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Google Analytics and Google AdWords Conversion Tracking are two Google products designed to assist companies in the analysis of their Search campaign performance so that they can make smarter decisions and realize better results. If you do not have your own tracking system, or do not work with a vendor who has one, these can be great tools for you to utilize.

These products can be used separately or together. But it is important to note that when used together, they sometimes present the challenge of data discrepancies. These discrepancies can be due to how the code fires, how quickly a page may load, or other factors. Therefore, we recommend using only one tracking product for decision support.

So which is the best option for tracking performance via Google? Well, the answer is much more complicated than simply choosing one vs. the other. There are key factors that you must consider when deciding which tool set is the right one to use or focus on. Let's review what each tool can do, and analyze their capabilities, as well as areas in which they lack.

### AdWords Conversion Tracking

AdWords Conversion Tracking is solely used to measure traffic performance from Google AdWords. This product must be used with a Google AdWords account. It cannot stand alone and will not provide any information on other traffic sources or direct traffic.

AdWords Conversion Tracking is integrated directly into the AdWords account it is setup through and creates actionable data within the user interface that can assist directly with bid and budget changes. Conversion tracking also is only required to be placed on the pages that are of value, such as a checkout page or a download confirmation page that indicates the user has completed the action of value desired. Multiple conversion goals can be setup and tracked independently.

AdWords Conversion Tracking allows the use of additional tools provided by Google: Conversion Optimizer, Search Funnels, and Enhanced CPC. Conversion Optimizer and Enhanced CPCs are tools that Google will use to determine the value of each keyword being purchased and will make automated adjustments to optimize an account. These can be helpful in managing a large group of accounts, but it is a best practice to independently monitor performance and make adjustments. Google uses the Search Funnels tool to help develop attribution models. Google AdWords alone provides no information on what users were searching before they clicked on your ad, how many times they clicked on your ad before converting, and what terms they searched before choosing to buy from you. This can allow insight into the value that branding initiatives and non-branded terms bring to an account.

The adoption of AdWords Conversion Tracking can provide additional benefit through the availability of betas that Google offers. Due to Google's goal of increasing the adoption rate of

AdWords Conversion Tracking, many new betas are said to require AdWords Conversion Tracking. Google also allows the integration of AdWords, Analytics, and Conversion Tracking that can be seen within Google Analytics.

## Google Analytics

Google Analytics allows for a better integration of online and some offline media. Paid Search is a marketing form that is easily measured from a last-click or a first-click standpoint, but one of the biggest challenges is accounting for the influence of online and offline media external to Paid Search. While Google Analytics does not bring all of the pieces of the purchase process together, it does allow for a better understanding of the influence and relationship between media channels.

Analytics is a cross-channel and cross-engine analytics software platform that can provide simple or complex views into performance. Google Analytics allows website owners to set up goals similar to conversions utilized in conversion tracker.

Analytics offers many add-ons that are not available through Google Conversion Tracking, such as e-commerce reporting, integration with AdSense, mobile tracking, internal search site monitoring, social network application tracking, custom reports, advanced analysis tools, and additional applications, to name a few.

What you may consider Google Analytics' most valuable features depends on your goals and industry. For companies utilizing other marketing channels outside of Search, the most valuable feature is multi-channel funnels. Multi-channel funnels not only help you better attribute value on terms within the search campaigns, but also your other channels that result in the completion of a goal. If all mediums of advertising use the proper URL structure, Google Analytics will collect information on all mediums and provide information around which medium is initiating the sales process and which medium is closing the sale.

Google Analytics allows the use of third-party applications to enhance the view, availability, and analysis of the data being collected. The selection includes but is not limited to: Content Management, Call Tracking, Social Media Analytics, and enhanced reporting tools. These can provide a quick update to increase the capabilities of Google Analytics for additional fees.

## So, Which Is The Winner?

The bottom line is that neither one of these tools has been determined to be more accurate than the other. Some analysis using existing data could be helpful in determining which data set is best for each individual case. Both tools are free and are designed to protect your data. Determining which product to utilize really depends on what you want to accomplish. Both products offer additional value to PPC campaign management. If your main goal is to better optimize your Google AdWords account, then Google AdWords Conversion Tracking is the

right choice for you. If your company employs a variety of offline and online channels, and you are looking for a more efficient and complex integration of these channels, then Google Analytics is your best bet.

The following chart outlines some of the basic differences between these two tools.

**Google Analytics vs. Google Conversion Tracking**

	Google Analytics	Conversion Tracking
Requires Adwords		X
Requires Code on Every Pages	X	
Conversion Optimizer		X
Search Funnels	X	X
Multi-Channel Funnels	X	
Enhanced Bidding		X
Ecommerce Reporting	X	
Integration with AdSense	X	
Analytics intelligence	X	
Custom Reports	X	
Advanced Analysis Tools	X	
Data Export	X	X
API and Developer Platform	X	
Applications Available	X	
Cookie Length	Up to 2 Years	Up to 30 Days

While we can't give you an exact answer on which is the right one to use, one thing is certain: the future of Search will focus on the continued development and understanding of how online and offline media work together. This future focus will make for more coordination between all channels that will further maximize the return on investment and provide a more effective way of reaching consumers. If you do have a complex marketing plan and are a part of a very competitive industry, you should be getting your feet wet with this concept by using tools like Google Analytics in order to understand the integration of data between channels now, before this concept becomes a norm within your industry and the competition is far ahead of you.