

# Understanding & Using Google Analytics Dashboards

## What are Google Analytics Dashboards

We all understand that as humans we are in the most part visual learners, Google Analytics Dashboards are a way of allowing you to quickly visualise your data via the use of a collection of widgets. In any Google Analytics profile you can make use of up to 20 of these visual dashboards that can have 12 widgets in each.

A good definition of dashboards would be:

A dashboard is a visual display of the most important information needed to achieve one or more objectives; consolidated and arranged on a single screen so the information can be monitored at a glance.

In this course material we will have a quick look at the options available for building the most effective dashboards to monitor objectives within Google Analytics.

We will also provide some examples of dashboards that have already been created and show you how to quickly and easily implement these within your own analytics. Because of the sheer scope and depth of this subject we will not cover how to build your own dashboards but you should gain a flavour of what can be achieved and we will provide links to other resources that will allow you to learn more about creating your own dashboards based around your own business goals and metrics.

## Finding Dashboards in the Analytics Environment

Before we can get stuck in, we need to find the dashboard, whenever you login to GA you are by default shown the Audience Overview screen, if you look to the left navigation at the very top just below the search bar you will see the section entitled Dashboards (see fig1.)

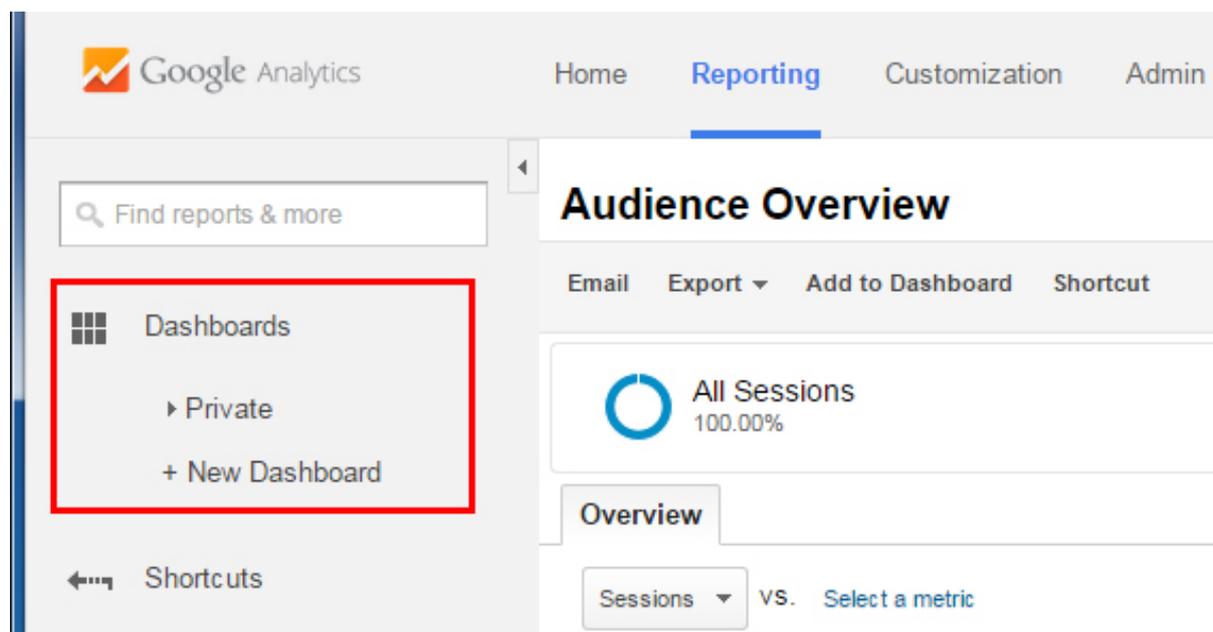


Figure 1 Dashboard view in Google Analytics

Here you will be able to see any dashboards that have already been created for this profile (under private) or create a brand new dashboard. Clicking on the Private section will give you a simple default dashboard very kindly provided by Google called 'My Dashboard' (fig 2.) it's OK for starters but you can do so much more. Take a look though as you will start to get an idea of the sort of things that can be displayed.

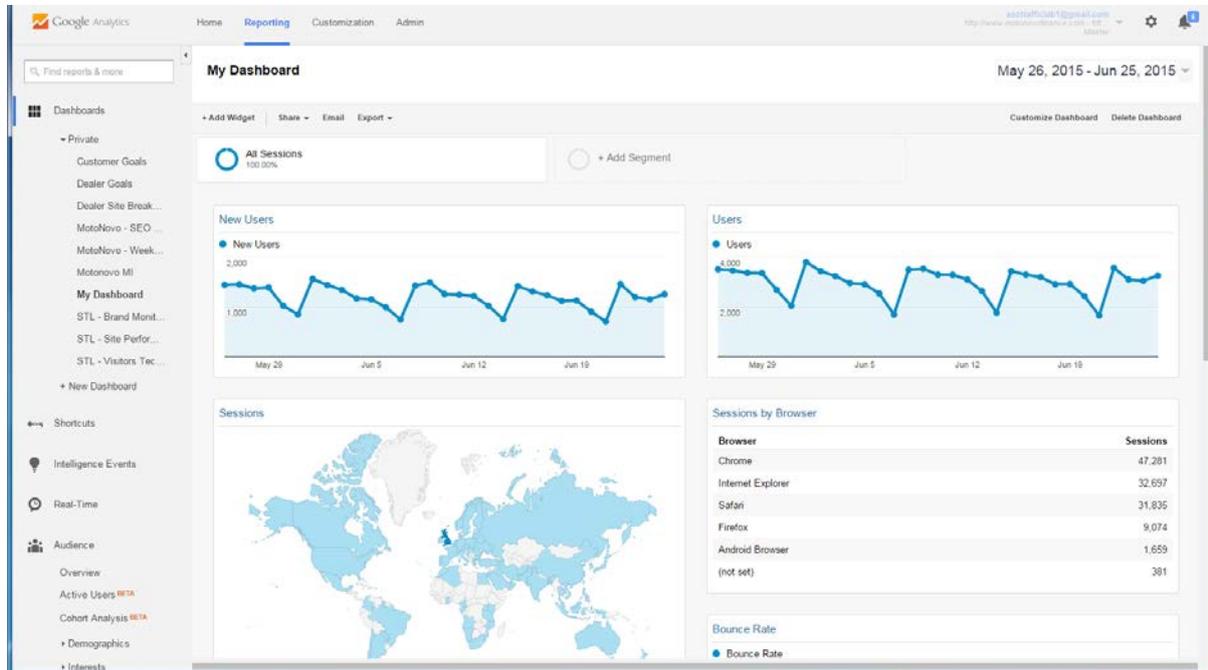


Figure 2 My Dashboard

Obviously we would like to get an understanding of the different widgets that are available to us for creating dashboards so let's go ahead and click on the link to create a new Dashboard at which point you will be presented with the following screen (fig. 3).

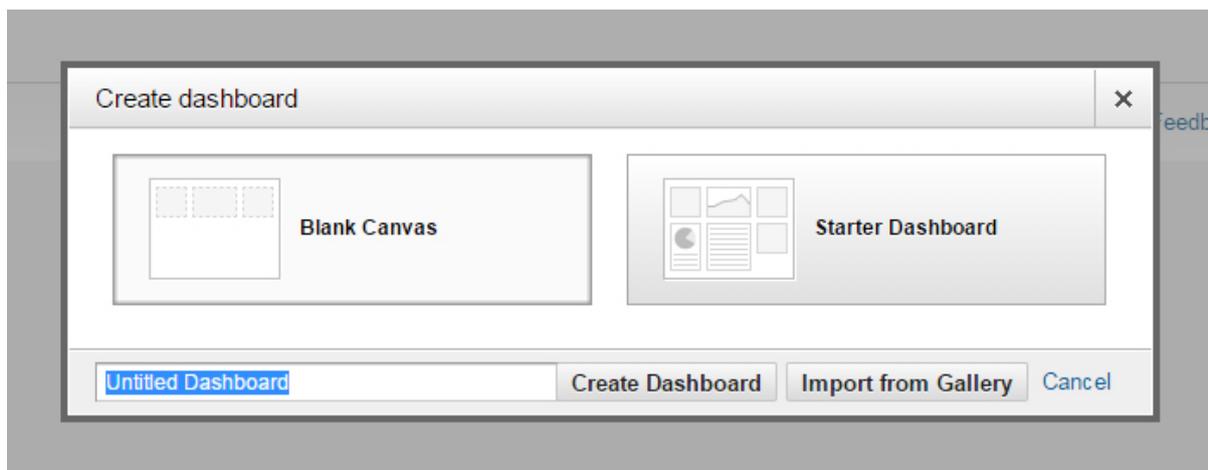


Figure 3 Create Dashboard

As you can see there are several options here for us to choose, there are a great many dashboards that have already been created by other users and these can be imported into your own GA by clicking 'Import from Gallery' or following the link here <https://www.google.com/analytics/gallery/> (we will cover importing later). Many of these dashboards are plug and go, although some need slight modifications to give a true record of your own statistics and these are generally easy edits.

Whatever your requirements we would again highly recommend that you take a look at some of these, as a wise man once said ‘Why reinvent the wheel’.

For now though go ahead and click the ‘Blank Canvas’ option, add a name where it says ‘Untitled Dashboard’ you could use ‘Test Dashboard’ for now as it can always be deleted later. Then click the ‘Create Dashboard’ button. This will present the following screen (fig. 4) which shows the types of widget available and we will look at each of these options next.

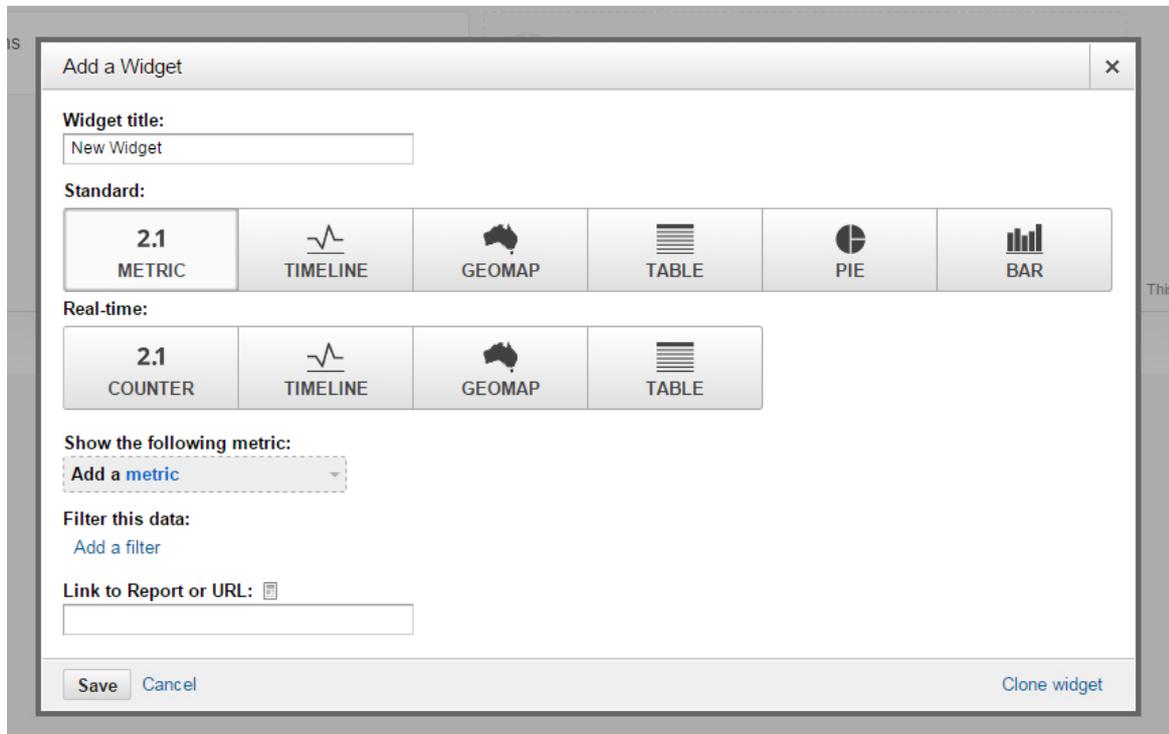


Figure 4 Add a Widget Screen

## Dashboard Widget Types

The dashboards on Google Analytics are composed of widgets, components on the interface that enable you to see a specific chart. There are currently 6 types of dashboard widgets, and 4 of them can be used both for standard and real-time data. Below is a description of each.

### 1. The Metric Widget (Standard)

This widget allows you to display single metric data with no charts and is the ideal option for displaying the types of data that you need to check every day. So for example you may want to know how much revenue you brought in from Adwords, and how much this actually cost to generate and you can see this example in (fig. 5) where you can see two examples of how the Metric widget will appear.

With this widget you also have the option to apply some customisations in this instance there are two, *Filter this Data* and *Link to Report or URL*.

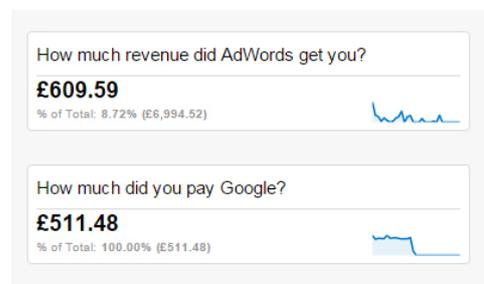


Figure 5 Metric Widgets in action

The first allows you to apply a filter to the current data utilising any of the available dimensions from within Google Analytics. An example of this

would be if you only wanted to see this data from a specific country. The second option allows you to have the title of the widget link to a specific report.

## 2. The Metric or Counter Widget (Real-time)

Although called the Counter Widget this is actually the real-time version of the Metric Widget. It differs in the fact that it deals with the number of visitors that are active on the website at that precise time. It can be grouped by different dimensions, which means you will see a bar below the counter showing the distribution of the active visitors into, for example, mobile and web visitors.

## 3. Timeline Widget (Standard)

The Timeline widget is a favourite for many types of business as it tells the story of what has been going on the last x number of days and is generally utilised with two lines of data that depict quantity and quality. So for example we could use this to display Sessions with Product Revenue, two great metrics that it is good to see in comparison. Visits are great but it's always better to show how much money those visits generated. (fig. 6)

As with the Metric Widget the Timeline Widget can also be utilised with real-time data where it will show data for activity within the last 30 minutes or 60 seconds. You can also filter data and add a link as before.

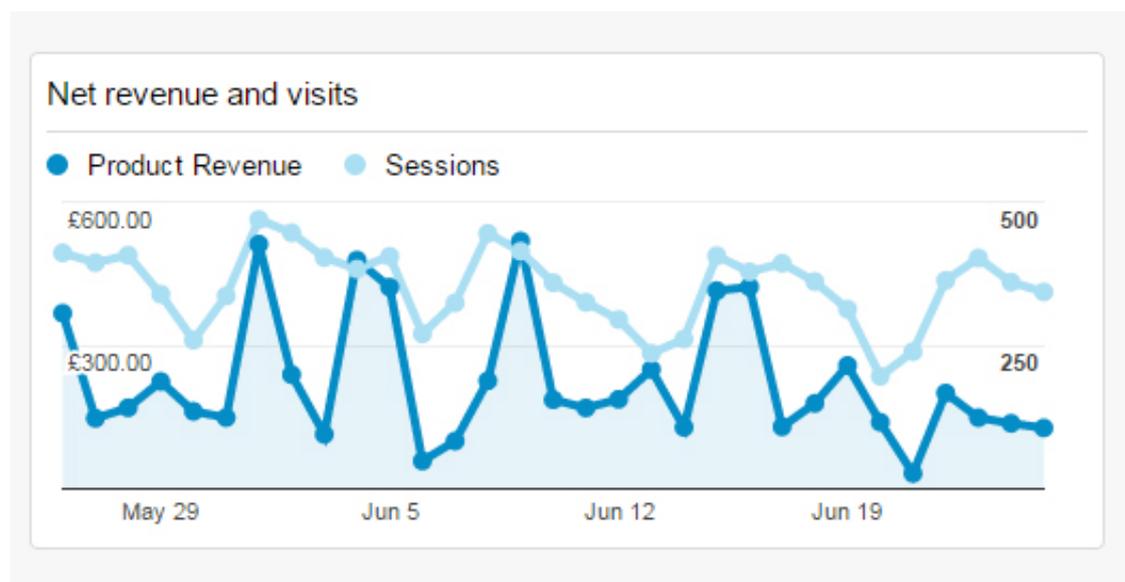


Figure 6 Timeline Widget

## 4. GEO Map Widget (Standard)

The GEO Map Widget allows you to see how a specific country is contributing to your business through the website which is particularly useful if you are located around the world. Again this widget can be utilised in real-time and can be filtered etc.

In its simplest form it can be utilised to show the concentration of your Sessions from around the globe as can be seen in the example in (fig.7) over the page.

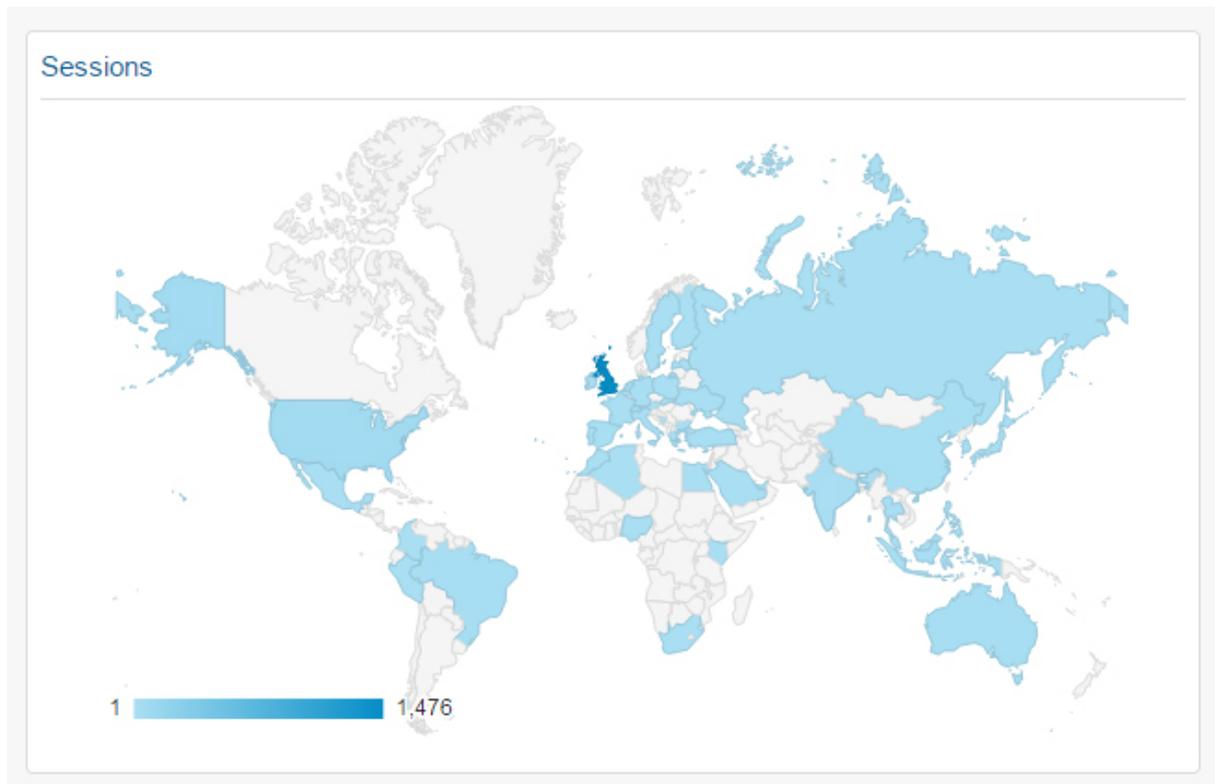


Figure 7 GEO Map Widget

### 5. Table Widget (Standard)

The Table Widget is perfect for providing a list of items with two associated dimensions and is often utilised for examining landing pages, content, product and campaign performance. So for example we could look at aspects such as what are the best organic landing pages and what goal completions and conversion rates those pages provide (see fig. 8).

The real-time version of this Widget is much more complicated, allowing you to choose three dimensions which it displays as a pivot table showing the combinations of these in real-time.

Best Organic Landing Pages - Goal Completions and Conv. Rate			
Landing Page		Goal Completions	Goal Conversion Rate
/	📄	54,238	226.11%
/customer-site/	📄	22,723	270.80%
/dealer-site/cars/	📄	11,893	194.49%
/customer-site/contact-us/	📄	6,011	122.37%
/customer-site/contact-us/request-call-back/?altTemplate=altpagerequestcallback	📄	5,395	169.39%
/customer-site/mymotonovo/	📄	3,887	126.94%

Figure 8 Table Widget

In both version you will be able to show the table with 5 to 10 rows of data, and you will also be able to filter the data and link the report to a URL.

## 6. Pie Widget

Pie charts have always been a popular medium to visually display data such as percentages and as such are a useful if somewhat restricted edition to the GA Widgets.

With the Pie Widget you can choose a single metric and then apply one dimension, you can also have this shown as a traditional Pie Chart or the more unconventional doughnut chart which includes the total metric in the centre. So for example we could look at the number of visits to a site by source/medium as in the example in (fig. 9) which also shows the two versions side by side.

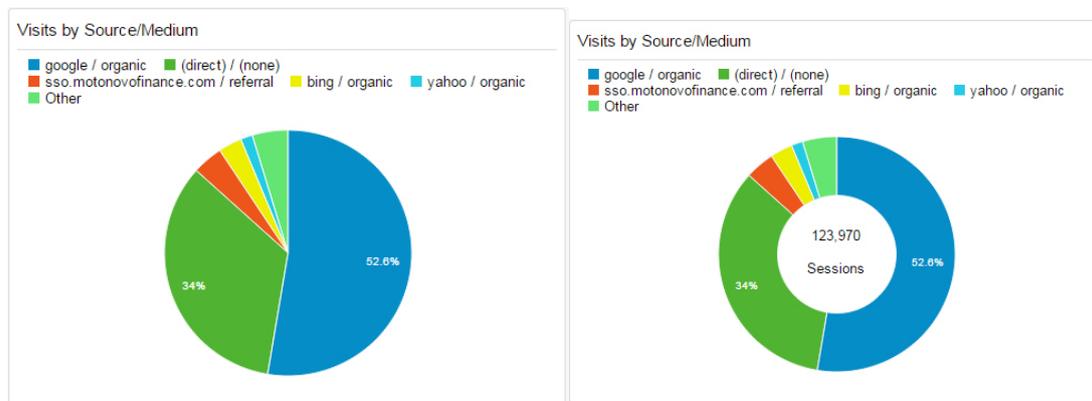


Figure 9 Pie Widgets (Traditional and Doughnut)

You can also decide on showing from 2 to 6 slices on the chart, and you can filter the data and add a link to it.

## 7. Bar Widget

The bar widget is probably the most powerful of all widgets, it offers a multitude of customizations options.

## Structured data

When you perform a Google search, the engine returns a number of links, along with a brief piece of text describing each one. Users can thereby determine whether or not they'd like to click on a link before actually doing so. So for example we could take a look at the number of sessions grouped by the dimension medium pivoted by a second dimension sub-continent. (see fig. 10).

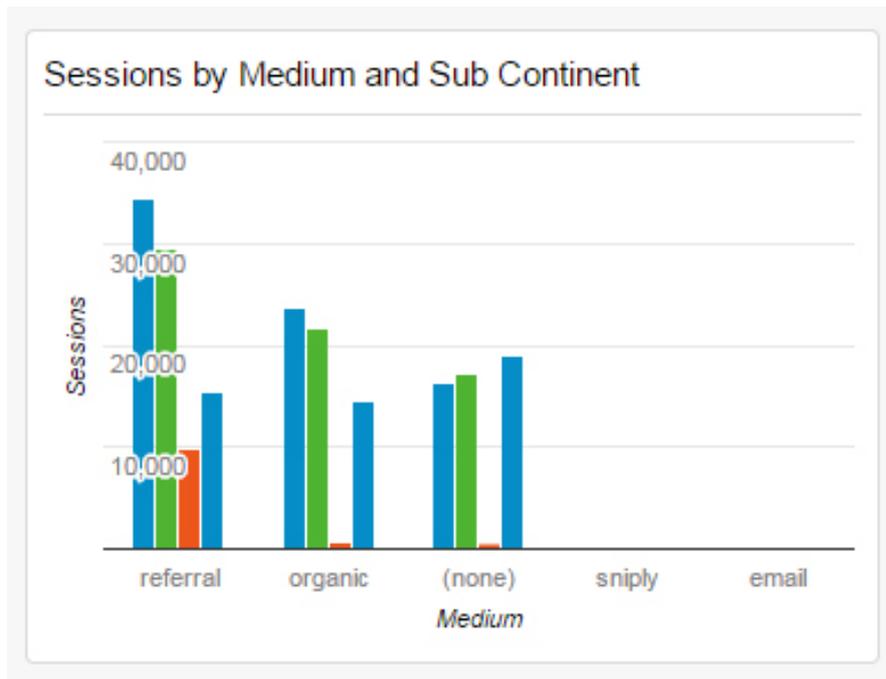


Figure 10 Bar Widget

In the above example we can see the number of sessions being driven by each medium and then in this instance how they vary between Northern Europe (Blue), Southern Europe (Green), Eastern Europe (Orange) and Other.

Additional customizations that you will be able to apply using this widget:

- Show up to x bars: you can decide to show from 2 to 9 bars in the chart.
- Use a horizontal version of this chart.
- Stack series elements such as pivoting, segmentation or date comparison: I personally think this creates a confusing chart, I prefer the style shown in the screenshot where the pivot is shown in different bars instead of stacking them up.
- Show values of the vertical axis.
- Show values of the horizontal axis.
- Show title of the vertical axis.
- Show title of the horizontal axis.
- Show up to x gridlines: you can either decide to show from 2 to 4 gridlines, not to show any, or to let Google Analytics decide (Auto).
- Filter this data: the data on the widget can be shown for any particular set of data, e.g. you can see the widget only for PPC traffic.
- Link to report or URL: you can link the chart to a specific report.

There is a lot more to Dashboards than we can cover in this lesson and if they are of interest we would recommend the following resources to learn more, we do hope that this has given you a flavour of how powerful these can be.

<https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1068216?hl=en>

<http://searchenginewatch.com/sew/how-to/2185593/google-analytics-dashboards-insights>

## Importing Google Analytics Dashboards

In this section we will take a look at how to import Google Analytics Dashboards from either the Google Analytics Gallery <https://www.google.com/analytics/gallery/> or from a third party resource such as ourselves.

1. Firstly login to the Analytics Profile that you wish to apply the Dashboards
2. From the Dashboards tab select + New Dashboard
3. From the screen as in (fig. 3) select 'Import from Gallery'
4. You will be linked directly into the Google Solutions Gallery as shown in (fig. 11)

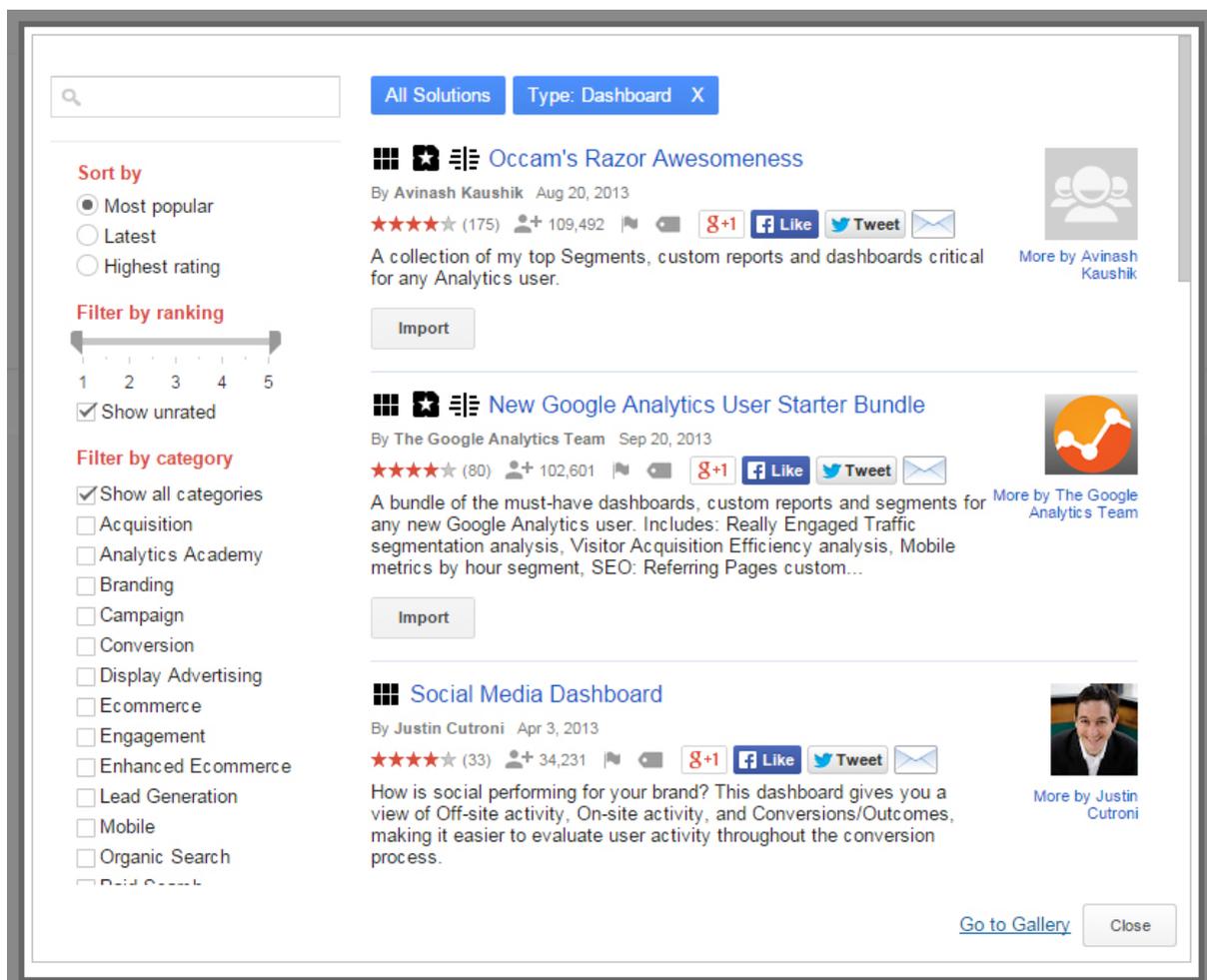


Figure 11 Google Analytics Solutions Gallery

5. Browse through the various categories until you find a dashboard that you like or covers what you are looking for and then click the Import button, depending on how many profiles you have in your account, it may ask which profile you want to apply the dashboard to.
6. It will then open the Dashboard in your account and show you results straight away.

### Importing from a third party

Most third party suppliers provide dashboards in the form of a link generally that has been shared from one of their own Dashboards so in this section we will look at how to export or share a dashboard and also how to import a dashboard that has been shared with you or you have found from a third party.

### Sharing a Dashboard

With the Dashboard you wish to share open in your own Analytics select the 'Share' option and then from the drop down menu select 'Share Template Link' as in (fig. 12)

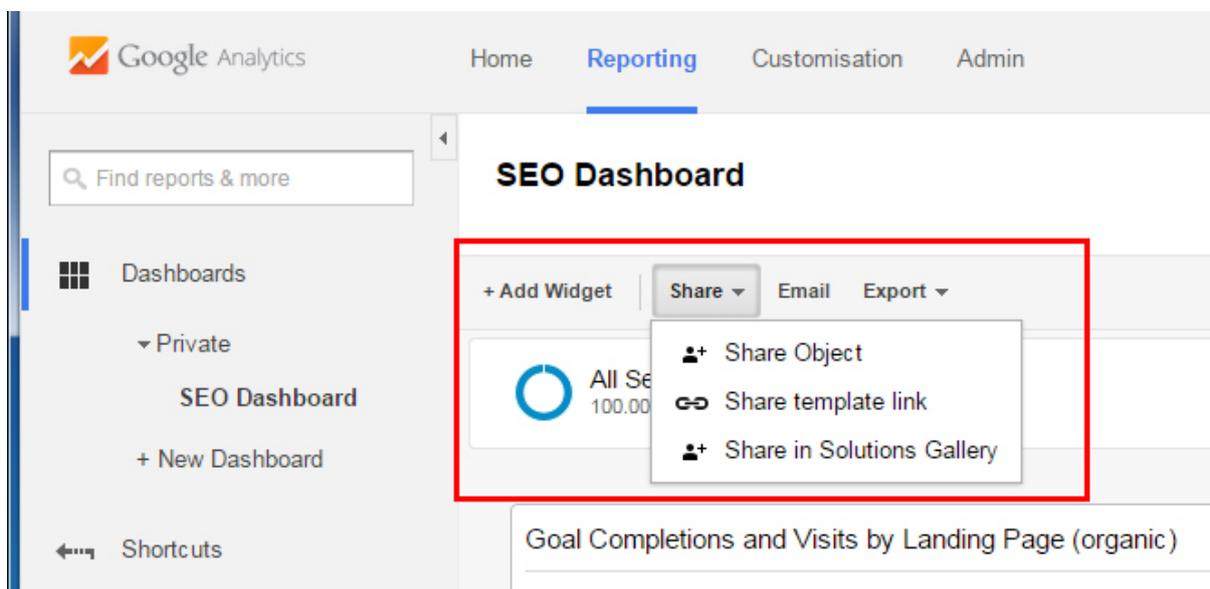


Figure 12 Sharing a Dashboard

You will see the following as shown in (fig. 13) copy and paste the link into the relevant document and forward it on to whoever you wish to share the Dashboard.

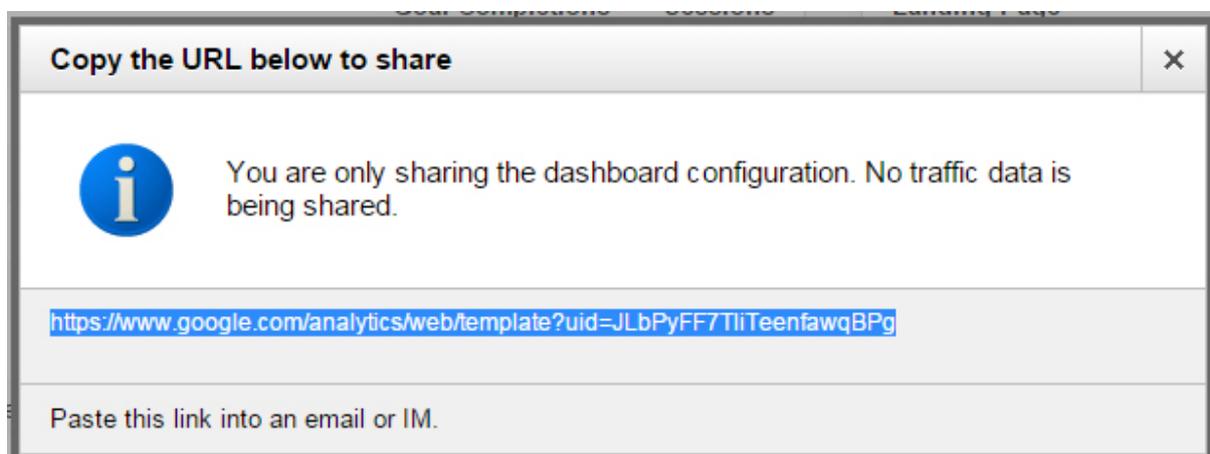


Figure 13 Copy and Paste Link

### Importing a Dashboard

Importing a shared Dashboard from a link couldn't be simpler:

1. Open your Google Analytics
2. Open another browser tab and past the shared link and hit enter
3. You will be presented with a screen as shown in (fig. 14)
4. Select the correct view/profile and hit the Create button, the new Dashboard will open in your Analytics with newly populated data from your statistics

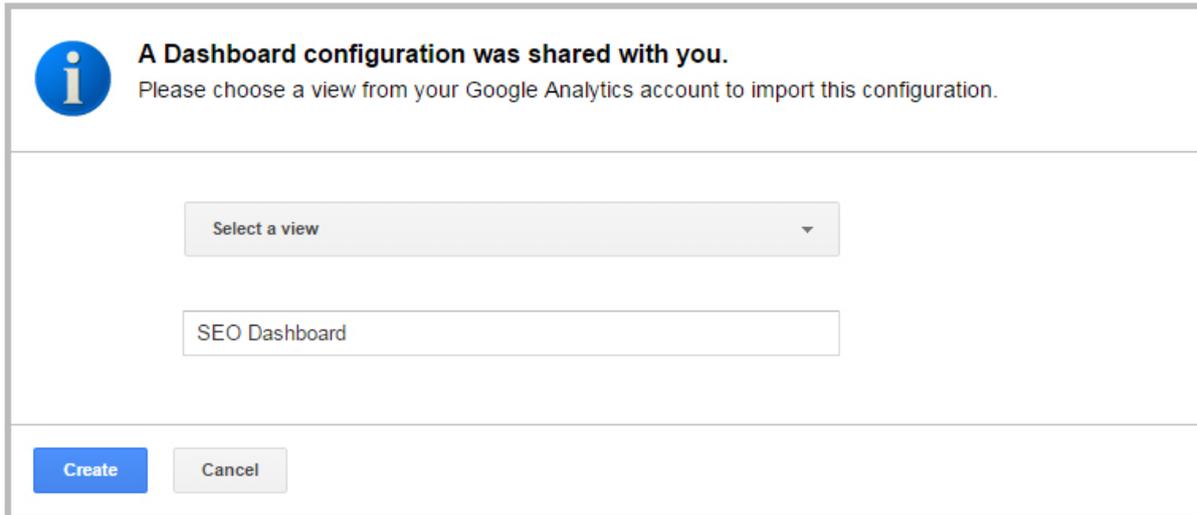


Figure 14 Shared Dashboard selection

## Conclusion

Now that we've gone through the basics of Dashboards I hope that you can begin to appreciate how powerful and simple these can be to use, maybe we have inspired you to learn a bit more. If you would like to implement a couple of Dashboards we use ourselves then please see the share links below, Enjoy!!

STL – SEO Dashboard

[https://www.google.com/analytics/web/template?uid=EN43jiiZTOKflrnP\\_v6k8A](https://www.google.com/analytics/web/template?uid=EN43jiiZTOKflrnP_v6k8A)

To get the best from this dashboard you will need to edit three of the widgets:

1. Top Non Brand Keywords (Visits & Convs.)
2. Organic Non Brand Visits (+ not provided)
3. Top SEO Landing Pages (Organic Non Brand Visits and Goals)

To do this click the small pencil icon in the header of the relevant widget, and edit the fields that have the words 'Your Brand Here' with your brand term, if you need to add more brand terms add another filter and copy the settings from the existing filter.

STL-Adwords Performance Dashboard

<https://www.google.com/analytics/web/template?uid=CE2zFIKVQRS9hQa4VOuvqQ>

Requires Adwords and Analytics accounts to be linked.

