

# GA4 vs. Universal Analytics: Key Differences

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# All Hits are Tracked as Events

- In GA4, all hits are tracked as events, allowing for automatic tracking of outbound link clicks and file downloads.
- Drawbacks include the need for additional configuration and limitations in customization.

```
class="container">  
  class="carousel-caption">  
1>One more for good measure.</h1>  
>Cras justo odio, dapibus ac facilisis in, egestas eget quam.  
</p>  
><a class="btn btn-lg btn-primary" href="#" role="button" data-  
</>  
  
left carousel-control" href="#myCarousel" role="button" data-  
class="glyphicon glyphicon-chevron-left" aria-hidden="true"></>  
class="sr-only">Previous</span>  
  
right carousel-control" href="#myCarousel" role="button" data-  
class="glyphicon glyphicon-chevron-right" aria-hidden="true"></>  
class="sr-only">Next</span>  
  
carousel -->  
tent Section-->  
  
ntainer">  
row">  
class="col-md-4"></div>  
class="col-md-4"> <h2> FEATURED CONTENT </h2> <div class="feature-  
class="col-md-4"></div>  
4 small-->
```



# Views are Replaced by Data Streams

- Views are replaced by "Data Streams" in the GA4 account hierarchy.
- Data Streams do not perform the same function that Views once did.



# Different Metrics

## Defining “Users”

To understand GA4 users, we need to understand New Users, Total Users, Active Users, and Returning (established) Users.

- **New Users:** users who interacted with your site for the first time
- **Total Users:** total number of unique users who logged an event of some kind
- **Active Users:** Any user who has an engaged session OR when GA4 collects the first\_visit event or a specific event parameter relating to time
- **Returning Users (established Users):** A user who has previously been on your site and is now returning to your site is a Returning user. Returning users are identified by the “New / established” dimension in GA4.



## Fewer Standard Reports

- There are fewer standard reports available in GA4 relative to UA.
- The more limited reports can be customized to suit specific purposes.



# Session Reports

- Metrics like average session duration and bounce rate are either gone or significantly different in GA4.
- This takes some getting used to as these metrics are relied upon in UA.

**From Google:** Some aspects of session counting in Google Analytics 4 differ from Universal Analytics. In Universal Analytics, a new campaign will start a new session regardless of activity. In Google Analytics 4, a new campaign does not begin a new session. This may lead to lower session counts in your Google Analytics 4 property.



# 4 Categories of Events

- There are 4 categories of events in GA4: automatically collected, enhanced measurement, recommended, and custom events.
- The first two are tracked by default, and the latter two require custom implementation.

Events represent a fundamental data model difference between Universal Analytics and Google Analytics 4 properties.

A Universal Analytics event has a Category, Action, and Label and is its own hit type. In Google Analytics 4 properties, every "hit" is an event; there is no distinction between hit types. For example, when someone views one of your website pages, a page\_view event is triggered.

In a Universal Analytics property, a hit type ...	is captured in a Google Analytics 4 property as an ...
Page View	Event
Event	Event
Social	Event
Transaction/e-commerce	Event
User timing	Event
Exception	Event
App/screen view	Event

Google Analytics 4 events have no notion of Category, Action, and Label and, unlike Universal Analytics reports, Google Analytics 4 reports do not display Category, Action, and Label. Therefore, it's better to rethink your data collection in terms of the Google Analytics 4 model rather than port your existing event structure to Google Analytics 4.



# Different Conversion Tracking

- Setting up conversion tracking is very different in GA4.
- There are no more "goals" like pages/session or session duration, and only events can be marked as conversions.





**Need to set up GA4? [Click this link](#) with a step by step how to.**

**Feel free to contact me with any questions or if you need help.  
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