Google Launches Another Social Effort with Google+ by Judah Getz

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A while ago, a digital marketing agency in New York wrote an article saying that Google Buzzâ€™s launch strategy was not very well planned. All of a sudden a link appeared on millions Gmail accounts, which instigated a massive outcry about privacy because Gmail usersâ€™ recent activity was being broadcast for anyone to see. In order to avoid this faux pas again, Google+ will start out as invite-only, much like the early days of Gmail. And, just like Gmail, Google+ has been dubbed a constantly evolving â€œprojectâ€• instead of a polished â€œproduct.â€•

So what is that evolution going to look like? Google+ takes some of the features that we love about Facebook and provides some innovative improvements. Circles lets you easily create different communication groups of friends through easy drag-and-drop, which means no more over-sharing through Facebook posts. The mobile integration, something that Facebook has yet to truly capitalize on, looks incredible through features like Huddle, which lets you text a group of friends instantly.

Lastly, Google+ is intended to be more of a blanket approach with a navigation bar that appears no matter where you are in your logged-in Google experience. This provides an amplification of your favorite Google products using social functionality (yup, thatâ€™s where they are going with the â€œ+â€• name). Google Search gets new social content discovery with Sparks, Google video chat gets a twist with a feature called Hangouts, and now your Google account gets a more robust, visual Profile.

In the end, the success of Google+ depends on whether or not consumers can truly get over the hurdle of trying yet another social channel. Of course, it doesnâ€™t hurt that many of these features are embedded within existing Google products, but that doesnâ€™t mean adoption will be easy. It will be crucial to evaluate how Google+ could hit different segments as it evolves â€“ for example, what small business wouldnâ€™t love to use Hangouts as an alternative to expensive webinar software? Also, something no one is really talking about is the ability of Googleâ€™s Android momentum to provide a crucial foothold for mobile/social adoption.

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