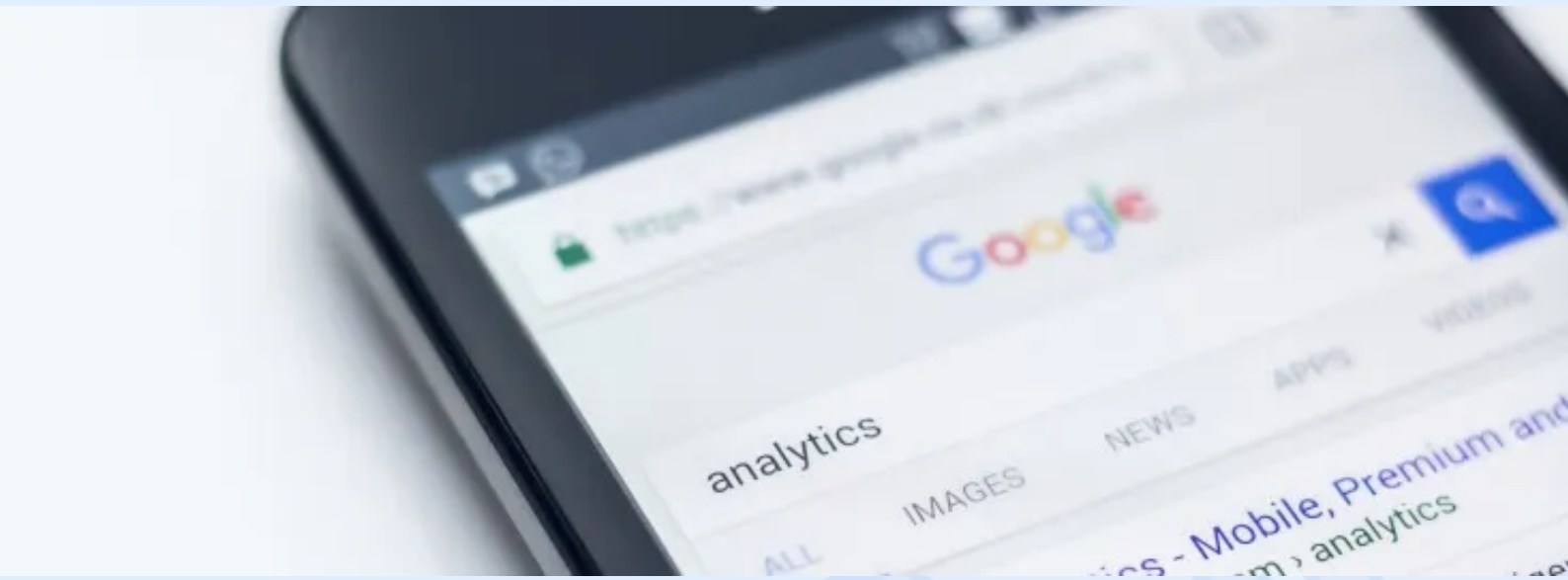

It may come as a surprise, but Google Analytics reports only capture a small portion of your actual statistics. It's not that you're doing anything wrong; it's just that even Google cannot track every single Internet user. While some issues with Google Analytics can be fixed, others currently have no viable solutions.

Today, we'll discuss the latter category. Although you can't fix these problems, it's important to be aware of them to make informed judgments based on your reports.

No Cookies

One issue you can't fix is the absence of cookies. Google Analytics cannot track users who have disabled cookies. No cookies mean no data – it's that simple. Cookies are crucial because they tag users and record information about their activity on your website over multiple visits. There are several reasons why cookies can cause problems:

- The user’s firewall deletes or blocks cookies
- The user deletes them manually
- The user’s browser doesn’t accept cookies
- The user is browsing in incognito or private mode
- The user is using a VPN or proxy that interferes with cookie storage
- The user has installed browser extensions that block cookies
- The website has technical issues preventing cookie deployment
- The user's device settings are configured to reject cookies
- Changes in data privacy regulations leading to stricter cookie consent requirements

FAQ: The user enabled cookies, but Google Analytics still can't track any data. Why is this?

There may be two reasons:

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1. **Disabled JavaScript:** Google Analytics can't track users whose browser is unable to load the JavaScript tags placed in the page's code.
2. **Google hasn't processed the data yet:** GA is 6-24 hours behind based on the size of your website, so be patient and check the report later. To ensure that your data is being collected, jump to Real Time Mode, where information will appear within 15 minutes.

Session Timeout

Another issue caused by cookies is session timeout. There are two types of cookies used by GA:

- **Permanent cookies:** These cookies are placed on the device during the first visit and remain there until they expire or are deleted.
- **Session cookies:** These cookies are deposited on each visit.

But what happens if a user browses the website, then leaves the computer for a 30-minute break, and returns to continue browsing? Unfortunately, GA will consider this a brand new session, as it sends a new session cookie after 30 minutes of inactivity.

Different or Shared Devices

Different Devices

Imagine this situation: a man is stuck in traffic and starts searching for new headphones on his smartphone. When he comes home, he accesses the page he bookmarked from his computer and buys the headphones. In a perfect world, this should be tracked as one visitor who switched devices. In reality, these are counted as two unique, unrelated visits.

Shared Devices

There is also the reverse situation when two or more people use a shared device. For example, after the man buys the headphones, his wife uses the computer to visit the same website for the first time, searching for a hair dryer. Ideally, this should be counted as two separate visits, but since the cookie is tied to the device, Google Analytics will consider the two visits as coming from the same user.

Conclusion

You might wonder, "What's the point of using Google Analytics if the information is not correct?" Keep your head up: Google Analytics compensates for the inaccuracy by collecting huge volumes of data, making the sampling statistically representative and providing you with a clear picture of visitors and buyers.

Understanding the limitations and reasons behind some of the illogical data can help you see these reports in a new light. We'd also like to help you get to the root of your analytics issues. Feel free to get in touch with our app creators if you need assistance or have any questions.

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