

# Google Analytics 101 - Terminology

## **Sessions**

A session represents a series of hits for a single user with no interruptions longer than 30 minutes. GA sets the time frame (though you can adjust it), so anything your visitor does on your site within those 30 minutes will be counted in the same session.

## **Users (previously unique visitors)**

A user is a unique individual who accesses website one or more times. An individual user is defined by the presence of the `_ga` cookie in the browser. Because one user can access a website multiple times in within the reporting period, the user count is lower than the session count.

## **Pageviews**

Pageviews is the total number of pages viewed. Repeated views of a single page are counted.

## **Bounce Rate**

A bounce is a single-page visit, or more accurately a single-hit session. While bounce rate is a negative indicator for most types of landing pages, some level of bounce is always to be expected, especially if your website is more informational than transactional.

## **Direct traffic**

Traffic to your site arrives via the user typing in the URL, or using a bookmark, a link in document or pdf, a link in an email program, mobile social media apps, some URL shorteners or https-to-http links. This can be fixed using custom URL campaign tags, as shown below.

## **Google Analytics Campaign Tags**

### **Medium**

Medium is the most general data dimension related to traffic source attribution that Google Analytics records. Built in mediums include "organic" (unpaid search), "cpc" (cost per click, i.e. paid search), "referral" (referral), and "none" (direct traffic has a medium of "none"). You can add your own custom mediums (`utm_medium`), such as "email," "social," "display" or "print."

### **Source**

Source is more specific than medium. Source is the origin of a website visit or the way the visitor got to your site. Sources include "google" (the name of a search engine), "cnn.com" (name of referring site), and "direct" (users that type in a URL directly). You can add your own custom sources (`utm_source`), such as "linkedin.com," "2013AlumniList" or "NewsweekMagazine"

### **Campaigns**

This is a custom dimension that you set yourself (`utm_campaign`). Use broad campaign names that span multiple mediums and sources, such as "JulyNewsletter" or "201608AlumniEvent."