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CJA Derived Fields—Everything You Need to Turbo-charge your Existing Analytics Data

While you were cheering the Denver Nuggets at winning their first ever NBA Championship, in August, last year, Adobe quietly made Derived Fields for Customer Journey Analytics Generally Available.

Adobe Customer Journey Analytics (CJA) is already a powerhouse for real-time journey analytics and reporting. Derived Fields just turbo-charged it.

With Derived Fields, you use rule-based logic to transform CJA schema and manipulate and update already captured data on the fly, in ways not possible earlier, or supported by existing Standard Data fields.

The Derived Fields interface lets you maximize the potential of existing data - instantly, retroactively, and in a non-destructive manner - to uncover never-before insights to back successful business decisions.

Chief Analytics Officers are now delighted how their analytics teams use Derived Fields to make more insightful reports on journey updates to executive teams. Journey planners find it more intuitive now to connect, measure, and attribute all interactions on the path to purchase

Derived Fields- the Power of Retroactivity

Traditionally, data analytics teams apply new data processing rules on a go-forward basis, diluting the utility of historical data, and leaving two sets of inconsistent data. IT teams will then bring their expertise to re-ingest historical data through the data processing rules to make the database reliable.

Implement CJA Derived fields inside data containers called Data Views. Data Views interpret and process data for individual business and analysis use cases.

At the point of report generation, Derived Fields linked to data views process data retroactively, without destroying or changing existing data, and seamlessly flow to process live data, so your entire database is immediately usable in analytics and reporting.

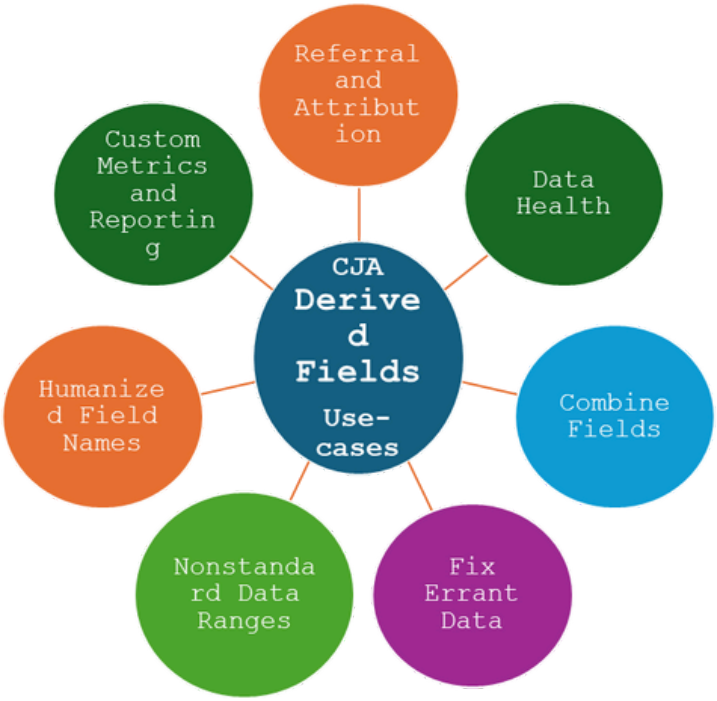
Since changes iterate and preview in real time, you have the advantage and flexibility to test and compare various reporting settings and build derived fields to learn what works best for your business.

Derived Fields—Use Cases

Usually, Derived Fields get created within a Data View. A Data View is a container specific to Customer Journey Analytics (CJA), which lets you determine how to interpret data for specific business groups and analysis use cases. It is a customized view of your data, where you specify the dimensions and metrics needed for analysis, with settings such as session timeout, persistence, and attribution.

Derived Fields use multiple functionalities and processing logics to essentially do one thing - clean data, generate new ways of looking at it, and report it in usable and understandable ways.

This Resource is an exploration of how medium to large enterprises use Derived Fields to enhance data usability.



Data Health

Unprocessed data is notorious for errors, whether misspellings, incorrect tracking codes, missing or added special characters, or platform-specific data with unique naming peculiarities and nuances, abbreviations, and more.

Derived Fields, in Adobe Customer Journey Analytics (CJA), is a powerful tool to address an assortment of data errors that impact the accuracy and reliability of analytics. These fields offer a way to create new data points from existing ones, to enhance data analysis and reporting capabilities.

Data health is marred by:

- Incorrect data entries, whether due to human error or system glitches.
- Data in inconsistent formats or naming conventions.
- Incomplete or missing records.
- Errors and inconsistencies while integrating data from various sources.
- Data Redundancy.

Your data analysts use Derived Fields to find and replace, apply consistent transformation rules across all data sources, combine or concatenate data fields, fix incorrect formatting or spelling, and ensure the data accessed by end users is harmonized, clean and easy to interpret.

Incomplete or missing records skew results and obscure true insights. Derived fields fill-in gaps using predefined logic. For example, if certain records lack geographical data, derived fields infer missing values based on related data points, such as IP addresses or previous entries.

Redundancy clutters data, making analysis cumbersome and less efficient. Derived Fields processing rules consolidate multiple data points into a single, more meaningful metric. For instance, combining individual product views and purchase actions into a single engagement score simplifies analysis and enhances insights.

Referrals and Attribution

Use Derived Fields to create multiple referral metrics with different attribution models, and look-back windows, from the same underlying data field, across marketing channels.

To categorize inbound traffic, apply the Url Parse and Case When functions to classify sources based on URL, referring domain, and query parameters. Your query parameters indicate paid marketing efforts, organic search, or social.
Rectify errors from live tracking-code implemented within and across channels, smoothen inter-channel aberrations, align with previously captured data, and consolidate channel-wise performance.

Make more informed decisions when optimizing your marketing strategies and drive paid, earned, and owned growth.

CJA's retroactive and query-run time reporting capabilities allow you to hone the processing logic and capture and properly attribute all marketing channels. The ability to manipulate and transform data in this way leads to more nuanced analyses and insights of how your visitors interact with platforms, where they come from, and identify patterns and trends previously difficult to discern.

Humanize Field Names

When standard data fields in CJA do not have user-friendly or understandable references and values, workflow efficiency is impacted.

Derived fields make data easy to rename, combine or concatenate, or remove field names through easy-to-configure rules.

The Derived Fields functionality is used to rename standard fields with identifiers using intuitive naming conventions in a taxonomically contextual structure, so both your management and data users find them readily understandable and enhance their experience of using your analytics data.

For example, different naming conventions for customer segments across systems can be standardized using derived fields. This harmonization ensures that integrated data remains consistent and reliable and supports cross-system analysis with greater accuracy.

Combine Multiple Fields — Concatenation

The Concatenate functionality allows you to combine values across dimensions with a delimiter, into a fresh single combined value.

This is useful to integrate related data points that are fragmented data, scattered across different fields or tables, and hinder comprehensive analysis. Derived fields using the concatenate function to combine fragmented data into a cohesive data field.

For instance, merging customer interaction data from multiple channels into a single view provides a holistic perspective on customer behavior.

The new combined fields so created get used as metrics or dimensions with standard visualization and filtering capabilities.

By creating new dimension variations using the data already collected in CJA, you gain a deeper understanding of your data and uncover new insights that may have previously gone unnoticed.

Fix Errant Data — Find and Replace

Despite native data cleansing capabilities of both Adobe Experience Platform (AEP) and Customer Journey Analytics (CJA), data that flows into CJA from these platforms, and from other third-party sources, is often inconsistent.

The Find & Replace functionality of derived fields helps you quickly manage rogue or malformed data values. Use data manipulation logic with the Find and Replace functions to correct these errors, validate, and adjust data.

For example, a derived field checks for outliers in numerical data and corrects them based on predefined thresholds, so data remains accurate and reflective of actual trends. The same function also standardizes data by transforming values into a uniform format. For instance, if data includes multiple formats for dates or phone numbers, a derived field converts entries to a consistent format.

Your data analysis workflows get streamlined when Derived Fields lets you identify and replace values that disrupt data aggregation or are otherwise inconsistent. This ensures your data is comprehensive, accurate, reliable, and symmetrical across all value variations.

Nonstandard Date Ranges

Derived fields based on CJA Standard Time References Fields allow you to work with custom date ranges that cover nonstandard time periods. This includes date ranges with data gaps that still need to be associated with the aggregate.

This gives you more flexibility when analyzing your data and a better understanding of the relationships between distinct data points across time boundaries.

Incremented Derived Fields for Goal Tracking

New Derived Fields that work as a counter, increment their normalized static values every time it recognizes an event. This is used to track progress against pre-set goals and adopt course corrections on the fly to situate performance with objectives.

For example, every time a parsed URL points to domains from Google, Bing, DuckGoGo, or Yahoo, etc., and the query parameters qualify, your attribution increments towards performance of paid ad campaigns.

In another example, you use a derived field to recognize and count visitor page bounces (Session Start and End Values are equal) against a website performance goal of lowering the number of page bounces every month.

Custom Metrics and Reporting

Predefined metrics do not always capture the nuances of specific business needs. Derived fields give you the power to create custom metrics tailored to your organization's unique reporting requirements and performance benchmarks.

Derived fields combine multiple related data points into a single metric. For instance, merging various product engagement metrics into one score simplifies analysis and enhances clarity.

Complex datasets complicate reporting. Derived fields simplify these datasets by aggregating relevant data points into concise metrics. This streamlining makes it easier to generate clear, actionable reports.

On the other hand, simple engagement metrics might not capture the full picture. Derived fields create complex engagement scores by combining various interaction metrics. These enhanced scores provide deeper insights into customer engagement levels.

In every case, this customization capability ensures your data analytics and reporting reflects the true performance indicators, leading to better-informed decisions.

Final thoughts

The Derived Field functionality of Adobe Customer Journey Analytics (CJA) allows you to fully unlock the potential of the data you collect.

Derived fields play a pivotal role in rectifying data errors, ensuring accurate and reliable analytics. But beyond error correction, they are a catalyst to achieve overall data quality and more meaningful and actionable data points.

For example, calculating customer lifetime value or engagement scores provides deeper insights than raw data alone. These enhanced data points support more strategic decision-making and drive better business outcomes.

Using Derived Fields inside CJA saves significant time and effort, compared to transforming or manipulating applications outside of Customer Journey Analytics or within your own Extract Transform Load (ETL) / Extract Load Transform (ELT) processes.

Your data analytics team can greatly enhance overall data quality and usability, resulting in reduced inconsistencies in CJA data interpretation and analysis.

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