



## Getting to Grips with Google+

How to navigate this vast and unique platform, to share content with new and targeted audiences

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# If Content is King, Who is its Queen?

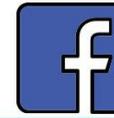
There was once a time when conference marketers could only dream of discovering a universal platform for sharing all content types to their diverse audiences. After spending days, weeks and even years navigating the ins and outs of the different platforms, questioning which best balances the showcasing of your media with the reach and engagement of your audience. In the end, it seems we always have to compromise. Not only is it difficult to find one platform offering an outstanding “one for all” approach, but frustratingly so many also fail to deliver an approach, perfect tailored to just one audience type.

2014 and 2015 have seen the popularity of content and media-rich marketing skyrocket. As a softer and more engaging way of showing off your conference, B2B marketers claim that, on average, it already accounts for 30% of their marketing budget. Plus, being a promotional tool that’s also useful to your audience, its position in your strategy is only expected to grow.

Lending itself to a digital and social environment, social media has naturally become content’s home. Twitter’s introduction of “twitter cards” and video sharing, as well as Facebook’s ever improving visuals for media posts, are clear evidence that these platforms are striving to keep up with the pace of media-rich content sharing. But sadly for the conference organisers, most of the advances lie within platforms based at the consumer end of the market, and so it’s easy to see why this field remains heavily dominated by B2C rather than B2B.

## WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

2004 - 2014



**2004**  
Facebook was founded



**2005**  
YouTube launched



**2006**  
Twitter launched



**2009**  
Facebook creates the 'like' button



**2008**  
Facebook surpasses MySpace in number of users



**2007**  
tumblr launched



**2010**  
Twitter sponsored tweets launched



**2011**  
Pinterest and Google+ launched



**2012**  
- Facebook reaches 1Bn users  
- Google+ launches communities  
- Pinterest is fastest site in history to get 10m unique visitors



**2015**  
Xibo launches Google+ Direct Messaging



**2014**  
Ellen DeGeneres' Oscar selfie becomes the most retweeted tweet of all time



**2013**  
Vine and Instagram Video launched

From a conference marketer's perspective, it's no easy task identifying a platform on which to share your content, and gain the audience reach and relevance required.

## The Google+ Journey

When Google+ launched in 2011, the question on everyone's mind was whether there was the need for yet another social media platform. With the likes of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, between them offering outlets for personal and professional networking and content sharing, Google+ was always going to struggle to prove its place on the block.

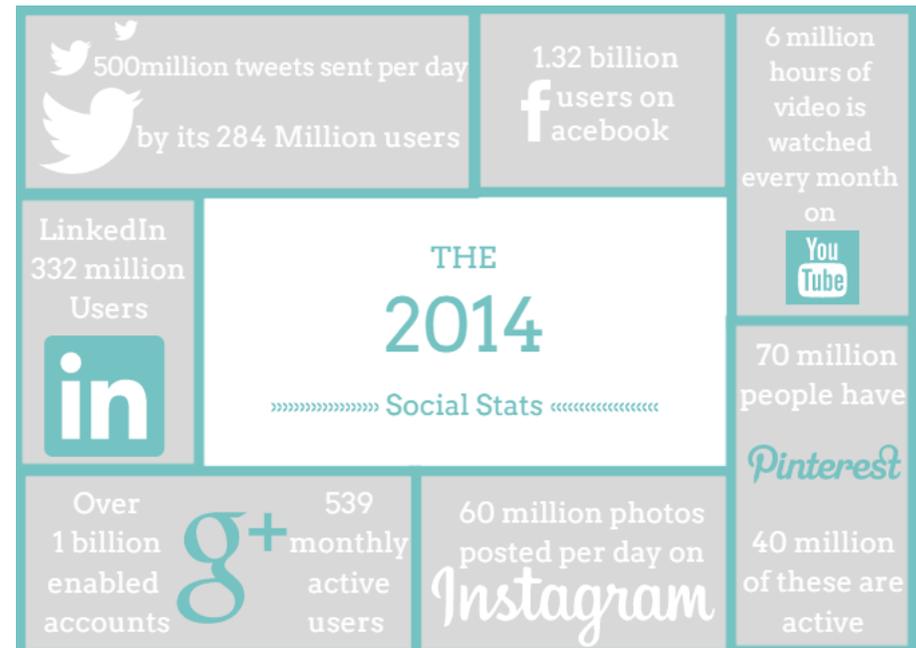
With this, user engagement and average time spent on Google+ was admittedly pretty slow to start with. But now, almost 4 years later Google+ is flourishing and boasts an active usership of over 340million, a statistic rivalled only by Facebook.

It seems what many failed to appreciate at the beginning was this platform's beautifully designed content sharing function, and in addition, the ability to share your content with just about anyone. In this respect, Google+ ought to be the conference organisers' new best friend.

## What's so different about Google+?

Rather than viewing Google+ as a social media platform, I suggest you see it as a content platform, with an extensive social overlay. After all, Google itself exists as a tool for searching for the most useful, entertaining and relevant content from across the web. From articles to videos, webinars, maps, you name it Google will deliver the best results straight to your desktop, mobile or tablet. It was only natural

then, that Google would bring us a platform to share these discoveries with those that share our interests.



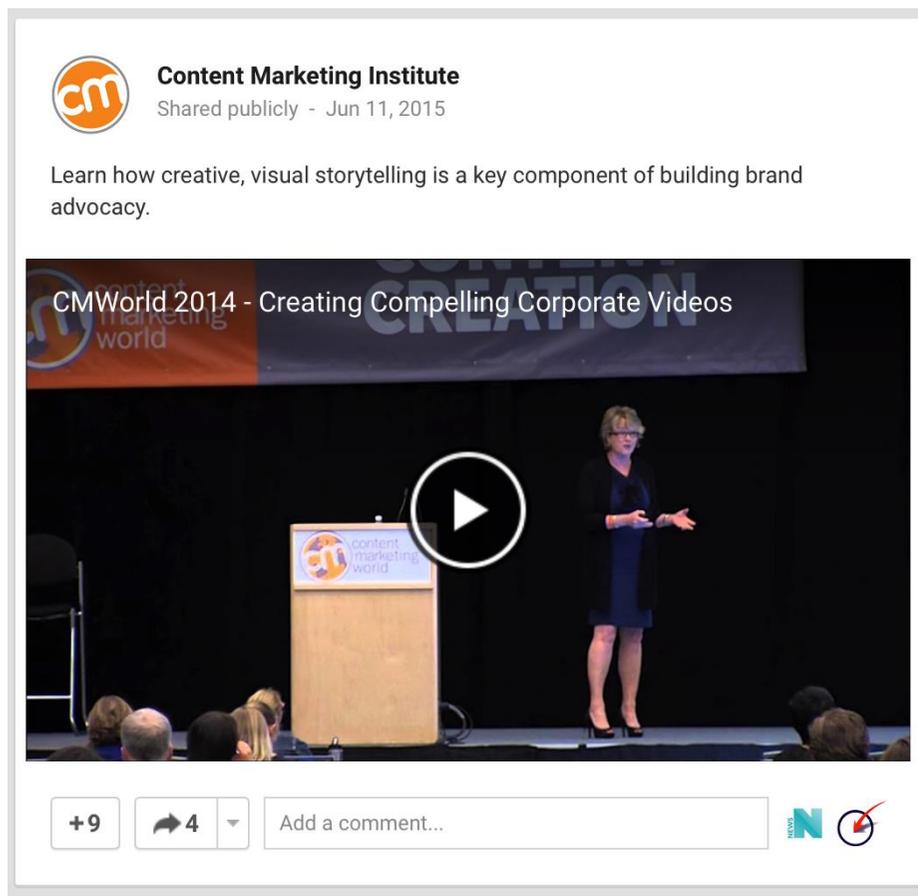
(Data Source: Ad Week)

## Why is Google+ Perfect for Content?

Adopting a focus on SEO across landing pages and social media posts will help to improve your event's ranking and visibility on Google Search. But focusing heavily on text-based optimisations isn't necessarily the best way to market your pre-event content. Driving traffic to content from, often less visually enticing, text based marketing can be an uphill battle. Then again, because few professional platforms offer an exciting way to deliver content, finding an alternative method of sharing content has been equally tough.

Ultimately, after what feels a never-ending search, our efforts often feel misspent.

It's no secret that visual marketing and media-rich content posts drive higher engagement levels, so any platform which exploits this is bound to deliver top results. It's here that Google's value in sharing content to potential delegates is undeniable. Google+ offers the ability to share content in 6 different ways, and so guarantees each piece is included as an embedded post suited to its media type, rather than as a generic attached link directing you to another webpage.



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The introduction of Twitter's inline images instead of pic.twitter.com URLs showed the importance of representing content its true form. This upgrade alone resulted in twice the level of engagement in some cases.

Google+ has integrated this ethos across the board, introducing embedded images, videos, event invites, whitepapers and more, with strong visual displays and no need for potential delegates to veer off into new webpages. This level of post customisation and optimisation is something that's not often seen within B2B social media platforms. Although LinkedIn may boast a higher active user time per month, it's not as fit for content as one would hope.

Thanks to Google's prominence as a search engine, email provider and cloud host, most of us have and are logged in to our Google+ account without even realising. Regardless of which Google platform you might be on, Google Search, YouTube, Google Drive etc., Google+'s navigation and notification pane (AKA the SandBar) pops in to view. With this Google+ members are just one click away from their Google+ account, and are notified when you chose to interact and share content with them.



And if that wasn't enough, all content you share is also embedded within an email delivered right to your recipient's email inbox.

With these features, it's time to say goodbye to landing page click-through rates, and simply focus on the crucial downloads, views and conference registrations!

## Reaching out to your Audience

When it comes to targeting Google+ operates in many ways like a directory, giving you access to everyone, so long as you know whom you want to contact.

On many other professional platforms such as LinkedIn, messaging is now restricted to those you're connected with or willing to pay to talk to. Either way your options and reach for direct marketing are limited. In this respect, Google has turned this common Social Media rule on its head, allowing you to message and share content with anyone. Giving you a potential reach that is unrivalled by any other platform.

## Segmented Sharing

When it then comes to audience segmentation, Google+ has benefitted from being a latecomer to the social media world. Learning the strengths and pitfalls of the incumbent platforms Google+ has developed its greatest gift to the conference marketer, the ability for segmented sharing. Google+ Circles allows you to segment your event's target audience into distinct delegate groups, so any content shared can be directed at one or a few of these with tailored messages for each.

Twitter teased us with the ability to segment our audience with their Twitter Lists, yet in reality its use simply acted as a tool for auditing our followers. Google takes this one step further, so your posts can be public, private and everything in-between. Harnessing this power, you can create Circles that reflect the breakdown of your event audience, in terms of industry, job title, interest, location, so you can ensure each piece of content is relevant and highly targeted to each one.

## What does this mean for us?

As online conference marketers, we've spent the last 6 months busy exploring the platform and its relevance to our industry. And we've been pleasantly surprised, to put it lightly.

We should never have doubted Google, and considering the staggering results we've seen from sharing content with targeted audiences, we're a little embarrassed that we did.

HR professionals, Marketing Managers, Oil & Gas pros alike are online and very receptive, with average click-through rates 26% to the content we've shared with them! That's over two times the engagement we've been used to (and thrilled with) on LinkedIn!

Granted, we aren't expecting Google+ to take over Facebook or LinkedIn as the meeting ground for the masses, in personal and professional networking, but it definitely has a unique angle the other platforms simply don't have.

Now that LinkedIn has drastically restricted its members' abilities to directly reach out to those beyond their network of 1st connection, Google+ now takes pride of place as one of the biggest and broadest platform offering a way to reach out to new audiences on a one-to-one basis.

If your finding yourself intrigued, but simply don't know where to start? Speak to one of our team. After months of navigating through Google+ we've got it covered, allowing you to search by job title, industry and location, so you can reach out to your perfect event audience.



## LET'S MARKET YOUR EVENT

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your conferences and exhibitions!

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