

## Our latest blog post

### Google Universal Analytics - should I upgrade?

Measuring your website performance is a crucial part of making continuing improvements to your website. And the need to keep improving through change is more prevalent than ever in the constantly evolving digital age.

This is why many businesses have adopted Google Analytics as an integral part of their digital strategy, helping them to collect the most comprehensive data on their digital performance.

There are currently major changes taking place with Google Analytics and this is something that all businesses should be aware of.

In October 2012 Google announced the launch of Universal Analytics, to help users 'tailor Google Analytics to their specific needs, integrate their own datasets and ultimately get a more complete vision of the entire marketing funnel'.

Universal Analytics will eventually replace the current Google Analytics, this will happen over a 4 phase period and requires businesses currently using Google Analytics to make a decision on whether to voluntarily upgrade now or wait until the enforced change takes place.

Google have set up the Universal Upgrade Centre to provide users with guidance on the 4 phase development timeline (<https://developers.google.com/analytics/devguides/collection/upgrade>).

If you have not upgraded by the time Universal Analytics becomes the mandatory analytics tool for Google then you will continue to receive data from your current analytics for up to two years, but then all pre-Universal Analytics collection methods will be deprecated and no longer work.



### What are the benefits of upgrading?

#### **Google highlight benefits such as:**

- User IDs for individual website visitors, allowing you to recognise users who connect with your website through multiple devices or sessions and attribute all activity to one user in your reports
- New and more flexible data collection methods to track any digital device e.g. websites, mobiles, tablets and other digital devices, like game consoles and information kiosks
- Simplified and more accessible configuration options from the admin page in your account rather than having to adjust tracking codes on your site
- Create custom dimensions & custom metrics to collect data specific to your business requirements and extend beyond the standard set Google provide
- Stay up to date with new features and updates - properties getting data from a previous version of Google Analytics tracking code will not receive any product updates or access to new features

## How long does it take to upgrade?

This is the how long is a piece of string question as it depends on the property you're upgrading.

### ***There are two basic steps to complete the full process:***

1. Transfer your property to Universal Analytics data processing technology – this should take a couple of minutes to do and will then take Google 24 - 48 hours to complete the process
2. Implement the new Universal Analytics tracking code – this is driven by and depends on your development environment, and your data collection and reporting needs

## What do you need to be aware of / do?

It requires a decision! Given that interactive choices are risky and uninformed choices are costly the enforced change does provide a great opportunity to:

1. Document how you have Analytics set up
2. Review how you are currently using Analytics
3. Check this corresponds with what you are wanting to achieve – i.e. is the information you're collecting driving insight and actions, or just adding more data to your reading pile?



### ***We would recommend that you:***

- Don't ignore the changes – unless you want to “kick the can down the road” and panic later which may lead to paying premium consultancy costs (anyone mention cookies?)
- Don't just blindly transfer to Universal Analytics without understanding the impact upon your current analytics reporting

If you need help or want to discuss how these changes will affect your business contact Six Serving Men by calling **(0115) 837 2663** or emailing **help@6sm.co.uk**, we're just around the corner.

