

How to Use Google Analytics to Track Your WordPress Site Speed

It's not surprising to learn that **site speed** is one of the factors that Google uses in its algorithms to determine the search ranking of a web page. Google defines site speed as "*how fast your website responds to web requests*". In the simplest case it is how quickly your pages load for your average visitor.

When you think about it, there is nothing more frustrating than an unusually slow loading web page, so it makes a lot of sense that when all things except speed are equal, the faster websites are ranked higher up in the search rankings compared to similar slow websites because good content and speed enhances the users' experience.

The best way to track your WordPress site speed is by using the [Google Analytics Site Speed Report](#) feature which was introduced in May 2011. There are of course other ways to track site speed such as using add-ons for your browser or other tools but the Google Analytics Site Speed Report is by far the most powerful and convenient tool available for this purpose.

The components you will need to use Google Analytics Site Speed Report on your WordPress site are:

1. [Google Analytics account](#)

If you don't have a Google Analytics account, you should sign up for one using the link above and follow the instructions regarding how to setup your account to point to your WP website.

2. [Google Analytics for WordPress plugin](#)

This plugin will allow you to install the javascript code (from your Google Analytics account) on your WP pages and is the recommended plugin to use if you are not already using it .

For those who may have older versions of this plugin such as v4.0.9 or below (like I had on one of my sites), you will need to upgrade to the latest version.

The latest plugin version has some cool new features one of which is that it automatically adds Google Analytics Site Speed Report feature to your Google Analytics code.

This feature was first introduced in version 4.1 and at the time of writing this article the latest plugin version is 4.1.3.

(Note: You can add the site speed code manually if you wish by following the help pages from Google)

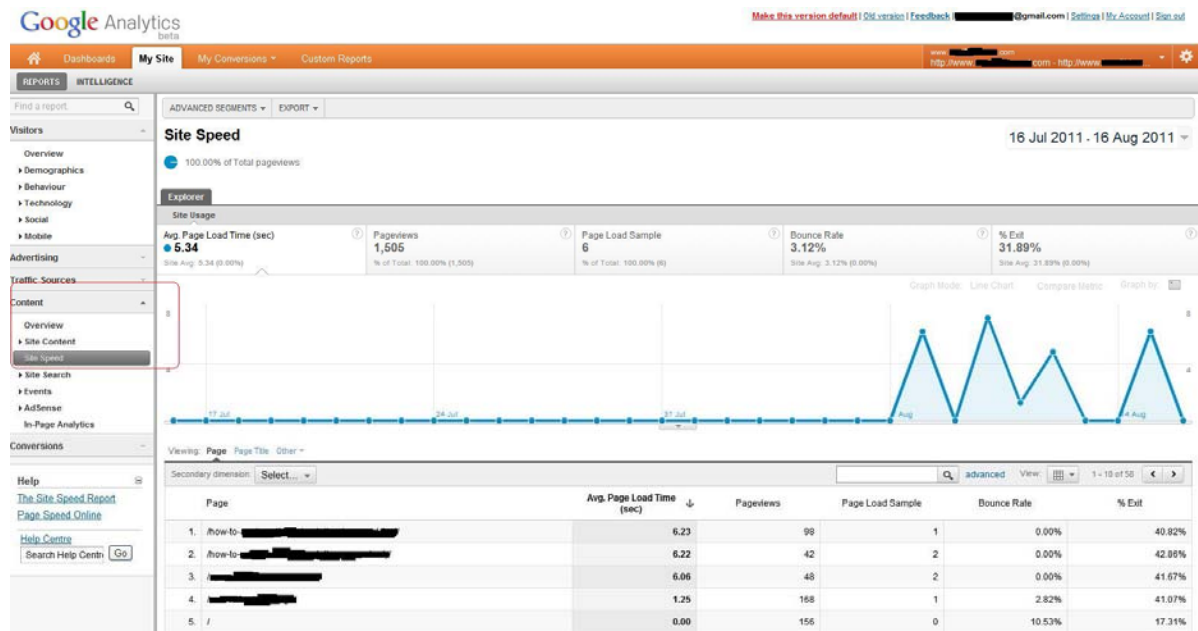
If you already have Google Analytics installed on your WP site using the plugin mentioned above, then do this simple test before doing anything else:

- Using a web browser navigate to your WP site.

- Right-click on any page of your WP site and “View Page Source”
- Search the Page Source page for the Google Analytics code and check to see if you have the “**trackPageLoadTime**” code highlighted in yellow below (Note: your code may look slightly different):

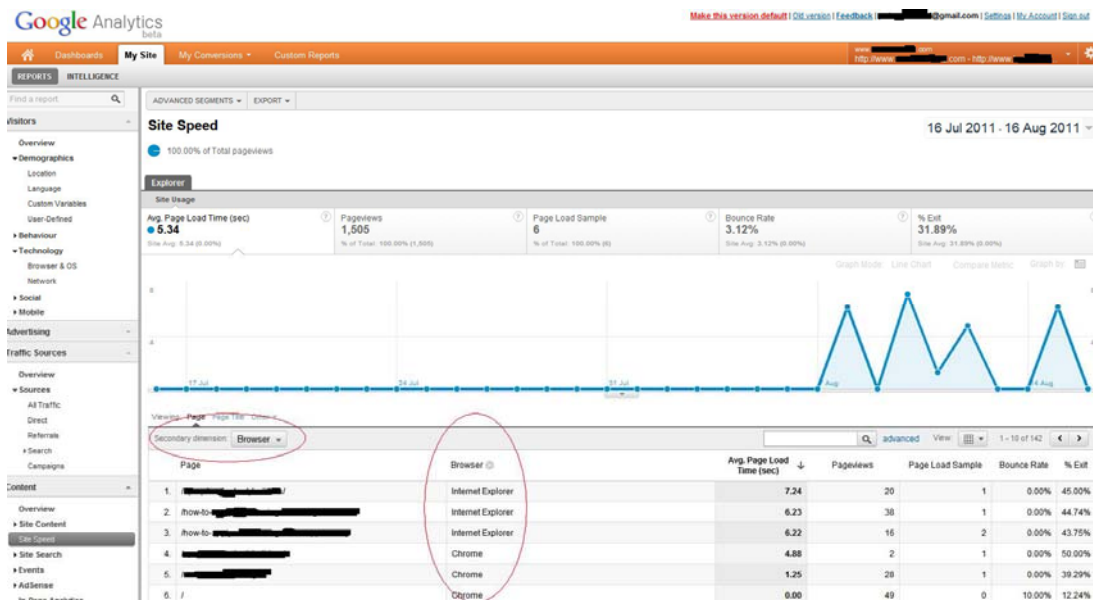
```
<script type="text/javascript">
    // Google Analytics for WordPress by Yoast v4.1.3 |
    http://yoast.com/wordpress/google-analytics/
    var _gaq = _gaq || [];
    _gaq.push(['_setAccount', 'UA-12345678-1']);
    _gaq.push(['_trackPageview'],['_trackPageLoadTime']);
    (function() {
        var ga = document.createElement('script'); ga.type =
        'text/javascript'; ga.async = true;
        ga.src = ('https:' == document.location.protocol ? 'https://ssl'
        : 'http://www') + '.google-analytics.com/ga.js';
        var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];
        s.parentNode.insertBefore(ga, s);
    })();
    //]]&gt;&lt;/script&gt;</pre>
</div>
<div data-bbox="111 436 886 501" data-label="Text">
<p>If you already have the <b>trackPageLoadTime</b> function on your WP pages then you are ready to use Google Analytics Site Speed Report and hence you don't have to upgrade to the latest plugin. If you don't have the above then you must upgrade to the latest plugin version or at least version 4.1 in order to be able to use GA Site Speed Report.</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox="111 515 879 552" data-label="Text">
<p>So once you have your Google Analytics account and relevant plugin version installed, you can access your Site Speed Report by doing the following:</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox="142 586 862 620" data-label="List-Group">
<ol>
<li>1. Log into your Google Analytics account and go to your dashboard. If you are currently using the “old” GA interface you should see the following:</li>
</ol>
</div>
<div data-bbox="173 631 816 741" data-label="Image">
<img alt="Screenshot of the old Google Analytics dashboard interface. The top navigation bar is orange and contains 'Analytics Settings', 'View Reports: www. [redacted] .com', and 'My Analytics Accounts: www. [redacted] .com'. A 'New Version!' link is circled in red in the top right corner. The left sidebar shows a menu with 'Dashboard', 'Intelligence Beta', 'Visitors', 'Traffic Sources', and 'Content'. The main content area is titled 'Dashboard' and shows a date range of 'Jul 16, 2011 - Aug 1'."/>
</div>
<div data-bbox="171 841 857 889" data-label="Text">
<p>The Site Speed Report can be accessed only via the new GA interface. Go to the new Google Analytics interface by clicking on the “New Version” link shown circled above.</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox="342 932 653 951" data-label="Page-Footer">
<p>All rights reserved <a href="#">Tips and Tricks HQ</a></p>
</div>
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2. Once inside your new GA interface, you can view the Site Speed Report by traversing to the **Content->Site Speed** menu from the side bar as shown:



By default the report lists your website's pages in order from the slowest to fastest page.

3. Your website pages are the primary dimension upon which the site speed is based on. The cool thing about this report is that you can introduce a **secondary dimension** to the data to further dig down into more properties about the page query. For example if you wanted to find out which type of browser the visitor was using then you can add this to the page speed report. You can do that by clicking on the **Secondary Dimension** drop-down box and selecting browser. Your report will then show browser type against page speed as shown below:



So using the above information you can then take appropriate action or decide what sort of things you can do to optimize your content for certain browsers for example.

In summary, there are many other insights you can gain from the Google Analytics Site Speed Report which you can use to take action to counter any unusually high latency you might see on your WordPress website.

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