

# Google Analytics 360 and BigQuery improve efficiency and insights for Skyscanner

Skyscanner digs deeper into data to reveal customer behaviors



## About

- Skyscanner is the leading global travel search company, founded in 2003.
- Headquarters: Edinburgh, United Kingdom
- [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net)

## Goals

- Develop more granular insights into consumer behavior
- Conduct analysis quickly and efficiently
- Optimize products

## Approach

- Integrate Google Analytics 360 with Google BigQuery
- Use these in conjunction with Tableau and Python
- Enable one-off investigations as well as daily dashboards

## Results

- Accelerated workflow
- Deeper insights more quickly
- Improved conversion rates by 30-40% on smartphones and tablets in the last six months

Skyscanner is a leading global travel search company for flights, hotels and car hire around the world. Founded in 2003, the company helps over 40 million people each month find the best travel options across its portfolio of websites and mobile apps.

Skyscanner wanted to understand anonymous customer behaviour on a more granular level. Mark Shilton, Principal Analyst in the Skyscanner Data Team explained that standard reporting and reporting APIs in Google Analytics 360, part of the Google Analytics 360 Suite, were helpful for high-level analysis, but “we were keen to dig deeper into the data to get more insight and further optimise our products.”

Skyscanner wanted to drill down into specific markets, device types and marketing channels. Plus, certain teams within the company wanted to understand the performance of individual site functionalities. They needed to see how well interactions with given functionalities affected conversion rates. Finally, the company wanted to create detailed cohorts to understand how users interact with Skyscanner over time.

## Integration for deeper insights

Skyscanner opted to address all of these needs by integrating Analytics 360 with Google BigQuery. This integration has become the starting point for many detailed investigations across the business.

For example, analysts and engineers now run cohort analyses to understand how frequently users return to Skyscanner, and which channels are most effective at which part of the customer journey. “This type of analysis is allowing a much deeper understanding of our marketing activity and is informing our future strategy and spend,” Mark says.

He notes that using BigQuery with tools such as Tableau and Python also offers more speed and efficiency than ever before. “While in the past it was tricky to get a fully unsampled report based on specific segments of users flowing directly from Analytics 360 into a Tableau dashboard, now it is simply a matter of writing the query, creating a connection in Tableau to automatically refresh the data daily, and publishing this dashboard to the rest of the company.”

*“Since we set up our Google Analytics 360 export into BigQuery, this data source has become a key part of our analytical toolset. We can get the precise data we need more quickly and accurately.”*

**—Mark Shilton**  
**Principal Analyst,**  
**Skyscanner Data Team**

This flexible combination of tools also helps Skyscanner keep an eye on costs. “Where the aggregations and segments of data are required on a regular basis, we have to consider the potential cost of querying the entire BigQuery dataset multiple times for the same data,” Mark explains. “To minimise this, we use Python scripts to automate aggregations into new, smaller tables that are much more cost efficient to query.”

## A clear path ahead

Combining Analytics 360 with BigQuery has supercharged Skyscanner’s ability to turn raw data into deep understanding of consumer behaviour. “We have been using BigQuery for various pieces of analysis, from one-off investigations to powering daily dashboards,” Mark affirms. “In all cases it has sped up our workflow and enabled us to gain greater insight more quickly. In a fast moving internet economy, this is key.

“BigQuery has also allowed us to more easily isolate the effects of marketing from the effects of site changes,” Mark says. Skyscanner can write queries that separate traffic from various sources, including marketing campaigns, customers who make it to specific parts of the funnel, or those who interact with new functionality. This understanding has played a key role in improving overall conversion rates on Skyscanner’s websites—particularly on mobile. Mark says, “we’ve achieved conversion rate improvements of 30 to 40% on smartphone and tablet devices in the last six months.”

Looking to the future, Skyscanner’s next steps include exploring how this data can be used to segment, cluster and classify users for machine learning analyses, which would not have been possible using standard reporting.

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### About the Google Analytics 360 Suite

The Google Analytics 360 Suite offers powerful and integrated analytics solutions for today’s biggest enterprises. Measure, see, and improve the impact of your marketing across every screen, channel and moment in today’s customer journey. It’s easy to use, and makes data accessible for everyone so the “aha” moments are simple to discover and share. Move from insight to impact faster with the Google Analytics 360 Suite, and as a result, make the most of every consumer connection. For more information, visit [google.com/analytics/360-suite](https://google.com/analytics/360-suite)