

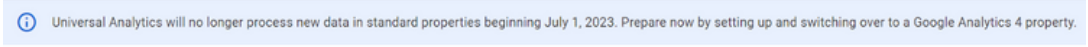
The Handy Vuzo Guide to GA4

What Do I Need To Know About Google Analytics 4?

- Google is retiring Google Analytics Universal (the version of GA lots of websites are currently using) on the 1st July 2023
- It is going to be replaced with Google Analytics 4 (GA4) which website owners are going to have to use if they want to carry on getting insight into their traffic's behaviour
- Google's been talking about this for a while now, but as we've got less than 12 months left until Universal stops processing new data, lots more businesses are starting to sit up and take notice



If you've noticed this little banner at the top of your screen every time you login into your Google Analytics account, you're already aware Universal Analytics is going to be replaced with Google Analytics 4 in 2023.



If you haven't got around to doing more than just clicking the dismiss button, not to worry. July 2023 might seem like a really long way away but it will be here before you know it, so let's get our head around GA4 and what you need to know.

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What *is* Google Analytics?

Starting at the very beginning, Google Analytics is a free service offered by Google that allows website owners to monitor the performance of their traffic. You can see how people are finding your website (paid, organic, social, etc.), how long they're spending on your website, and what they're doing.

Google's official recommendation is that this data is only ever used for trending purposes but when configured correctly, you can see which marketing channels are performing best. You can identify your lowest CPA, areas stopping your traffic converting, how, where and why your traffic is most likely to leave your website, and much more.

Google Analytics 4 is the next evolution of Google Analytics, and it's going to take over Universal in Summer 2023.

Running any kind of tracking is never compulsory but it's always advisable if you're spending any kind of resource on your website

Do I have to use GA4?

Running any kind of tracking is never compulsory but it's always advisable if you're spending any kind of resource on your website. If you're using Universal at the moment and you want to carry on receiving data after July 2023, then yes, you'll have to use GA4 unless you want to change your analytics provider.

Is GA4 Free?



Yes. Like loads of Google's products, you can use GA4 for free. But, you might need to factor in any time cost if you need a developer or data science agency to help you get everything up and running.

Google also offers Google Analytics 360 (GA360) which is a paid service providing tools and support for larger, enterprise sites. Google goes into detail about what 360 clients can expect from GA4 over the standard integration here. In a nutshell, if you're paying for 360 you get more from GA4: you get more event parameters, you can track more conversions, and you can export more BigQuery events.

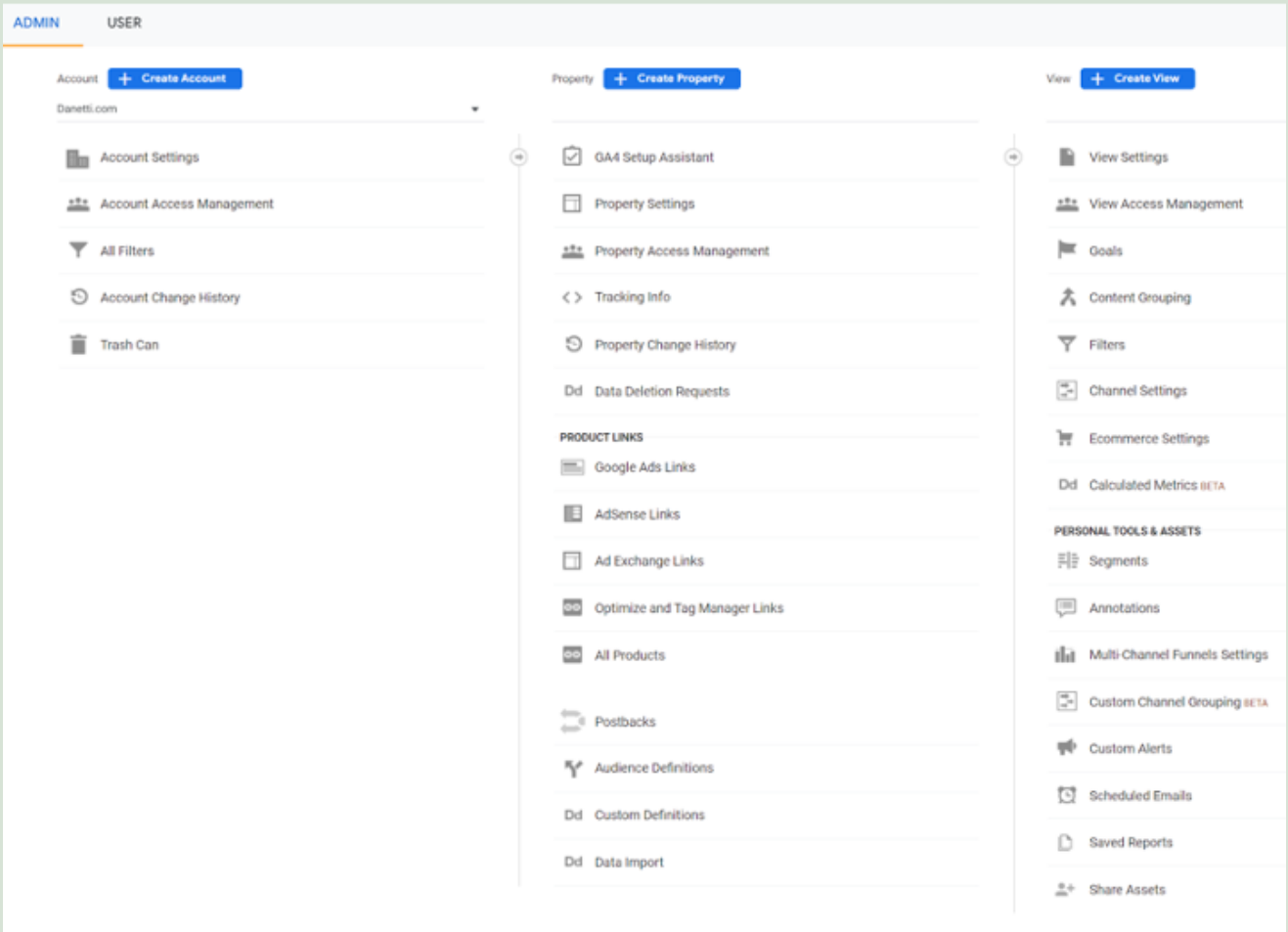
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What's the difference between GA4 and Universal?

There are lots of differences between Universal and GA4 but it depends what you're using your Analytics for at the moment as to which differences are more important to you.

Admin:

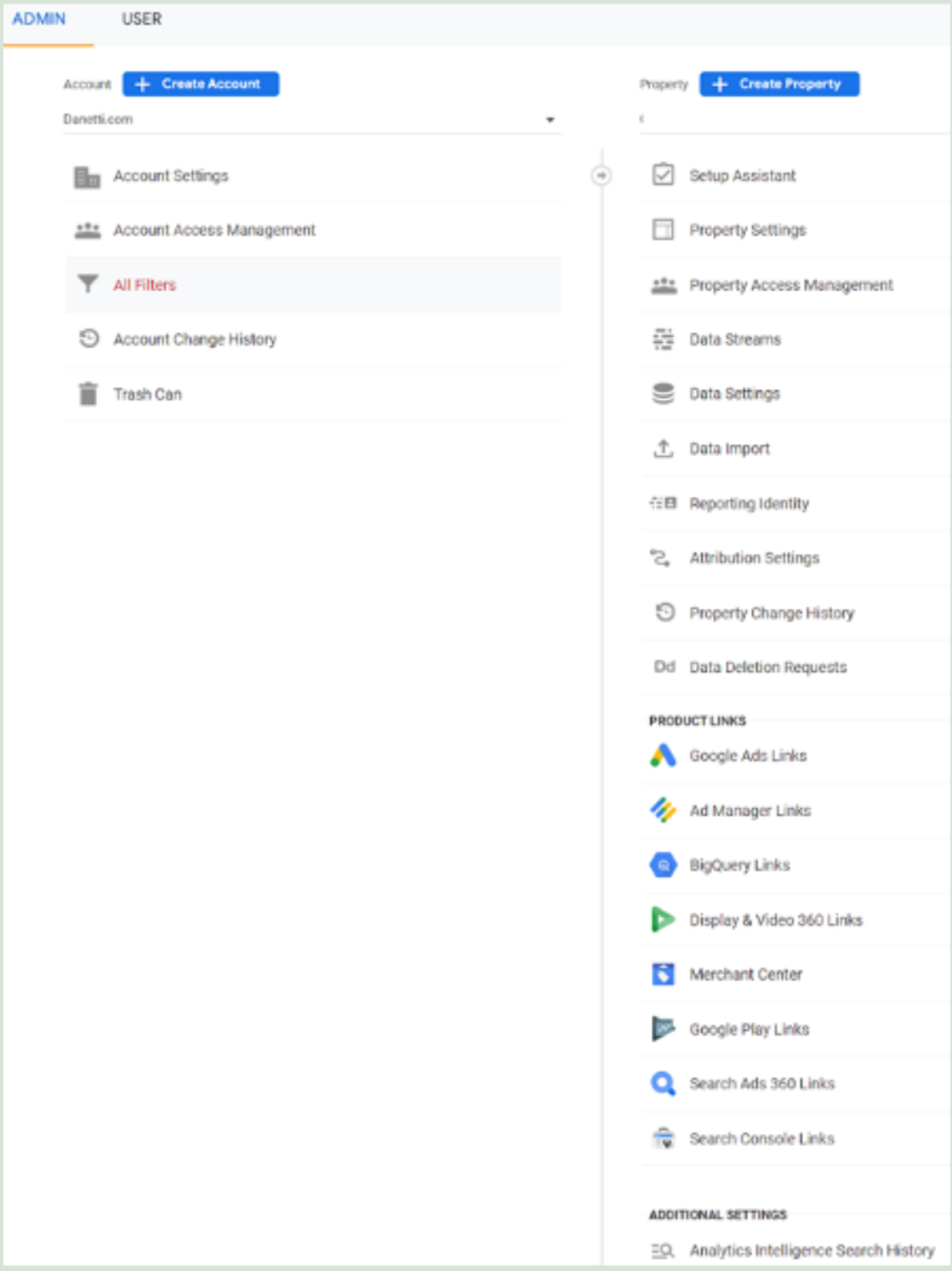
Let's start at the beginning - when you login to Universal, you have your admin section which shows you the *Account*, the *Property* and the *View*. This is a bit like having your business HQ (which is the Account) then having various branches (which is your Property view). If you've got more than one branch/website, or maybe an app and a website, they'll all need their own property and you need to start amalgamating the data yourself.



Google Analytics Universal Admin view

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In GA4 you've got *Data Streams* instead. You set up a Data Stream to see how website A is doing or App B but you can also set up Data Streams to see how they're doing together.



Google Analytics Universal Admin view

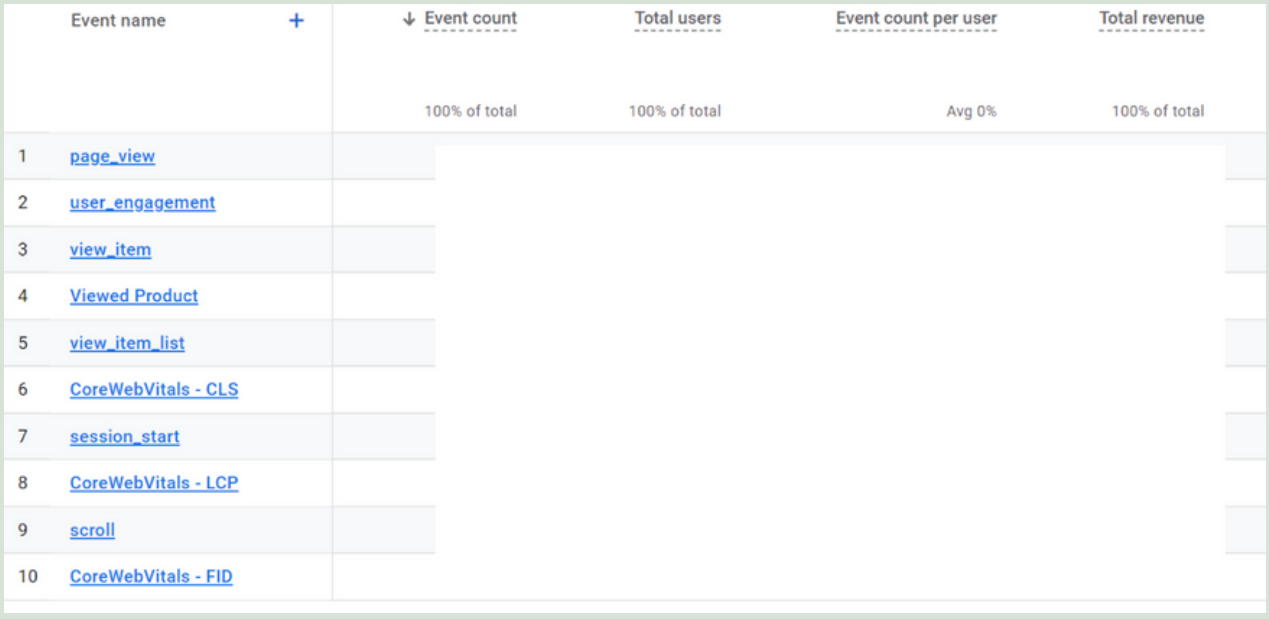
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In GA4 there's a lot more variation in the way the data can be spliced and presented

Events:

One of the bigger differences you're going to hear about is the word 'Event' - everything in GA4 is an event. Someone's just scrolled down half your page? That's an Event. Someone just viewed a page? Engaged with your site? Purchased a product? Yep, they're all Events.

Of course, Universal always had Events, but these had to be set up in Google Tag Manager which would then pass the data back to GA. More often than not, these Events would be something outside the standard GA offering but in GA4, *everything* is an Event and there's a lot more variation in the way the data can be spliced and presented.



	Event name +	↓ Event count	Total users	Event count per user	Total revenue
		100% of total	100% of total	Avg 0%	100% of total
1	page_view				
2	user_engagement				
3	view_item				
4	Viewed Product				
5	view_item_list				
6	CoreWebVitals - CLS				
7	session_start				
8	CoreWebVitals - LCP				
9	scroll				
10	CoreWebVitals - FID				

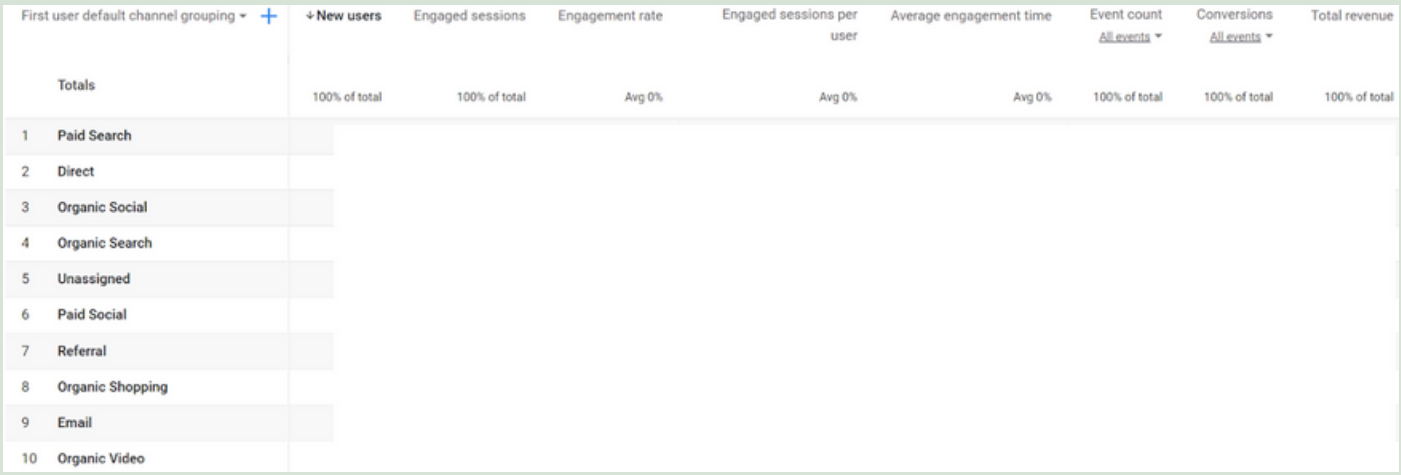
GA4 Event report

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Engagement:

Another slight change in terminology and data gathering practice is Bounce Rate vs. Engagement.

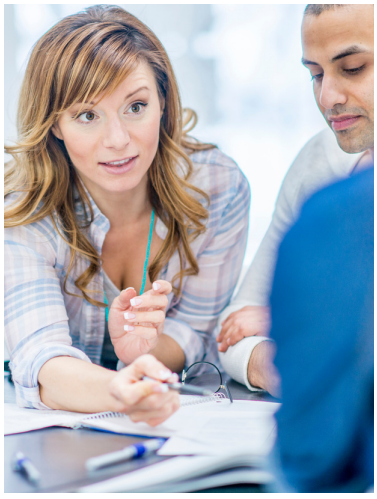
Once you start having a look around GA4 you might notice there's no Bounce Rate. Under the Acquisition report, you'll see engagement metrics.



	First user default channel grouping	↓ New users	Engaged sessions	Engagement rate	Engaged sessions per user	Average engagement time	Event count All events	Conversions All events	Total revenue
	Totals	100% of total	100% of total	Avg 0%	Avg 0%	Avg 0%	100% of total	100% of total	100% of total
1	Paid Search								
2	Direct								
3	Organic Social								
4	Organic Search								
5	Unassigned								
6	Paid Social								
7	Referral								
8	Organic Shopping								
9	Email								
10	Organic Video								

GA4 Acquisition report

In GA4, an Engaged Session is any session that lasted more than ten seconds, had at least one conversion, or had more than one page view (or any combination thereof). It's an accurate enough metric and a fair comparison for Bounce Rate, but it's not the same thing.



Consent:

A key requirement of GA4 was for it to be future proof. Whether you're trading in Europe and need to comply with the GDPR, or the UK DPA (or even America where cookie consent is more state dependent), data tracking is a hot potato.

GA4 is designed to capture all the data that it is allowed, but then uses machine learning to plug the gaps where cookie content has been opted out. This means as content management becomes more enforced and marketers have access to less data, there's still enough intelligence behind the collected data to continue providing insight.

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Is GA4 easy to use?

We've had a few clients over at Vuzo Towers using GA4 for a while now, and whilst it's certainly not difficult to pick up, the user interface is very different to Universal.

As for the actual implementation, there are plenty of tutorials out there but as with Universal, it's always recommended that someone who knows their way around code sets everything up.

GA4 offers a Home option in the main menu and this presents a selection of score cards full of data you can click into. You've then got your Report tab, Explore, Advertising, and Configure. Under the Report option, there are several sub reports similar to the Universal interface but nowhere near as many overall compared to Universal and its menu option of the realtime, audience, acquisition, behaviour and conversions each with their own expanded menu offering beneath them.

If you've got a good handle on Data Studio, this is probably the best way to visualise your report once you've got everything set up.

As with Universal, it's always recommended that someone who knows their way around code sets everything up



What if I need more help?

That's an easy one - get in touch!

Our friendly team are always happy to chat, whether it is a technical question about your marketing, or more detailed discussions about your data. Drop us an email at hello@vuzo.co.uk!

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