

# Is Google+ still a thing?

You still see the logo sprinkled about, but if you're not already a Google+ devotee, you might wonder why with all the other big social players around (e.g., Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn). Here's the what and why of Google+ with some decision-making fodder for jumping on (or off) the bandwagon.

As [Mashable's](#) Karissa Bell says, "Google+ may still be seen as the punchline to jokes about 'failed social networks'... ." However, there are some loyal members in some specific groups, such as photographers and cooking gurus. So, Google is making modifications to Google+ that put the focus on photos rather than text. There's always a bit of gnashing of teeth anytime a social platform changes its interface. So, Google has provided for the switching back and forth from the old to the new.

There are advantages to jumping on board even if you're neither a graphic nor culinary artist. For one, search rankings. Google still corners the market on search engines. As a leader in this area, Google+ content will enjoy more accessible searchability. If you are trying to be "out there everywhere," then a Google+ plus presence can't hurt.

There is a war about the numbers, though. Google claims to have 343 million users per month, according to [Fast Company](#). Compare that to the Facebook figure of 700 million users a month. However, there's some scuttlebutt that the Google number is grossly overstated because it includes any new user of Google who would automatically have access to a Google+ presence.

Google is working on improvements to Google+ and hoping to attract more active groups. Two primary focuses of Google+ are Communities and Collections. If you're going to dive in (or stay in and wade deeper), it pays to understand how they can work for you.

## Google+ communities

According to Jennifer Beese of [SproutSocial](#), a community is created around common interest or passion about a topic or product. To create a community around your business, get specific about a product, service or product line. Then, assign someone to keep the content fresh and participants engaged. Like any social network, you'll want to provide lots of opportunities for people to get involved in the community. Don't let the spammers take it over! Similar to LinkedIn groups, an engaged community can bring significant content and visibility to whatever you need.

## Google+ collections

Where the moderator drives the content and the conversation in Communities, it is the visitor or members who drive it in Collections. Collections can be private, public or made available to a specific type of user. It's a little Twitter and a little Pinterest in that it enables following, commenting and retweeting, er ... plus one-ing (+1), to reshare content. Collections lend themselves more to graphical content like photos than big chunks of unembellished text.



## **Conclusion?**

Depending on your market drivers, Google+ should still be considered, not to the exclusion of the bigger players, but certainly as a value add.