



The New Adventures of GA4:

A Reporting Issues Update

July 2023 Update

July 2023 marked the beginning of a thrilling journey into the world of Google Analytics 4 (GA4). But like any good thriller, it's come with a few unexpected twists and turns. Buckle up, because we're diving headfirst into the ups and downs of this brand-new analytics frontier as we navigate GA4 reporting issues and what we can expect down the road.

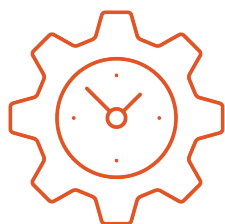




GA4: The New Kid on the Block So, Picture This:

July 2023, the sun is shining, and GA4 is rolled out globally like the red carpet at a movie premiere. It's all glitz and glamor, but wait, what's this? Some not-so-Hollywood challenges are lurking in the shadows.

Let's shine a spotlight on the issues of the GA4 show.



Issue #1

Data Delays - The Waiting Game

Remember the good ol' days of Universal Analytics (UA) when data appeared like magic in your reports? Well, with GA4, the magic comes with a side of patience.

Events and custom dimensions might take up to 72 hours (or even longer) to grace your standard reports, and even Explore reports are taking up to 24 hours. Imagine waiting for your pizza delivery, but instead of 30 minutes, it takes a day. Not fun, right?

These processing delays may inhibit things like marking events as conversions or creating comparative reports, and they may cause data discrepancies when integrating with other platforms like Google Ads.

Another GA4 issue is that month-on-month or year-on-year data take time to catch up, so comparative reports processed in the first few days of the month will likely see numbers change. In addition, some reports may process faster than others leading to more data discrepancies in different views or summaries until everything catches up.



Issue #2

Data Gaps - Lost in UTM Space

Missing or inaccurate data is causing a fright too. Ever heard of the “Unassigned” traffic channel? It’s like that mysterious wardrobe in your attic, except it’s not a gateway to Narnia; it’s a data black hole.

Unassigned traffic happens when in the absence of proper UTM tagging. Think of UTM tagging as the breadcrumbs to track your digital Hansels and Gretels. We’re following UTM best practices, and if you’re curious about what those are, here’s a helpful article all about just that.

The other GA4 issues causing data gaps are ‘not set’ data values, due to the aforementioned delays, and the “other” data category. The “other” category rears its ugly head when uncommon values are grouped together – like using secondary dimensions with low numbers.

It also seems that the lack of available annotations in GA4 is throwing a kink in the reporting chain. Even if you can see all the data, this makes it hard to see if increases in conversions or traffic correlate with any site changes like new page publications, an email blast, or other new content.

There are third-party tools and a Chrome extension that can act as a band-aid in the short term, but it’s not an ideal situation by a long shot.



Issue #3

Third-Party Reporting Tool Drama

Now, if you’re a fan of third-party reporting tools, GA4 might throw a few plot twists your way.

Explore reports, while dazzling, can be obstructive when it comes to importing them into third-party tools. It’s like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. GA4 lacks a lot of the standard reporting that UA had, so users must use Explore to drill down to data. Explore, however, is view only, so it can’t be imported into third-party platforms.

Making things even more fun – Segments, Audiences, and Comparisons are not available across all GA4 report types.

Looker Studio (formerly Data Studio) can be used for reporting, but it requires custom report creation from scratch and thus, a more intensive time investment.

You can export GA4 data into Google Sheets, but this is really not an ideal format. The only solution in the short term is to brace yourselves for longer report compilation times.

The Big Picture: The GA4 Saga

GA4 is like a double-edged lightsaber – powerful but with a learning curve as steep as an Olympic ski jump. It's got customization options galore, but when it comes to reporting, it's like trying to juggle knives blindfolded.



Our Promise To You - We're in This Together

It's easy to feel overwhelmed and frustrated by the GA4 issues, but fear not! We'll be your trusty ringleader on this analytics adventure. We are already taking measures to improve the process as much as we are able (i.e. transferring data and goals from UA and GA4).

Together, we'll make sense of the quirks, harness the power, and turn GA4 into a well-oiled data reporting machine. It will take time – and the kind of patience required while waiting for the next season of your favorite show during a Hollywood strike – but know that eventually the GA4 rollout issues will be resolved and reporting will be smooth sailing.

**In the meantime, please, reach out to Ironistic
with any questions or concerns.**