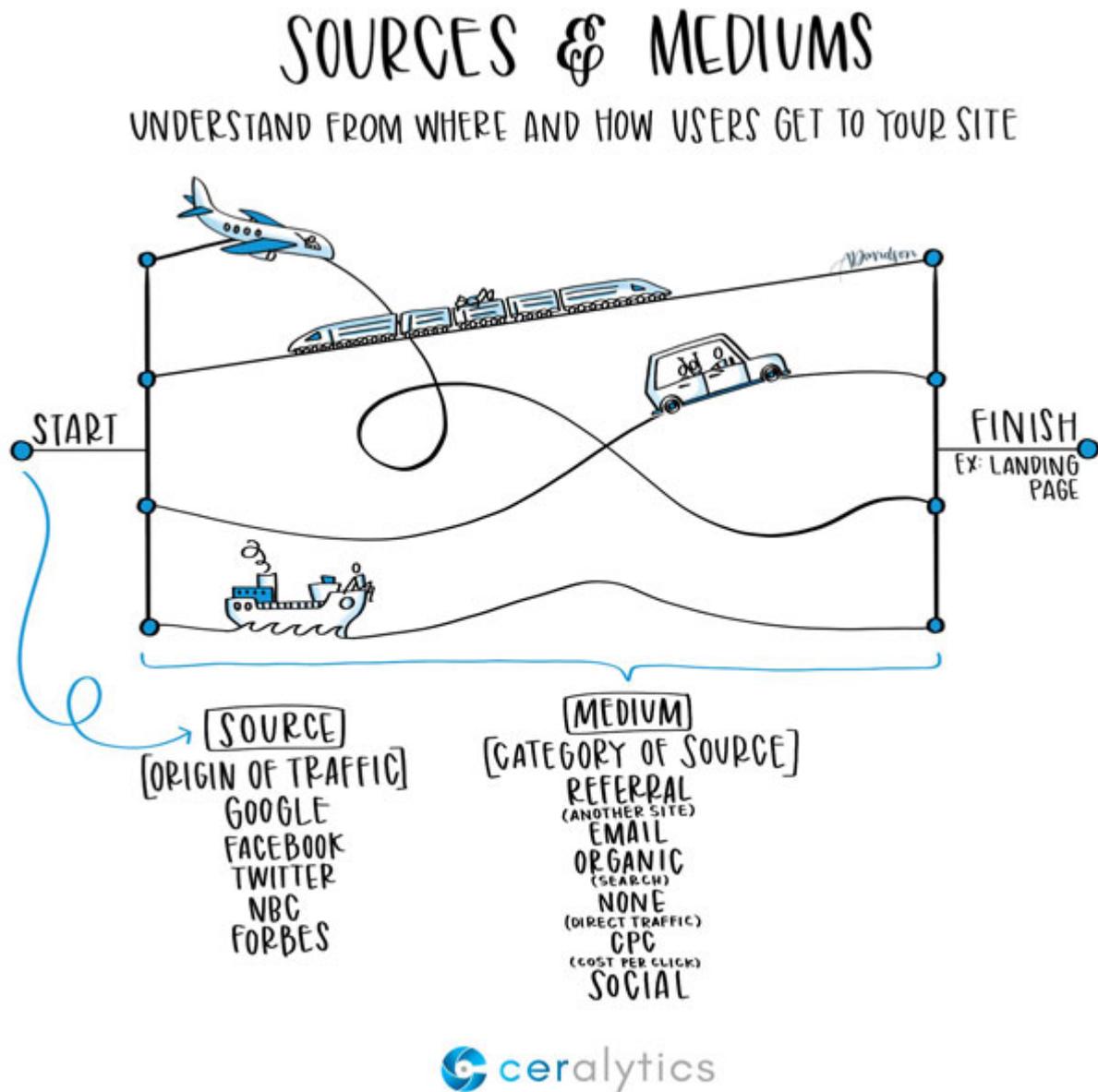# What The Heck are Sources & Mediums?

Brandon Andersen, Chief Strategist, [ceralytics](#)

Understanding where and how your audience gets to your site gives you insight into the inbound channels that you should pursue further and which you should pull back from.

The insights within Google Analytics are incredibly valuable to your organization. But for many marketers and business owners, Google Analytics is a bit daunting.

Let's start with one of the most frequently asked questions.

What are Sources & Mediums?

Sources are where your audience is right before they come to your site. Usually this is a website like Google, Facebook, or any other domain.

Mediums are the vehicles that your audience takes to get from that source to your site. These vehicles can be referral (a click from another site), email (a click within an email), organic (organic search), CPC (cost per click), social (a click from a social post), and more.

One source can use multiple vehicles to get their audience to your site. For example, traffic starting from Google, could come to your site via CPC (AdWords) or organic (organic search). Traffic from Forbes could come to your site via referral traffic, paid traffic, or email.

What are landing pages?

Landing pages are the first page your audience hits when they enter your site. Analyzing landing pages can show you where people enter your site and what they do when they get there. If you have a landing page that is very popular, but has a high [bounce rate](#) and low goal conversion, it may mean something on that page is not delivering what your audience needs.

Analyzing the performance of your landing pages by source and medium will help you identify the needs of your audience based

on how they got to your site. Not all audiences are the same, and those coming from social channels may be more apt to browse your content whereas audiences coming from organic search may quickly bounce because they didn't find the answer they needed in the first few seconds of being on your site.

What about direct traffic?

The oddity in sources and mediums is the concept of **direct traffic**. You'll see direct traffic in most sources and medium reports.

Instead of coming from another site and utilizing a medium to land on your site, direct traffic is like teleportation. People just *POOF* appear on your site. Well, they don't just magically appear…they usually come directly to your site either by typing your URL directly or clicking on a bookmark in your browser. Since Google Analytics can't determine an origin for that traffic, the source gets the label "direct." And since there's no vehicle they used to get there, medium is labeled (none).

Next steps to take

If you have access to Google Analytics for your website, you can find Source & Medium reports under Acquisition > All Traffic > Source/Medium. Take a look at the different sources and how audiences from them perform on your site. Which sources and mediums produce the most goal conversions and engagement? Which are under performing?

To view landing pages by source and medium, click on "Secondary Dimension" and start typing "landing page." It should auto-complete (because it's Google after all), and you should be able to select "Landing Page." Now you will see the top landing pages and which sources and mediums brought them to your site.

About Sketchalytics

Each week we send out a micro-lesson in marketing and/or business.

Our goal is **NOT** to give you best practices to go out and do what other people do. You can get that anywhere.

Instead, our goal is to **give you knowledge** that you can apply to your own organization to make the best decisions possible.

If you know anyone who you think would benefit from Sketchalytics, please feel free to share this with them so they can sign up.