

The 35 most noteworthy differences between UA and GA4

- 01. The measurement model has changed** from being based on sessions and pageviews to being based on events and activity
- 02. Cross-platform tracking is enhanced** in GA4 because different devices now share the same schema
- 03. Bounce rates have been reduced** in GA4 to only apply to a session that has failed to trigger an event such as scrolling, or that has left after less than 10 seconds
- 04. Bounce rates have been replaced** by engage rates, which qualify an engaged sessions with time and event parameters, rather than just whether the user navigated the site or not
- 05. Session counting is now predicated on engaged sessions** in GA4, rather than total sessions counting as was standard in UA
- 06. Total user numbers will appear differently** across both iterations because UA doesn't segment new vs returning users, but GA4 does
- 07. Tracking IDs have changed**, with GA4 IDs starting with a G instead of a UA
- 08. User ID is used instead of Client ID** for tracking user data in GA4
- 09. Unique characters are assigned to User IDs** in GA4 to help recognise returning visits and cross-platform behaviour
- 10. App Instance ID replaces Client ID** for mobile app users in GA4
- 11. The reporting interface will appear different** due to some measurement instruments being renamed, removed or replaced
- 12. Multi-channel attribution is now more viable** thanks to improvements in cross-platform tracking in GA4
- 13. 'Hits are 'Events' in GA4**, and the parameters that can be set for each hit are more customisable
- 14. Late hits can be tracked for longer** in GA4 - up to 72hrs rather than UA's ability to track them for 4hrs
- 15. Enhanced Ecommerce tracking** is still being developed in GA4 and is far less comprehensive than in UA
- 16. Custom dimensions in GA4** have replaced the 'Hit' and 'Session' scopes with 'Event' to more accurately account user activity
- 17. Custom metrics in GA4** reflect the changes to dimensions, with all previously selectable scopes now being replaced by the 'Event' scope
- 18. Creating additional data views is no longer possible** in GA4, but data streams for your site and apps is possible
- 19. Creating additional reporting views is no longer possible** in GA4, but data streams for your site and apps is possible and can be used as alternatives
- 20. Event tracking is more flexible** in GA4, with up to 25 possible custom parameters per event
- 21. Event scoped segment creation is now possible** in GA4, rather than being limited to just user scopes segments in UA
- 22. Multiple conversion counting per session is now possible** in GA4, whereas UA could only record one conversion per session regardless of how many conversions there actually were
- 23. Conversions that satisfy multiple conditions** weren't possible in UA because conversions had to be based around four established parameters, but in GA4 you can by creating custom audience triggers
- 24. Pageviews combine pageviews and screenviews** in GA4, whereas UA only showed pageviews
- 25. Sessions are calculated differently**, with GA4 using the event metric, and UA using the hits metric
- 26. Certain event tracking events are now automated**, including scrolling, outbound clicks, video playback and downloads
- 27. Event data for inactive users can be retained** for a customisable length of time before being deleted in GA4
- 28. Content grouping** is created by adding a new group in UA, but in GA4 you'll need to use the predefined parameter to auto populate the grouping
- 29. Funnel creation has been greatly improved** in GA4, with the ability to create them easily and apply advanced segments which UA was not capable of
- 30. A new DebugView Report is available** in the GA4 reporting interface which wasn't possible in UA
- 31. A new Explorations report template suite** has been added to the GA4 reporting space
- 32. IP anonymisation is enabled by default** in GA4 and cannot be disable, unlike in UA
- 33. BigQuery is is a free connection** through GA4, unlike in UA
- 34. Spam data prevention** was lacking in UA, but has been addressed in GA4 by mandating that a secret key be used in all hits, which are only available for GA4 users
- 35. Web purchase counts remain unaltered**, but for consistent data across GA4 and UA, make sure you are using a unique transaction ID value