

HOW TO: Google+



A FIRST GLANCE AT GOOGLE'S NEW SOCIAL NETWORKING PLATFORM

Finally, we get a hands-on test with Google's new social network – Google+. Could it be the next in a succession of increasingly successful online social platforms?

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10 million users in
2 weeks and 1 billion
pieces of content
shared a day...



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Finally, we get a hands-on test with Google's new social network – Google+. Could it be the next in a succession of increasingly successful online social platforms?

Just as Facebook rendered MySpace obsolete, will Google+ have Facebook owner Mark Zuckerberg looking over his shoulder? Or will it go the way of Google Buzz and be seemingly, universally ignored? And, even more importantly, what are the potential marketing opportunities for you?

At the moment it is still in the testing stages but we have been quick to get involved. On first impressions, Google+ seems fairly standard and, in marketing terms, a bit limited in terms of social marketing.

IN TRUE BOX CLEVER FASHION, WE ARE SELDOM SATISFIED WITH FIRST IMPRESSIONS – LET’S EXPLORE SOME POTENTIAL USES AND FLAWS.

Positives+

- + Obviously, it is part of Google. This means there is potential for integration between many, if not all, Google products: YouTube, GMail, Google Maps, Blogger, Chrome, to name but a few. Imagine online campaigns that marry the strength of social networking, Google Analytics and YouTube all tailored to consumer search habits via Chrome. Especially with the development of Internet ready television; YouTube could soon be more powerful and essential than ever.

‘Hang Outs’



This allows up to 10 people to simultaneously share a video chat session.

A few Box Clever ideas for you:

You could have one-to-one customer service video calls or demonstrations.

What about launching a competition that revolves around people pitching product or campaign ideas via video call? Stream it all on YouTube in real time.

‘Circles’



Circles allow you to segment your fellow Googlers so you can share content with specific groups. Why not divide up your “followers” into three different segments and test online offers and communications? Cut your test marketing expenditure and see who reacts to what.

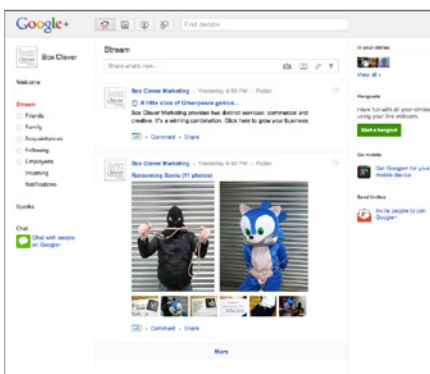
- + This new launch will undoubtedly drive more people to set up Google accounts, strengthening the power of Google’s “+1” button - it’s basically a Facebook “Like” but for the search engine; upon clicking, not only are “friends” alerted on Google+, but every time they search on Google their search results will be affected, showing the websites their friends have recommended and enhancing that all important SEO standing.
- + Overall, Google+ seems to be geared more towards use through mobile platforms than Facebook. Imagine the potential with all of Google’s products: a consumer logs onto Google+ and you can engage with them using geographically sensitive advertising and providing directions via Google Maps.

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Negatives–

- Facebook is stronger than ever. Currently clocking in with over 750 million users. Some will argue Google+ has arrived at a point in time where Facebook is too big to compete against from “scratch” in terms of networking. It may just be a flash in the pan and not warrant the attention and investment of time that companies give twitter and Facebook. However, the potential rewards of being first in could be sizeble.
- At this stage, even though it is early days, we have seen nothing new. Just a few features that develop Facebook’s initial ideas – video calls are nothing new in themselves either. With nothing truly new on offer at this stage it’s hard to see how Google+ can draw people away from a medium they are already so familiar with. Just as we ask somebody to “Google” something we also now tell people to “Facebook” us.
- Finally, and again whilst we are still in the infancy of Google+, it remains to be seen what Google will offer to rival Facebook’s ‘pages’ system for commercial products and services.



In the first 2 weeks of its launch there are reportedly over 10 million Google+ users, apparently sharing over a billion pieces of content a day, and it is still on limited trial – Looks like we have our work cut out.

As Google+ rolls out fully, we are sure things will become clearer and we will see what other tricks Google have in the bag. Until then, we will have to make do with what we have. We will be keeping an eye on developments closely at Box Clever.

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