



20 Things to Keep in Mind While Creating a Google Analytics 4 Property

A Dual-Deploy Checklist

Google's recommendation is that companies create a new Google Analytics 4 (GA4) property alongside their existing analytics property (a process often referred to as dual deploying or dual tagging) in order to start gathering data, as well as benefit from the latest innovations GA4 has to offer, sooner rather than later.

Dual-deploy - GA360 and GA4 implemented alongside leveraging mostly the same business requirements.

28 million businesses are currently running Google Analytics and for many of them, this recommendation is causing them to ask questions such as "What is dual-deploy?", "How difficult will it be? Where do I start?" and "What do I look for?"

28 million businesses are currently running Google Analytics.

There are a lot of things to keep in mind.

With this checklist, Napkyn shares 20 lessons we learned while drafting a measurement plan for our first dual-deployments of GA360 and GA4. We had to create a NEW measurement strategy that was covering GA360 implementation along with GA4 implementation for a website and an app whose functionality was very closely aligned.

Measurement Plan - Marketing and UX central source of business requirements and analytical implementation.

Use this CHECKLIST when you go over your strategic measurement planning session to avoid some inconsistencies between the platforms' and KPI tracking. It will help you to stay focused and provide a balanced measurement strategy between two platforms, two types of Google Analytics properties, and a shared Data Layer.

GA360 and GA4 dual-deploy Checklist

Start with KPI requirements

- To ensure congruence between GA360 and GA4 tracking, start by defining your main KPIs. What metrics and dimensions (in general) will help you track them? Create separate columns for metrics and dimensions for both property types. This will help to ensure you are covering the most important areas of interest for both properties.

Consistency is a key (where possible)

- Use the same names for event actions and custom dimensions/parameters where possible, for both property types and platforms.
- Use the same names for user flow steps, where possible.

GA360 eventing structure to GA4 event/parameters/user properties structure

- Create two separate tabs in your file for GA360 measurement and GA4 measurement. In the future, you will need only GA4 governance documentation and it will be ready for you to use.
- Keep in mind that some events in GA4 have required names which do not necessarily work with GA360 like event category, action, label structure. For example, a 'login' event is a part of enhanced measurement in GA4. However, this event is tracking only successful logins. In GA360, if you want to separate successful logins from erroneous logins, the eventing structure has to be adjusted.

Please find more enhanced measurement events for GA4 described in the [Google help documentation](#) and ensure you are adhering to them in your plan.

- Create a separate tab in your document for 'User Properties'. This is something that is not available in GA360 because those user properties (i.e. UserID) are part of the custom dimension list. Again, this will be a helpful separation when GA360 is sunsetted.
- Remember the GA4 data model is more flexible and additional tracking may be added. Don't limit yourself not only in actual tracking, but also in KPIs. For example, new predictive metrics such as churn or LTV can be added to the list of your KPIs or questions such as "how long on average it took a user to complete the form" can be answered with GA4.
- Keep all events lowercase and use underscore to connect the words in the event name. For example, instead of Internal click, use internal_click as the event name. This is a requirement for GA4 event names where spaces between words are not allowed.
- Keep in mind "goals in GA360 vs conversion in GA4 tracking". You often need an event label available to create a particular goal in GA360, while in GA4 it is more flexible. A conversion in GA4 can be created from the event and a parameter or set of parameters which makes it easier to come up with the structure of the events. This difference sometimes creates a question of how to name the event so it's consistent between the property types - but without unnecessary tracking in both.

- Use the '=LEN()' formula to keep track of the 40 [character limit](#) for the event and parameter names in GA4.
- Try to stay within 25 parameters in a single event tag due to the limit in GA4. However, if you need to track more, they will be available in BigQuery extract.
- It's good practice to have a named event label (and a good way to help your implementation team), i.e., instead of putting the exact values of the event label you want to fire, for example, "yes" or "no", use a general description of the values, for example, [action_option], i.e. "yes", "no". This helps to keep consistency between two data models. Make sure the description in the bracket means something, because it can be used as a parameter name in GA4.
- If you have any ecommerce tracking, check [this post](#) to familiarize yourself on how to leverage GA360 Data Layer for GA4 ecommerce implementation. It seems like Product list tracking will require your full attention.

App vs Web

- Specifically, for app implementation, there is a parameter required with each event. Check the following example of app code:

```
"cordova.plugin.firebase.analytics.logEvent("login", {type_of_login: "[type_of_login]"});"
```

In this example, you have to add a type_of_login parameter, if you don't, your compiler will throw an error. However, there are events without associated parameters. We recommend using a common custom dimension/parameter such as page_type, for example. We collect page_type with each hit, so it's a safe parameter to add.

```
cordova.plugin.firebase.analytics.logEvent("login", {page_type: "[page_type]"});
```

- Note that enhanced measurement (or automatically collected events) is available for [web only](#), so ensure that app tracking has its counterparts.
- Create a column in the sheet where you describe each event and parameter, if that functionality relates to the app. This will help the implementation team only implement necessary code to a particular platform, and provides an overview of the implementation.

General notes

- GA4 is still in development, so if something is not working, it may not be your fault. Please check the [Google support documentation](#) for the latest GA4 news.
- Keep in mind differences in the properties settings have to be planned in advance.
- Keep in mind that when it comes to reports, it's not a good idea to compare apples and oranges due to different data models.
- Keep in mind that not all GMP stack items are connected to GA4 yet.

Added Complexities to Keep in Mind

Shared Data Layer between GA360 and GA4 properties

Why do we recommend leveraging one Data Layer for two types of data models? There is a simple answer. Two Data Layers will take more time to implement as well as manage the updates. If you miss something in one and add to the other, your data will be "corrupted". In addition, currently you can leverage the GA360 Data Layer structure for GA4, but you can't reuse the GA4 Data Layer for GA360 implementation due to the data model that GA4 Data Layer was based on. This leaves you with a pretty clear choice: reuse the GA360 Data Layer to implement GA4 or, when you start dual-deployment from scratch, base your GA4 implementation on the GA360 Data Layer.

But enough about the Data Layer. If you are curious to read more about it, check out our blog post, [wtf is a Data Layer](#)

Multiple Platforms Involved: Web and App

Most of the functionality was shared between the platforms which helped with aligning the measurement. However, some functionality was missing from the app and had to be mentioned in the plan. In addition, there are implementation differences among the platforms that needed to be addressed. For example, app code implementation requires a parameter with each event while website code doesn't.

GA360 and GA4 property differences

These types of GA properties are not only based on different data models but also have different property settings, eventing structure, and limits (i.e., Parameter's character limits and parameter limit).

All of these we had to keep in mind while creating a consistent and actionable measurement plan.

In Conclusion

Even though this checklist may not be totally complete, and eventually Google will release more items that have to be taken into consideration, it will get you started on creating beautiful, consistent measurement strategies for both GA360 and GA4 properties, and as a bonus - your implementation team will love you!

Our GA4 Services

Napkyn offers a wide range of Google Analytics 4 services to assist brands and agencies both brands understand and address GA4 challenges including:

- Deciding when the right time is to dual deploy
- Determining what changes need to be made to your current measurement setup
- Creating a clear set of instructions for translating your current measurement framework
- Building the new framework
- Deploying the new GA4 property

[Contact Napkyn](#) for a no charge 1-hour Q&A with a GA4 Expert.

About Napkyn

Napkyn is a digital analytics and data engineering company with more than a decade of experience working with data-driven enterprise marketing and technology leaders of Fortune 1000 and hyper-growth organizations. They select and retain Napkyn for expertise in Data Enablement, Data Quality and Data Analysis developed and delivered across a wide range of industries - Financial Services, Utilities/Energy, Healthcare, Retail/eCommerce, Automotive. Napkyn is a Google Premier Solution Partner for Google Marketing Platform and a Certified Google Cloud Service Partner. Napkyn's vision is a world where marketers are ethically collecting, integrating, managing and putting into action high quality data to produce outsized benefits for customers, employees, and their community. You can learn more about Napkyn Analytics at napkyn.com or by following Napkyn on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#)

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