

[HOW-TOS](#) > [GOOGLE TOOLS](#)

# How To Set Up Your First Google Analytics Dashboard

Frederic Gonzalez - Aug 08, 2016 6:06 pm

**Editor's Note:** As we are building our [SkiftEDU](#) service for marketers and SMBs in travel, we recently launched a new initiative: our new weekly series on digital marketing tips and tricks, **SkiftEDU How-Tos**. These How-Tos are a series of **free in-depth weekly articles** around various topics in digital marketing, such as this one below.

It is estimated that 87% of all travel-related search begins online, and we all know how dominant Google is in this area. In fact, Google owns anywhere between 65-90% of the online search market, depending where you live in the world, leaving Bing and Yahoo far behind on the global scene. So assuming you have a website in place, there is no reason why any travel brand would not use Google Analytics. It's a free tool, and it gives access to endless and useful data providing business intelligence for your organization.

Beyond data, you should also link your Google Analytics account to a Google AdWords account as well, so that your search engine marketing (SEM) efforts align with the performance of your site and goals you should have in place for your website: downloading a brochure, completing a request for quote, booking a room online, subscribing to your corporate newsletter, etc.

In this article, we will show you how to setup your first dashboard so you can learn from and share relevant indicators with your colleagues, boss or various stakeholders.

## Install Google Analytics

Before we take a look at key elements of Google Analytics and what to include into your dashboard, let's make sure we have the basics down: do you even have Google Analytics installed on your website? And if it is, has it been properly done? Too often, I see hotels or restaurants with Google Analytics installed only on their homepage, but not on all pages of their site, which is pretty much the

same not having it all. The tracking code must be added to ALL pages of your site.

Make sure you visit [this page](#) to open up your account and get started, or watch this video:



If you feel at a loss with all the potential data flowing from Google Analytics, I would recommend you [watch this video](#) (30 minutes, but well worth it) by Google Small Business, explaining the ABC of Google Analytics, walking you through the various elements and sections available in the tool.

## How to set up dashboards

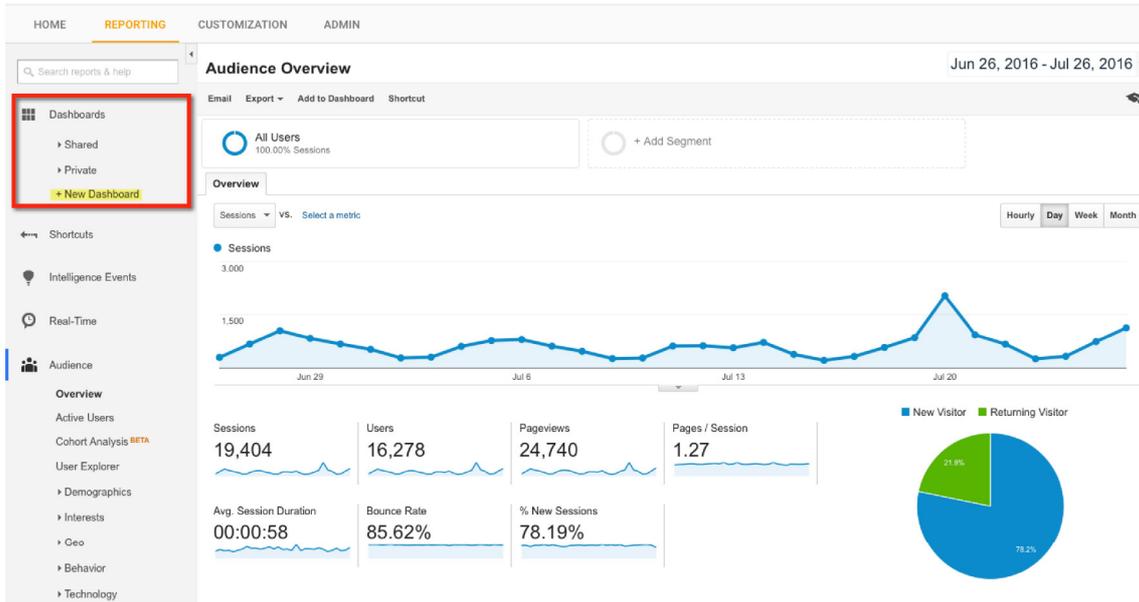
Now that you understand all the potential stemming from Google Analytics, perhaps you wonder why you should setup a dashboard to begin with. Truth be told, we know how things unfold in the real world: even though you have access to this wealth, breadth and depth of data, in reality you won't have time (or interest) to dive into Google Analytics on a regular basis – unless that's part of your job description and daily routine. Having dashboards in place thus allows you to track key performance indicators, and share on a regular basis with the people in the organization who need to know, without having to return to the tool itself constantly.

Setting up a dashboard is not a complex task, if you follow these four basic steps:

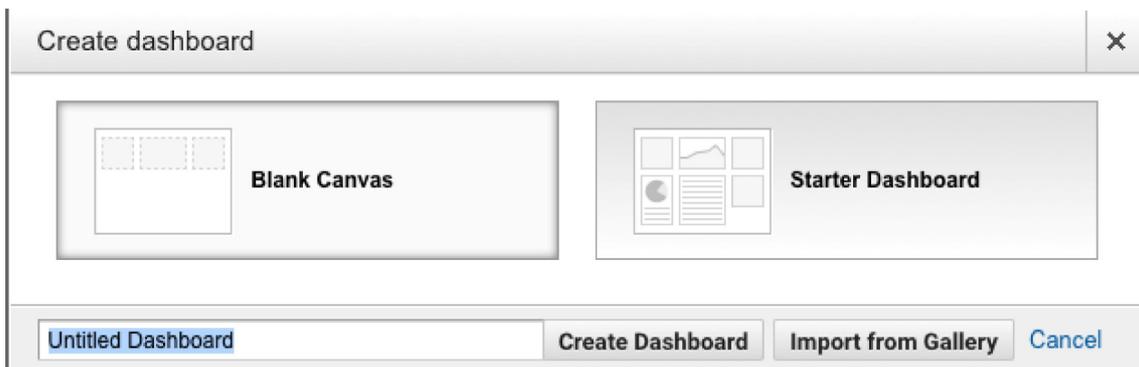
1. Identify what objectives you wish to track in time
2. Create your dashboard
3. Choose key performance indicators that align with the objectives outlined in point #1
4. Determine sharing frequency and recipients

## Step 1: What do you want to report

If you are not sure of exactly what you seek to report, it may help to take a look at different existing reports for some inspiration. First, login to your GA account and click on “New Dashboard” in the top left of the vertical menu.



Once you click on “New Dashboard”, you will be given the option to choose from a blank canvas, a starter dashboard, or import from Google’s online gallery. Click on that last option to see what existing reports are already available out there, you may be surprised!



Once you are in the Gallery section, take a look at the various categories available. This gives you a good idea of the type of reporting you may want to consider for your business:

- Acquisition
- Ecommerce
- Lead Generation
- Organic Search
- Paid Search

- Etc.

Enter keywords in the search box to see what existing dashboards may be relevant to your reality. By simply putting “Hotel” in the search box, there were 44 different reports suggested by Google!

The screenshot shows a search interface for Google Analytics dashboards. The search term is "Hotel". The results are sorted by "Most popular". Three dashboards are listed:

- Hotel Performance Metrics Dashboard** by Vagelis Varfis | Nudge Digital, Feb 14, 2014. It has 445 users and a 5-star rating. Description: "This dashboard is useful for hotels that want to have a full overview on meaningful data. Access on data concerning: -Visits and Unique Visitors -Bounce rate -E-Commerce and Conversion Rate -Branded Traffic from Organic Searches -Non-Branded Traffic from O..."
- Hotel Website Metrics Dashboard** by yvon, Oct 2, 2013. It has 131 users and a 4.5-star rating. Description: "Essentials for Hotel Managers about Booking & Website Metrics. The most important metrics you need to know about minus everything else that distracts. Don't forget to have 2 Analytics Reports emailed to you: 1.) This Dashboard Report: Click on ..."
- Essential Trends for Hotel** by Theron Gore, Jan 15, 2014. It has 50 users and a 4.5-star rating. Description: "Super high-level trend report for hotels"

On the left, there are filters for "Sort by" (Most popular, Latest, Highest rating) and "Filter by ranking" (1-5). Below that, there are "Filter by category" options, including Acquisition, Analytics Academy, Branding, Campaign, Conversion, Display Advertising, Ecommerce, Engagement, Enhanced Ecommerce, Lead Generation, Mobile, Organic Search, Paid Search, and Publishing.

The key here is to understand what you seek to report and why. This will help you align the type of dashboard to create in the following step.

## Step 2: Create your dashboard

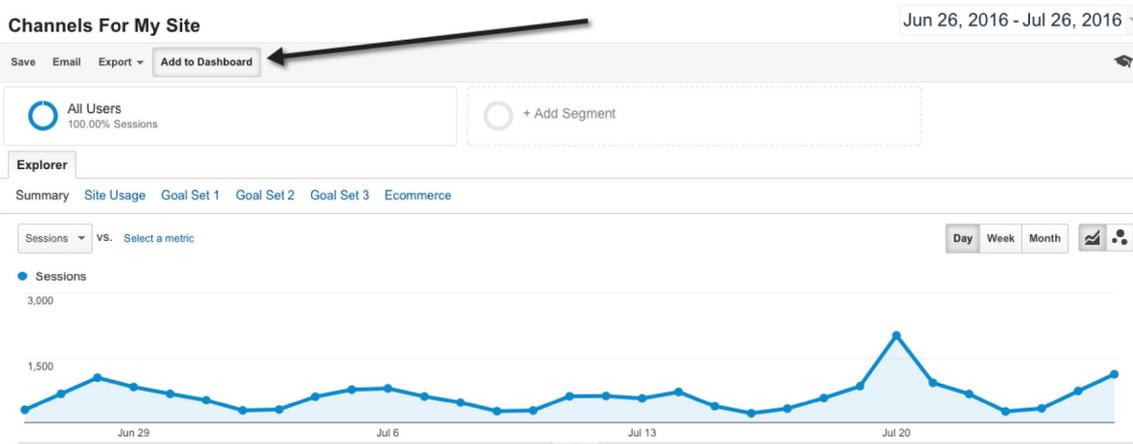
If you are not going to use an already existing dashboard template for the Gallery, then simply click on “Starter Dashboard” in order to get going. Google will provide basic widgets that you can then adapt and customize as you please: tables, pie charts, bar, timeline, metric, etc. You can also customize the view of the report itself into various layouts, depending on how busy you like your view.

The screenshot shows the "CUSTOMIZATION" tab in Google Analytics. The interface includes a navigation menu with "HOME", "REPORTING", "CUSTOMIZATION", and "ADMIN". A search box for reports is visible. Two line charts are displayed: "New Users" and "Users". A red box highlights a pencil icon and an 'x' icon in the top right corner of the "New Users" chart. Two blue callout boxes provide instructions: "You can change how your report will look, format & columns, here" (pointing to the CUSTOMIZATION tab) and "Mouse-over a widget in order to edit or delete its content and format" (pointing to the icons on the chart).



**NOTE:** There is a maximum of 12 widgets available per dashboard. If you want to track more than 12 indicators, you will have to create another dashboard. Suggestion: create a dashboard for organic results vs paid campaigns, or a dashboard focusing on traffic (demographic, source, devices, etc.) vs another dashboard focusing on onsite behavior (time spent, popular pages, conversions, etc.).

Personally, I prefer to use a different approach when creating a dashboard, which is to identify which indicators I wish to track, and then add them to a new or existing dashboard. So let's say for example I want to keep track of channels (organic search, paid search, social media, etc.) that generate traffic for my site. This information is available from within my Google Analytics reporting, but I can either create a shortcut if I want to access it often, or add it to an existing or new dashboard.



At the end of the day, both techniques end up creating pertinent dashboards. They are simply two different ways to achieve it.

## Step 3: Choose indicators to track

Setting up the dashboard itself is obviously the easy part. Now you need to prioritize on what elements and indicators you wish to monitor in time.

Considering the amount of data available in Google Analytics, this can seem like a daunting, if not impossible, task.

Here are five of the commonly used and relevant indicators for hotels and travel brands in general:

### One. Organic Landing Page Report

If you are interested in tracking the evolution of your SEO efforts, then this is where you'll want to focus. In Google Analytics, you can find this section under: *Acquisition > Keywords > Organic* (Change Primary Dimension to Landing Page)

Some of the indicators you will want to monitor include:

- Number of **sessions** that took place on key landing pages
- Top **landing pages**, where users began their session and what information they sought to consume on your site
- **Bounce rate**, or the percentage of users that left the site without visiting a second page
- **Conversion rate**, identifying which landing pages get the most goal completions

### Two. AdWords Campaign Report

If you wish to know how users behave on your site once they come from a Google AdWords campaign – that is, after they've clicked on one of your ads, then you will want to monitor this behavior. In Google Analytics, you can find this section under: *Acquisition > Adwords > Campaigns*

The indicators you will want to monitor should be similar to those from the previous report, except that we are dealing with paid efforts rather than organic. Also, you will definitely want to track conversion rates, as they should justify your paid efforts and help you adjust accordingly.

### Three. Top Conversions Path Report

While many marketers tend to focus on conversions, or sessions and bounce rates, it can also be relevant to better understand which channels brought you the most qualified traffic, and which combinations converted better. In Google Analytics, you can find this section under: *Conversions > Multi-Channel Funnels > Top Conversion Paths*



Path	Conversion Count	Percentage	Revenue
1. Organic Search > Direct	191	(22.77%)	CA\$39.00
2. Direct x 2	55	(6.56%)	—
3. Organic Search > Direct x 2	40	(4.77%)	—
4. Email > Direct	38	(4.53%)	—
5. Direct x 3	26	(3.10%)	—
6. Email x 2	25	(2.98%)	—
7. Organic Search > Direct x 4	20	(2.38%)	—
8. Email x 3	19	(2.26%)	—
9. Organic Search > Direct x 3	17	(2.03%)	—
10. Direct x 4	15	(1.79%)	—

The two key indicators to track with this report are:

- **Multi-Channel Grouping Path**, which helps you understand which combination of channels delivered the best results for traffic on your website. Channels can be: direct, organic, paid, referral, social, email.
- **Conversions** will tell you which combinations actually delivered the most results aligning with your goals and converted into sales, brochure downloads or whatever goals are in place that have dollar value assigned to them.

#### Four. All Pages Report

One of my favorite section in Google Analytics is where we can find details about what content is most popular with user, where they spend time and how this content converts. In Google Analytics, you can find this section under: *Behavior > Site Content > All Pages*

Some of the indicators you will want to monitor include:

- **Pageviews**, which is the total number of times that users have viewed a given page on your site
- **Average time on page**, which tells you how popular specific pages may be in keeping users on your site
- **Exit rate**, which indicates the percentage of users that left your site from that specific page
- **Page value** tells you how much money a specific page may be generating.

A “Thank You” page may be worth a given amount, since you know people subscribed to your newsletter or sent a request for quote, for example.

#### Five. All Traffic Report

Last but not least, you will want to track the overall effectiveness of your site by monitoring key traffic indicators. In Google Analytics, you can find this section under: *Acquisition > All Traffic > Channels*

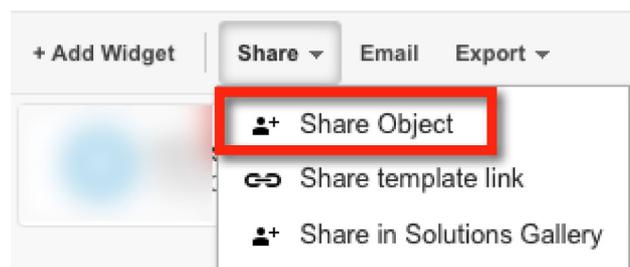
Some of the indicators you will want to monitor here include:

- **Source/Medium**, in other words where your traffic is coming from
- **Sessions**, or how many times users visited your site during the time period under analysis
- **Pages/Session** will tell you how many pages were consulted, on average, per visit
- **Revenue**, or which channels give you the better bang in terms of conversions

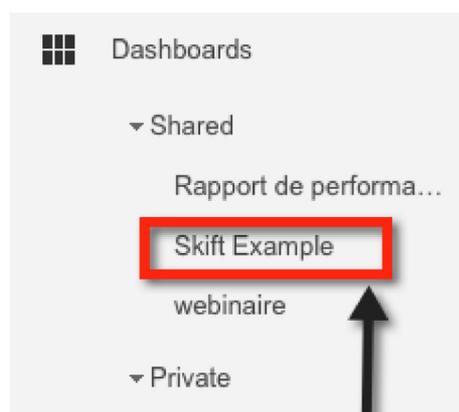
Of course, there are many other indicators that you want to monitor. The important thing to remember here is that it should be data that evolves in time, from week to week, or from month to month, depending on the frequency of your reports. Knowing more about your site users demographics is perhaps relevant, but will this information change from week to week? Most likely not. This kind of information may thus be preferably analyzed through quarterly or yearly audits, for example.

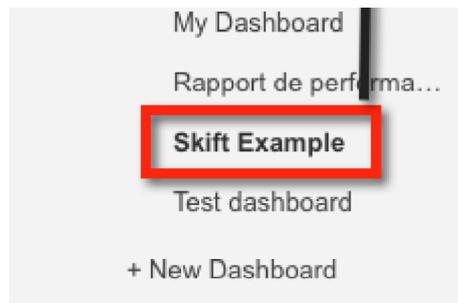
## Step 4: Share with colleagues

The last step is to set up sharing settings for your dashboard. My default, when you create a new dashboard it will be considered a private dashboard, so only the user (you) will see it. But if you share access to a given Google Analytics Universal Account (UA), with colleagues or agency, then it's quite possible you may want to share a newly created dashboard. To do so, simply click on the "Share" button, then "Share Object".



In the top left navigation, you will notice that the report is now showing in both private and shared dashboards.

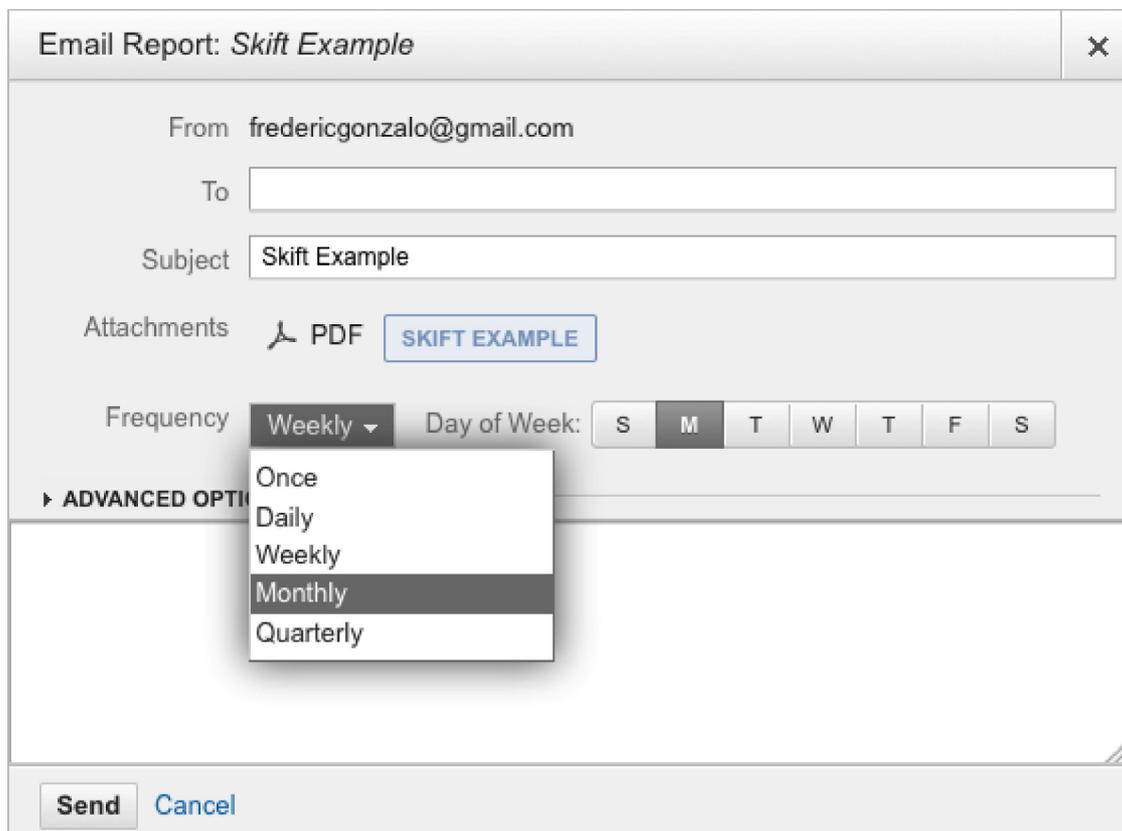




There are two other sharing options. First, you can share the template link to a friend or colleague, or perhaps a brand headquarter creates a template dashboard and shares the template to its franchisees or independent banners. NOTE: the data doesn't follow, you only share the template, so no worries about sharing sensitive information.

The other option is sharing to the Gallery. If you feel your newly created dashboard may benefit other folks in the Google galaxy, then you can also share here. Again, no data will follow, you will only end up sharing your template.

Now, if you'd like to share dashboards with people who don't have access to your accounts, like colleagues, bosses, clients or industry partners, you can do this by clicking on the "email" button to the right handside of the "Share" button we saw previously.



Reports can be sent in .pdf format at various frequency: once, daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly, and to whatever email address you choose to. If you don't

want to set up a regular schedule, you should probably opt for the third button, “Export”, which will give you a one-time .pdf report to send to whomever you choose

For more on this, read [10 Google Tools Brands Should Use](#).

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