

SETUP GA4 CORRECTLY



GOOGLE ANALYTICS 4 SETUP CHECKLIST

GA4 DONE WRITE SERIES

OPTIZENT.COM

DIGITAL ANALYTICS CONSULTING AND TRAINING

GA4 Setup Audit Check-List

This checklist will help you set up GA4 on your site as well as help you with regular audits. This checklist is created by the [Optizent Team](#). This is one of the many documents we use when setting up or auditing GA4.

GA4 has a different data model and setup than Universal Analytics. If you are unfamiliar with how GA4 works, I highly recommend enrolling in [one of our courses](#) or [contacting us](#) to help you set up GA4. You can reach us at support@optizent.com.

Below is the list of items you should check and verify during setup and audits. Regular audits ensure that your setup is according to your current needs.

Property Settings in GA4

To access these settings go to the Admin Panel and look for the links under the Property column. The exact link name is specified in the parenthesis, e.g. (Admin Data collection and modification Data Streams Click to select the Data Stream), at the end of each bullet point.

1. **Enable Enhanced Measurements** – These are enabled by default. Always verify them during regular audits to ensure you have enabled/disabled the desired ones. Make sure the Form Interactions is disabled because it causes some troubles not yet resolved at the time of writing this document: (Admin Data collection and modification Data Streams Click to select the Data Stream)
2. **Configure on-site search settings within Enhanced Measurement** – This setting is enabled by default, but you should check the configuration and apply what you need to use the right query parameters: (Admin Data collection and modification Data Streams Click to select the Data Stream Enhanced Measurement Configuration icon Site Search Show advanced settings)
3. **Verify Time zone for reporting is correct** – You have to select this while setting up the account. We live in a time when teams are scattered all over the world so make sure this time zone setting still makes sense and stakeholders are aware of this: (Admin Property Property Details)
4. **Integrate Google Ads** – If you are running Google Ads then enable the link between GA4 and Google Ads: (Admin Product Links Google Ads links)

5. **Integrate Search Console** – You should always enable this link to see data from Google Search Engine for your site: (Admin□Product Links□Search Console links)
6. **Setup data transfer to BigQuery** – GA4 can send data to BigQuery without any 3rd party tool. This is a big enhancement in GA4 and is highly recommended. If you have a small site, then you might not need to pay anything for this data storage. However, if you have a large site then you will end up paying for the storage and usage. Make sure to read BigQuery terms and pricing (details are available in the GA4 course): (Admin□Product Links□Big Query links)
7. **Cross-Domain Tracking** – Add all your domains in the list for cross-domain tracking: (Admin□Data collection and modification□Data Streams□Click to select the Data Stream□Google tag□Configure tag settings□Settings□Configure your domains□Cross-domain Linking Configuration)
8. **Use Same GTM Container** – We have often seen clients using different containers on different subdomains or sites that are tracked as one using cross-domain tracking. Having different containers makes it difficult to manage the tags, triggers, and variables. It also makes debugging difficult.
9. **Define Internal Traffic rules** – Setup the rules that define the internal traffic e.g. traffic that is generated by employees, contractors, etc. of your organization: (Admin□Data collection and modification□Data Streams□Click to select the Data Stream□Google tag□Configure tag settings□Settings□Show more□Define Internal Traffic)
10. **Exclude Internal and Developer Traffic** – Once you create the traffic rules then you can exclude it from your reporting: (Admin□Data collection and modification□Data Filters□Create Filter)
11. **Remove Unwanted or spam referrals** – Though GA4 tries to remove unwanted or spam referrals they might still end up in your data. Make sure to audit this regularly and remove them immediately: (Admin□Data collection and modification□Data Streams□Click to select the Data Stream□Google tag□Configure tag settings□Settings□Show more□List Unwanted Referrals)
12. **Session Timeout** – By default, a user session expires on 30 minutes of inactivity. However, based on your site/app, you might want to have a different session timeout setting: (Admin□Data collection and modification□Data Streams□Click to select the Data Stream□Google tag□Configure tag settings□Settings□Show more□Adjust session timeout)

13. **Time for Engaged Sessions** – GA4 pings users every 10 seconds to ensure the user is still connected and active. Leave this to the default of 10 seconds unless you have a specific reason to adjust it: (Admin □ Data collection and modification □ Data Streams □ Click to select the Data Stream □ Google tag □ Configure tag settings □ Settings □ Show more □ Adjust session timeout)
14. **Enable Google signals data collection** – To get cross-device and demographic data in your GA4 reports: (Admin □ Data collection and modification □ Data collection)
15. **Verify Data Retention time period** – By default, GA4 will only store event data for 2 months, and user data for 14 months. We recommend changing the event data retention setting in the admin panel to 14 months (max). If you have a legal team then consult with them to ensure it is per your policies and local laws: (Admin □ Data collection and modification □ Data Retention)
16. **Audit User Property and Account access** – Employees come and go and so do agencies that you work with. Over time your account might have people that should no longer have access to the account or the property. Periodically check the Property Access Management as well as Account Access management, to ensure no unauthorized access is granted: (Admin □ Account □ Account access management)
17. **Property Change History** – Do a period check to make sure no unwanted changes have been made to your property. A similar setting is available at the account level: (Admin □ Account □ Account change history)
18. **Granular location and device data collection** – This setting allows Google Analytics to collect city level and device-level data. It is enabled by default and is used for complying with regional laws. I suggest you leave this on but you have an option to turn this off entirely or for specific regions as well: (Admin □ Data collection and modification □ Data collection □ Granular location and device data collection)
19. **Advanced Settings to Allow for Ads Personalization** – This setting allows you to do Ad personalization to your site visitors. When you turn it on, you can export your Google Analytics audiences and conversions to your linked Ads accounts to deliver relevant, personalized experiences to your end users. It is enabled by default but you can turn it off entirely for specific regions: (Admin □ Data collection and modification □ Data collection □ Advanced Settings to Allow for Ads Personalization).
20. **User Data Collection Acknowledgement** – You have to acknowledge you have placed necessary privacy disclosures, and taken your users' permission for the collection and

processing of their data, including the association of such data with the visitation information Google Analytics collects for your site/app. Make sure to have your legal team review it: (Admin□Data collection and modification□Data collection□User Data Collection Acknowledgement).

21. **Enable Conversion events** – GA4 tracks events that you can later see on your reports, but you will also need to see some of those events as Conversions. To do that, you can either “mark an event as a conversion”, or create an event as a “Conversion Event”: (Admin□Data display□Events□Modify Event / Create Event□Mark as a Conversion toggle) or (Admin□Data display□Conversions□New Conversion Event)
22. **Verify Custom Definitions** – GA4 uses certain definitions to better illustrate the captured events or the users who are doing those events. Those definitions are dimensions and metrics. GA4 provides a long list of these, but in case you need to track different information, you can create your own custom definitions. Before you start, make sure you understand about different scopes, limits, and best practices recommended by Google: (Admin□Data display□Custom Definitions□Create Custom Dimension / Metric / Calculated Metric)
23. **Verify and adjust Audience Definitions** – Audience functionality allows you to define a set of attributes that can automatically start grouping users that match those defined attributes, so you can later use that audience for reporting or remarketing. GA4 automatically creates 2 audiences (“All Users” and “Purchasers”). You can also create your own audience definitions: (Admin□Data display□Audiences□New audience)
24. **Data Redaction** – Apply and configure data redaction functionality to prevent the collection of PII (email addresses and URL query parameters). This works only for website datastreams: (Admin□Data collection and modification□Data Streams□Click to select the Data Stream□Events□Redact data)

25. Verify the following limits – during every audit. These limits apply to one property.

Item	Limit	Notes
Distinctly named events	500 per app user, per day	Automatically collected events , like first_open and in_app_purchase, and events you collect via enhanced measurement do not count toward the limits. You cannot delete events once they are collected.
Length of event name	40 characters	Events exceeding 40 characters will not be reported as conversions
Event parameters per event	25 event parameters	You can delete any parameters that you don't use to make room for new ones.
Item-scoped parameters per event	In addition to the prescribed item-scoped parameters for each recommended ecommerce event, you can include up to 27 item-level custom parameters in an ecommerce event.	You can archive some parameters if you are close to the limit
Length of event-parameter name	40 characters	
Length of event-parameter value	100 characters	Exceptions: 1- page_title: 300 characters or less; 2- page_referrer: 420 characters or less; 3- page_location: 1,000 characters or less
User properties	25 per property	You can not delete or archive user properties
Length of user-property names	24 characters	
Length of user-property values	36 characters	
Length of User-ID values	256 characters	

The character limits are the same for single-width character languages (e.g., English) and double-width character languages (e.g., Japanese).

Configuration limits

Configured item	Limit per property	Can I delete items if I'm close to the limit?
Audiences	100	Yes
Conversions	30	Yes
Custom insights	50	Yes
User-scoped custom dimensions	25	Yes
Event-scoped custom dimensions	50	Yes
Event-scoped custom metrics	50	Yes
Registered custom conversion events	30	Yes
Data retention	Up to 14 months	N/A
Explorations	200 created per user 500 shared	Yes
Explore sampling limits	10M events per query	N/A
Ads links	400	Yes. You can also consider using a Google Ads Manager account and linking to that account instead of linking to individual client accounts.

About this checklist:

This checklist is created by the [Optizent Team](#). This is one of the documents we use when setting up or auditing GA4. GA4 has lots of moving parts and is always evolving. If you don't pay attention to how it is setup then you will end up collecting bad data. Bad data leads to bad decisions. So you must audit GA4 regularly to ensure that the data you are collecting is of good quality and you are maximizing the use of features that GA4 offers. In addition to the things mentioned in this checklist, we thoroughly check your setup in Google Tag Manager, the data layers you have, the reports you have configured, data integration, etc. to ensure GA4 and other marketing data sources meet your business needs.

Where to get more help?

You have a few options to get more help with GA4 setup and audit as well as other digital marketing analytics needs:

1. You can reach out to us at <https://www.optizent.com/contact> or email us at support@optizent.com for a no-obligation initial consultation.
2. Enroll in the [GA4 Complete Course at Optizent Academy](#).
3. Join Optizent Inner Circle - Optizent Inner Circle Membership is a community that provides you access to learning material, courses, and support systems you need to be successful in your career. We will never let you feel alone in your journey. Find out more at <https://academy.optizent.com/courses/membership/>