

User-journey analysis: Universal Credit

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1. Identify the problem and develop a hypothesis

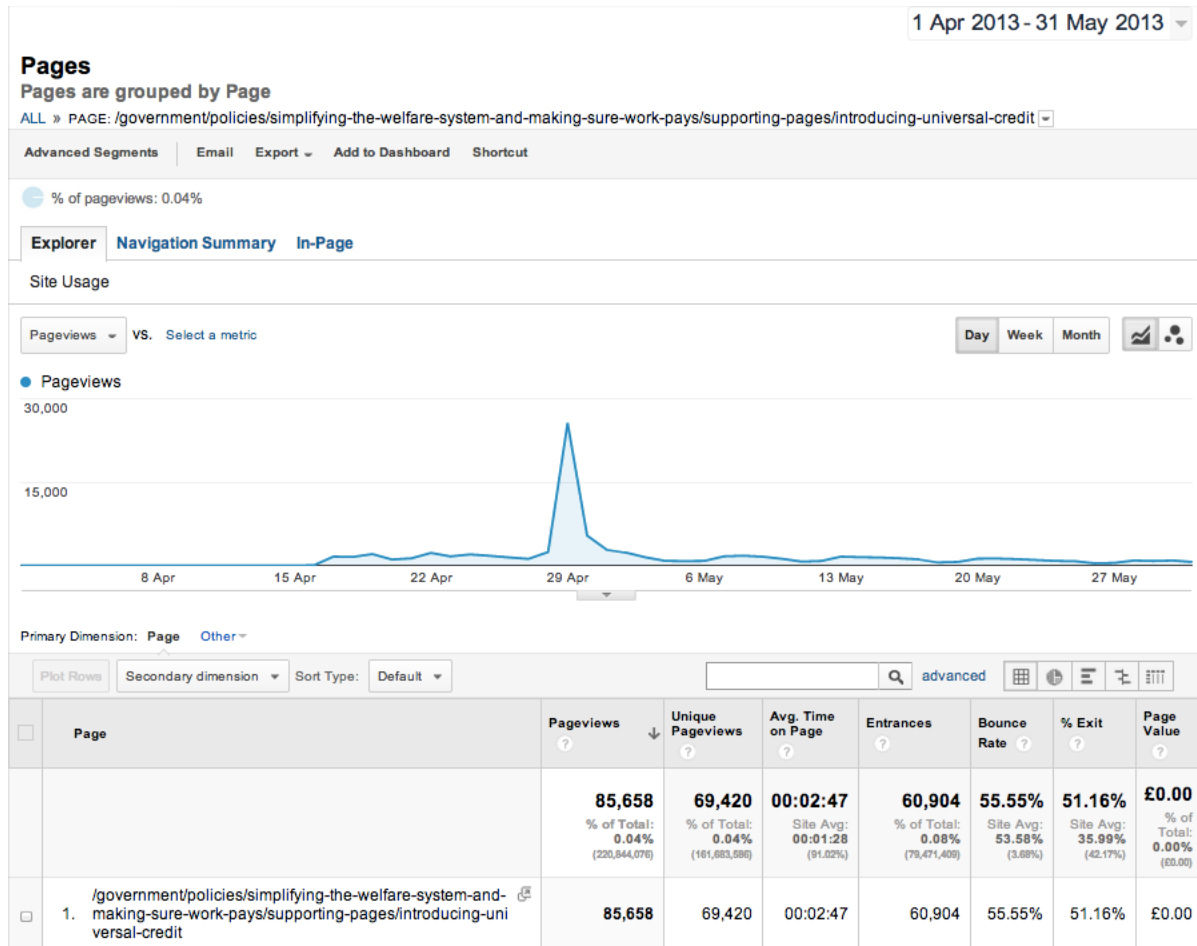
Google Analytics easily becomes a rabbit warren that doesn't yield answers if you don't start with a hypothesis. Step into the magical slippers of the user and try to replicate their journey to get an idea of what could be causing a usage anomaly, success, or failure.

Google is often the culprit

Around 70% of traffic to GOV.UK comes from external search. So spikes and drops in visits will often be due to how well-optimised they are for the keywords (user needs) that people are searching for in external search engines, which strongly influences their position in search results.

Universal Credit spike

For example Janet, a GOV.UK Content Co-ordinator noticed a huge spike in traffic to a Universal Credit policy page.



Policy page and mainstream guide both covering Universal Credit

The spike occurred on the day that the new scheme was announced, so an increase was expected. But we had two items on Universal Credit - the policy page which shot up (report above), and a mainstream guide targeted at people claiming the benefit.

Janet wondered if some of the people going to the policy page wanted the citizen-focused content, which was aimed at allowing people to apply for the benefit rather than informing them of the details of the policy.

Hypothesis - wrong page appearing first in Google

Janet searched for 'universal credit' in Google and saw that the policy page appeared above the mainstream guide.

Google universal credit

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Ad related to **universal credit** ⓘ

Universal Credit 0300 500 5000
www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/
 Benefits Are Changing In 2013. Find Out How To Get Ready
 [Privacy](#)

News for universal credit

 [Most families 'will gain nothing' from Universal Credit, new report says](#)
 The Independent - 14 hours ago
 The vast majority of families will gain nothing from the introduction of the Universal Credit, the Government's flagship welfare reform scheme, ...

[Universal credit is trouble, but it's no welfare revolution](#)
 The Guardian - 30 Apr 2013

[Introducing Universal Credit - Simplifying the welfare system and ...](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/...the.../supporting-pages)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/...the.../supporting-pages> ▾
 Apr 26, 2013 – Universal Credit will help claimants and their families to become more independent and will simplify the benefits system by bringing together a ...

[Universal Credit - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/overview)
<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/overview> ▾
 4 days ago – Universal Credit is a new benefit that has started to replace 6 existing benefits with a simpler, single monthly payment if you're out of work or on ...

She thought that lots of people were replicating this search and choosing the first result, whereas the second result was more targeted to their need.

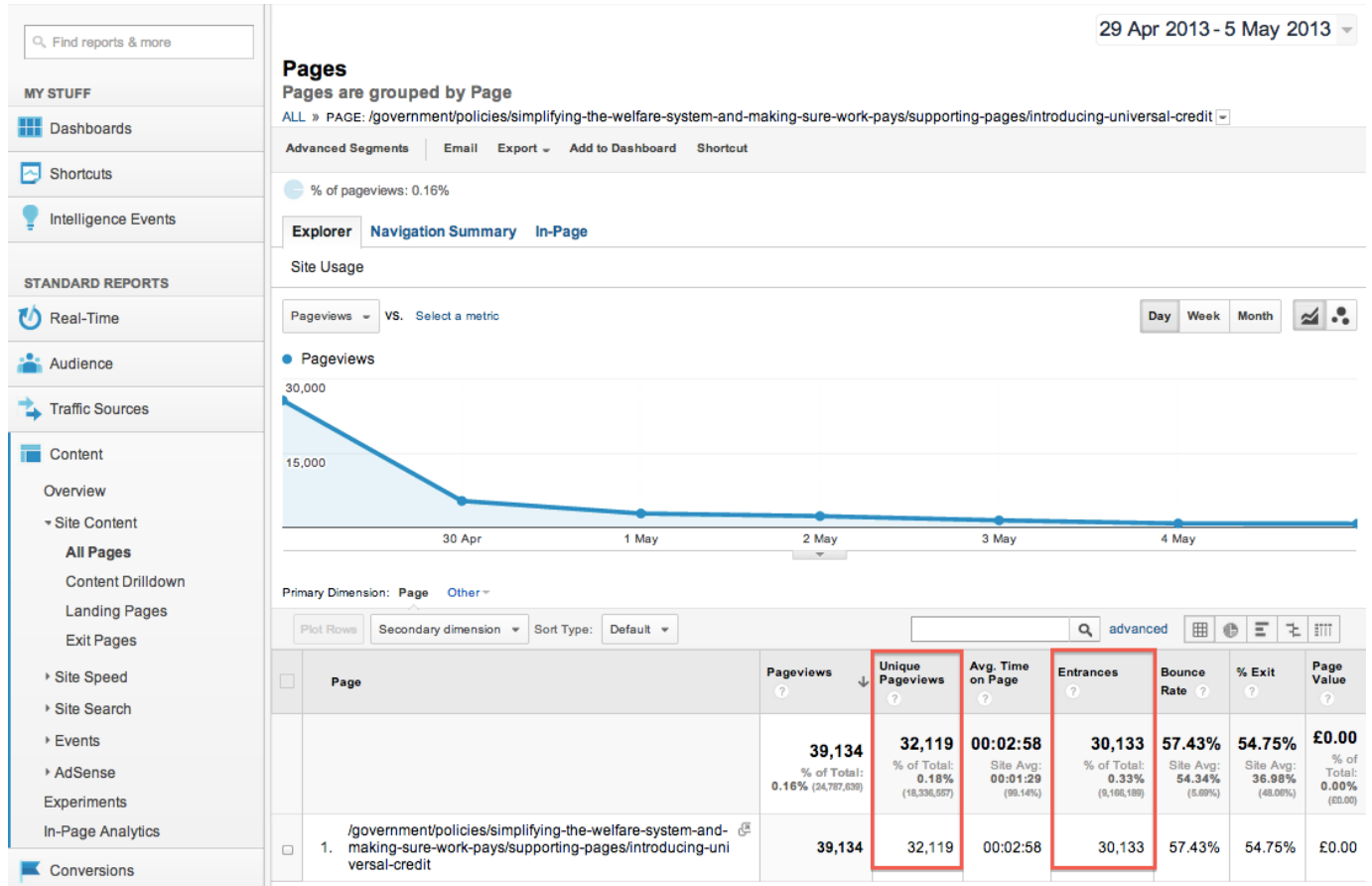
2. Test hypothesis: where is traffic coming from?

1. Choose profile 'www.gov.uk > Single Domain (Entire site - FILTERED) (DEFAULT)' in top left drop-down of Google Analytics
2. Choose time period - in this case the week covering the spike
3. Open report Content > Site content > All pages

Entrances

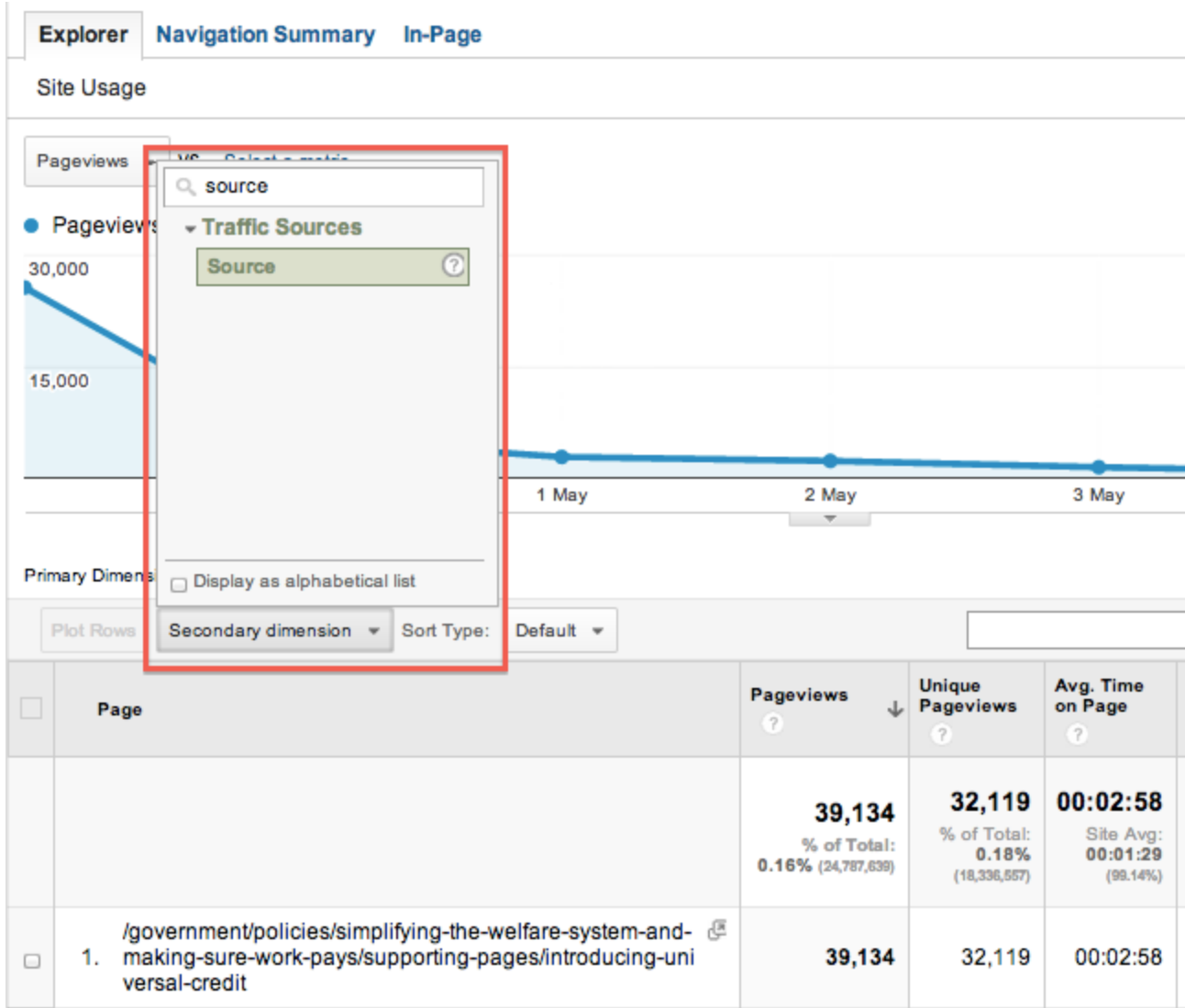
In the report you can find out how many people are landing on this page from outside GOV.UK in

the Entrances column. In this case it's about 30K out of 32K unique pageviews, which is a large majority.



Source

You can find out more about the source of the traffic by selecting the Secondary dimension button and searching for 'source'.



Then order the results by Entrances by clicking on this label, to show you how much traffic has come directly from Google to the policy page.

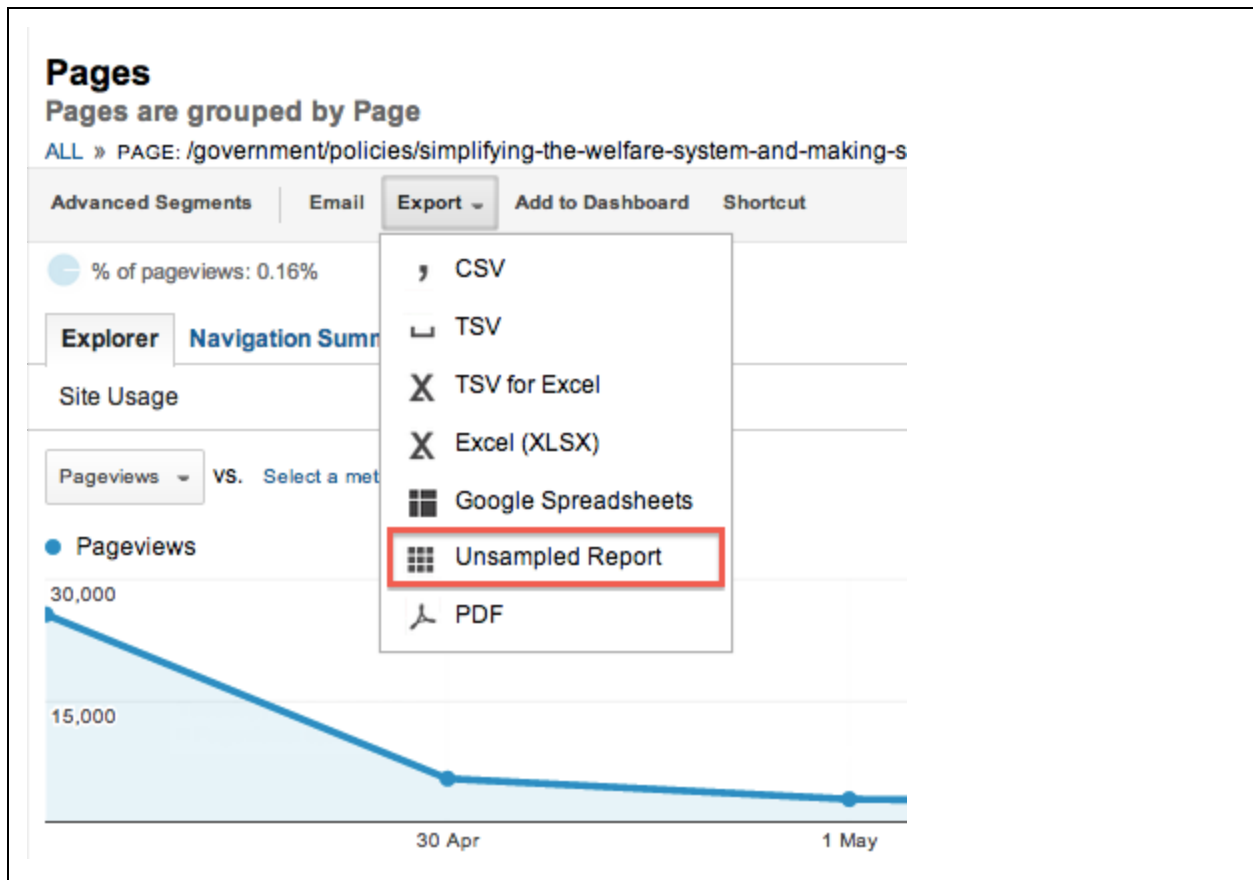
<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	Source	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances
			38,144 % of Total: 0.15% (24,787,639)	31,204 % of Total: 0.17% (18,336,557)	00:02:44 Site Avg: 00:01:29 (83.03%)	28,717 % of Total: 0.31% (8,168,188)
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	google	28,167	22,935	00:02:44	21,784
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	(direct)	2,858	2,338	00:03:24	2,190
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	bing	1,076	779	00:02:50	631
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	bbc.co.uk	594	557	00:02:04	482
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	google.co.uk	482	482	00:03:38	482
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	yahoo	779	742	00:01:02	482
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	facebook.com	520	445	00:01:43	445
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	m.facebook.com	371	334	00:00:08	334
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	direct.gov.uk	148	148	00:01:26	148
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	m.bbc.co.uk	148	148	00:02:54	148

For the Universal Credit policy page Google is clearly the main source of traffic, generating around 23K out of 31K unique pageviews.

Google quirk one - sampled data

Applying a secondary dimension means that we can only get data from a small sample of traffic, in this case 2.69% of visits. This is a large sample and a clear majority, but often you'll need to generate an unsampled report to get actual data.

Some reports do not allow unsampled data (e.g. Navigation report). Where I've referenced sampled data in this case study I've included the label 'SAMPLED'.



Keyword

Now that we've isolated Google as the main source of traffic we can find out what keywords people are using to get to the page. Search for 'keyword' in the secondary dimension field, again ordering results by Entrances.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	Keyword	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances
			38,131 % of Total: 0.15% (24,787,639)	31,193 % of Total: 0.17% (18,336,557)	00:02:44 Site Avg: 00:01:29 (83.10%)	28,709 % of Total: 0.31% (8,166,189)
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	universal credit	14,882	12,209	00:02:47	11,875
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	(not set)	7,682	6,346	00:02:47	5,455
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	(not provided)	6,569	5,270	00:02:32	4,862
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	universal benefit	816	631	00:01:02	631
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	universal credits	668	445	00:02:26	408
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	what is universal credit	334	297	00:03:11	297
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	universal credit 2013	223	223	00:01:31	223
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	how does universal credit work	111	111	00:00:00	111
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit	new benefit system 2013	111	111	00:00:00	111

A good proportion of traffic is coming from the keyword 'universal credit'.

Google quirk two - obscured keywords

There are also almost 7K entrances that are unaccounted for in (not set) and (not provided) rows which we can assume hide more searches for 'universal credit'.

(Not provided) covers keywords that are obscured from us because people have either blocked Google from tracking their searches, or are logged into their Google accounts. (Not set) covers the visits that haven't come from external search, so don't generate keywords.

Hypothesis confirmed

We've confirmed that a large proportion of traffic is replicating Janet's search, and we'd at least like them to have the option to navigate to the citizen-focused guide from the policy page.

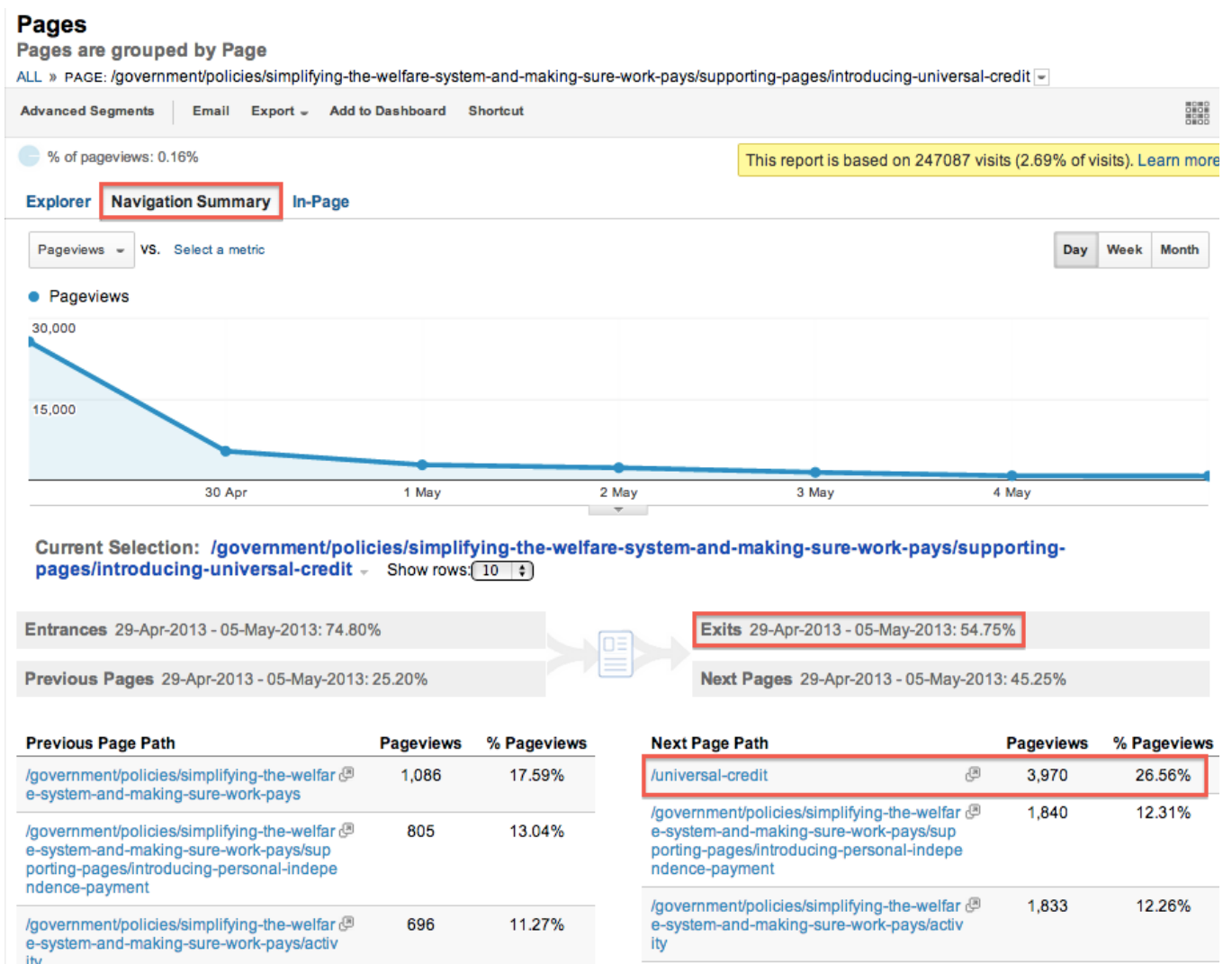
3. Develop solution: where is traffic going next?

How can we get the right page appearing first?

One option is to provide users with a link from the policy to the guide.

There was a link from the policy to the guide, but it was at the bottom of the page. We can check if this is sending any traffic over.

While still in the pages report, choose the Navigation summary tab to find out where people are going to next from the policy page. You can see that 55% are exiting GOV.UK, and 27% of people who stay on the site go to the guide - /universal-credit (SAMPLED).



Janet made the link more obvious by moving it to the top of the page, and presenting it in a

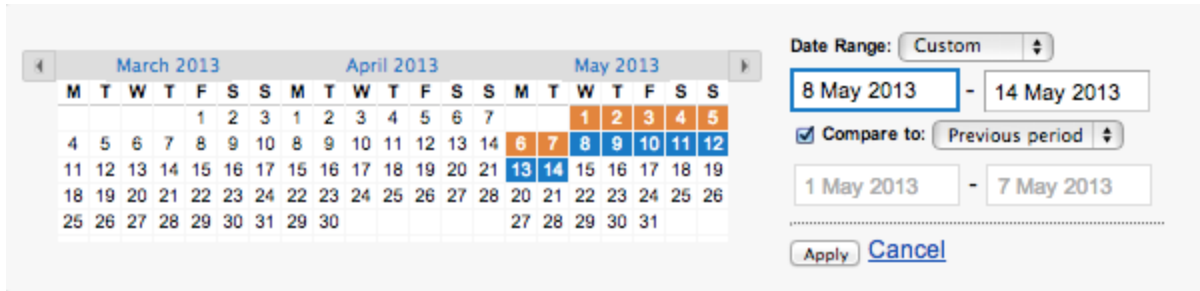
call-out box on May 7.

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website header with the logo and 'Inside Government' navigation menu. The main heading is 'Policy Simplifying the welfare system and making sure work pays'. Below this, there is a navigation bar with 'Policy', 'Detail', and 'Latest' tabs. The 'Policy' tab is selected. On the left, there is a list of related links: 'Introducing Universal Credit', 'Introducing Personal Independence Payment', 'Introducing a cap on the amount of benefits working age people can receive', 'Improving the Work Capability Assessment', 'Making sure housing support is fair and affordable', and 'Welfare Reform Act 2012 regulations'. The main content area is titled 'Supporting detail: Introducing Universal Credit'. A red-bordered call-out box contains the text: 'This page explains the government's policy on Universal Credit. If you are looking for information about how Universal Credit will affect you, see [information for Universal Credit claimants](#).' Below this, the text reads: 'Universal Credit is a new single payment for people who are looking for work or on a low income. Universal Credit will help claimants and their families to become more independent and will simplify the benefits system by bringing together a range of working-age benefits into a single payment. It will be introduced in 2013 and will replace:'

4. Measure change: compare different time periods

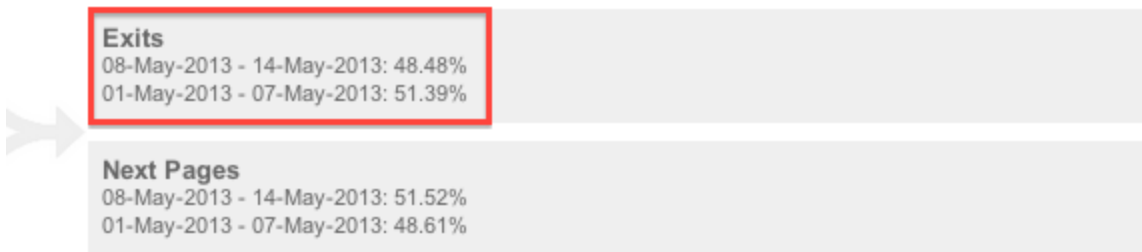
We can check whether this has increased traffic to /universal-credit by comparing time periods before and after the change.

While still in the Content > Site content > All pages, specify which time periods you want to compare.



Traffic from policy to guide increases

People navigating from the the [Universal Credit policy page](#) to the [citizen-focused guide](#) increased by 37% - 8 - 14 May compared to 1 - 7 May.



Next Page Path	Pageviews	% Pageviews
/universal-credit		
08-May-2013 - 14-May-2013	1,241	32.39%
01-May-2013 - 07-May-2013	984	23.65%
% Change	26.12%	36.91%

Fewer people are exiting, and more people are navigating to /universal-credit (SAMPLED). Result!

Google reflects user need by surfacing /universal-credit first in search results

Google started surfacing /universal-credit above the policy page for the keyword 'universal credit', hopefully as a result of Janet's actions.



universal credit



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Ads related to **universal credit**

Universal Credit 0300 500 5000
www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/
Benefits Are Changing In 2013. Find Out How To Get Ready

Email address

Subscribe to newsletter Privacy

Info On Tax Credits

Help With Childcare Costs

Tax Credits & Childcare

Tax Credits For Carer's

Universal Credit 2013 - The UK benefits system is changing

www.shelter.org.uk/Universal-Credit

It may affect you and your family.

Universal Credit - GOV.UK

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/overview>

May 30, 2013 – **Universal Credit** is a new benefit that has started to replace 6 existing benefits with a simpler, single monthly payment if you're out of work or on ...

Universal credit in danger of failing, official Whitehall review says ...

www.guardian.co.uk > Society > Benefits

May 24, 2013 – Major Projects Authority's performance report on 170 most expensive projects gives flagship scheme same 'amber-red' status as HS2.

Universal credit: the essential guide | Society | guardian.co.uk

www.guardian.co.uk > Society > Benefits

by Amelia Gentleman - in 39 Google+ circles
Apr 29, 2013 – The flagship policy in the government's welfare reform programme is being piloted on 29 April and is due to go live nationally this October.

As a result traffic to the policy page decreased.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	Pageviews ?	Unique Pageviews ?	Avg. Time on Page ?	Entrances ?
		56.36% ↓ 4,611 v. 10,567	56.09% ↓ 3,756 v. 8,554	8.33% ↓ 00:02:37 v. 00:02:51	62.43% ↓ 2,815 v. 7,492
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. /government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit				
	29-May-2013 - 04-Jun-2013	4,611	3,756	00:02:37	2,815
	01-May-2013 - 07-May-2013	10,567	8,554	00:02:51	7,492
	% Change	-56.36%	-56.09%	-8.33%	-62.43%

And traffic to the universal-credit page that Google surfaces first increased.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	Pageviews ?	Unique Pageviews ?	Avg. Time on Page ?	Entrances ?
		190.18% ↑ 4,611 v. 1,589	190.42% ↑ 3,578 v. 1,232	16.26% ↑ 00:01:37 v. 00:01:24	322.02% ↑ 3,085 v. 731
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. /universal-credit/overview				
	29-May-2013 - 04-Jun-2013	4,611	3,578	00:01:37	3,085
	01-May-2013 - 07-May-2013	1,589	1,232	00:01:24	731
	% Change	190.18%	190.42%	16.26%	322.02%