Google Analytics 4 – https://analytics.google.com

Google Analytics 4 (GA4) is a set of tools that allows you to better understand your website content and visitors through data visualization.

This document is specific to State of Indiana employees and contractors that want a basic reference on how to use Google Analytics. This document will outline the basics of Google Analytics and provide links to other online resources to continue learning.

Table of Contents

Login to Google Analytics

**NOTE: All users must be approved before they have access to Google Analytics. Please fill out a form here to request access: https://www.in.gov/inwp/tools/analytics/**

All users must go to https://analytics.google.com to login.

State Employees

State employees will use their state email address to login.
- Click **Next** after and you will be taken to IOT's Azure sign in.
- Complete your login using your state email credentials.
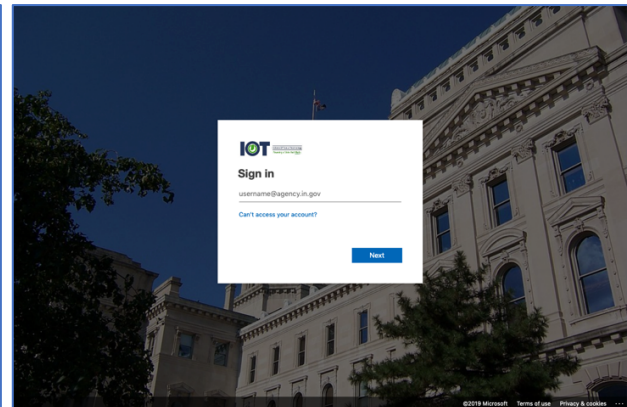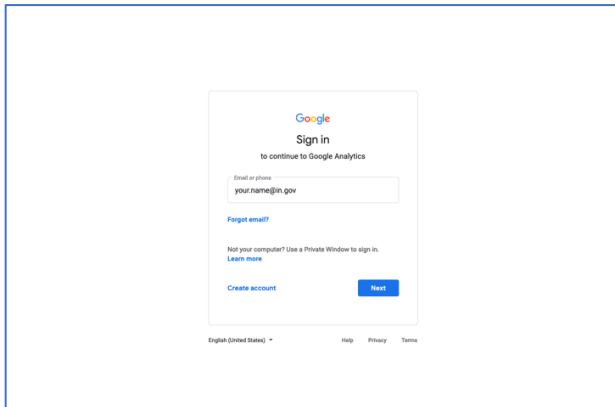
Contractors

Contractors will use their business emails. This email must be verified by Google before access is granted in Google Analytics.

To do this, go to https://accounts.google.com/ and click **Create account**. Then you will need to click **Use my current email address instead**. Complete the process.

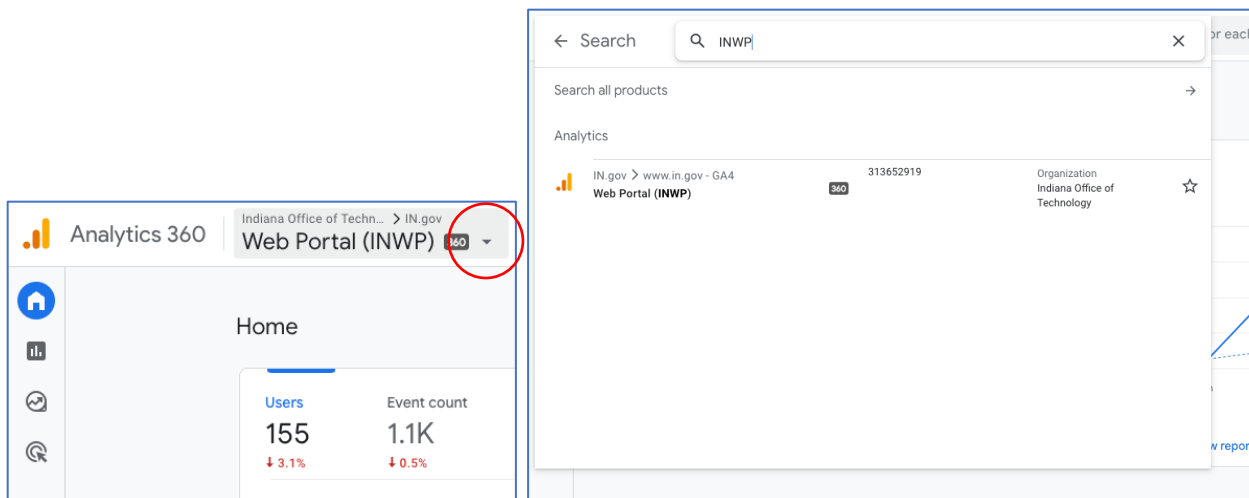# Access Your Site(s)

After you are logged in to Google Analytics, the first thing you will need to do is verify you are on the right site. Some employees will have access to multiple sites, so you will need to choose the correct one.

These different sites are called 'Subsites'.
- In the top left, next to the Analytics 360 logo, you will see a dropdown. Click anywhere in that text or on the arrow.
- A modal will pop up and show you all the sites you have access to.
- The easiest and quickest way is to search for your site. Begin typing and you will see a list of your available sites.
- Click any of the sites in the list to access your site.

Dashboard Access

A new way to access your sites and data even faster is IOT's new dashboard. This dashboard gives you instant access to many of the most popular metrics with the ability to switch between all your subsites. This might be the best solution for most users, so we encourage you to try it out first. You can read more about it here.

Home Dashboard

Your home dashboard is a default set of widgets that allow you to quickly view reports on site activity. Each of these reports is interactive and allow you to view more information to gain deeper insight.

There are several different sections of the home dashboard that give you a way to quickly navigate to different parts of GA4:
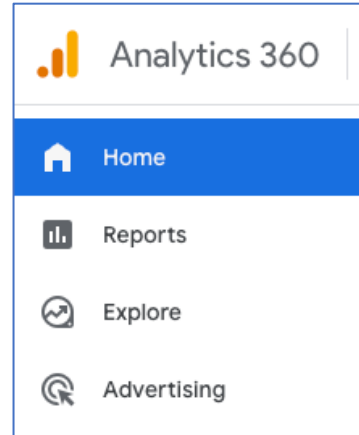
- **Report snapshot**: This is an interactive widget that will show historical metrics from the past 7 days. You can click on the top tabs (Users, Event count, Conversions, and New Users) to get different data to display. You can click "View reports snapshot" in the bottom-right to explore more.

- **Realtime users:** This widget will show you the realtime users on your site. To view more realtime data, you can click "View Realtime" in the bottom-right corner.

- **Recently accessed:** After you have viewed GA4 a few times and browsed around, this widget will show reports and pages you recently visited. This gives you a quick way to access those same areas in GA4 quickly.

- **Suggested for you:** This is a collection of widgets that will give you quick access to data housed in other areas of GA4. There is an option to scroll through more of these widgets by using the arrow on the far right.
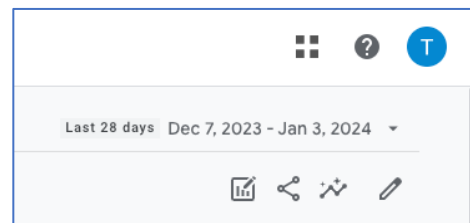
Reports

Reports are broken into different categories to sort your site data. Based on which report you choose you will be able to uncover specific information about your site or your visitors. Each report section has an Overview that gives you quick insight on the data. There are other more granular areas of each report that allow for deeper dives into the data.
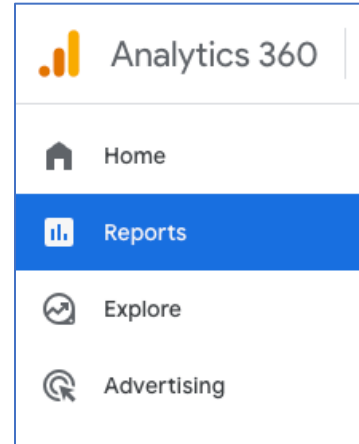
The initial page is the Reports Snapshot. This overview page will show you a summary very similar to the homepage, but with more widgets associated with page and user data.

You can modify the date range of any report by using the date dropdown in the top-right side of the interface. There are also other options to create comparisons, share, get insights, and modify each report.

Realtime

Real-time reports show you what is happening on your site right now. You can see the number of visitors, current referrers, active pages, geographical locations, and much more.

Acquisition

Acquisition reports show you how visitors got to your site. Whether through organic search, social media, referral websites, or director traffic, this tab will show you all the data for your referrals.

User Acquisition tracks where new users (only new users) are coming from. Traffic Acquisition tracks where all users are coming from (regardless of new or returning).

Engagement

The biggest change between Google Analytics UA and GA4 is how the data is modeled. **In GA4 everything is event-based**, versus in the old UA everything was session-based. Because of this major change, everything is tracked as an "Event".

The Engagement tab will break down the top pages and events. This will give you information on page views, user engagement, file downloads, and other actions.

Events

The Events tab under Engagement will break down all the tracked events on your site. There are two general types of events, Default and Custom. Default Events are defined by Google and are available for all pages. Custom Events are defined by IN.gov via Google Tag Manager and track specific actions on specific sites/pages. Below are two tables that show all the Default and Custom events currently being tracked (as of January 2024):

DEFAULT EVENTS		
Event Name	**Type**	**Fires When**
session_start	Built-in	When a user engages with the site
user_engagement	Built-in	When the app is in the foreground or webpage is in focus for at least one second
first_visit	Built-in	When a user visits the site for the first time
scroll	Enhanced	The first time a user reaches the bottom of each page (i.e., when a 90% vertical depth becomes visible)
file_download	Enhanced	When the user clicks a link ending with a commonly used extension type (.pdf, .doc, etc)
view_search_results	Enhanced	When a user searches the site
video_complete	Enhanced	When the video ends (YouTube)
video_progress	Enhanced	When the video progresses past 10%, 25%, 50%, 75% (YouTube)
video_start	Enhanced	When the video starts playing (YouTube)
video_pause	Enhanced	When the video is paused (YouTube)
page_view	Native	User views a page

Custom events table on the next page…

Custom events are not automatically applied to all subsites. If you would like to add them to your site, please reach out to the IN.gov team through this form.

| CUSTOM EVENTS		
Event Name	**Type**	**Fires When**
blog_post_downvote	Custom	When a user downvotes a blog post (for custom blog sites)
blog_post_upvote	Custom	When a user upvotes a blog post (for custom blog sites)
chatbot_click	Custom	When a user interacts with a chatbot
click_email	Custom	When a user clicks on an email address
click_inbound	Custom	When a user clicks a link with the in.gov domain, and the first part of the path of the clicked link differs from the current site's path
click_outbound	Custom	When a user clicks outbound links
click_phone	Custom	When a user clicks on a phone number
page_translated	Custom	When a user translates a page automatically (with native language device settings and modern browser)
scroll_depth	Custom	When a user scrolls the page
side_menu_shown	Custom	When a user clicks on the mobile menu
language_translation	Custom	When a user translates via Google Translate
screen_reader	Custom	When a user uses the screen reader
accessibility_settings	Custom	When a user clicks on the accessibility settings

Create Your Own Events Report in the Menu

If you want to see any missing reports in the Engagement Tab (Searches or Link Clicks), you will need to **create a New Report**. You can follow these steps to add a new link to your left navigation with the new report:

1. Go to **Reports > Engagement > Events**
2. In the top right, **click on the "Customize Report"** icon.
3. Under Dimensions, you want to delete "Event Name" and then add in the custom event. You can add multiple dimensions if you want to switch them.
4. Under Metrics, you want to remove "Total Revenue" and add any other metric that you want listed in the table and chart views.
5. Each time you update the settings in the far-right side panel, you will see the report update immediately. This allows you to fine-tune the results.
6. **Click "Save…" and then choose "Save as a new report".**
7. In the bottom of the left-side navigation, you will see "Library" at the bottom, which allows you to customize the layout of the left-side menus. **Click "Library" and then choose "Edit Collection" under "Life cycle".**
8. From this screen you can choose your new report and drag it under "Engagement" and then click "Save…". You will now see your report in the menu!

Pages and screens

The Pages and screens tab under Engagement will show you your most popular pages, by URL. You can change the display of this table by changing the primary display under the Search bar in the table:
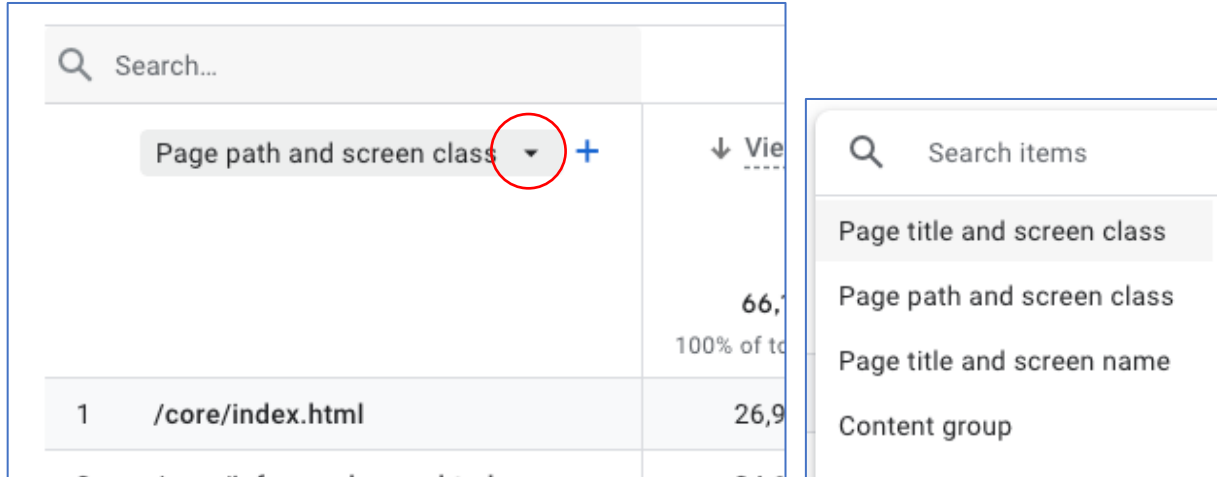
NOTE: Screen class mostly applies to applications where the page path does not change.

Landing page

The Landing page tab under Engagement will show you the most popular pages that visitors start their session with.

User Attributes

The User Attributes tab will show the visitor information related to your traffic. This is user-centric data and not content-centric. You can view geographic information and other demographic information.

Tech

The Tech tab will show information on the operating system, platform, browser, and device that the user visited your site with.

Where is Bounce Rate?

Things have changed in GA4, where Bounce Rate is not a prominent metric displayed anymore. Instead GA4 focuses more on Engagement. Engagement rate and bounce rate are important metrics in Google Analytics that enable you to measure and analyze user engagement with your website or app.
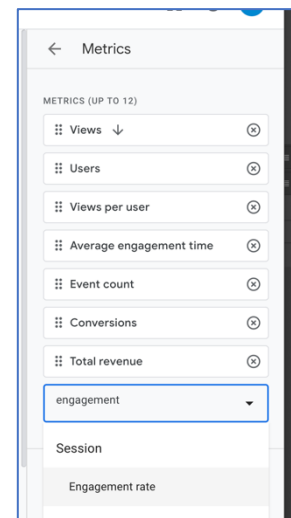
Both metrics are defined in terms of engaged sessions.
- A session is a period during which a user is engaged with your website or app.
- An engaged session is a session that lasts longer than 10 seconds, has a conversion event, or has at least 2 pageviews or screenviews.

The engagement rate is the percentage of engaged sessions on your website or mobile app. The bounce rate is the opposite of the engagement rate. The bounce rate is the percentage of sessions that were not engaged.

By default, most reports in Google Analytics do not include the engagement rate and bounce rate metrics. To view these metrics in your reports, you need to customize the report.

1. In the Reports tab, go to the report that you want to see add either Bounce Rate or Engagement Rate to, and click "Customize Report" in the top right (pencil icon).
2. Under "Report Data" you can add those metrics and click "Apply". Then you will see them appear in your tables, graphs, and widgets.

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Table Drilldowns

In the Reports tab you will interact with tables. The graphic below shows you where you can find the Filter, Primary Dimension Selector, Secondary Dimension Selector, Rows per Page, Event Selector and Conversion Selector.
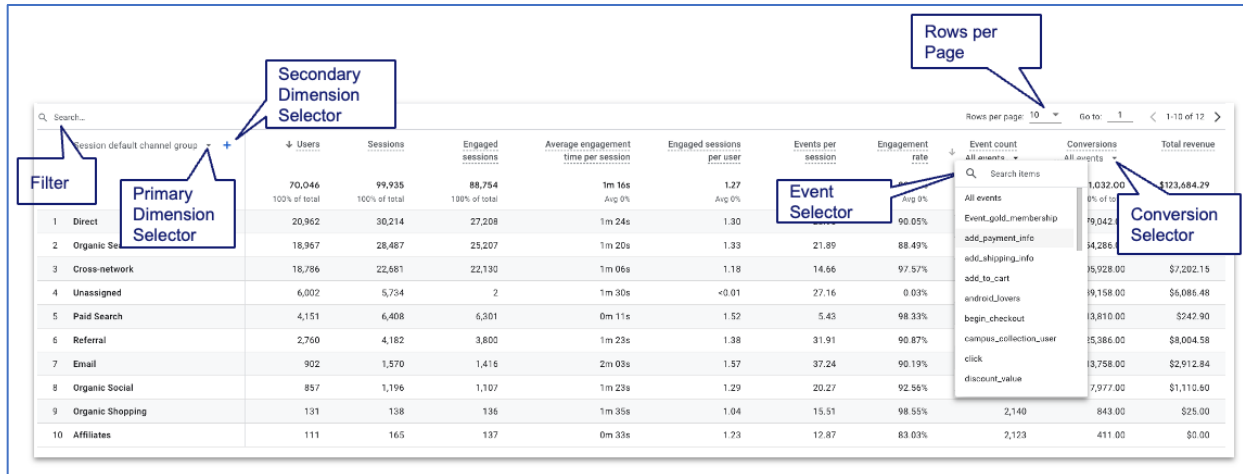

Comparisons

You can create comparisons for all your different visualizations and tables. To do this you can specify the dimension and associated values to compare with. The graphic below explains how to add the comparison, hide/show it, remove it, and add another.
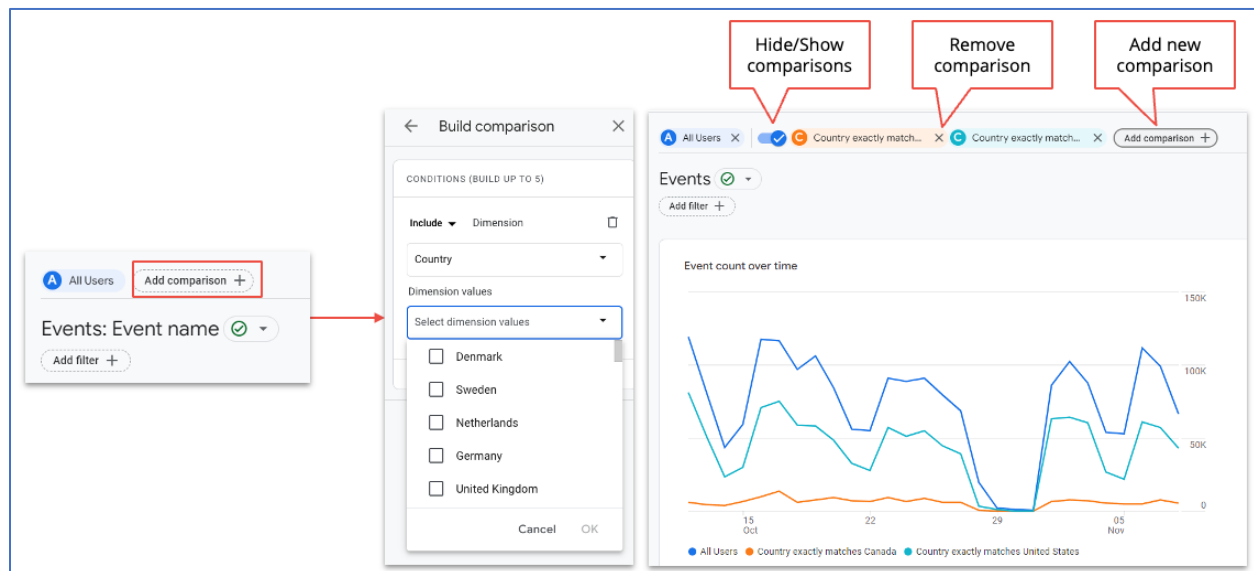
Explore

The Explore tab is where you can create your own "Explorations", which are dashboards that you can save and access anytime. There are a limited number of templates available to quickly start your new exploration.
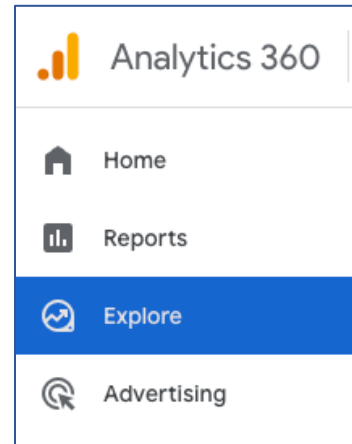
Creating Explorations

There are various types of explorations you can create. The most popular one will likely be Free form, which you can create a complex crosstab layout with multiple visualization styles including tables, bar charts, pie charts, line charts, scatter plots and geo maps.

To create an exploration that shows the **top links** for your site you will follow these steps (screenshot on the next page):

1. Create a new **"Free form"** exploration.
2. You will want to add Dimensions (Under Variables), which will be the **"Link text" and "Link URL"**. Add both of those using the **"+"** button next to Dimensions.
3. Next you will want to add Metrics (Under Variables), which will be the **"Event count".** Add this by using the **"+"** button next to Metrics.
4. Now we need to map these variables in the settings. The easiest way to correctly map Dimensions and Metrics is by simply **double-clicking** on them. This will automatically place them under Rows and Values.
5. You should see the table populate on the right side, under its own tab. You can then sort the columns anyway you want to. You can also, right-click any item in the table to exclude it, only include it, or create a segment from it.
6. If you want to further filter the table, you can scroll to the bottom of the Settings column and create a filter. In this case, you could create a filter that the "Link URL contains http", which will remove any blank results.
7. You can also export the results of these tabs and share them with other users by using the icons in the top right of the tab.
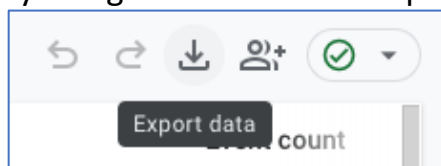
a.

Variables ✕

EXPLORATION NAME:

Top Links

Custom
Sep 20 - Oct 17, 2023 ▾

SEGMENTS +

DIMENSIONS +

⠿ Link text

⠿ Link URL

METRICS +

⠿ Event count

⚙ Settings ✕

ROWS

⠿ Link text

⠿ Link URL

⠿ + Drop or select dimension

START ROW

1

SHOW ROWS

50 ▾

NESTED ROWS

No ▾

COLUMNS

+ Drop or select dimension

START COLUMN GROUP

1

SHOW COLUMN GROUPS

5 ▾

VALUES

⠿ Event count

Creating Explorations from Standard Reports

You can move most of the standard reports in the Reporting tab into an Exploration. To do this, simply click on the **"Edit Comparison (Pencil Graph icon)"**. Then you might see an "Explore" button in the bottom right corner. By clicking **"Explore",** it will create an exploration that you can modify and quickly filter to get different types of reports.
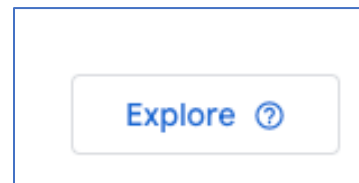

Tips / Other Items

Below are a few items that should be highlighted that can improve your experience in Google Analytics.

Insights

Insights is available on the Home tab and every tab under the Reports tab. You can find it on the far-right side, as an icon that looks like a line graph with sparkles over it. It uses Analytics Intelligence, which is a set of features that uses machine learning and conditions you configure to help you understand and act on your data.
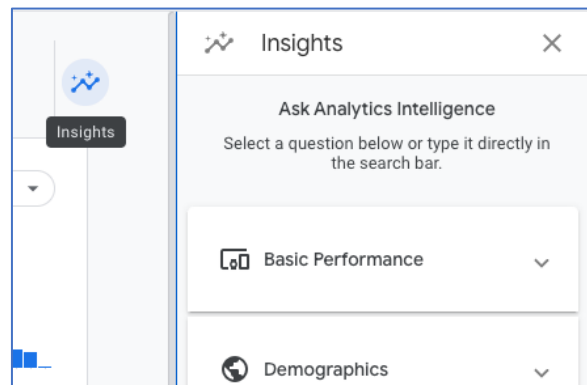

This might be a great place to start your exploration if you are new to GA4 or if you are looking for more in-depth information that is not easily discovered in the default interface.

Internal Traffic

Currently Google will only allow for filtering at the root property level and not at the subproperty level. That being known, agencies will not have access to that information but can request reports be generated by IN.gov to uncover any internal traffic numbers.

Search

Another great way to quickly discover metrics quickly in Google Analytics is to use the Search bar at the top of the interface. This will give you plenty of suggestions of what to search for and has a great auto-complete feature that aides you in your query. Results will often be returned in the Insights tab on the right-side of the page.
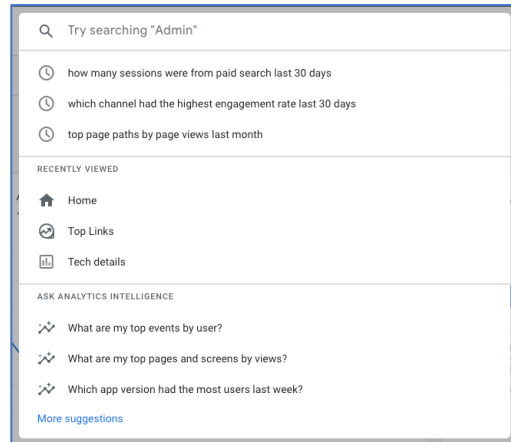

Sharing / Reporting / Exporting

In the Reporting, you can share a link or download an export for any open tab. Sharing will only work with those who have existing access to the subproperty, and **NOT** any external users.
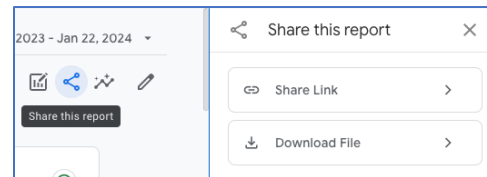

Comparisons

In the previous version of Google Analytics, these were referred to as Segments, but in GA4 these are comparisons. You can create your own comparisons in any Report tab, on the far-right side next to the share and insights icons.

One tip for creating a comparison (or creating any filter in GA4) is that when you choose **"Exactly matches"** you will be presented a list of options that currently exist in the data. This takes any guessing out of the equation and immediately delivers results. There are other options, but you may consider starting with "Exactly matches" to see what your options are for "contains" and other options.
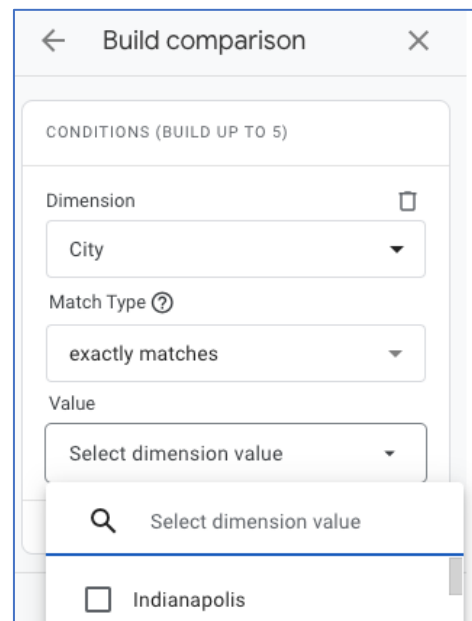
Dashboard (Looker Studio)

The IN.gov program has developed a dashboard that quickly shows a lot of the most popular metrics in GA4 for your convenience.
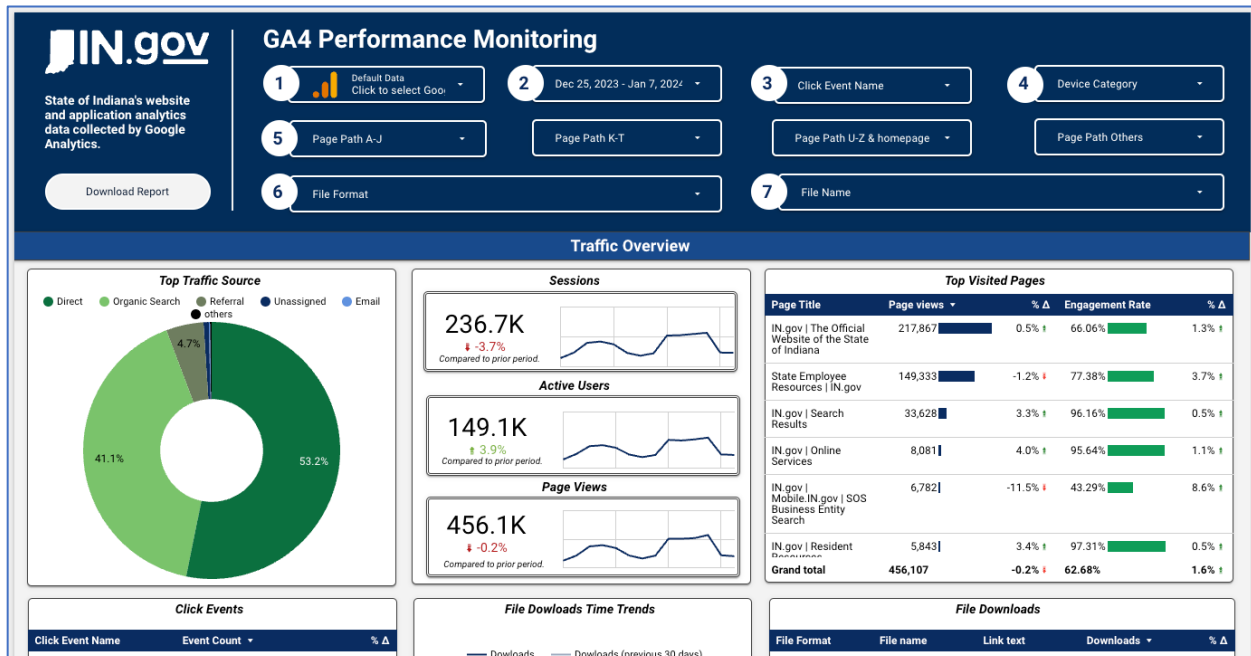
The default data loaded into the dashboard will be the IN.gov Core website. **To access your site, click on the "1" dropdown.** This will display all the websites that you have access to, simply click on one of those and the dashboard will instantly update.
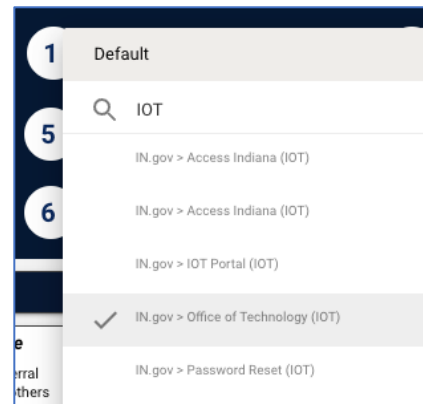
You can use the other dropdowns to discover more metrics about your website. Each of the widgets is interactive and can be hovered and/or clicked on.

NOTE: If you have multiple Google accounts, you will need use a private browser or another secondary browser to access the dashboard the first time. Once you have accessed it, the dashboard will appear in your "Recent" list when you switch accounts.

You can access the dashboard here:
https://lookerstudio.google.com/s/lqaiaIx6Au8

Resources and Help

Google Analytics Online Training - Free, online courses about Google Analytics and other Google Ads tools. Complete self-paced lessons to learn how to use Google products to their full potential.
https://skillshop.exceedlms.com/student/catalog/list?category_ids=6431-google-analytics-4

Google Analytics Help - The Analytics Help Center documents all aspects of using Analytics, including how to get started, best practices for analysis, and troubleshooting.
https://support.google.com/analytics

IN.gov Analytics Requests – A list of IN.gov services related to analytics, including requesting new tracking, new users, a links to training videos.
https://www.in.gov/inwp/tools/analytics/