



An Introduction To

# GOOGLE ANALYTICS

For Real Estate

How Leveraging Analytics  
Can Help You Boost Traffic  
& Attract More Business

**Placester**



## Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION



---

*“Any serious business working in real estate has a website these days. And like any business operating in the online world, the intelligence from web analytics can be used to improve business performance.”*

*- Peter O’Neill, L3 Analytics*

---

*Is Your Real  
Estate Website  
Working?*

## The real estate marketing landscape has changed.

Love it or hate it, the real estate marketing landscape has changed. While open houses, phone calls, and other offline activities are still essential to a successful real estate business, the need for an active online presence has never been greater. What’s more, monitoring the performance of your online presence is becoming increasingly important.

# The Online Real Estate Landscape

By the Numbers

**90%**

**90%** of homebuyers are now turning to online sources when searching for a home

Over the past four years, real estate-related Google searches have grown **253%**. Homebuyers perform an average of **11 searches** before taking action on a real estate site

**253%**

**78%**

**78%** of homebuyers visit at least three real estate sites before taking action on a site

Sources:

<http://www.realtor.org/reports/digital-house-hunt>

---

***More and more homebuyers are making up their minds about the properties they're interested in online before moving the conversation offline.***

---

As a real estate agent, the options for measuring interest in your listings used to be quite limited. For example, maybe you'd take out an ad in a local newspaper and track how many people contacted you about it. Or maybe you'd hold an open house and count how many people walked through the door.

Today, such approaches to gauging homebuyer interest just aren't going to cut it. As the data illustrates, more and

more homebuyers are making up their minds about the properties they're interested in online before moving the conversation offline.

In this new real estate marketing landscape, real estate websites are the equivalent of shop windows: Prospective homebuyers show up to see photos and floor plans, to learn about neighborhoods and school systems, and to see if the agent (or company) is one that they

---

***Google Analytics lets you track the activity on your website.***

---

want to do business with. So, how do you ensure that YOUR real estate website is a lean, mean, property-selling machine? The answer: get analytical.

***“Analytics is simply a way for you to track the activity on your website. The number of visits it receives, where people come from, how long they stay, and what they’re looking at while they’re on your site.”***  
***-Jeff Bernheisel, 1000watt***

---

*Read on to learn the ins and outs of using Google Analytics for real estate and how you can leverage analytics to boost traffic and attract more business.*

---

## This eBook will show you:

- Why you should use Google Analytics for real estate
- How to set up Google Analytics
- How to interpret basic Google Analytics metrics
- How to manage Reports & Dashboards in Google Analytics
- How Google Analytics can measure social media/content marketing
- How Google Analytics can measure conversion
- How to use marketing to improve analytics outcomes



# What Is Google Analytics?

Google Analytics

Google Analytics, sometimes abbreviated as “GA,” is a free service offered by Google that generates detailed statistics about how visitors are getting to your website and what they are doing once they’re there.

It is a quantitative tool, which is a fancy way of saying that it measures things in terms of quantity.





## WHAT IS GOOGLE ANALYTICS?

---

*With Google Analytics, you can measure: visitors, traffic sources, content, & goals.*

---

Specifically, Google Analytics can measure:

- Visitors (e.g. How many people are visiting your site?)
- Traffic sources (e.g. Which sites are sending the most visitors your way?)
- Content (e.g. Which pages on your site receive the most traffic?)
- Goals (e.g. How many visitors to your site are performing specific actions?)



## WHAT IS GOOGLE ANALYTICS?

---

*Google purchased Google Analytics (formerly “Urchin on Demand”) from Urchin Software Corp. in 2005*

---

Google Analytics is able to make all of these measurements via a “page tag” (called the Google Analytics Tracking Code), which is a snippet of code that lives on all of the pages of your website. The page tag collects visitor data and sends it to Google Analytics, where it is then organized into charts, graphs, and lists.

Unlike earlier analytics tools, which were geared toward technologists and webmasters, **Google Analytics was created for marketers**. So, while you might be hesitant to use Google Analytics on your real estate website due to a



## WHAT IS GOOGLE ANALYTICS?

---

*Google Analytics  
was made for  
marketers, not  
webmasters.*

---

lack of technical knowledge, fear not: Google had YOU in mind when they released Google Analytics back in 2005. Today, Google Analytics is the most popular web analytics tool available.



# Google Analytics Usage

By the Numbers

14 million

More than **14 million** websites  
use Google Analytics

55%

**55%** of the top **10,000 websites**  
use Google Analytics

51%

**51%** of Fortune **500 websites**  
use Google Analytics

Sources:

<http://trends.builtwith.com/analytics/Google-Analytics>

<http://www.trendslide.com/blog/fun-facts-about-google-analytics/>

<http://www.e-nor.com/blog/web-analytics/51-of-fortune-500-companies-use-google-analytics>

# Why Use Google Analytics for Real Estate?



Real estate professionals can spend anywhere from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands of dollars on real estate websites and marketing campaigns. Typical costs include:

- Hosting
- Design
- IDX/MLS Integration
- Listing syndication





## WHY USE GOOGLE ANALYTICS?

---

*Online real estate marketing costs include: hosting, design, IDX/MLS integration, listing syndication*

---

Unfortunately, many in the industry take a “set it and forget it” approach to their real estate marketing strategies. Once their websites are up and running and their listings are being showcased on partner sites, they simply wait for homebuyers to reach out to them.

The problem with this approach, of course, is that it doesn’t provide any insight as to what’s working and what isn’t. It could very well be the case that a ten thousand dollar website is only seeing a handful of visitors each day, or that an expensive syndication



## WHY USE GOOGLE ANALYTICS?

---

*“The biggest benefit of analytics to an end user, whether that’s a brokerage or an individual agent, is the ability to monitor the overall health of your website”*

*- Jeff Bernheisel,  
1000watt*

---

partner isn’t driving nearly as much traffic as they promised.

This is exactly where Google Analytics comes into play: It allows you to measure the performance of your real estate website as well as the effectiveness of your marketing efforts.

Want to know how many visitors partner sites like Trulia, Zillow, or Realtor.com are sending your way? Google Analytics can show you. And once you have that data,



## WHY USE GOOGLE ANALYTICS?

---

***With Google Analytics, you can find out if syndication partners are driving the results they promised.***

---

you can make an informed decision as to whether or not partnering with those sites is a worthwhile investment.

But that's just one example. Once you have Google Analytics set up on your real estate website, you'll be able to...

- Find out how visitors are getting to your site (Google search? Referral traffic? Direct?)
- Learn which of your pages are driving the most traffic and which are getting the most social sharing (Blog post? Homepage? Listing search page?)

## WHY USE GOOGLE ANALYTICS?

---

*“Google Analytics enables you to measure conversion, user engagement, technology trends, and more. Best of all, it’s free.”*

*-Tom Flanagan,  
Residential  
Properties*

---

- Discover what parts of your website are generating the most leads through conversion events (Contact form? Newsletter signup? Social sharing button?)

Now that you have an idea of the benefits that Google Analytics can provide, let’s take a quick look at the cost: \$0. While a premium version of the program does exist, you can get all of the basic features of Google Analytics free of charge. So, are you ready to start measuring the performance of your real estate website? We’ll show you how to get started with Google Analytics in the next chapter.

## Chapter 2

# GETTING STARTED WITH GOOGLE ANALYTICS

## Set It Up and Learn the Basics

Now that you know what Google Analytics is and what benefits it can provide, it's time to get the program up and running on your real estate website so you can start measuring performance. Instead of bombarding you with every itty-bitty detail about how you can use Google Analytics, this chapter will provide you with a jumping-off point. (We'll dive a little deeper in the next chapter.)

# How to Install Google Analytics

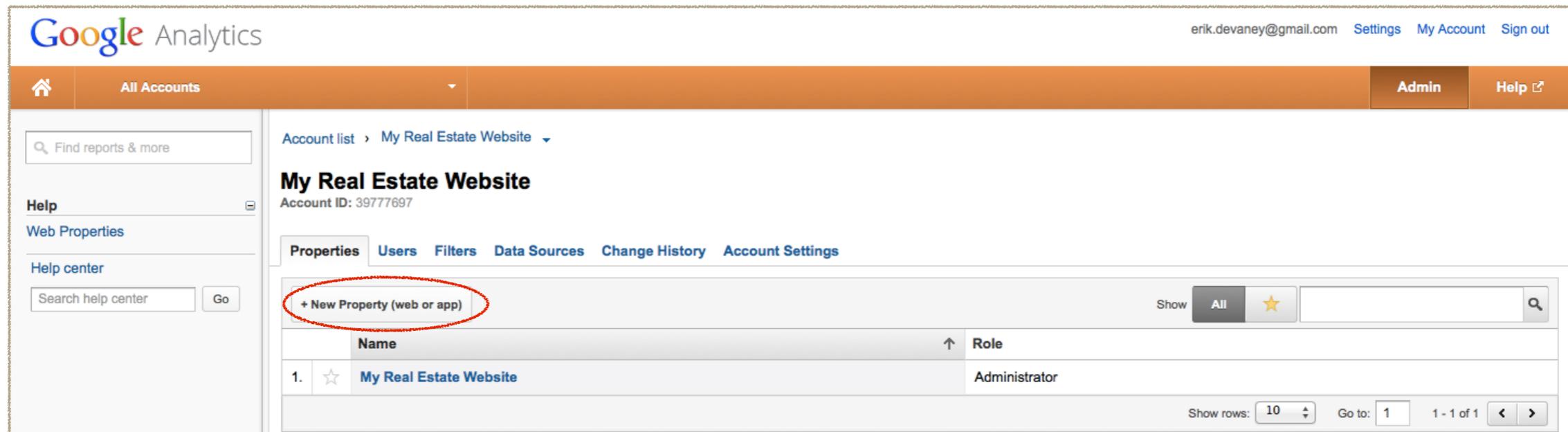


In this section, we'll give you step-by-step instructions for getting Google Analytics set up on your real estate website. (Already have Google Analytics installed? Skip ahead to the next section to learn about some basic Google Analytics metrics that you should be monitoring.)

- **Step 1:** First thing's first: You need to sign up for an account at <http://www.google.com/analytics>.
- **Step 2:** Once you're signed up, log into your account and head to the Admin tab at the top right of the page.

## HOW TO INSTALL GOOGLE ANALYTICS

- **Step 3:** From Admin, select the account that you created in Step 1 and click “+ New Property.”



The screenshot shows the Google Analytics Admin interface. At the top, the Google Analytics logo is on the left, and the user's email (erik.devaney@gmail.com) and links for Settings, My Account, and Sign out are on the right. Below the header, there's a navigation bar with 'All Accounts' and 'Admin' (selected) and 'Help'. The main content area is titled 'My Real Estate Website' with Account ID: 39777697. There are tabs for Properties, Users, Filters, Data Sources, Change History, and Account Settings. The 'Properties' tab is active, showing a table with one property: 'My Real Estate Website' with the role of 'Administrator'. A red circle highlights the '+ New Property (web or app)' button in the top left of the Properties section.

- **Step 4:** On the next screen, Google Analytics will have the tracking options you need preselected. So you can go ahead and scroll down to the “Setting up your web property” section and enter your website’s name, URL (aka web address), and time zone. When you’re finished, click “Get Tracking ID.”

## HOW TO INSTALL GOOGLE ANALYTICS

**What would you like to track?**

Creating a new property will provide you with a Tracking ID.

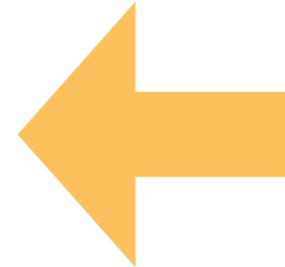
When your initial property is created, we will also create a default profile that will gather all data associated with the tracking code. If you would like to gather only a subset of the data for this code, you will probably want to create a second reporting profile, and you will need to create and apply one or more profile filters to this data.

**Web Site** | **App**

Track web sites whose HTML you control | Track interactions within Android and iOS apps

**Select a tracking method**

Features	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Universal Analytics <small>BETA</small>	<input type="radio"/> Classic Analytics
Basic GA features (Visitor acquisition, behavior, and conversion data)	✓	✓
Event tracking	✓	✓
AdWords account linking	✓	✓
Custom variables	Upgrade to custom dimensions & metrics	
Custom dimensions & metrics	✓	
Online/offline data sync	✓	
Multi-platform tracking	✓	
Simplified configuration controls	✓	
Select new feature releases	✓	
Advanced advertisement tools (AdSense, Content Experiments, DFA, Remarketing)	Coming soon	



Google Analytics is set to track a website (as opposed to an app) by default. The latest version of its tracking software (Universal Analytics) is also selected by default.

Click the blue button to get your tracking ID.



**Setting up your web property**

**Website Name**  
MyRealEstateWebsite.com

**Web Site URL**  
http:// www.myrealestatewebsite.com  
Example: http://www.mywebsite.com

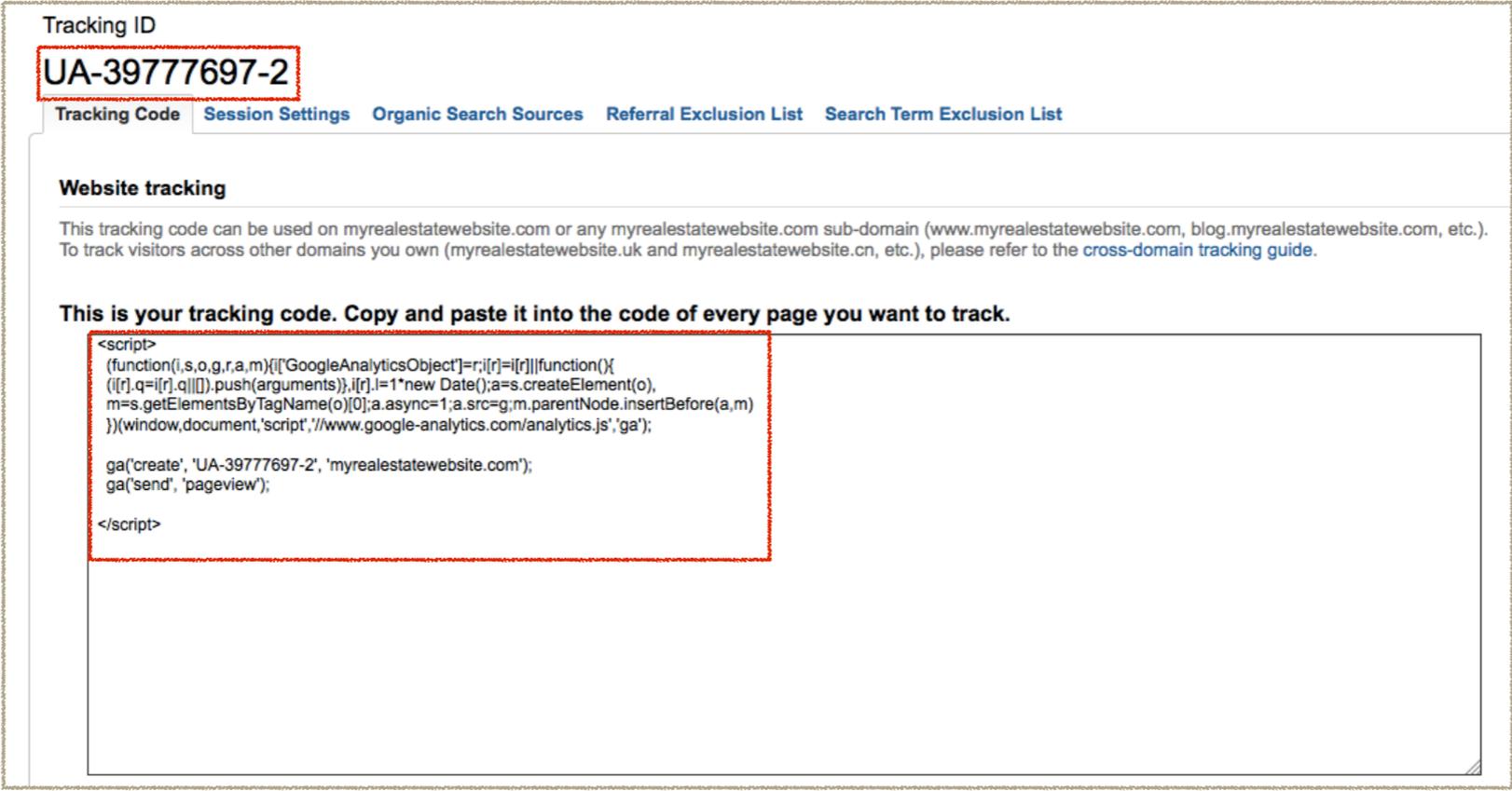
**Industry Category** ?  
Select One

**Reporting Time Zone**  
United States (GMT-05:00) Eastern Time

**Get Tracking ID** Cancel

## HOW TO INSTALL GOOGLE ANALYTICS

- **Step 5 (for non-Placester websites):** Here's where things get a little tricky. You need to copy the tracking code snippet and paste it into your website's source code just before the `</head>` tag. If you don't have access to your site's source code (or don't know what the heck "source code" is), get in touch with your website's manager/developer and ask for assistance.



The screenshot shows the Google Analytics interface. On the left, two orange arrows point to the interface: one labeled "Tracking ID" pointing to the "Tracking ID" field, and another labeled "Tracking code" pointing to the "Tracking Code" field. The "Tracking ID" field contains the value "UA-39777697-2". The "Tracking Code" field contains the following JavaScript code snippet:

```
<script>
(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){(['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]]function(){
  ([r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o),
  m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m)
})(window,document,'script','//www.google-analytics.com/analytics.js','ga');

ga('create', 'UA-39777697-2', 'myrealestatewebsite.com');
ga('send', 'pageview');

</script>
```

## HOW TO INSTALL GOOGLE ANALYTICS

- **Step 5 (for Placester websites):** Head to the Theme Options section in your WordPress Dashboard and copy/paste your Tracking ID (UA-XXXXXXXX-X) into the field labeled “Google Analytics Tracking Code.” Don’t forget to click “Save Options.”

The screenshot shows the 'Theme Options' panel in a WordPress dashboard. It is divided into three sections: 'Featured Listings', 'Google Analytics Tracking Code', and 'Display Theme Debug Messages'. The 'Google Analytics Tracking Code' section is highlighted with a red border and contains a text input field and a button labeled 'Pick featured listings'. Below the input field is a note: 'Add your google analytics tracking ID code here. It looks something like this: UA-XXXXXXXX-X'. At the bottom of the panel are two buttons: 'Restore Defaults' and 'Save Options'.

**Featured Listings**

[Pick featured listings](#) Select your featured listings here that will display in your sidebar listings widget as well as on the home page's featured list.

You haven't set any featured listings yet. Currently, a random selection of listings are being displayed until you pick some. If you previously picked listings, and now they are missing, it's because you (or your MLS), has marked them inactive, sold, rented, or they've been deleted.

**Google Analytics Tracking Code**

Add your google analytics tracking ID code here. It looks something like this: UA-XXXXXXXX-X

**Display Theme Debug Messages**

Display the theme debug panel at the bottom of all non-admin pages. Great for debugging issues with the themes.

[Restore Defaults](#) [Save Options](#)

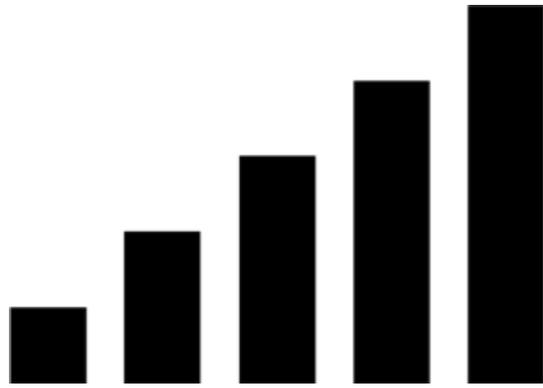
---

***Note: After installation, it can take up to 24 hours for data to appear in your Google Analytics account.***

---

Once you've added the tracking code to your website, it can take up to 24 hours for all of the data to appear in your Google Analytics account. When the data does show up, don't freak out! Seeing all of those charts, graphs, and lists can be a bit overwhelming at first. But trust us: soon it will all make sense.

# Understanding Basic Google Analytics Metrics



When you first dive into your Google Analytics account, you will likely have two questions on your mind, namely: “What am I looking at?” and “What am I looking for?”

We touched on the answer to the first question in Chapter 1: you’re looking at various data sets, or metrics, which provide insight into how visitors are getting to your website and what they are doing once they’re there.

---

***“I think the biggest challenge (anyone) faces in using analytics is understanding what it all means. All these numbers can seem very overwhelming at first.”***  
***-Jeff Bernheisel,  
1000watt***

---

To answer the second question, you should be looking for the best possible results for all of those metrics. So, what exactly does that look like? Let’s break it down metric by metric.



**Visits** - Each and every time someone visits your website, Google Analytics registers it as a “visit.” In general, you want this number to be as high as possible. (Keep in mind, however, that visits alone aren’t always a strong indicator of your site’s success.)

---

***Learn the lingo:  
“Uniques” is short  
for “Unique  
Visitors.”***

---



**Unique Visitors** - If you don't count repeat visitors (wherein the same person visits your site more than once), what you're left with is unique visitors or "uniques." Many marketers consider uniques to be more important than visits, as they do a better job of representing how many individual people are interested in your site.



**Pageviews** - Simply put, pageviews are the total number of times pages on your site are viewed. In general, the more pageviews, the better.

---

***In general, you want your site to have high Pages / Visit and Avg. Visit Duration. (However, there are exceptions.)***

---



**Pages / Visit** - This is the average number of pages viewed during a visit to your site. A high average could mean that visitors are engaging with your content. However, it could also indicate that visitors are having trouble finding what they're looking for on your site.



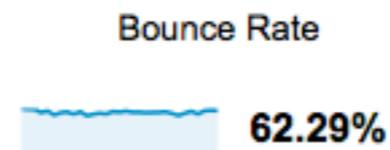
**Avg. Visit Duration** - This is the length of time the average visitor spends on your site during a particular visit. As with pages / visit, a high average visit duration could be

---

*In general, the lower  
the bounce rate,  
the better.*

---

considered positive. Alternatively, it could mean visitors are struggling to find what they're looking for.

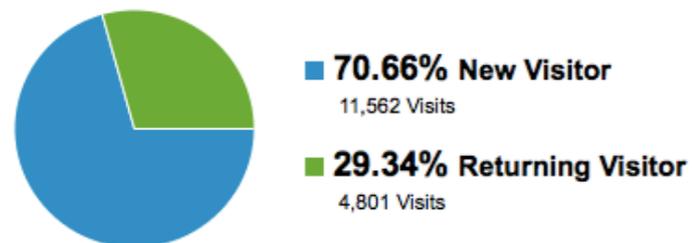


**Bounce Rate** - Bounce rate is the percentage of visitors who come to your site and leave without viewing any other

pages. A high bounce rate is generally a bad thing, as it indicates that visitors don't want to engage with your site. However, it could also indicate that visitors are finding what they're looking for right away (so they don't need to continue searching on other pages).

## UNDERSTANDING BASIC METRICS

*In addition to listing the % New Visits metric, Google Analytics provides a pie chart showing % New Visitors vs. % Returning Visitors.*



% New Visits



**% New Visits** - This one's pretty self explanatory: it's the percentage of first-time visitors to your site. While a high percentage is generally considered positive, it might also indicate that visitors aren't finding much value in your site, which is why they aren't returning.

Of course, making sense of these metrics is difficult if you don't know the timeframe. For example, while getting 5,000 uniques in the span of a single day would

---

*The default date range for Google Analytics is the past 31 days from yesterday, which gives you an overview of the past month's activity.*

---

likely be something to celebrate, getting 5,000 uniques in the span of an entire year wouldn't be so great. So, when you're observing metrics in Google Analytics, make sure you pay attention to the date range. You can control the date range using the widget in the top right corner of the page.

Changes to the date range will also be reflected in the chart at the top of the page. You can control which metric is depicted in this chart using the widget at the top left, and can even select two metrics for a comparative view.

## Audience Overview

Mar 2, 2013 - Apr 1, 2013

Advanced Segments | Email | Export | Add to Dashboard | Shortcut

Control the date range for all of your metrics

Control the metric (or metrics) that appear in the chart

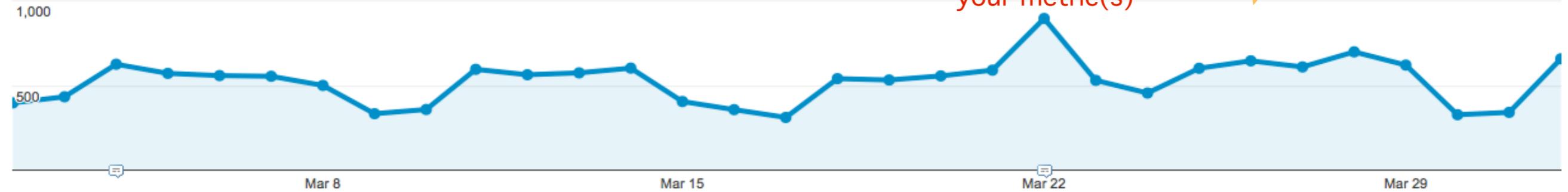
Control how the chart presents your metric(s)

% of visits: 100.00%

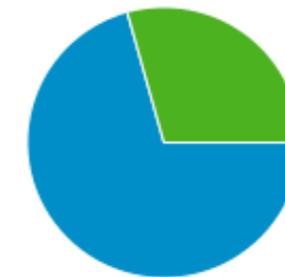
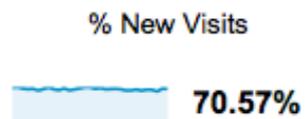
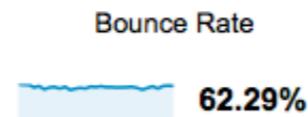
### Overview

Visits vs. Select a metric

Visits



## 12,345 people visited this site



**70.66% New Visitor**  
11,562 Visits

**29.34% Returning Visitor**  
4,801 Visits

# Managing Reports & Dashboards in Google Analytics



All of the metrics we highlighted in the previous section are from the “Audience Overview” report, which is one of the many standard reports that Google Analytics provides. Standard reports organize related data, making it easier for you spot trends. For example, by looking at the “Mobile Overview” report (Audience > Mobile > Overview), you can see - amongst other things - if there’s a correlation between average visit duration and the percentage of visitors who access your site via a mobile device.

Find reports & more

**MY STUFF**

- Dashboards
- Shortcuts
- Intelligence Events
- STANDARD REPORTS**
- Real-Time
- Audience**
  - Overview
  - Demographics
  - Behavior
  - Technology
  - Mobile**
    - Overview**
    - Devices
    - Custom
    - Visitors Flow
- Traffic Sources
- Content
- Conversions
- Help

## Overview

Mar 2, 2013 - Apr 1, 2013

Advanced Segments | Customize | Email | Export | Add to Dashboard | Shortcut

% of visits: 100.00%

Explorer

Site Usage | Ecommerce

Visits vs. Select a metric

Day | Week | Month

Visits	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
<b>16,363</b> % of Total: 100.00% (16,363)	<b>2.20</b> Site Avg: 2.20 (0.00%)	<b>02:39</b> Site Avg: 02:39 (0.00%)	<b>70.57%</b> Site Avg: 70.57% (0.00%)	<b>62.29%</b> Site Avg: 62.29% (0.00%)

Primary Dimension: Mobile (Including Tablet)

Plot Rows | Secondary dimension | Sort Type: Default

	Visits	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile (Including Tablet)					
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. No	13,403	2.32	00:02:53	70.85%	59.34%
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Yes	2,960	1.65	00:01:33	69.80%	75.64%

Show rows: 10 | Go to: 1 | 1 - 2 of 2

Manage standard reports

View report data

By clicking the Email tab at the top of the page, you can also schedule standard reports to be sent to your inbox with the frequency of your choosing (once, daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly).

The screenshot displays the Google Analytics 'Overview' report for the period Mar 2, 2013 - Apr 1, 2013. The 'Email' tab is selected in the top navigation bar. An 'Email Report: Overview' dialog box is open, allowing users to schedule reports. The dialog box includes the following fields and options:

- From:** edevaney@placester.com
- To:** (empty text field)
- Subject:** Google Analytics: Overview
- Attachments:** CSV (dropdown), OVERVIEW (button)
- Frequency:** Weekly (dropdown menu is open, showing options: Once, Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly)
- Day of Week:** S, M, T, W, T, F, S (checkboxes)
- Buttons:** Send, Cancel

The background report shows a line chart for 'Visits' with a peak around 1,000 and a summary card indicating 16,363 visits, which is 100.00% of the total for the period.

---

*With a custom report, you can target the metrics that are most important to your business.*

---

Keep in mind, however, that Google Analytics wasn't built specifically for real estate professionals. So while standard reports are helpful, custom reports allow you to hone in even further on the metrics you find most important.

For example, say you wanted a snapshot of how many visitors Trulia, Zillow, and Realtor.com are sending to your website. Instead of searching through a standard "Traffic Sources" report, you could build a custom report that shows you only the traffic coming from those specific sites.

## MANAGING REPORTS &amp; DASHBOARDS

To build a custom report, go to the Customization tab at the top of the page and click “+ New Custom Report.”

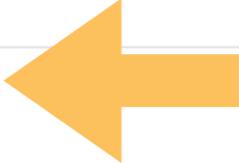
The screenshot shows the Google Analytics interface for managing custom reports. The top navigation bar includes the Google Analytics logo, the user's email address (edevaney@placester.com), and links for Settings, My Account, and Sign out. The main navigation bar has tabs for Reporting and Customization, with Customization being the active tab. On the left, there is a sidebar with a search bar and a list of report categories, including Custom Reports and Overview. The main content area is titled 'Custom Reports' and contains two buttons: '+ New Custom Report' (which is circled in red) and '+ New Category'. Below these buttons is a table with two columns: 'Title' and 'Creation Date'. The table is currently empty, and a message at the bottom of the table reads 'There is no data for this view.'

After naming your report, you’ll need to specify at least one metric and one dimension before your report can be saved. In this instance, a metric refers to a numeric measurement (such as a pageview), while a dimension describes who or what is being measured (such as new or returning visitors).

## MANAGING REPORTS &amp; DASHBOARDS

### Create Custom Report

**General Information**

Title   Name your report

**Report Content**

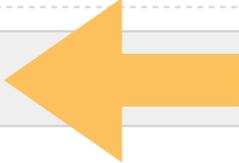
Report Tab  + add report tab Duplicate this tab

Type

Metric Groups

 Add at least one metric

Dimension Drilldowns

 Add at least one dimension

**Filters - optional**

**Profiles - optional**

Current Profile 'placester.com'

Additional Profiles

---

***Learn the lingo: A “dashboard” displays your most important Google Analytics data on a single page.***

---

In addition to using standard and custom reports to organize your Google Analytics data, you can use dashboards. Dashboards display summaries of reports as widgets on a single page, making it easy for you to monitor many different metrics at once.

Your Google Analytics account comes with a default dashboard (My Dashboard), which you can access via the Dashboards tab on the left sidebar.

You can customize the layout of this dashboard by clicking “Customize Dashboard” at the top right of the page, and you can add new charts, graphs, and lists to the dashboard by clicking “+ Add Widget” at the top left.

To start with an entirely blank canvas, you can create a new dashboard by clicking + New Dashboard from the Dashboards tab.

## My Dashboard

Mar 25, 2013 - Apr 3, 2013

MY STUFF

**Dashboards**

My Dashboard

**+ New Dashboard**

Shortcuts

Intelligence Events

Advanced Segments **+ Add Widget** Email Export

**Customize Dashboard**

### New Visits

### Unique Visitors

### Visits

### Visits by Browser

Browser	Visits
Chrome	2,194
Safari	1,054
Firefox	978
Internet Explorer	747
Safari (in-app)	139
Android Browser	129

### Bounce Rate

● Bounce Rate

100%

---

*The difference between Google Analytics reports and dashboards: reports are detailed and complex, dashboards are visual and interactive.*

---

As a real estate professional, some of the most important metrics to include in your dashboard are:

- Unique visitors
- Average visit duration
- Bounce rate
- Referral traffic

To help save you time, the Placester team created a Google Analytics dashboard that includes the most important metrics for real estate marketing.

[Click here to download our free real estate marketing dashboard.](#)

## Chapter 3

# DIGGING DEEPER

## Measuring Marketing Analytics & Conversion

In Chapter 2, we introduced you to some of the basic metrics you can monitor with Google Analytics and also showed you how to manage reports and dashboards. In Chapter 3, we'll dig a little deeper and turn our attention to how you can use Google Analytics for measuring social media and content marketing, as well as for measuring conversion events.

# Using Google Analytics to Measure Social Media & Content Marketing



While Google Analytics is primarily a web analytics tool (i.e. it measures the performance of your website), it can also be used for marketing analytics. Marketing analytics is the measurement of the performance of your marketing activities, including your social media marketing and content marketing efforts.

As you've probably realized, you can view some social media and content marketing metrics (like followers,

---

***Definition:***  
***Marketing analytics -***  
***the measurement of***  
***the efficiency and***  
***effectiveness of your***  
***marketing***  
***campaigns***

---

fans, likes, and shares) directly on your blog or in your social media accounts. The problem with such metrics, however, is that they really only tell part of the story.

For example, you might be disappointed to see that over the course of a week, a new blog post of yours received only one Facebook like. What you might not see, however, is that during that same week, your post was viewed thousands of times. The takeaway? Don't get caught up in so-called "vanity metrics" like Facebook likes. The more important thing is that visitors are engaging with your content and converting into leads.

---

***“Vanity metrics look good on the surface. However, these metrics can create a false sense of security.”***

***-Tom Flanagan,  
Residential  
Properties***

---

With Google Analytics, you can get more insight into your social media and content marketing performance by looking at the following:

- How much traffic your blog posts are receiving (Standard Reports > Content > Overview)
- The number and percentage of visitors coming to your site from different social networks (Standard Reports > Traffic Sources > Social > Overview)
- [Where your content is being shared the most](#)

---

*The Google Analytics URL Builder is a free tool that helps you add tracking tags to your URLs.*

---

To observe this final metric, you'll need to set up a custom campaign using Google Analytics' [URL Builder](#). By assigning tags that correspond to the different social networks you're posting to, you can measure which social networks are producing the best results.

Specifically, you'll need to add three parameters to a URL to track it: campaign source, campaign medium, and campaign name. For example, if you wanted to monitor how a blog post performs on Twitter, you would take the blog's URL and use the URL Builder to add `utm_source=twitter` (which indicates that Twitter is the

---

*Once your URL has  
been generated,  
you'll be ready to  
copy, paste,  
and post!*

---

traffic source), utm\_medium=social (which indicates that the URL is being accessed from a page on a social network), and utm\_campaign=smm (which indicates that the URL belongs to your “social media marketing” campaign).

Your finished URL would look something like this:

`http://www.MyRealEstateWebsite.com/sample-blog-post/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=smm`

## Google Analytics URL Builder

**Step 1:** Enter the URL of your website.

**Website URL \***

http://www.MyRealEstateWebs

(e.g. http://www.urchin.com/download.html)

What page do you want to track?

**Step 2:** Fill in the fields below. **Campaign Source, Campaign Medium and Campaign Name** should always be used.

**Campaign Source \***

twitter

(referrer: google, citysearch, newsletter4)

Where are you going to post?

**Campaign Medium \***

social

(marketing medium: cpc, banner, email)

What type of marketing?

**Campaign Term**

(identify the paid keywords)

**Campaign Content**

(use to differentiate ads)

**Campaign Name \***

smm

(product, promo code, or slogan)

What do you want to call your campaign?

Submit

Click "Submit" to generate your URL

http://www.MyRealEstateWebsite.com/sample-blog-post/?utm\_source=twitter&utm\_medium=social&utm\_campaign=smm

---

*Where to monitor  
your tagged URLs:  
Standard Reports >  
Traffic Sources >  
Sources >  
Campaigns*

---

By swapping out “twitter” when posting the same URL to other social networks, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, or Google+, you can monitor how much activity those sites are driving as well. You can then compare the results side by side in Google Analytics to determine where most of your potential customers are hanging out. Just head to the “Traffic Sources” standard report, click “Sources,” and then click “Campaigns.”

# Using Google Analytics to Measure Conversion



While the previous sections of this eBook have focused primarily on how you can use Google Analytics to measure and characterize the traffic coming to your real estate site, it's now time to turn our attention toward what your visitors are doing once they reach your site.

Seeing an increase in unique visitors week over week is certainly exciting. However, it doesn't give you much insight as to how many of those visitors are taking action on your site and converting into leads. This is where Google Analytics' Goals come into play.

---

***Definition:***  
***Conversion event -***  
***an action or***  
***behavior that***  
***demonstrates***  
***consumer interest***

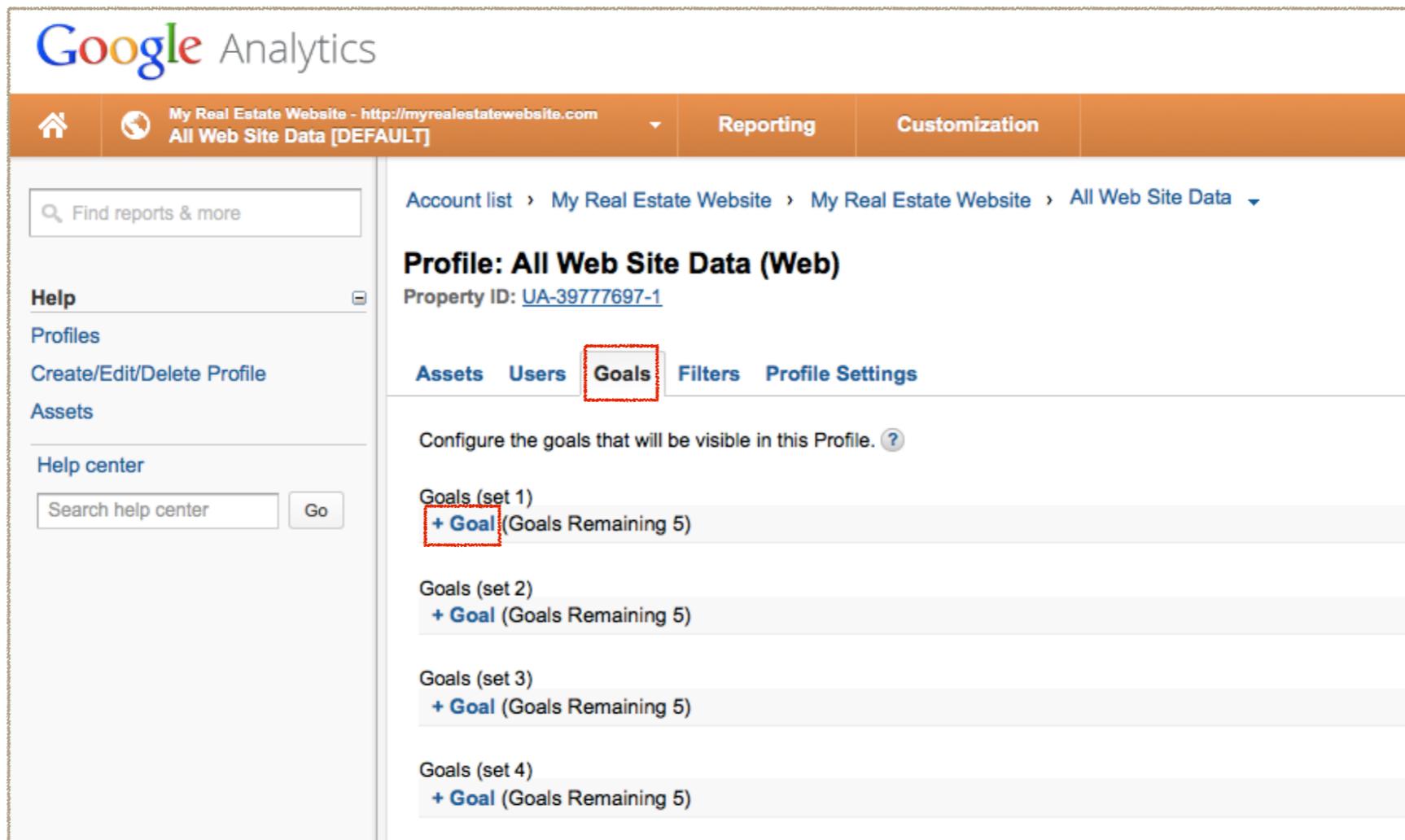
---

By setting up Goals, you can measure how many of your visitors are completing conversion events. Conversion events are specific actions or behaviors that demonstrate visitor interest. Examples include filling out a contact form, signing up for a newsletter, or staying on a site for an extended period of time. Visitors who complete conversion events have the potential to become valuable leads, as they've demonstrated interest in what you're offering.

Ready to set up some Goals so you can start measuring conversion? Here's how you do it:

## MEASURING CONVERSION

- Step 1: Head to the Admin tab at the top right of the page and select the profile you want to add a goal to.
- Step 2: Click the Goals tab (beneath the Profile menu) and then click “+ Goal.”



The screenshot displays the Google Analytics Admin interface. At the top, the Google Analytics logo is visible. Below it, the breadcrumb navigation shows: Account list > My Real Estate Website > My Real Estate Website > All Web Site Data. The main heading is "Profile: All Web Site Data (Web)" with the Property ID: UA-39777697-1. A navigation bar below the heading includes "Assets", "Users", "Goals", "Filters", and "Profile Settings". The "Goals" tab is selected and highlighted with a red box. Below this, there is a section titled "Configure the goals that will be visible in this Profile." followed by four goal sets, each with a "+ Goal" button and "(Goals Remaining 5)". The first "+ Goal" button is highlighted with a red box. On the left side, there is a sidebar with a search bar for reports and help center, and a list of navigation options including Help, Profiles, Create/Edit/Delete Profile, Assets, and Help center.

- **Step 3:** Enter a name for your Goal that you'll be able to recognize in reports (e.g. "Email signups")
- **Step 4:** If you want the Goal to apply as soon as you're finished setting it up, select "Active." Select "Inactive" if you want to create the Goal without applying it right away.
- **Step 5:** Select and configure a Goal Type from the following four options:
  1. **URL Destination** - triggers a conversion when a specific URL destination is reached, such as a "Thank You" screen
  2. **Visit Duration** - triggers a conversion when a visitor stays on your site for a specified period of time
  3. **Pages/Visit** - triggers a conversion when a visitor visits a specified number of pages
  4. **Event** - triggers a conversion when a specific action is taken, such as a download, video view, or email signup (Note: To create this type of Goal, you must first set up [Event Tracking](#).)

- Step 6: Click “Save.”

The screenshot shows a web interface for configuring goals. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Assets', 'Users', 'Goals' (selected), 'Filters', and 'Profile Settings'. Below the tabs, the page title is 'Goals > Goals (set 1): Goal 1'. The main section is titled 'General Information' and contains three form fields: 'Goal Name' (a text input field), 'Active/Inactive' (radio buttons, with 'Active' selected), and 'Goal Type' (radio buttons for 'URL Destination', 'Visit Duration', 'Page/Visit', and 'Event'). At the bottom left, there are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons. Three yellow arrows point from red text annotations to the 'Goal Name', 'Active/Inactive', and 'Goal Type' fields. The annotations are: 'What are you going to call your Goal?' pointing to the 'Goal Name' field; 'Do you want your Goal to be active immediately?' pointing to the 'Active' radio button; and 'What type of Goal do you want to set up?' pointing to the 'Goal Type' radio buttons.

Once you have your Goals set up, you can monitor them in the “Conversions” standard report under the “Goals” section.

## Chapter 4

# IMPROVING YOUR GOOGLE ANALYTICS OUTCOMES WITH MARKETING

*Measuring Is the  
First Part of the  
Equation*

**Get informed, then  
take action.**

As you've now learned, Google Analytics can provide you with a wealth of information about how your real estate website is performing. What it can't do, unfortunately, is take action to improve your site's performance. But fear not! As a capable real estate marketer, the power to improve your Google Analytics outcomes is in your hands.

---

***“The purpose of web analytics is to provide you with intelligence that you can use to make better decisions and improve performance.”***  
***- Peter O’Neill, L3 Analytics***

---

Here are a few tried and true examples of how you can use what you’ve learned in Google Analytics to inform your marketing efforts and boost your numbers:

## **Create More Content**

Low site traffic levels got you down? One solution is to ramp up your content production by publishing blog posts, videos, and other media more

frequently. Adding fresh, relevant content to your site will help you rank higher on search engines, making it easier for customers to find you. You’ll also have a lot more content to share on social networks, which can further increase your online presence.

Just remember that when you create content, you should always have your audience in mind. To help you figure out what type of content your prospective

---

***“One of the most powerful ways to use analytics is in combination with a keyword rank tracking tool so that you can monitor keyword positions and look for opportunities to grow very targeted traffic that converts well.” - Jeff Bernheisel, 1000watt***

---

customers enjoy the most, check out those social media and content marketing metrics we covered back in Chapter 3.

### Use Keywords

While content alone can go a long way in improving your Google Analytics outcomes, optimizing your content with relevant keywords will make it even more effective. To see what keywords

visitors are using to find your website, head to the “Traffic Sources” standard report, click on “Search,” and then click “Organic.”

You can also use free online tools (like [Google’s Keyword Tool](#)) to see how competitive different keywords are. (Pro tip: Nearly 70 percent of homebuyers who take action on real estate websites begin their searches with local keywords, such as “Boston homes for sale.” So

---

*Nearly 70 percent of homebuyers begin their searches with local keywords, such as “Boston homes for sale.”*

---

keep that in mind during your keyword research!) Once you’ve identified some keywords that you want your site to rank for, start weaving them into your content.

Depending on your budget, you might also want to consider using [Google Adwords](#) to target a list of keywords. Google Adwords is a Pay-Per-Click (PPC) service, which means you only have to pay when a prospect clicks on your ad.

One of the main perks of using Google Adwords for real estate is that it allows you to target geographic locations, making it easy for you to reach homebuyers only in the specific areas you cover.

## Integrate Social Media

If your content isn’t getting the type of social traction you had hoped for, the

---

*Incorporating social sharing buttons on to your site makes it easier for visitors to spread your content.*

---

problem could be that you're not making it easy for your audience to share.

To address this problem, make sure that all of your content (including your listings) is outfitted with share buttons for all of the major social networks. By making it easier for folks to share your content to Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, and Pinterest, you're increasing the likelihood with which your message

will be spread and your website will be discovered by interested parties.

## Final Thoughts

Using Google Analytics will not improve your real estate website's performance overnight. However, if you regularly monitor your reports and dashboards, and take actions based on your findings, you should start to see gradual improvements. Keep in mind that it

---

*With Google Analytics, persistence makes perfect.*

---

takes time for trends to develop. So even if you have one day of less-than-stellar results, don't be discouraged. Keep at it! And remember, if you ever need help, advice, or insight, Placester's [Real Estate Marketing Academy](#) is just a click away.

# Resources

## Google Analytics Alternatives



Whether you need additional functionality, want two analytics programs to cross-check for accuracy, or just have a grudge against Google, here are some other analytics options you can use to measure your real estate website's performance:

- Clicky
- MixPanel
- KISSmetrics
- Woopra
- FoxMetrics
- Mint



## Books

Cutroni, Justin. *Google Analytics*.

Ledford, Jerri L., Teixeira, Joe, & Tyler, Mary E. *Google Analytics, 3rd Edition*

Miller, Michael. *Sams Teach Yourself Google Analytics in 10 Minutes*

Carraway, Mike. *Real Estate Rocket Fuel: Internet Marketing for Real Estate for the 21st Century and Beyond*



## Articles

McGee, Faith. Why Real Estate Pros Should Pay Attention to Website Analytics (February 13, 2013).

Jeans, Gabrielle. Google Analytics for your Real Estate Website and Why You Need It (July 27, 2012).

O'Neill, Peter. How Real Estate Agencies Should Use Web Analytics (April 13, 2011).

Dewald, Gahlord. Google Analytics Custom Reports (Feb 29, 2012).

---

*eBook Contributors*

---



• **Jeff Bernheisel:** Project Manager at Portland, Oregon-based [1000watt](#), a digital marketing agency that specializes in the real estate space



• **Tom Flanagan:** VP of Marketing & Technology at Providence, Rhode Island-based [Residential Properties](#); Technology columnist for [Inman News](#)



• **Peter O'Neill:** Web analyst & Founder at [L3 Analytics](#), a UK-based web analytics consultancy



• **Frederick Townes:** CTO & Co-founder at [Placester](#); Senior Technical Advisor at [Mashable](#); Founder of [W3 EDGE](#)

---

*Thank you!*

---

Thanks for checking out our Introduction to Google Analytics for Real Estate eBook! For more insight into the world of real estate marketing, be sure to visit our [Real Estate Marketing Academy](#).

Looking to set up a new real estate website with built-in IDX/MLS search, premium themes, and indexable property pages? Head to [Placester.com](#) and get started with a 15-day free trial.

# Placester