Google Analytics does not match Freestar Analytics for page views and sessions

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Summary

When trying to reconcile Google Analytics (GA) traffic with Freestar Analytics numbers, more often than not, these values don't match. Of particular concern to some users is the pageviews and sessions data.

Solution

When you're doing a deep dive into your data, you may compare pageviews and sessions from Freestar Analytics to those in Google Analytics (or other metric providers). Since Freestar only counts the pageviews and sessions where we had an opportunity to serve an ad, we don't expect these values to match, as our organizations have different definitions for what is counted (Google's definitions for sessions and pageviews).

At Freestar, Freestar Analytics only allows us to count sessions that are monetized. So, if a user viewing your website has an ad blocking software enabled, we cannot count any ads that are prevented from displaying for that user.

Typically, we expect a discrepancy between 10% and 30% — depending on the type of site and users that visit the site.

Below are some common causes for discrepancies to help you better understand the differences between the two.

Cause

The following is a list of possible causes. Roughly ranked from most to least likely.

- Users have enabled an ad blocking software:
  - Will block Freestar ads
  - Often doesn't block Google Analytics
  - Not all ad block behaviour is the same and therefore detecting and reconciling is near impossible.
- Certain pages on the site do not have ads:
  - Google Analytics should be on all pages
  - Pages that are dedicated to logins, policies, contact info, profiles, etc... shouldn't have ads.
- There are certain pages where Freestar cannot serve:

- Pages that violate the domain whitelist can have Google Analytics without Freestar
- Pages with an email address in the URL
- AMP pages
- Single page apps:
  - Google Analytics has a way to log additional page views on command; Freestar can log additional page views using the newPage() function. A mismatch in these methods causes a discrepancy.
  - Google Analytics logs a page view when the page view command fires, Freestar waits for an ad to serve.
- Users who leave the page quickly (bounce rate):
  - Google Analytics fires faster than Freestar.
  - Users who leave or move to a new page before the first ad loads do not have a page view counted.
- Implementation errors:
  - Something could be configured incorrectly for Google Analytics.
  - Check your code to ensure that Freestar is being loaded on all applicable pages.

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