The Measure Pod: #30 Why Use Both GA And AA? (With Liam Galliers)

[00:00:00] **Dara:** Hello, and thanks for joining us in The Measure Pod, a podcast for people in the analytics world. I'm [Dara](https://www.linkedin.com/in/darafitzgerald/), I'm MD at [Measurelab](https://www.measurelab.co.uk/?utm_medium=podcast&utm_source=transcript&utm_campaign=30) and I'm joined as always by [Dan](https://www.linkedin.com/in/danielperryreed/) who's an analytics consultant also at [Measurelab](https://www.measurelab.co.uk/?utm_medium=podcast&utm_source=transcript&utm_campaign=30). This week, we're also joined by an external guest [Liam Galliers](https://www.linkedin.com/in/liam-galliers/). So Liam, at this point in the show, what we always do is we ask people how they ended up falling into the wonderful world of analytics. So this is your chance to give a little bit of a summary of how you got into analytics and maybe a bit about what you're doing currently.

[00:00:51] **Liam:** Sure, I'm sad to say that I'm not going to break the mould in terms of that, I'm not going to be the first person to come in and say, yeah, I've always wanted to do digital analytics. I studied maths at uni and when I finished uni, like most people I had no idea what I wanted to do. Didn't know what I wanted to do. So I wound up being in a graduate scheme for a company in the rail industry and it was pretty dry and boring. It was just lots and lots of documentation, reading documentation and so one of my friends worked in the CRO team at Dentsu and just said, look, there's a job up here, do you want to come and interview for it? And I jumped at the chance and went yes. Anything that will get me away from what I'm currently doing, I'll take it.

[00:01:30] **Liam:** Then that was kind of it, since there it's kind of spawned and morphed into like a year and a half at Dentsu, then went on to a company called Code Computer. And then I've stayed predominantly marketing/digital/product/agency side until recently when I went in-house to a company called Ocean Finance and then now here at Cinch of which I have been here for it might not sound like long, but in century is it's definitely long thing. I've been there for a year and three quarters leading the team across both digital analytics and CRO. So building that out, supporting the product teams and then trying as best we can to innovate and do new things is pretty much where I am now.

[00:02:04] **Dara:** Great, and the reason we asked you to come on Liam is you are one of those relatively rare breeds who knows, not just Google Analytics, but Adobe Analytics. So here at Measurelab we're very much Google Analytics people. A few of us have worked with Adobe Analytics, myself included, but that's always been the lesser, the lesser piece for us, and we've been GA (Google Analytics) from day one. But you've had that experience of working with both, so we thought it'd be interesting to bring you on to ask a question we've probably asked ourselves in the past, or we've maybe asked clients before, which is why would you actually use GA (Google Analytics) and Adobe Analytics in parallel, or why would you basically run two different analytics tools?

[00:02:45] **Liam:** Yeah, it's one that I've also been on the receiving end agency side as well. Having to give that kind of agnostic view of well, which one's best. It's a tricky one, most people cut their teeth with GA (Google Analytics) because it's free and it gives you exactly what you want. I think in my experience I've always come down on the side of, if you can have both, great. It's amazing, you get a lot of the flexibility of a tool like Adobe Analytics, but then you can also couple that with readiness of reporting in GA (Google Analytics) for those people who aren't so au fait with it. I think one thing I've always said is if you have a team of analysts and if you've got some dedicated resource to really throw at it, I would probably recommend Adobe because that's, that's the analyst tool, you can dig into levels of granularity. You can set things up to a specific set of your level of customisation a little bit more so than GA (Google Analytics), but GA (Google Analytics) then is the, the entry level.

[00:03:37] **Liam:** If people just want to come in, see reports, get an easy view of all the metrics they're used to, GA (Google Analytics) is the one. I think that's where for me, that's where that sweet spot is. It's where you've got half of people who maybe don't want to learn analytics and just want to come in and get reports and get them scheduled, great GA (Google Analytics). But if you really need to dig into that level of granularity Adobe is the kind of tool that affords you that.

[00:03:59] **Daniel:** So that's a really interesting point Liam, and I've dabbled in both worlds as Dara suggested, Google way more than Adobe and it probably looks and feels a little different since the last time I even logged into Adobe. But I mean, fundamentally, right, I think it's still right in saying that it's the same stuff, it's just a different flavour. We're still tracking web analytics, we're still tracking marketing sessions into a website or app and then conversions or performance off the back of them right? So we were talking about not apples and oranges. We're talking about like red and green apples, right. Is they're very similar, just slightly different approaches to things. Something you said around how GA (Google Analytics) might be like the entry level or if you have both, it could be, it's a wise or a good approach. The inevitability though, and I'm sure you get this all the time is that people have the same number of what they perceive to be the same number, but two different versions of it, and that's hard enough when you're using one tool and people log in and have a different filter or segment applied in GA (Google Analytics) or Adobe. But how would you even approach that when you have two sources of truth, in a sense.

[00:04:49] **Liam:** It's a difficult one because obviously you're the data people, right? You should have one source of truth and that people should be able to come to you and trust that what we're saying is right. I think you're right, it's different flavours of the same level of data and a session broadly speaking should be the same across both. Obviously there are differences, but the difficult part that I've always had is that as an analyst, if I'm using Adobe Analytics, that's my tool and I can help out when it comes to Google Analytics and I can help provide a certain level of enrichment or configuration, absolutely fine. But for me, I would always recommend the tool that I spend most of my day in, which today would be Adobe Analytics. I think I would always advocate the use of the tool that the analysts are in day in, day out. Providing you've got that just because they're the ones that are going to know how it's been set up, any changes to the way that it's been set up. So I guess this is another question that everybody's probably heard, this thing's gone down, were there any changes that were made? And you have a mini heart attack and go on no I didn't make any changes did I, I'm sure I didn't, but I need to go and check. It's that sort of ear to the ground mentality and approach to analytics that would mean I would favour the tool that I use day in, day out, but it's the dreaded question of, well, I've got two figures that say something different, which ones right?

[00:06:05] **Daniel:** I think that comes back to governance, right? There's more awareness and governance and documentation around the product that the analysts are using. So It sounds a bit like, analysts versus marketers, is that fair? Because I can imagine that you got a tool like Google that sits within a marketing product suite and then Adobe as a more of an analyst product suite, and I think is that really the split that you've seen before? Or is it some ways down the middle?

[00:06:25] **Liam:** The typical analyst answer is it depends, but it's one where I've tended to see that marketing teams are in my past experience, marketing teams are usually the departments that are going to push for Google Analytics because most of the tooling that they use is in the GMP (Google Marketing Platform) they're gonna be using Search Ads 360, DV360. They're going to want connections in, and I think for ease of connection and also for the level of ability in terms of things like attribution that Google Analytics gives you, that's a no brainer given that it's easy to plug in. It's easy to plug and play, and usually marketing are going to need that data quick compared, well, not comparatively, but everybody needs data quick, but when you put in pounds and pence into marketing, you're going to want to know where it's going and what it's doing.

[00:07:09] **Liam:** When I say Adobe Analytics is the analyst tool, both tools can give you that level of flexibility that you need. It's just that GA (Google Analytics) you may need to know about SQL to get there because you're going to need to get it into a BigQuery instance. But with Adobe, the drill-downs you can do the visualisations that you can do all in one tool. It definitely lends itself well to it being a sandbox for analysts, just because broadly speaking, the analysts have got the time to dig into it, but I do get the sense that GA (Google Analytics) particularly, I'm sure you guys have heard this, the death of the third party cookie, when that comes around it's going to be interesting to see what GA4 has and how it's going to approach that. So I think the way that GA (Google Analytics) positions itself is definitely more marketing led.

[00:07:51] **Daniel:** Yeah, for sure. So we know that obviously the Google Marketing Platform incorporates Google Analytics and they favour well, they solely favour their own product connections to the DV’s, the SA's, Google Ads, even, and now Optimize and everything else. From an attribution perspective, outside of just pulling in things like contextual data like cost and clicks, they pull in the auto-tagging, right? So you don't need the manual UTMs or campaign structure. What's missing, what do you not get in Adobe? Let's say you're running your DV360 campaigns, what would you not get that feels missing or lacking in Adobe that you would need, or a marketer would feel they'd need GA (Google Analytics) for?

[00:08:25] **Liam:** I think from what I've seen in past experiences it's generally been, there's a lack of understanding as to how you can set that up in Adobe, because it's fully available. You can do it, you might have to jump through a few extra hoops then you might do for GA (Google Analytics), because the connections aren't so readily available to plug and play, but you can still do it. It's just, it requires an extra level of input and an extra level of, like we said earlier, governance and knowledge about it, where I think Google has done a very, very good job of making it so easy to go well if you are the account owner of that account and you're also an admin in analytics, you can just click a few buttons and we'll sort the rest out for you.

[00:09:01] **Liam:** Whereas I think with Adobe, there's a certain level of extra legwork that needs to be done in order to get that in there. Particularly when you've got to think that you have to use things like Adobe Campaign and you have to use the Adobe Marketing Platforms, which most marketers might not be well-versed in, they tend to be more Google side, and it's the same analysts right? If you talk to any analyst, most analysts know GA (Google Analytics), very few of those people also know Adobe. It's one where they've made it easy for people to use Google Analytics and they've made it easy for people to plug and play. So I think it is the extra leg work and the fact that most marketers necessarily don't use or very rarely have used the Adobe Marketing Suite.

[00:09:40] **Dara:** Liam one thing I experienced in the past was with, so you're right about obviously GA (Google Analytics) is very accessible and pretty much everybody who works either as an analyst or as a marketer has had some experience with GA (Google Analytics), but a problem I encountered previously where people were running, both, it wouldn't necessarily be Adobe Analytics, but where they were running GA (Google Analytics) and a second analytics tool, if that analytics tool was a little bit more complicated to implement, weirdly, it meant it got implemented better because people thought GA (Google Analytics) was easy. You just put a tag on the website and everything else gets taken care of, and also back pre 360 GA (Google Analytics) people thought well it's free, so how good can it actually be? So there was a problem where people would maintain what at the time at least would have been seen as the enterprise analytics tool, and then GA (Google Analytics) was seen as the, the less reliable sibling, whatever analogy to use.

[00:10:30] **Dara:** Do you think, is that still the case now, or if you're running them in parallel, do you think that they're likely to get equal attention in terms of implementation and configuration?

[00:10:39] **Liam:** I personally think that there will always be a skew. There will always be a skew towards one or the other. I'm not necessarily sure it would always be the same incumbent tool over GA (Google Analytics) necessarily, but there will always be one. I think that depends on the way that you're either, analytics team if you have one, or your engineering team skew, to be honest. Your engineers, they'll be configuring the data layer, they'll be the ones that are in control slightly of telling you what's going to be pushed to each tool, I think that tends to be the way that it skews. It is one where I think that some people might still have the same opinion of, well, GA4 is free we may as well whack it on. I'd rather have it there than not, and then you get into the age old debate of well engineers don't like it because of page load speeds, everything else with it. So how do you manage that and how do you manage having two tools, two extra bits of JavaScript on the page when it's not needed.

[00:11:30] **Liam:** I do think that the team that your analysts or engineers are more skewed to will get more attention, and I think it's a reality that it's very difficult to have two tools that are set up in exactly the same way all the time. I mean, that'd be ideal, right? If you have one tool that's free and an enterprise level tool and they were all set up in exactly the same way saying the same thing, but that's not going to happen. So yeah, there will always be one that's favoured more so than the other, I personally would think. And more often than not, it may be the enterprise level tool. I've not heard of the, well if the tool's free, it can't be that good, it's an interesting one though.

[00:12:04] **Daniel:** I always think of this as the Google halo effect. I mean, Google can't be wrong, it's Google. Google is always right. And I'm in a previous life of mine, Liam. I worked at an attribution and analytics product and we had our own software solution that was pretty much a carbon copy of Google Analytics or a similar, well, maybe actually closer to Adobe actually, but the perception was always because GA (Google Analytics) again was always there alongside, because it's free, why not? It's always there. So we were validating against, we're always validating the sessions or clicks in Google Ads, but it was always comparing against Google Analytics. It was never, oh, Google Analytics might be wrong, let's entertain the idea, it was always a way of Google Analytics is the default, why is your number different? And even though, let's say even 50/50 it was always that Google Analytics was in the wrong, but there's always this Google halo effect, and I found that the Google products in general have this way of dominating in one way or another. I know that's a Google tactic, but they are so dominant in the industry. They're so dominant in the experience and the usage and partly because they give them out for free, that people just assume it's right. I've struggled in the past to try to explain why they're different or why it might not be right. Google must be right, that's the number and then we have the analyst using this other tool that is different. Do you come across that? Is that still something that you, or is that something you've come across at all actually.

[00:13:17] **Liam:** Yeah, I've definitely come across it in a previous life, specifically agency side. It's definitely one where the age old one with GA (Google Analytics) is bounce rate, right? Someone puts on an event onto a page, they set it as an interactive event, the bounce rate plummets, what's happened there? Why has it gone down? That's the age old one. So for things like that, I think that's where it's quite clear to show okay, this is human error and GA (Google Analytics) can be set up in a way to be wrong. Like data very rarely lies but it can lie and that's partly due support implementation, not the data itself lying.

[00:13:48] **Liam:** I think it comes back to people's perception of I've always thought this number was right. I've always assumed that this number is right. And I think it's that realisation of, and I think people find it quite hard to take when somebody comes in and says that number that you've been making decisions on and basing a lot of investment around is actually wrong. We used to do it quite a lot in, again, my previous life in agency side, where you'd run an implementation and audit and implementation, the audit throws up all of these problems with somebody's implementation, with specific metrics that they've been using. I think people are quite quick to say that can't be wrong because I've put my neck on the line for that metric. I'm the one who could be culpable because I've not thought about that metric being wrong. I've found that in my past experience to be harder to get over and that's more tool agnostic as well as opposed to it just being Google.

[00:14:33] **Liam:** I think the one thing that's always propped up with me though, particularly with the marketing agency background is Google Ads says this, GA (Google Analytics) says that, why don't clicks and sessions match? And again, it's the age old question, right? Like, oh, surely a click is a session. Google do a very good job documenting why there are differences, but having to go through that multiple times, if I had a penny for every time I got asked that question, I wouldn't be here.

[00:14:54] **Daniel:** Explaining the Campaign Timeout to marketers is actually one of the hardest things I've ever had to do in any kind of education aspect. I know Dara has done the same, we were both running Google Analytics training, and it's always something you need to get past early on before you start looking at the data, but it's always a really tough concept to grasp. It's one of those points, actually, that always makes me remember. Sometimes it's easy to forget when you say Google Analytics, it's just a product name. It's just one word, it's Google Analytics it's GA, we will abbreviate it, but we forget that it's Google and it's a marketing tool. They have a stake in the game, they have a finger in the pie, and they have a invested interest in making media look performative and things like the Campaign Timeout, these are things that are just one of many things that are layered into this tool that help improve the observed performance of your marketing campaigns. It's a really good point, actually, when I'm talking to people about this, it's just, it's still Google Analytics it's still owned by Google. Google Ads is their driver actually for buying Google Analytics back in the day. Why do you think they're doing this?

[00:15:44] **Liam:** I think a lot of people are now cognisant of the fact that Google will want Google to look good. And I think people are waking up to that I think a little bit more, any company is going to want to make itself look good right? I mean, it's not slight on Google at all, but I think most people are realising that one tool would favour it's main money driver, in terms of paid search.

[00:16:03] **Daniel:** Well of course, you go into Facebook Ads or Google Ads, they pick attribution models that favour their own products, and I don't knock that why wouldn't you, why would you use a first click model if you're doing brand PPC? Why would you not include incorporate post-view impression data into your display campaigns if you're a display provider, it just makes perfect sense, but it's always that thing of trying to explain why does my agency X provide me this number and Google Analytics have the Y number? Why is it so different? Again, going back to the point, Adobe and Google Analytics or any other platform, actually, they're always going to have slight nuances or variations just like anyone would do when you're looking at three different ad platforms.

[00:16:37] **Liam:** Exactly, I think one thing that like a lesson I learned in my marketing agency days, which at the time when I heard it again, it was a bitter pill to swallow. A client I was working with said, web analytics tools and not accounting tools. They're not there for you to say that's how much money we made. That's how in absolute figures, this is what's happened, it's more of a trend observation tool. And it's more for observing those trends over time and seeing how your changes affect things. The numbers are probably going to be wrong, they're probably going to be wrong because of so many different factors, but if you can spot the trend and if you can see that trend and chart it and visualise it, that's more what the tool should be there for. And I mean, try saying that to a client who's turned around to you and says, why are these figures different?

[00:17:16] **Daniel:** You're definitely preaching to the converted , we get that all the time.

[00:17:19] **Dara:** There's something there as well about people sticking to what they know isn't there. I think often those questions come from, somebody is looking at the number they feel they understand from the tool that they are most familiar with. And then somebody else may be within the businesses reporting data from somewhere else. That's often what it comes down to, isn't it it's, people's maybe lack of understanding of where even the data they're reporting on often they don't even understand that in the first place, they have an understanding of it, but it might be misinformed or if there's an underlying tracking issue, you mentioned earlier about, you could do an audit and realise something has always been wrong and people have been reporting on the wrong metrics from day one.

[00:17:52] **Dara:** So I think a lot of it comes from when your view of the truth comes up against somebody else's view of the truth suddenly you're you get into, well, hang on which system is right, which number is right, which person is right.

[00:18:03] **Liam:** Yeah, it's one where I think most, hopefully anyway, my personal opinion is that got into data because like I said, data, very rarely lies. There's no subjectivity when it comes to data, like the data is what the data is and providing you've got it set up correctly it should be right. It's not your opinion at the end of the day. It's just those are the facts, but yeah, you're right. When two sets of facts come up against each other, it's very hard to justify how that's happened or why what's happened, especially when they could be conflicting.

[00:18:33] **Daniel:** So I have a question for you Liam, and it may be just more of an opinion thing more than anything. Do you see there ever a situation where these two tools or any two tools like this can run parallel happily forever, or do you feel the reason I'm asking is because I've seen this happen numerous times again, but it's always a movement towards one product over another. There's always a conversation, no matter how far down the line you get of like, why do we have both let's phase one out or phase one down? Is there a situation where both can live happily ever after or will it always be a situation where the inevitability is that it will converge into just one of these products whichever way it goes.

[00:19:09] **Liam:** Personally I think that with GA4 and GA3 (Google Analytics), providing you don't go over your hit limit. Providing you can run them both in tandem, I don't think that apart from a strong set of governance and possibly to allay any fears from engineering, using a CDP to route data through, into both tools, providing the connections are set up properly. You can try to ensure as much as possible that the data that's being sent to both platforms is consistent in the same format. And it's purely processing on the tool side that would change any data then between them. But I think making sure that you've got that governance in place, making sure that like say if you route it through a CDP, the data should be the same, should pretty much be the same. Then it's purely a configuration piece on the tool, which provided that you keep your channels in order.

[00:20:00] **Liam:** If we assume that GA (Google Analytics) is going to be used for marketing and attribution purposes then providing that you keep your channels relatively the same, or you're auto tagging set up correctly it should be fine. I think the tricky part comes from ensuring that you have got the same data in different places. Nine times out of ten someone will go, okay our main metric, we're trying to run an attribution model against our main metric. What if we move that so it's further up the funnel? What if we want to run models on different points in the journey? And of course, if you don't have that level of data enrichment in both platforms, it becomes very, very difficult to be able to say. Well, we can't do it in this tool, we've got to do it in that tool. We don't really have data driven models in one tool over the other. So, you just run into all of those different problems, and I think that's where, although the CDP I've mentioned, allay some fears from an engineering point of view, I think that's where you can try and streamline that process in order to make sure data lands in all places in the same format.

[00:20:52] **Dara:** Do you think trying to mirror them could in some ways be a mistake, though? So let's say, I know GA (Google Analytics) better than Adobe, it's easy for me to then just go to GA (Google Analytics) or vice versa. So I'm going to try and use it for everything. Even if the intention was actually for it to be used for its strong points, like let's say it was going to be used for marketing and attribution. Whereas if I actually learned where GA (Google Analytics) is lacking and Adobe picks up, then I'd be able to get a better solution overall, we're inherently a bit lazy and we stick to what we know.

[00:21:20] **Liam:** Yeah, it's bound to happen, I do agree that trying to mirror, like-for-like, look at the amount of work that's going to have to go into that, to start with. Just to get it to that point, let alone maintain it and then maintain it at the same level of integrity. Especially if we run with the assumption that you're going to have a team of analysts beavering away on say Adobe in this case, but any other tool, that's going to be a mammoth amount of time to be able to mirror that and maintain it, and I think if you don't have that strong level of governance in place, and you aren't clear about what you want to get out of each tool, then you are going to end up with two parallel running tools with different figures, different applications, and yeah, it can happen. So I do think mirroring like-for-like is not the right thing to do. I think when that use case comes up, like I just spoke about where they may want to attribute to a conversion point further up the funnel, that's when I think you can start to have a conversation about that and say, okay, if that's something we want to do, let's discuss as to why we think we want to do it. How is this going to change our implementation? How is this going to change the analysis and the data that you've got? There has to be a real discussion around that before enriching the dataset with that extra conversion point.

[00:22:28] **Dara:** Another difference that was always quite obvious between the two is the amount of help available online, the amount of documentation, the amount of online communities. It was always a lot easier to find out, if you didn't know something about Google Analytics, you could find out. I at least always found it harder and I don't know how much this has changed, but it's a bit more of a closed community with Adobe. So back to your very original point where it can often be a tool for a team of analysts where it's your job to know all the ins and outs of it, maybe GA (Google Analytics) for a business or for a marketing team has been the preferred choice because it's easier to find out what you don't know about it.

[00:23:04] **Liam:** Yeah, I agree. I think I definitely was of that opinion when I first started out with Adobe, I definitely thought just because it's not as easy to find results for any help with Adobe, I definitely was that way inclined. I definitely agreed and said, well, you need to go on a training course and that's what you need to do in order to find that out. The one thing I would say, and I haven't been paid or commissioned for this, but Measure Slack is your friend, like that is such a wealth of knowledge amongst the community to be able to go and ask and nine times out of ten you are going to get a quick response and a correct response from that community. It's one thing I've definitely had to lean on it in the past, when I'm getting up to speed with things, and it's definitely the way forward, it's one where again, marketers may not know about it. It tends to be more analytics based and that could itself, be a problem.

[00:23:54] **Liam:** I definitely implore marketers to join that, or anyone really in the industry who wants to upskill. That's such a good wealth of knowledge, and what I'd also say is much like with Stack Overflow, you might find that someone's asked the same question as you six or seven years ago and you're so thankful to that one person who's in the exact same scenario you're in, you tend to find that with the Experience League and Adobe side as well. So like years ago, someone would have asked exactly the same question, thanking them to high heaven that somebody who's been in the exact same scenario as you have. It might take a little bit longer to dig into that but you can find them and they are there. And likewise, the Experience League community and forum is a good repository for knowledge.

[00:24:30] **Liam:** So I think they're done differently, but I would say that I used to agree wholeheartedly with that, but I don't know if it's just because I'm using Adobe more, but I've definitely come to learn where the fountains of knowledge are for Adobe.

[00:24:43] **Dara:** You're probably right, I'm probably just showing how long it is since I've done any work with Adobe.

[00:24:47] **Liam:** I don't want to gush too much over it, but from an Adobe side, it can be difficult sometimes if you don't know where to look, that's such a good place just get the answer that you need.

[00:24:56] **Daniel:** It's had a number of honourable mentions on here Liam so far. So yeah, definitely plugging it again is awesome. I'll stick a link in the show notes for sure. But yeah it's an amazing place for that resource. I really liked the idea of like Google Analytics is very much a marketing product. Whether we use it as one or not, from Google's perspective as a marketing tool is within the Google Marketing Platform, Adobe Analytics, not so much. In my head, I've got this kind of like this boxing match between marketers and analysts, and you've got Adobe one side and Google the other side.

[00:25:20] **Daniel:** I know it's not as clear as that, but what I'm wondering is there a third option? And the products that we use in this situation. So within Google, if you're in the Google marketing stack, then there's almost no choice you have to use Google and GA4 is just ingraining this more intrinsically into the product where you have to use this product if you want to use Google Ads, DV/SA360, those products as well.

[00:25:40] **Daniel:** If I'm not going to use those connections, if I'm not using those integrations, let's say, I'm using this purely from an analytics or data perspective. How far do we go within a software as a service product, something like Adobe Analytics before we get to a point that we say, actually, I'm just going to pull this data directly into a warehouse and pull my data myself, and in a way, build your own stack, but have a first party data stack rather than leading into a third party software provider. Especially when you get to a team of a certain size, like it might be more feasible to take that investment of spend on the software and put it into the people and build your own stack because you end up with the same data, maybe even a better quality or business specific set of data, but where does that line sit do you think?

[00:26:18] **Liam:** It's a question that I've been asked in a previous life and kind of I've wrestled with in other positions as well, like do you buy or build. At what point do you decide to go one way or the other, and I think I've worked in some verticals where they are extremely specific and have a very specific nuance for how we want the data to fit. And it's just having to try and conform to, let's say, user/session/hit scopes can be quite difficult and, having to conform to that structure is hard for certain verticals that is, where it doesn't lend itself well to that. I think it's at that point that you possibly need to start looking at building versus buying. I think we've all done it where we've bent the rules a little bit of tools and we've gone, right, this isn't really the best use case for it, and there probably are other ways that I can do this, that a much better but these are the tools that I've been given.

[00:27:08] **Liam:** I think that's where a build option becomes a bit of a necessity. And I think it's definitely an area where I think when businesses mature in their analytics space, that becomes a real question. I think to get off the ground quickly, obviously you've got your tools out there, an Adobe, a GA (Google Analytics), and they're the ones that can get you running quickly, getting reports out and meeting business needs. I think it's when, as you're trying to bend the restrictions that are put in place to buy analytics platforms and software as a service that do that job. That's where it starts to become a real question for building, and it's one where personally I'd love the challenge to have to build. That would be amazing, not done it before, that's the kind of dream is like, yeah, I can go off and build this thing for ages it will be amazing.

[00:27:56] **Liam:** I think I've worked in certain places where you've had to bend scopes, you've had to bend customisation to do what you want with it, and it doesn't really fit what you need or want it does it and that's it. I think that's where the allure of it's your own structure, you own it, do what you want with it. You can come up with the relationships between different data structures. That's the bit, I think that is exciting, which outside of your traditional ecomm, I think is where the application fits in.

[00:28:23] **Daniel:** So Google is very hard-coded right, it's pretty fixed, it's pretty entry level as well. Hearing you talking about Adobe, it feels like almost like from an analytics perspective, from an analyst perspective, it almost feels like a stepping stone beyond that. It's almost one step up and actually it's more flexible. It's a more analyst friendly product too, to be able to do those manipulations and customisations of visualisations that you want to do. It sounds like then the build option is like that next level and the way you've got this stepping stone, so Adobe analytics is almost like a stepping stone to getting to a point of actually, again, this flexible tool becomes inflexible and you're bending that to an extent and actually then the next logical step is to build. So it almost feels like a stepping stone on that kind of maturity progression, the analytics progression to build and Adobe is that middle layer, starting with Google, Adobe, then build. At least in my head that's the way I'm thinking about things.

[00:29:11] **Liam:** Yeah, I think with GA (Google Analytics) that's not to say that you couldn't get to a point where you can get everything that you need from that tool. I think it's definitely worth pointing out that while in the interface itself, it's not particularly flexible to five levels of granularity or whatever it is you can get from dimensions. You can still get that with a feed out to BigQuery, right. And you can still get to the level of detail and customise what you want. But yeah, I think as everybody matures with their digital data and as everybody matures with their analytics platform. I think the build question becomes a lot more real and I think, yeah, when you've got teams of tens or hundreds, it makes sense to start thinking about that build question.

[00:29:52] **Liam:** Yeah I would agree that as you get into a company that matures, that build option probably is one that is a reality really.

[00:30:00] **Dara:** And thinking about it another way, we've had a lot of conversations with clients about this previously, where if you're not bending your current solution, then you probably don't need the next level up. You probably don't need to build, or you probably don't need the, the more customisable enterprise of a solution. If you're not bending it currently, then you're not making full use of what's already available. Each time you start bending to the point of breaking, you've got to justification to move to that next level.

[00:30:23] **Liam:** Yeah, exactly. But if we think back to GA (Google Analytics) parlons, you've got event action, getting people to think that, that doesn't actually mean the action that somebody is taking, you can just use that for whatever you want, but it doesn't have to be an action. It could just be anything that's like the first instance where I think people have gone, oh yeah, I can do what I want with this. Do that first to really see what you can maximise out of that before you even start thinking about building out your own data pipelines and everything else.

[00:30:50] **Daniel:** Yeah how many websites have we implemented enhanced ecommerce tracking that's not actually purchasing anything, right. The blank spaces that we fill in with whatever we need to do.

[00:30:58] **Liam:** Yeah, they're just data structures that relate in a certain way that you can, like you say, you can use to put whatever you want in and it's once you understand that and go, okay, it's the relationship between the data that I'm using, it's that kind of north star build that you start to go, if only the data worked in this way, then that I think is where it's come back to that build question that's where it starts to be really interest.

[00:31:22] **Dara:** Okay, I think I'll try my best to summarise. So it's been a really good conversation, and I think what we probably, the three of us knew beforehand anyway, is it's not really a case of GA (Google Analytics) versus Adobe or GA (Google Analytics) versus anything else. It's more about understanding what the needs of the business are, and then picking a tool or multiple tools that are going to meet those requirements.

[00:31:43] **Dara:** Whether you're running with one analytics tool or multiple in parallel, governances is hugely important and it's once you've decided what it is that you need from that tool or those different platforms, it's sticking with that and making sure that everybody using the data has that understanding of what the differences are between the different data sources, and really knows how to play to the strengths of each one. Okay time to shift gears. So Liam, if you've listened to the show before, you'll know, this is the bit where we awkwardly talk about what we try and do outside of our work to wind down. And usually it's the bit where everybody finds out how boring Dan and I really are outside of work as we scramble to try and think of something interesting to say, but because you haven't answered that before, you've got no excuse. So what have you been doing outside of your day job to wind down and relax lately?

[00:32:29] **Liam:** So, well recently this weekend, I'm not sure if either of you play video games, but Elden Ring came out. So Elden Ring for me has been the sort of brunt of my time to just try and unplug from the world.

[00:32:41] **Daniel:** You're in good company Liam, how many hours have you clocked?

[00:32:44] **Liam:** So when it came out on Friday, I sort of woke up a little bit early to play it, had it preloaded, woke up early to play it. So I've been busy over the weekend, but I've managed to put in two to three hours on the Friday, and it's one where I've tried to keep away from any material online. Like here are the best things to do for a beginner. I just want to organically explore that on my own. So I've just been getting stomped left, right, and centre I think, just because I've gone into completely different areas that I really shouldn't be in, but yeah. That's the magic is being crushed and then actually realising what to do.

[00:33:15] **Daniel:** It makes the highs that much higher when you do get it.

[00:33:18] **Liam:** Yeah, exactly. So that has been, and probably will continue to be my time sink for the next few weeks and months.

[00:33:25] **Dara:** Well I'm not going to pretend to understand that because I'm not a gamer, but I know Dan is, so Dan, have you been also been gaming or have you been doing something else?

[00:33:33] **Daniel:** Yeah, I'm very aware of Elden Ring I haven't got it and I probably to be brutally honest, probably won't for many years. These are the kinds of games that soul crushing element of games I love playing if there's like a a few of us playing it or even watching streams of it, but actually playing it myself it's not my bag. I love the game, but it's not a solo adventure for me, I'm more of a story-based, single-player RPG, or even like the kind of classic point and click adventure game kind of gamer. But that aside, my wind down this week is not video games. Actually I'm a little bit late to the party with this, and I understand there's a huge hype and it's a TV show that came out a couple of years ago. Which I believe me by the same guys that made Scrubs back in the day, probably why I like it so much, but it's about an American football coach that comes over to the UK to coach an English football club, and he's just the most positive human being in the world and it's just such a lovely TV show it's on apple TV+. I think me and my wife did all of series one and we started series two from Friday. So we've just done it over the weekend. It's just been absolutely amazing and like I said, a little bit late to the party, but I highly recommend anyone that can check it out, check out Ted Lasso, it's just lovely, happy TV.

[00:34:33] **Liam:** We've done exactly the same recently where we burned through season one, and it's just so wholesome. Like it's just so positive and wholesome. Just everything like the whole culture shock he has from being American in this like quintessentially British town and trying to get up to speed with football. It's definitely worth a watch.

[00:34:51] **Daniel:** Yeah it's like that same wholesome feeling you get from watching the Pottery Throwdown or the Bake Off or something like that where it's just nice. It's just nice. How about you Dara, what have you been doing?

[00:35:00] **Dara:** Well, that's even more recommendations to watch Ted Lasso, but I haven't done that yet, but I will, I'm convinced. Mine's half an update, which just proves what I said about being pretty boring. So it's been a while since I've given a snake update on the podcast, Liam, for your benefit, I've got two rescue snakes and I'm waiting to get a third one. So the snake didn't arrive over the weekend, but the vivarium did, and this is going to be the biggest of the three snakes so that's why it took so long for the vivarium to come.

[00:35:26] **Dara:** So I spent the weekend trying to figure out where it's going to go because it's seven foot by three foot by three foot. So I was scratching my head thinking, and I made a bit of a mistake, I thought it was seven foot high but it's seven foot wide. So my plan for where it was going to go is out the window and I need a plan B. So yeah, the snake hasn't arrived yet, but I've been busy trying to figure out whether the vivarium is going to go and then putting it together.

[00:35:48] **Daniel:** So basically you've got a glass coffin sitting in your house right now trying to find a place for it.

[00:35:52] **Dara:** Yeah, that's exactly what I have.

[00:35:54] **Daniel:** Is this the one that fell off the back of a truck and broke?

[00:35:58] **Dara:** Not the snake, but the vivarium. Yeah thankfully, no snakes fell off the back of lorries not that I know of, anyway.

[00:36:04] **Liam:** No snakes were harmed in the making of this podcast.

[00:36:07] **Dara:** Exactly. Exactly. Okay just before I wrap up. Liam, for anyone listening, where can people find out a bit more about you assuming you want people to find out more about you? It's perfectly fine if you don't.

[00:36:19] **Liam:** Sure, yeah reach me on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/liam-galliers/), probably the best place to go to. I would definitely not say Facebook or any other social media given my entire life is probably on there and there's some embarrassing bits you probably don't want to share, but yeah LinkedIn would be your best bet.

[00:36:32] **Dara:** Great and Dan, what about you?

[00:36:34] **Daniel:** Yeah, probably the same. I'm not really active on any other social media other than [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/danielperryreed/). I have a [Twitter](https://twitter.com/dpezrez), but I never, never use it. I've never really been fussed and Facebook, I think I still have an account somewhere buried around, but now LinkedIn is the place to go, and actually recently I've started my own blog, which is probably a really good way of getting in touch if you want to, [danalytics.co.uk](https://danalytics.co.uk/?utm_medium=podcast&utm_source=the_measure_pod&utm_campaign=30). Obviously beautifully named, and I've just started posting some bits around GA4 and some other things like that.

[00:36:57] **Dara:** I just liked the fact that you said I have a [Twitter](https://twitter.com/darafitzgerald) that just goes to show how little you probably use it. I also have a Twitter and I also don't use it, so it's the same for me. [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/darafitzgerald/) is the best place to find me. That's it from us for this week as always, you can find out more about us and find all our previous episodes, if you miss them first time round, or if you didn't miss them, but you want to listen to them again, then you can find them in our archive over at [measurelab.co.uk/podcast](https://www.measurelab.co.uk/podcast/?utm_medium=podcast&utm_source=transcript&utm_campaign=30). Otherwise, if you want to drop us an email podcast@measurelab.co.uk or look me or Dan up on LinkedIn and drop us a line if you want to suggest a topic for us to discuss, or better still, if you want to come on The Measure Pod and actually discuss that topic with us. So normally I would say, join us next time. This actually is episode number 30 for us, and it's becoming a bit of a tradition that we take a little break after each round of 10 episodes.

[00:37:50] **Dara:** So we're going to do exactly the same again, which means sadly, you're not going to hear us for a couple of weeks, but we will be back with more analytics chit-chat in a few weeks time.

[00:37:59] **Dara:** I've been Dara, joined as always by Dan, and this time round by Liam. So it's a bye from me.

[00:38:04] **Daniel:** Bye from me.

[00:38:05] **Liam:** And bye from me.

[00:38:06] **Dara:** See you next time.