# snoobi
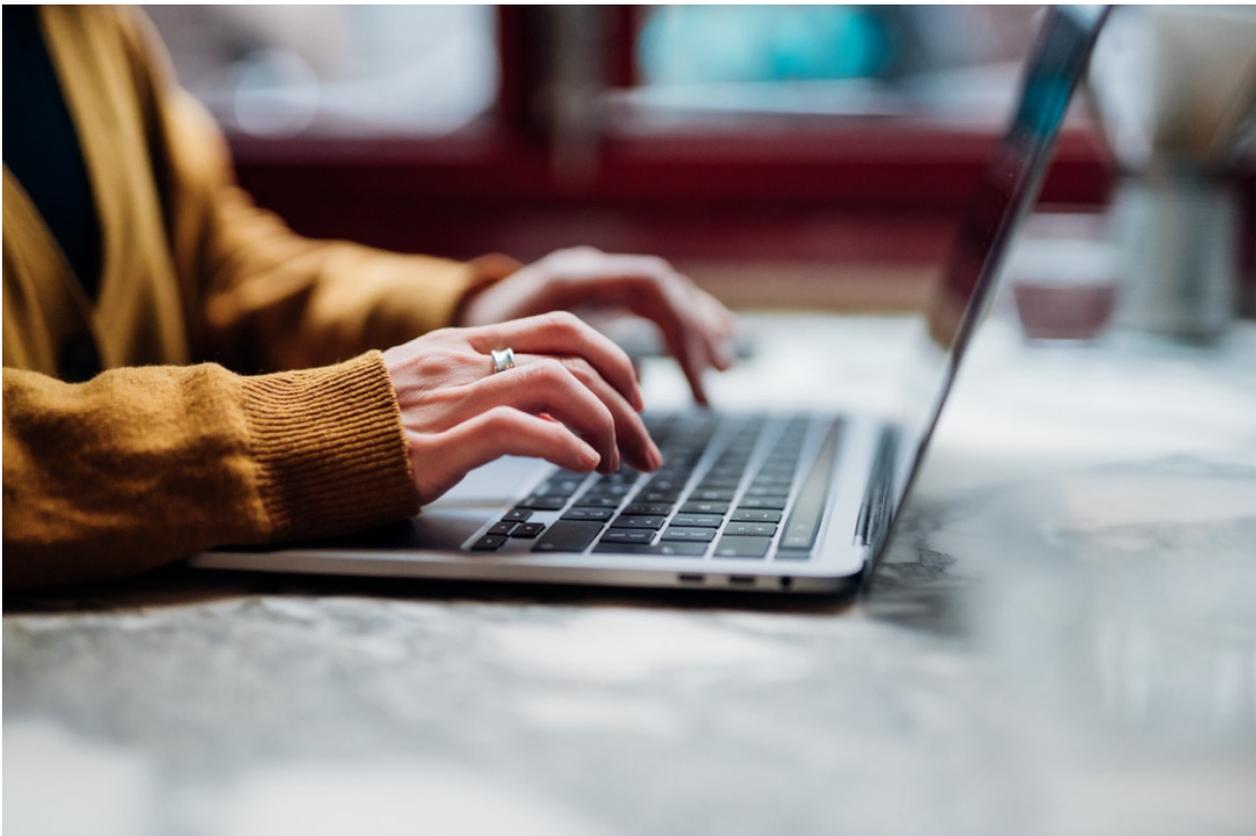
# White Paper
## Using session properties with Snoobi Analytics

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# Introduction

Most of the metrics in web analytics are based on the actions of a visitor during a session. Snoobi knows the concept of 'Site Variables' that collect data during the session, such as a click on a button or other action. In general web analytics, a session refers to a series of interactions that a user has with a website within a specific timeframe. A session begins when a user accesses the website and typically ends after a period of inactivity, moves to a different website or when the user closes the browser.

A session property or parameter is a variable that Snoobi Analytics associates with a session.

For example, user ID and preferred language are both session properties. Because session properties are key and value pairs, you can think of each session property as an entry in the description of a website visit or session.

Properties on a session level are important because they provide insights into the visitor and overall user experience as an element of the session during a single visit to a website. Understanding session-level properties helps analysts and marketers make informed decisions to optimize the website and enhance user engagement. It can also provide additional information about the session as a single entity. Session properties can capture additional behavioral elements such as logged-in use.

With the 2024 release of Snoobi Analytics we extended the option to add fully customizable properties to Snoobi's data collection and reporting.
Adding session properties to the data collected from the website visitor, combined with the ability to collect analytics data without the need for cookies provides a wealth of additional information and insight to website owners to optimize the use of the website.

This white paper describes how to implement and use the session properties feature.

Since we realize that the implementation, reporting and gaining benefit of this new feature will not immediately be clear or possible for our clients we also introduce a new support service where we combine the technical implementation with specific training and reporting.

# Session Properties - Technical Implementation

The Technical implementation involves a short snippet of code on at least one of the web pages where also the standard Snoobi tracking code is installed.

The content of the property contains the name of the variable, followed by the content. Variable name and content are completely freeform, you can select the name and content as desired. Choose a name that indicates clearly what content the user can expect.
The code for session properties can be an element in a 'tag manager' such as Google Tag Manager but can also be added by Snoobi Support for the website or added to the website code directly.

## An implementation code example

```
1    <script type="text/javascript">
2    var _saq = _saq || [];
3    _saq.push(['addProperty', 'UserId', '123', 'overwrite']);
4    _saq.push(['addProperty', 'Locale', 'fi', 'overwrite']);
5    _saq.push(['addProperty', 'Department', 'Sales', 'overwrite']);
6    </script>
```

## More details and knowledgebase document

More details about the usage and implementation on a website can be found in the Snoobi Knowledgebase document: (Click here for the document link).

# Session Properties - An example of usage and benefit

One example (and one that has been implemented on several websites with success), is the ability to add information about the visitors' acceptance of cookies.
As Snoobi Analytics has the ability to function with or without cookies it can be important to view what percentage of your website visitors accept cookies and if that impacts the usage of your website, or even the conversion to a website goal (contact form or order, for instance).

In this example we only used 'true' and 'false', for cookies ON or cookies OFF, but this can easily be expanded when multiple cookie levels, such as 'required', 'none', 'marketing' need to be reported.

```html
1  <!-- Snoobi Properties -->
2  <script type='text/javascript'>
3  var _saq = _saq || [];
4  _saq.push(['addProperty', 'cookies', 'true', 'overwrite']);
5  </script>
```

The code used is shown here for cookies=true, replace with cookies=false when the visitor does not accept any cookies.

Of course, the 'true' and 'false' used in this example can also easily be replaced by a JavaScript variable. The actual implementation depends on your website and cookie consent tool.
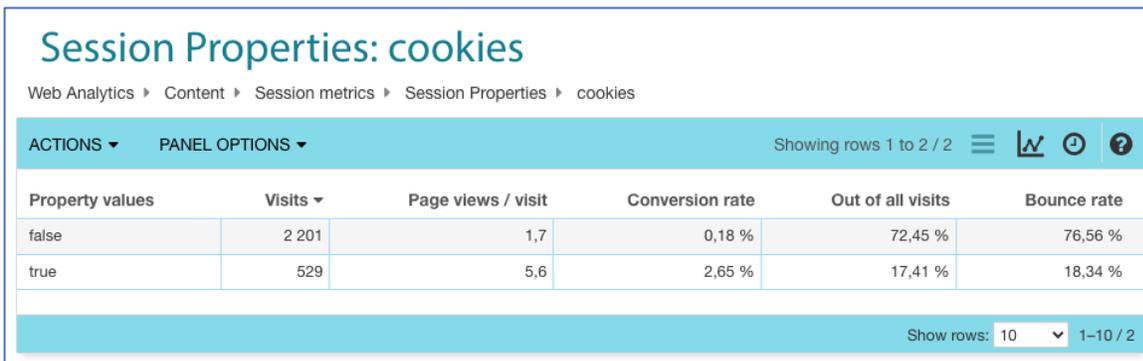
The result of this will be shown in the analytics report under Content | Session metrics. Two sub-menu items are shown:

- One for Site variables, which are variables set as an element during the session, for instance the search term used to search text on the site (and there can be many searches done during a session, so this is not a candidate for a session property.)
- And one for Session properties. That will show a list of the properties collected. By clicking on the name of the property the values and details will be shown.

## How can we benefit from the metrics for this 'Cookies' property?

First, we see that there are many more 'False' values; from a total of 2730 visits less than 20% agreed that cookies can be used.

### Session Properties: cookies

Web Analytics ▶ Content ▶ Session metrics ▶ Session Properties ▶ cookies

| Property values | Visits ▼ | Page views / visit | Conversion rate | Out of all visits | Bounce rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| false | 2 201 | 1,7 | 0,18 % | 72,45 % | 76,56 % |
| true | 529 | 5,6 | 2,65 % | 17,41 % | 18,34 % |

Show rows: 10 ⌄   1–10 / 2

We also see that when cookies were allowed, the page views per visit and conversion rate are a lot higher, and the bounce rate much lower.

We 'miss' some 10% in the total count so there are 10% of the visitors that left the website even before the decision of yes or no cookies could be made. The website on which this is implemented requires the visitor to decide before continuing. So, 10% of the visitors did not want to decide and left immediately.

## What is important?

As the use of the website is a lot better when a visitor agrees on cookies, it may be helpful in this case to change the text of the cookie statement and make it clearer that allowing cookies doesn't mean the visitor is no longer anonymous or sees a lot of pop-up advertising.

Even small changes to the text, or color-changes, size or placement of buttons can have an impact. This website could also consider implementing a 3-level cookie statement for 'Required only', 'Marketing' and 'None' and then review the impact.

What the actual changes are, will depend on the purpose of the website: is this a public service website, commercial site or even a web shop?

# Session Properties - Some more examples

Here are a few more examples where the implementation of Session Properties will help gaining additional insight into how various factors influence the behavior of visitors or users to the website. The possibilities are endless, just realize that you don't need to capture information which is default in Snoobi Analytics anyway, such as the source of the visit, advertising links and any other standard analytics metric.

## Example for any website with a cookie consent manager

The basic code example for sites that are interested to know how the consent for cookies influences the results is already given in the previous chapter. This can be expanded to include additional options. Many Cookie consent managers have options for various types of cookies such as 'Functionality', 'Strictly necessary', 'Analytics' and 'Advertising'. In all cases use 'Overwrite' in the property collection code as consent is a single option per session.

Other examples below for web shops or portals may also be relevant for standard websites.

## Example for web shops

There are a numerous options for web shops to use Session Properties. Here are just two examples but you are only restricted by your own imagination and need for additional insight.

- Add login details to the session. Even when (for privacy reasons), you may not want to add the actual login details, it is helpful to know if a user has a previous login.
  Also, in this case use 'Overwrite' in the collection code.
- Add a property for a filled shopping basket. You can then review how many visitors have completed the filling of a shopping basked but did not complete the purchase. You can then investigate what caused the shopping cart to be abandoned.
  Since filling the shopping basked can have more than one event during a session, use 'Append' in the collection code and make sure the variable content is unique, for instance by adding date-time to the event. Combining this with basic login details provides insight - you should be able to review if this important partner reviews only your latest details, downloads product images and pricing but rarely actually orders something.

## Example for any website with accessibility functions

Many sites have a requirement to conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) international standard.

There will be features on the website that are intended to be used for accessibility, for instance a feature that changes the color and size of the display, or that reads the text on the screen. Capturing that information as an element that is part of the session helps to review if these features are used and optimized.


## Example for portals or intranet sites

Similar as for web shops, gaining insight into the environment of the user or visitor is important as it adds 'intelligence' to the standard web analytics functions and metrics.
A few examples:

- For privacy reasons, you may not want to capture actual names in the web analytics results, but anonymous data such as department or office location may be available for intranet sites. Are they reading important articles and announcements?
  For portals where there are multiple users who can login on behalf of a company, add the company name as a property to the session so you can review web site usage on a company level.
- With more employees working from home, the name of the organization in Snoobi Analytics may be the ISP or VPN connection, adding information about one or more login elements will make analysis of the results easier.
- With portals, you may have several levels of logins. For instance, 'internal' for own employees, 'key account' for important accounts or 'partner' for specific partners. You may want to review web site behavior as a group or more specific if combined with the name of the entity.

## Session Properties - Reporting

The session properties are visible in several locations in the Snoobi Analytics reports.
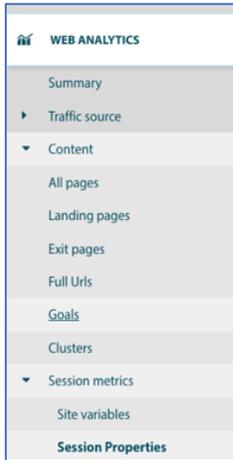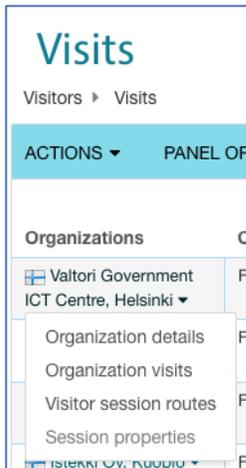
(1) From the main menu.

Under Web Analytics, Content, Session metrics

The menu item Session Properties will show the names of the properties.

Click on a name to see details.

(2) From the Visits panel, for a specific visitor.

In the panel with Visits, click on the down-arrow to see options for the organization.

Then click on Session Properties to view the properties for this visit (aka 'Session').

(3) From a specific session

The last location is in Visitors, then Session Routes. Click on the Session properties link in the header of the session to review the actual properties for the session.

Note that the option is greyed out when there are no properties attached to this session.
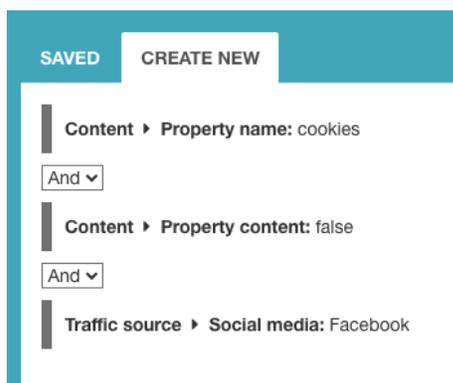
# Session Properties - Segmentation and filtering

As with any metric or variable in Snoobi, segmenting or filtering based on a property is simple.
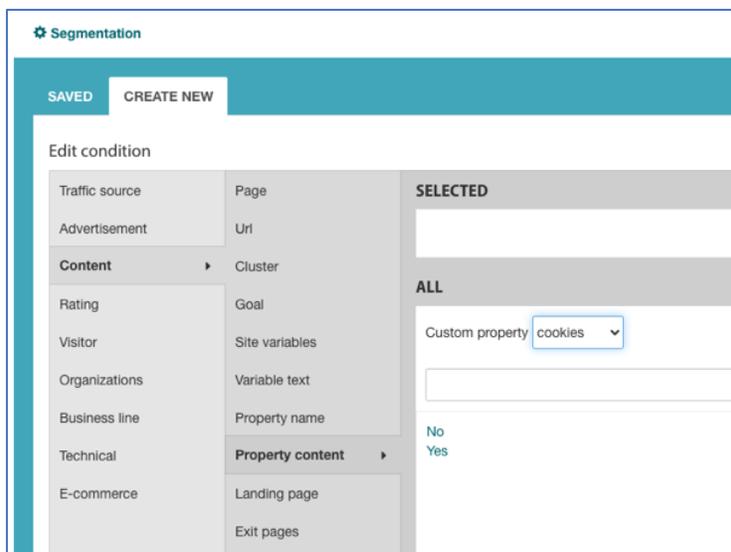


Select Content - Property name for a simple yes/no top-level filter on availability of the property.

That enables a review of how many visits had the property and how many did not.



More details are available in the segmentation on Property content. Select the custom property, and then one or more of the content elements (True/Yes or False/No) in this case.

Combine with other elements to gain more insight, for instance by combining with traffic source, in this case Facebook.

In this example the Snoobi reports will only show sessions that have Facebook as the source of the visit, and cookies were not allowed.

Segments can be saved, shared between Snoobi account users, and used in reporting.

# Session Properties - Implementation assistance

Snoobi is confident that the new Session Properties feature will provide additional insight in the website traffic.

But we also realize that this is a new concept for Snoobi Analytics which needs some time for clients to fully appreciate the benefits and implement.

To support our customers, we created a specific service option for this purpose. There is a choice to use one or more from the elements below to receive assistance in implementation.

A free option for a quick review of your website and discussion if session properties, is also available. This can be beneficial to you and add to the insight in your visitor behavior.

## Session Property implementation consulting elements

We can provide a detailed analysis and advice how you can best implement Session Properties, complete with examples and potential benefit for your organization. Your own administrators and web site developers can use this to fully implement.

Where needed, we can create a technical track as in many cases it is not needed to make changes to your own environment since we can provide account-based custom Properties and capture these as part of your own tracking code on the Snoobi side.

The advantage for you is there is no need to change your website or portal elements, which can be time consuming and costly.

We can also assist with reporting, either by adding elements to existing reports or by the creation of completely new reports.

We can also offer the Snoobi Datafeed assistance for session properties; allowing 3rd party tools and BI-reporting tools to make use of the elements in your session properties, either as a filter option or as a specific json or csv element.

*We believe that with the new Custom Properties feature we have a simple and effective way for our clients to benefit from optional elements added to their web analytics.*