

DIRECT REPORT THE LOWDOWN

Marketers wait their turn for Google+

Google has long lagged behind Facebook and Twitter as a social media destination. Months after CEO Larry Page reportedly told employees that bonuses will be tied to the company's social media progress, it launched Google+, its own social platform. Google excluded nearly all brands from participating at launch, leaving experts to speculate about the platform's marketing potential.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

Joe Wilcox, Betanews

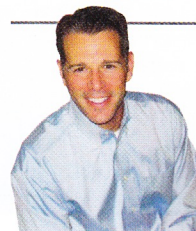
The service allows people to create discreet "circles" for sharing statuses, location, photos, videos and more, and users can group chat or video call as well. It's a service sure to keep people who use it on Google sites longer. For all the obsession about page views and page ranks, particularly among advertisers, time on any site matters more. Whether or not Google+ succeeds or fails remains uncertain, particularly given the service is still invite-only. It's not how many people are using the service, but who they are and who listens to them.

Thomas Claburn, InformationWeek

Google's business customers, specifically users of Google Apps, have to wait a bit longer to try Google+. The Google Profiles service, a required component of Google, has not been compatible with Google Apps for several months. Google engineers are working to remedy the situation but there are significant hurdles to overcome, particularly while Google+ is still working through privacy issues. Google product manager Christian Oestlien said it hopes to make its social networking services available to businesses later this year.

Glenn Gabe, Search Engine Journal

While Facebook has the largest social network in the world with 750 million-plus members, it has almost no serious search capabilities. Now that Google has hit the scene with Google+, and it's outstanding, it has a serious opportunity to achieve a unique closed loop marketing platform. For marketers, this is incredibly important.



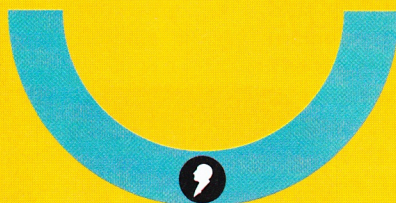
Glenn
Gabe,
Search
Engine
Journal

Amir Efrati and Tom Loftus, The Wall Street Journal

The good news is that the settings for Google+ appear to be fairly straightforward, though some users have already misunderstood some of the privacy controls. People can choose to allow their information to be viewed by anyone on the Web, only certain Google+ members or nobody. But some users are finding small kinks. *Financial Times* reporter Tim Bradshaw discovered a feature that he felt could be a privacy issue. Information shared within a private Google+ circle could be shared to the public.

OUR VIEW:

More important to marketers than the Google-Facebook rivalry is what features Google+ will give them to promote their products and services to consumers and communicate with the public. So far, the service shows promise as a marketing tool. For instance, if Ford Motor Co. is any example, the platform's "huddle" service will allow people to chat with executives about company initiatives, and its "circles" feature could also help brands pick the consumers they want to target with messages. Marketers should embrace both features to target consumers by interest and communicate with them in innovative ways.



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