



Taking advantage of Google+

By David McBee

I am not a fan of Google+ — at least for its intended purpose. So, I'm going to balance my take on Google+ by also telling you a little about Google AdWords and Google Analytics, which are both pretty great.

Google AdWords allows you to make sure that your website ranks on the first page of Google for the search keywords you deem important to your business. This is done by bidding on certain keywords, setting up a daily budget, writing some ads and getting clicks on those ads that result in visits to your site.

It's basically the online equivalent of the Yellow Pages. AdWords allows all businesses to appear on Google, no matter the state of their website's quality and no matter what kind of budget they have. Granted, the larger your budget, the more keywords you can bid on, the higher you can appear on the search and the longer you can advertise each day. However, even those with small budgets get to play on page one.

Google Analytics is an entirely different technology. It's all about measuring what's happening on your website. When you install some code on each page of your website, Google will track your visitors and what they do on your site. Google Analytics can tell you the geo-location of your site visitors, where visits come from (referring sites), what pages of your site they visit, how [▶ Page 76](#)

*Using the service can
benefit your business*



GOOGLE+ From Page 74 long they spend on the site and more.

With Google Analytics installed, you'll be able to determine the value of your online marketing investments, like AdWords. It's a free tool and pretty much a must-have for anyone interested in analyzing their website visitors.

Google does not call Google+ a "social network." They call it a "social platform." However, these features sound a lot like Facebook and Twitter.

- You create a profile for yourself. It includes your picture, your contact information and a little about yourself.
- You update your status with pictures, comments, links, locations and more.
- You invite your friends to join and you add them into lists based on how you know them. You can now see their pictures and updates, comment on their activity, chat with them, send emails and share stuff.
- You can search for people who have similar interests.
- You can create a page for your business.
- You can follow other businesses.
- You can do this all from your computer or your smartphone.

This is pretty much all the same stuff you can do with the other social networks. To be fair, Google+ does all of this just a little better than Facebook and Twitter by making it easy to group friends into specific circles, so that you don't end up showing those party pictures from the lake to your mom or your boss.

Also, they offer Google hangout — basically a video chat with one or more people — so that's pretty cool. There also are features for measuring the "ripples" of your updates across the web, so you can find out how much influence you wield on Google+.

However, here's the big story behind Google+. Basically, it seems like Google is favoring those who participate on Google+ by improving how they rank on Google search. If you play nice on the Google+ kickball field, it seems you're more likely to get picked first. That means that if you want to outrank your competitors in the place where 70 percent of all business searches take place, then you probably need to take the time to post updates, pictures and other tidbits on Google+.

If you want to rank high in Google's Local Search results when

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someone searches the term “Tent Rental Your City,” then it would be a good idea to get lots of Google+ customer reviews, which, by the way, is not that easy to do, considering the lack of true user participation on Google+.

While Google+ has more than 170 million users, second only to Facebook, a recent infographic posted on Umpf.co.uk — Search “Google+ is a Ghost Town infographic” seen on page 76 — and you will see that there actually is very little user engagement going on. For every 100 million users, only six are likely to share a story on Google+ compared to 197 on Twitter. People signed up for Google+ right away, but found that most of their needs were already being met on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

So what should you do? Make sure you have a Google+ profile for your business. Complete it with lots of information about your business and any pictures or video you have. Then, whenever you post something interesting in the other social networks, be sure to do the same on Google+, too.

As an added benefit — my favorite thing about Google+ — when you create your own unique content online and post a link to it on Google+, Google will crawl the content almost immediately and stamp you as the creator of that content. This is great, so that others who “borrow” your content don’t get credit for it.

As for reviews, don’t focus on getting Google+ reviews. Just focus on getting reviews in general. Google+ reviews will come, along with Yahoo, Dex, SuperPages, Yelp and others. Google crawls those sites, too, so any and all reviews will help you rank better in Google Local Search results.

There also is a great service for helping make it easy for your clients to review you at popcickle.com.

So that’s the story with Google+. Basically, few people use it, but there are benefits to being one of those few. By participating, it helps your site rank better on Google. Google AdWords gives you the power to appear on page one of Google and Google Analytics helps you track the visits to your website. **RM**

David McBee, davidmcbec.com, Olathe, Kan., will give the presentation “Internet Marketing: Get up to Speed” on Sunday, Feb. 10, at **The Rental Show 2013** in Las Vegas. An early adopter of Internet technology, he writes the blog, “Let’s Translate — Making Sense Out of Internet Gobbledygook,” where he writes about online marketing strategies. For more information, go to davidmcbec.com.



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