Google Analytics in Color

Color is extremely helpful when viewing large amounts of information. Within Google Analytics it is used to differentiate sections of your reports, add clarity, provide emphasis, and show value and pain points. Color is an integral part of the information architecture, which I think the Google Analytics team has designed well.

This section lets me show the most important images in color. I also encourage you to read this book while viewing your own Google Analytics reports so that you can interact with your data while I describe the detail.

Figure 4.4 is a key screen shot for understanding the Google Analytics user interface—it has a typical structure that most reports follow. Ensure that you are familiar with the use of its features (labels A to R).

![Image of a typical Google Analytics report with guideline path]

Figure 4.4 A typical Google Analytics report with guideline path
Reports contain two types of information—metrics (numbers) and dimensions (text). These are color-coded green and blue in Figure 4.5. Throughout Google Analytics, there are many instances where you can select dimensions and metrics. Therefore, it is important that you understand the difference.

Using a secondary dimension allows you to cross-reference your data. For example, the source/medium of a visitor by visitor type, as shown in Figure 4.13, allows you to understand the differences between new and returning visitors based on how those visitors find your site.
Figure 4.7 shows Google Analytics color-coding data by date (compare to past) and performance (an improvement or not). Metrics that improve are shown in bold green, while those that decrease are in bold red. The Bounce Rate metric is the exception because a decrease in this metric is considered a good thing.

Figure 4.7  Comparing two date ranges
The “comparison” view of table data, as shown in Figure 4.10, is a great way to quickly identify which dimensions (in this example, referral mediums) are your significant traffic contributors. Green bars show those that are above the table average, with red bars indicating those that are below the table average. Besides traffic volume, other metrics can be viewed in this way, for example, goal conversion rate, transactions, revenue, per visit value, and so forth.

![Comparison view](image)

**Figure 4.10** Comparison view
Figure 4.15 shows the building of an advanced table filter to show only visit data from visitors that arrive from referral links (for example, partner sites) and social networks who also spend at least 3 minutes on your site and have a conversion rate of greater than 10 percent. Note the color coding of dimensions and metrics.

Real-time reports, as shown in Figure 5.2, display a 30-minute window of your website traffic, updated within seconds. It is an excellent resource for testing new campaigns and monitoring time-sensitive performance—for example, a new product announcement, news article, or TV ad.
The Intelligence Events Overview report, shown in Figure 5.3, is your alert system that flags important changes in your traffic patterns that may otherwise have gone unnoticed.

![Figure 5.3 The Intelligence Overview report](image)

Clicking through on one of the alerts shown in Figure 5.3 shows the report in Figure 5.4. The report details the important factors that triggered the alert.

![Figure 5.4 The daily intelligence report](image)
Flow visualization, shown in Figure 5.7, allows you to view how traffic flows around your website. Unlike path analysis from other vendor tools, a node is not a single page but rather a collection of similar pages that Google Analytics has grouped together. This technique greatly improves your ability to understand flow rather than individual paths, which are meaningless.

Figure 5.7  An example Flow Visualization report
Multi-Channel Funnels is a new report suite that allows you view all the referral sources that have contributed to a conversion—as opposed to last click wins. Figure 5.14 shows the level of detail and customization features available. In particular, you see the value of referral sources based on whether they only assisted in the conversion process or were the last click in the conversion chain.

Figure 5.14  Multi-Channel Funnels assisted conversion report
As part of the Multi-Channel Funnels suite of reports, Figure 5.15 shows how different mediums have contributed and interacted for those visitors that converted—that is, completed a goal or transacted. For example, rows 5 through 7 reveal that email follow-ups are an important part of the marketing mix, a fact that is lost if only the “last click wins” scenario is considered.

![Figure 5.15 Top Conversion Paths report](image)
The Social Actions report of Figure 5.17 shows the level of social interactions with your content; that is, do people tweet, share, like, and rate your content, and if so, what is the preferred social network for your visitor demographic?

Figure 5.17  Example Social Actions report
The geographic density maps of Google Analytics are an excellent way of visualizing your data when location is important. You can zoom in to continent, subcontinent, country, and even regional level. Figure 5.18 compares the visit density of US visits to the goal conversion rate density. For this example website, location is clearly an important factor in success.

**Figure 5.18** Geographic density of (a) visits and (b) goal conversions rate for the same data set
Motion charts animate your data. I recommend you regularly view this report to spot important changes. By animating with motion charts, you can view how up to four metrics of a dimension vary over time. For example, for the dimension referral source, show how traffic volume, page depth, goal conversion rate, and average time on site vary over time, as shown in Figure 5.21. The visualization technique is an excellent way to spot significant changes over time—something that is practically impossible to do with the default static view of data.

Figure 5.21  Motion chart for the Traffic Sources Medium report

Figure 5.33 shows how your internal search engine (site search report) is performing. In this example, it shows the number of searches performed, broken down by which page the visitor performed the search from. Clicking through each page URL reveals the search terms used.

Figure 5.33  Site Search report showing which pages visitors start their search from
Funnel visualization is a technique used to optimize well-defined linear paths on your website—for example, a checkout process or subscription sign-up—as shown in Figure 5.22.

Figure 5.22  A three-step Funnel Visualization report
Figure 5.34 is a visual map of the performance of links within a page. The site overlay shows (for this example) where your visitors are clicking. Other performance metrics can also be used, such as goal conversion rate, transactions, value metric, and so forth.
Sometimes you need to focus your audience’s attention (and even yourself!) on a specific set of data values or a customized group of metrics—typically these are your key performance indicators. For these, export your data, either manually as a file download or automatically using the API, and import into an Excel spreadsheet for further manipulation, as is shown in Figure 10.1.

![Figure 10.1 Example KPI report for a travel website using Excel](image-url)
A powerful addition to the Multi-Channel Funnels reports that are discussed in Chapter 5 is the ability to build a custom channel grouping, as shown in Figure 11.18. In the example shown, the custom channel will compare the use of brand versus generic keywords from search engine visitors; that is, when there are multiple visits to achieve a conversion, what is the relationship between the referral search terms for each visit?

**Figure 11.18** Custom channel grouping set up for search engine visitors using brand terms versus generic terms