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# Google Analytics or Search Console: which one answers which question

Analytics & Tracking

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# Google Analytics or Search Console: which one answers which question

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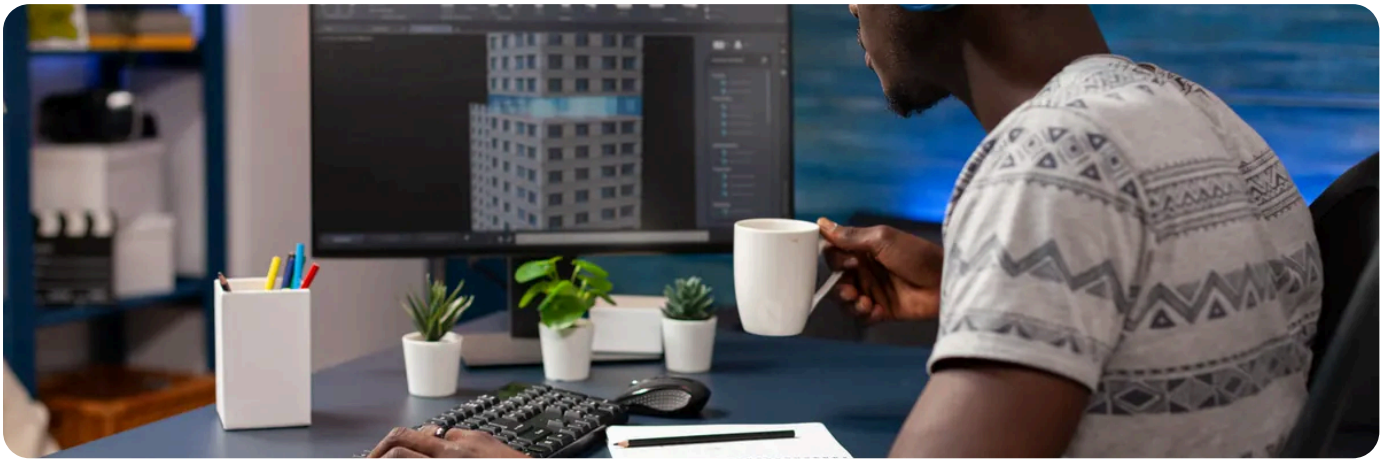

Both are free, both are Google's, and they are easily mixed up, but they answer different questions. **Search Console** tells you what happens **before** a person reaches the site: whether you appear, on which searches and how many click. **Google Analytics** tells you what happens **after** they arrive: what they see, where they go and what they do. It is worth having both.

## The question, and who answers it

| I want to know… | Where to look |
|---|---|
| **Which words people use to find me on Google** | Search Console, Performance, Queries |
| **How often my site appears and how many people click** | Search Console, Performance (impressions and clicks) |
| **Whether Google read and kept my pages** | Search Console, Pages (indexing) |
| **Whether there are errors or security warnings** | Search Console, Pages, Security |
| **How many people visit, and where from (Google, social, direct)** | Analytics, Acquisition |
| **Which pages they view most, and how long they stay** | Analytics, Engagement |
| **How many contact requests, calls or purchases result** | Analytics, with events marked as key events |
| **Whether the e-mail or ads campaign brought visits** | Analytics, with UTM links. See **UTM links**. |

## Setting both up, in order

1. **Search Console first**, because it starts storing data and what has passed cannot be recovered. See **how to set it up, step by step**.

2. **Then Analytics**, connected to the site. See **how to set it up and what to look at first**. If the site asks for consent, Analytics should only run after the person gives it: **the cookie notice**.

3. **Link them to each other.** In Analytics, in the admin settings, the Search Console link brings the queries into the reports. Both must be in the same Google account.

4. **Mark what matters as a key event.** A form sent, a click on the phone or on WhatsApp, a purchase. Without this, Analytics counts visits but does not say whether they served any purpose.

5. **Pick one question a week** and answer it. Do not try to read everything at once.

## Why the numbers do not match

Search Console's number of *clicks* and Analytics' number of *sessions* from Google are never equal, and that is normal. Analytics does not count people who refused cookies, Search Console counts clicks and not visits, and each defines "a day" and "a visit" its own way. Compare the trend (going up or down), not the exact figure. cPanel's statistics count on the server, with no cookies, and give a third number: **visitor statistics**.

**Neither tells you where you ranked on Google in general.**
Search Console's average position is an average over different searches, and varies with who searches and where. It is for seeing a trend, not for promising places. Whoever swears you first place has no way to guarantee it.

**Take out your own visits.**
If the team opens the site every day, filter your internal traffic in Analytics, or the numbers look like customers. Search Console does not have this problem, because it only counts people who came from searches.

NEED A HAND?

Did the Analytics code make the site slow, or can Search Console not verify the domain? Tell us the address and what appears.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- Getting your site indexed in Search Console, step by step
- Google Analytics: setting it up and what to look at first
- Proving the domain is yours: TXT records
- Visitor statistics: where they are and what they mean

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