Most plan to tough out the switch to Google Analytics 4

Kicking and screaming it is. Despite grumbling about Google Analytics 4, the vast majority of marketers tell us they plan to make the switch anyway, even if they aren’t very excited to.

What we found. About 70% of the 250 marketers we polled said they planned to switch and will handle the migration internally. Another 14% of respondents said they planned to switch but would hire outside consultants to help them get set up with GA4. Only 12% said they planned to explore other analytics platforms to use instead of GA4. The remaining 4% cited “other” scenarios, such as having already installed GA4 or that they use a different tool to handle their analytics now.

Why this is happening. Google this month said it plans to

sunset Universal Analytics, the current version of GA, in July 2023. The company also said users would not be able to port over data from the older version to the new GA4. That news both stung users and gave them a reason to migrate sooner than later so they will have at least some historical data in the new platform.

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Why we care (and why we're not surprised). On one hand, Google has never been shy about retiring platforms, or making platform changes, despite user outcry. But the pushback on Google's decision here highlights the ubiquity of Google Analytics and its power as a free tool. If there were equivalent free alternatives then more people would be using them. While making to switch to something like Adobe Analytics could give users more control over their data, that comes with a price that may be too steep for some organizations.

It's notable, though, that 14% said they plan to hire outside help. That shows how intricate some GA instances are today. That must seem more daunting to an organization when the platform you are migrating to is confusing and complicated, as marketers have complained about GA4.

The bright side. Analytics expert Charles Farina this week took the glass-half-full approach, highlighting 10 features in GA 4 that he's looking forward to in a long Twitter thread. These include audience-based conversion tracking, time between interactions data, custom and trended funnels, improved event segments and massive improvements in debugging.

"At first look, Google Analytics 4 seems drastically different and that change can scare people off," wrote Colleen Harris, a Google Analytics expert who runs our SMX Master Class on GA4,

wrote for Search Engine Land around the time GA4 was first announced. “The good news is, as digital marketers, we’re all in the same boat of learning a whole new system. We also have time to learn this new tool.”

It’s true. We have 16 months.

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