



What are the limitations of Google Analytics 4?

We explore the limitations of GA4 and show you the best ways to overcome them.





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Who are we?

Ruler Analytics is a multi-touch attribution and marketing mix modelling product for forms, phone calls and live chat, evidencing every step a visitor makes in their journey and matching revenue back to the source.

Ruler 'closes the loop' between leads and revenue by linking your CRM, analytics tools and other sales and marketing products. It enables organisations to attribute revenue to their marketing activity and understand the steps customers make in the decision making process.

Our platform provides a single point of truth to identify which campaigns are driving revenue, allowing organisations to make meaningful decisions to optimise marketing spend. With 1,000+ integrations with the world's leading applications, Ruler Analytics can sync data back to Google Analytics, your CRM or paid media solutions to give insight where you need it most.

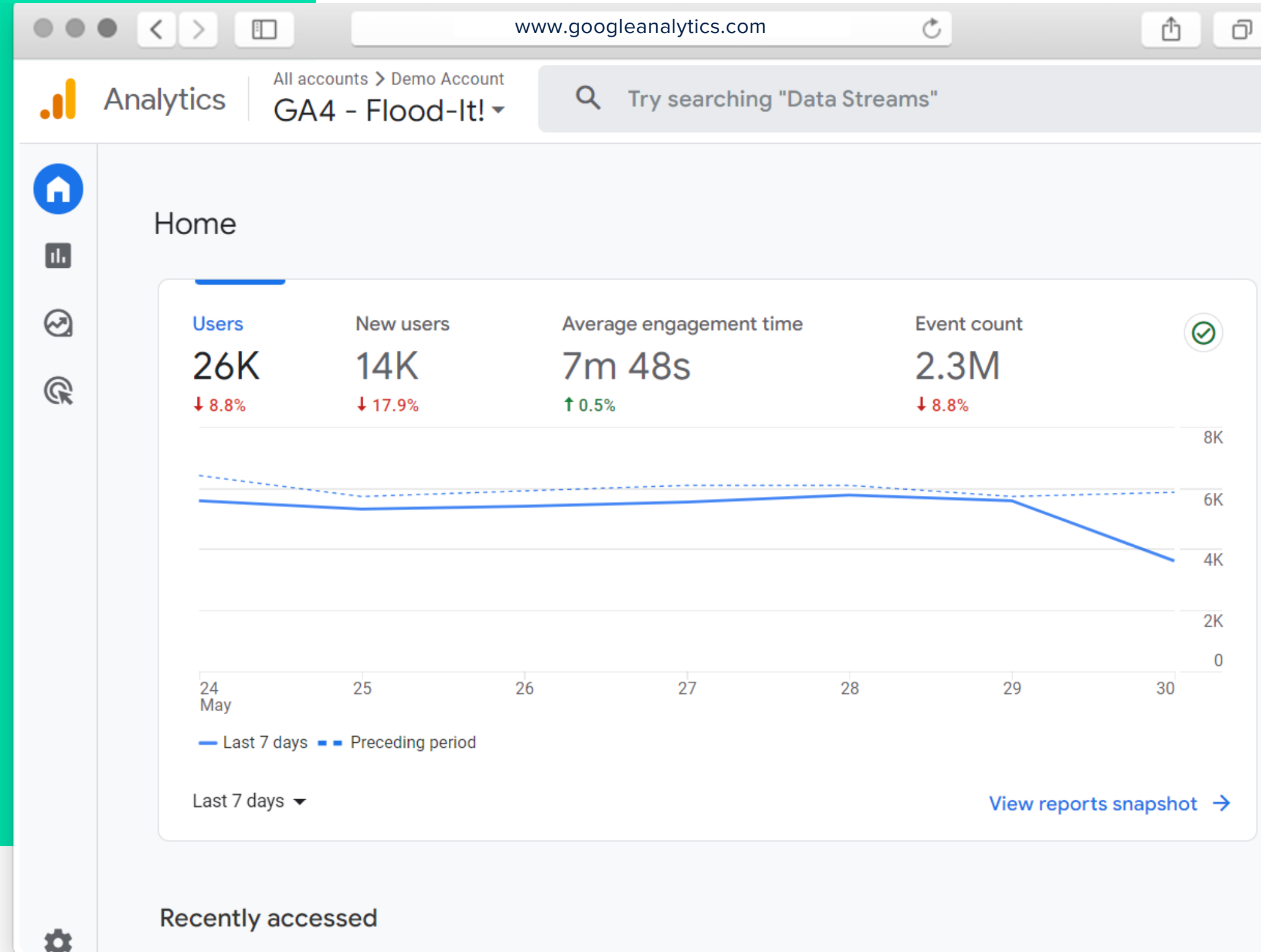




What are the limitations of Google Analytics 4?

Google Analytics has been a key tool for marketers for many years – our data shows that 90% of marketers use Google Analytics as their primary analytics tool. Be that as it may, the discontinuation of UA and the transition to GA4 has led to some uncertainty about the future of Google Analytics.

While some marketers are excited to make the leap to GA4, others are slightly more hesitant. GA4 offers several advantages over UA, including privacy-focused data collection, more insights into user behaviour, and greater flexibility and scalability. But, there are a few areas where it could be improved, and that's exactly that's what we're going to focus on.





Increased reliance on sampled data and machine learning

Google Analytics 4 has increased its reliance on sampled data and machine learning to improve the efficiency of the platform.

The move was made to make up for the loss of data that will occur once Google phases out third-party cookies.

While data sampling and machine learning aim to speed up and improve the accuracy of GA4, they are not without their risks.

Data sampling and machine learning are estimates, which can lead to biased and incorrect conclusions about the performance of your marketing campaigns.

Google Analytics 4 reports on users as a whole

Google Analytics provides you with aggregated visitor data. For example, the number of visitors to your website, the pages they visit, and the time they spend on your website.

GA4 can't track any personally identifiable information on website users. You can't break down your traffic by visitor level and track data such as names, email addresses, or phone numbers.

Without this data in GA4, it's hard to identify and track the marketing sources that are sending quality leads and deals into your pipeline. As a result, the link between marketing and revenue is effectively broken.



The removal of attribution models in Google Analytics 4

Previously, GA4 offered a variety of attribution models, including first-click, linear, time decay, and position-based. However, Google has decided to sunset all these models except for last-click and data-driven attribution.

Google says that these attribution models are no longer accurate or flexible enough to track the complex buying journeys of today's consumers.

Changes to the attribution models in GA4 have generated mixed reactions from users. Some users are optimistic about the update, while others are concerned about the potential loss of control over how they assign credit to various traffic sources.

Data collection and configuration limits

The free version of Google Analytics 4 has certain limitations regarding data collection for event parameters and user properties, which you need to be aware of.

In GA4, there's a maximum limit of 50 custom metrics and dimensions per property and a limitation of 30 conversions per property.

This isn't much of a problem if you only need to track a few key metrics and conversions. But if you exceed this threshold, you're likely missing a big chunk of your performance data.



Data in Google Analytics 4 isn't fully GDPR compliant

As of March 2023, Google Analytics 4 has been banned in several EU countries, including, Austria, France, Italy, Netherlands and Denmark.

These countries have banned GA4 because they believe that the way that GA4 collects and transfers data violates their data protection laws.

One standout violation is that GA4 transfers data to the United States. The US isn't considered an adequate data protection country under the laws of these EU countries. There's a risk that the data could be accessed by government agencies without the user's consent.

No dedicated support for Google Analytics 4 users

Google Analytics offers several resources, including documentation, tutorials, and forums, to help users get started and troubleshoot problems.

However, Google doesn't offer dedicated user support for GA4. So if you have a specific problem, you'll have to find a solution on your own using Google's documentation.

Relying solely on Google's documentation can be challenging as you're left to navigate through a vast amount of information and determine what is outdated, irrelevant, or not applicable to your specific situation.

How to navigate and overcome the limitations in Google Analytics 4

While these obstacles are mostly outside of your control, there are a few things you can do to minimise their impact.

01

Link Google Analytics 4 with BigQuery

To overcome the challenge of data sampling, you can link GA4 with BigQuery. If you're unfamiliar with BigQuery, it's a Google Cloud Platform service that allows you to store and analyse large amounts of data to generate more actionable insights.

02

Upgrade to the paid version of GA4

Google Analytics 360 offers more advanced features and higher data processing limits compared to the standard version of GA4. For example, data retention is increased from 14 to 50 months and you're allowed up to 50 conversions per property in GA 360.

03

Join and participate in GA4 communities

There are a few things you can do to solve the problem of no dedicated support from Google Analytics. You can join online communities on Reddit and LinkedIn, watch courses on YouTube or attend workshops online.

04

Consider alternative & complimentary tools

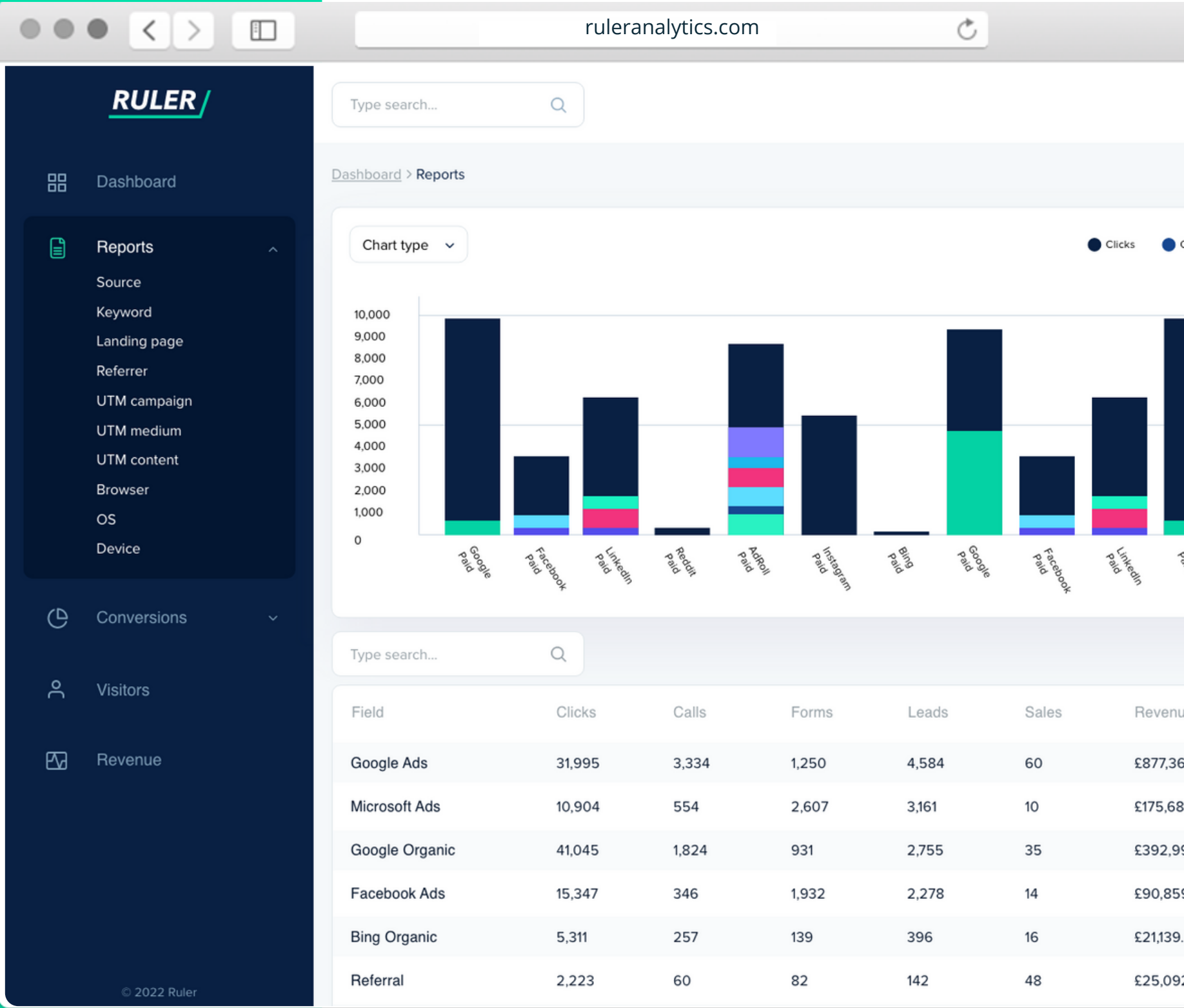
There are several website analytics tools (free and paid) that are 100% GDPR-compliant and offer a variety of features that can help you track your website traffic and marketing campaigns in the countries that have banned GA4.

What is Ruler and how can it help?

Ruler is a holistic marketing measurement platform that helps businesses close the loop between marketing and revenue.

It does this by tracking all touchpoints between a customer and a business, including website visits, phone calls and form interactions.

This data is then used to create reports that show businesses which marketing sources are most effective at driving leads, opps and revenue. The reports in Ruler use different attribution models to assign credit to each marketing channel for conversions. Let's take a closer look at the benefits of Ruler.





Tracks anonymous visitors over multiple touchpoints

With GA4's inability to track visitors individually, the link between your marketing and sales efforts is effectively broken. With Ruler, you can gain visibility over your website visitors and marketing touchpoints.

Ruler allows you to track the path a customer takes from the first time they interact with your brand to the point where they make a purchase.

It captures each marketing touchpoint for every new and existing lead and sends the data to your CRM, allowing you to keep track of your marketing effectiveness at every stage of the pipeline.

When a lead closes on a deal, the revenue is passed back to Ruler Analytics, allowing you to attribute revenue across multiple marketing touchpoints.



Anonymous visitors come to your website. GA4 aggregates the data.

A user converts via web form. GA4 can only track online conversions, not offline events.

GA4 can't track PII data (e.g. names, emails), so the link between marketing and sales is lost.



RULER





Attributes revenue using various attribution models

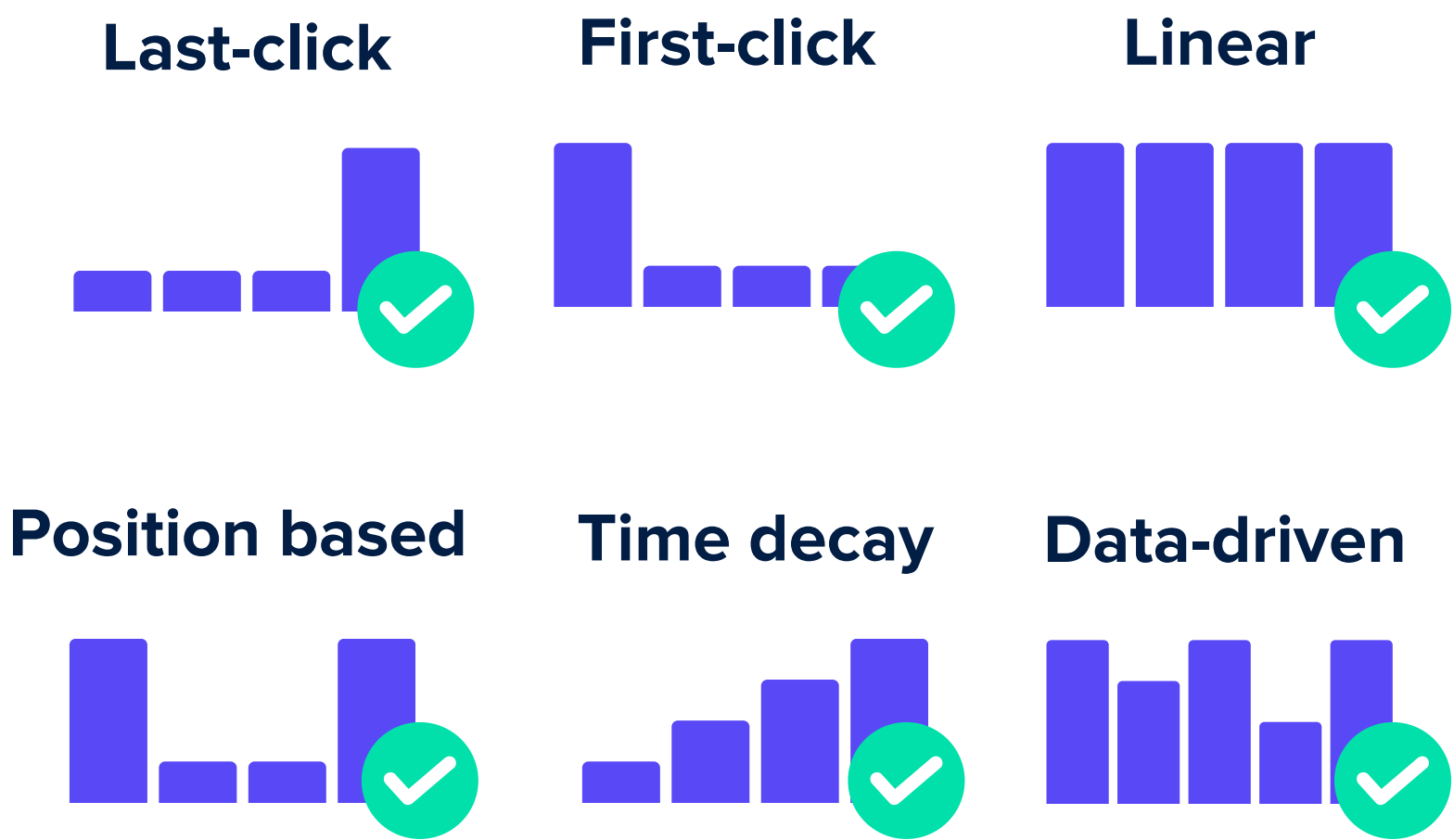
Google's decision to sunset most of the rule-based attribution models in GA4 has left marketers with fewer options to attribute conversions and revenue.

Ruler has all the rule-based attribution models previously available in GA4. So you have complete control over how you attribute conversions and revenue to your marketing.

Similar to GA4, Ruler also uses data-driven attribution to measure the impact of marketing channels on conversions. Data-driven attribution is a machine learning model that uses historical data to determine how much credit each marketing channel deserves for a conversion.

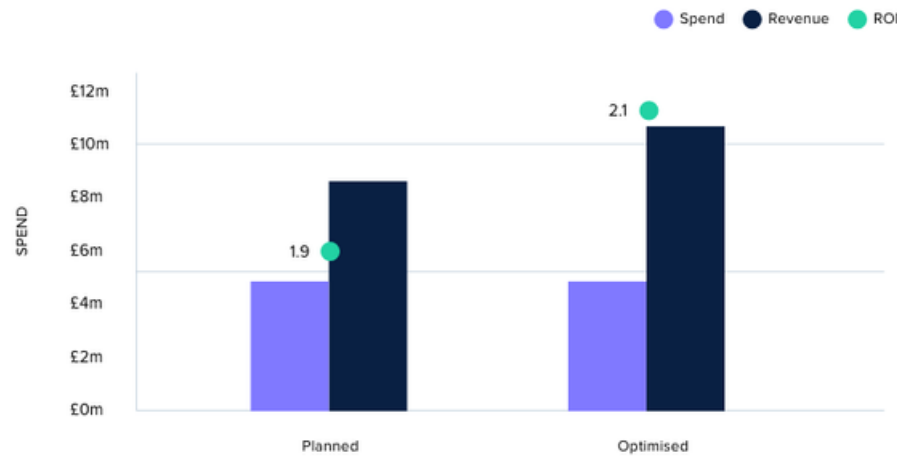
Unlike last-click attribution, which only gives credit to the last channel a user interacts with, data-driven attribution looks at the entire customer journey and assigns credit to each channel based on its influence.

Attribution models in Ruler Analytics

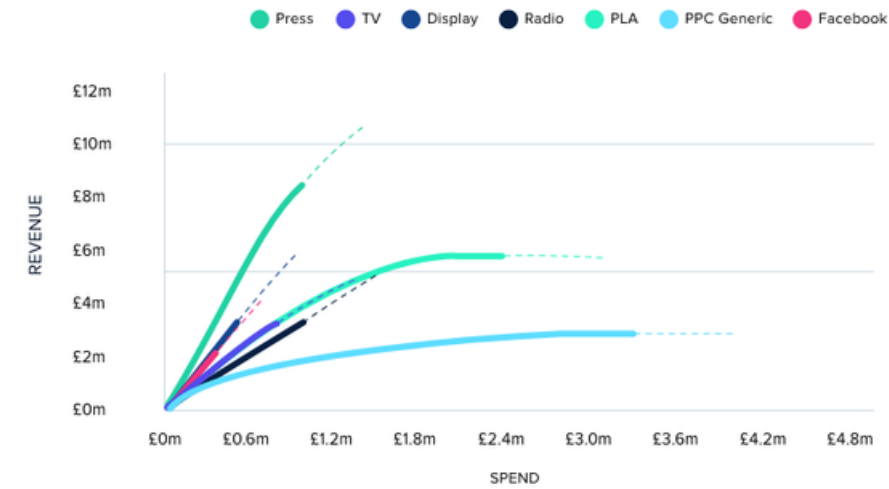




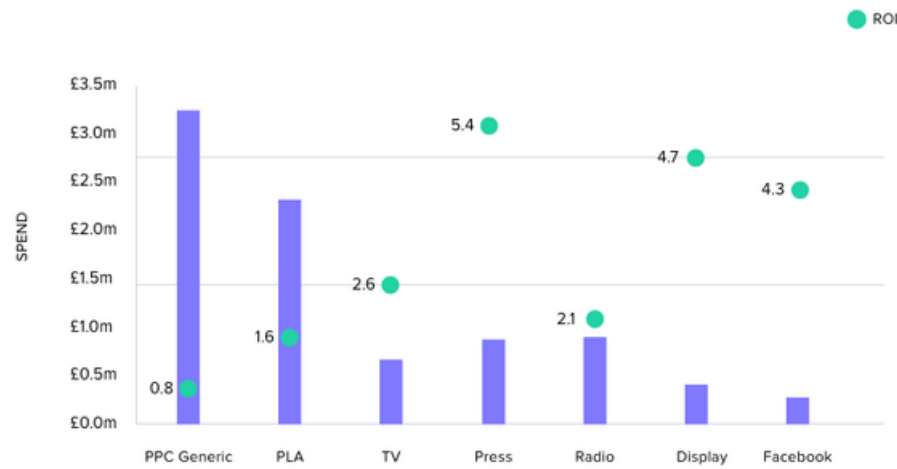
Predicted upside



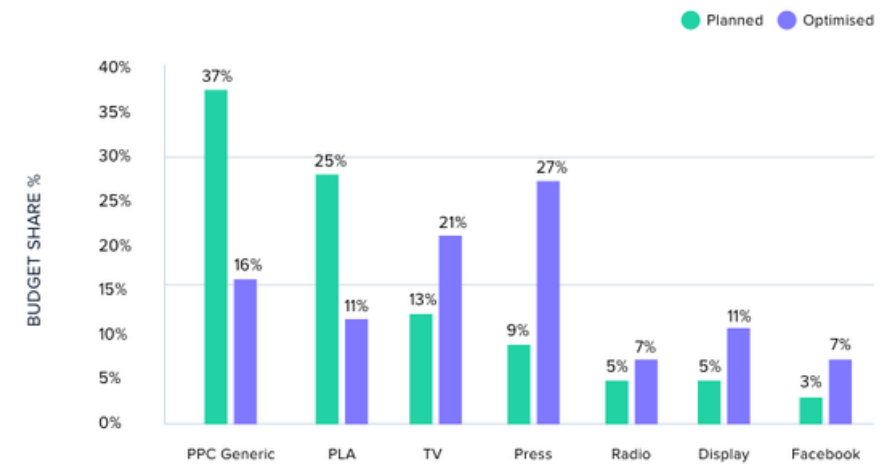
Diminishing returns



Return on investment



Budget optimiser



Marketing mix modelling for invisible touchpoints and offline media

Tracking the click paths of your website visitors, leads, and customers can provide valuable insights into how your marketing is performing and help you make adjustments to improve your results.

But what happens when someone sees your ad, doesn't click, but later converts? It's difficult to connect these interactions to revenue using traditional attribution. Also, with the launch of Apple's iOS 14.5 update and Google's "cookie phaseout", marketers are finding it increasingly challenging to track user journeys across different platforms and touchpoints.

This is where marketing mix modeling steps in. Alongside its attribution, Ruler also comes equipped with marketing mix modeling (MMM). Ruler's MMM uses statistical modeling to consider clicks, impressions and offline advertising, such as ad views, TV, and radio.

By combining Ruler's attribution and MMM, you can get a more accurate picture of the impact of individual marketing efforts on conversions and ROI.



Benefits of Ruler

After integrating Ruler into your current tech stack, you can enjoy the following key benefits:



Effective measurement post iOS 14.5

Ruler provides a more comprehensive view of marketing effectiveness. It assists marketers struggling with the impact of iOS 14.5 on their digital advertising campaigns.



Trusted insights for optimal budget allocation

Using diminishing return curves, Ruler can model your ROI over time and project how much headroom is left in your ad channels, allowing you to put your budget where it has the most impact.



Data to enhance targeting & optimisations

Ruler can model visitors that are close to conversion or have been qualified. You can send this data to your ad accounts as conversions to increase signals for algorithmic bidding and targeting.



Opportunity to integrate with over 1000+ platforms

Ruler integrates with almost any tool, allowing you to seamlessly pass marketing source, conversion and revenue data to your favourite tools without the legwork.



How Optionis use data from Ruler to prove ROI

Optionis Group provides accountancy, tax and umbrella employment solutions to contractors and small businesses across multiple brands.

We spoke to Chris Shepherd, Ecommerce Manager, who manages a wide range of digital channels to deliver campaigns, with leads pulling into his CRM.

Chris said, “A high proportion of our leads like to engage with us through telephone numbers. They prefer to speak to a human rather than communicate and transact digitally.”

This posed a challenge as the team couldn’t prove which campaigns were driving offline leads for the business. And even more so, they couldn’t prove which of those leads went on to convert into to a sale.

With Ruler’s marketing attribution solution in place, Chris was able to evidence how the team had exceeded targets including the number of leads generated, call volume, paid and direct traffic volume and brand awareness mentions via referral sites and social channels.

Chris continued, “Ruler’s tracking allows us to monitor if campaigns are driving sufficient call volumes and help better understand which sources have the strongest conversion metrics for both conversion to lead and conversion to sale.”

“We’ve also identified areas where we can focus our efforts. For example, Ruler’s data highlighted inefficient spend in a campaign, resulting in our cost per lead coming in over budget. With access to this data we were quickly able to realign messaging and improve conversion rates across all channels.”



Could Ruler help with your GA4 limitations?

Google Analytics is a powerful tool that can provide valuable insights into your website traffic and marketing channels, but it can't do it all.

By leveraging a marketing attribution tool like Ruler alongside Google Analytics, you can paint a more accurate picture of the customer journey and attribute conversions and revenue across various channels and touchpoints with more confidence.

Want to learn more about Ruler? Book a demo, and we'll show you how Ruler can work with Google Analytics to generate better insights about your marketing effectiveness.

[Book a demo](#)

Want to find out more?

Speak to our Sales team to find out how we can best support your marketing measurement

[Speak to Sales](#)