

Hacker News hates Google Analytics. 41% of YC startups use it anyway

Installmap, 2026-10-14

Stories linking plausible.io, usefathom.com, matomo.org and umami.is have collected 9,270 Hacker News points; those four tools run on 81 of 5,386 crawled YC homepages (1.5%) and Google Analytics 4 on 2,207 (41.0%).

Hacker News is run by Y Combinator. Few topics do better there than Google Analytics being bad: "Use of Google Analytics declared illegal by French data protection authority" collected 1,172 points in 2022, "Italian watchdog bans use of Google Analytics" collected 942 the same year, and "Tech-savvy audiences block Google Analytics", a post on Plausible's own blog, collected 1,214. The phrase "Google Analytics" appears in 1,848 story titles, 42 of them pitching an alternative.

YC publishes its company directory, so we can check what the companies founded by HN's core audience actually install. We crawled 6,133 YC company homepages in September 2026; 5,386 returned a usable page. Google Analytics 4 runs on 2,207 of them (41.0%). Plausible, Fathom, Matomo and umami, the four privacy-first tools HN keeps upvoting, run on 81 homepages combined (1.5%).

Key findings

- Google Analytics 4 is on 41.0% of crawled YC homepages. Plausible is on 0.7%, Matomo on 0.3%, Fathom on 0.3% and umami on 0.1%.
- Stories linking plausible.io have collected 6,530 Hacker News points across 68 stories. Stories linking usefathom.com, matomo.org and umami.is add 2,740 more. The four tools those domains sell run on 81 YC homepages.
- The exception is PostHog: 221 stories, 6,502 points, and 688 YC homepages (12.8%). In the 2024-25 batches it reaches 22.1%.
- The same gap shows outside analytics. Svelte release posts have collected 5,809 points from svelte.dev alone; Svelte runs on 0.7% of YC homepages and React on 35.3%.

HN points vs. YC homepages

Tool	HN stories linking its domain	HN points	YC homepages
PostHog	221	6,502	688 (12.8%)
Plausible	68	6,530	40 (0.7%)
Fathom	107	1,418	16 (0.3%)
umami	8	927	7 (0.1%)
Matomo	16	395	18 (0.3%)

HN columns count stories submitted to Hacker News whose URL sits on the tool's own domain, all time, with points as of October 14, 2026. The YC column is homepages out of the 5,386 crawled, share in brackets.

One row surprised us: Fathom has more HN stories than Plausible (107 to 68) and fewer than half its installs. Umami's eight stories include a single 820-point hit from 2020; it runs on seven YC homepages.

Analytics tools on YC homepages

Source: Installmap crawl of Y Combinator company homepages, September 2026

PostHog is the darling that converted

PostHog gets the same HN treatment as Plausible: 221 stories from posthog.com, 6,502 points. Unlike Plausible, YC startups install it. It is on 688 crawled homepages (12.8%), and the share climbs batch by batch:

Batch years	Crawled	PostHog	Google Analytics 4
2019 and earlier	1,595	56 (3.5%)	712 (44.6%)
2020-21	984	101 (10.3%)	508 (51.6%)
2022-23	1,008	169 (16.8%)	501 (49.7%)
2024-25	1,157	256 (22.1%)	369 (31.9%)
2026	642	106 (16.5%)	117 (18.2%)

PostHog is itself a YC company (Winter 2020 batch). The 2026 sites are weeks old and many have no analytics tag yet, so both shares drop there.

The pattern outside analytics

Svelte's release posts are HN royalty: SvelteKit 1.0 took 919 points, Svelte 3 took 639, and stories from svelte.dev have collected 5,809 points in total. Svelte runs on 36 crawled YC homepages (0.7%). React runs on 1,900 (35.3%) and Next.js on 1,767 (32.8%).

The reverse case is jQuery. "jQuery" appears in 4,210 HN story titles, and the jQuery 4 release in January 2026 still collected 811 points. It runs on 1,298 YC homepages (24.1%).

What we make of it

We went in expecting a gap and found a chasm. Google Analytics is free, wired into Google Ads and the default in every tutorial, and 41.0% of the companies founded by HN's own audience run it. The privacy-first tools that keep beating it on the front page add up to 1.5% of the same homepages. The one HN favourite with real install share, PostHog, sells product analytics rather than privacy.

Our counts are floors on both sides. A Plausible script proxied through the site's own domain and renamed is invisible to our crawl, self-hosted umami is missed entirely, and Google Analytics running purely server-side is missed too. Closing the 2,207-to-81 gap would take a twenty-seven-fold undercount of the four tools, with no undercount of Google Analytics at all.

How we counted

We fetched 6,133 YC company homepages from the YC company directory in September 2026 and

counted the 5,386 that returned a usable page, using the rendered page where we had one and a plain fetch otherwise. A tool counts when the homepage matches its fingerprint (script URLs, inline init code or tool-specific markup); each tool page on this site lists its evidence. The Hacker News numbers come from the Algolia HN API, pulled October 14, 2026: stories only, all time, matched on the story URL's host and verified against the tool's domain, with title phrase counts quoted where a tool's domain carries few submissions. Points move after a pull, so totals are as of that date. The company lists behind the install counts are on the Google Analytics 4, Plausible and PostHog pages for the YC group.

Dataset

Per-story HN rows and the tool-level summary are in `static/data/hacker-news-hates-google-analytics`, CC BY 4.0.

Source

<https://installmap.com/research/hacker-news-hates-google-analytics>

Dataset: `hn_stories.csv`, `summary.csv`, `README.md`, `METHOD.md`

Denominators

Group	Domains scored	On the list
Y Combinator companies	5,386	6,133