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Moving beyond Universal Analytics

Google Analytics vs. Piano Analytics –
choosing the right analytics provider for your business

DECISION MAKING GUIDE

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In a move that rocked their customer base, Google announced that Google Universal Analytics (UA) is scheduled to sunset in 2023.

Not only will UA stop processing any new data from July 2023, but the next generation of the platform, Google Analytics 4 (GA4), and Universal Analytics are not backwards compatible. This means that nothing from UA will transfer to GA4: no historical data, no repurposing of tags, no repurposing of the existing data model. It's a complete structural overhaul with no direct comparisons between the two reporting data sets. All UA data will be lost, and users will only be able to access previously processed data in their Universal Analytics property for **"six months."**

Businesses are faced with a choice; stay with Google but start from scratch, or use this as an opportunity to look for a **future-proof privacy-compliant** analytics provider. Those who rely on web data must move quickly to migrate their analytics framework to ensure the continuity of their data flows and minimize the impact on business operations, whether it is with Google or another provider.

This major overhaul and forced migration, coupled with privacy concerns across the globe, has many businesses looking to other solutions to replace GA. To help those tasked with making decisions about the future of their data, we've put together this decision-making guide to help evaluate alternatives to Google and demonstrate how choosing a solution that is powerful, accurate, compliant and flexible can elevate your data capabilities.

If you're considering leaving Google's walled garden to gain control over your data, this guide will help you understand how Piano Analytics stacks up against GA4 in terms to data quality, data flexibility, privacy compliance, user experience, and customer support.

Data quality

Data quality is the measure of how well-suited a data set is to serve a specific purpose. The quality of data that an organization leverages impacts their ability to gather insights, understand the health of their business, and drive informed decision-making.

The six elements of data quality

Compliance

Is the data being collected, processed, stored, and used in a manner that does not violate data privacy regulations?

Consistency

Is the data consistent across digital platforms?

Cleanliness

Is the dataset free of incorrect, corrupted, duplicate, or incomplete data?

Accuracy

How well does the data reflect reality?

Completeness

Is the data comprehensive?

Timeliness

Is the data available when you need it?

Data quality is a core principle in Piano Analytics – all of the tool components are seamlessly interconnected and always provide the same real-time and unsampled data.

With GA4, data quality is drastically compromised due to **data sampling** – the practice of analyzing a subset of traffic data, rather than all data, to estimate the overall results. This compromises critical business decisions as they are only based on estimates of the full picture.

Data quality comparison

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Compliance

Is the data being collected, processed, stored, and used in a manner that does not violate data privacy regulations?

GDPR & ePrivacy compliance with expert support and hands-on data protection officer

Major data privacy concerns, including legal action in multiple European countries

Consistency

Is the data consistent across digital platforms?

Centralized strategy with one unified data model, consistent data across the platform

Latency and data inconsistencies across different reports and views

Cleanliness

Is the dataset free of incorrect, corrupted, duplicate, or incomplete data?

Native processing tools such as bot exclusions, external traffic, custom processing rules

Black box processing rules, limited data exclusion, no data transformation features

Accuracy

How well does the data reflect reality?

No data sampling

Data sampling across nearly all reports

Custom metrics & measurements for a complete view of your audience with unbiased attribution

Potentially biased attribution with reporting tied to marketing campaign performance

Completeness

Is the data comprehensive?

Ability to enrich data with key third-party data sources

Limited custom metrics and measurements

Unlimited custom events

1,000+ custom properties

Custom measurement strategies

Timeliness

Is the data available when you need it?

Data access in real time across all views & interfaces

Data not fully complete before 4 hours, leaving only limited data from the last five to 30 minutes

All data available within 2 minutes

Data model flexibility

The strength of an organization’s data model is critical for measuring and understanding what matters most to their business needs.

To ensure continuity and accuracy of data across teams as initiatives change, organizations need a model that has the functionality to measure across all platforms and devices, supports custom metrics, and delivers a holistic view of user behavior. A rigid data model limits a company’s ability to measure custom events and KPIs, preventing businesses from exploring their data in depth and extracting unique user insights.

With Piano Analytics, our data model is designed to serve all teams with a unified view of user behavior while also supporting custom properties, events, and metrics – providing true flexibility in what you measure.

GA4’s data model has a wide range of drawbacks and specifically lacks customization, making it difficult for businesses to measure unique events and access granular reporting. It also has limited reporting features with only a few pre-built reports available for users which makes it harder for teams to access and share data.



Getting started

400+ out-of-box properties as well as advanced A/V and e-commerce datasets

Not available

Properties

Up to 1,000 custom properties

No customization

Metrics

Unlimited custom events and custom metrics (compared to GA4’s 125)

125 custom metrics and event-scoped custom dimensions

100 user-scoped custom dimensions

Data access

Easy-to-use data management interface, with classification (categories), control, (hiding/ showing properties) and definitions

Limited data access, sharing, and pre-built reports

Transparency

Easy data model management with ability to create custom processing and reprocessing rules to keep data clean and update site tagging without dev interference.

Black box processing rules

Privacy compliance

With the data privacy movement expanding rapidly across the globe, it's more important than ever to choose a GDPR-compliant analytics provider that's purpose-built to operate effectively in a privacy-centric environment.

Piano Analytics is a privacy-by-design solution that provides the features and functionality to measure user behavior across platforms and devices while maintaining the strictest privacy standards.

Google Analytics has been increasingly penalized for its controversial use of data and **was officially deemed illegal** to use at the start of 2022 by the Austrian, French, and Italian Data Protection Authorities.

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 Google Analytics

Data transparency

All Piano Analytics data is 100% owned by our customers, is processed transparently, is only collected for a specific purpose

Google data processing is not transparent and it is regularly under fire for controversial uses of data.

While Google has made some changes to make GA4 more privacy-centric, these quick updates are mostly misleading and don't address the core issues with their platform.

Data storage

Piano's data is stored in the EU to comply with both GDPR and ePrivacy regulations.

Google states on its **website** that its data is stored in multiple locations across the globe.

Cookie consent exemption

Piano is one of the few analytics solutions that has cookie consent exemption from the French CNIL. This allows tracking of approved website behavior in France without consent and is only granted to providers that maintain a high standard of privacy compliance and meet several collective conditions.

Google Analytics always requires consent to collect any data in France.

It has also been deemed illegal to use by the Data Protection Authorities in Austria, France, and Italy.

End-user rights and first-party opt-out management

Piano is fully transparent over its end-user rights in compliance with GDPR and offers 1st-party opt-out management.

Google is not transparent over end-user rights and doesn't offer first-party opt-out management.

User experience

To gain the most value from your analytics tool, it's essential that it is user-friendly and fully accessible to both data analysts and teams across the organization.

Piano Analytics was purpose-built to be easy to onboard and use for all teams, regardless of their level of analytics experience.

GA4's UX has been highly criticized by users, and is one of its biggest drawbacks. Users claim the interface is not intuitive and is difficult to use, and has received an overwhelming amount of backlash online. As well as the massive quantity of bugs, the new notions and reporting structure can be considered overwhelming.

With Piano, analytics are available to everyone

User interfaces

We have multiple interfaces for different user profiles within your business so you can truly provide the right analytics experience for each user – from checking KPIs to deep data mining.

Design

Our UX/design is in our platform DNA and a core value of our company. We deeply consider the UX of our analytics platform at every step of the way to ensure ease of use on every single page.

Specific insight

Piano provides business-specific insight modules including A/V, Subscription, Sales and eCommerce that enable multiple teams to not only leverage unified, quality customer data, but also share those insights easily across the organization.

Flexible interfaces

We provide the most open and flexible interface on the market which gives you full control of how you want to access or mine your data.

Customer support

Switching analytics solutions is no small feat so to make the most of your data, you might need or want to tap into technical resources.

Piano places a premium on service. That's why implementation, onboarding and 24/7 support are available to all Piano Analytics customers. And, if you need more help, our strategic services team offers access to hand-on expert assistance.

Despite being a 'Premium' offer, GA4 has limited in-product service and doesn't offer any kind of bespoke expert accompaniment.

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 Google Analytics

Access	24/7 implementation, onboarding and technical support	Limited in-product live chat and email support within specific working hours
Consultation	Account management, strategic and privacy expertise	Not available
Troubleshooting	Access to senior professionals who can answer questions and address any issues any time of day from our in-house support network.	Not available
Insights	Easy-to-use data management interface, with classification (categories), control (hiding/showing properties) and definitions	Not available
Best practices	Strategic Services from Piano's team of industry experts, covering all business' conversion and monetization needs, from foundational strategy, to product launch, to ongoing optimization.	Not available

It's time to make the move

With the sunset of Google UA and forced migration off the platform, businesses need to act fast to minimize any disruption to their data flows and the continuity of business operations.

With Piano, you're choosing an advanced analytics solution used by thousands of leading digital businesses to make data their competitive advantage. Powerful, accurate, compliant, and flexible, Piano unifies all your data into one seamless analytics powerhouse.

There has never been a more opportune time to migrate to an analytics solution that is a better fit for your business.

**Discover how Piano Analytics can help drive your business.
Request a **free demo** and transcend the restrictions limitations
you face with other providers.**