Introduction
The Audience section of Google Analytics is full of information to help you understand characteristics about your users.

This includes information about their geographic location or the type of device they use to access your site. Other reports in the Audience section help you understand your users’ behavior over multiple visits to your site, like how often they visit and how much time elapses between visits.

In this lesson we’ll review:

- how to learn about user behavior with the Frequency and Recency reports
- how to access geographic data
- how to view data about mobile traffic to your site
- how to access data about your custom dimensions

Audience reports overview
The Audience reports are designed to provide insight into the characteristics of your users, what devices they use to visit you, and how loyal and engaged they are with your business.

The Location report
Let’s start by taking a look at one of the most commonly used reports in Google Analytics -- the Location report.

The Location report lets you see where visits originate by Continent, Sub Continent, Country, Region, Metro Area or City. For web visitors, this location information is derived from mapping IP addresses to geographic locations.
The heat map can be adjusted to display any metric geographically. For example, switching the map to show the metric "% New Visits" allows you to quickly identify mature versus emerging markets for your business. Having this information can help you decide whether to focus more on building awareness or instead on building customer loyalty in different locations.

The data table is useful for doing more detailed analyses. For example, if you’re looking to expand your business, you may want to identify the areas from which you receive little traffic, but have seen that users who do come are likely to be good customers. These regions could represent untapped markets where advertising could help build more awareness and opportunity for your business.

Using the comparison view in the data table, you can add in a metric like “Average Value” to see which of your least traffic generating regions perform above average.

You could also use the Location report to identify the regions where you already have a large audience, but lower than average performance. For example, if certain regions have a higher than average bounce rate, your advertising messaging, website or application may need to be optimized to appeal more to the given audience. This could mean translating your ads and site to the local language or adding more geographically relevant content to your site.

**The Behavior reports**

Let’s move on to the Behavior reports in the Audience section.

**The New vs. Returning report**

The first report in the Behavior section is the **New vs Returning report**. It gives you a quick look at the ratio of your first time and repeat visitors. You can compare this ratio for different time periods to see how your audience loyalty may be shifting.

You can also see the relative impact of new vs returning visitors by viewing the ecommerce metrics in this report. As you can see here, Returning visitors not only make purchases more often, but also tend to spend more per purchase. Knowing this behavior, you might decide to develop a customer loyalty program or remarketing strategy that helps grow your returning customer base.
The Frequency report
The Frequency report lets you see how frequently visitors return to your site within a time frame -- once, twice, or even more.

If visitors come once but don’t return, you might infer that you’re marketing your site to the wrong audience, or that your site content and design are not sufficiently engaging or easily navigable.

The Recency report
The Recency report shows how many days go by before users return to your site -- do they tend to visit once a week or just once a month?

This information can especially be useful if you are a publisher or maintain a blog on your site. Let’s say you currently offer new content on your site on a daily basis, but see from the Recency report that customers only tend to visit once a week. Knowing this behavior, you might decide to develop a new email subscription option for your site or other notification system to remind users to visit your fresh content when it’s created.

The Engagement report
Next, the Engagement report lets you see how much time people spend on your site in increments of seconds, and how many pages they view. Note that single-page visits are assigned to the 0-10 visit duration.

Depending on the nature of your site, your target duration for a visit will vary. For example, if you have a blog or news site, you’re probably hoping visitors spend some time there to carefully read through the content. On the other hand, if the purpose of your site is to help people quickly troubleshoot a technical problem, but users are spending a lot of time on the site, you might conclude that your instructions are unnecessarily complicated.

As with visit duration, your goals for page depth can vary depending on the nature of your site. For example, if you’re running a website for a college, in addition to finding information about the admissions process you want visitors to look at many pages of your site in order to learn about the background of the school, understand the different departments and faculties, and learn about available social activities. On the other hand, if the purpose of your site is to provide contact information for store locations, you may want your visitors to have to view only one or two pages before they find the information they need.
The Technology reports
Now, let’s move on to the Technology and Mobile reports.

Understanding the technologies visitors use to reach and consume your site lets you fine tune current versions, and plan upcoming implementations. You want to be sure your website is fully functional on your users devices.

You can use the Browser and Operating systems report to quickly identify whether users may be having issues using your site in some browsers. For example, if your site has a comparatively high bounce rate on a mobile browser, you may need to create a mobile optimized version of your website with streamlined content and simpler navigation, or you may need to fix a technical issue your users are experiencing.

The Mobile reports
You also want to understand the extent to which visitors are migrating away from desktop to mobile browsers to plan your development accordingly.

You can use the Mobile Overview report to see a breakdown of visitors by whether they visit using smartphones, tablets or desktop devices. Again, you can compare this breakdown between different date ranges to see how quickly mobile usage of your site has changed over time.

The Mobile Devices report lets you see additional details about the devices your visitors use, including the mobile device name, brand, service provider, input selector, operating system, and other dimensions like screen resolution.

These reports can give your developers and designers direction on how to create a mobile optimized experience to best suit your users.

Custom Dimensions
Finally, with some help from your development team to implement additional code, you can use Custom Dimensions to collect and analyze data that Google Analytics doesn't automatically track, like demographic data.

For example, you might have a form on your website where visitors can indicate which industry they work in.
In this case, you can use a custom dimension to capture your users’ selections. Subsequent visits will remain classified under the segment a user selected so that you are able to analyze how users in different industries engage with your site.

Custom Dimensions appear as primary dimensions in Custom Reports, rather than appearing directly in the Audience report section, but they are still powerful tools for understanding your audience better.

Note that you must be using the newest version of the Google Analytics tracking code to implement Custom Dimensions.

Conclusion
Check out the resources in this lesson for more information about using Custom Dimensions for your website or mobile application and for additional information on using the Audience reports.

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