



MonsterInsights

Beginner's Guide to Google Analytics



Beginner's Guide to Google Analytics

Do you want to know how Google Analytics works? Google Analytics 4 (GA4) offers powerful insights about your website visitors. But using it isn't straightforward, and many beginners find it complex and difficult to learn.

So, in this beginner's guide to Google Analytics, we'll break down the basics of how Google Analytics works. We'll also help you navigate to different reports and explain what they mean. By the time we're done, Google Analytics 4 will no longer feel like a complicated mystery to you!

What is Google Analytics?

In simple words, Google Analytics is a free tracking tool offered by Google, and it shows you how visitors use your website.

For instance, let's say you own an [eCommerce store](#) and want to know how many users visit your website. With the help of Google Analytics, you can see the number of visitors to your store, where they're coming from, which device they're using, and much more.

What Does Google Analytics Do?

Google Analytics offers information about user behavior that can be critical for your business. There are many reasons why you should be using Google Analytics.

Here are some of its benefits:

- 🕒 Measure your website's performance
- 🕒 See if your marketing efforts are working
- 🕒 Get inspiration for which type of content to create or products to list on your website
- 🕒 Divide users into different segments (like age, gender, country, device, etc.) to see which ones are more engaged

- 🕒 Figure out which website pages to optimize to [boost conversions](#)

Alright, let's dive into our tutorial.

How to Use Google Analytics 4

Google Analytics is intimidating at first glance, but with this tutorial and some practice, you'll be using it to read and understand your website's data in no time.

Step 1: Create a Google Analytics Account and Add The Tracking Code

The first thing you'll need to do is create a Google Analytics account and add a tracking code to your website.

If you need help with these two steps, you can follow our easy guide on [how to add Google Analytics to your WordPress website](#) to get started. If your website isn't on WordPress, find out how to add Google Analytics to your CMS.

So, what is a tracking code?

Your Google Analytics tracking code is a snippet of code that allows Google Analytics to track the visits on your website and the actions that your website visitors perform. It's made up of a programming language called JavaScript and looks something like this:

Install the Google tag manually

Below is the Google tag for this account. Copy and paste it in the code of every page of your website, immediately after the <head> element. Don't add more than one Google tag to each page.

```
<!-- Google tag (gtag.js) -->
<script async src="https://www.googletagmanager.com/gtag/js?id=G-XXXXXXXXXX"></script>
<script>
  window.dataLayer = window.dataLayer || [];
  function gtag(){dataLayer.push(arguments);}
  gtag('js', new Date());

  gtag('config', 'G-XXXXXXXXXX');
</script>
```

You don't need to understand the contents of the code, but you might like to know how it all works.

When a user visits your website, Google Analytics will drop a [cookie](#) on the user's browser. Cookies are small files that contain information about the user's activities.

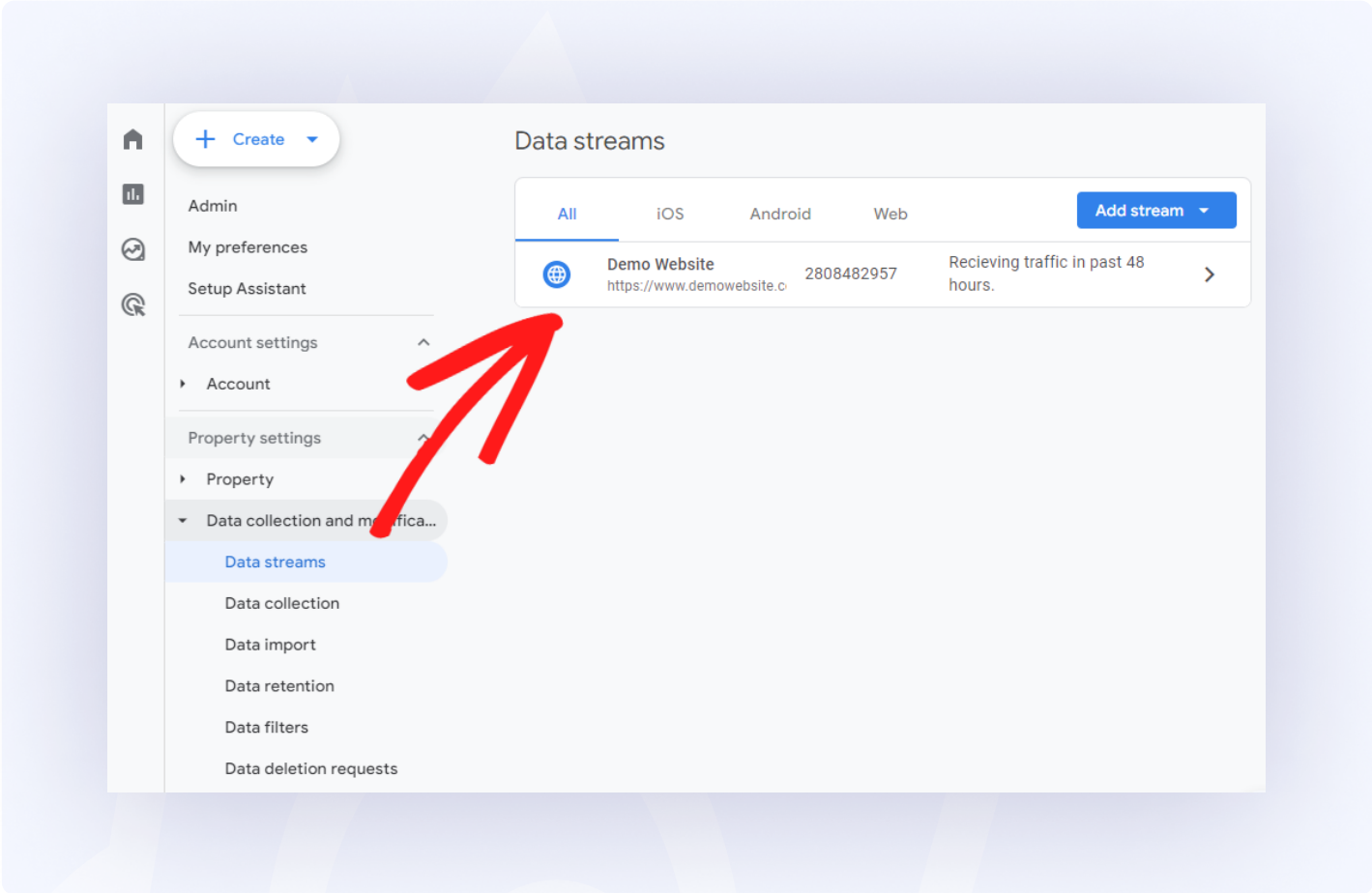
Using these cookies, Google Analytics will be able to see how the user behaves on your website and collects this information to show you in different reports.

Step 2: Set up Conversions

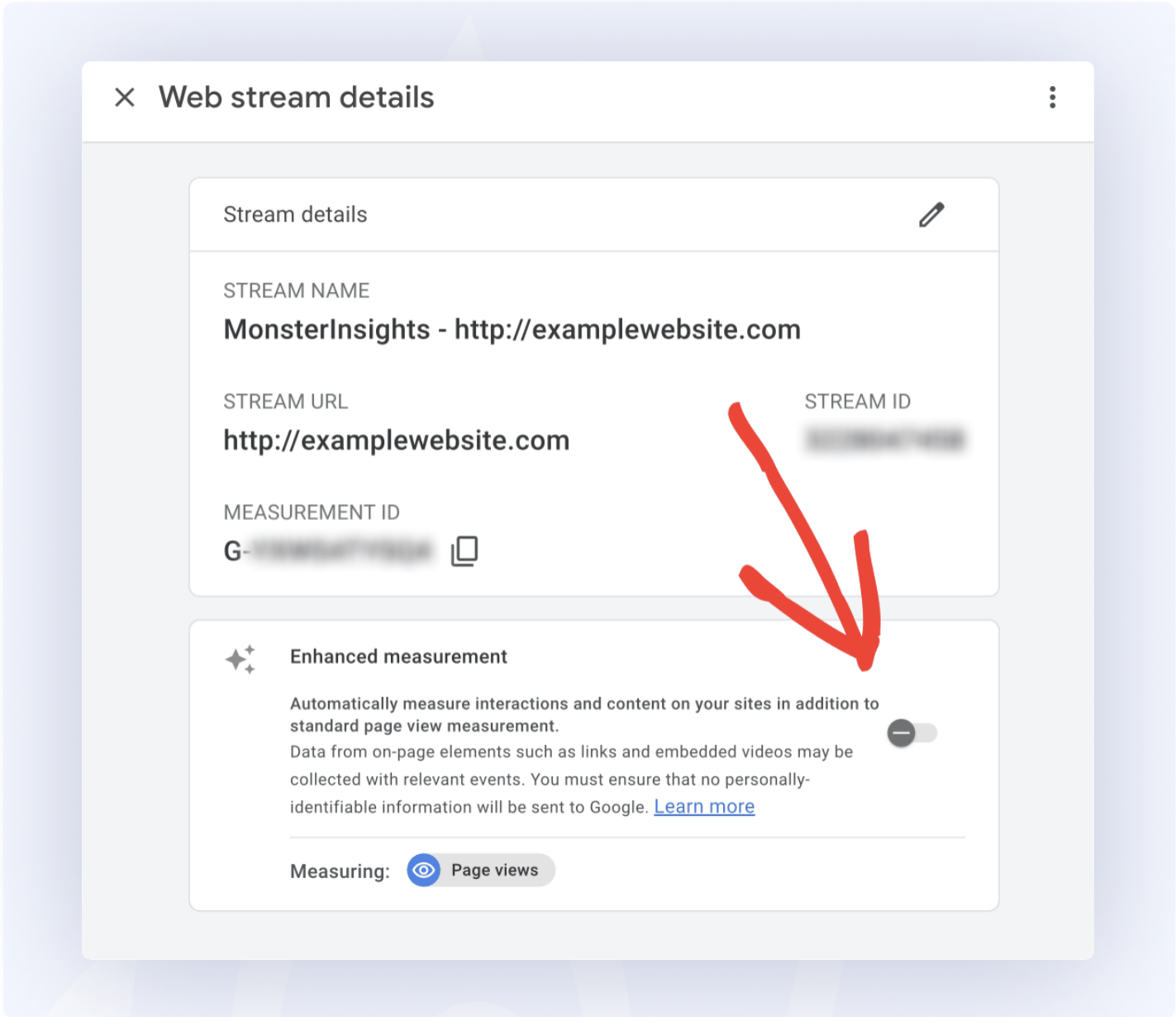
If you want Google Analytics to tell you how many of your visitors completed a conversion, like signing up for your newsletter, [filling out a form](#), [watching a video](#), viewing a certain page, or buying a product, you'll have to set up conversions.

Google Analytics 4 can automatically track some events on its own with its Enhanced Measurement tracking, like [file downloads](#), video views, form submissions, and a few more. However, keep in mind that there are a few constraints with GA4's built-in enhanced tracking. For instance, the video tracking only works with YouTube videos, form tracking has some reported issues if you're also using a Facebook Pixel, and scroll tracking only fires if a user scrolls to the bottom of your pages.

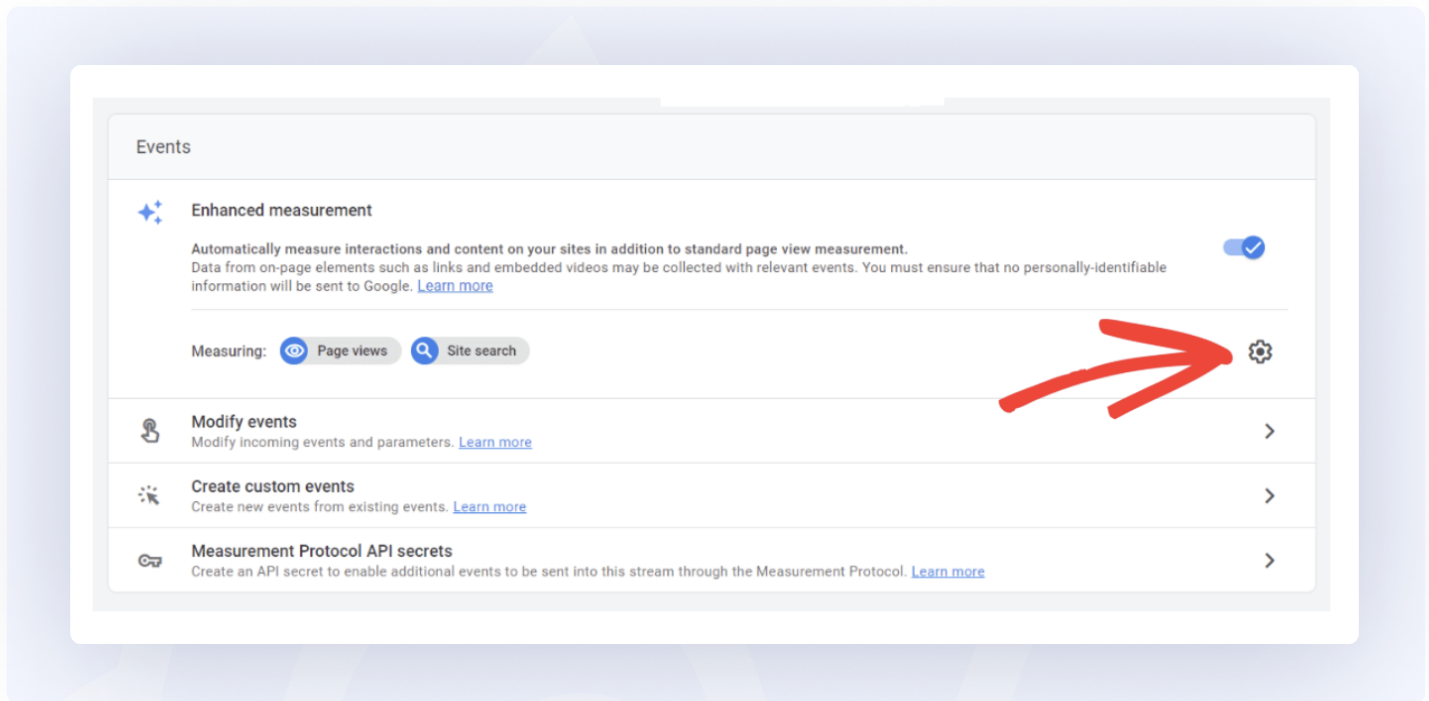
To set up enhanced measurement, head to the Admin cog, then Data Streams, and click into your data stream:



Now, you'll see an Enhanced Measurement section. If you want Google Analytics to attempt to track events on its own, make sure this is flipped on.



Once it's switched on, you can click on the cog icon to choose what's automatically tracked:



NOTE: There's a better way to track events if you're a WordPress user! Make sure to [check out MonsterInsights](#), the easiest way to set up event and [conversion tracking](#) in GA4.

MonsterInsights users, please make sure your enhanced measurement is turned off.

Now, you can mark whichever events you want tracked as conversions. So, when someone completes an event of your choice (downloading a file, submitting a form, etc.) it'll count as a conversion in Google Analytics.

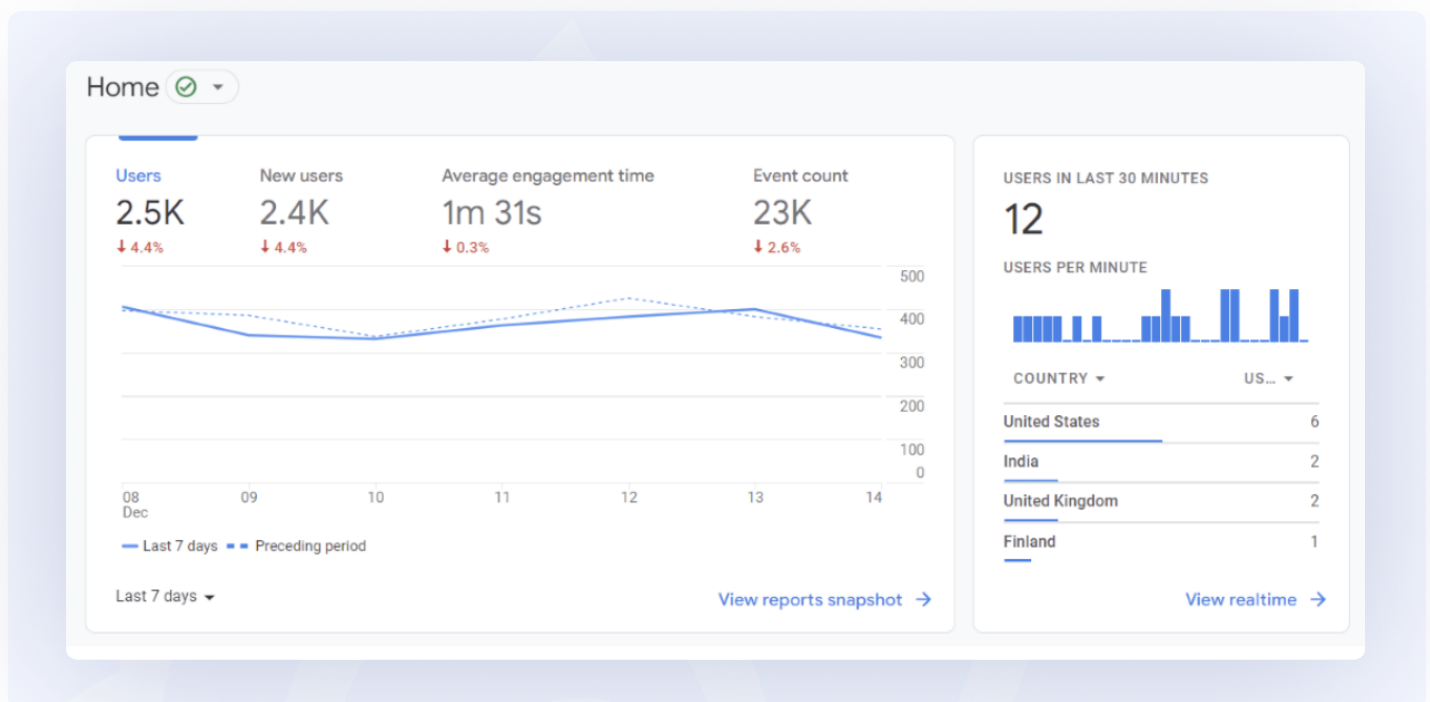
To do this, head to the Admin cog » Conversions. Then, you'll be able to click the switch to mark an event as a conversion.

Looking to set up eCommerce tracking? That’s a bit more complicated, but you can [check out how easy it is with MonsterInsights and WordPress](#).

Google Analytics Beginner’s Guide: Reports

Once you’ve created an account and added the tracking code, it’s time to see what you can do with Google Analytics.

As you start, you’ll arrive at Google Analytics home. It gives you a quick overview of how your website is performing.

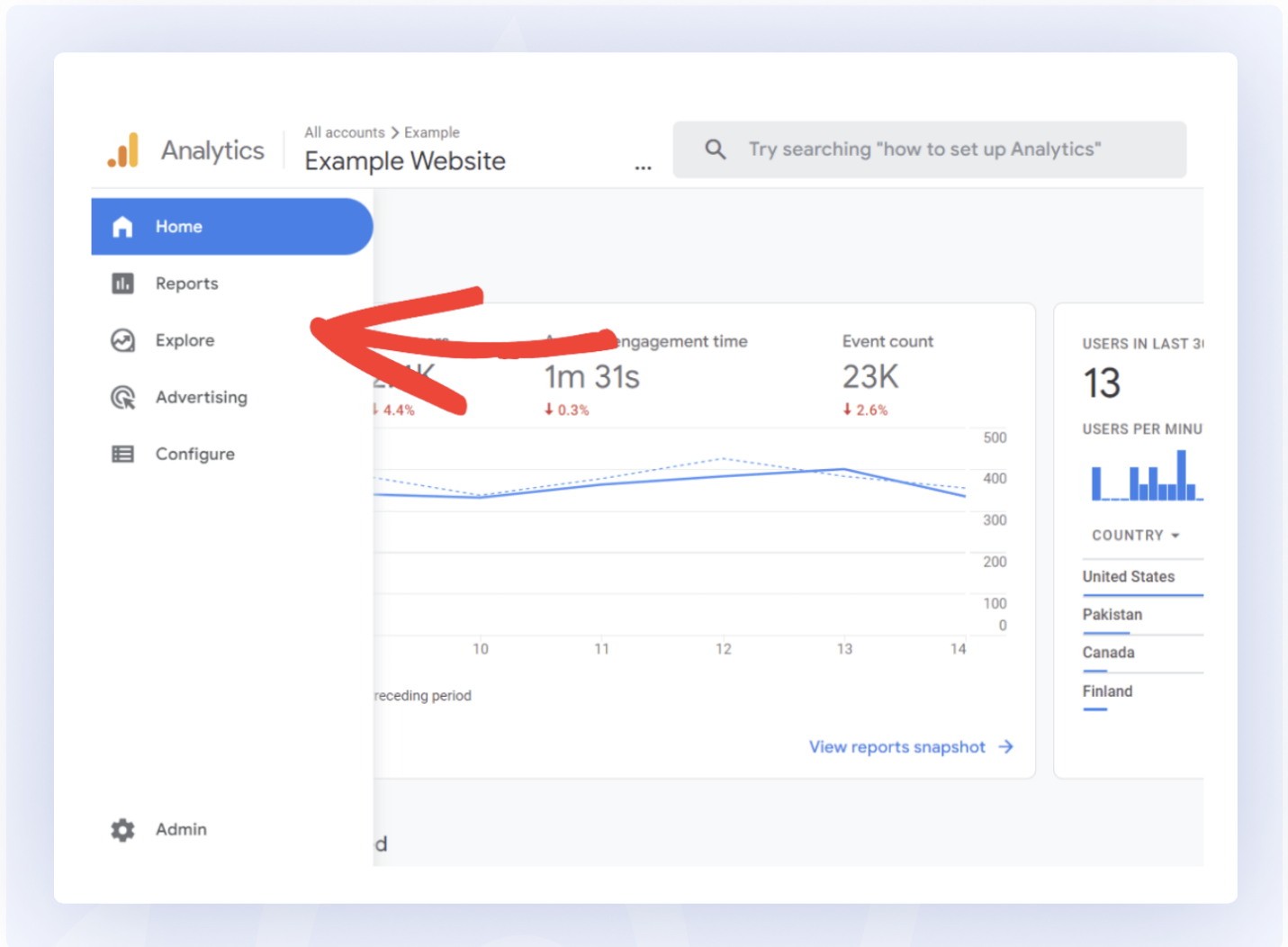


For instance, you can see:

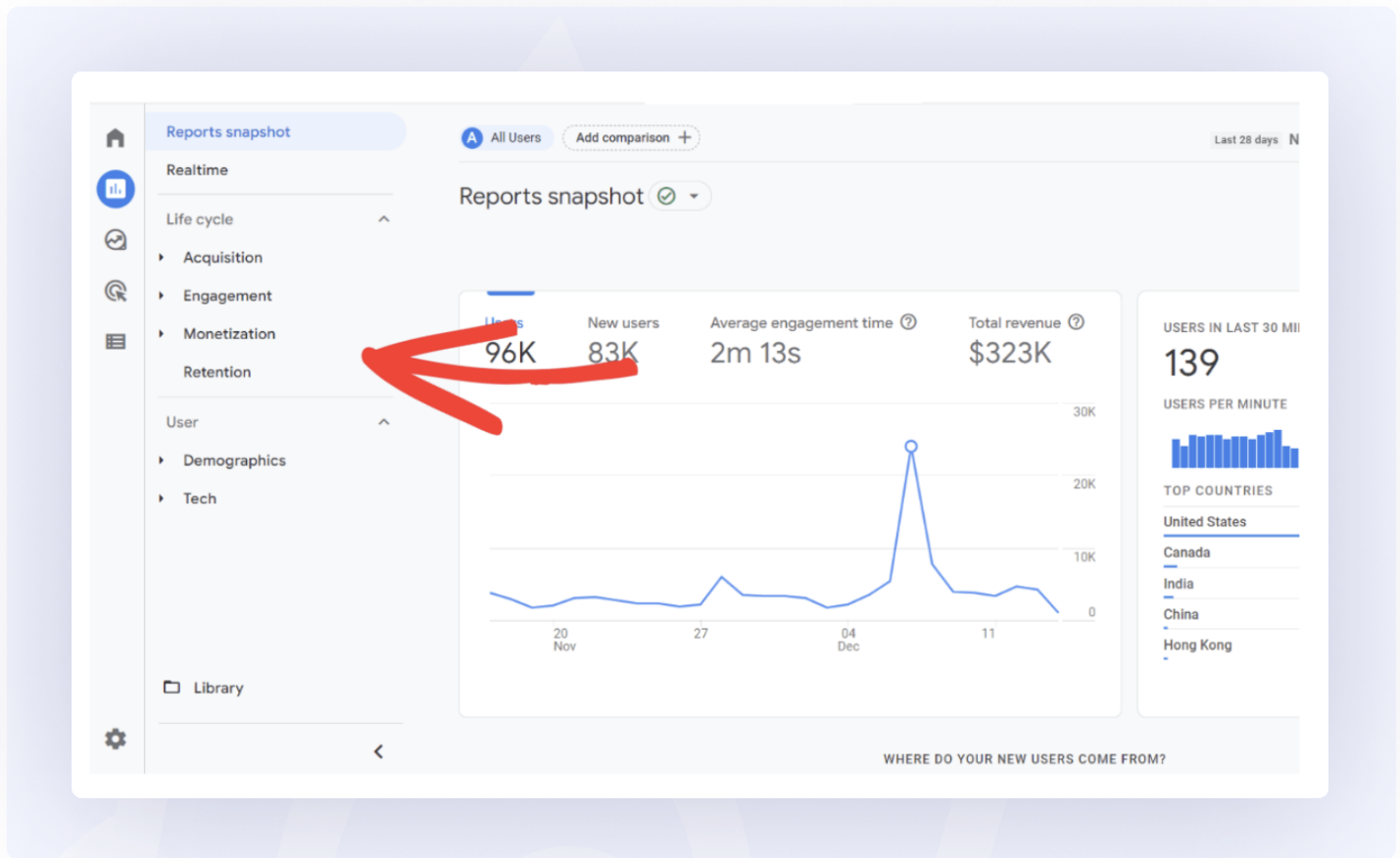
- 🕒 **Users:** How many visitors came to your website (in the past 7 days or whatever date period you have selected)
- 🕒 **New users:** Of the users who visited your site, how many of them hadn’t visited your website before

- ⦿ Average engagement time: How much average time a visitor spends on the website
- ⦿ Event count: How many events (clicks, form submissions, etc.) were completed

On the left-hand side panel, you'll see a navigation sidebar that expands when you mouse over it:



To access your reports, head to the Reports tab.

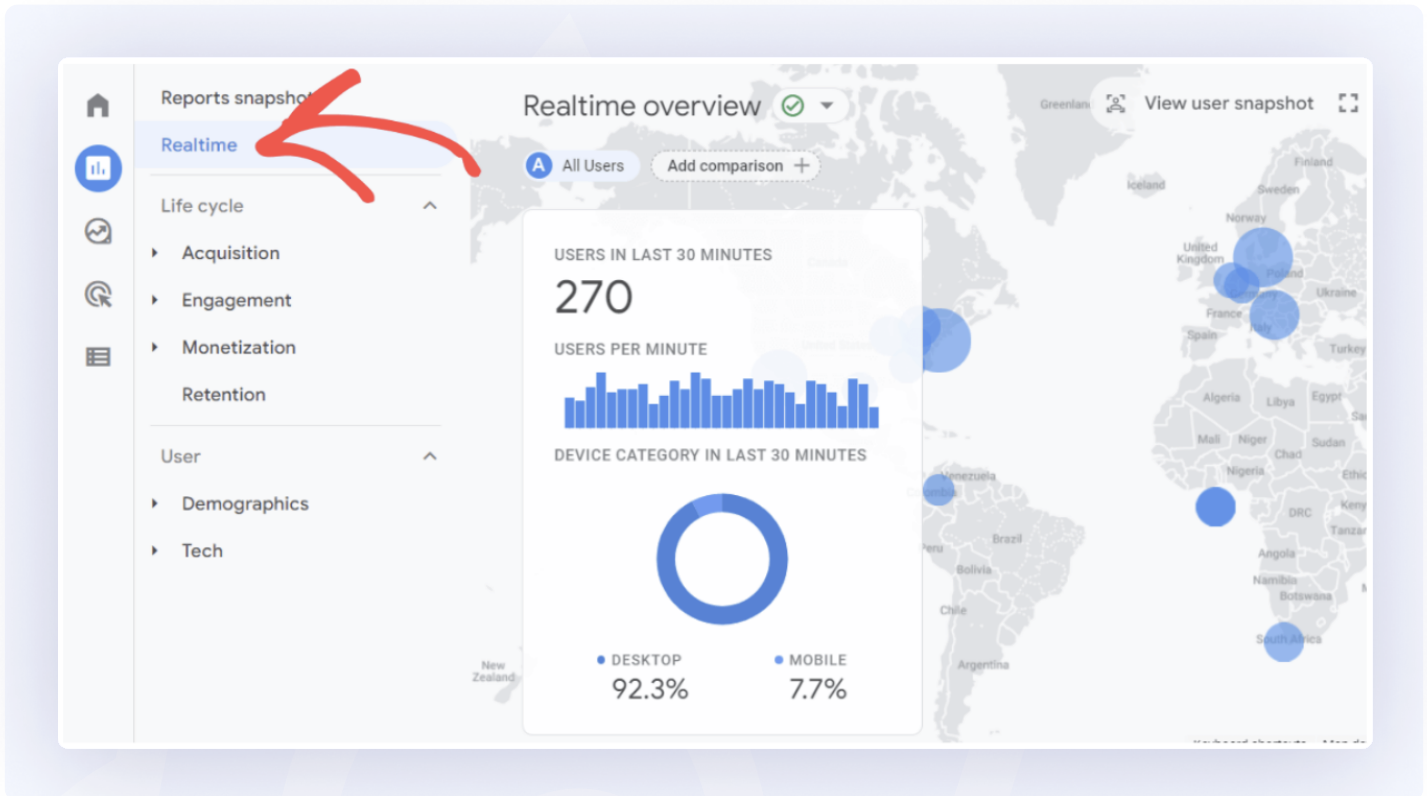


You'll see a new navigation with Google Analytics reports:

- 📊 Reports snapshot
- 📊 Realtime
- 📊 Acquisition
- 📊 Engagement
- 📊 Monetization
- 📊 Retention
- 📊 Demographics
- 📊 Tech

Let's take a look at each of these reports, what they track, and how you can use them.

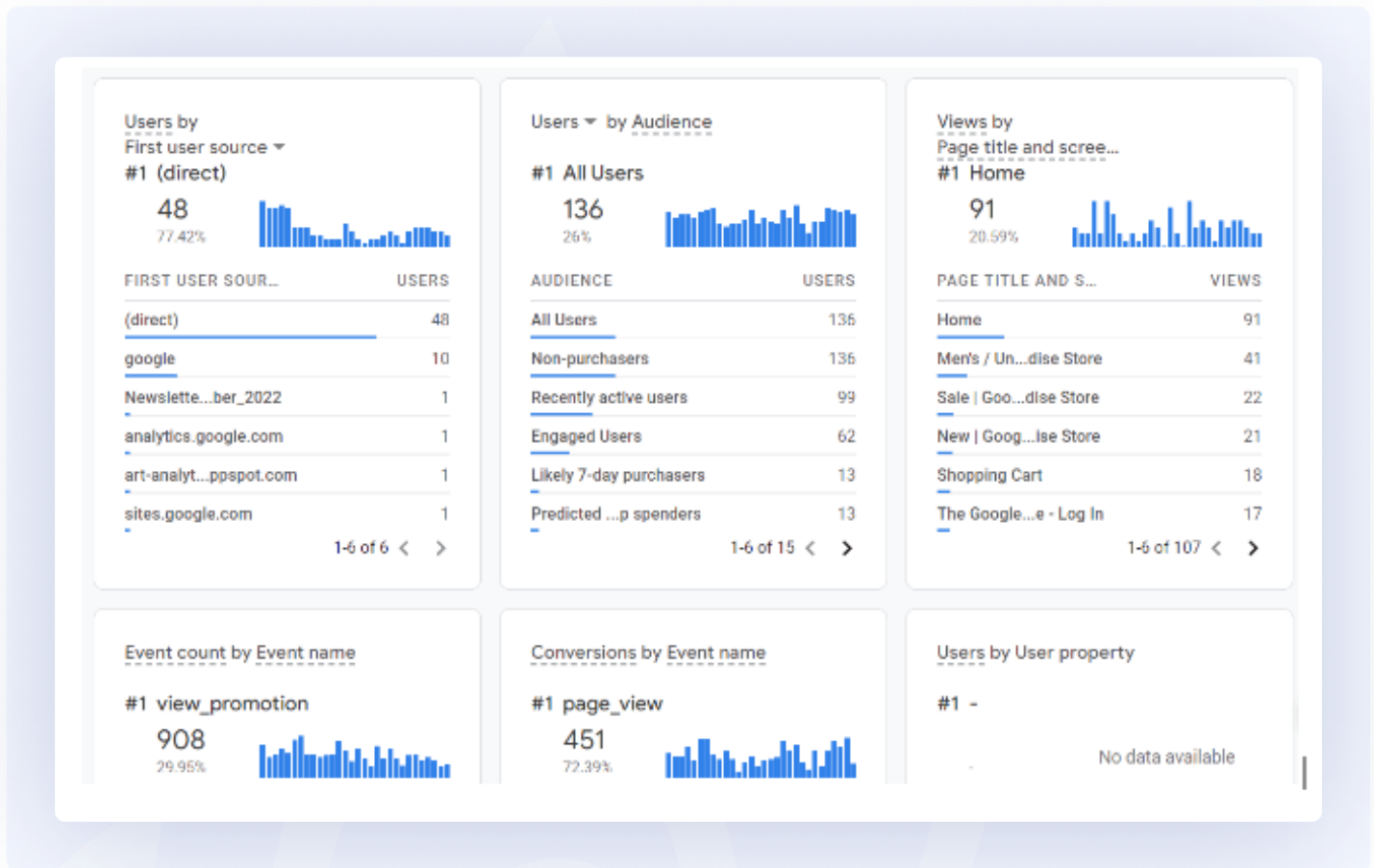
Realtime Report



The Realtime report shows the number of users on your website right now. This is where you go to see real-time activity on your website.

The main card overlaid on the world map shows how many users have visited your site in the last 30 minutes, plus what percentage of them were on desktop, mobile, or tablet-type devices.

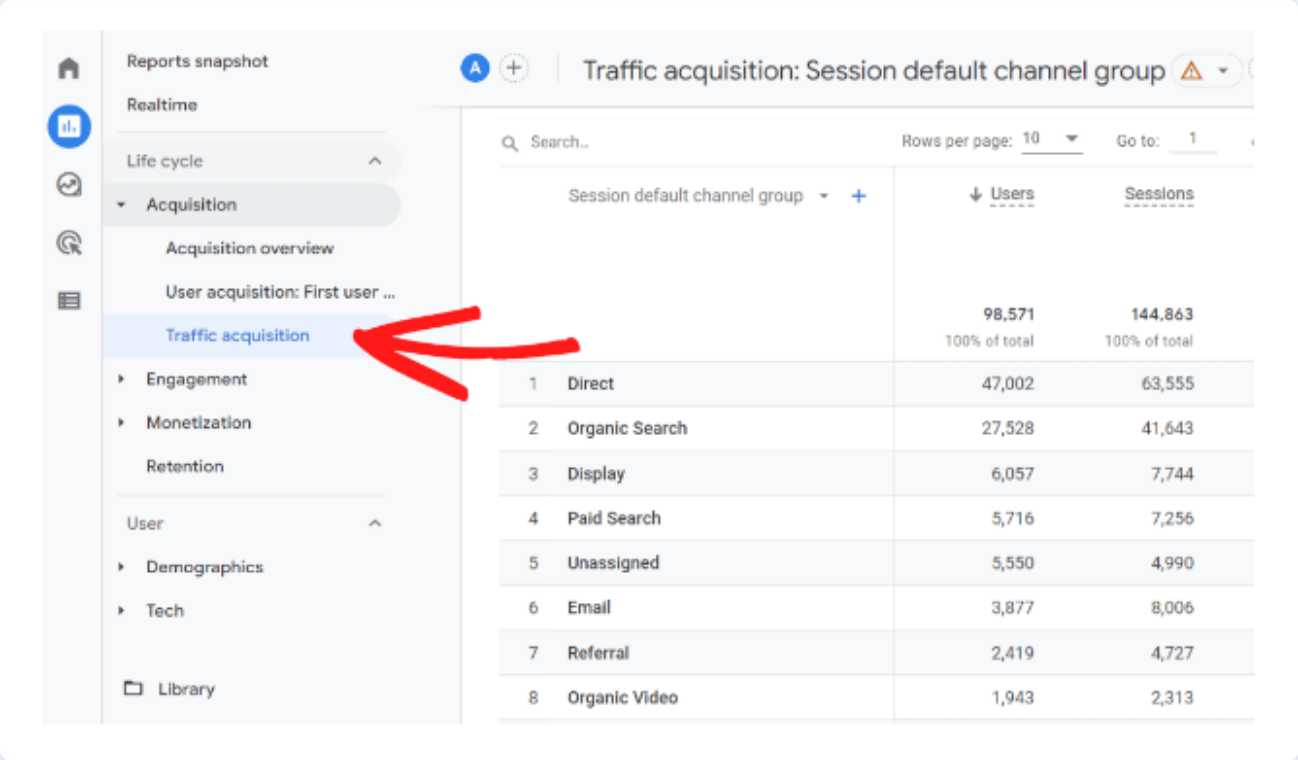
When you scroll down the page, you'll see cards with different real-time data to check out:



[Realtime reports](#) are great for measuring the performance of a recent [campaign](#) that you're running, like a sale, free [giveaway](#), or promoting content on social media.

Acquisition Report

The Acquisition report in Google Analytics breaks down your website traffic. If you want to figure out how you acquired your traffic, this is the report to find that data. We recommend starting with the Traffic Acquisition report to see the channels your visitors used to find your website:



Session default channel group	Users	Sessions
	98,571 100% of total	144,863 100% of total
1 Direct	47,002	63,555
2 Organic Search	27,528	41,643
3 Display	6,057	7,744
4 Paid Search	5,716	7,256
5 Unassigned	5,550	4,990
6 Email	3,877	8,006
7 Referral	2,419	4,727
8 Organic Video	1,943	2,313

As you are getting started with Google Analytics, acquisition reports are extremely useful. They'll tell you how your traffic reaches your website.

Google Analytics will divide your web traffic into traffic categories such as:

- 🕒 Organic Search: [Organic traffic](#) is the traffic that comes from search engines like Google or Bing
- 🕒 Direct: This is the traffic that arrives when someone [types in your website's URL](#), opens your website through a bookmark, or when Google cannot recognize the traffic source
- 🕒 Referral: [Referral traffic](#) is the traffic that comes from links to your site elsewhere on the web
- 🕒 Paid Search: If you're running [Google Ads](#), that traffic will show up here

- Organic Social: This is the non-ad traffic that arrives from [social media](#) platforms like Facebook or Twitter

If you want more detail, you can dig deep in the Acquisition report to find traffic sources.

For instance, to see more exact channels, click the Session default channel group dropdown:

Session default channel group		Users	Sessions	Engaged sessions	Average engagement time per session
		98,571 100% of total	144,863 100% of total	88,095 100% of total	1m 30s Avg 0%
1	Direct	47,002	63,555	38,083	1m 28s
2	Organic Search	27,528	41,643	29,508	1m 35s
3	Display	6,057	7,744	3,651	0m 25s
4	Paid Search	5,716	7,256	4,014	1m 04s
5	Unassigned	5,550	4,990	172	1m 26s
6	Email	3,877	8,006	6,117	2m 43s
7	Referral	2,419	4,727	3,659	2m 33s
8	Organic Video	1,943	2,313	1,232	0m 33s

From the dropdown, choose Session source/medium. Then, you'll be able to see more detail about exactly which traffic sources sent traffic to your site.

Traffic acquisition: Session source / medium ⚠ + Last 28 days Nov 17 - Dec 14, 2022

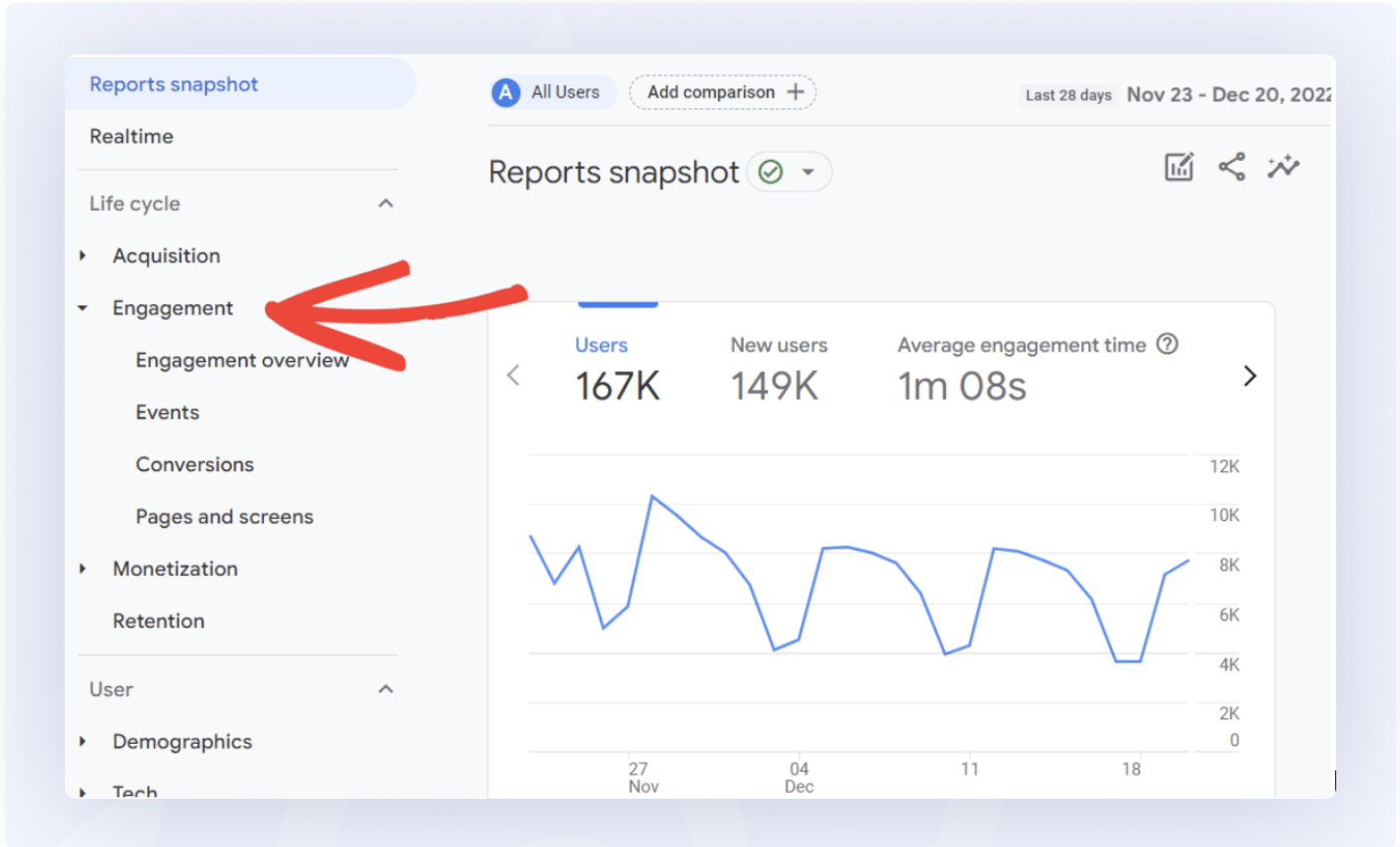
Search... Rows per page: 10 Go to: 1 < 1-10 of 33

Session source / medium	↓ Users	Sessions	Engaged sessions	Average engagement time per session
	98,282 100% of total	144,454 100% of total	87,731 100% of total	1m 30s Avg 0%
1 (direct) / (none)	47,002	63,555	38,083	1m 28s
2 google / organic	22,949	35,847	25,565	1m 44s
3 google / cpc	13,471	17,167	8,795	0m 44s
4 (not set)	5,547	4,985	171	1m 27s
5 Newsletter_November_2022_2 / email	3,587	6,952	5,305	2m 39s
6 baidu / organic	1,808	1,870	1,210	0m 14s
7 youtube.com / referral	1,736	2,036	1,105	0m 33s

With this information, you will know where to invest your time and money. For instance, if you're lacking organic traffic, you need to focus more on [search engine optimization](#).

Engagement Report

When it comes to finding out what your visitors are doing while they're on your website, you need to look at the Engagement report in Google Analytics. This is where you can see events your visitors trigger, conversions they completed, and pages they visited.



In this section, the most helpful report for beginners is Pages and screens. It includes both events and conversions for each page. Let's take a look

The screenshot shows the 'Pages and screens: Page path and screen class' report. The left sidebar has 'Pages and screens' highlighted by a red arrow. The main content area displays a table with the following data:

Page path and screen class	Views	Users
	571,375 100% of total	63,096 100% of total
1 /Google+Redesign/Stationery	47,776	13,708
2 /basket.html	40,204	5,618
3 /Google+Redesign/Apparel	37,347	13,151
4 /Google+Redesign/Lifestyle/Drinkware	33,590	12,188
5 /store.html	24,780	5,091
6 /Google+Redesign/Apparel/Mens	22,239	6,191
7 /Google+Redesign/Clearance	19,408	5,757

In this report, you'll see all your pages that were visited in the time period you have selected. For each page, you'll see:

- 🕒 Views
- 👤 Users
- 👁️ Views per user
- 🕒 Average engagement time
- 📄 Event count
- 🔗 Conversions
- 💰 Total revenue

With all of this data, you can see which of your pages are getting the most views, how much time visitors are spending on them, and whether any conversions occurred on each page. This gives you an overview of how each of your pages is performing.

In the same Engagement section, you'll find a Landing page report. This report has many of the same metrics as the Pages and screens report, but is landing pages (pages your visitors landed on when they visited your site) instead of all pages.

Reports snapshot | Landing page: Landing page

Realtime

Life cycle

- Acquisition
- Engagement
 - Overview
 - Events
 - Conversions
 - Pages and screens
 - Landing page**
 - Monetization
 - Retention
- User
 - User Attributes

Landing page		Sessions	Users
		84,380	62,153
		100% of total	100% of total
1	(not set)	47,513	41,018
2	/Google+Redesign/Stationery	15,629	12,317
3	/Google+Redesign/Apparel	11,679	10,681
4	/Google+Redesign/Lifestyle/Drinkware	10,504	9,737
5	/	6,089	5,687
6	/Google+Redesign/Shop+by+Brand/YouTube	2,601	2,412
7	/Google+Redesign/Apparel/Mens	2,591	2,259

Monetization Report

The monetization report is a report for eCommerce websites who sell products (whether they're physical or [digital](#)). If you do sell through your website, you'll have to set up eCommerce tracking in order to track those sales.

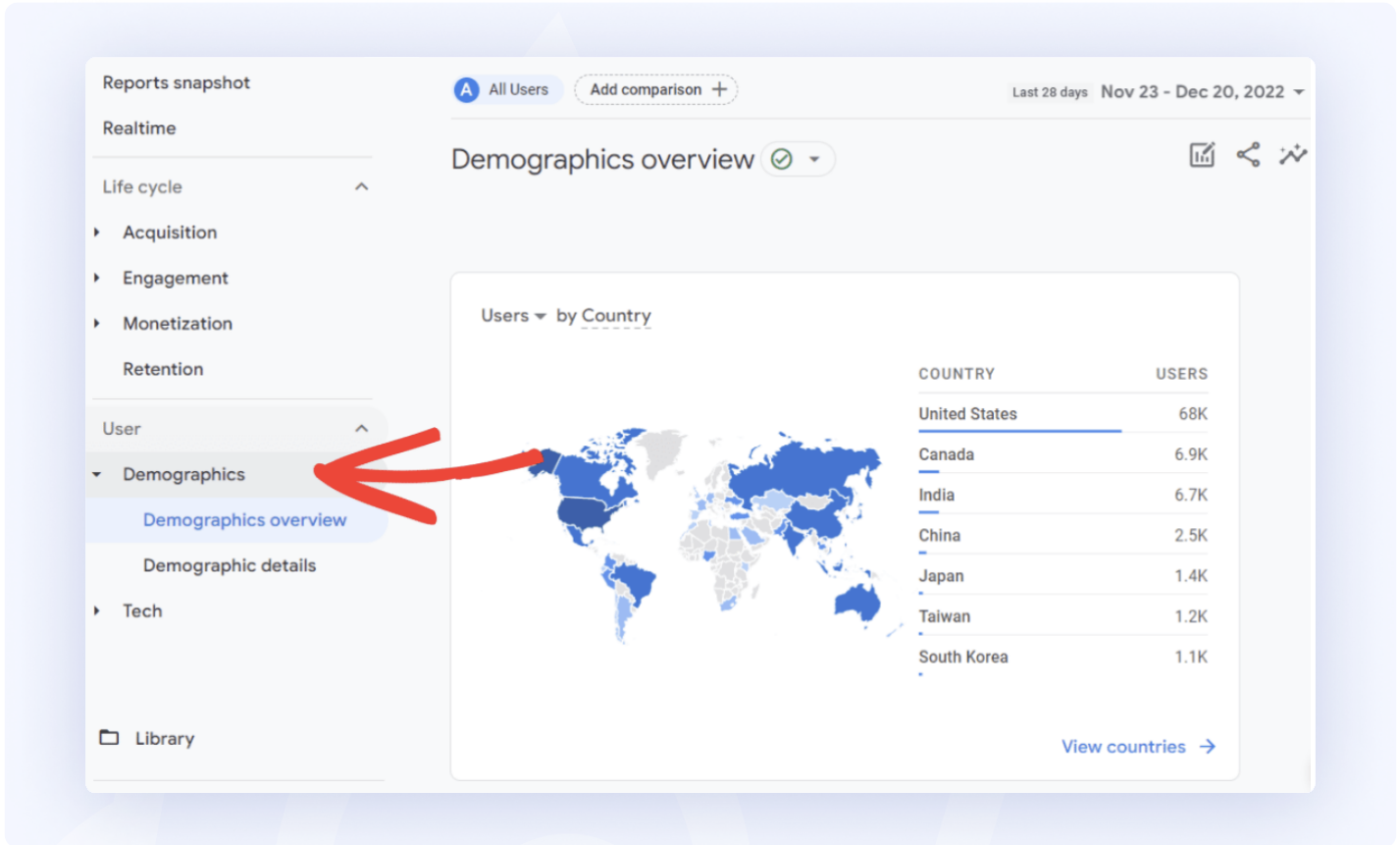
If you have WordPress, you can learn more about [setting up eCommerce tracking with MonsterInsights](#). If you don't have WordPress, you'll want to look into [setting it up using Google Tag Manager](#).

Once you've got eCommerce running, the Monetization report will show you eCommerce metrics for each of your products:

Item name	Items viewed	Items added to cart	Items purchased	Item revenue
	52,727 100% of total	24,889 100% of total	9,207 100% of total	\$92,321.94 100% of total
1 Chrome Dino Warm and Cozy Accessory Pack	3,441	514	134	\$1,509.20
2 Super G Timbuk2 Recycled Backpack	1,900	189	26	\$2,675.00
3 Google Campus Bike	1,772	201	35	\$1,628.00
4 Google Sensory Support Event Kit	1,339	31	9	\$405.00

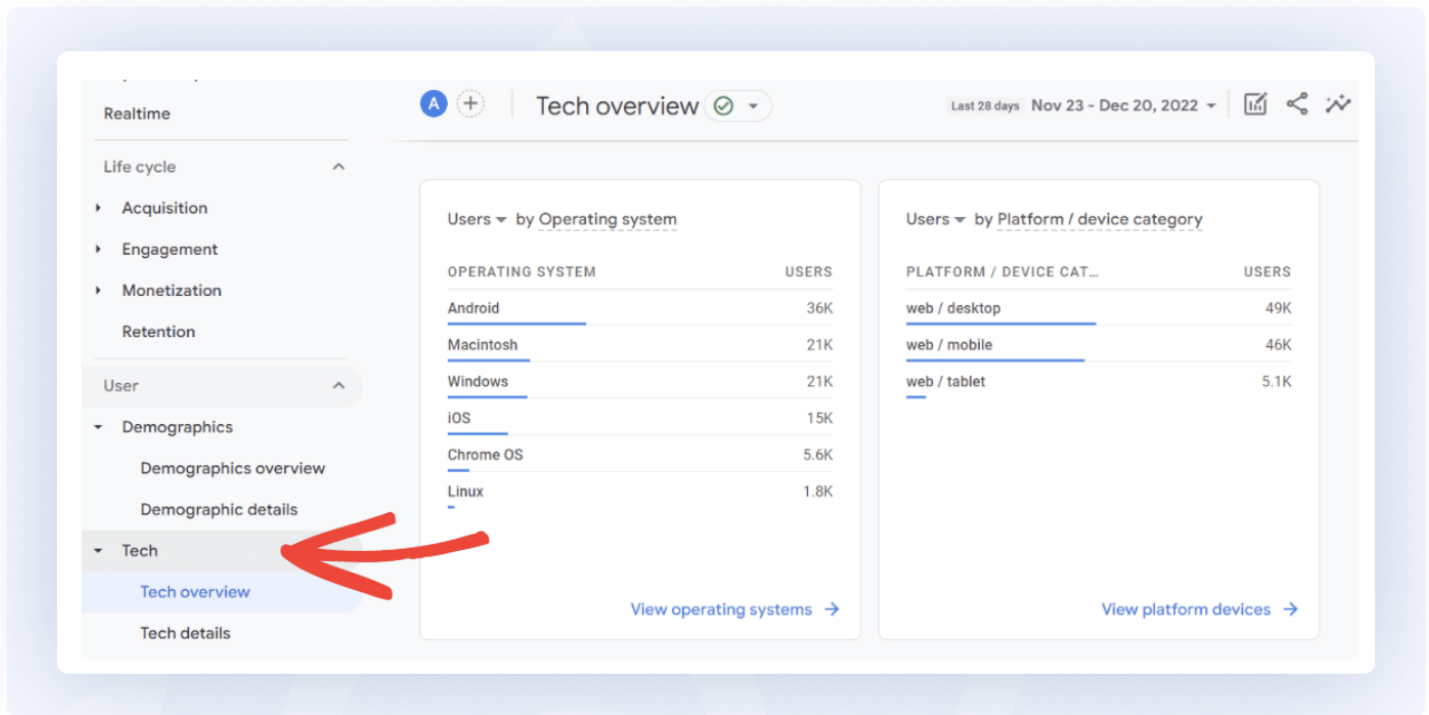
Demographics Report

The demographics report tells you more about your audience, like where they're from, gender, age, and language. This can help you understand your audience and tailor your content for them.



Tech Report

The tech report tells you what technology your users used to visit your site, whether they were on desktop, mobile, or a tablet. You can also learn their operating system, browser, and screen resolution.



That’s our rundown of the reports in Google Analytics 4. The more time you spend looking at them and playing around with them, the better you’ll get at finding meaningful data. Once you’ve got the hang of the basic reports, you can try [creating custom Explore reports](#). Now, let’s take a look at a much easier way to use Google Analytics for WordPress users.

MonsterInsights Makes Google Analytics Easier

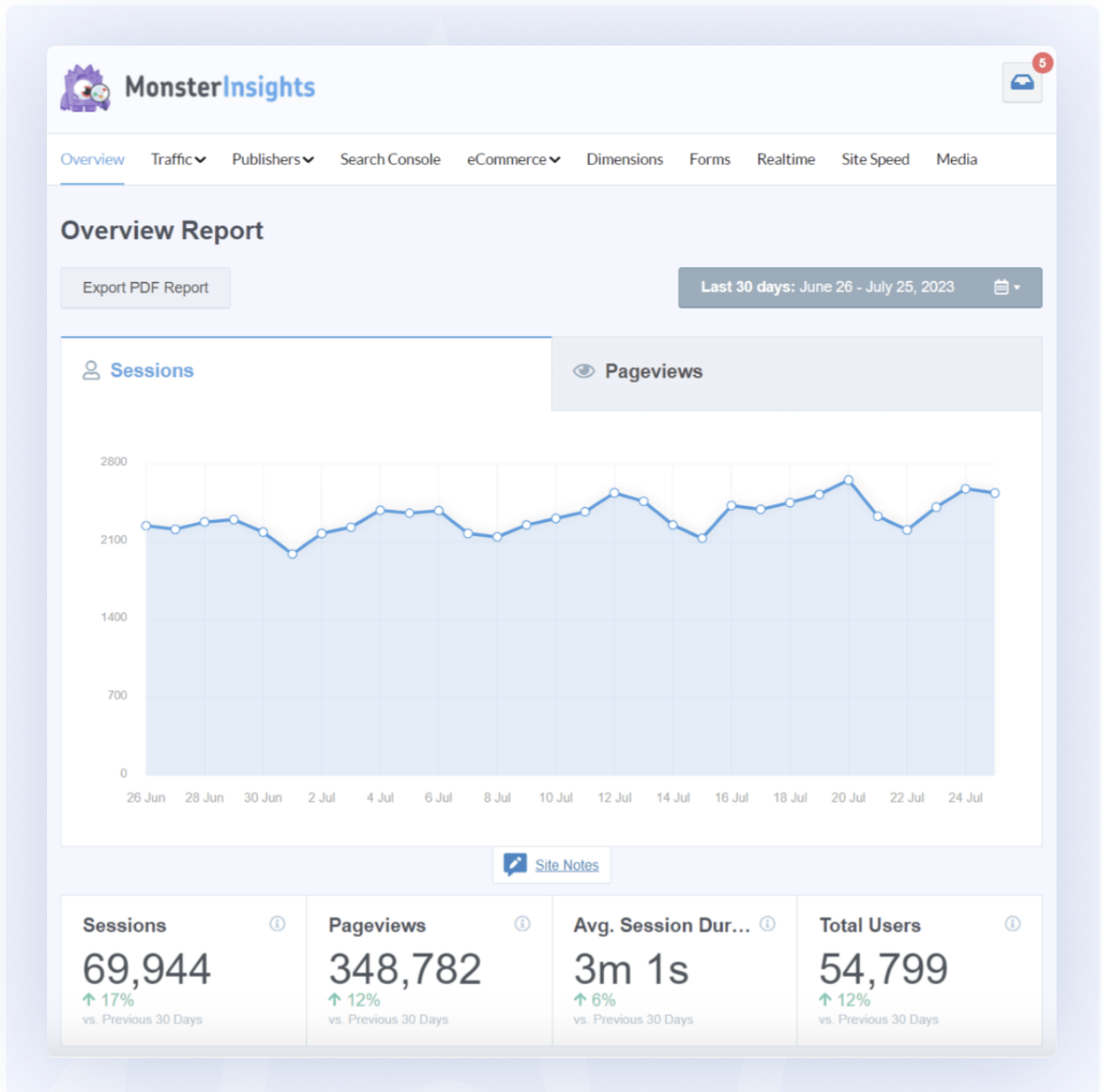
[MonsterInsights](#) is the most user-friendly Google Analytics plugin for WordPress.

It enables anyone, including the beginners, to install, set up and use Google Analytics in WordPress easily, without having to touch any code.

MonsterInsights offers different reports that make finding meaningful data in Google Analytics very easy.

Overview Report

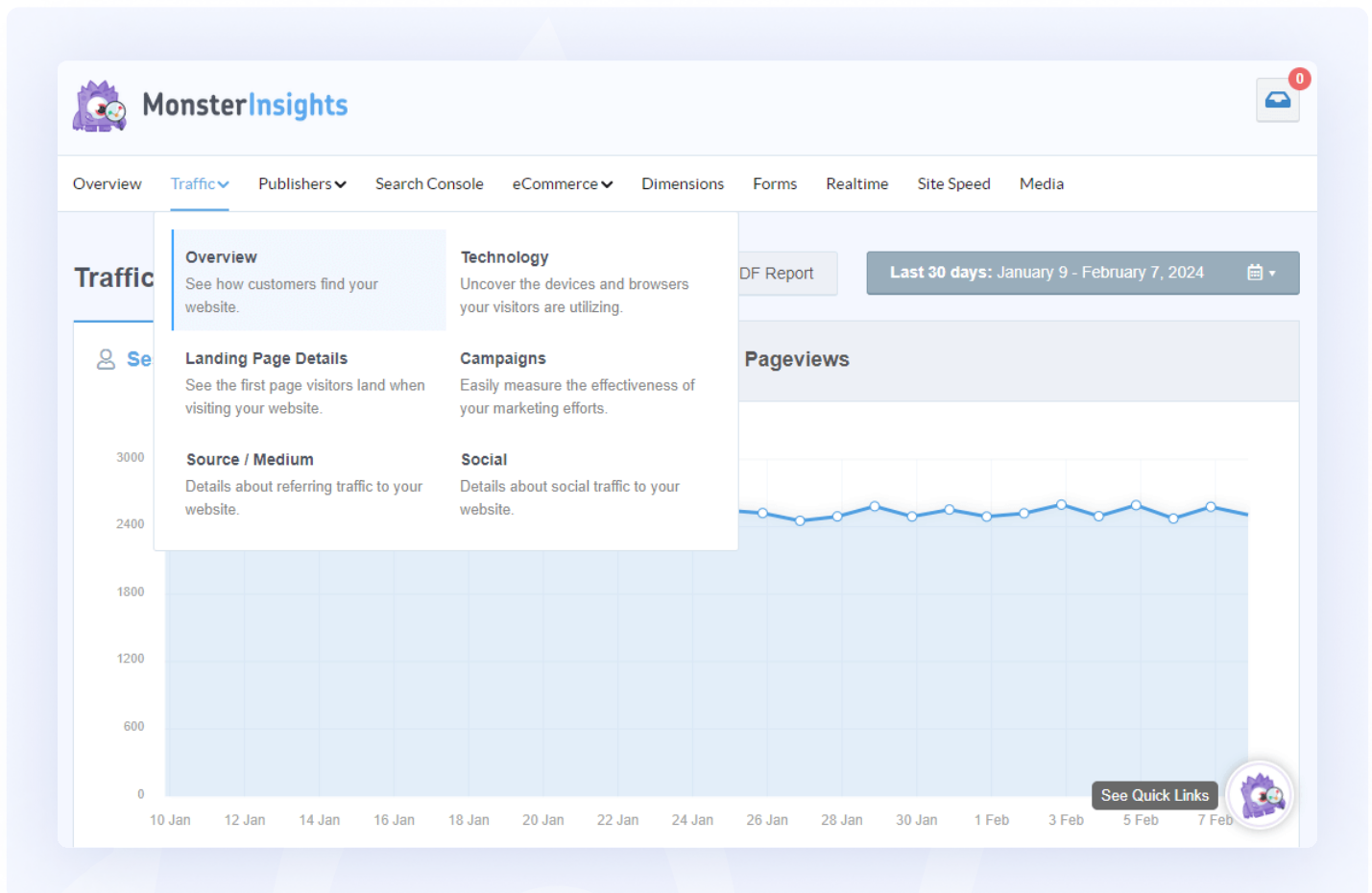
First, it's the website overview report. You can see a graphical presentation of the sessions and pageviews for your site. Then, below that, you'll see the total number of sessions, total page views, average duration per session, and total users.



- 🕒 New vs. returning users
- 📱 Device breakdown – Proportion of users on desktop, tablet, and mobile
- 🌍 Top 10 countries your visitors are from
- 🌐 Top 10 referral websites sending you traffic
- 📄 Top posts/pages

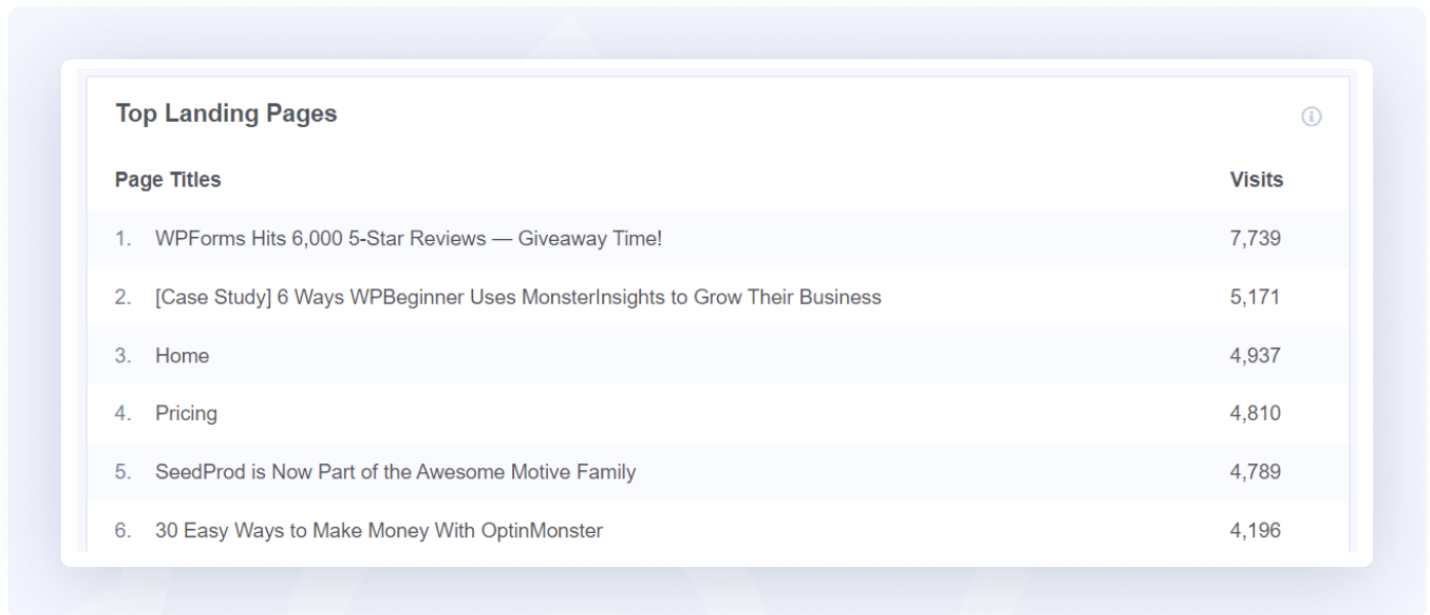
Traffic Report

The second MonsterInsights report section is Traffic. Within this section, you'll be able to access six different reports with vital information about your traffic, including what channels they used to find your website, what devices they were using, what landing pages they landed on and whether or not they converted, and more.



Publishers Report

The next report you can view in the MonsterInsights dashboard is the Publishers Report. There you'll find your [top landing pages](#), top outbound links, top affiliate links, top download links, demographics, [scroll depth](#), and interest categories in this report.



Top Landing Pages ⓘ	
Page Titles	Visits
1. WPForms Hits 6,000 5-Star Reviews — Giveaway Time!	7,739
2. [Case Study] 6 Ways WPBeginner Uses MonsterInsights to Grow Their Business	5,171
3. Home	4,937
4. Pricing	4,810
5. SeedProd is Now Part of the Awesome Motive Family	4,789
6. 30 Easy Ways to Make Money With OptinMonster	4,196

There's also a Pages report in this section, where you'll get more details about all of your top most visited pages.

Search Console Report

The fourth report tab is the Search Console report where you can view the top search queries your users use on search engines to find your site.

Search Console Report Export PDF Report Last 30 days: July 12 - August 10, 2023

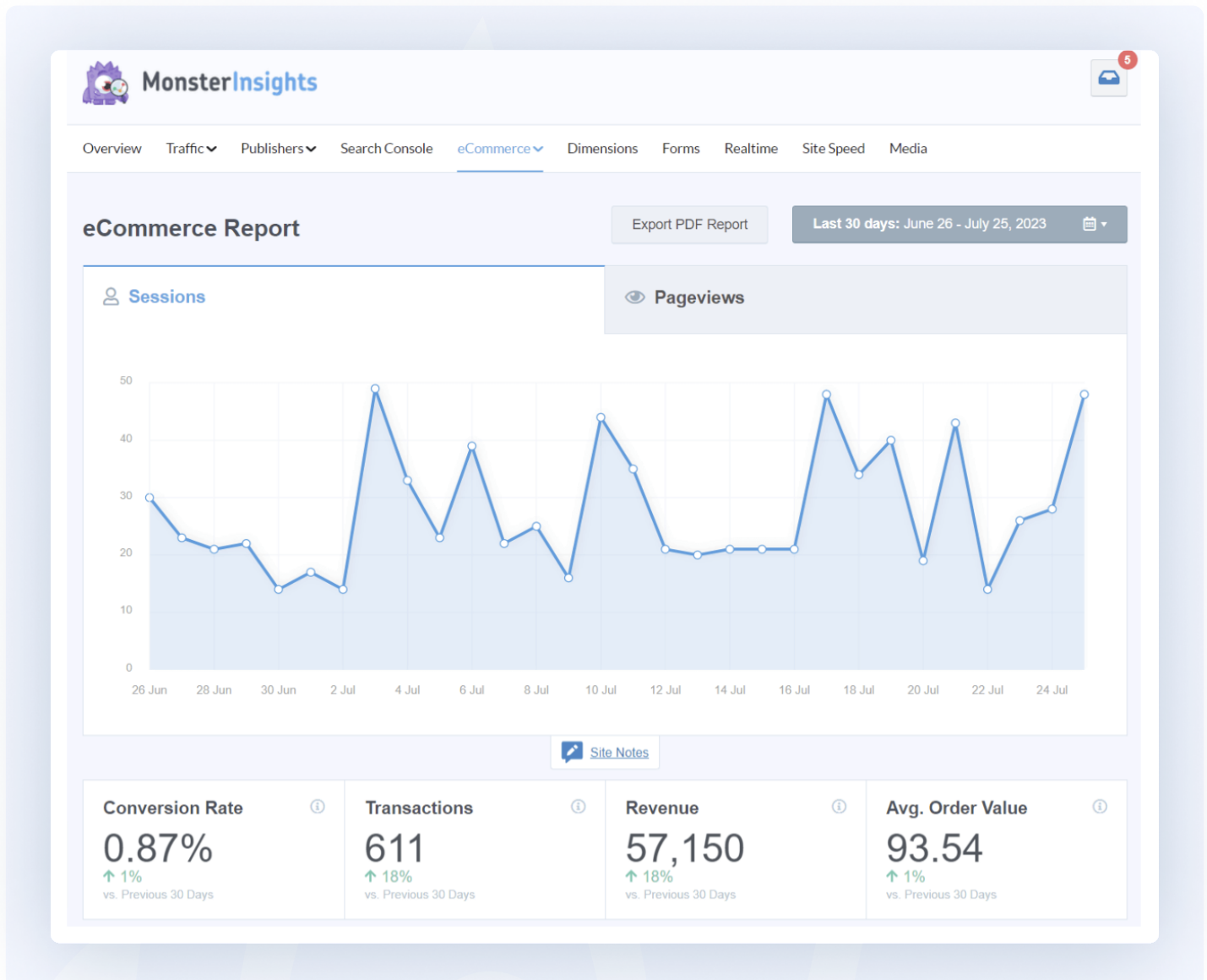
Top 50 Google Search Terms

Terms	Clicks	Impressions	CTR	Avg. Position
1. wordpress seo	96	865	11.1%	16
2. google analytics 4 in wordpress	93	796	11.68%	8
3. seedprod theme builder	93	646	14.4%	17
4. google analytics keywords	92	888	10.36%	8

Learn more about [connecting MonsterInsights and Google Search Console](#).

eCommerce Report

Also in MonsterInsights is the eCommerce report, which provides a great overview of your online shop's performance. You can view your shop's conversion rate, the number of transactions, how much revenue you've generated, and your average order value.

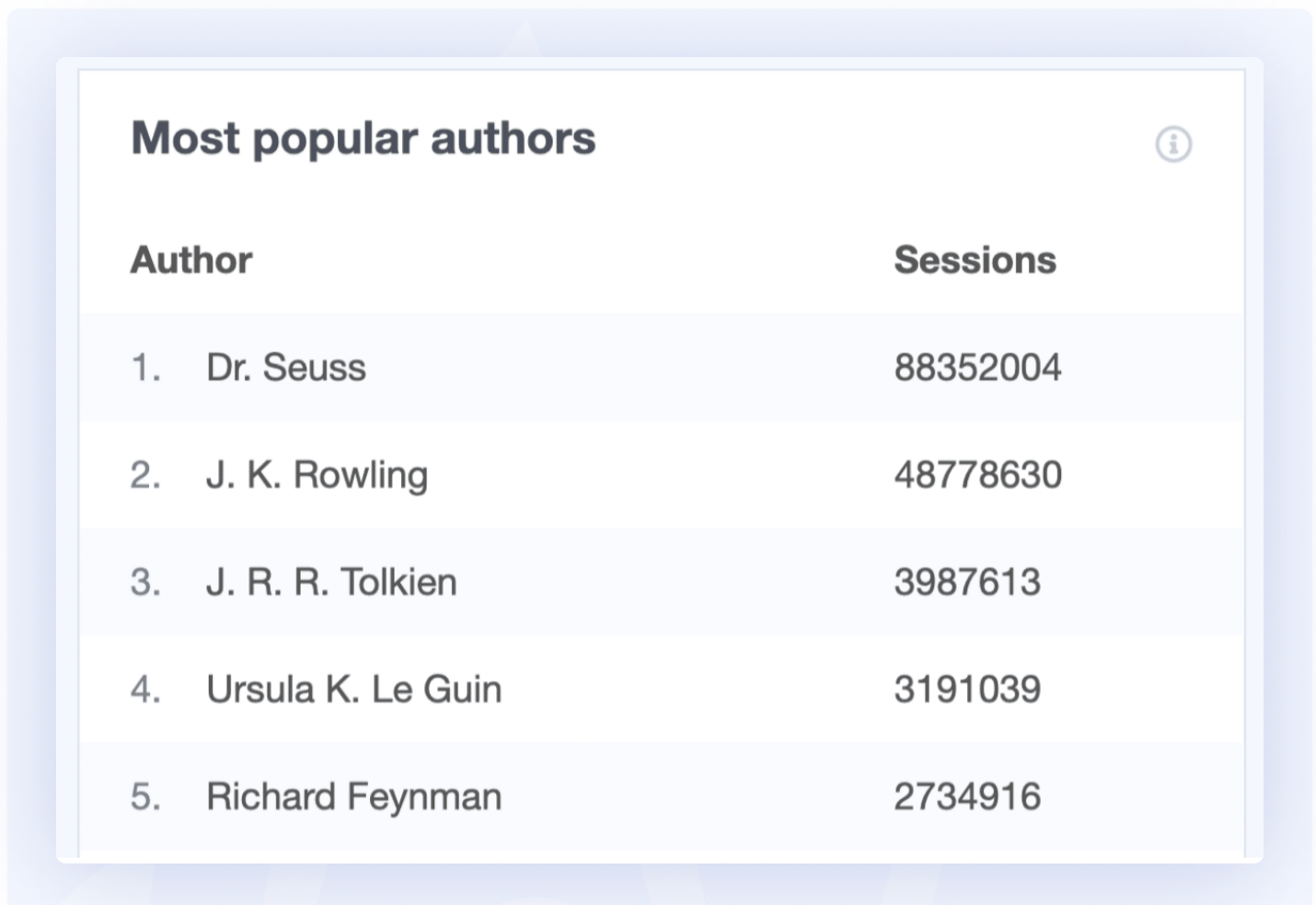


Plus, you can see the list of your [top products](#) and many more useful metrics about your online shop.

Custom Dimensions Report

The next report is Custom Dimensions Report. This is where you can set up and track helpful data that Google Analytics doesn't track out of the box on its own, including:

- 🕒 The [most popular authors](#) on your site
- 🕒 Which [keywords you've used on your site](#) are bringing in the most traffic
- 🕒 Top categories and tags on your site
- 🕒 Logged in users



Most popular authors		
Author		Sessions
1. Dr. Seuss		88352004
2. J. K. Rowling		48778630
3. J. R. R. Tolkien		3987613
4. Ursula K. Le Guin		3191039
5. Richard Feynman		2734916

For more on MonsterInsights custom dimensions, check out [The Beginner's Guide to Google Analytics Custom Dimensions](#).

Forms Report

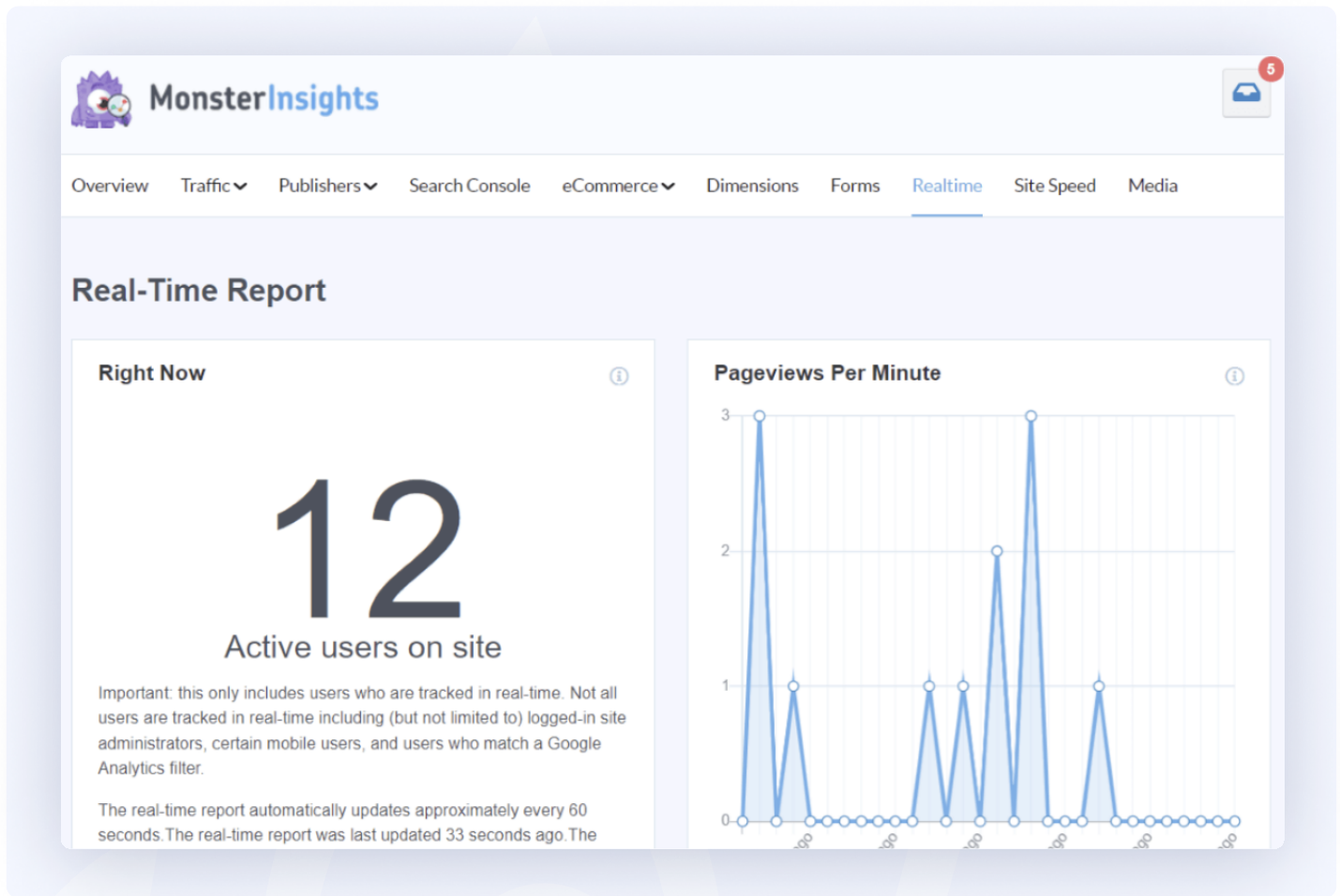
Next in MonsterInsights is the Forms Report. It automatically [tracks all the forms on your site](#) without any setup (beyond installing our addon) and gives you data on their conversion rate and submissions.

The screenshot displays the MonsterInsights Forms Report interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the following items: Overview, Traffic, Publishers, Search Console, eCommerce, Dimensions, Forms (highlighted), Realtime, Site Speed, and Media. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is 'Forms Report'. To the right of the heading, there is a button labeled 'Export PDF Report' and a date range selector showing 'Last 30 days: June 25 - July 24, 2023'. The main content area contains a table with the following data:

Forms			
Form Name or ID	Impressions	Conversions	Conversion Rate
1. Job - Footer	533	107	20.08%
2. Newsletter - Checkout	525	66	12.57%
3. Subscribe - Footer	520	87	16.73%
4. Subscribe - Checkout	520	44	8.46%
5. Job - Checkout	517	47	9.09%

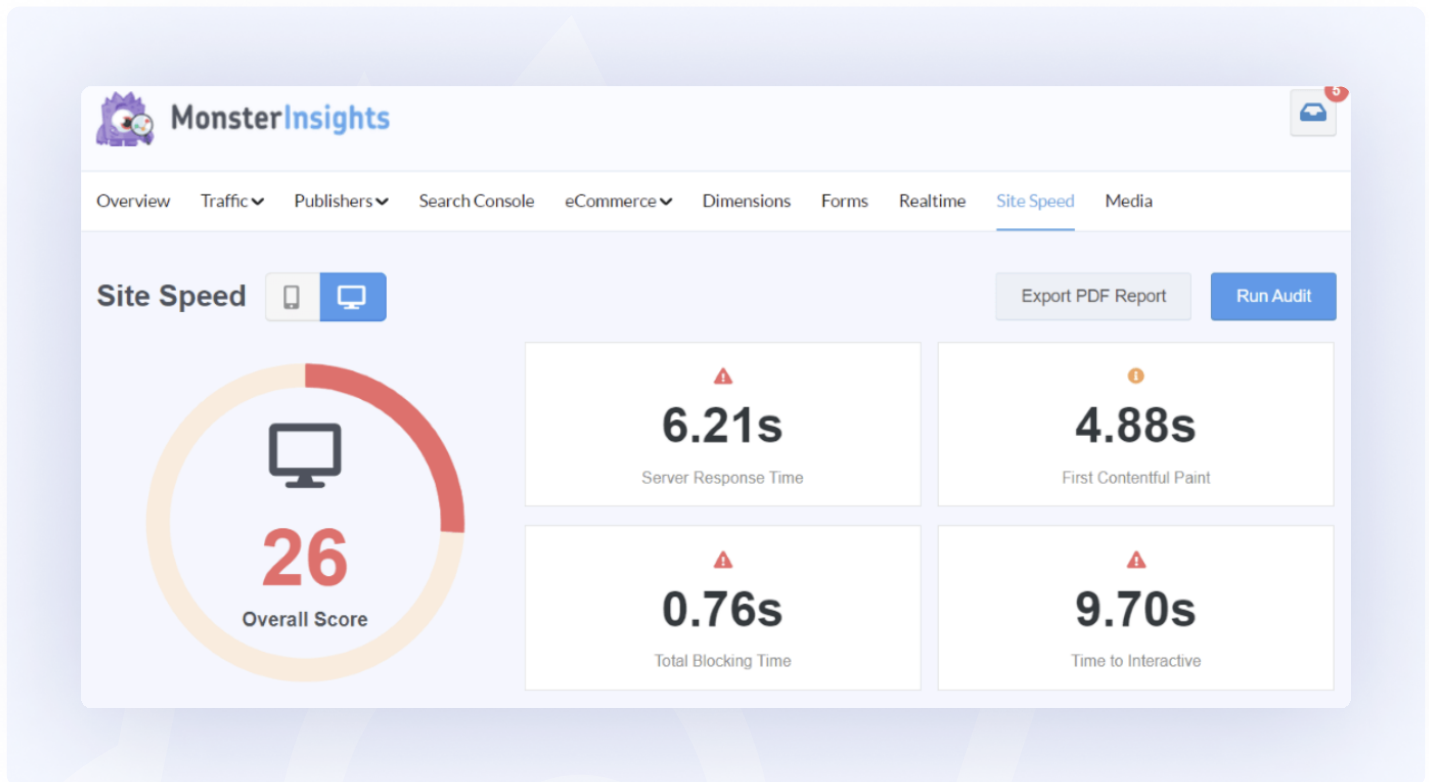
Realtime Report

Do you like following your traffic immediately after sending out [email or social media campaigns](#)? Open the MonsterInsights Realtime report to see how many people are currently on your site, what pages they're on, and where they're from.



Site Speed Report

The speed of your website can impact a lot of things, including how you rank in search and how much organic traffic you get. That’s really important! So, you can access your up-to-the-minute [site speed report](#) inside MonsterInsights any time.



Media

Do you have videos embedded on your website? If so, you can see how many times they're getting watched with the [MonsterInsights media report](#).

That's it!

We hope you enjoyed our Google Analytics Beginner's Guide. Have more questions about how Google Analytics works? Head to the [MonsterInsights blog](#), where we cover a huge variety of content about Google Analytics!



Video Details	Video Plays	Avg. Watch Time	Avg. % Watched	Completion Rate
1. 30 Easy Ways to Make Money With OptinMonster	8	1m 32s	50%	0%
2. Say Hello to WP Mail SMTP Pro – Easy Email Deliverability for WordPress	8	27s	50%	0%
3. SeedProd is Now Part of the Awesome Motive Family	7	47s	25%	0%

That’s it!

[Get started with MonsterInsights now!](#)

All these metrics are really important to learn about your users so you can improve your marketing strategies and SEO, and boost your conversions.

We hope this guide helped you understand how Google Analytics 4 works.

Here are a few articles on the MonsterInsights blog that you can check out to help with learning how to set up and use Google Analytics 4:

- 🕒 [Top 11 Important Google Analytics Metrics to Track](#)
- 🕒 [What Are Google Analytics Channels? GA4 Channels Guide](#)
- 🕒 [A4 Events: A Quick-Start Guide for Beginners](#)
- 🕒 [How to Use Google Analytics Annotations in GA4 + WordPress](#)
- 🕒 [A Complete Guide to GA4 Conversion Tracking for WordPress](#)
- 🕒 [How to Set Up Google Analytics 4 eCommerce Tracking on WordPress](#)

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