

The Google Analytics 4 user interface is designed with four distinct areas for analyzing data:

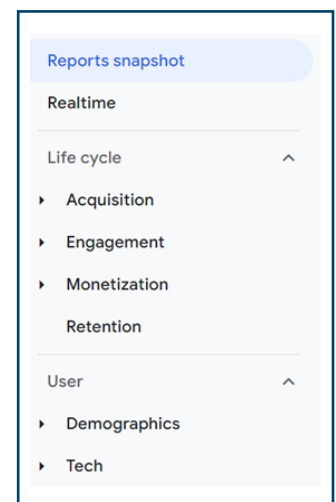
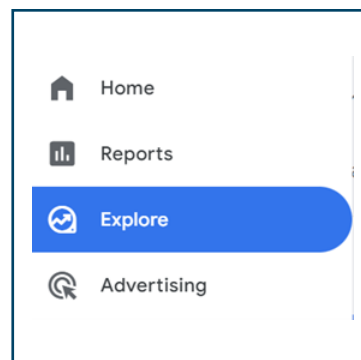
- [Home](#) – bubbles up relevant information based on your previous behavior in GA4
- [Reports](#) – contains predefined and custom reports to give you top-level insights into your data
- [Explore](#) – a collection of advanced data analysis techniques that allow you to uncover deeper insights than what’s possible in Reports
- [Advertising](#) – provides various tools for analyzing multi-channel attribution modeling and conversion paths

In this guide, we will be diving deeper into the **Reports** section, and specifically the ability to [customize](#) this section to fit the unique needs of different businesses, roles, and teams.

A Breakdown of Reports

To access GA4 reports, click on “Reports” in the left-hand navigation of your GA4 property.

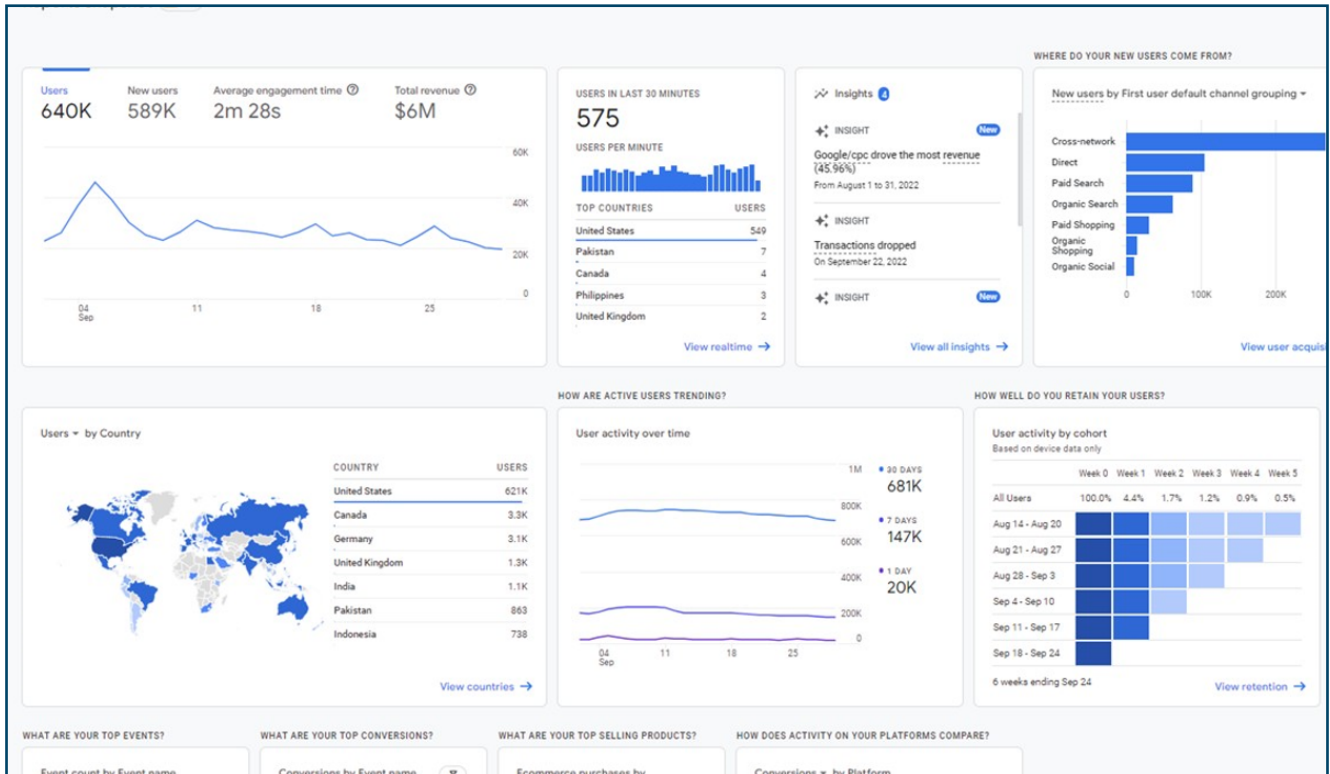
From here, you can navigate to the [Reports snapshot](#), [Realtime](#) reports, or sets of report [collections](#) (report group headers) and [topics](#) (subsets of reports). The default report collections are **Life cycle** and **User**, and topics are the expandable report groups within these collections, such as Acquisition or Demographics. **All but the realtime reports are fully customizable** by account Editors and Administrators.



Types of Reports

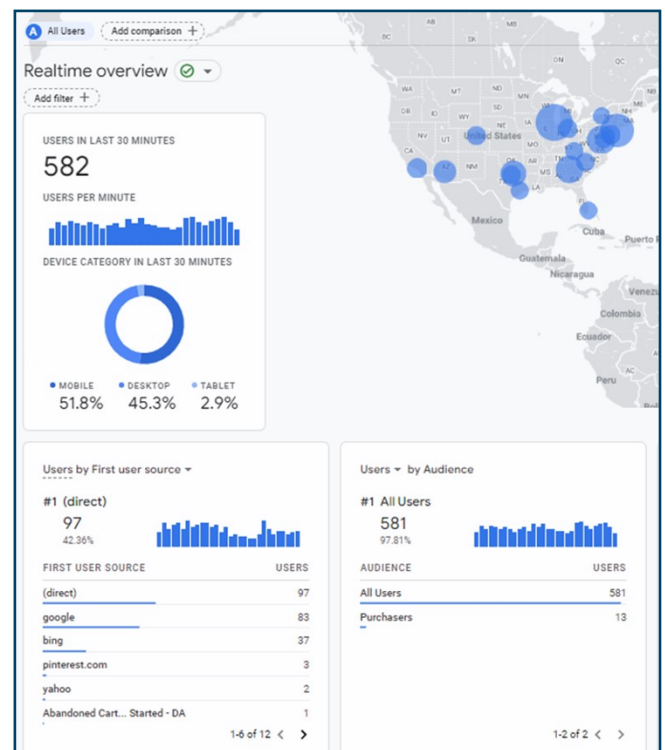
Reports snapshot

This is an overview report that opens by default when you first navigate to Reports, and can contain a collage of any of the summary cards available from any of your Overview reports. Read more on Overview reports below.



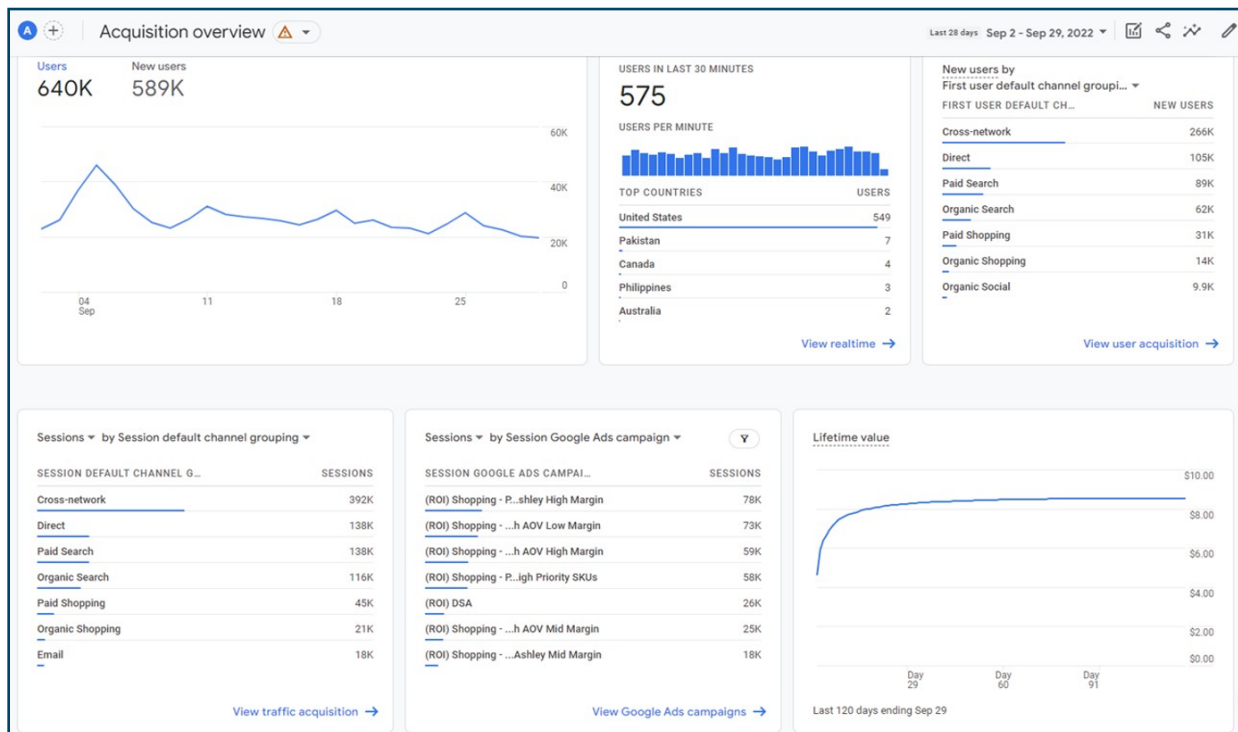
Realtime

Realtime reports let you monitor current performance by showing information about the users on the website and/or app within the last 30 minutes, i.e. users whose sessions have not yet expired. You can apply comparisons to Realtime reports, but the report cards themselves cannot be edited.



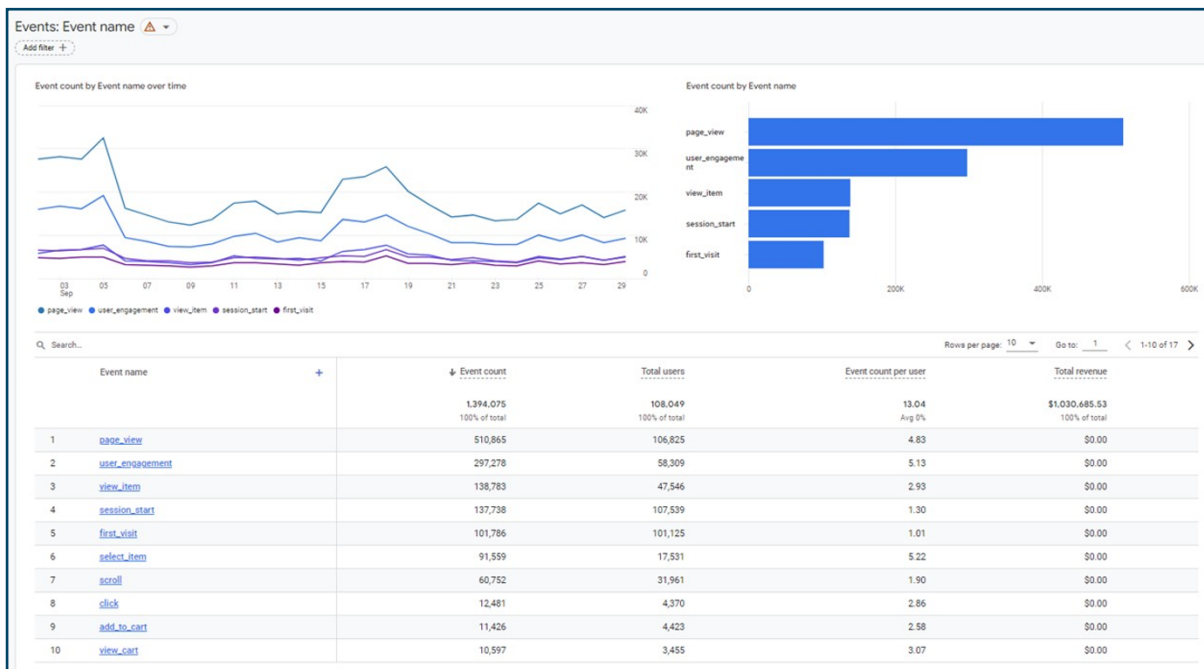
Overview Reports

Within Reports, **collections** contain **topics**, and each topic typically contains an **Overview report**. Overview reports are like the Reports snapshot in that they contain summary cards that link to detail reports in the bottom right corner of each card. Not all linked detail reports are also shown in the left navigation, so going through the Overview report may be the only way to find certain detail reports by default (for example, the Google Ads campaigns report link shown in this Acquisition overview screenshot).



Detail Reports

Detail reports are single reports that typically contain a data table, graph, and one additional chart visualization like a bar chart or scatter plot. Data tables in detail reports can show up to 250 rows and can have secondary dimensions and comparisons applied.



Predefined Collections and Topics

The Life Cycle Collection

The Life cycle collection of reports is predefined to help you break down user activity at each stage of the customer journey, from acquisition to retention. This collection includes the following topics, each of which houses an Overview report and up to 3 Detail reports.

- **Acquisition** – These reports are all about where traffic originated, both from a user scope (**User acquisition**) and session scope (**Traffic acquisition**). These two detail reports are structured the same way, but with different approaches to attribution. You can think of User acquisition as a first-touch model, whereas Traffic acquisition is a last-touch model. Attribution models chosen at the property level are not applied to acquisition reports, as they are tied specifically to Conversion reporting.
- **Engagement** – These reports highlight the engagement users have with the website or app after they've arrived. This collection houses reports on events, conversions, and pages, with metrics like engagement rate and [user stickiness](#).
- **Monetization** – This topic contains ecommerce reporting as well as additional reports that may or may not be applicable to your business, such as in-app purchases from mobile apps and ad revenue from publisher platforms like AdMob.
- **Retention** – Retention is currently a standalone Overview report of sparklines to show how frequently and how long users engage with the website, with users grouped into cohorts.

Life cycle	
▼ Acquisition	
Overview	
User acquisition	
Traffic acquisition	
▼ Engagement	
Engagement overview	
Events	
Conversions	
Pages and screens: Page ti...	
Landing page	
▼ Monetization	
Overview	
Ecommerce purchases	
In-app purchases	
Publisher ads	
User purchase journey	
Retention	

The User Collection

The User collection is designed to tell you more about the users engaging with the website or app, such as their ages, interests, and devices.

- **Demographics** – These reports classify users by age, location, language, and gender, along with interests they express through their online browsing and purchase activities.
- **Tech** – These reports provide details on user platforms, devices, operating systems, and browsers.

User	
▼ Demographics	
Overview	
Demographic details	
▼ Tech	
Overview	
Tech details	



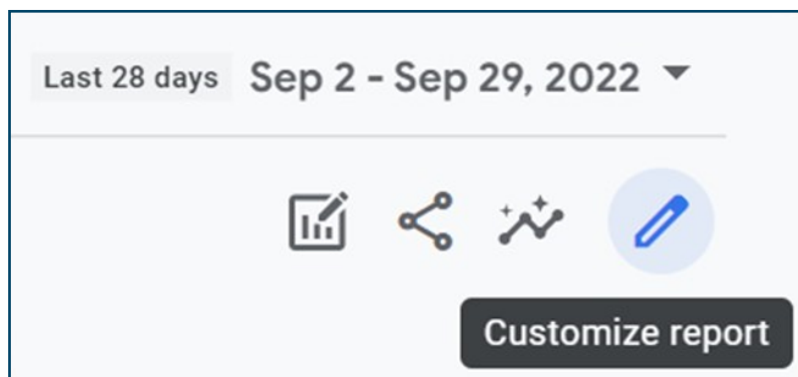
Customizing Your Reports in the Library

With Administrator or Editor access, you can create new collections, topics, and reports, and you can edit any of the existing collections, topics, or reports to fit the specific needs of your business. For example, it might be smart to delete the monetization reports for a lead-gen site that doesn't have any revenue-generating metrics that are tracked.

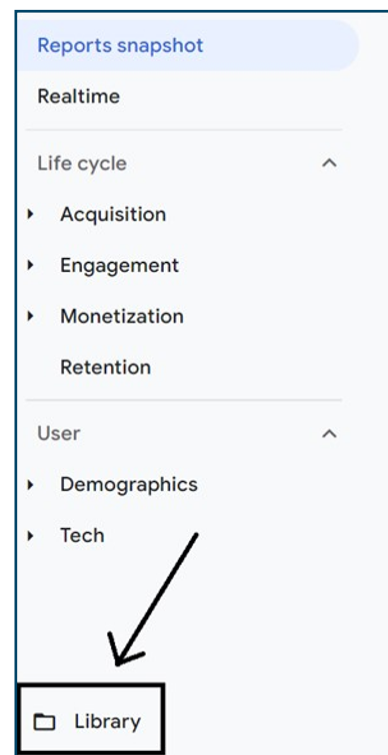
Note: The changes you make to Reports are applied to everyone with access, and it's not possible at this time to have a private report collection. Be sure to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure everyone agrees with changes made to pre-existing reports, or simply start fresh with your own report collection.



To customize reports, navigate to the [Library](#) feature at the bottom of the Reports section. As mentioned above, editing and creating reports requires **Administrator or Editor** access, so if you don't see this option, it means you need a higher level of access.

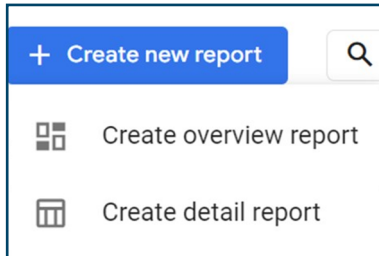


Within the report Library, you'll find all of the prebuilt reports mentioned above, and you can click to edit them from there. You can also edit existing reports by clicking the **pencil icon** in the top right corner of any report.



Creating Detail Reports

From the Library, click “**Create new report**” and choose if you want to build an overview report or a detail report. *Start with a detail report first*, since overview reports are built of summary cards from detail reports. You’ll be able to choose a starting template or start a blank report from scratch.



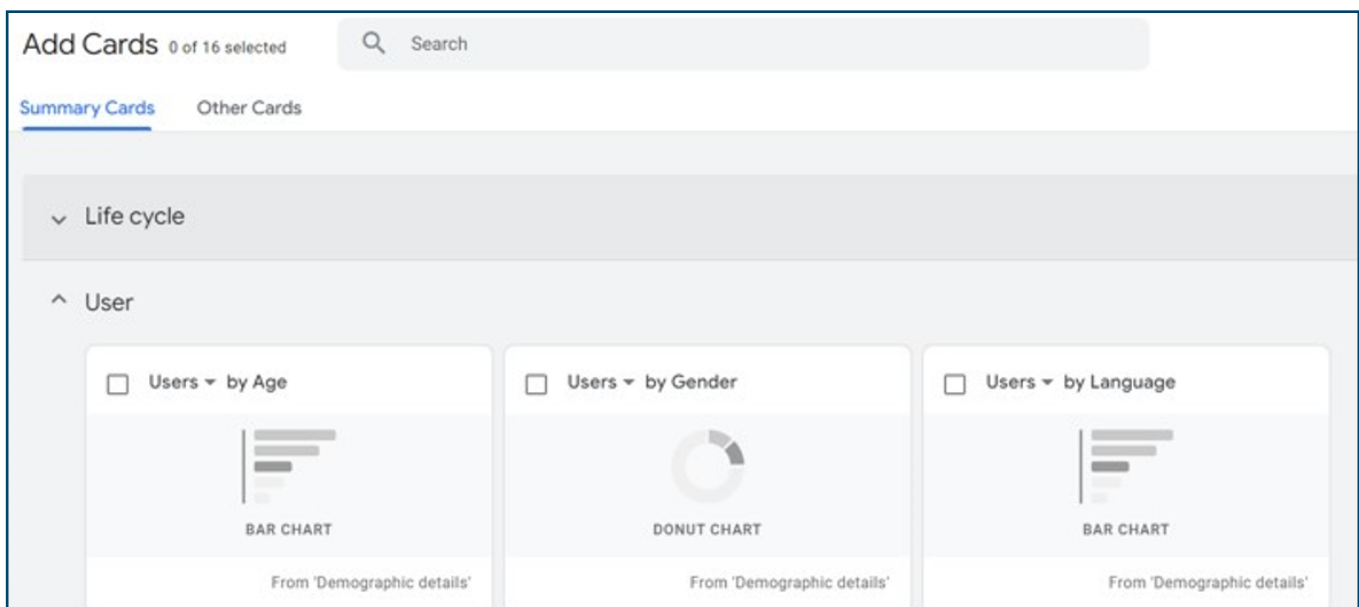
Building a report is a lot like building a custom report in Universal Analytics, but even more simplified. You can select as many dimensions as you need and up to 12 metrics. In your report, your selected dimensions will be provided as dropdown primary dimension options, so secondary dimensions can only be applied outside of the initial report configuration.

Finish out your report by adding **dimension-based filters**, selecting **chart types**, and building the **summary cards** you’ll want to have in your **Overview reports**. When you’ve finished designing your report, save it and give it a name and description.



Creating Overview Reports

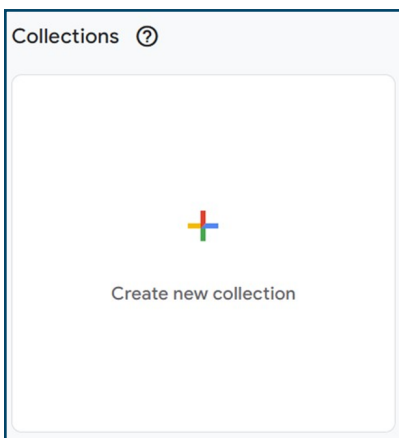
The summary cards you’ll add to your overview reports are created within your detail reports, so make sure not to skip this step when building a detail report. After your topic’s detail reports are complete, you’ll want to create an overview report and select the summary cards you’d like to display in your overview. Within the report configuration, you’ll be able to expand or collapse collection headers to find the summary cards from your specific collection. You may also find useful cards in the “Other Cards” tab.



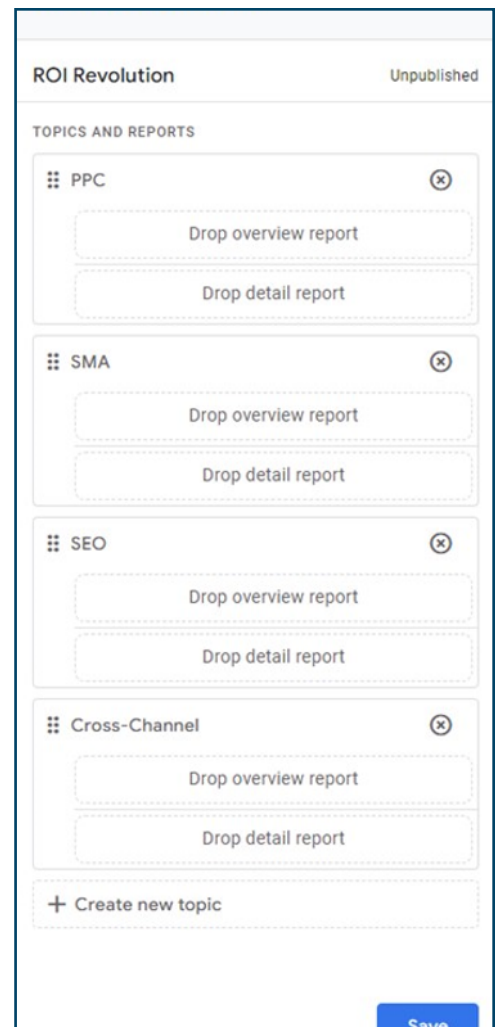
Designing Collections and Topics

After you've finished building all the detail and overview reports for your collection, click "**Create new collection.**" Once again, you can start from a template or build a blank collection from scratch.

For example, you might want to call your report "<your name>'s Favorites" to show other users that your report collection was designed for your unique needs. Similarly, your agency teams might build their own collections with topics that represent the different marketing channels they manage. Be sure to think about the data that is most important to you and go from there to design your ideal report structure.



From here, you can drag and drop your reports (provided in a list to the right) into your collection design. When you're done, click **Save** and return back to the main Library screen.

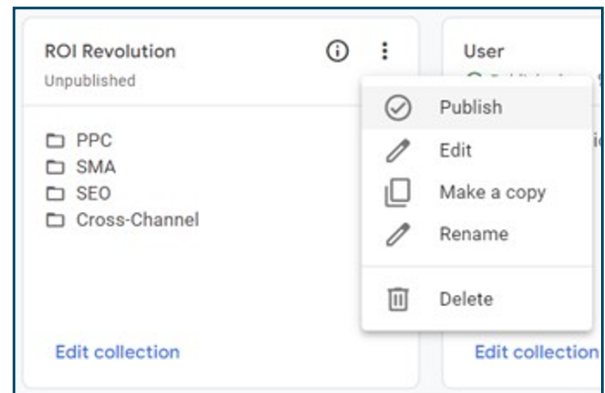


Publishing a Collection

After you've finished designing your reports, topics, and collection, you'll need to **publish** the collection before it begins showing up in your Reports navigation. To do this, go to the main Library page, find your collection across the top, click the three dots, and select "Publish." You will now see the reports in your main Reports lineup (and so will everyone else!). Collections are listed in alphabetical order, but you can force an order by adding numbers to the starts of each collection name.

It's also worth noting that publishing collections and organizing reports into collections and topics is not required. If you save a report without adding it to a collection or publishing that collection, you can still access the report at any time by navigating to the Library screen.

Keep in mind that Reports are very limited, so you should design these to be as top-level as possible. Not all dimensions and metrics are available, so if you run into roadblocks, your report design may be better for Explore or Looker Studio.



If you feel overwhelmed by the transition to GA4, you're not alone. It's an entirely new way to track and analyze your most important data, and being able to leverage it to meet your goals is crucial.

If you think your business could benefit from having a team of GA4-certified experts by your side for this new journey, send a message to our team today.

