

# Observatory Discovery Research

## Findings from talking with APS data analysts and practitioners



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## About this document

This document contains high-level insights from a Discovery research stage with APS data analysts.

In this stage we undertook 18 one-hour semi-structured interviews with subscribers of the gov.au Observatory, from 13 agencies. Information was captured and synthesised using a thematic analysis process, and analysed to make sense of the experiences we heard from participants. The following insights refer to the general workplace experience of Observatory subscribers.

Where appropriate we have factored in differences between professional experience between users based on their stage of career development, and differences between organisational maturity when it comes to integrative data analytics practices.

**A note on generalisability.** Due to the sample size readers should be cautious when generalising the findings of this report to broader contexts.

# Who are our users?

## Our **primary users** are **Analysts**

Analysts work in varying areas across the APS and occupy different roles across organisations.

We spoke with analysts in web, communications and content teams.

These analysts had various roles such as UX designer, product manager, web team lead and data analyst.

## **Analysts are at different stages of development in their Google Analytics journey.**

We've identified and created personas for users at three development stages: **Beginner**, **Intermediate**, and **Advanced**.

This categorisation helps us to view our users on a continuum and to design services to assist users at one stage of development to move to the next.

## Who are our secondary users?

Our **secondary users** are the **Stakeholders** working with analysts.

Stakeholders are the recipients and users of the analytics work conducted by analysts.

We know through our interviews with analysts that understanding stakeholders is important for the Observatory as they are the end-user of analytics work.

Across organisations, stakeholders include:

- Executives
- Business/line areas
- Content/product owners
- Communications teams

# Key Findings

What did we learn about analysts and their work context?



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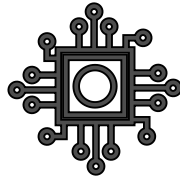
- 1 Our primary users are the analysts who use Google Analytics. Our secondary users are their stakeholders who receive the outputs of their work.
- 2 Users are unsure what the role of the Observatory is, what it does and how it can support them.
- 3 Users are at different stages of development in their analytics journey, which means they need different things from the Observatory.
- 4 It can be difficult to establish 'an analytics service' because of the ad-hoc nature of how requests are received and answered.
- 5 Users would like to establish a greater sense of purpose behind the use of Google Analytics and know how to define and measure success.
- 6 Users engage other digital tools alongside Google Analytics to understand how their users engage with websites.

- 7 Users are unsure of the best way to communicate findings with their stakeholders. They are also unclear on what stakeholders need from analytics.
- 8 Organisational culture and the attitudes of stakeholders towards analytics impacts our users' professional journey and ability to deliver value to agencies.
- 9 Users would like to have more time to conduct independent analysis and encourage stakeholders to ask more complex questions of the data.
- 10 Users would like to improve their analysis and communication skill to create actionable insights which result in user-centered changes to the website.
- 11 The situation during COVID-19 has seen an increase in demand for web analytics in users' organisations. This as an opportunity to promote analytics and demonstrate its value to stakeholders.

# Users face a variety of barriers to enhancing services



**Culture**



**Technology**



**Visibility  
of efforts**



**Resources**



**Security**



**Relationships**



**Capability**



**Perception**



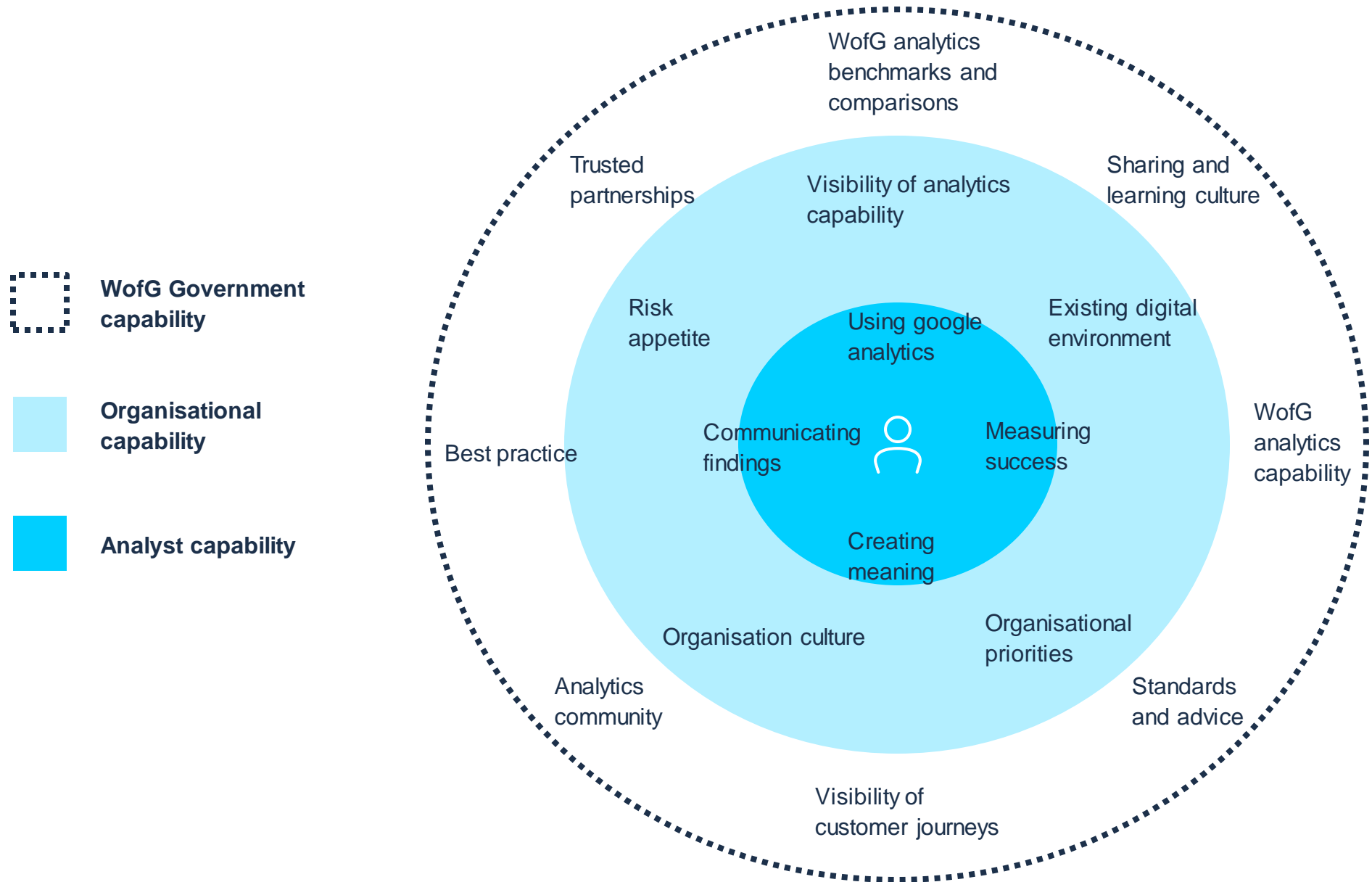
**Data literacy**



**User-perspective**



# What factors impact analytics users?



# In your words

## Measuring success

“We don’t have anything at the moment to measure what a successful transaction is.”

“Our organisation is complex, it’s very difficult to come up with ways of measuring.”

## Stakeholder buy-in

“When you don’t have a senior manager understanding the value of it... if they don’t champion it, no one is going to follow that path.”

“It’s really hard to get executive to buy into Beta.”

## Data-driven insights

“We haven’t done much integration between sources.”

“Self-directed analysis is how you learn, and it’s preparing you for future questions.”

“For the longest time, it was a lack appreciation of the value of data and analytics and the intelligence that I can bring to understand users and products and make decisions.”

“How should you think about the information you are collecting?”

# In your words

## Sharing data

“We don’t have a history of sharing data externally, I think it’s a good idea. We’re a Government agency, we should be open to the public.”

## Digital Environment

“We have all these pages that have been set-up with all this time and money.”

“We have all these portals which no one is using.”

## Educating Stakeholders

“The education process works well when you have case studies.”

“I’m trying to educate them [stakeholders] at a point in time when they’re interested.”

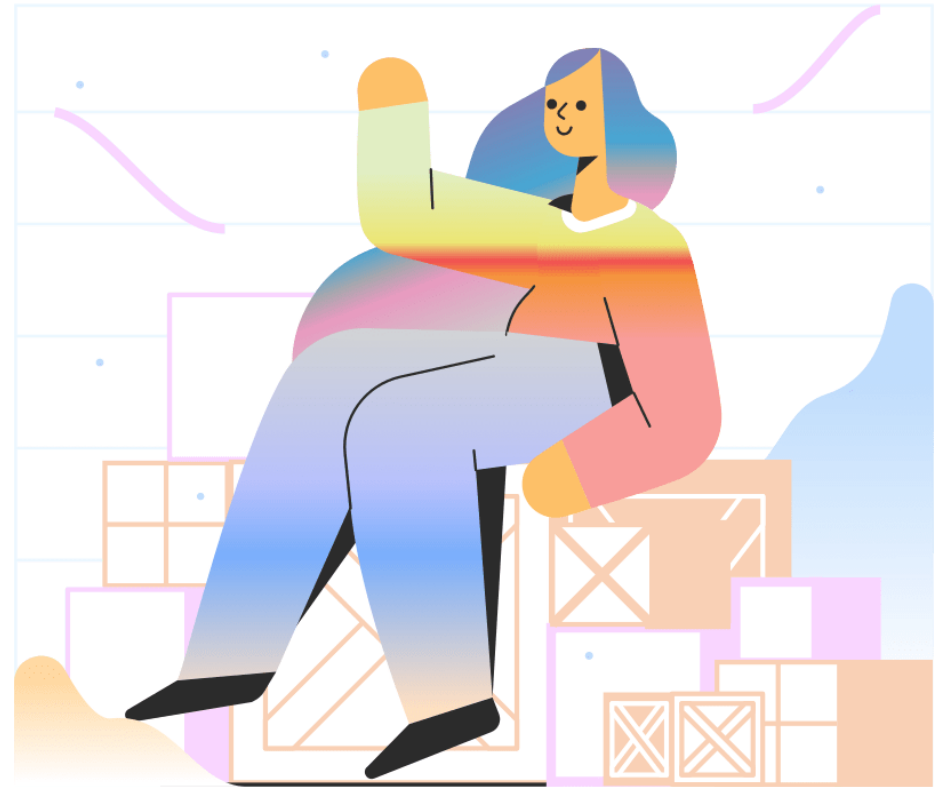
## Data appetite during COVID

“There’s a hunger just to know what the public is thinking.”

“You’ve got live data coming from a website that taps into what Australians are thinking.”

## Future Considerations

How might an Observatory service better support analysts?



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1 The Observatory can provide 'analytics leadership' through best practice guidelines, standards and advice.

2 The Observatory can create practical tools and templates to support users which are aligned to best practice.

3 The Observatory can facilitate sharing and learning relationships across Government.

4 The Observatory can provide more training and learning opportunities.

5 The Observatory can establish benchmarks, comparisons and trends between Government websites.

6 The Observatory can explore user journeys across Government websites.

- 7 The Observatory can ensure that Whole of Government analysis is simple, intuitive and accessible to stakeholders.
- 9 The Observatory can create compelling narratives about the value of analytics for users to tell a story with their stakeholders.

- 8 The Observatory can support users to have discussions with their stakeholders about security and privacy concerns.
- 10 The Observatory can facilitate relationships between peer-organisations to help promote the role of analytics across similar organisations.

# What changes do analysts want to see?

## Measuring Success

### Current State

Success is based on the generation and publication of content on the website and performance is measured on surface-level metrics, namely page views.

### Future State

Success is based on designing for the user experience and making changes to the website in response to user insights. Performance is measured using analytics and other digital tools to understand how the user has engaged with the website and what their experience has been.

# What changes do analysts want to see?

## Decision making, workflows and analytics

### Current State

Data insights don't play a regular and consistent role in informing decisions and workflows. When analytics are used, it is surface level and vanity metrics that inform decisions.

### Future State

Stakeholders regularly look to analytics to inform decisions and ask for insights that interrogate different aspects of user engagement with the website. When making decisions, stakeholders have strategic questions that analytics can help answer.



# What changes do analysts want to see?

## Understanding the user experience

### Current State

Understanding the user experience is an ad-hoc concern across organisations. There are discussions around being user-centric in website design but no established patterns of incorporating user insights into workflows.

### Future State

Using web analytics to understand the user experience is an established and valued practice across stakeholder teams. There are lines of communication between stakeholders and analysts to receive regular data insights on user engagement. Insights are used to inform how stakeholders work to deliver services to users.

# What changes do analysts want to see?

## Stakeholder engagement

### Current State

Stakeholders aren't always aware of the work of the analytics team, and they're unlikely to actively seek insights other than vanity metrics like page views.

### Future State

Stakeholders have visibility of the work of the analytics team and see them as trusted partners. Stakeholders are excited to hear about insights uncovered by analysts, and routinely ask analysts questions that help inform the direction and development of their work.

# What changes do analysts want to see?

## Whole-of-Government (WofG) relationships

### Current State

There is little to no discussion between analytics teams across Government. Analysts don't know who their peers are in other organisations and haven't had the opportunity to establish relationships.

### Future State

Analysts have established relationships across organisations and routinely engage to discuss shared opportunities and challenges and to explore pathways for collaboration. Analysts can ask the network for support and advice and openness across organisations has created a learning culture.

# What changes do analysts want to see?

## Understanding the user journey

### Current State

Understanding user journeys is confined to an individual organisation's web estate. Analysts are unable to view the whole picture of how users engage with their website because they don't have visibility of the role of other Government websites in their users' journey.

### Future State

Organisations regularly collaborate to map user journeys across policy and service areas. There are systems in place to understand how users move across the Government estate and engage with Government services. Analysts across organisations work together to present this journey to their stakeholders as a basis for service design.

# What changes do analysts want to see?

## Benchmarking and Comparisons

### Current State

Subscribers are unsure how to benchmark and compare themselves against other organisations. There is no guidance on how to benchmark or on what kind of comparison would be valuable for different organisations.

### Future State

There are clear and relevant benchmarks at WofG level. Organisations can easily access comparison data and know what they should be looking for to measure success against WofG standards.

# What changes do analysts want to see?

## Capabilities and Tools

### Current State

Subscribers have varying levels of capability and tools across organisations. This results in uneven analytics capabilities across Government and weakens the value of a WofG analytics services.

### Future State

Subscribers have similar levels of capability and access to tools across Government. There are standard tools within the Google Analytics 360 subscription, to which all stakeholders receive access and regular support and training.

# Considerations for the development of Observatory services and products

Level	Considerations	
<b>Analyst context</b>	<b>Analyst skills in:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using Google Analytics</li> <li>• Creating meaning from analytics findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating analytics findings with stakeholders</li> <li>• Using analytics to measure success in the organisation</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational context</b>	<b>Organisational maturity in designing for the customer, evidenced by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational culture</li> <li>• Organisational priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing digital environment</li> <li>• Visibility of analytics capability</li> <li>• Risk appetite</li> </ul>
<b>WofG Context</b>	<b>Australian Government capabilities and maturity, evidenced by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WofG analytics capability</li> <li>• Sharing and learning culture</li> <li>• Analytics community</li> <li>• Trusted partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WofG analytics benchmarks and comparisons</li> <li>• Visibility of customer journeys across Government websites/services</li> <li>• WofG standards and advice</li> <li>• Government best practice</li> </ul>

**Thank you**

**For any questions about these insights,  
or if you'd like to help grow data  
analytics capabilities within your  
agency, please reach out to  
[observatory@dta.gov.au](mailto:observatory@dta.gov.au)**



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