



The following is an introduction to the Google Analytics platform. Google Analytics allows you to track a variety of data related to how people are viewing and interacting with your website. In order to utilize Google Analytics, you must first have a Google account. If your town does not already have an account, or if you cannot recall your login information, please contact VTS.

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Getting Started

To access your town's Google Analytics page, first go to <https://analytics.google.com>. From there, enter your e-mail address and password to sign in. Once you've signed in, you'll be taken to the first page, which we will discuss below. On the left side of this page, you will see a menu with seven primary sections, each of which has various subsections. This manual will discuss six of those seven sections and how certain subsections relate to your website.

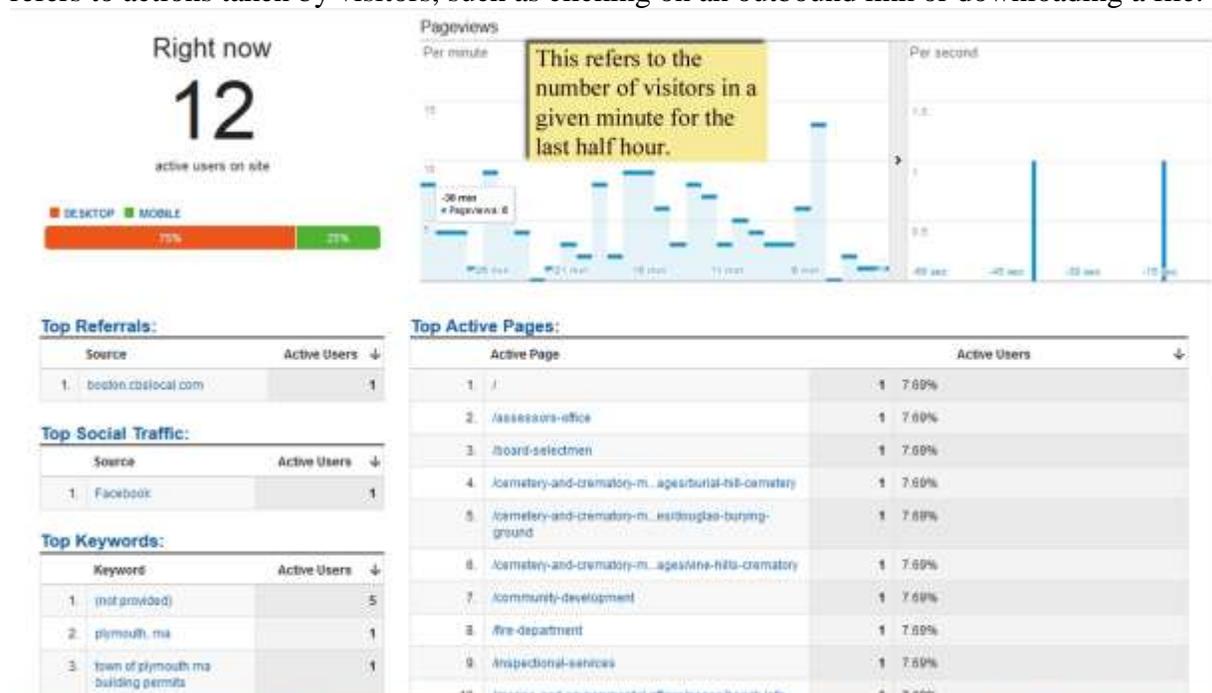
Home

When you first log in, you will be taken to the Google Analytics Home screen. This screen contains widgets of various reports created automatically by Google. The setup is similar to that of a Dashboard, which we will discuss later. Reports can range from when people are viewing the site to how often they are returning. This section is meant to give easy access to answer the most common questions people have when reviewing their web stats.

Real-Time

This section lets you to see who is viewing the website right at that moment and what type of devices they are using. Top Referrals and Top Social Traffic show you where these users came from. For example, if someone found the site through Google, then Google.com would show up as a referral, whereas a person clicking on a Facebook link would cause Facebook to appear under Social Traffic.

On the left side of the page, the Locations subsection shows what country people are viewing from while Traffic Sources will show what search engine (if any) they used to get there. You can also view which specific pages are being looked at by going to Content. The Events section refers to actions taken by visitors, such as clicking on an outbound link or downloading a file.



Audience

Overview



This is where you'll get your general site-wide information, such as unique users, total page views, and time spent on the website. This information is also displayed over time as illustrated in the graph above. The default timeframe is one month, which you can alter by clicking the dates in the top-right corner

When setting the date range, you can also compare two sets of data (such as one week vs. another, this month vs. last month, etc.) by clicking the "Compare to" box. The chart can be broken down by hours, days, weeks, and months. For instance, if you wanted to see when people visited the site most often, you could change the view to "Day" to see which days were most popular or "Hourly" to get specific times. This format is fairly consistent across many of the reports you will see on this site.

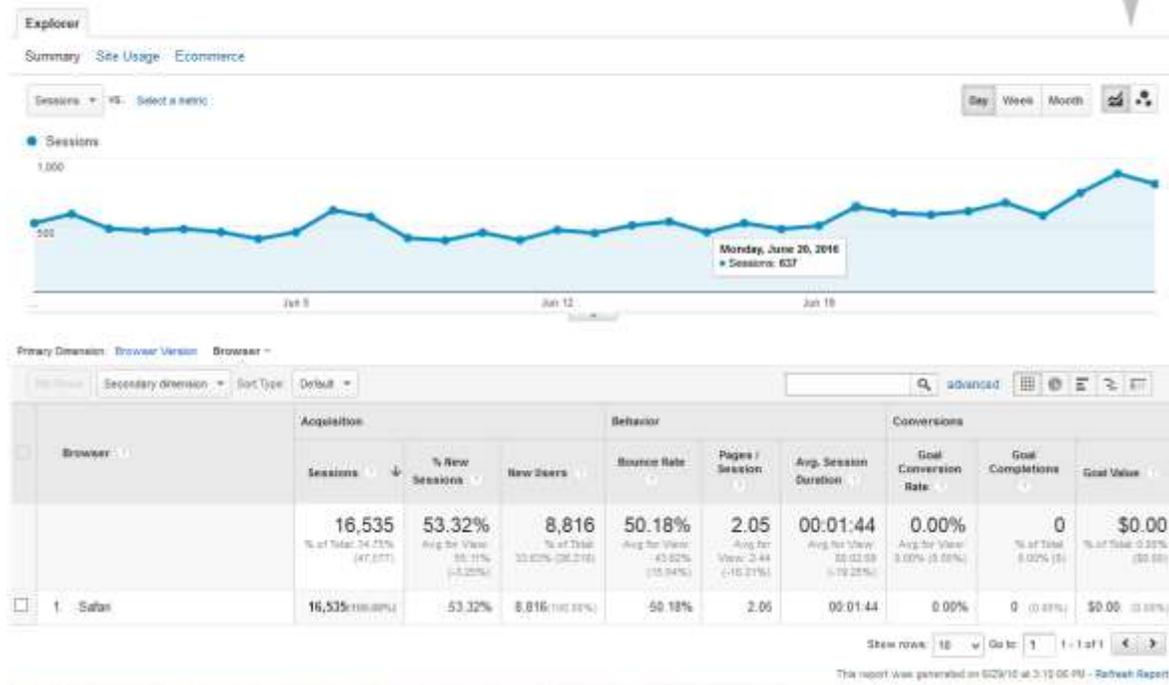
Further down the page, you can get demographic info ranging from what browsers or operating systems people are using to what city or town they are in. From there, you can then get information specific to that demographic. For instance, if you click on "Browser", you can see what browsers visitors are using and how often they are being used relative to one-another. Then, if you were to click on "Firefox", you could see the same type of overview stats as before, but specific to the people who used Mozilla Firefox.

Demographics	Browser	Sessions	% Sessions
Language	1. Safari	16,535	34.75%
Country	2. Chrome	16,047	33.73%
City	3. Internet Explorer	8,480	17.82%
System	4. Firefox	3,124	6.57%
Browser	5. Edge	1,562	3.28%
Operating System	6. Safari (in-app)	1,159	2.44%
Service Provider	7. Amazon Silk	325	0.68%
Mobile	8. Android Browser	299	0.63%
Operating System	9. Opera	16	0.03%
Service Provider	10. BlackBerry	14	0.03%
Screen Resolution			

[View full report](#)

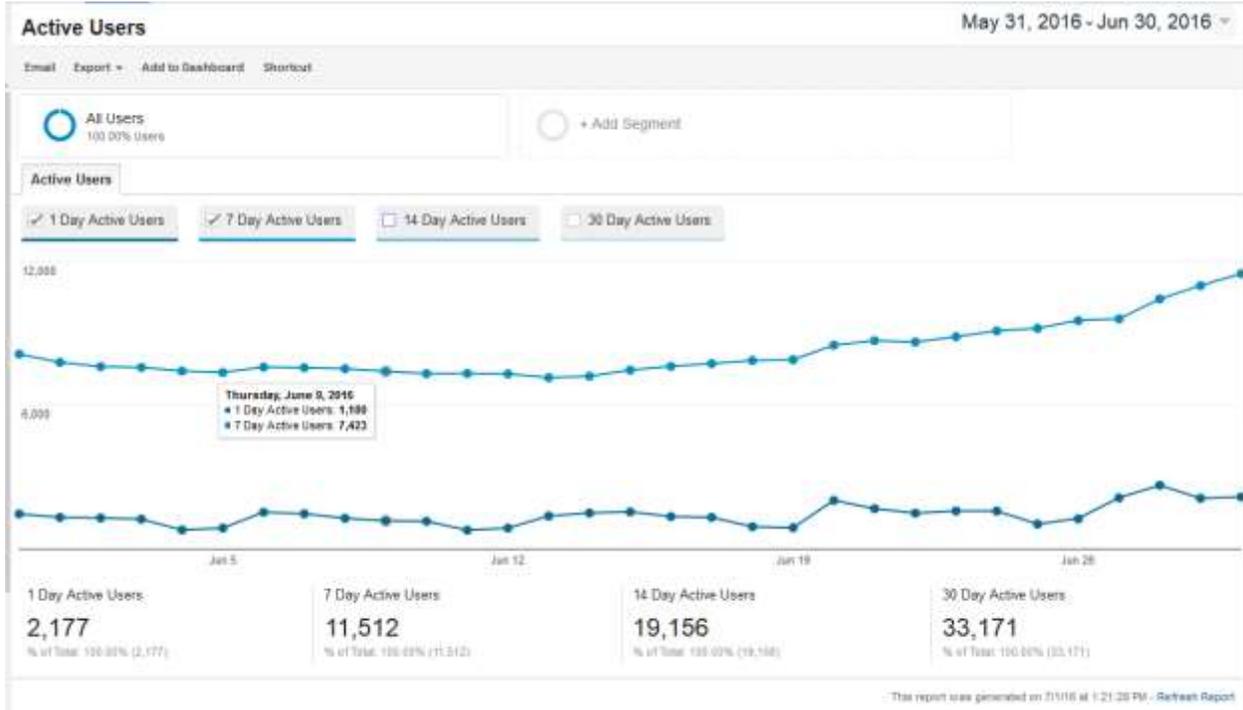
This report was generated on 6/29/16 at 3:07:53 PM - Refresh Report

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If you click on View Full Report, you will see a page similar to what is shown above. The chart displays the number of sessions over time while the table shows the total numbers. To learn what each column represents, hover over the question mark in the column header. If you click on the Secondary Dimension button, you can narrow the numbers down various metrics such as what pages people are viewing, what social network they came from, and more. These different metrics are also discussed later on.

Active Users



This section illustrates how many unique visitors have been to the website over a given timeframe. As with Overview, you can set the date range in the top right corner. 1 Day Active Users refers to unique visitors on that day, 7, 14, and 30 Day Active Users refer to unique visitors in those frames, so if one person goes the site multiple times in that frame, they are not counted as multiple unique visitors.

Cohort Analysis

Similar to Active Users, Cohort Analysis gives you another look at unique visitor retention.

	Day 0	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9
All Users 7,402 users	100.00%	3.09%	1.11%	0.62%	0.57%	0.36%	0.22%	0.00%		
Jun 22, 2016 909 users	100.00%	3.19%	1.87%	0.55%	0.44%	1.21%	1.78%	2.88%		
Jun 23, 2016 923 users	100.00%	3.94%	1.25%	1.38%	2.08%	1.58%	0.00%			
Jun 24, 2016 907 users	100.00%	2.33%	2.43%	1.30%	1.82%	0.80%				
Jun 25, 2016 719 users	100.00%	4.45%	1.28%	1.20%	0.80%					
Jun 26, 2016 907 users	100.00%	4.04%	2.31%	0.60%						
Jun 27, 2016 1,334 users	100.00%	5.40%	0.88%							
Jun 28, 2016 1,823 users	100.00%	0.00%								

The image above illustrates user retention over a seven day period. Day Zero represents the day a user first visits the site. Day 1 is one day after; Day 2 is two days, etc. For example, the Day 1

percentage for June 25th is 4.45%. This means that 4.45% of people who viewed the website on June 25th returned to view the site again on June 26th. The Day 2 number for that date is 1.25%, which means of the people who viewed the site on the 25th, 1.25% also viewed the site on the 26th and 27th. If you'd like, you can also change the relative timeframe by altering the Cohort Size and Date Range above the table to reflect the preferred range.

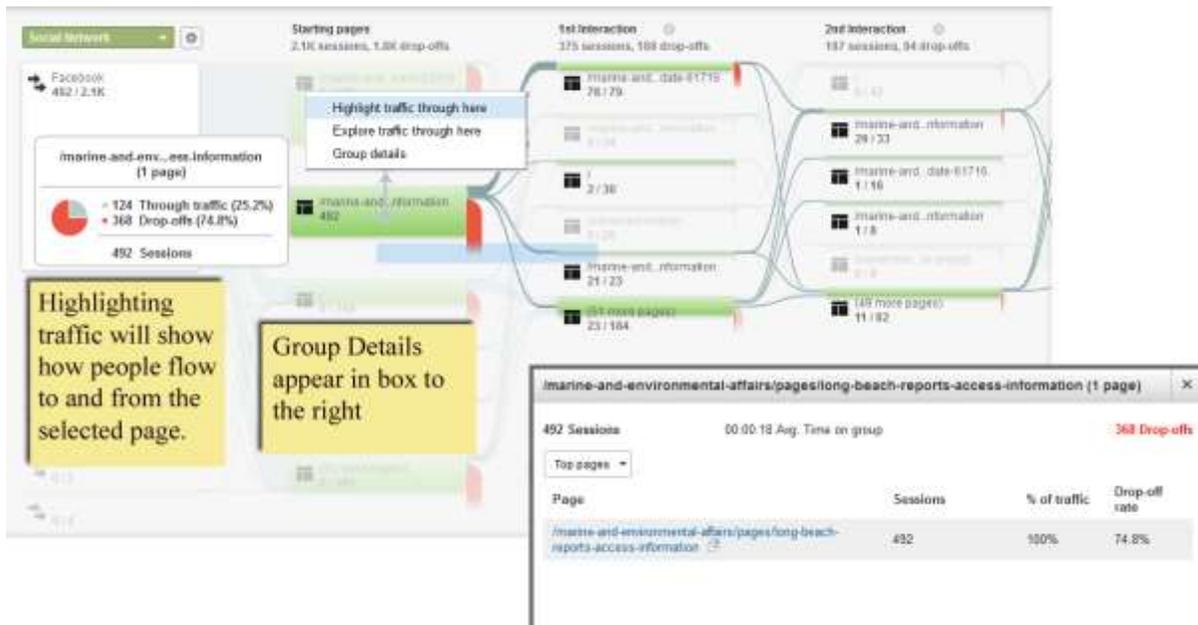
Geo, Technology, Mobile

These sections operate in the same way as the options in Audience Overview. For example, if you were in Audience Overview, hit Country, and then clicked View Full Report, you would be taken to Geo > Location. Each of these sections allows you to see the stats for a specific location, browser, device, etc. If you want to get even more specific, you can click the Secondary Dimension button.

For instance, let's say you wanted to see what pages people were viewing, but only cared about the people from your state. First, you would click on United States, then your state. Next, you would click Secondary Dimension > Behavior > Page. The secondary dimension feature is available in many different reports and functions the same way in each. Many of the dimensions themselves are discussed later on.

Users Flow

One report available across multiple sections is Users Flow. There are specific subsections for this report under Social as well as under Audience and Behavior. In each case, you can track where visitors are coming from and how they move from one page to another. This is first done by setting the category parameter in the green box in the top left corner of the report.



Once you've set your category, you will see four columns of data. The first column illustrates the source. For Social Network, this would be places like Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. If you were in Users, it would be a set of different browsers, cities, countries, etc. The second column is the landing page where

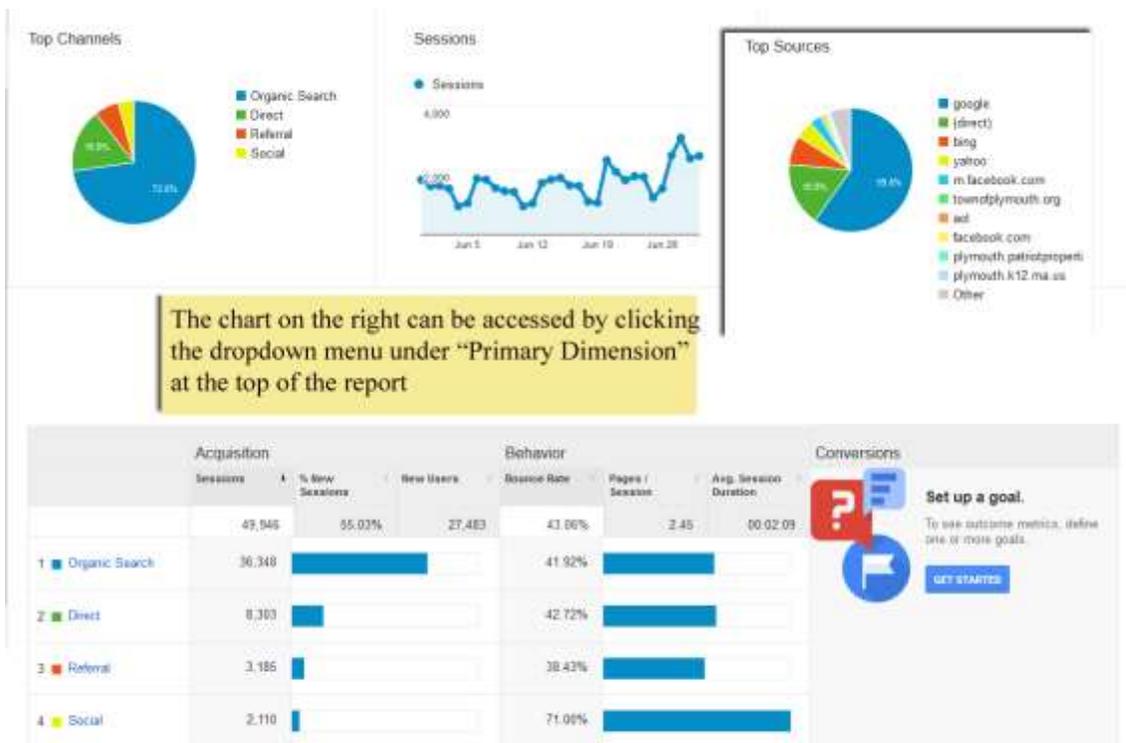
visitors first end up from their category. These are the first pages people see when they visit the site. The two final columns represent which pages people go to from there.

With all but the first column, you can also see the percentage of people who continue on to the next page. The green represents total sessions while the orange at the end is those who did not continue to another page. You can view this as a percentage by hovering over a particular URL in the flow chart. You can also narrow down the information by clicking any cell in the chart, which will bring up a menu with three options: Highlight traffic through here, Explore traffic through here, and Group Details.

In this case, you would primarily be using the first and last options. Highlighting traffic will show the flow of visitors to and from the specified URL. Group Details shows the full URL, how many sessions have occurred, and how many users continue to another page. If you view the details for the bottom row of each column, you will see a list of the other top URLs with that same information.

Acquisition

Overview



This section details how people are getting to the website. "Organic Search" refers to visitors who arrived through a search engine such as Google, Yahoo, or Bing. "Direct" refers to people who reached the site by entering a specific URL (such as "/town-clerk") without going through

any sort of search engine. “Referral” tracks visitors who were referred to the town by another website. Similarly, “Social” tracks visitors who followed a link on social media.

If you click on any of those topics, you will be taken to a page that breaks down the specifics for that category. For instance, if you click on Organic Search, you will see a table of what search terms people used to get to the site. An example of this can be seen on the next page. Please keep in mind that due to privacy reasons, some search engines will not provide data on specific search terms due to privacy. This is why you will see “(not provided)” and “(not set)” among the keywords.

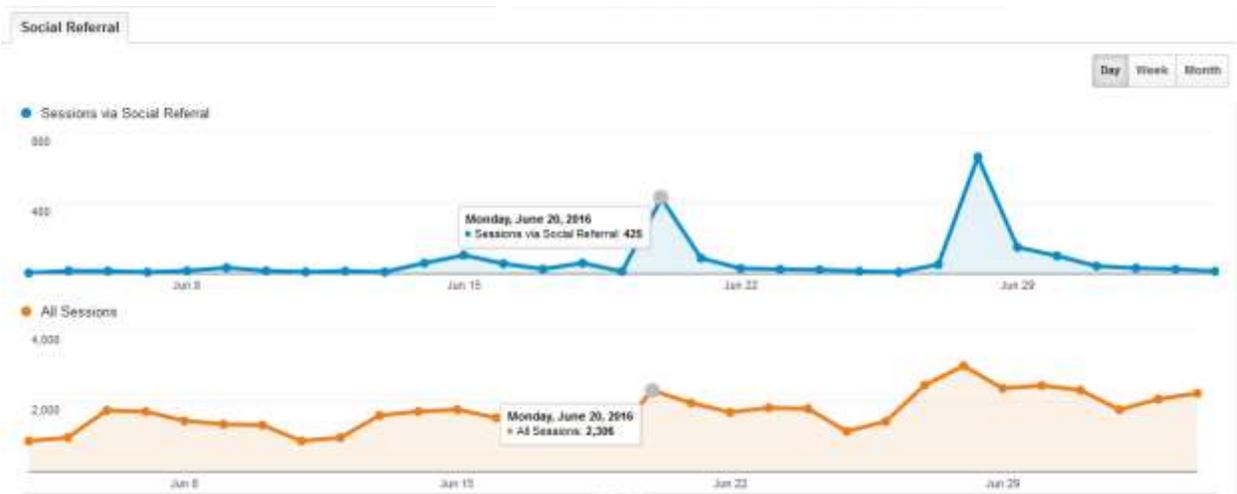
Keyword	Acquisition			Behavior		
	Sessions	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration
	36,348 <small>(% of Total: 72.77% (40,344))</small>	54.67% <small>Avg for View: 53.02% (-4.00%)</small>	19,871 <small>(% of Total: 39.38% (27,463))</small>	41.92% <small>Avg for View: 42.88% (+2.64%)</small>	2.49 <small>Avg for View: 2.40 (+3.75%)</small>	00:02:14 <small>Avg for View: 00:02:09 (+2.41%)</small>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. (not provided)	32,896 (90.60%)	54.88%	18,054 (54.88%)	42.45%	2.46	00:02:14
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. town of plymouth ma	372 (1.02%)	47.58%	177 (47.58%)	16.67%	4.19	00:03:21
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. plymouth ma	252 (0.69%)	67.46%	170 (67.46%)	34.92%	3.05	00:02:08
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. town of plymouth	242 (0.67%)	34.30%	83 (34.30%)	14.06%	3.46	00:02:30
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. town of plymouth, ma	70 (0.19%)	31.43%	22 (31.43%)	22.86%	3.34	00:02:57
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. plymouth massachusetts	60 (0.17%)	88.33%	53 (88.33%)	56.67%	1.96	00:00:37
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. plymouth town hall	60 (0.17%)	50.00%	30 (50.00%)	23.33%	4.73	00:04:15
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. www.plymouth-ma.gov	59 (0.16%)	40.68%	24 (40.68%)	13.56%	3.92	00:05:57
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. plymouth, ma	38 (0.10%)	68.42%	26 (68.42%)	34.21%	2.71	00:02:26
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. plymouth	34 (0.09%)	79.41%	27 (79.41%)	56.86%	1.86	00:02:17

Similarly, the table for Direct breaks down which URLs are being entered and how many people are using them directly. This allows you to see how often people click on those links you post on your Facebook and Twitter pages. For example, if you click on Facebook, you can see overall traffic stats coming from that page.

Social

There is a subsection under Acquisition that is also called Social. In this subsection, you receive much of the same information as the Social area under Overview. Under Network Referrals, you can also see the traffic coming from individual social networks such as Facebook or Twitter. Meanwhile, the Landing Pages section shows the specific pages people went to from those networks.

For example, if someone clicked on a link on the town’s Facebook page to a page in the Parks and Recreation Department, you would see a the number for Facebook increase under Network Referrals as well as the URL for the new Parks and Rec page. In both cases, you can see how long people remain on the website and how many other pages are being viewed. For more info on the Users Flow section, refer to [Page 6](#).



In both Network Referrals and Landing Pages, you will see the above graph comparing the total viewership to those who reached the site through a link on a social network. Using this, you can see how your social media posts are impacting your overall traffic.

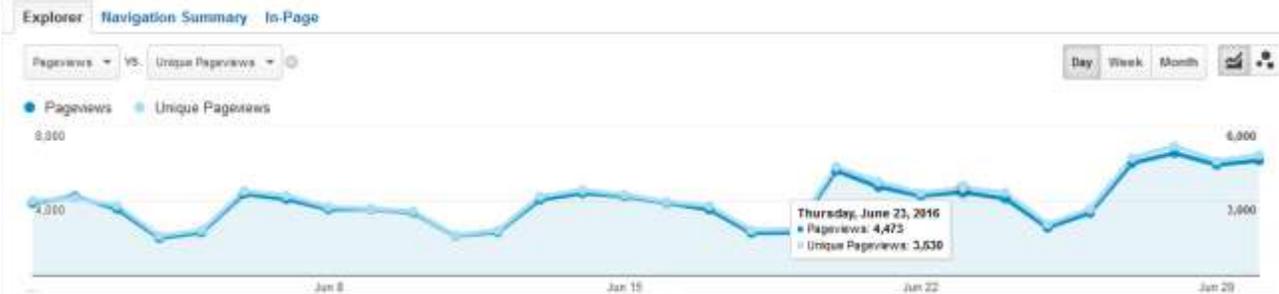
Behavior

Overview

The Behavior section covers the overall views for individual pages. The graph at the top of the page examines total page views over time. If you click on a specific page, you can then get audience stats for that page. The Page and Page Title options will show the ten most visited pages overall. If you click the View Full Report button for these sections, you will be lead to the Site Content section.

Site Content

This section is broken down into four subsections: All Pages, Content Drilldown, Landing Pages, and Exit Pages. The format of each section is fairly similar, with the top half featuring a graph of instances over time and the bottom half containing a table of pages. The graphs for All Pages and Content Drilldown both default to show pageviews in the given timeframe. If you click on the Pageviews button or “Select a metric” you can change the data or add a second metric as a comparison. In the chart below, you can see a comparison between pageviews and unique pageviews.



Similarly, the graphs for Landing Pages and Exit Pages show sessions and exits over time. Landing pages refer to the page visitors start one while exit pages are the last page they see before going to another site. These two graphs also have different sets of comparable metrics.

Page	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit	Page Value
	118,140 (Total: 100.00%) (118,140)	92,342 (% of Total: 100.00%) (92,342)	00:01:28 Avg. for View: 38:01:28 (0.00%)	48,079 (% of Total: 100.00%) (48,079)	43.11% Avg. for View: 43.11% (0.00%)	40.70% Avg. for View: 40.70% (0.00%)	\$0.00 (% of Total: 0.00%) (0.00)
1.	1,499 (1.26%)	16,195 (17.54%)	00:01:07	14,858 (30.90%)	29.51%	33.20%	\$0.00 (0.00%)
2. /departments	6,522 (5.52%)	4,735 (5.13%)	00:00:40	1,771 (3.68%)	28.26%	18.57%	\$0.00 (0.00%)
3. /maine-and-environmental-affairs/pages/long-b each-information	4,846 (4.09%)	3,607 (3.91%)	00:01:07	2,749 (5.72%)	38.07%	38.36%	\$0.00 (0.00%)
4. assessors-office	4,576 (3.87%)	3,601 (3.90%)	00:02:40	2,600 (5.42%)	32.94%	61.95%	\$0.00 (0.00%)
5. /home/pages/online-payments	4,073 (3.43%)	3,695 (3.99%)	00:08:05	1,069 (2.22%)	13.76%	74.52%	\$0.00 (0.00%)
6. /human-resources/pages/job-opportunities-0	3,467 (2.93%)	2,519 (2.73%)	00:01:48	1,714 (3.58%)	42.33%	63.17%	\$0.00 (0.00%)
7. /maine-and-environmental-affairs/pages/long-b each-reports-access-information	3,077 (2.60%)	2,579 (2.79%)	00:01:02	1,096 (2.28%)	62.77%	46.18%	\$0.00 (0.00%)
8. /recycling/pages/transfer-station-hours-directio nk	2,096 (1.77%)	1,783 (1.92%)	00:02:23	1,256 (2.61%)	35.15%	66.88%	\$0.00 (0.00%)
9. /maine-and-environmental-affairs/pages/long-b each-4x4-sticker-information	2,038 (1.73%)	1,794 (1.94%)	00:03:20	1,083 (2.25%)			\$0.00 (0.00%)
10. /town-clerk	2,029 (1.72%)	1,676 (1.81%)	00:01:24	1,211 (2.52%)	45.41%	38.69%	\$0.00 (0.00%)

Each of the four tables has slightly different columns. For info on each column, hover over the question mark in the column header. Much like the table in Audience Overview, this one allows you to set a variety of secondary dimensions. The first three sections also allow you to change the primary dimension

Behavior Flow

This subsection acts in the same way as [Users Flow](#) in that you can see how visitors are flowing from one page to another.

Site Speed

This will give you an idea as to how fast pages are loading. You can break these numbers down by browser, country, and page. The Page Timings section will allow you to see how fast pages load compared to each-other as well as how often each page is viewed. If you see a page has a demonstrably slow load time, you can then check that page to see if there may be too much content in one place.

Site Search

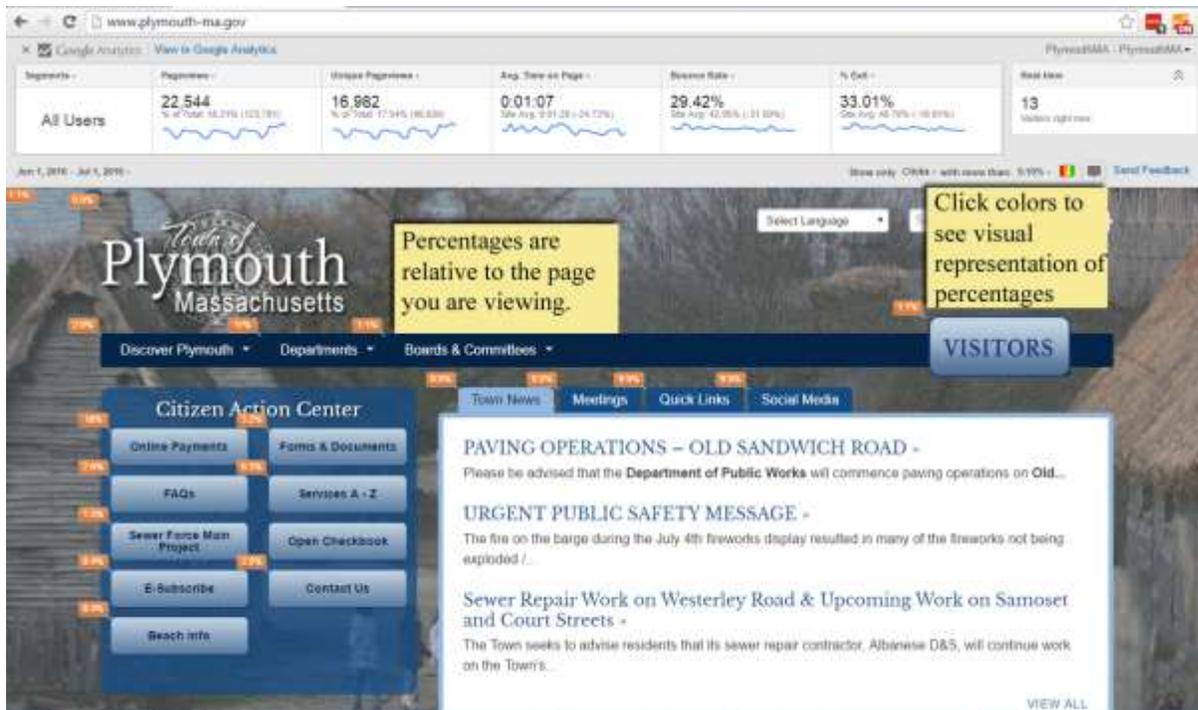
When enabled, it allows you to see what search terms people are using with the website's internal search function. Usage refers to how often the search function is used relative to the total number of visitors. Search Terms shows which terms people are entering into the search bar. The Pages section shows which pages people click on from the Search page.

In Page Analytics

This section functions a bit differently from the rest of Google Analytics. In order to view it, you must be using the Google Chrome browser, which can be downloaded at google.com/chrome. Once you've opened Chrome, you can download the Page Analytics extension by clicking the link referenced in the error message or by going here:

<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/fnbdnhhicmebfgdgglcdacdapkcihcoh>

After the extension is added, you will see an orange icon appear in the top right corner of the browser. Now, instead of going into Google Analytics, go directly to your town's website. From there, you can turn the extension on or off by clicking the orange icon in the top right corner of the browser.



When the extension is active, you will see a toolbar much like the one for the Audience Overview section at the top of the page. This toolbar will let you view various metrics such as total pageviews and real-time visitors. You can view one or multiple sets of data by selecting or unselecting options under Segments. As with the other sections, you can also set the date range(s) by clicking on the dates in the left corner of the toolbar.

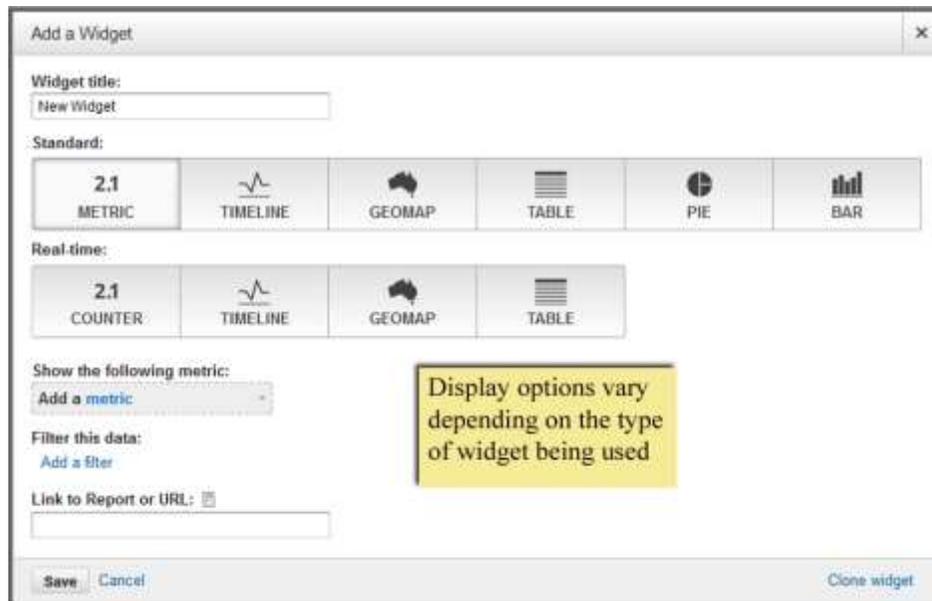
Customization

Dashboards

Dashboards allow you to select various widgets (tables, graphs, etc.) and have them all appear on one page. When you first create a new dashboard, you will have two main options: a Blank

Canvas or a Starter Dashboard that contains eight default widgets. You also have the ability to import a dashboard from the Google Analytics Gallery. The Gallery dashboards were created by other Analytics users and are broken down by both rating and category.

Regardless of which option you select, the functionality will remain the same. Widgets can be re-arranged by clicking and dragging or edited/removed by clicking the icons in the top-right corner. You can add widgets to a Dashboard by clicking “Add New Widget” at the top of the page, which will bring up this window:



Widgets are broken up into two categories: Standard and Real-time. The former shows data over a set timeframe while the latter functions much like the Real-Time section itself in that it shows data at that moment. Both categories contain the many of the same options.

Metric and Counter will give you numbers. Timeline will show metric data over time. GeoMap shows the data in terms of where it is coming from. Table allows you to compare multiple metrics at once. Pie and Bar show a comparison of the top metrics. With each widget, you also have the option to link the widget to a specific report or URL. For instance, you could have a widget displaying the pageviews for a particular page, then have the link go to the full Site Content report.

Saved Reports

The Saved Reports section allows you to create a quick list of your favorite analytics reports, so you don't have to browse through the sidebar to find them. This section will also save your preferences for these reports. For instance, let's say you want to track the total pageviews for the Town Clerk and compare it to the unique visitors to the same page. Normally, you could go to Behavior > Site Content > All Pages, select the page for the Town Clerk, and then select a metric to compare to Pageviews.

However, rather than going through those steps every time you log in, you can instead go through the steps once, then click the Save button, which will add that report with those specifications to the Saved Reports section. Now, if you want to view that same report later on, you can go to Customization > Saved Reports.

Custom Reports/Alerts

Much like the Dashboards section, the Custom Reports section lets you set up individual report pages. For instance, rather than constantly going to one of the other reports, then changing the dimensions to what you really want, you can now create your own report page for quick and easy access.

The Custom Alerts section allows you to set up alerts when a given metric reaches a certain point. This can be used to track spikes or dips in traffic and can be refined for specific pages, users, sources, and more.

On the Custom Alerts page, you can create a new report by clicking “Manage Custom Alerts”, then clicking “New Alert”. First, you would want to give the alert a name to differentiate it from any others. You’ll then want to determine the time period you want to analyze. Once you’ve done that, you can set the conditions you want to track. For instance, let’s say you want to know any time you receive an influx of visitor traffic from Facebook.

Alert name:

Apply to: **PlymouthMA**

Period:

Send me an email when this alert triggers. Also include

[Setup your mobile phone](#) to receive a text message about this alert

Alert Conditions

This applies to	Condition	Value
<input type="text" value="Source"/>	<input type="text" value="Contains"/>	<input type="text" value="facebook"/>
Alert me when	Condition	Value
<input type="text" value="Pageviews"/>	<input type="text" value="Is greater than"/>	<input type="text" value="20"/>

The alert is configured to apply to all traffic originating from Facebook, so if 20 or more people click on a link in Facebook that takes them to your website, you would receive an alert. If you’d like, you can also have these alerts sent to your e-mail for phone by either checking the box marked “Send me an email when this alert triggers” or clicking the link to set up your phone to receive the alerts.