

# Google Analytics 4 Guide

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## *Creating and Using Your Comparison/Segment in Reports*

University Relations, Digital Marketing & Analytics

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## A. What analysis features are available in GA4?

### Comparisons

- You can use comparisons to view **standard GA4 reports** specific to your program area.
- For an overview of the standard GA4 reports, please refer to these articles:
  - <https://www.bluecompass.com/blog/understanding-google-analytics-4-reporting>
  - <https://databox.com/most-useful-google-analytics-reports#head1.4>

### Segments

- You can use segments to view **custom exploration reports** specific to your program area.
- For an overview of the custom exploration reports, please refer to this article: <https://www.monsterinsights.com/how-to-create-google-analytics-4-custom-reports-step-by-step/>

### Audiences

- You can create audiences to use as remarketing audiences for **ad targeting in Google Ads**.
- This is one of the reasons a program area or college may consider creating a separate Google Analytics/Google Tag Manager account – to implement this type of tagging for ad targeting in Google Ads.
- For more information on how to use GA4 audiences, please refer to this article: <https://www.analyticsmania.com/post/google-analytics-4-audiences/>

### Comparisons vs. Segments vs. Audiences

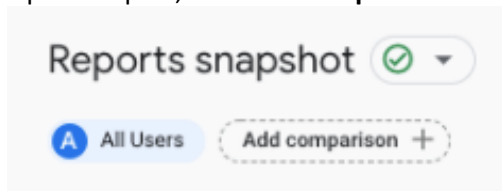
	Comparisons	Segments	Audiences
<i>Best used for...</i>	Quick analysis and comparisons in standard reports	Deeper and more customized analysis in exploration reports	Ad targeting in Google Ads
<i>Standard reports</i>	Can be used in standard reports	Cannot be used in standard reports	Can be used in standard reports
<i>Exploration reports</i>	Cannot be used in exploration reports (but you can <u>“export” comparisons to explorations using the “Explore” feature</u> )	Can be used in exploration reports	Cannot be used in exploration reports (but you can build audiences from segments within explorations)
<i>Google Ads</i>	Cannot be used in Google Ads (but, as a workaround, <u>you can convert a comparison into a segment, then build an audience from the segment</u> )	Cannot be used in Google Ads	Can be used in Google Ads (primarily built to be used as remarketing audiences)
<i>Retroactivity</i>	Are retroactive (unless you use an audience as a dimension in one of the comparisons)	Are retroactive	Are not retroactive (will only start accumulating data after you create them)

In this guide, we will be focusing on how to view standard reports using comparisons and how to view exploration reports using segments.

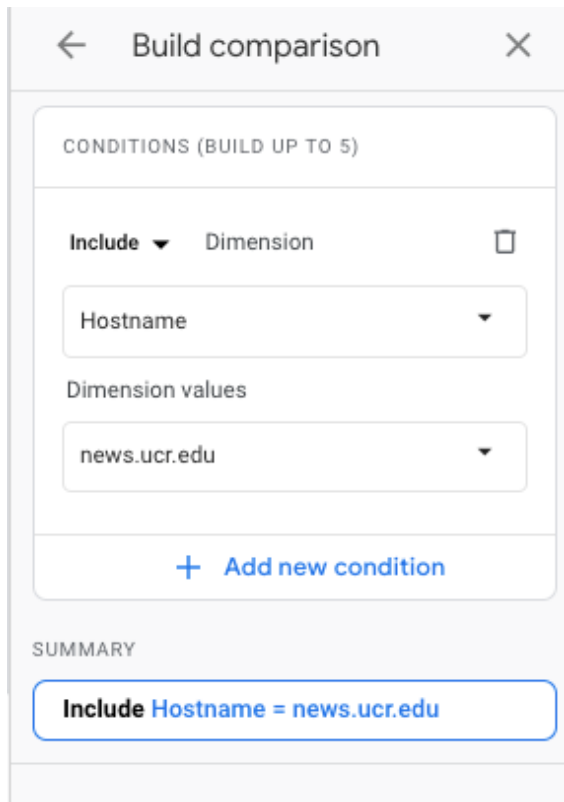
## B. How do I use comparisons to view standard reports?

### 1. Creating your comparison in standard GA4 reports

- To view standard reports specifically for your program area, you will need to create a comparison each time you open a report that you are interested in seeing.
- Open a report, click **Add comparison**.



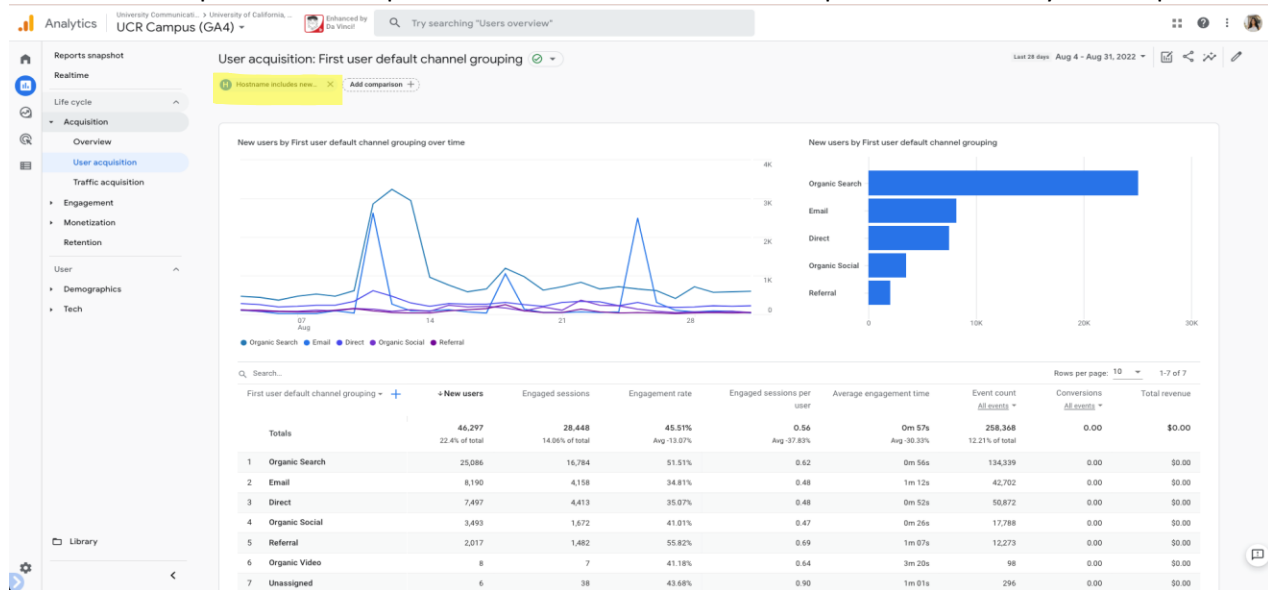
- In the **Build comparison** panel, select **Include**, select **Hostname** and then type in and select the site hostname that you would like to view. You can add up to 5 conditions in one comparison.



### 2. Using your comparison in standard GA4 reports

- Click **Apply** to create your comparison.
- The comparison that you created will apply to each standard report you view, except for the Realtime report.
- You can remove the “All Users” comparison to view metrics only related to the comparison you created.

- Here is an example of what a report would look like. Notice at the top that it describes your comparison.



- Please note that you will need to recreate your comparison each time you exit your Google Analytics session.

## C. How do I use segments to view exploration reports?

Please note: For our campus purposes, we usually use “session segments” which are segments that look at the group of users who visited your site during a session. This group of users may have also visited other ucr.edu sites during the same session, which could explain why other websites and pages may appear in your reports. To see data related to only your sites, you can add an additional filter to only include the hostname/URL you are looking for.

### 1. Creating and maintaining your program area’s segment

- To view key exploration reports specifically for your program area, you will need to [create a segment](#) that includes all of the websites that you would like to view the metrics for one report:
  - Navigate to **Google Analytics > Explore**.
  - Click the “+” sign next to the **Segments** section.
  - Create a custom segment and select “**Session segment**.”
  - Adjust the segment definition to include **sessions** when **hostname** contains **<your URL>**.

- Here’s an example of how EAOP’s segment looks:

← EAOP sessions



Add a description

Include Sessions when:

Hostname contains eaop.ucr.edu

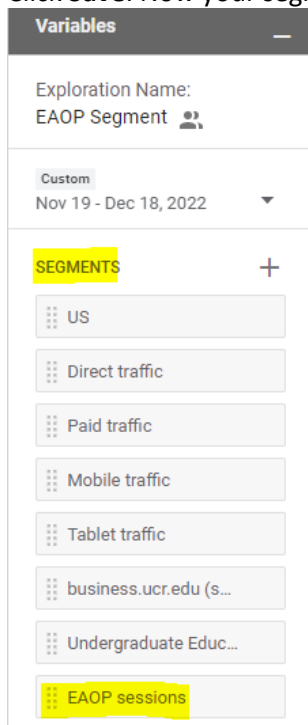
OR

AND

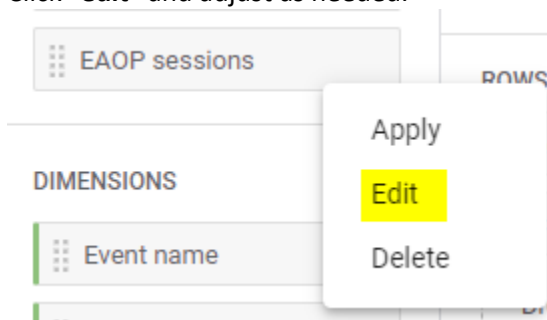
+ Add condition group

- If you want to include more than one site, add another row by selecting **AND**, then follow step d again.

- f) Click **Save**. Now your segment will be available to use in your explore reports.

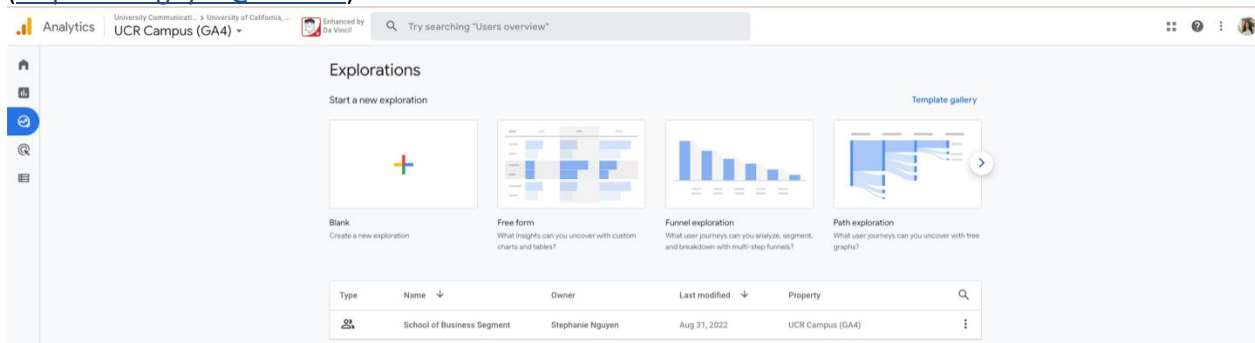


- If you need assistance setting up your segment, reach out to the Marketing Data Manager ([stephanie.nguyen@ucr.edu](mailto:stephanie.nguyen@ucr.edu)).
- From there, you can always edit your segment if a site needs to be added/removed from an existing segment.
  - a) Hovering over your segment name.
  - b) Select the three dots to the right.
  - c) Click **“edit”** and adjust as needed.



## 2. Creating and viewing your segment's exploration reports

- Once your segment is created, you can set up explore reports for your program area. To get started, log into **Google Analytics** > click **Explore** > click **Blank** to start a new report.
- For a detailed guide on how to use and create explore reports, please see: <https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/7579450?hl=en#zippy=%2Cin-this-article>
- If you need assistance setting up your explore reports, reach out to the Marketing Data Manager ([stephanie.nguyen@ucr.edu](mailto:stephanie.nguyen@ucr.edu)).



## 3. Creating other exploration reports

- There are other custom reports that you may want to create for your program area, but they require more set up. For examples, please see: <https://www.datadrivenu.com/exploration-templates-ga4/>

Report Name	Details Vary by Program Area	Report Purpose
<b>Cohort Exploration</b>	<p>You will need to define what conditions a user should meet in order to be included in the cohort.</p> <p><a href="#">Instructions on how to create a cohort exploration report here.</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Users can be grouped based on common qualities and behaviors into a cohort.</li> <li>A great way to collect user data while still maintaining user privacy.</li> <li>Focuses on collecting cohort data over time.</li> <li>Can be used to see how effective your website optimization and marketing efforts are.</li> </ul>
<b>Funnel Exploration</b>	<p>You will need to define each step of the funnel.</p> <p><a href="#">Instructions on how to create funnel exploration report here.</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracks your user's journey throughout the site.</li> <li>Allows you to look at all the steps along the way and see where people are falling out of your desired funnel.</li> </ul>
<b>Segment Overlap</b>	<p>You will need to define what segments you want to see overlap.</p> <p><a href="#">Instructions on how to create segment overlap report here.</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine shared behavior based on overlapping between segments. For example, examine user behavior based on gender and location. You can create a segment overlap exploration to see how men and women in different regions are behaving and use that to adjust your marketing efforts.</li> </ul>

<b>Path Exploration</b>	<p>You will need to filter this report by the segment you're interested in exploring.</p> <p><a href="#">Instructions on how to create a path exploration report here.</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar to funnel exploration, path exploration reports let you follow your user's journey throughout your site.</li> <li>• You can examine your user behavior using tree graphs to see where they go and how they interact with your site.</li> <li>• You won't examine users through specific funnels like you do in funnel explorations, but instead you look at their organic behavior to gain insights.</li> <li>• You can set up filters here like all your reports to see how users are behaving when they trigger certain events or belong to certain segments.</li> </ul>
<b>User Explorer</b>	<p>You will need to select specific groups of users to drill down into each individual user's activities.</p> <p><a href="#">Instructions on how to create a user exploration report here.</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look into individual user activities.</li> <li>• Uncover insights about patterns of behaviors based on these individual user activities.</li> <li>• Look at demographic data and examine individual users on an intimate level, while still maintaining user anonymity and following Google's privacy guidelines for data collection.</li> </ul>
<b>User Lifetime</b>	<p>You will need to configure your predictions to get more accurate and reliable statistics.</p> <p><a href="#">Instructions on how to configure a user lifetime report here.</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look into the entire lifetime of individual users.</li> <li>• Good for remarketing campaigns because you can observe efforts and changes that drove users away from our site.</li> <li>• Analyze those efforts that have kept users around and look at the demographic data surrounding those who have continued visiting our site.</li> <li>• The report uses machine learning to predict the likelihood of future purchases, activity, and revenue.</li> </ul>