't have a wide millennial audience, but want to attract them, maybe you can consider tweaking some elements of your website (perhaps copy or visual experience) to better engage them.

Interests

The more you know about your audience the better. By diving into "Affinity Categories and "In-Market Segments" you can gain some other interesting insights into who your web visitors are.

Affinity Categories (what they like) such as:	In-Market Segment (what kind of things they spend money on) such as:
Shutterbugs	Travel/Hotels
Travel Buffs	Software
Technophiles	Consumer Electronics
Business professionals	Home & Gardening
TV Lovers	Auto & Vehicles
Social Media Enthusiasts	

Where to go in Google Analytics
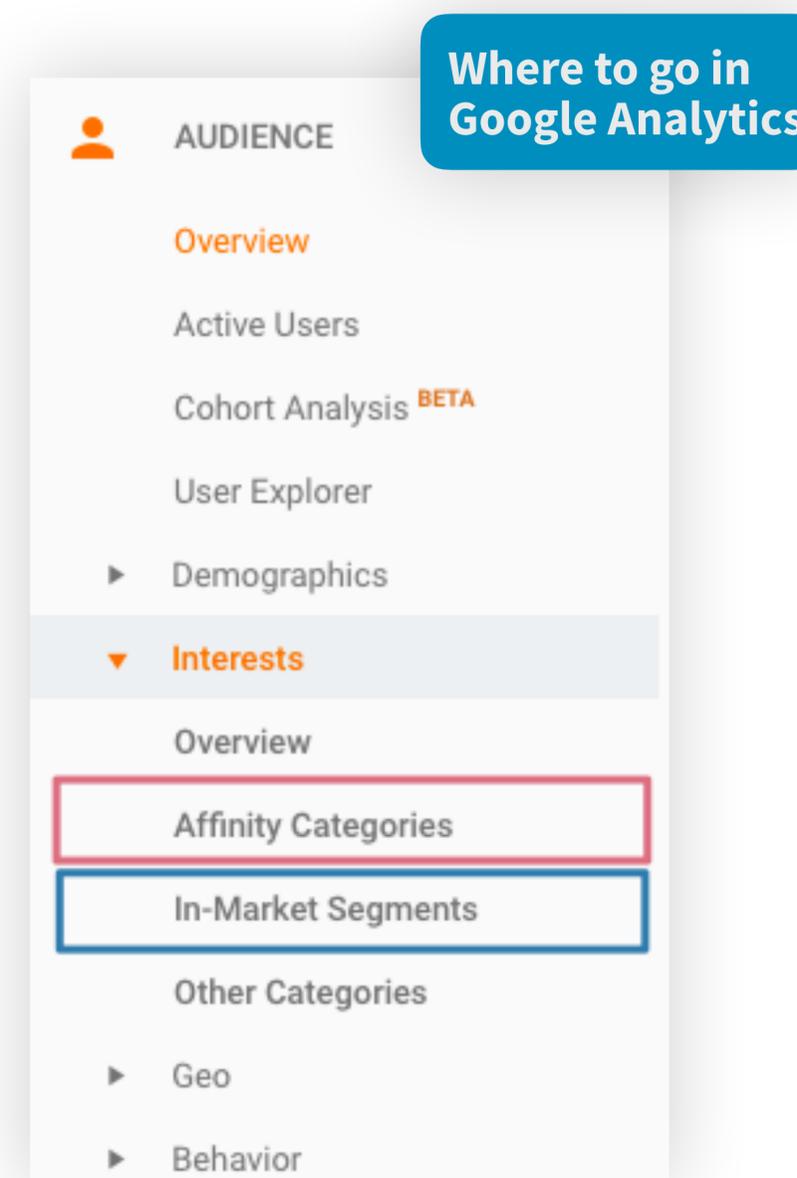
Interests

ℹ️ What can I do with this information?

Capture your audience's attention by targeting your content to speak to what they're interested in.

For example, if you know your audience has a lot of TV Lovers, you might create a blog post outlining the different locations various TV shows have filmed in your destination.

On the other hand, if you know your audience likes to spend a lot of money on Auto & Vehicles, you'll know to promote events such as car shows front and center on your website.

2. Acquisition

Where is my traffic coming from?

In this section learn how to measure:

A. The main drivers of your website traffic

B. How much is coming from social, email, direct, organic (and what that all means)

C. Clicks and traffic from specific links with UTM parameters
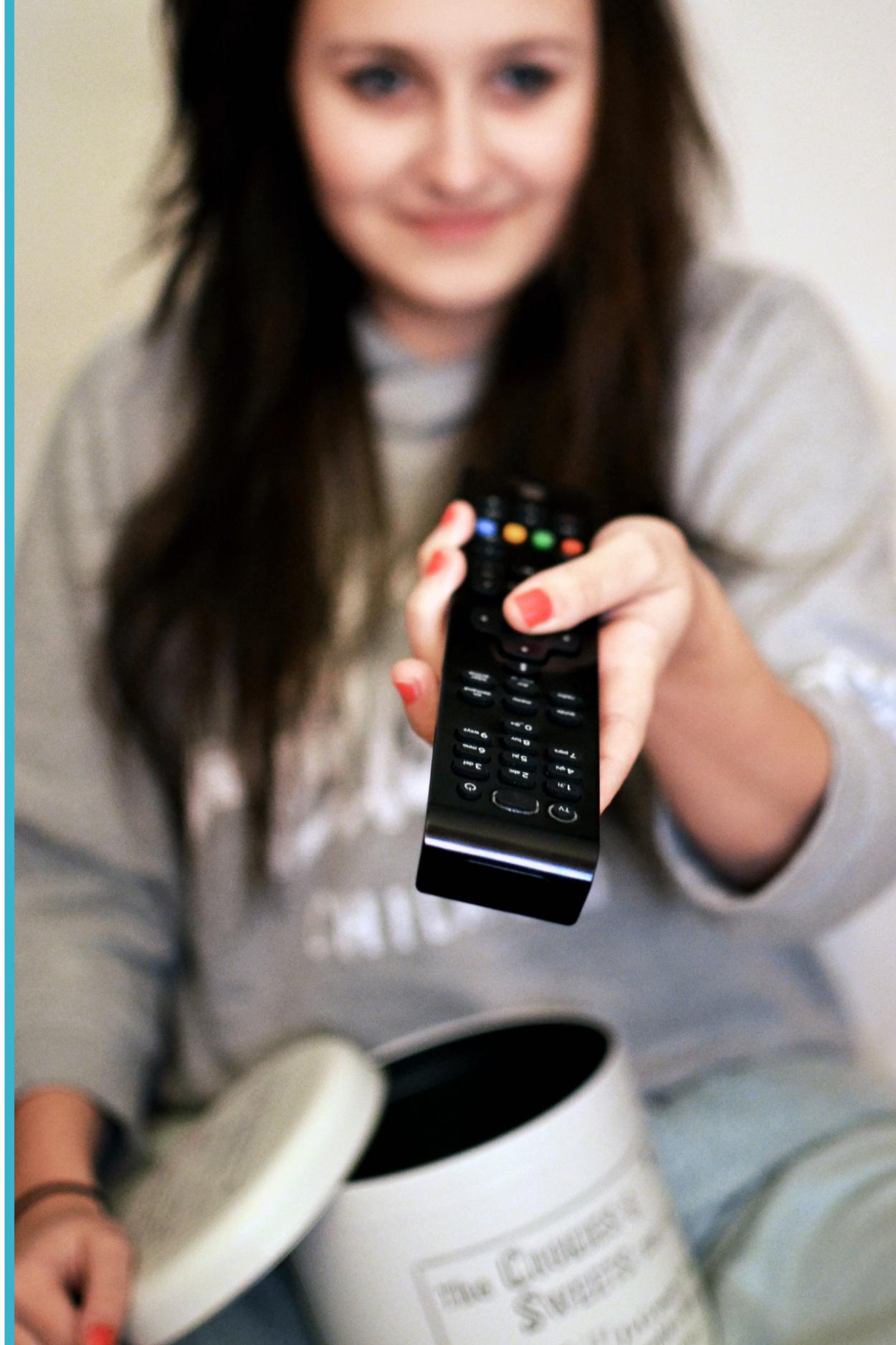
Where is my traffic coming from?

How many people are coming to your website through Twitter? Through Facebook? Through your newsletter?

To answer this question you just simply go to Acquisition, All Traffic, and then "Channels". This page will show you at a glance how many sessions each channel is bringing to your website.

You can see the results of your social media marketing efforts, email campaigns, and how many people are discovering you through Google.

Where to go in Google Analytics

ACQUISITION

Overview

▼ **All Traffic**

Channels

Treemaps

Source/Medium

Referrals

▶ AdWords

▶ Search Console NEW

▶ Social
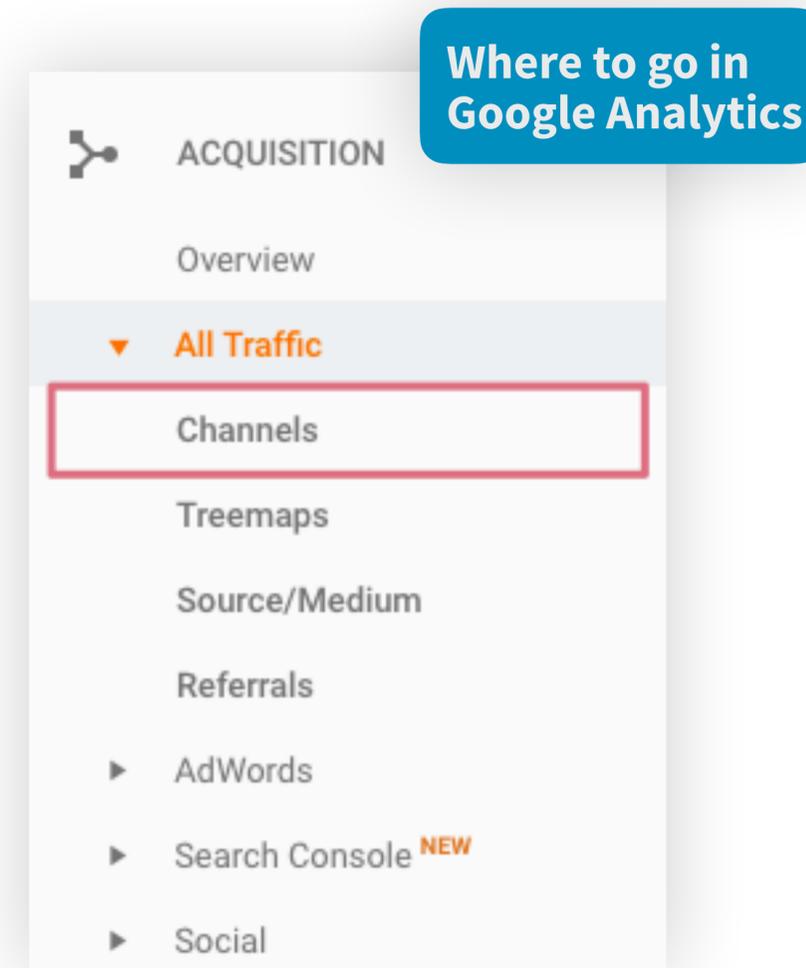
Where is my traffic coming from?

There are 8 main acquisition channels that Google Analytics will group your traffic into:

Direct	When someone goes directly to your website (e.g. typing your website URL into their browser)
Organic	When people find you through search engines (e.g. by searching "Things to do in [destination]" and you pop up)
Social	These are the people that come in from social media. If you're Tweeting blog content for example, and they click through to your site.
Referral	This is traffic coming from another website who's linked you. e.g. in a blog post they mention you and link you in their copy.
Paid Search	These are people specifically clicking on your Google Adwords ads
Email	When people come to your website from an email, like one of your e-newsletters, they'll show up here
Display	These are the people coming in from any display ads you might be running
Other	If you're using UTM parameters, this is where you'll see your custom sources

Where is my traffic coming from?

ℹ️ What can I do with this information?

One of challenges most travel marketers face is justifying the spend/time on different channels (like social, email). Tying this back to actual web metrics will give you tangible results and help you ground your strategy.

Which specific link did someone click?

UTM parameters are little bits of information that are added to a URL that help Google Analytics (and you!) differentiate links from each channel.

Therefore, each link with a UTM parameter has a unique identity that says, *"I am a link from social media!"* or *"I am a link from your latest newsletter!"*

While *channels* are buckets (Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn would fall under "Social"), using links with specific UTM parameters allows you to track exactly which link people clicked to go to your site.

5 types of UTM parameters and what they represent

Campaign Source `utm_source`	Required. Use `utm_source` to identify a search engine, newsletter name, or other source. *Example:* `google`
Campaign Medium `utm_medium`	Use `utm_medium` to identify a medium such as email or cost-per- click. *Example:* `cpc`
Campaign Name `utm_campaign`	Used for keyword analysis. Use `utm_campaign` to identify a specific product promotion or strategic campaign. *Example:* `utm_campaign=spring_sale`
Campaign Term `utm_term`	Used for paid search. Use `utm_term` to note the keywords for this ad. *Example:* `running+shoes`
Campaign Content `utm_content`	Used for A/B testing and content-targeted ads. Use `utm_content` to differentiate ads or links that point to the same URL. *Examples:* `logolink` *or* `textlink`

UTMs in action

For example, take this link:
http://crowdriff.com/blog/why-update-your-website-visuals-regularly/

Alone, if you click on it right now, Google will count that as direct traffic in Analytics. But, in fact, that click comes from this eBook.

So we can add UTMs that specify that these clicks are coming from an eBook.
http://crowdriff.com/blog/why-update-your-website-visuals-regularly/?**utm_source=ebook**

For example, you might want to track how much traffic is coming from your newsletter. In that case, you would put UTM parameters on the link you include in your email, which would look like this: http://crowdriff.com/blog/why-update-your-website-visuals-regularly/?**utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email**

That's the link you'd insert into your emails.

Now when you go to "Acquisition" in Google Analytics, you can see how many sessions on your website come from that specific link (through your email newsletter) in the breakdown.

Source / Medium	Acquisition Sessions
	7,683 % of Total: 100.00% (7,683)
1. (direct) / (none)	3,474 (45.22%)
2. google / organic	2,436 (31.71%)
3. newsletter / email	291 (3.79%)
4. t.co / referral	153 (1.99%)

How do I add UTMs?

Google has a **handy Campaign URL Builder** that adds UTMs to your links.

All you do is fill in the fields and Google will put together your link for you. To the average person, the link is just a normal link -- but to marketers and Google Analytics, it reveals the secrets to "Where is my traffic coming from?"

What to do with UTM links

Now your link is ready to be copied and pasted into your newsletter, web pages, or wherever you specified in the "Source" section of the builder!

3. Behavior

How are people engaging with my site?

In this section learn how to measure:

A. How engaged your visitors are on your site

B. The quality of your web traffic, based on their behavior

C. Your most engaging content

D. How to optimize your content based on engagement metrics

First off, what does it mean to be "engaging"?

Depending on each organization, the behavior that indicates "engagement" can differ.

Consider this: perhaps your homepage has an autoplaying video. So when a user lands on your site, they may watch it for two minutes and absorb a lot of information before leaving. But for another website without a video, if a user lands on it and doesn't do anything for two minutes, that might actually indicate idleness.

However, there are 3 universal metrics you can pay attention to that will help you shed some light on your visitor engagement:

1. Time on site

2. Pages per session

3. Bounce Rate
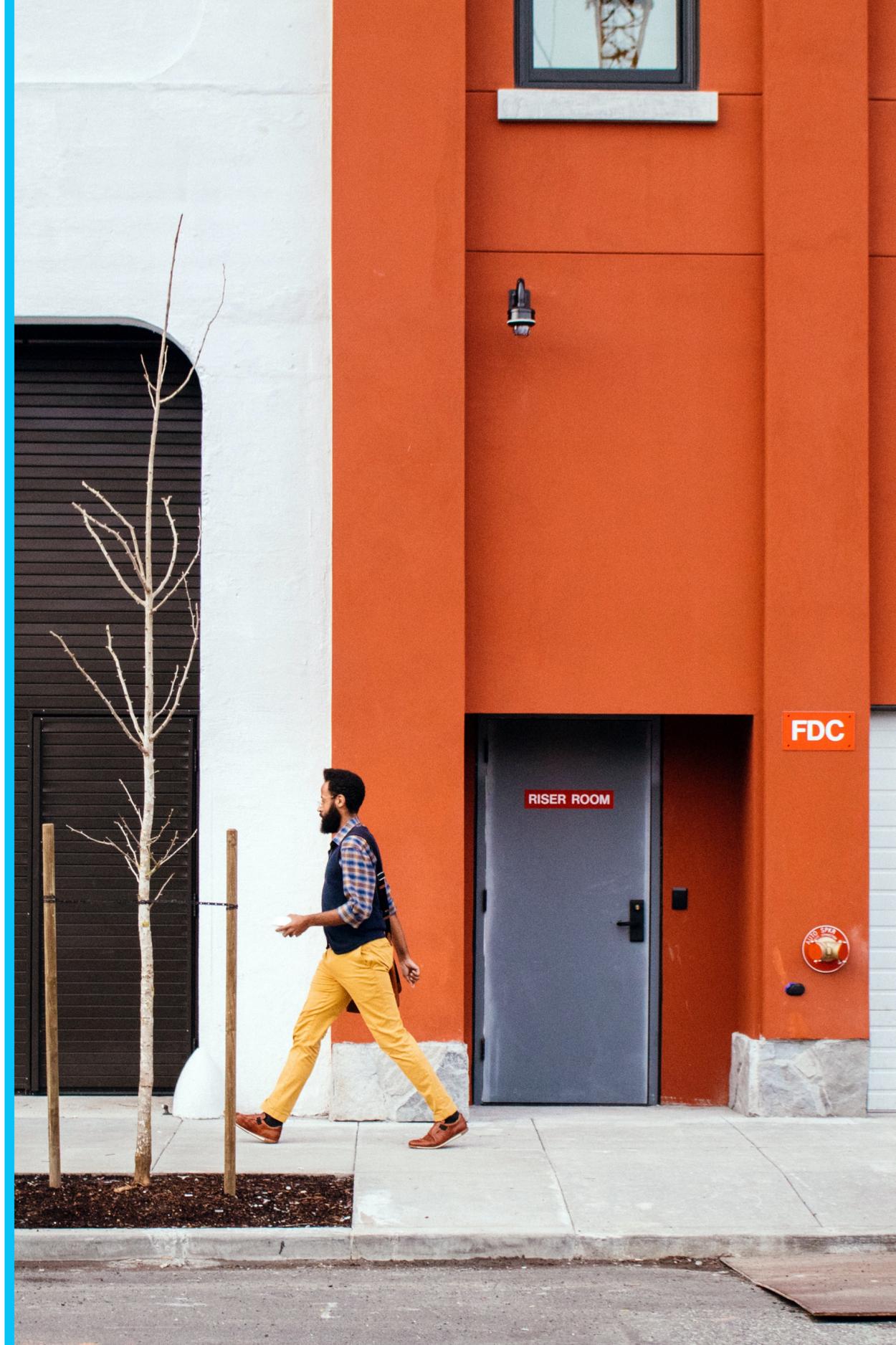
Time on Site

How much time are people spending on your website? There are three ways to measure this:

Time on Page	Go to Behavior, then Site Content, and click "All Pages".	This is an easy way to directly compare your web pages and identify which ones are performing well.
Website Avg. Time on Page	Go to Behavior, and click "Overview"	This takes the average amount of time people spend browsing each web page on your site.
Session Duration	Go to Audience, then Behavior, and click "Engagement"	This measures how much time people typically spend on your site per session.

Time on Site

Insights:

- Time on Site can be a good proxy to judge how helpful or valuable your audience finds your site. The better the content, the longer they stay to engage with it.

- You can identify the pages that have high Time on Page, and ask these questions: Why are they getting better engagement? What do these pages have in common? It might be because there's a video on one page or an interactive photo gallery. Take your learnings and test them on other pages.

Tip: If you want to increase your Time on Site, start by adding video or more photos. We've found that CrowdRiff customers using UGC on their website experience 3-4x increase in time on site.
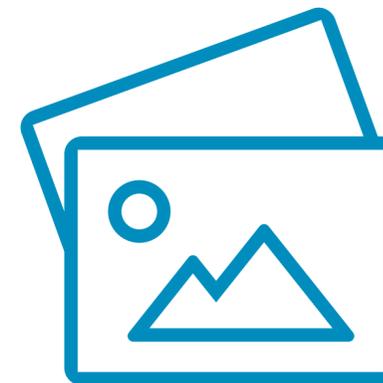
Pages per session

This is how many pages a user engages with when they go to your website.

You'll find this in Behavior and "Overview"

After landing on your homepage, do people go on to explore your website? How many pages do they interact with before leaving? Google Analytics can show you this information.

💡 **Tip:** You can see the common journeys users take when using your site by going to Behavior and then "Behavior Flow". Here you can see exactly which pages users are starting on and where they're dropping off.

Where to go in Google Analytics

BEHAVIOR

Overview

Behavior Flow

▶ Site Content

▶ Site Speed

▶ Site Search

▶ Events

▶ Publisher

Experiments
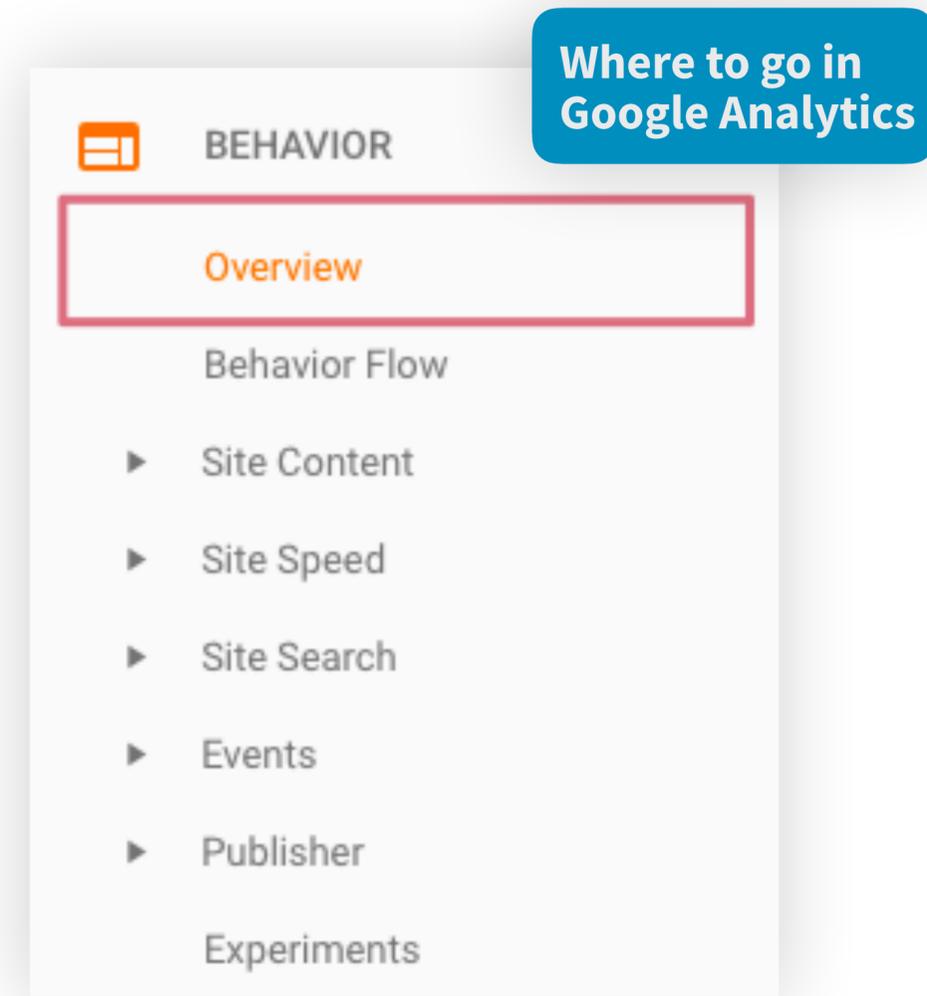
Pages per session

Insights:

- If your average pages per session is lower than you'd like, think about why. Is there anything you can change or tweak that might make this number grow?

For example, ask yourself:

- Is your website hard to navigate? Are there clear buttons and calls-to-action people can click?

- Is the content you provide interesting or helpful? Maybe people are seeing your headlines and sections and they're just not interested.

Bounce Rate

If someone comes to a single web page and leaves, without going to another page or interacting with any element on that page (like watching a video), that means they bounced.

To see your site's bounce rate, go to Behavior and then "Overview".

With so much going on in the digital space, a bounce rate is completely inevitable and absolutely normal. A bounce rate of around 60% is good. If you have a bounce rate of below 20% there's probably something wrong with your analytics!

Where to go in Google Analytics

BEHAVIOR

Overview

Behavior Flow

▶ Site Content

▶ Site Speed

▶ Site Search

▶ Events

▶ Publisher

Experiments
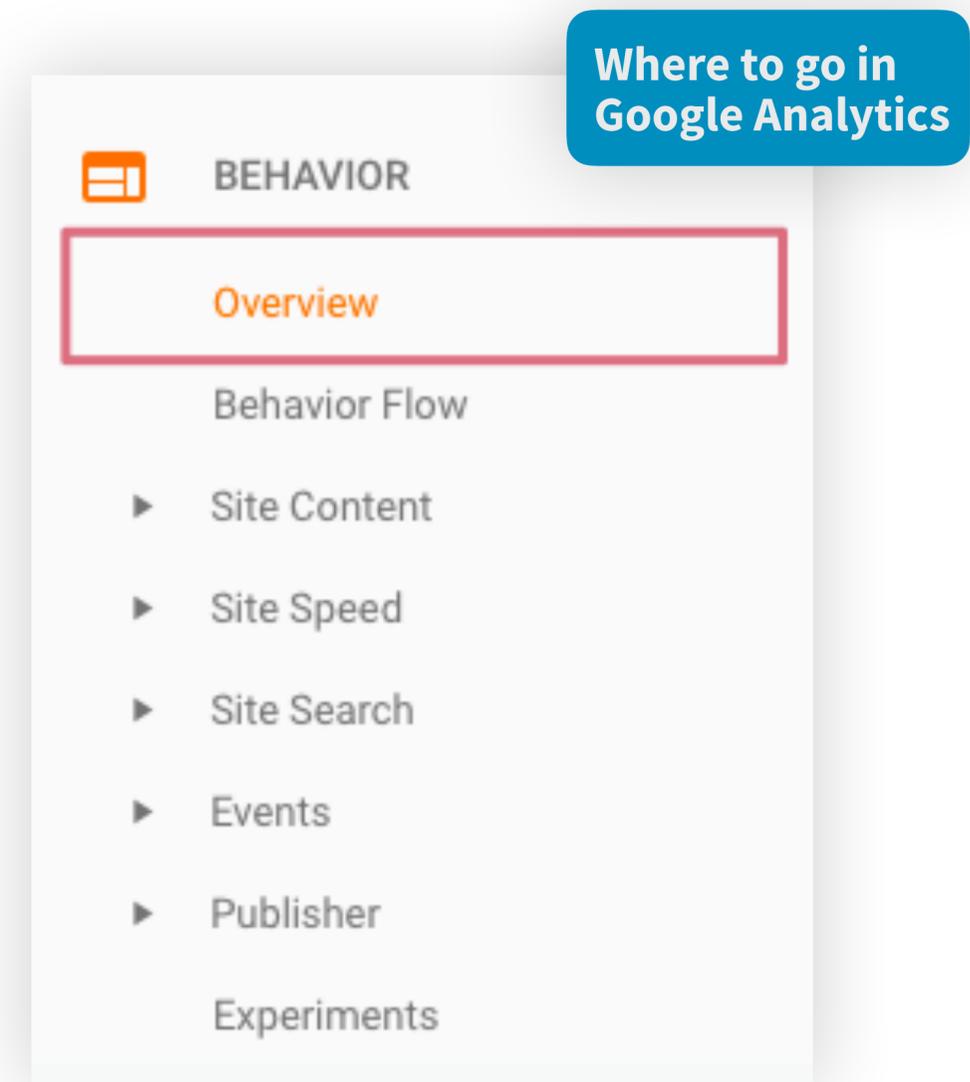
Bounce Rate

Insights:

A high bounce rate can suggest a few things:

- People might be coming to your site thinking you're one thing, and they find out you're not actually relevant to what they're looking for.
    e.g. They were looking for Washington DC not Washington State
    Try this: Specify your messaging so that you end up in the right Google searches

- Your site isn't interesting, so they leave. On average, you have 8 seconds to capture someone's attention.
    Try this: Visuals are the most engaging. The most innovative DMO sites are using a combination of video and photography to create immersive visual experiences.

Bounce Rate

Here is a great example of some websites that might find themselves with high bounce rates.

It's easy to confuse Washington State and Washington City, since they have the same destination name; travelers searching for either would search "Washington" and be presented with the sites for both the state and the city. It's easy for a traveler searching for the city to accidentally click on the state, realize their mistake, and bounce off the site.

Therefore, it would be understandable if these two websites had relatively higher bounce rates.

Measuring the quality of your traffic

You may be getting a high amount of traffic, but are they engaged?

Comparing acquisition channels with behavior:

Measuring metrics like number of sessions, bounce rate, and time spent on page by traffic source makes it easy to identify and focus on the channels that are bringing a high volume of good quality traffic.

For example, if you find that you get a lot of engaged visitors from social media, you know that it's a valuable channel to bring in interested travelers.

On the other hand, you might also see that your paid search channel is bringing a lot of people with a high bounce rate -- this can inform you to change your keywords or clear up your messaging.

Identifying your most engaging content

To find your top pages, you can go to the All Pages section of Google Analytics. Here your website pages are sorted by number of pageviews by default.

You can toggle it to sort by a number of metrics, such as Time on Page or Bounce Rate too.

Where to go in Google Analytics
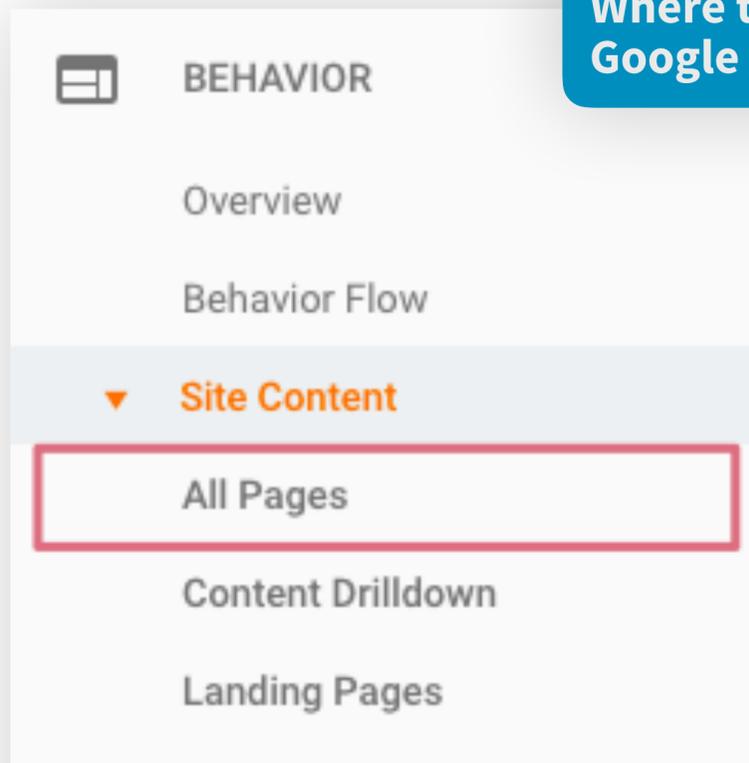
Where to go in Google Analytics
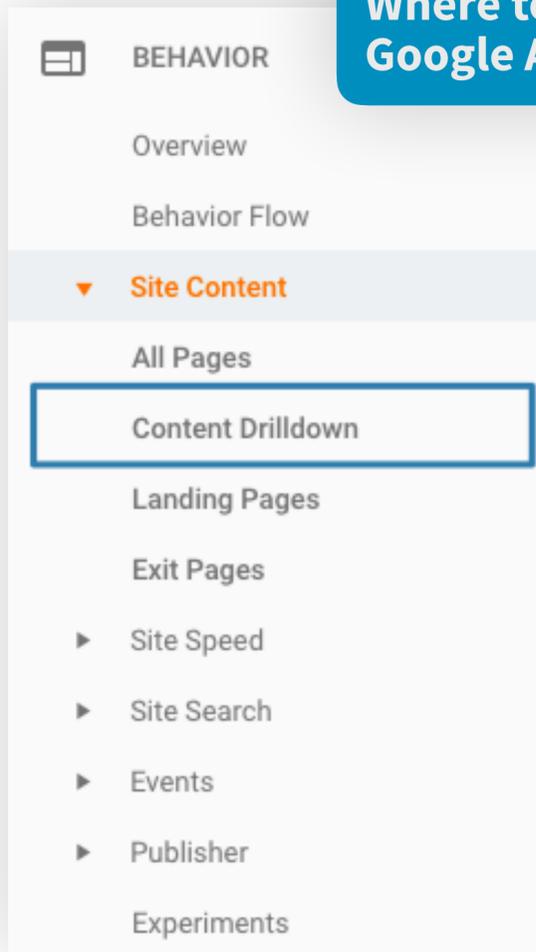
The Content Drilldown lets you identify your top sections.

For example, while you might have multiple posts on your blog, seeing these metrics for your entire blog lets you measure the performance of the blog as a whole. Then, when you click into each section, you can see the stats for individual pages.

Optimizing content

By knowing which content is the most popular, you can get insights into what your audience wants to see.

For example, if you find that your "Restaurants" page is really popular, you can deduce that people like food related content. So you might consider creating a blog post about the "Top 10 Cheap Eats in [Your Destination]" and promoting that on social.

Or maybe that "Restaurants" page is popular because of the visual photo gallery you've placed. You can then decide to create galleries to put on your "Museums" page too and track those stats.

Knowing your top pages can also show you which pages to further optimize. If you know that a certain page gets a lot of traffic and good engagement, you might consider putting an option to "Request a Free Visitor's Guide" pop-up or button.

Example Use Case: Fort Worth

When Fort Worth first put CrowdRiff galleries onto their site, they monitored page performance closely. Among other stats, they found an increase of 784% in traffic on their Restaurants page, where they'd placed a gallery above the fold.

When you see improvements like these on your website after making a change, you can try implementing the same changes onto other pages to optimize them to perform similarly.

You can read the full story in our **blog post.**

4. Conversion

Is my website working towards my marketing goals?

In this section learn:

A. How to gauge the quality of your traffic

B. What goals in Google Analytics are and how to set up your own

What are goals in Google Analytics?

When people come to your site, there are certain actions you want them to take or certain ways you want them to interact with your site.

For example:

- Requesting a visitor guide

- Browsing more than 4 pages in a session

- Spending more than 5 minutes on your site

- In Google Analytics, you can track these behaviours (and more) as goals

Setting up goals

There are 4 basic types of goals you can set up:

Goal	Completed when	Example
*Destination	A user lands on a specific URL	Track every time someone visits the "Plan my trip" page of your website
Duration	A user spends x or more time on your site	Track every time someone stays on your site for 5 min or longer
Pages per session	A user visit x or more pages on your site in one session	Track every time someone visits 5 or more pages on your website in one session
Event	A user interacts with a specific element on your site	Track every time someone clicks a CTA that leads to a tourism partner, to measure how much traffic you're driving to their site

*We recommend starting with destination goals -- they're simple to set up, and you can get creative with them!

Use Case: How to set up a goal to track newsletter sign-ups

You can set up an event goal to track the same thing, however, it requires more manual tweaking of your site's backend code.

Here, you just have to create a thank you page, where people are redirected after subscribing to your newsletter. Since the only way to get to that URL is by pressing "submit form", you (and Google Analytics) know that every time someone lands on that page, you've completed this goal.

STEP 1

STEP 2

5. How to Setup Google Analytics

Here is how to get your Google Analytics up and running.

Learn how to:

A. Get your Google Analytics up and running

B. Set up multiple sites under one account

C. Filter out your own IP address

How to Setup Google Analytics on Your Site

Setting up Google Analytics is relatively straightforward. In the admin panel, find the "Tracking Info" page to get your unique tracking code. Then, insert that code into the header html of every page you want to track.

Give it some time (an hour or two) and then you can verify if its working.
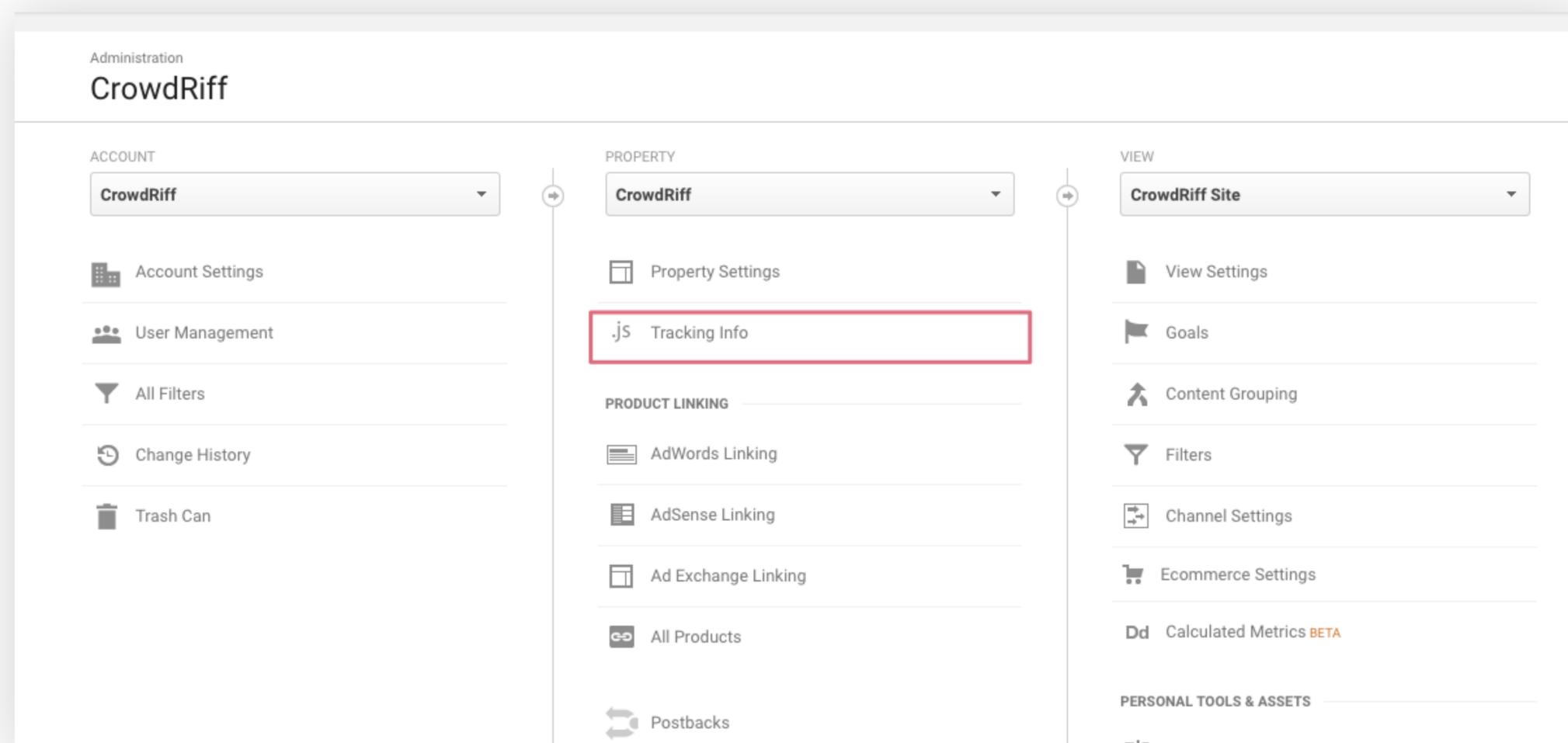
💡 Tip: If you're using a website theme, for example on WordPress, where you have a consistent header across your entire website, you'd only have to insert the code there once! (That's what we did!)

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Setting up Multiple Sites

If you have a microsite, or a blog with its own subdomain, you'll want to set up Google Analytics to track those sites too. From the admin panel, go to "Create new property".
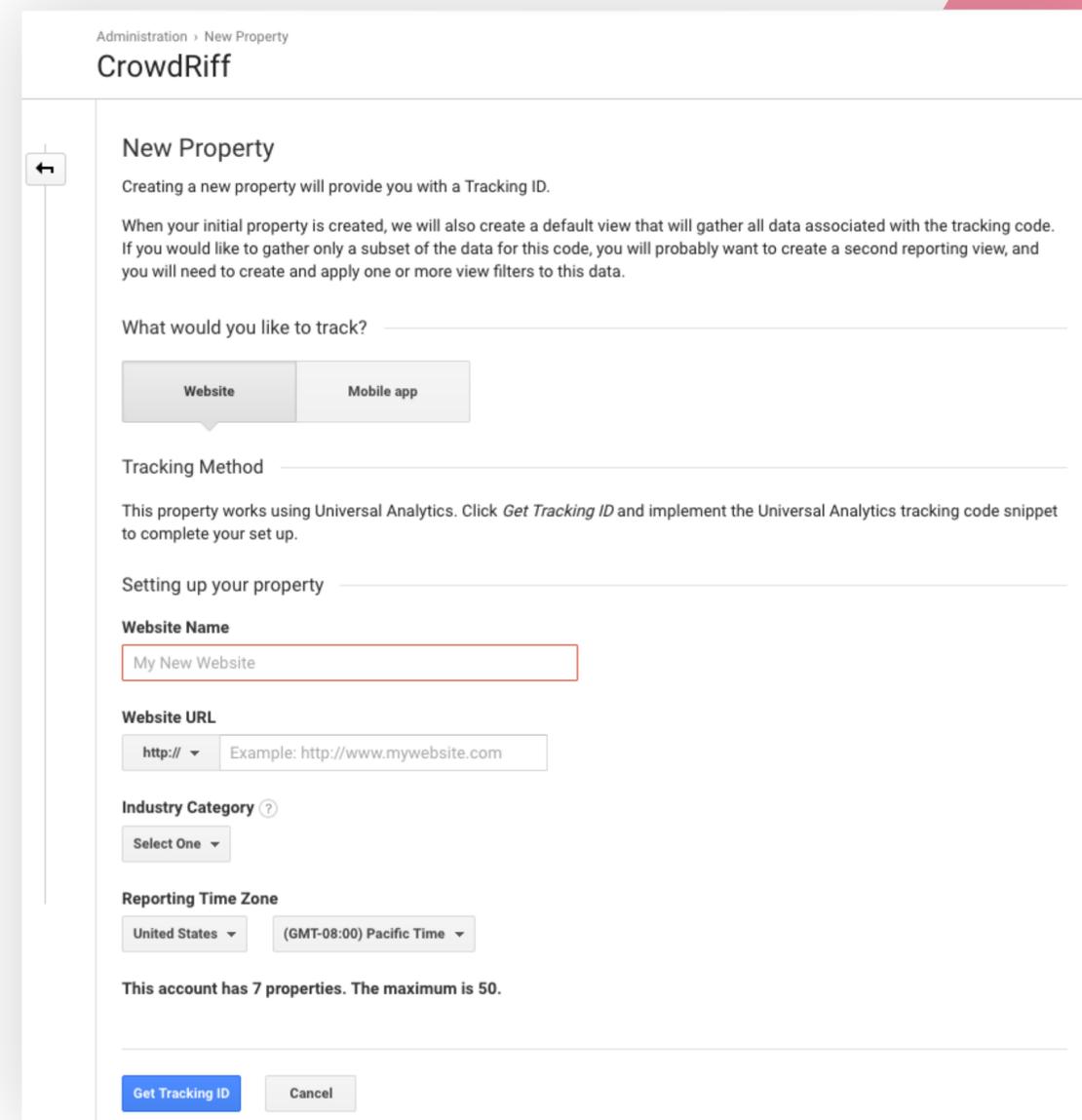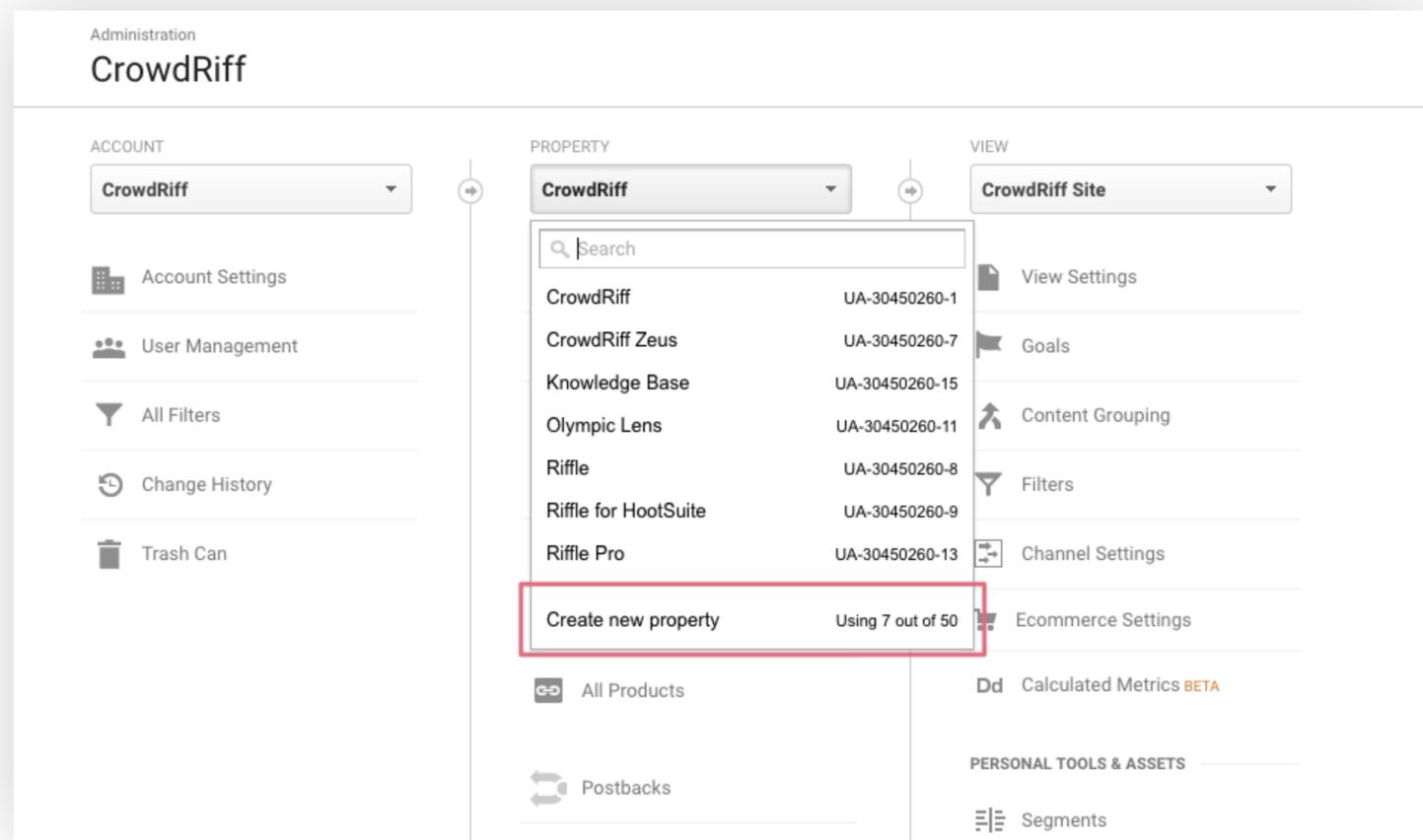
This will give you another Tracking ID, which you'd put into the html of the code, just like you set up your first site.

How to Filter Out Your Own IP Address

You want to track the activity of travelers on your website -- not your own. But chances are you'll probably be spending a lot of time on your website, browsing multiple pages and starting multiple sessions. In order to exclude your own behavior from Google Analytics, you can filter out your own IP address.

From the Admin panel, go to Filters, and then Add Filter.

Tip: To find your IP just type 'What's my IP' into Google.

Google Analytics: Unlocked!

There you have it!

Now you know the kind of data you can find in Google Analytics, and how to translate those numbers into tangible insights.

In the hands of a marketer, Google Analytics is an essential tool that can help you optimize your website, and captivate and inspire more travelers.

Keep exploring, because there's so much more to find and discover.

Speaking of which…

Google Analytics: Unleashed!

CrowdRiff helps you measure the impact of your visuals

CrowdRiff's Google Analytics integration captures every interaction website visitors have with your galleries.

It tells you what was clicked, what action was taken, and even provides links back to your library so you can take action immediately!

CrowdRiff allows you to leverage Google's deep demographic and behavioral data to understand the impact of your visuals on the bigger picture.

Further Reading
How to Get Board Approval for a Visual Marketing Platform
5 Ways CrowdRiff Helps DMOs Be Better Visual Influencers
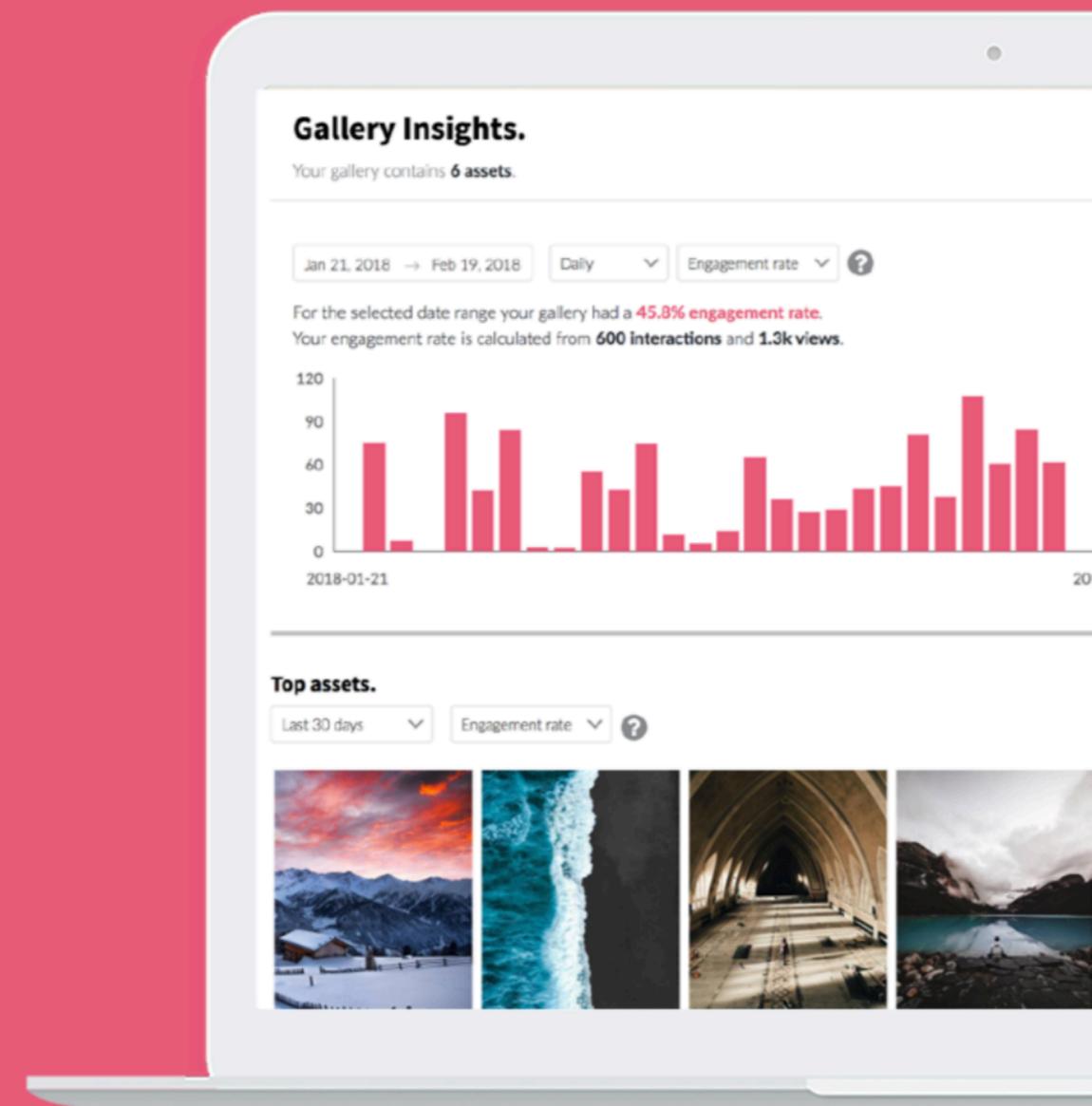
Make your website work better for you

CrowdRiff can help you improve your marketing performance. Travel brands that use CrowdRiff's visual marketing platform see stats like:

4x
INCREASE IN TIME ON SITE

30%
LOWER BOUNCE RATE

20%
INCREASE IN TRAFFIC TO TOURISM PARTNERS AND DEMO LINK

RIGHT NOW IN
PRAGUE,

854,968 photos are being shared by **239,546** social users.

Use them, and supercharge your marketing, in minutes.

LEARN MORE
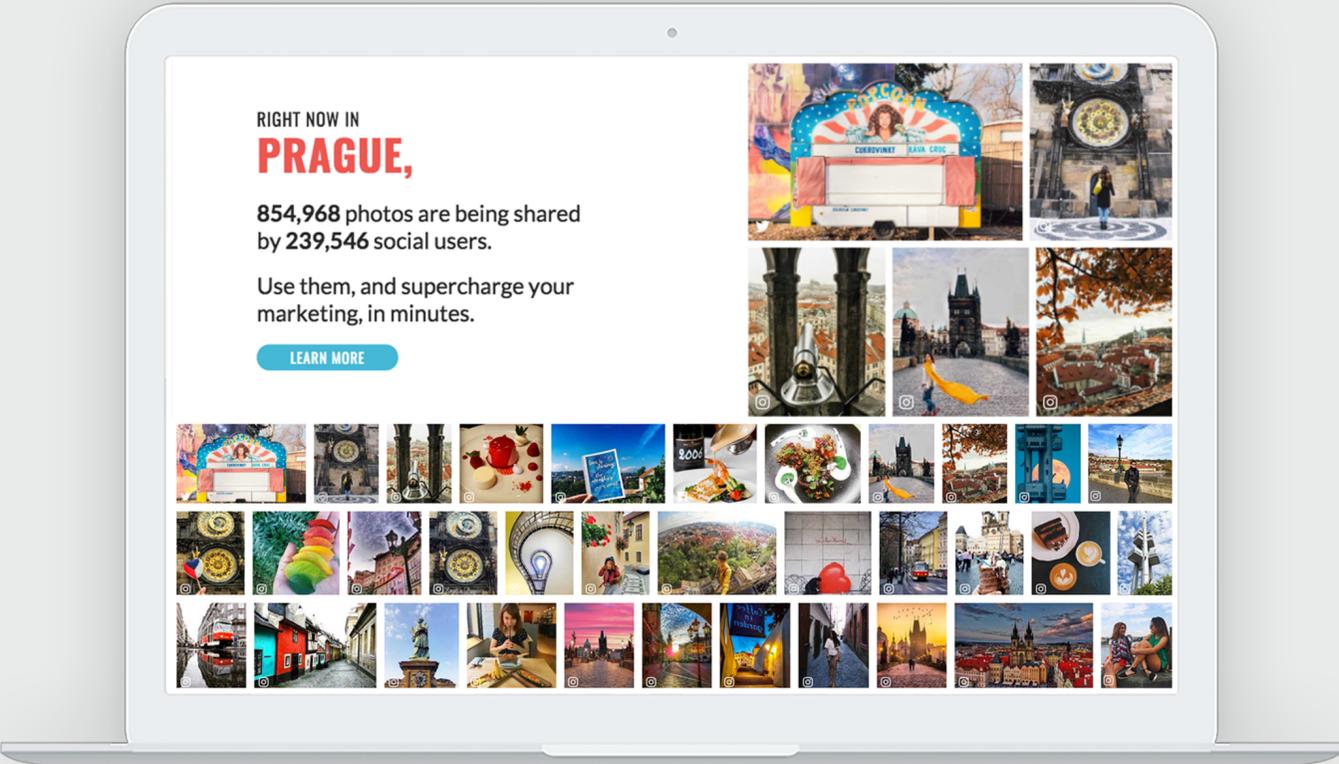
Want to achieve stats like these on your website?

Book a demo today, and discover how CrowdRiff visual can transform your website into your greatest marketing tool.

Book Your Demo

CrowdRiff