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Google+ Update

November, 2013

Google+ Update

As brands continue to formulate and refine their strategies for Google+ there are a few important areas to review and explore as the platform continues to evolve and add new functionality.

Google has released new features and updated functionality to improve the user experience and drive more value for brands to participate. A glimpse at demographics and current industries trends can help guide the focus for your brand's alignment.

Finally, a review of best practices will help increase the likelihood of user engagement and aid in a brand's success in this channel.

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Contents

Introduction

Features & Functionality

- Page design update
- Local
- Mobile app
- Auto-Hashtags
- Brands & Hangouts
- Hangouts on Air
- Search+ Your World
- Google Ripples

Adoption & Usage

- Demographics
- Top Industries

Best Practices

- Publishing tips
- Search Engine Optimization
- Engaging influencers
- Recommended pages
- Google+ tools

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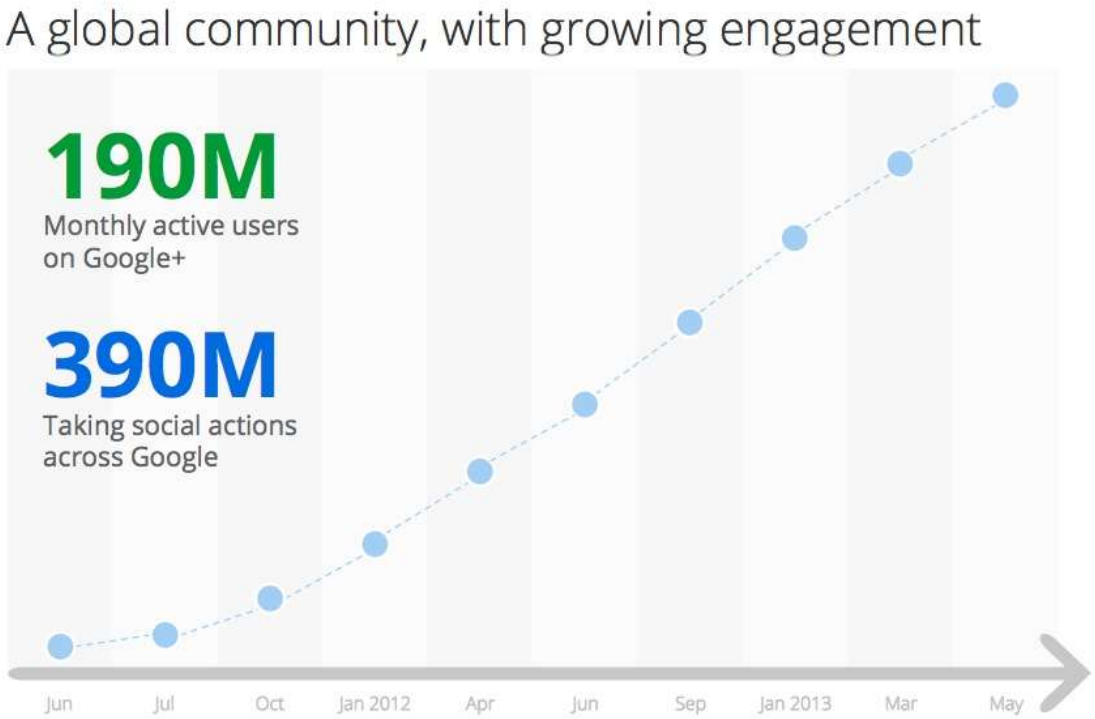
Introduction

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G+ Overview: A Look at G+ Today

Google+ is a growing global community:

- Google+ is a social destination overlay for Google which enables search, video, mobile, Google Offers, social sharing and recommendations.
- Currently there are 190M monthly active users on Google+.
- 390M users take social actions across Google including +1'ing brands, adding friends to circles, and utilizing the hangout feature.



*Source: Google, 2013

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What is Google+?

- Google+ utilizes the +1 function to facilitate connecting people through circles, sharing, and recommendations.
- Local recommendations from friends within a users circle will be served first providing more validity to results.
- Features like “hangouts” bring users together for shared social experiences.
- Google+ provides an opportunity for brands to amplify their SEO efforts through social annotations.



*Source: Google, 2013

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Features & Functionality

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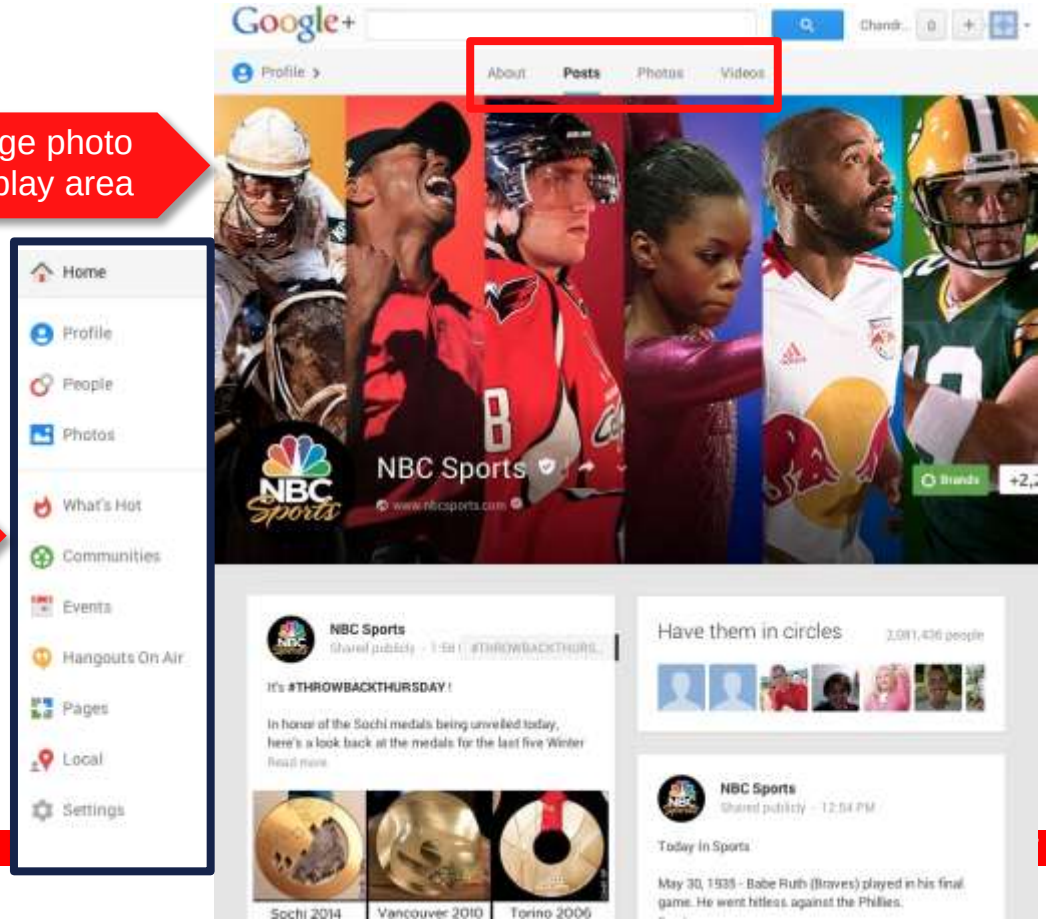
Page Design Update: Layout & Navigation

Updated design & navigation:

- Clean and minimal look & feel
- Easier navigation with icon ribbon, customizable with G+ apps
- More emphasis on photos with expanded real estate

Large photo display area

Icon ribbon for easier feature navigation



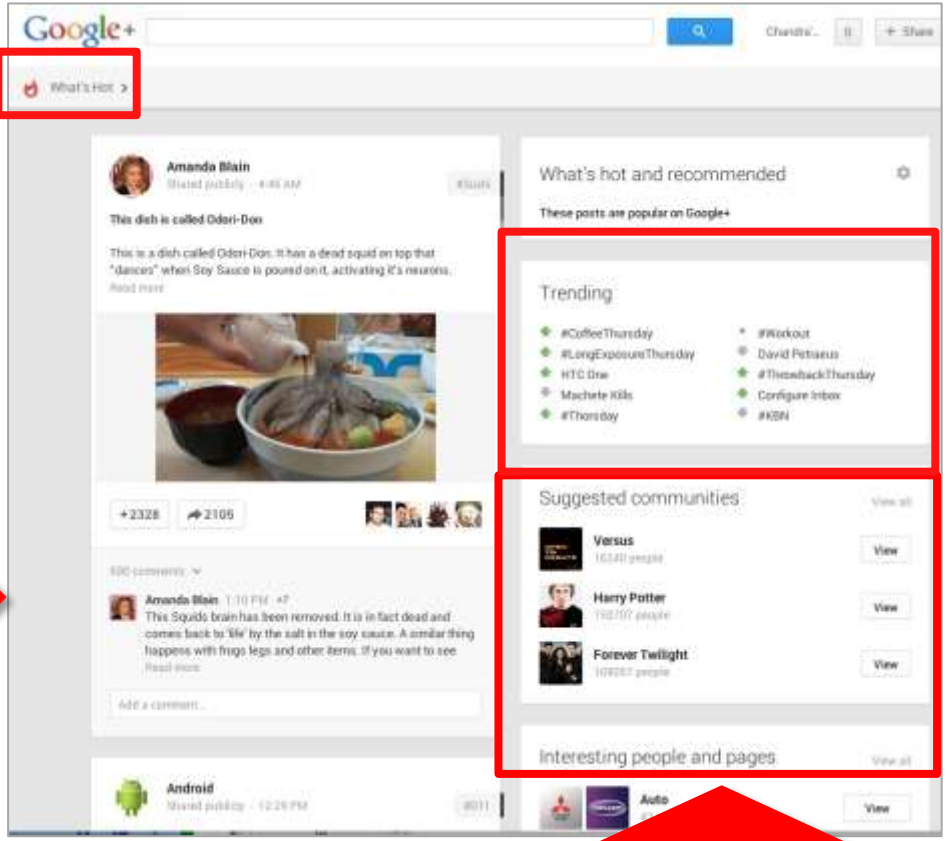
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Page Design Update: Discovery

Additional tools added to aid in discovery:

- “What’s hot” highlights trending topics with posts in feed & sidebar list
- Recommended pages show users and brands “You Might Like”
- Auto-hashtag feature allows branded content to be automatically hashtagged and potentially trend on G+

“What’s hot” shows trending topics on G+



Recommended communities & pages

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Page Design Update: Discovery & Auto-Hashtags

Google's new auto-hashtag feature aids in the discovery process:

- ✓ When content creators post new content, that content automatically receives hashtag.
- ✓ Google's processing power uses the hashtag to categorize all of the content being shared.
- ✓ When the hashtag is clicked, the "card" image flips around to help the user discover similar content.
- ✓ Google utilizes photo recognition as well to help assign hashtags; greyed out hashtags are assigned by Google and blue ones are added by the sharer.

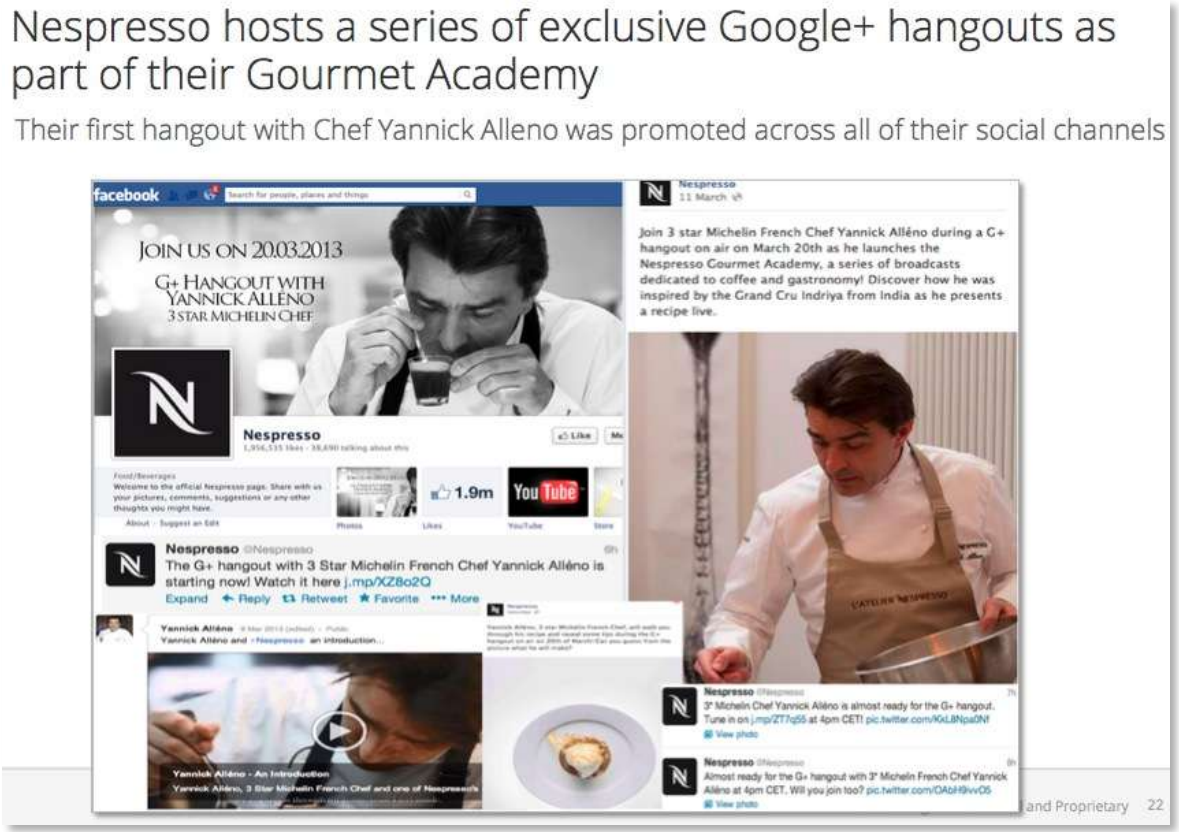


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Design & Functionality: Brands & Hangouts

Hangouts allow brands to bring users experiences around shared passions:

- **Nespresso** created a “Gourmet Academy” series of broadcasts all centered around coffee. During broadcasts master chefs demo live recipes for users. Broadcast brings passionate users together for a shared branded experience.
- The brand promotes the hangout series across other branded social channels including Facebook and Twitter.
- **Archives** – G+ has synced brand pages with hangouts so brands like Nespresso can now allow users to scroll back in time and review previous hangouts.



*Source: Google, 2013

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Brands & Hangouts

Veterans United gives veterans virtual tours of the WWII Memorial via G+ Hangout

Hangouts allow brands to have deeper engagement with followers by bringing them unique experiences:

- ✓ **Veterans United,** a home loans company for the nation's military members, utilizes G+ by posting relevant military-centric content frequently to their G+ page, hosting virtual tours of the WWII Memorial, developing a Hangout Hub to educate veterans on how to use G+, and creating Google+ Communities to promote their G+ badge on the site.
- ✓ **World World II Hangout** – Veterans United uses G+ to give veterans who can not travel a virtual tour of the Memorial. Positions the brand by providing an invaluable service to deserving individuals.



*Source: Google, 2013

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Veterans United Home Loans

"A Hangout is a magic carpet that can take you around the block or around the world in a matter of seconds."

Sarah Hill

Strategist, Host, Storyteller
Veterans United

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*Source: Google, 2013

Brands & Customized Hangouts

Customized branded hangouts allow brands to highlight unique elements of their brand and key features.

- Toyota created the **Toyota Collaborator Hangout App** which allows consumers and potential buyers to create a unique dream car.
- Provides opportunity for consumers to **create with the help of friends** which amplifies the experience among the social graph.
- Consumers can communicate with an actual Toyota salesman and have questions answered creating a valuable “virtual” pre-sell environment.



*Source: Google, 2013

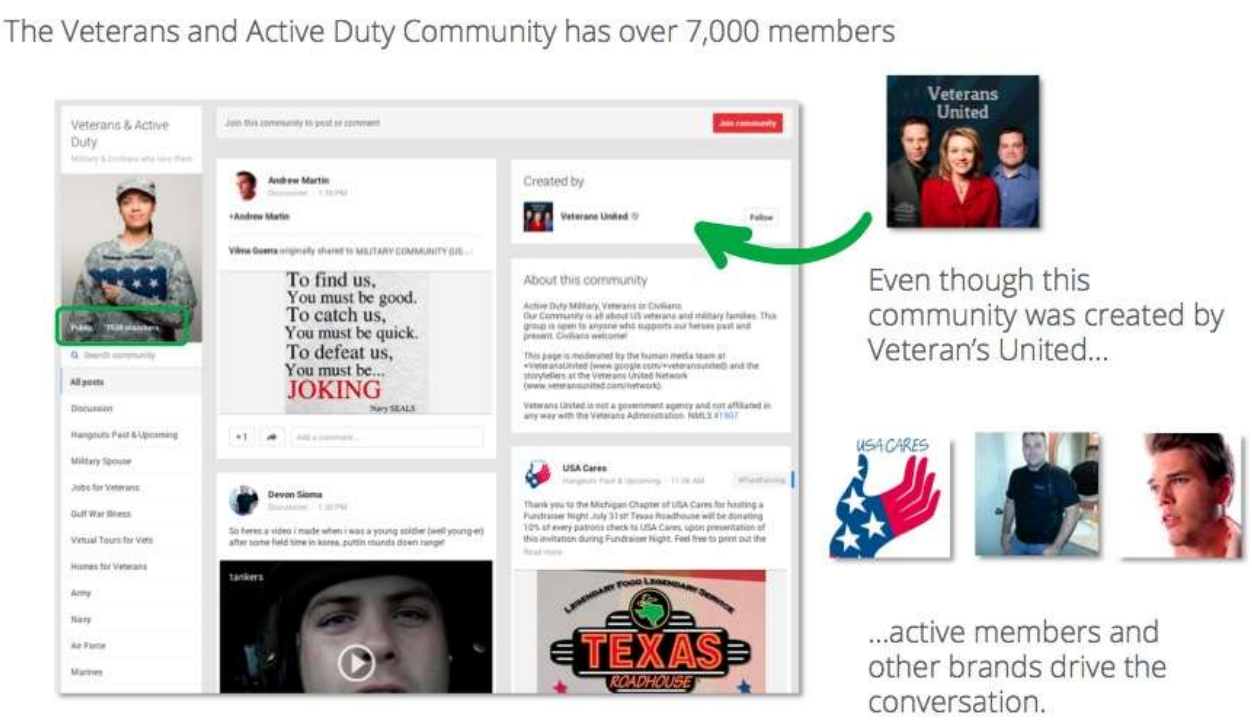
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Events & Communities

Brands and people can come together and have conversations around shared interests

Brands can utilize G+ communities to increase visibility but the sole purpose of being a part of a Google+ community should not be increasing sales or traffic to the branded website, but instead a medium to interact and have conversations with interested audiences.

As seen here **Veterans United**, a home loan company serving the nation's military, created the **Veterans & Active Duty Community**, however the conversation within the community is driven by military members and their families. Veterans United is uniquely positioned and created a branded platform to facilitate these conversations.



*Source: Google, 2013

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Google+ Brand Pages & Communities

Brands Insights for G+ Communities:

- ✓ Create awareness about your brand or service
- ✓ Start a new community
- ✓ Be an authority on industry-related discussions
- ✓ The public communities on G+ are indexed by Google Search so take advantage and post relevant content
- ✓ Engage with active users on a regular basis

Veterans United enjoyed the following results:

- ✓ High user engagement as seen through +1's, comments and shares of posts
- ✓ Higher CTR, lower CPC & CPA when displaying social annotations in search ads
- ✓ Increased awareness among current & future VA loan customers

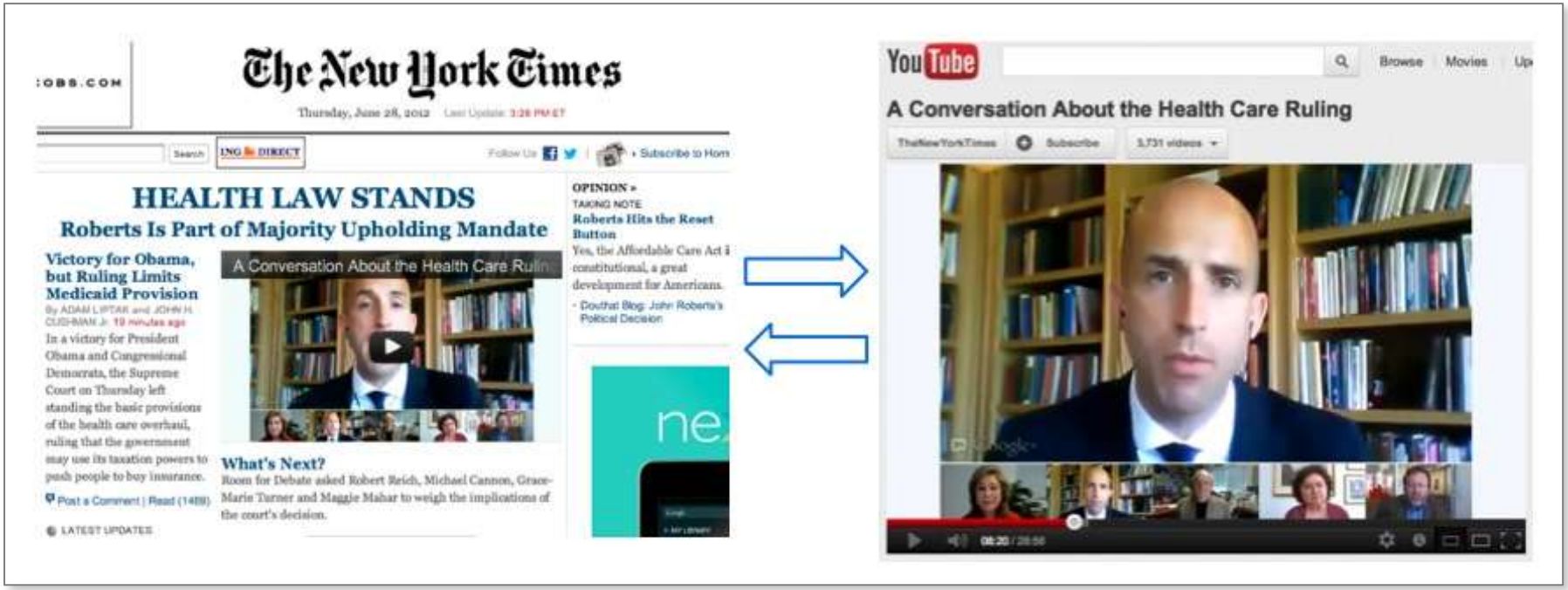


*Source: Google, 2013

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Hangouts on Air: Broadcast to the world

Simultaneously broadcast live on your site & YouTube. Also available to YouTube's 800M monthly viewers.



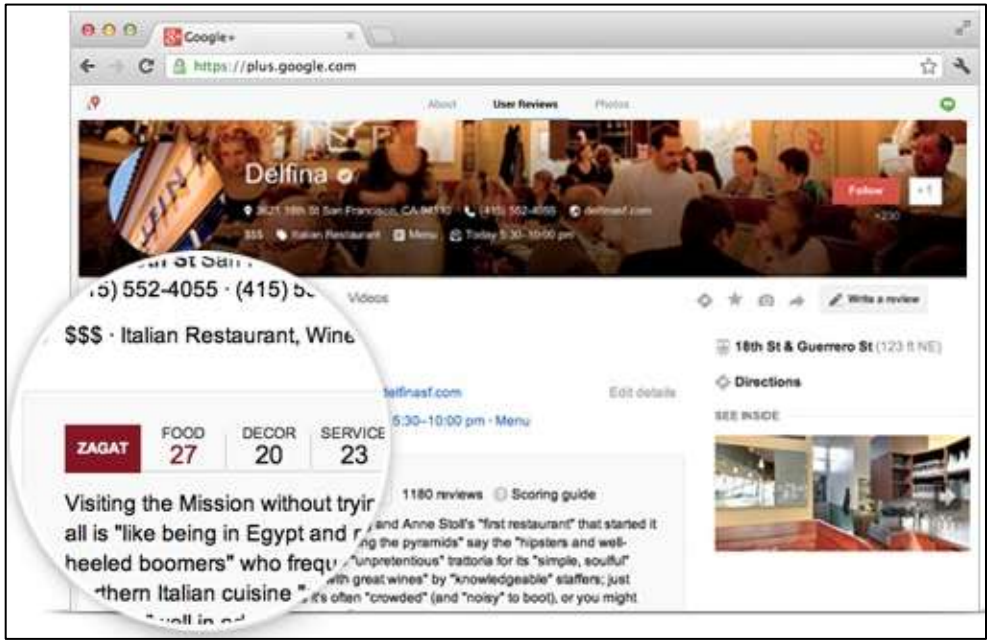
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*Source: Google, 2013

Updated Feature: Local

Google+ Local replaces Google Places:

- ✓ Users can read reviews and decide on the right places and business quickly
- ✓ Recommendations for businesses, restaurants, etc from people you know and trust from G+ will show up here
- ✓ Reviews from real people are tallied to create scores and summaries for businesses



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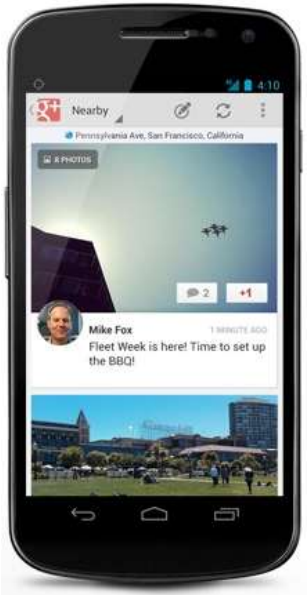
Mobile App Update

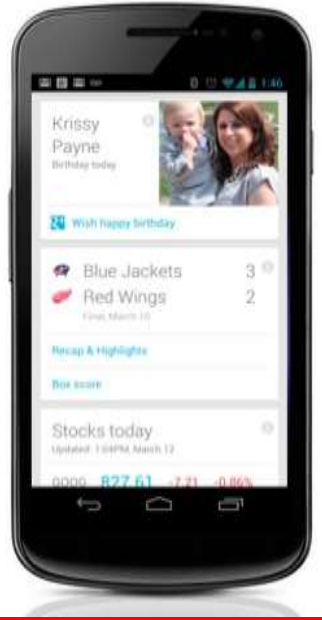
The updated Google+ app significantly improves the G+ mobile experience.

- ✓ Now see your stream and share with your circles from your mobile phone.
- ✓ Hangouts can bring conversations to life with photos, emoji and group video
- ✓ With “Party Mode” users can instantly share photos from an event (Android)
- ✓ Google Now provides “just in time” info and recommendations based on your geographic location

Share photos from events







Google Now = “just in time” info

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Google+ and Search

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Search+ Your World

Search implications have been one of the most compelling reasons to join G+ for brands and that has not changed. The current member base quotes have been questioned, especially with new Gmail & YouTube users automatically signed up for the platform, but the continued integration of G+ into all Google's digital touch points will support future growth.

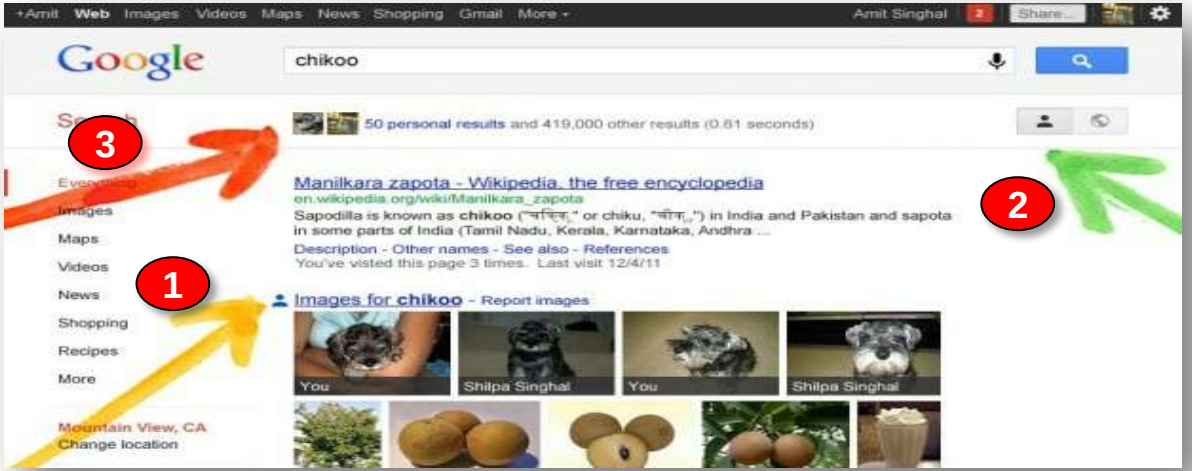
G+ content impacts search in a few different ways. Next we will review content implications and recommendations for SEO.

Users logged into G+ can see search results from 3 different views:

1. **Default** = personal results, G+ related content within total results

2. **Alternate toggle** = normal search results

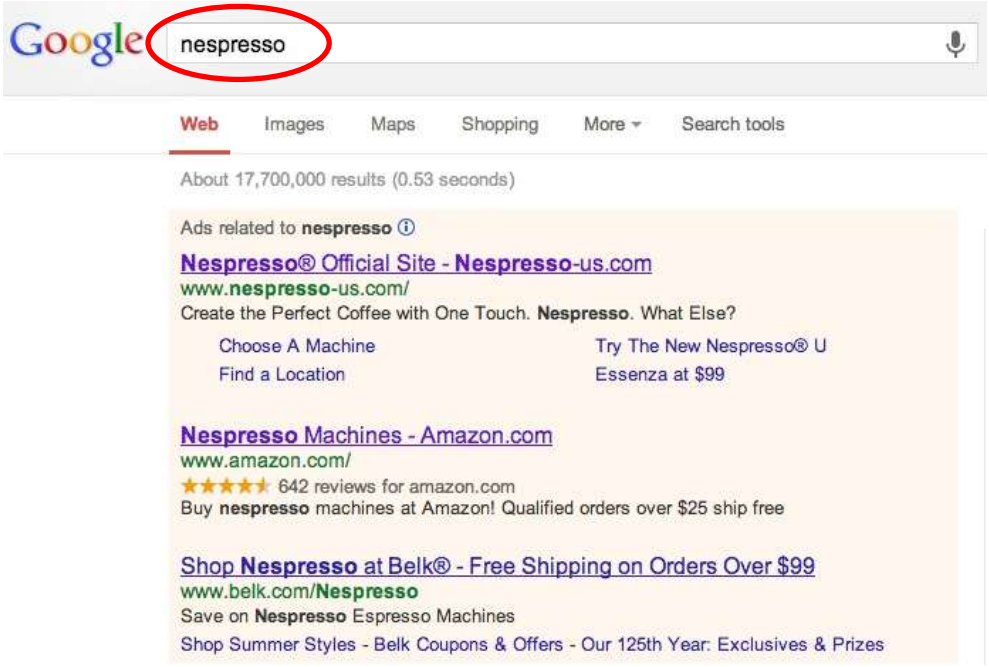
3. Link to **only personal results** (only G+ related content)

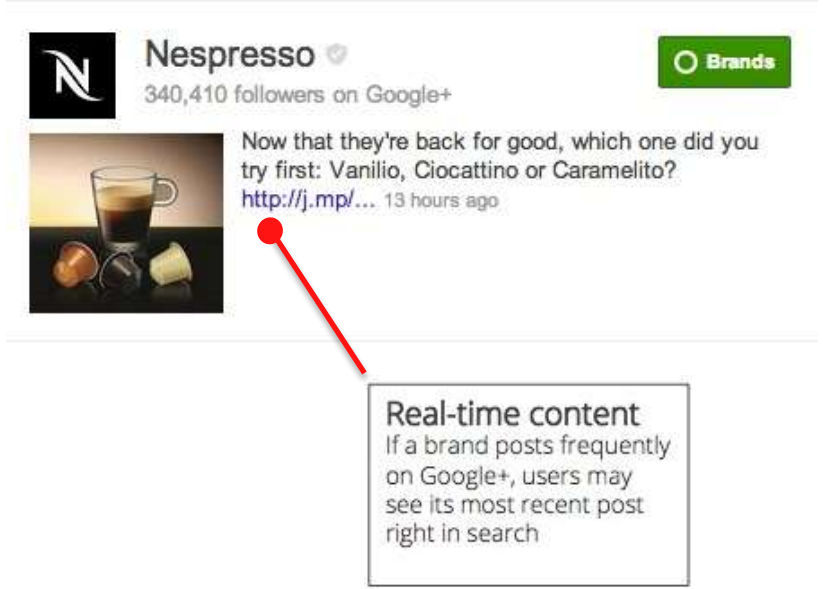


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Discovery: Search + Brands

Socially inspired brand awareness provides brands with the opportunity to add more validity, authenticity and compelling reasons for consumers to engage. Brands that post frequently on Google+ can benefit additionally from relevant G+ content served when a consumer searches for the brand.



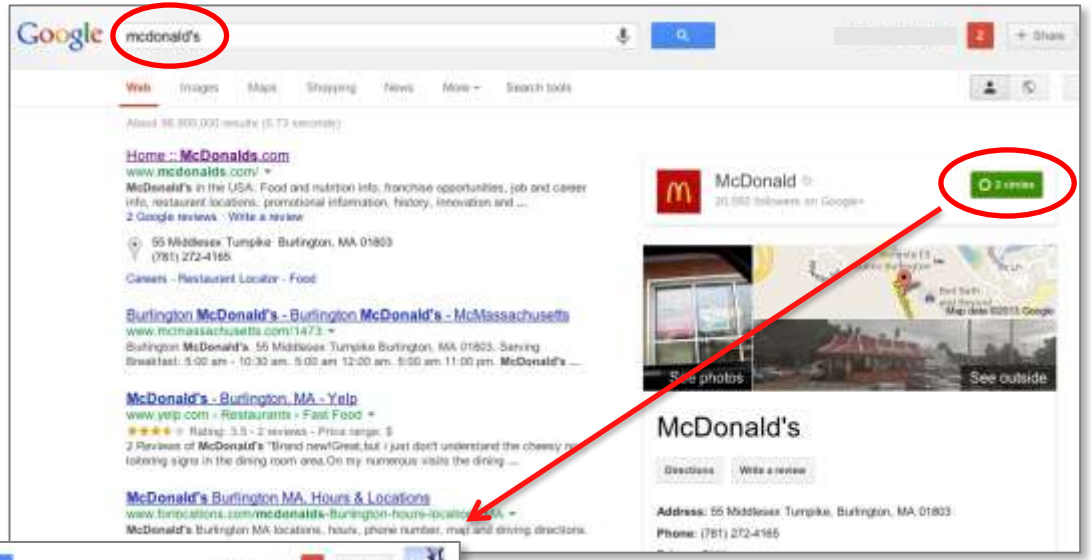


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*Source: Google, 2013

Google+ Page via Search

- ✓ Users can click through to a brand's page, right from the search results page.
- ✓ By searching "McDonald's" consumers can be exposed to the McDonald's G+ page and click directly through to it.



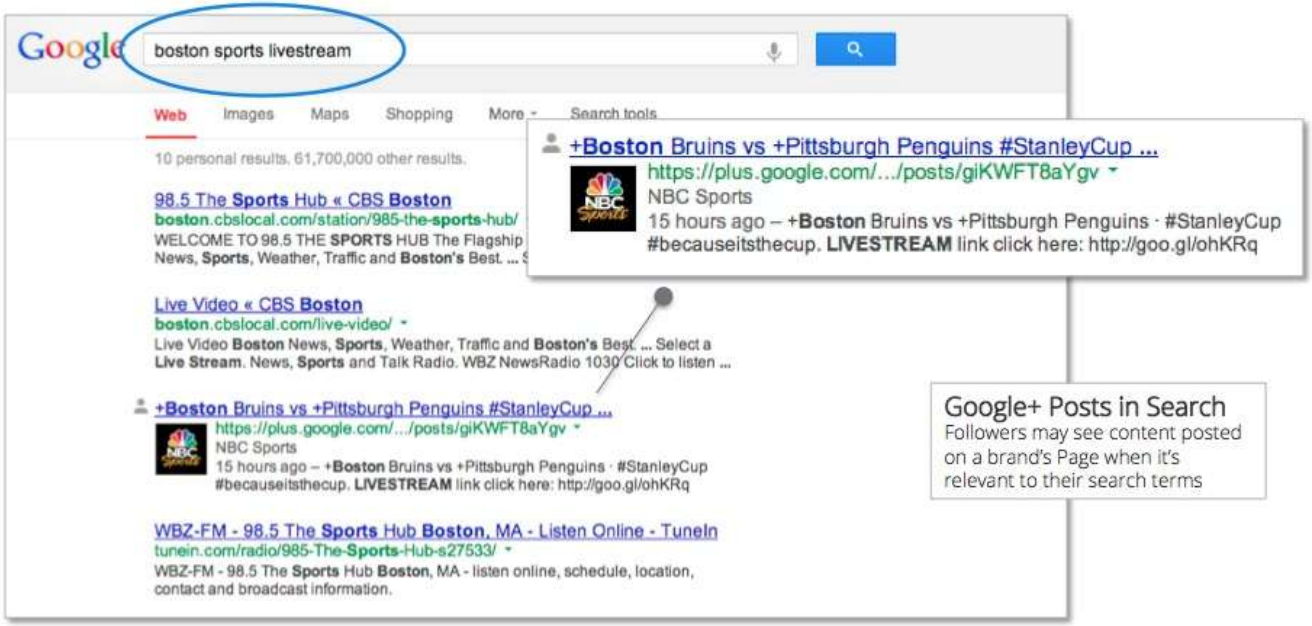


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*Source: Google, 2013

Surfacing Relevant Results via G+

- ✓ When relevant content is posted on a brand's Google+ page, followers may be served that content when it is relevant to their search.
- ✓ In this example, the Live Stream content posted on the NBC Sports G+ page is served after the search term "boston sports livestream" is entered.



*Source: Google, 2013

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Google+ Search & Social Annotations

Google+ has the potential to have a positive impact on search because of the power of the unification of Google search with Google's own social media platform. The platform is inherently designed to be more easily found by the Google search engine. As such, brands can optimize post content to have better search results within Google.

- ✓ When social recommendations are overlaid with search, brands can benefit from increased qualified traffic
- ✓ Social recommendations improve ad performance and can be executed through Google (ie, Enhanced Campaigns)
- ✓ When activated along with a brand's active Google+ page, social recommendations will appear when relevant to the search terms
- ✓ 5-10% is the average search ad CTR uplift from social annotations

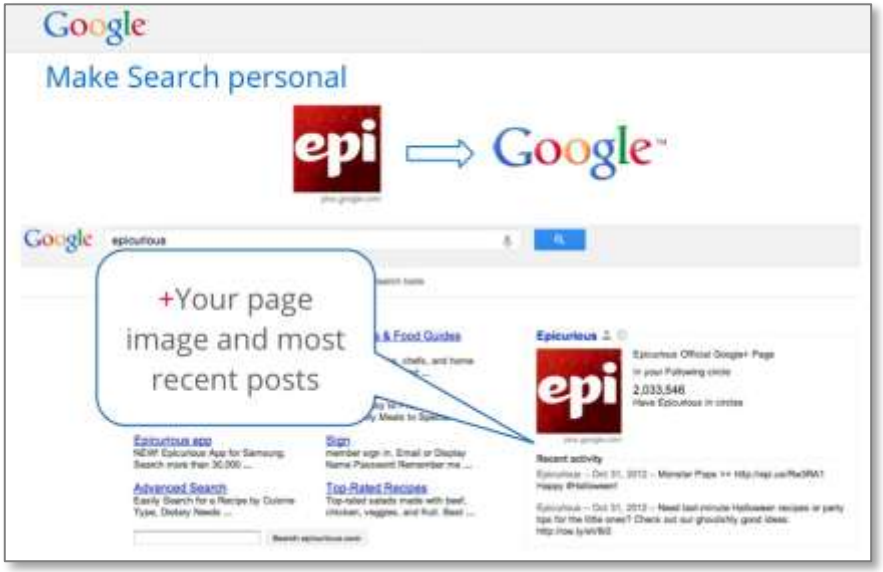


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Google+ Search: 7 Steps To a Successful Strategy

Increased visibility of branded content is one reason why many brands choose to have a presence on Google+. In order to optimize this opportunity for increased exposure here are some simple steps brands can take.

1. Create and verify your Google+ page.
2. Take advantage of social annotations in AdWords.
3. Claim your custom URL
4. Add the G+ Badge to your website
5. Post exclusive content
6. Host hangouts
7. Grow your follower base



*Source: Google, 2013

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Google+ Content Strategy

Post exclusive, engaging content & host hangouts – **photo and video posts** are the most engaging. Post at least every 72 hrs to enable better visibility on Google.com.







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*Source: Google

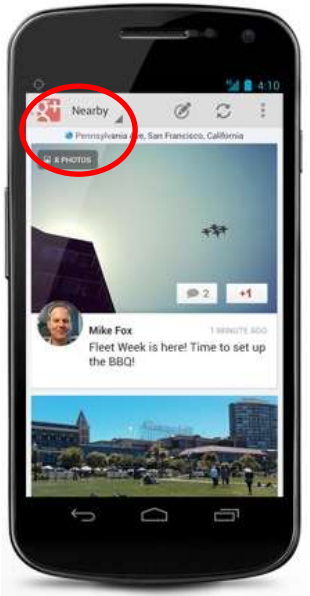
Google+ Cross Promotion Strategy

Grow your G+ followers through cross promotion

1. Add the G+ Badge to your brand's website
2. Add a call to action in your profile photo to "Add us to your circles"
3. Promote your G+ content and events across platforms
4. Enable G+ content recommendations for mobile





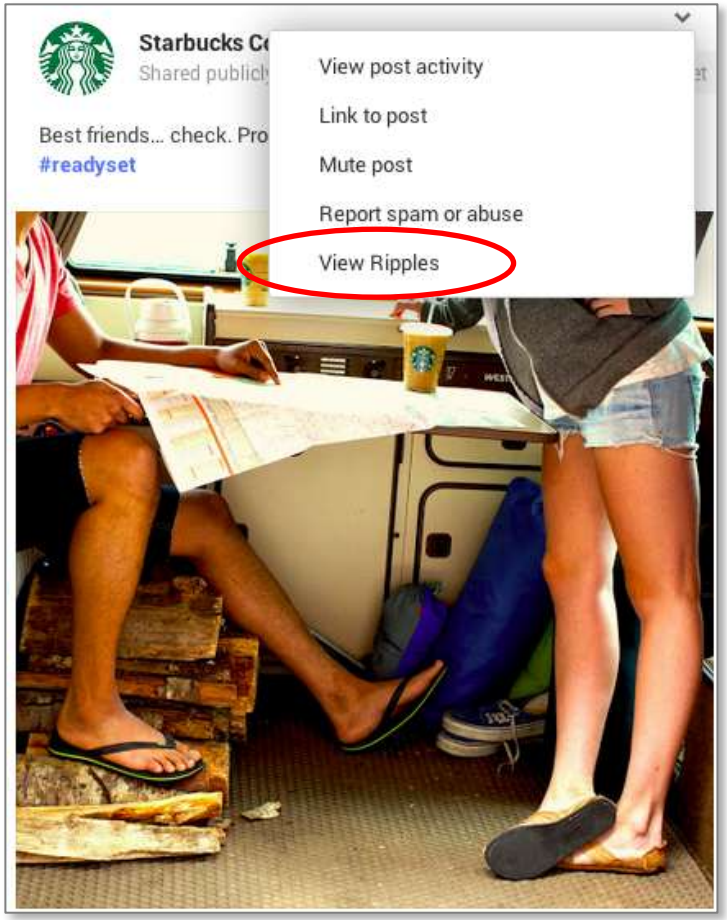


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Google+ Ripples

Illustrates a brand's earned media and identifies key influencers

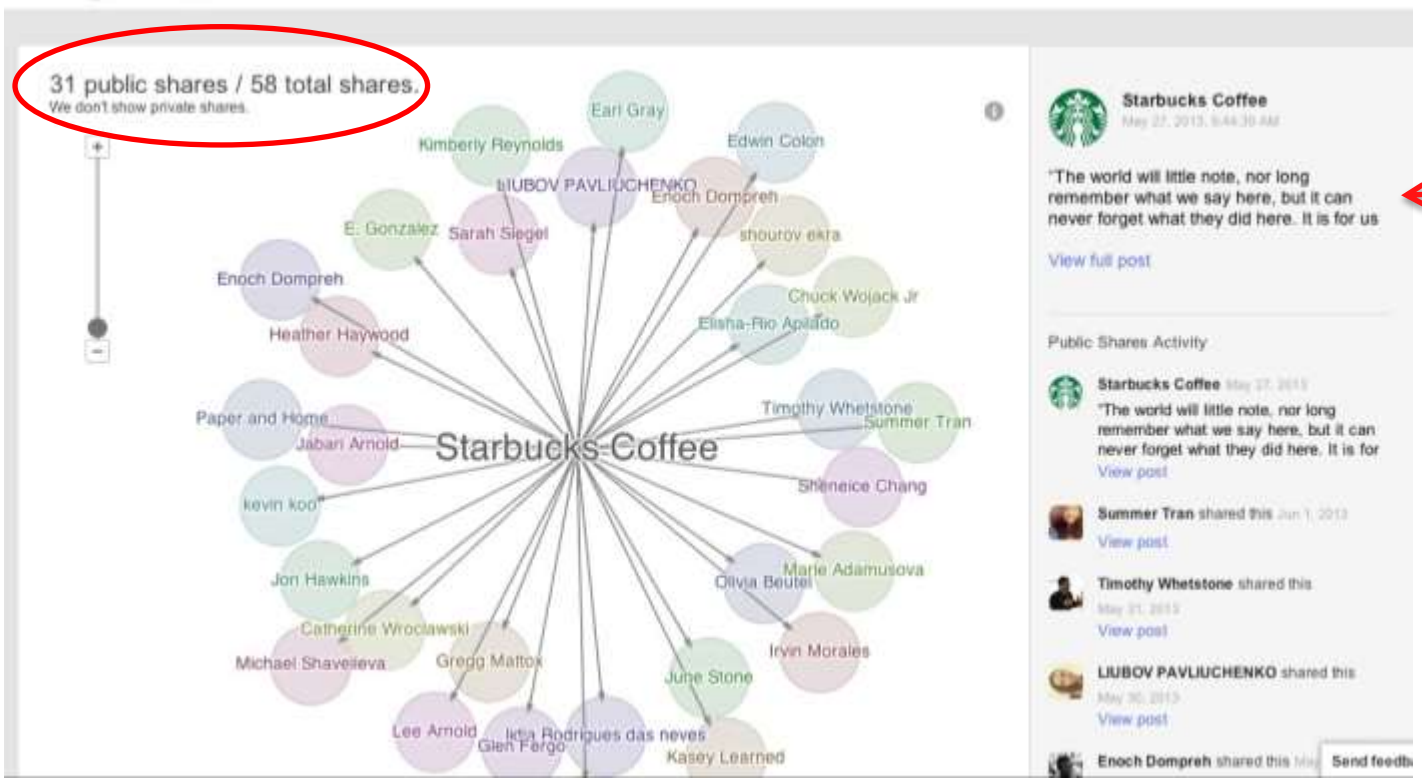
- ✓ Ripples creates a graphic of the shares of any public post or URL on G+
- ✓ Shows how a post has "rippled" through G+ and can help brands identify influencers and brand loyalists
- ✓ Illustrates how a post was shared over time and statistics on how it was shared
- ✓ Access Ripples from the gray arrow at the top/right corner of each post





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Google+ Ripples



Shared public post from Starbucks

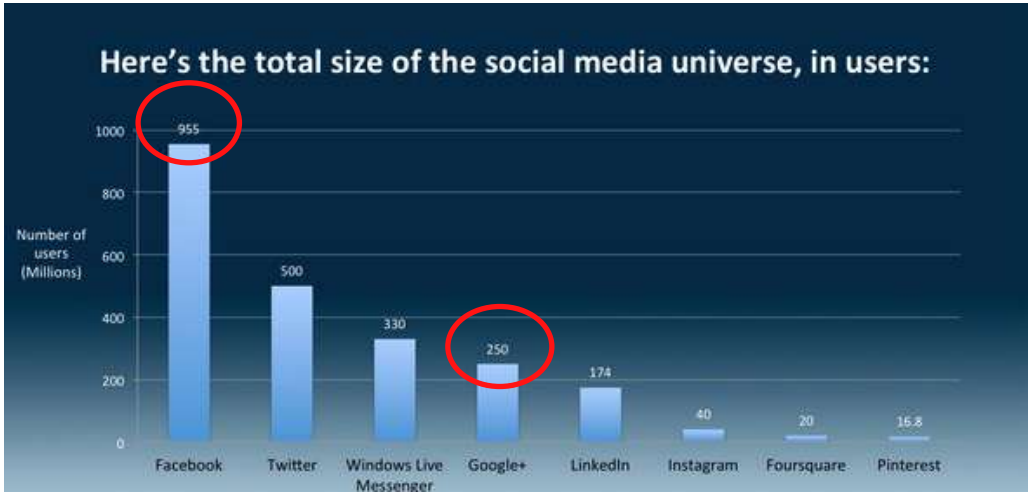
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Adoption & Usage

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Social Media Visits & Time Spent

Although adoption rates for G+ started strong at launch (due in part to forced adoption for some Google platform users), G+ still lags behind other social media platforms in key metrics such as usage and time spent. G+ has approximately 250M active users vs 955M active users on Facebook. On average, G+'s users spend only 3 min per month on the platform vs. 405 minutes per month for Facebook users.





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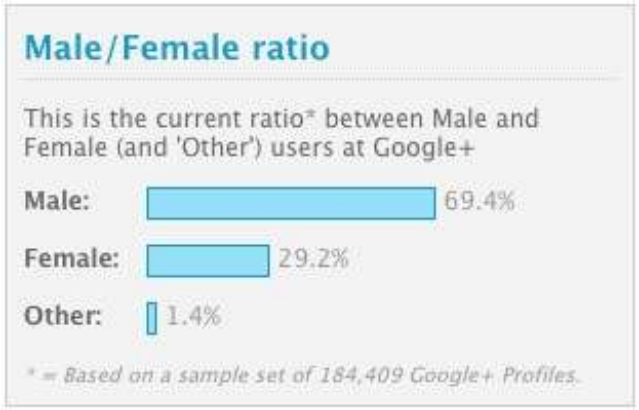
Source: Business Insider 2013 & The Wall Street Journal 2012

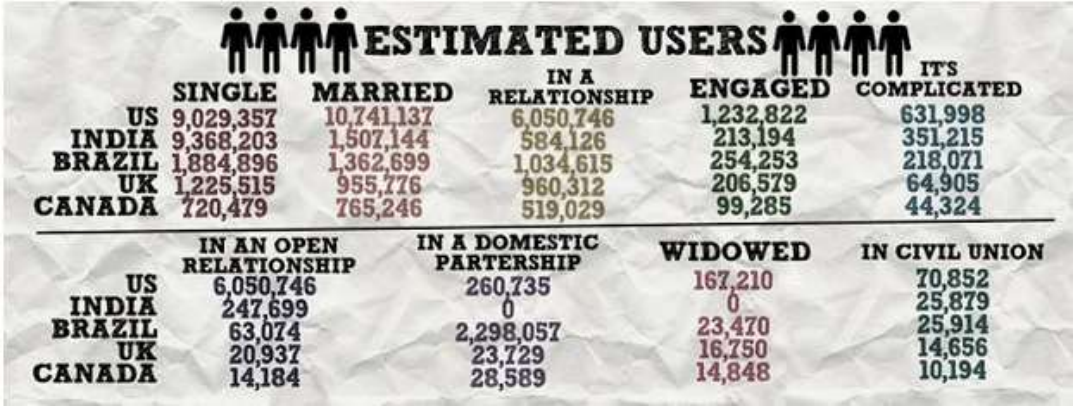
Demographics

Although Google keeps information on the usage and audience tightly guarded, many companies recognized the early male dominance of the site which continues today. Currently, G+ is 69.4% male. The dominant age group is 18-24 (42%).

Top 10 occupations reveal that IT Engineers are the top occupation with Developers, Designers, Software Engineers, Web Developers, and Writers also topping the list.

Geographically, the US leads the user base at 28.4% with India the only other country in the double digits at 18.9%.





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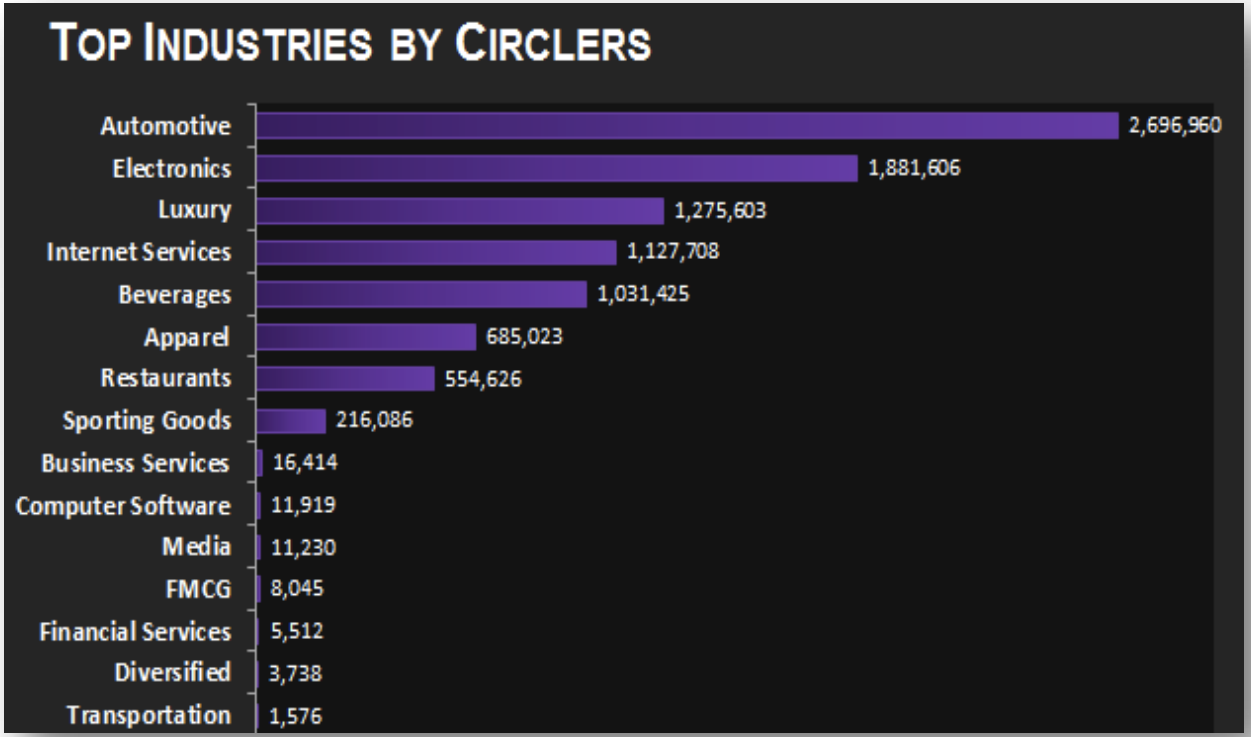
* Source: Simply Measured & Google+ Statistics

Top Industries

The automotive industry is in a leading position on G+ with a substantial lead over electronics, luxury and internet services. Consumers interested in automotive content would be ideal targets for insurance content as well.

Automotive brands within the top 40 pages on G+





*Source: Simply Measured 2012

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Google+: Top Followers

The top performing content on Google+ coincides with a male dominate, technically-inclined audience. The 10 top pages on Google+ include gaming, tech sites, a mobile platform, an automaker and a top sports news brand.

The Google+ Top 100

	(Click the → to go to that persons Google+ Profile)	Following	Followers
#1	Coldplay →	10	4,708,358
#2	Angry Birds →	-	4,531,735
#3	Google Art Project →	-	4,405,480
#4	YouTube →	-	4,050,984
#5	FC Barcelona →	-	3,913,685
#6	Android →	-	3,645,796
#7	UEFA.com →	-	3,471,386
#8	The Economist →	21	3,188,818
#9	Ferrari →	1	3,115,935
#10	ESPN →	4,691	3,042,595

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Best Practices

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Publishing Tips

Posting Recommendations:

- **Visual content is critical** on this platform for both desktop and mobile and engagement metrics confirm it. Photos are nearly 4x more engaging than other post types and make up 62% of total interactions. This will only increase with the new design updates.
  - *Engagement defined as total of +1s, Comments, & Reshares*

- **Post on weekdays in the morning**. Engagement rates on the weekends drop off by more than half. Weekdays are mostly equal but Wednesday shows a slight advantage. 6am – 12pm are peak engagement times and 9-10am are the highest of the day.



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Source: Simply Measured 2012

Publishing Tips

Search Optimization:

- **Post at least 2x week**. It appears that Google+ profiles with no posts within the last 72 hours do not show up in the “Related People/Pages” section of Google’s search results. Also optimize post content with keywords to boost SEO rankings.

- **Put the brand name, website (or link) and any other key words to describe the brand in the About section:** this is worth noting and experimenting with, since some early research with user profiles seems to indicate one of the most important search signals for Google+ is whether the query term(s) appear in the About section of the profile.



+1 button update

- **+1s count:** some initial investigation shows profiles/Pages that receive a lot of +1s on their posts show up more often in the “Related People/Pages” results
  - Consider adding +1s to your product pages

- **Even though initial engagement rates include comments and re-shares, they don’t matter as much as +1s** in helping to influence who/what shows up in “Related People/Pages” in search results.

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Google+ Publishing Tips

Broadcasting Novel & Different Content

- ✓ When launching a Google+ page, the content should include some unique pieces of content for Google+ such as a hangout to help drive awareness across platforms if possible.
- ✓ In the example below Chris Paul participates in a G+ hangout for the New York Times to discuss the Olympic basketball team.
- ✓ As brands begin posting on G+, if everything is a repost, brands may experience lower engagement rates as users sometimes look to see if brands are engaging differently on G+. Launching with unique content may be a good initial test.

Example of a Dell hangout for customer service and tech issues.





New York Times hangout featuring Carmelo Anthony and Chris Paul.

*Source: Mashable, 2012

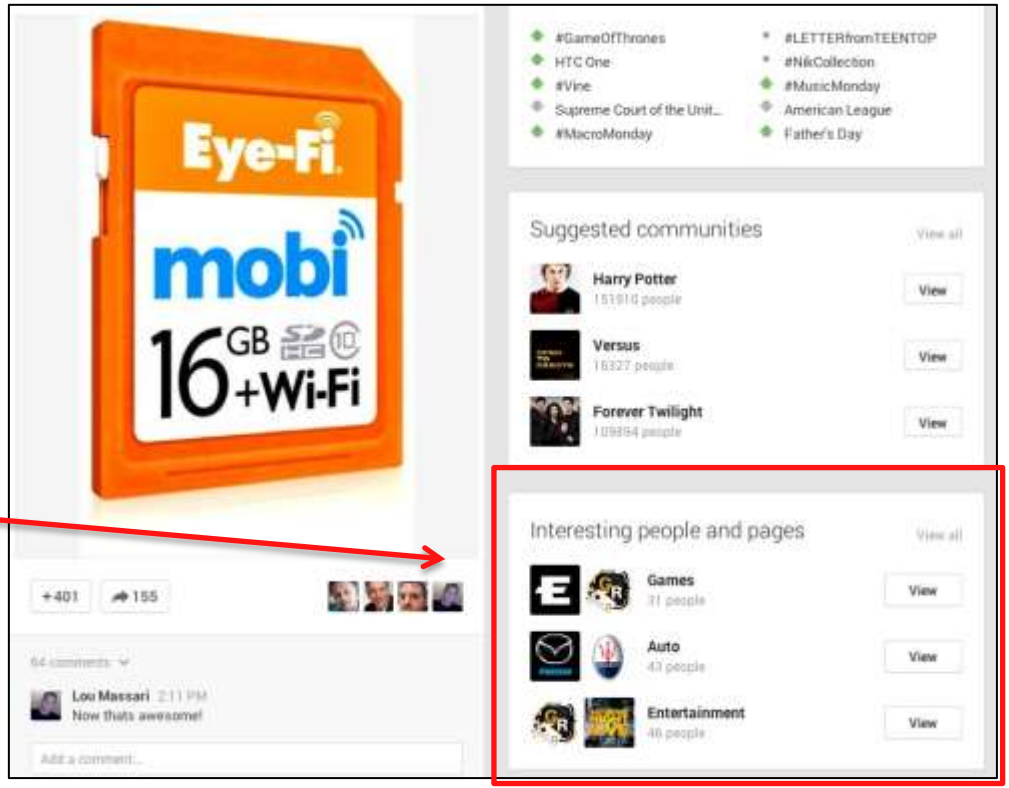
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Engaging Influencers & Recommended Page

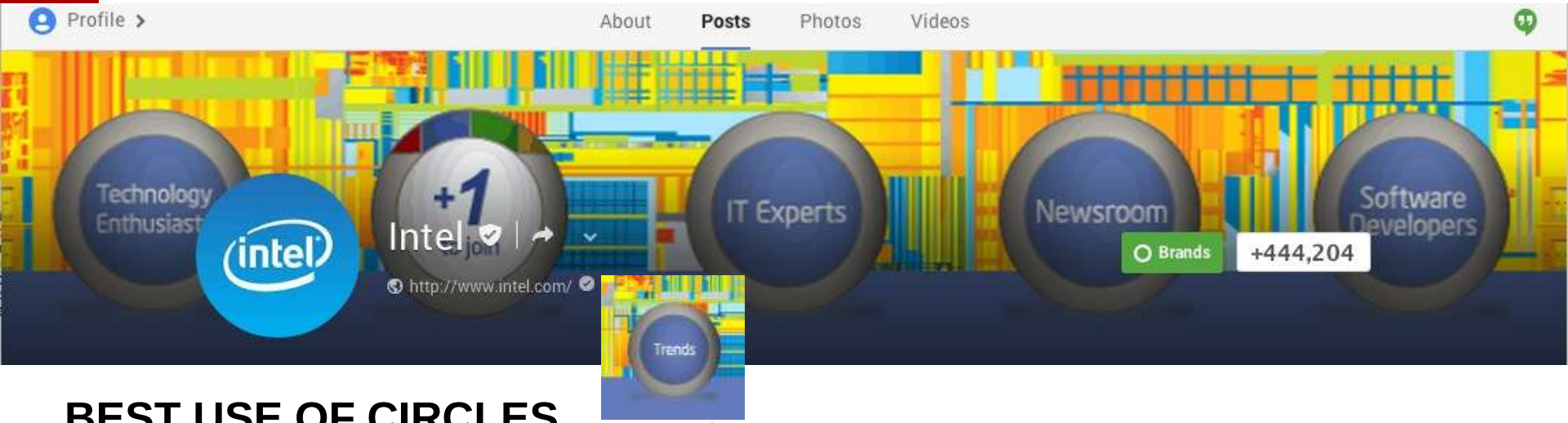
Two considerations for growing followers

- **Engage influencers that align with your brand**. The Ripples feature is a good start to see what users are interacting most with your content and understand their network reach. It is available on any public post.

- **Explore opportunities on recommended pages.** Certain pages are highlighted within the "interesting people and pages" section whether under the generic "Featured On G+" bar or a specific category. Investigate how you can help drive awareness of your presence from a mention on this page.



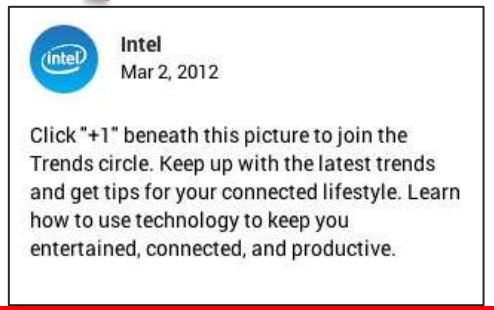
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BEST USE OF CIRCLES

Intel

User Segmentation



- Similar to Facebook's former functionality of Open Graph objects.
- Users opt-in by desired content vs. brand segmenting audience behind-the scenes.

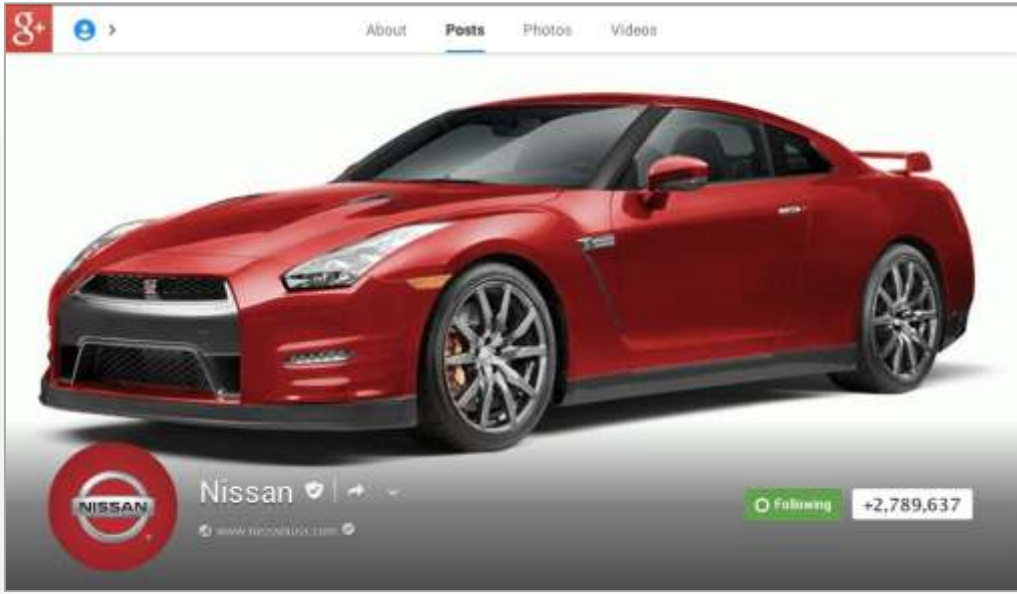
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- Animated .gif cover photo features various car colors
  https://plus.google.com/b/118266775760268518774/+Nissan/posts

- Bold card image makes best use of space to maximize visual impact

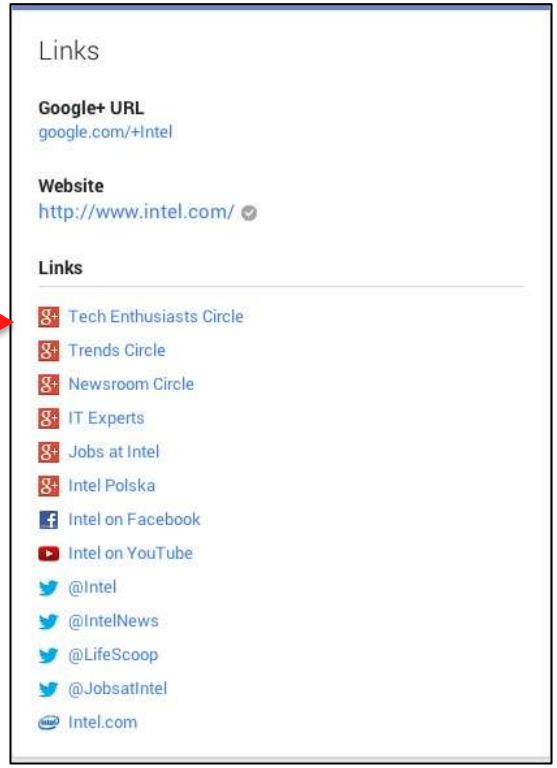


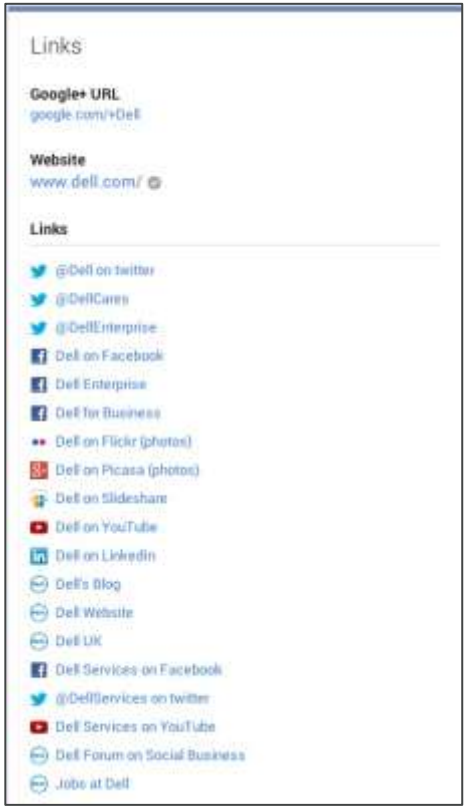
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Best Use of “About” Tab: Intel, Dell

Featuring all social links (within G+ and other platforms)

Intel links coincides with circle segmentation on the Google+ main page.



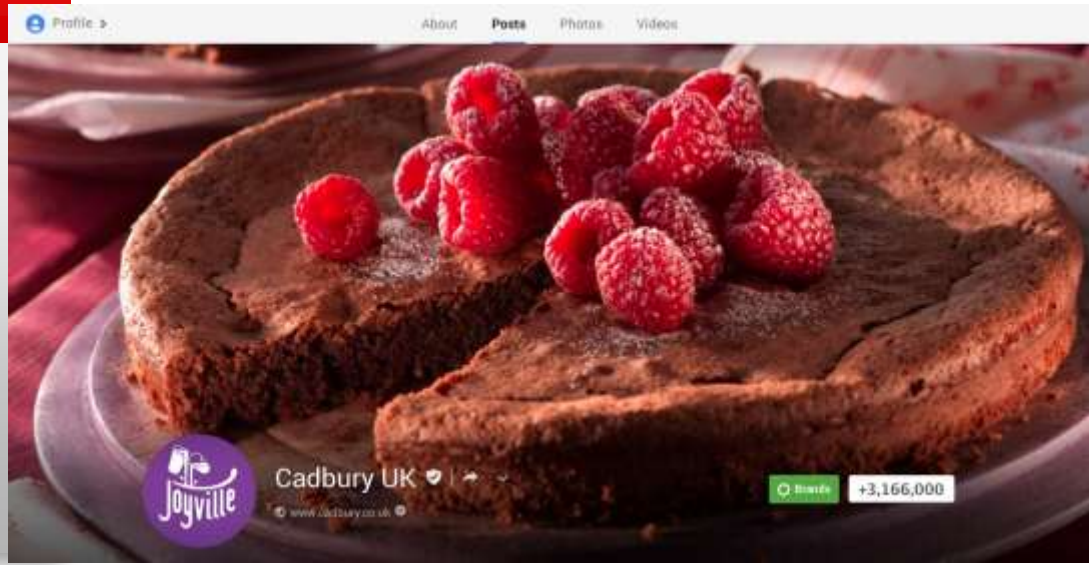


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Best Overall Google+ Use:

Cadbury UK

- Creative engagement leveraging G+ tools (exclusive circles, hangouts, etc.)
- Content strongly aligned with G+ audience, Olympic sponsorships and support of techy events like hack-a-thons
- Strong integration with digital assets, G+ links and post stream from .com
- Over 3.1MM followers; ranked within the top 20 pages on Google+



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Loyalty & Rewards

Cadbury UK

- Reward through recognition for Super Fans within the Million Circler Google Doodle
- Reward with product through G+ peer recognition





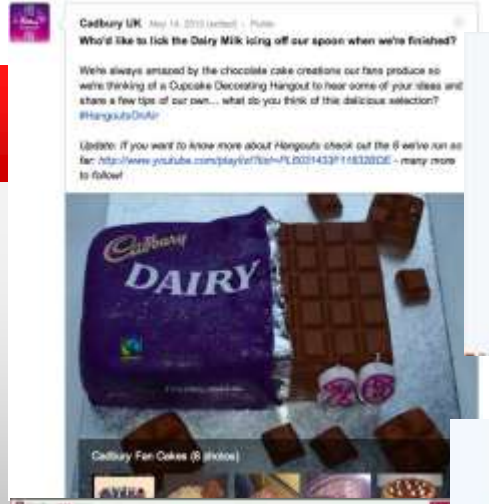
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Humanizing your brand via G+

Cadbury UK

- Cadbury made great use of specific and unique G+ content by showcasing recipes, chocolate creations, and dialogues with sponsored Olympic athletes.

Showcasing fan creations & ideas





Q&A with sponsored Olympic athlete



Building G+ page out of chocolate



Product research with official G+ Taster Circle

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Content for the G+ Audience

Cadbury UK

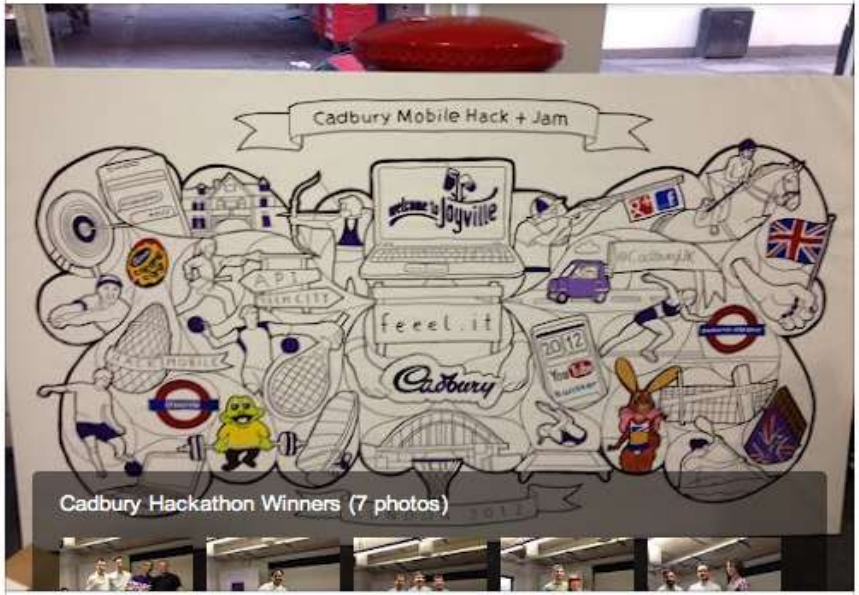
- Cadbury creates specific content geared towards their G+ audience including tech-focused events like hack-a-thons.

Cadbury UK May 28, 2012 (edited) - Public

And the winner is... After a weekend of hard work it's time to celebrate the hackers, coders, designers & idea makers from our Mobile #CadburyHack

The overall winner who'll be receiving £10k of support to develop their idea in time for London 2012? feeel it, who let you capture an image AND the sound/atmosphere around it to create the perfect postcards/memories of your Olympic experience this summer. They've taken pride of place at the centre of our Live Art piece, we hope you like it!

Find out more about the hack/Digial Shoreditch over at http://www.digitalshoreditch.co.uk/hack



Cadbury Hack-a-thon winning images

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Digital Asset Integration

Cadbury UK

- Cadbury's G+ feed is uniquely integrated into their website, along with links to the page.
- See Cadbury's website: http://www.cadbury.co.uk/



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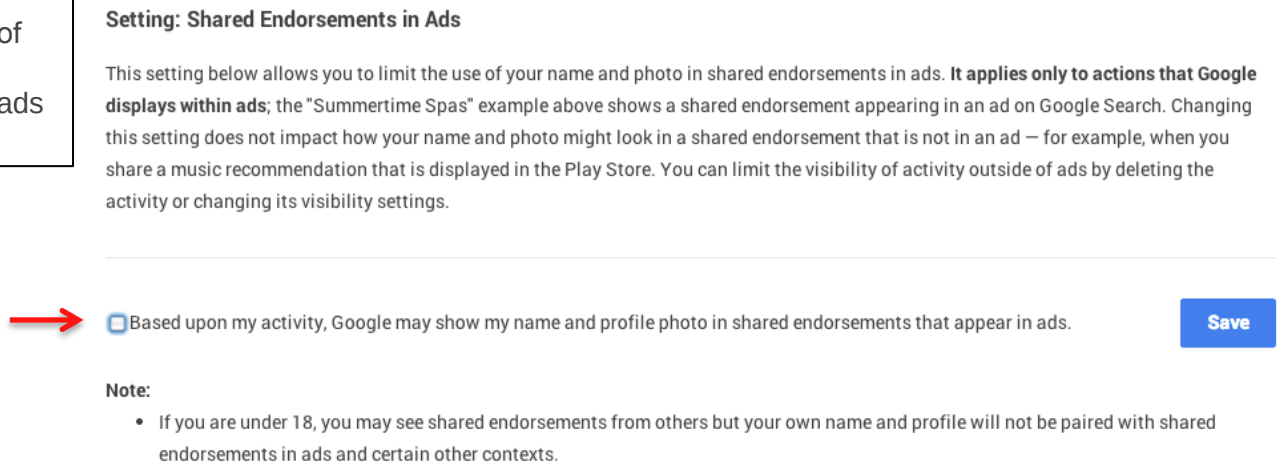
Shared Endorsements (Launch November 2013)

If you have a G+ account, your picture may show up in ads endorsing things you've liked or done unless you go in and turn this feature off here:

https://plus.google.com/settings/endorsements

Note: Information Google+ users have previously shared with a limited “circle” of friends will remain viewable only to that group, as will any shared endorsement ads that incorporate the information

Uncheck this box and click “save”



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TAKEAWAYS & CONSIDERATIONS

Google+ may present some compelling evidence for testing and/or optimizing your social strategy on the platform.

- **Audience alignment**
  - ✓ Examine your brand's current demos, industry trends, and top page performance to assess the alignment with your target audience and related content.
- **Search implications**
  - ✓ Google is clearly influencing search results with G+ activity and brands should take advantage through optimizing post and page content accordingly.
  - ✓ Utilize unique features on Google+ like hangouts to create targeted branded content to drive engagement.
  - ✓ Utilize social annotations to amplify search results on Google.
- **Competitive Advantage**
  - ✓ Review what your competitors are doing in the Google+ space. There may be an opportunity for your brand to gain a competitive advantage if your competitors are not already on the platform.

*Source: Google, 2013

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THANK YOU

For more about Oracle Social solutions:

www.oracle.com/SRM

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