



Google Analytics Unlocked

Data Driven Strategies for Your
Association Website



Howdy!



Ray van Hilst

VP of Strategy

Yoko Co



Alex Levy

Director of Communications
& Public Affairs

American Historical
Association

Why We're Here

- Let's face it... Google Analytics can be confusing.
 - And you don't use it every day!
- You want more than vanity metrics.

We'll Walk Through

Why

What data you actually should use to make business decisions

What

What metrics should you look at in GA

How

How to find them and set things up. And then connect those to your goals.

“Organizing is what you do before you do something, so that when you do it, it is not all mixed up.”

— **A.A. Milne**



Strategy

Say “NO” to Vanity Metrics

Data Driven Strategies for Your Association Website



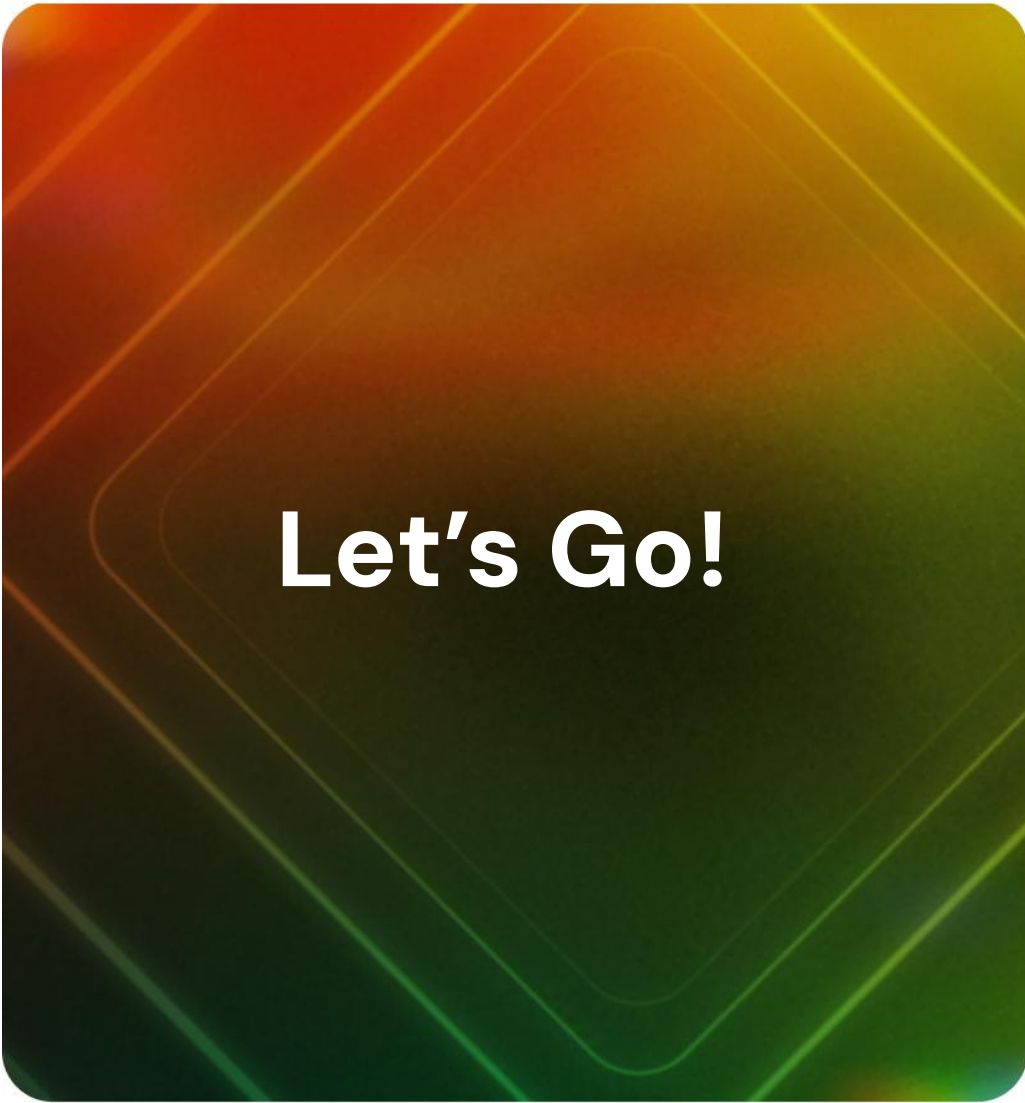
What metrics tie
to your **key goals**?



What will you **change**
based on the data?

Where To Start

GA4 Setup & Core Metrics



Let's Go!

Connect the Dots

Executive Leadership's Question	KPI or Metric
How many people are using our site and how active are they?	Users / Sessions / Page Views Engagement Rate / Average Engagement Time
What is our most popular content?	Landing Pages Pages and Screens (top pages) Content Groups Event Completions (key events / custom events)
How do people find our site?	Source / Medium Session Default Channel Grouping Users by Channel Google Search Console

Case Study: AHA

KPI or Metric	Affects Decisions For
Page Views Engagement Rate Landing Pages	What resources to market
User Acquisition Source / Medium	Where we share our resources
Downloads	What format we use for our resources
Realtime	Decision-making in the moment about marketing

What Resources to Market

Page title and screen class ▾ +		↓ Views	Active users	Views per active user	Engagement rate
Total		288,706 100% of total	130,787 100% of total	2.21 Avg 0%	43.58% Avg 0%
21	Professional & Career Resources - AHA	1,575 (0.55%)	983 (0.75%)	1.60	77.71%
22	AHA-OAH Joint Statement on Federal Censorship of American History	1,572 (0.54%)	1,141 (0.87%)	1.38	45.53%
23	AHA News & Announcements - AHA	1,539 (0.53%)	807 (0.62%)	1.91	59.15%
24	Vetted Resources - AHA	1,455 (0.5%)	1,399 (1.07%)	1.04	5.26%
25	Why Study History American Historical Association	1,441 (0.5%)	1,077 (0.82%)	1.34	74.08%
26	Radical Tariffs Aren't New, But They Have Been Disastrous	1,380 (0.48%)	1,117 (0.85%)	1.24	43.54%
27	Letters from Hernán Cortés – AHA	1,372 (0.48%)	741 (0.57%)	1.85	61.9%

Where We Share Our Resources

Session manual source ▾ +		Active users	↓ Sessions	Engaged sessions
Total		130,787 100% of total	194,266 100% of total	84,668 100% of total
1	google	60,436 (46.21%)	84,303 (43.4%)	46,937 (55.44%)
2	(not set)	48,767 (37.29%)	70,087 (36.08%)	21,541 (25.44%)
3	bing	2,430 (1.86%)	3,457 (1.78%)	2,062 (2.44%)
4	linkedin.com	1,443 (1.1%)	2,001 (1.03%)	771 (0.91%)
5	go.bsky.app	1,406 (1.08%)	1,982 (1.02%)	857 (1.01%)
6	chatgpt.com	1,092 (0.83%)	1,781 (0.92%)	797 (0.94%)
7	m.facebook.com	1,645 (1.26%)	1,708 (0.88%)	462 (0.55%)
8	l.facebook.com	689 (0.53%)	1,040 (0.54%)	533 (0.63%)

Where We Share Our Resources

Session manual source +	Active users	↓ Sessions	Engaged sessions
Total	514,611 100% of total	789,556 100% of total	380,029 100% of total
google	225,290 (43.78%)	335,554 (42.5%)	189,217 (49.79%)
(not set)	200,985 (39.06%)	288,225 (36.5%)	108,161 (28.46%)
bing	11,423 (2.22%)	16,907 (2.14%)	9,638 (2.54%)
t.co	6,510 (1.27%)	8,685 (1.1%)	3,295 (0.87%)
m.facebook.com	6,557 (1.27%)	6,773 (0.86%)	1,815 (0.48%)
academic.oup.com	3,296 (0.64%)	4,616 (0.58%)	2,688 (0.71%)
linkedin.com	3,301 (0.64%)	4,480 (0.57%)	1,645 (0.43%)
l.facebook.com	2,533 (0.49%)	3,827 (0.48%)	1,933 (0.51%)

What **Format** We Use for Our **Resources**

File Downloads

File Download		Event co... ▼
1.	/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/American-Lesson-Plan-1.pdf	449
2.	/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/History-Past-Public-Culture-Survey-Report-2021-08.pdf	191
3.	/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Smithsonian_final.pdf	135
4.	/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Statement-on-Standards-of-Prof-Conduct-Jan-2023.pdf	122
5.	/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2025-Annual-Meeting-Program.pdf	81
6.	/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Perspectives_63N2.pdf	60
7.	/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/NEH-Statement_final.pdf	60
8.	/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/AHA-Reads-2025-Checklist.pdf	58

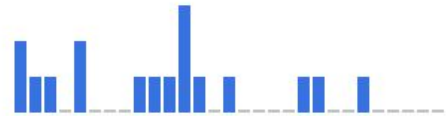
Realtime Decisions

Views by Page title and screen name

#1 American Lesso...l Association

18

10.11%



PAGE TITLE AND S...

VIEWS

American Lesson Pla... 18

Boston Coll. America... 11

American Historical ... 9

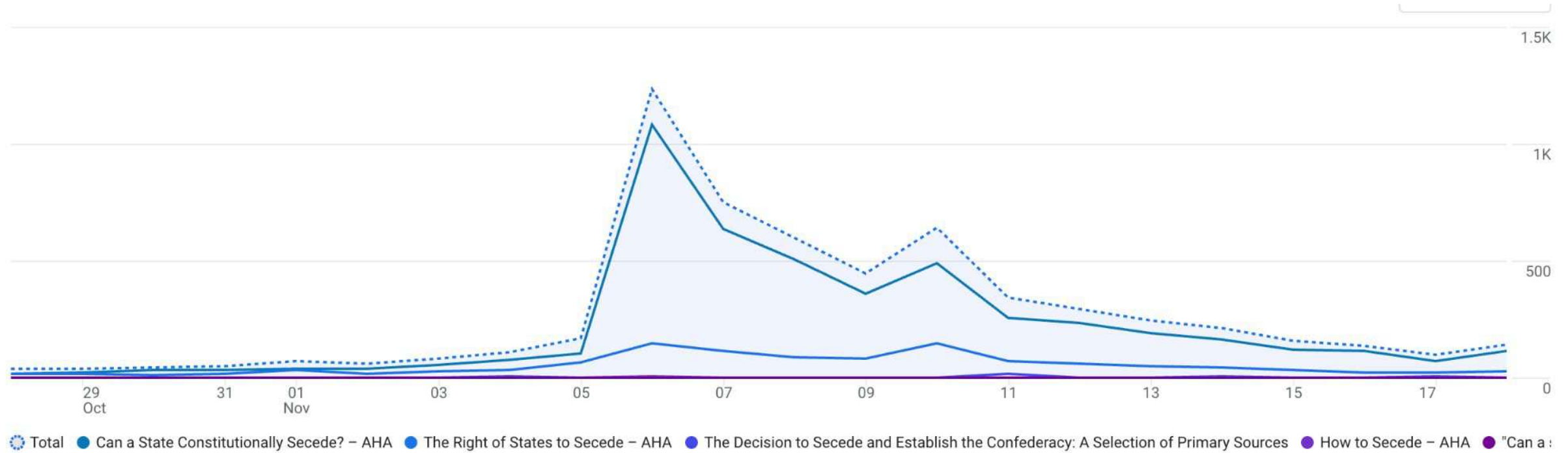
AHA Historical Colle... 7

American Historical ... 7

404 - Page not found... 6

Reacting to the News

Metrics: Can a State Secede?

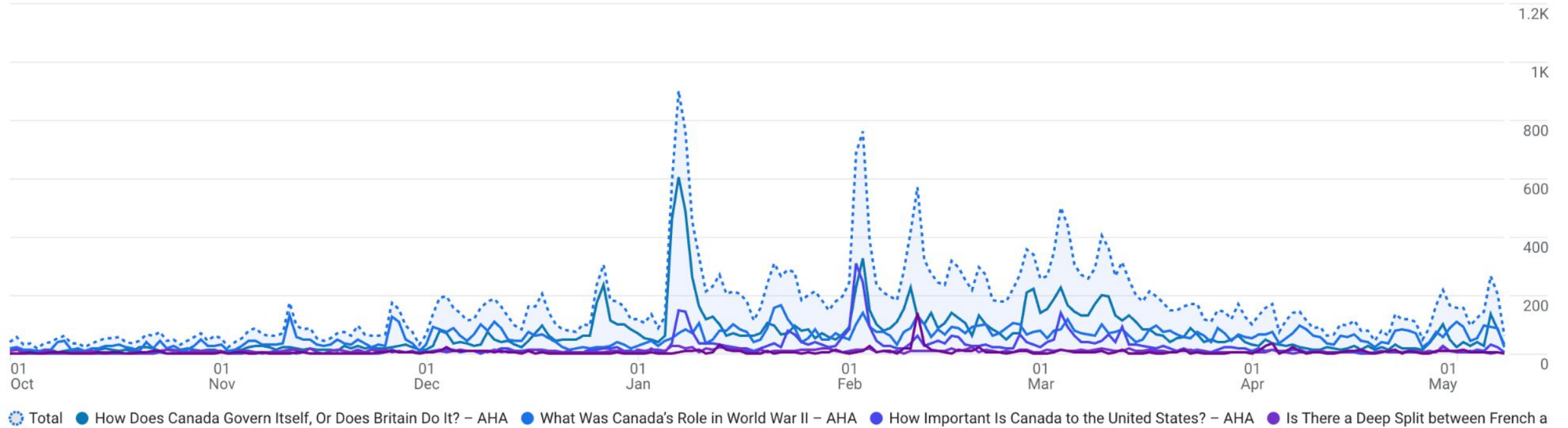


Reacting to the News

Metrics: Canada

Views by Page title and screen class over time

Day



**What's a
question your
leadership
wants
answered?**



Essential Configurations



Enhanced Measurement



File Download Tracking



Data Retention



Search Term Tracking



Data Signals

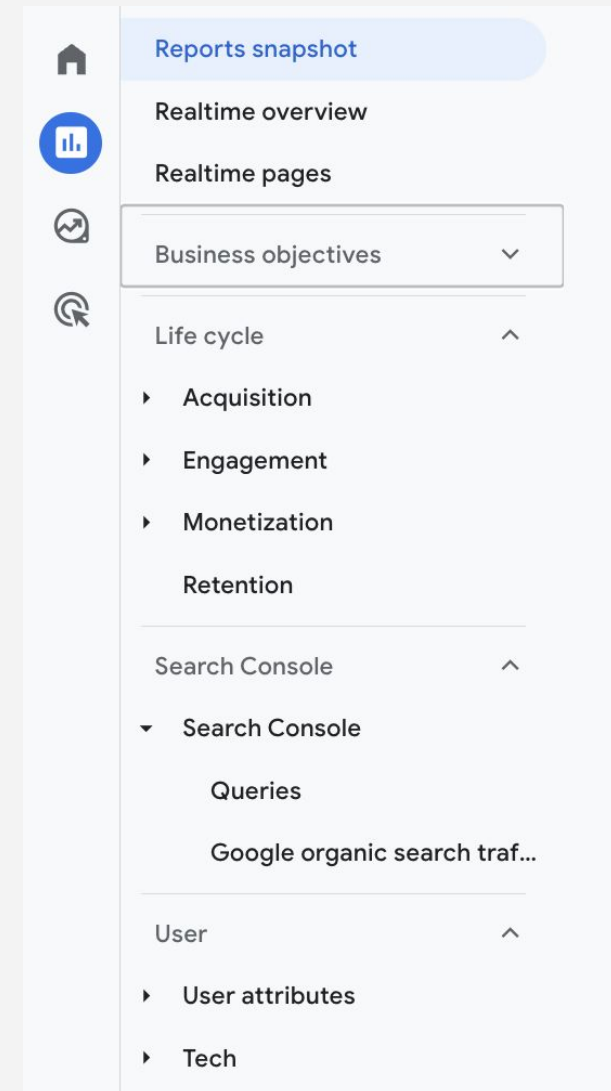


Content Groups (GTM)

Metrics 101:

What & Where

- Pages & Screens
- Landing Pages
- Acquisition & Referrals
- Search Console Integration



Wait! Something's Missing!

- Psst.. Click the pencil.
- Add Metrics & Dimensions
- Common ones I add:
 - Engagement Rate (Metric)
 - Query String (Dimension)

Last 28 days Apr 8 - May 5, 2025 ▾



Plot rows

Search...

Search items

Page title and screen class

Page path and screen class

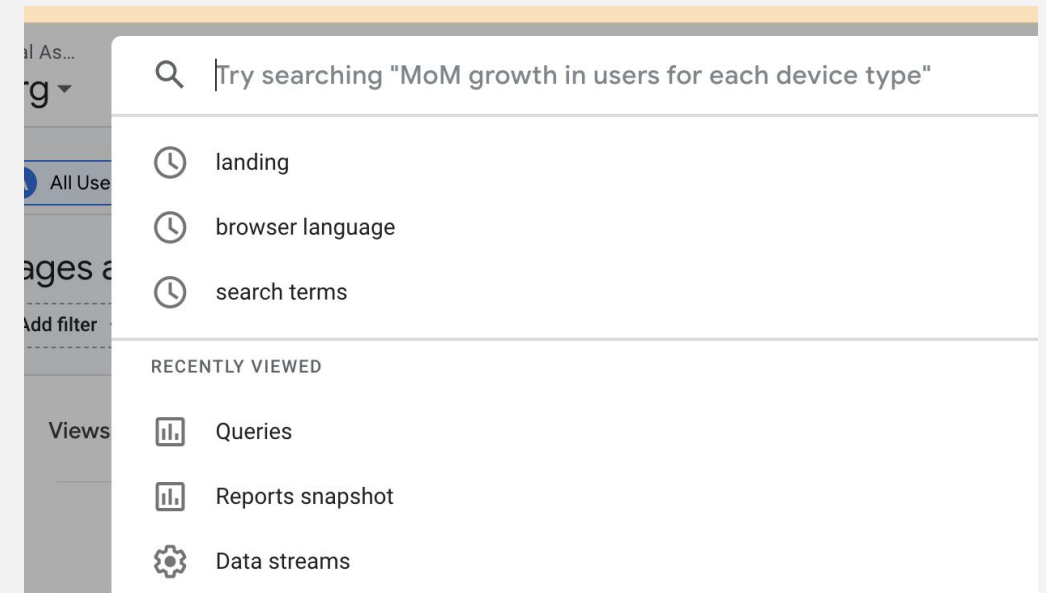
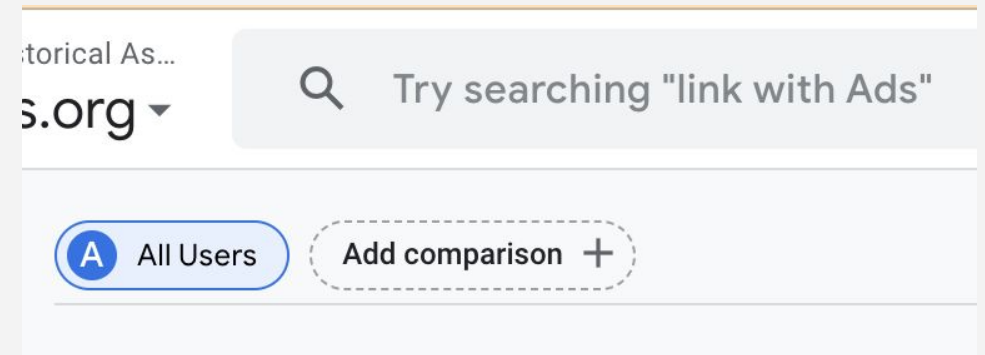
Page title and screen name

Content group

Page path + query string

But wait... **there's more!**

- AI Powered Analytics: Quick hits
- AI Powered Search: Ask what you want to know
- Realtime View
- Add additional dimensions to explore further







Metrics 201:

Let's Go Exploring

- Downloads
- Search Terms
- 404 Report
- Path Exploration
- New Feature: Copy Explorations across properties!!



Type	Name ↓
	Path exploration
	File Download Exploration
	Search Queries
	AHA 404s

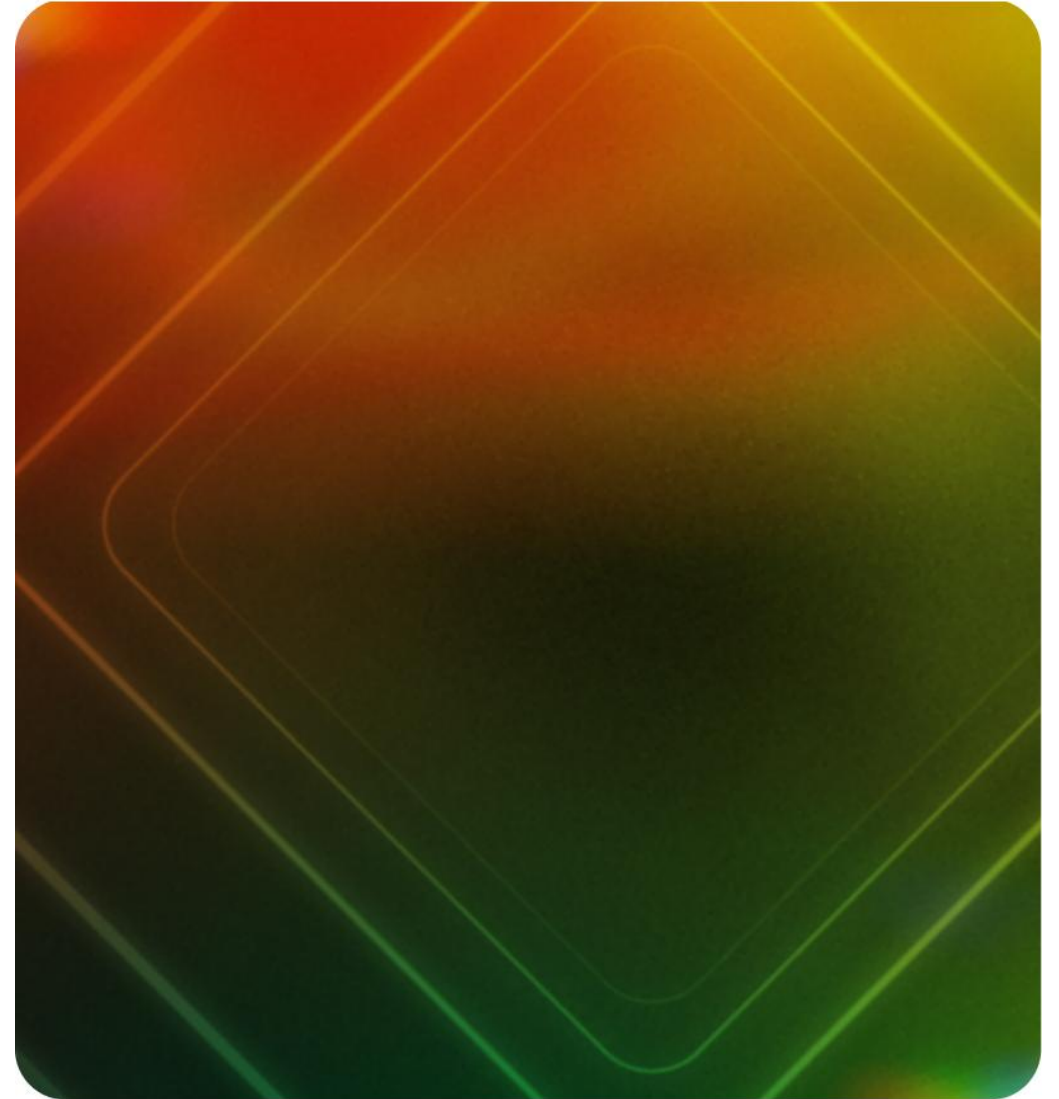
Meet Google Tag Manager

- Add and manage tracking without needing to update code every time.
- Give access to necessary team and they can add and update tags anytime.
- Set advanced configurations like content groups, custom events, custom parameters, etc.



Let's Get Cooking

Google Analytics Recipes in Action



Recipe: Numbers & Noodles

What: A report to see how many people visited your site and how many pages they viewed.

Why:

 Traffic Analysis

 User Engagement

 User Time Spent

Ingredients



Users

Total no. of unique visitors



Users

Total no. of unique visitors



Users

Total no. of unique visitors



Users

Total no. of unique visitors

Instructions

Step 1 | Open GA4 and go to **Reports > Reports Snapshot** for a quick overview. **This shows;** total users, new users, avg. engagement time.

Step 2 | For more detail, go to: **Reports > Engagement > Pages and screens**. **This shows;** views per page, users per page, avg. engagement time per page.

Step 3 | Want site-wide totals? Head to: **Reports > Acquisition > User acquisition**. **This shows;** how many new users came to your site, and from where.

Recipe: Channel Soup

What: Understand how users find your website: organic search, social media, email, referrals, or paid ads

Why:

 Traffic Analysis

 User Engagement

 User Time Spent

Ingredients



Traffic
Acquisition Report



Default Channel
Grouping
Lorem Ipsum



Source / Medium
Optional, total no. of visits



Session Campaign
UTM Tagged Data (optional)

Instructions

Step 1 | Open GA4 and go to **Reports > Acquisition > Traffic Acquisition** in the left hand nav.

Step 2 | Review Session default channel group for high-level insight of where traffic is coming from.

Step 3 | Drill Down by **Session Source/Medium**. Click a specific channel to see Source/Medium for more granularity (e.g., facebook.com / referral).

Step 4 | Drill Down by **Session Campaign** to evaluate tagged marketing efforts like newsletters or ad campaigns. (Make sure they're UTM-tagged!)

Recipe: Engagement Gumbo

What: Evaluate how different types or sections of content are performing using content groups and engagement metrics like time, scroll, and conversions.

Why:



Content Analysis



User Engagement

Ingredients



Content Groups

Set up in GTM based on URL



Views

Total no. of views



Avg Engagement Rate

How engaged are they?



Avg Engagement Time

How long viewed?

Instructions

Step 1 | Go to **Reports > Engagement > Pages and Screens**

Step 2 | Use the dimension selector at the top left to switch from Page title and screen class to **Content Group**.

Step 3 | Review these key **metrics**:

- **Views:** Basic popularity
- **Average engagement time:** Time spent on content
- **Engagement rate:** % of sessions with meaningful interaction

Recipe: Click Chip Cookies

What: Track what users are clicking. External links, downloads, and more. So you know what content is actually working.

Why:

 Traffic Analysis

 User Engagement



Ingredients



Custom Events
click_url, file_download



Custom Dimensions
file_name, click_url, link_text



Explorations
Deep dive into your data



Date Range
Choose your time period

Instructions

Step 1 | Navigate to **Reports > Engagement > Events**. Look for events like **click**, **file_download**, or **outbound_click**.

Step 2 | Click into an event (e.g., file_download) to see built-in metrics like: Total Events, Users, Event Count per User. (NOTE: only default parameters will show unless otherwise configured.)

Step 3 | Head to Explore for Full Flavor. Go to **Explore > Free-form Exploration**. **Add Rows:** Choose Event Name or a specific event like click or file_download. Season with **Columns (optional):** Add dimensions like Page path or Device category. Mix in **Metrics:** Use Event count, Users, Conversions (if applicable)

Step 4 | Add **Custom Dimension** Layers with dimensions like **file_name** (download file name), **click_url** (destination of the clicked link) and more!

Step 5 | Create **Filters** to Refine the Batch (optional). Filter to view only file_download or click events, or narrow it down to a specific page or source.

Recipe: Conversion Curry

What: Understand the journey users take before joining. What pages they visit, actions they take, and how they arrive. So you can optimize your funnel and remove friction.

Why:

 User Engagement

 Conversion Optimization



Ingredients



Custom Events

Conversion Event set up. Click, Page URL, etc.



Custom Dimensions

page_path, page_title



Explorations

Deep dive into your data

Instructions

Step 1 | Open **GA4 > Explore > Funnel Exploration**. Create a new exploration to visualize the join journey.

Step 2 | Define the Funnel Steps (look for pencil). Use event names and page views to set a linear journey. Examples include

- Step 1: Page view → /membership
- Step 2: Page view → /membership-benefits
- Step 3: Event = membership_join or link_url (often an AMS link)

Step 3 | Customize the Funnel Settings

- **Funnel Type:** Choose open if users can skip steps; closed if you want strict progression
- **Segment by Traffic Source** to see which channels convert best (use session source / medium)

Step 4 | **Build a Path Exploration** (Optional)

- Open Explore > Path Exploration
- Start with either **page_view** or **membership_join** as your ending point
- Reverse paths to see what users did right before joining
- Filter by session source, device, or specific URLs

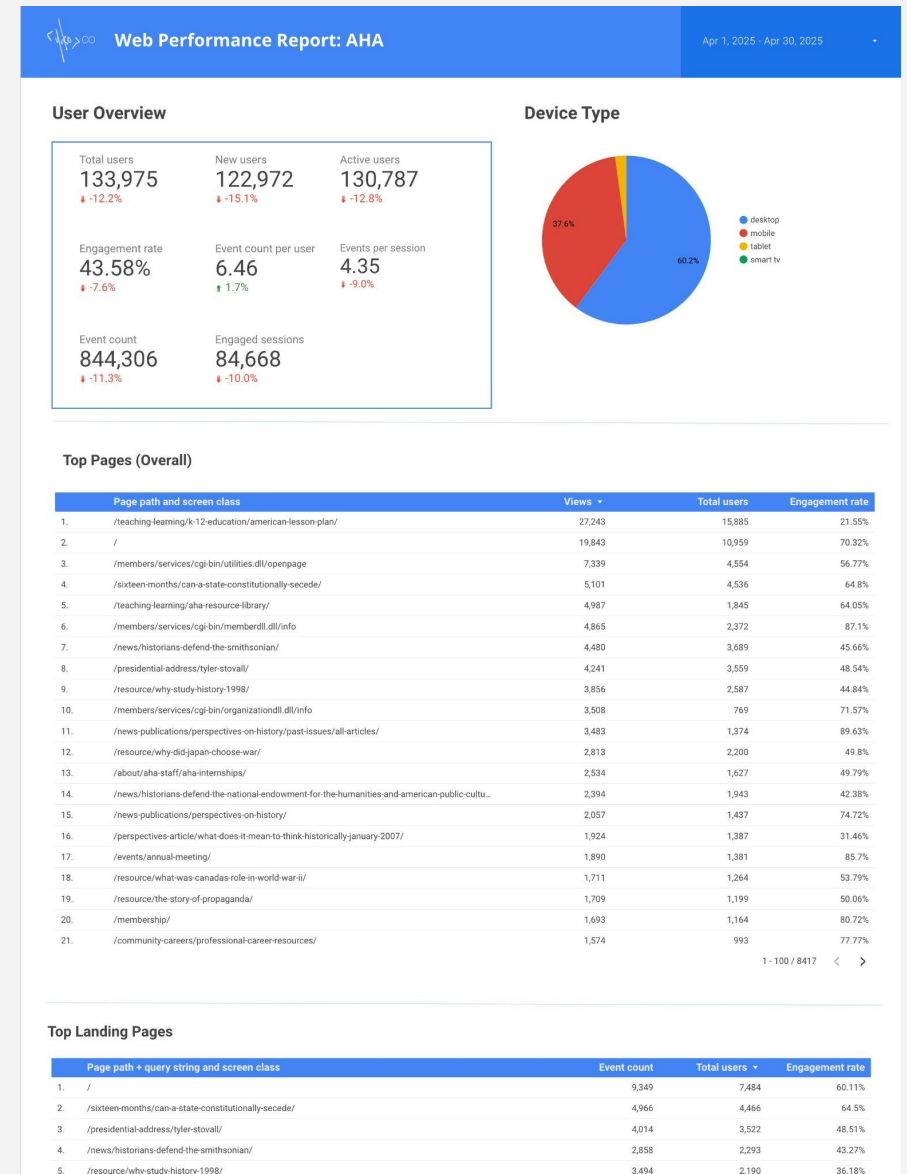
From Reports to Storytelling

Don't Share Numbers. Share Insight

Section 4

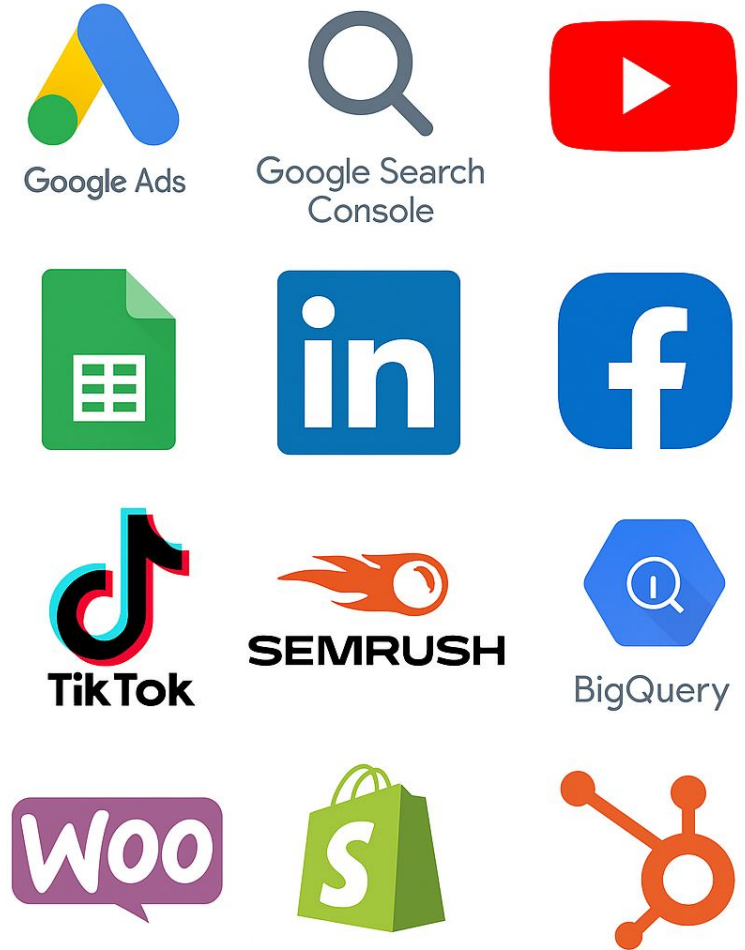
Google Looker Studio: BI & More

- GA Data Visualization
- Save time digging through multiple screens
- Automated reporting
- Scheduled sending
- Versions for different audiences



Google Looker Studio: Integrations Galore

- Google Analytics
- Google Search Console
- Google Ads
- SEO Tools (e.g. SEM Rush)
- Email Systems
- Social Media
- Google Sheets
- And more!!

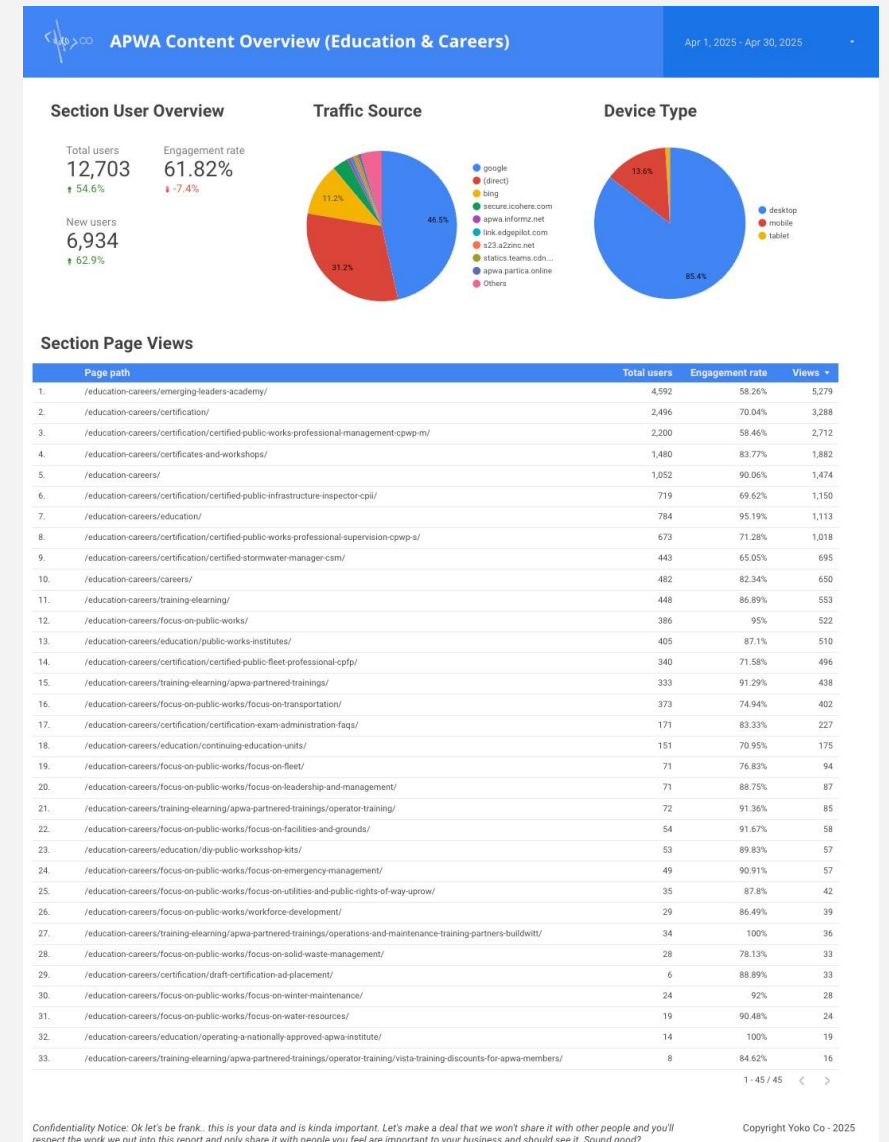


Leadership Dashboard **Data**

The Question	Why It Matters	The GA Metric
Are we attracting new audiences and growing membership?	Expanding reach Membership growth	User Acquisition Report (new vs. returning users) Demographics > Overview (age, gender, location)** Traffic by channel/source/medium
Are our key revenue drivers getting traffic?	Tracks performance of programs tied to revenue	Landing Pages & Pages/Screens reports Event Tracking (registrations, clicks, downloads) Conversion Events for CTAs
Are people engaging with our most important content?	Content strategy & value delivery	Pages and Screens report Engaged Sessions & Avg. Engagement Time- Content Groups (if configured)
Where are users dropping off in our join/renew/registration process?	Identify barriers to conversion	Exploration Reports: Funnel Path Custom Events (e.g. form views, join button click, membership page views)
Are people using our site search? And what are they looking for?	Insight into content gaps and user intent	Site Search Query Tracking (custom setup) Search Term Reports
How are people finding us? What channels are working?	Inform marketing strategy and spend	User Acquisition & Traffic Acquisition reports UTM Campaign Tracking
What content or resources are driving the most action?	Prioritize investment in high-value content	Pages and Screens Events (downloads, clicks, shares) Scroll and engagement depth (if configured)
Is our digital engagement improving over time?	Measure progress and justify investment	Trend lines in user behavior over time Comparison periods in reports- Looker Studio dashboards with date filters

Department Dashboards

- Identify content owned by departments and figure out URL parameters
- Filter off URLs and content types
- Create one page reports with all metrics using filters



Best Practices for Circulating

- Good to share with staff & councils/committees
- Include a Glossary
- Summary
- Looker report



Google Analytics Definitions

Google Analytics can be filled with lots of jargon and weird terms you might not use on a daily basis. To get you started, here are some of the more common terms you will see in our reports and other areas of Google Analytics. If you have any questions or have a definition you would like to add to the list, please email us at support@yokoco.com.

Total Users

The total number of people who visited the website or your section of the website during the selected time period. Each person is counted only once, no matter how many times they visit.

New Users

The number of people visiting the website or your section of the website for the first time (or at least the first time in a long while).

Views

The total number of times a page on the website was looked at. If someone visits the same page multiple times, each visit counts as a separate view.

Engagement Rate

The percentage of visits where people interacted with the website in a meaningful way, such as staying on a page for a while, clicking links, or scrolling. A higher engagement rate means visitors are actively exploring.

Traffic Source

Where visitors came from before arriving on the website. This could be from a search engine (Google), a social media post, another website, or typing the website address directly.

Device Type

The kind of device people used to visit the website, such as a computer, tablet, or phone.

Page Path

The part of the website's address (URL) that comes after the main website name, showing which specific page someone visited. For example, in "example.com/about," the page path is "/about."

AHA Analytics Workflow

- Review GA a few times a week
- Monitor realtime during major announcements
- Pull metrics for departments as needed
- Review Looker report closely each month
- Share Looker report and highlights with our communications team
- Prepare website and social media reports for governing Council at least twice per year
- Share metrics for departments for their Council reports as needed



Advantages of **Looker Studio**



Alex Levy  9:00 AM

Hi all, here's the April website analytics report. Some highlights:

- 27K!!! for American Lesson Plan (thanks to the work DKC is doing for us with advertising)
- 5K views for the Resource Library
- 2.5 views for the internships page, woohoo
- 1.4K views for the vetted resources page (interesting)
- Over 1K for the opportunities calendar
- Our biggest social media referrer was LinkedIn. And over 5K users from Bing
- I am curious why the Google search term "modern day cults" led to our website....
- PDF downloads: 449 for ALP, 135 for the Smithsonian statement, 60 for the NEH statement.

Which indicates that including a PDF download for major statements is a good idea.

I'm glad to see our evergreen content perform well.

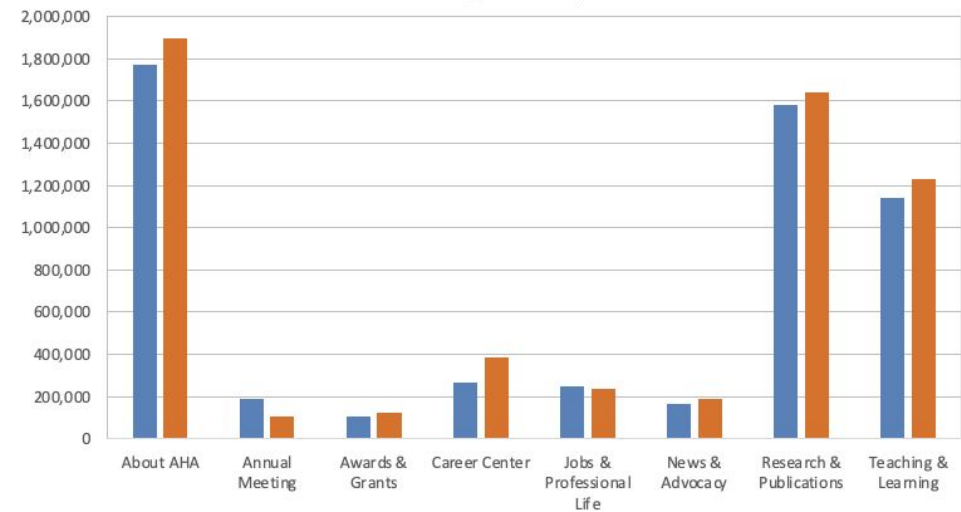
Advantages of Looker Studio

- 2022 website report: charts, tables created by staff
- Missed some metrics because of website structure
- Time-consuming, required a lot of explanation

Website Section	December 15, 2021 — December 15, 2022	December 14, 2020 — December 14, 2021	Percentage Change
About AHA	1,772,649	1,895,601	-6.49%
Annual Meeting	190,458	102,700	85.45%
Awards & Grants	108,256	124,520	-13.06%
Career Center	264,994	387,981	-31.70%
Jobs & Professional Life	247,366	239,543	3.27%
News & Advocacy	163,999	186,177	-11.91%
Publications & Directories/Research & Publications	1,578,519	1,643,634	-3.96%
Teaching & Learning	1,142,674	1,229,057	-7.03%
Total	5,468,915	5,809,213	-5.86%

This chart does not include about 600,000 pageviews included in the total number of [website](#) pageviews; most of those pageviews were for specific pages, document downloads, or other items that fall outside the main sections.

AHA Website Pageviews by Section



The above charts depict the total pageviews for the eight overarching sections of the website (excluding the homepage). The blue bars represent December 2021-2022 and the orange bars represent December 2020-2021.

Advantages of Looker

- 2025 website report: short memo highlighting new resources + Looker Report

Website Redesign

After nearly two years of planning and implementation, the AHA launched our new website on June 19, 2024. The new site has been well received, with praise for its design and user experience. We have worked hard since launch to make further improvements, including by creating redirects and new landing pages and adding appropriate tags to *Perspectives* articles (this effort will continue for quite some time, as we have nearly 10K *Perspectives* articles on the site).

Enclosed please find the analytics report, created by Yoko Co via Google Analytics. The metrics are—as Yoko Co expected—down since the new site launched, but still robust for an organization of our size. This decrease in views is due in part to Google indexing all pages on the new site, affecting some search engine rankings. But it's also due in part to spam issues on our old site, which likely inflated some of the page views we received. We have a high Google Authority score (52) so our pages should continue to remain high in Google search—though the recent addition of AI to Google search has made its results more unpredictable.

New Landing Pages

We have recently published the following resources:

[AHA State History Standards Support](#)

[Data on the Historical Discipline](#)

[Digital History Resources](#)

[History & Public Policy](#)

[Institutes & Workshops](#)

[Resources for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty](#)

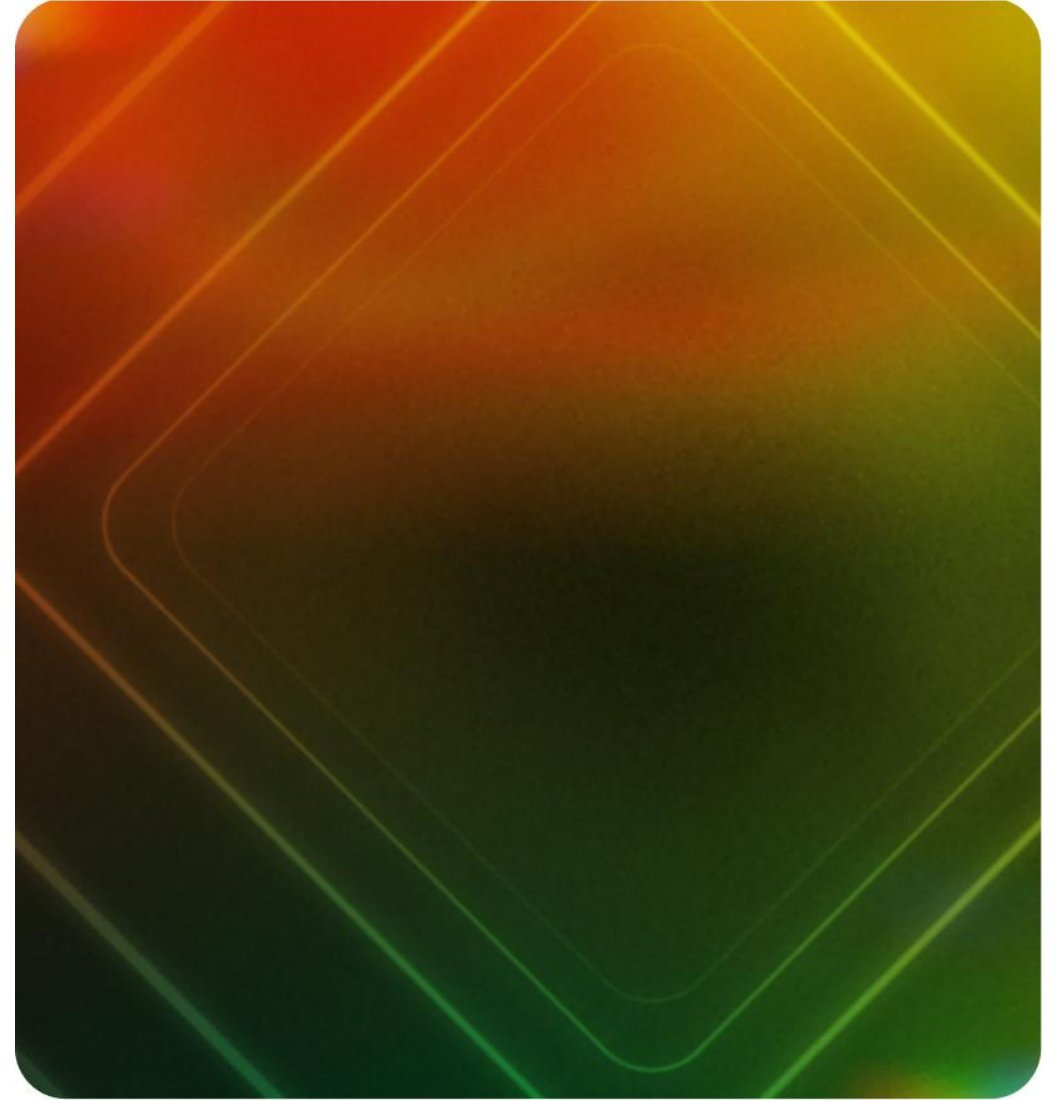
[Teaching Things](#)

It's ok to say "No"



If the data doesn't drive
action, **don't report on it.**

What's next in your journey?



3 Things To Do **Next Week**



Audit your Google Analytics Setup. Start with our worksheet.



Identify your KPIs. For you AND your teams.



Map GA metrics to those KPIs. (Bonus: Start a dashboard)

Questions? Resources.

- ChatGPT or Gemini
- AnalyticsMania.com
- Facebook Google Analytics 4 Community
- Google Analytics Release Notes
- Google Skillshop:
 - <https://skillshop.withgoogle.com/>

Slides, Downloads and More...



www.yokoco.com/mmct-google-analytics-unlocked/

Get in touch!



Ray van Hilst

VP of Strategy

Yoko Co

ray@yokoco.com



Alex Levy

Director of Communications
& Public Affairs

American Historical
Association

alevy@historians.org