# MEASUREMENT GUIDE





jeffalytics.com

# The Ultimate Guide to Measuring Google Plus



©2013 Jeff Sauer <u>www.jeffalytics.com</u> jeff@jeffalytics.com

## **Table of Contents**

Measuring Success with Google+	3
Measuring Success with Google+ Background Measuring Activity Within Google Plus	3
Measuring Activity Within Google Plus	4
1) Who has You in Google Plus Circles?	4
1) Who has You in Google Plus Circles? 2) Engagement with Your Google Plus Posts	5
3) Finding Ripples in Google Plus	8
Measuring Activity Surrounding Your Website in Google Plus	
4) Total Plus +1's for a Blog Post	
5) Followers of Your Google+ Business Page	
6) Google Author Stats	
5) Followers of Your Google+ Business Page 6) Google Author Stats 7) Social Data Hub Activity	
Measuring Activity On Your Website Driven by Google Plus	
8) Google Analytics Social Media Reports	
9) Traffic Sources Report in Google Analytics	
10) Google+ Powered Blog Comments	
Your Turn: Measure the Impact of Google Plus on Your Bottom Line	

## Measuring Success with Google+

How do I measure my success with Google+? What Metrics and KPI's are available for this measurement?

## Background

Sometimes I feel like I am part of the silent minority when I say that I love Google+, but I can't help it! As a regular user, I find that Google Plus is the most innovative social network in existence today and the experience just keeps on getting better. My favorite part of G+ is the transparency that you can gain into the activity surrounding your posts. This transparency combined with a host of tools provided by Google to analyze activity creates an opportunity to measure social network activity in a way that has never been available to website owners.

But how do you get started and how does one keep up with all of the advances in Google+ measurement? This post is a great starting point, because it will introduce you to:

- A comprehensive 360 view of what you can measure in Google+, including:
  - Measuring Activity Within Google Plus
  - Measuring Activity Surrounding Your Website in Google Plus
  - Measuring Activity On Your Website Driven by Google Plus
  - o Measuring the Impact of Google Plus on Your Bottom Line
- 14 Activities You Can Measure from Google Plus
- 26 Metrics You Need to Pay Attention To
- 10 KPIs That You Can Use for Your Own Measurement
- Links to 31 resources you can reference at your convenience

This guide was created because I have yet to see a comprehensive listing of the measurement capabilities available in Google Plus – and there are so many reporting features, metrics and ultimately KPIs that a comprehensive guide is needed to consolidate our knowledge into one place.

As you read this document, you may find that some of the concepts covered here have been around for as long as Google+ has been available, while others may be entirely new to you. My goal is to

provide a comprehensive guide that will live on into the future and grow as Google+ adds more features and ways to measure performance.

Please note that many of these metrics are equally valuable for both your individual Google+ account as well as your Google+ business page. For those features that are only available for individuals or businesses, I have distinguished below.

## Measuring Activity Within Google Plus

At this point in the development of Google Plus, the metrics available within Google+ are fairly straightforward. These surface level metrics help users understand where they stack up vs. the competition and also give indicators for how well they are engaging with their audience.

When reviewing your activity in Google Plus, be sure to pay attention to the following metrics, KPI's and tactics to continue to improve your results.

## 1) Who has You in Google Plus Circles?



This is probably the most basic unit of measurement in Google+, but it also provides important information that may be worth noting. The number times that a Google+ profile shows up in a circle is an indicator of how engaged a profile is with the Google+ network. While quantity does not necessarily trump quality on Google+, you can be assured that profiles with a hundred thousand followers will see more engagement than those with 100 followers.

#### Why Circles are Important

Google+ users will only see your posts after they proactively add you to one of their circles. The more times that your profile shows up in circles, the greater the chance of your posts being noticed by an audience. In addition, being in a large number of circles on Google+ will give your profile a <u>higher</u> <u>PageRank</u> with Google. This provides tremendous SEO benefits to pages that are shared by a Google+ profile that has achieved a high PageRank through continuous engagement.

#### **Metrics Available**

- Total Circle Followers
- PageRank of your Google+ Page

#### KPI

• **Total Circles > 1,000:** When I was first getting started with Google Plus, I set a goal to be followed by 1,000 people. Now that I have hit that goal and crossed the 2,000 circles mark, my goal is to reach 5,000 circles.

#### **Tactics for Reaching Goals**

There are several things that you can do to increase your circle count on Google+. The simplest form is to interact with people who are already on Google+. You can mention someone using a + sign on your posts, give their posts a +1, comment, etc. Enough activity will help grow your circle count organically.

You can also work on creating <u>shared circles</u> that list several people who share things in common with your profile and promote the shared circle to your peers. When done right, the shared circle will be reshared by many and mass-followed by even more.

Lastly, you can gain several followers if you talk about Google+ in your posts! That is what has gained me the most followers recently. People on Google+ love to read content about Google+.

#### **Resources for Counting Circles**

<u>Circle Count</u> tracks most followed profiles and pages, as well as engagement with content. Their <u>Chrome extension</u> is also quite handy. Check the PageRank of your Google+ profile with <u>prchecker.net</u>.

### 2) Engagement with Your Google Plus Posts

Each time you post something on Google+, the goal is most likely to get visitors to engage with the content that is posted. The simplest form of interaction with a post is to give it a +1 when you like the content that you see.

When you really like the content and want to share with your circles, you use the share button. When several other people begin to share your Google+ post, we start to see a ripple effect, which helps your post spread to broader audiences than you could ever imagine on your own (more on ripples shortly).

Engaging content also tends to draw more comments from people who read. This can be anything from continued discussion about the post, questions and clarifications or constructive criticism.

Viewing post engagement is very easy. At the bottom of each post, you can see how many people have given it a +1 as well as how many times it was shared by others. In addition, comments are displayed directly below the post.



To view all post activity in one handy place, you can also click on a view post activity link to any post.



#### Why Engagement Metrics are Important

Interaction with your Google+ posts is how your content gets noticed. Posts with many +1's, Shares and Comments have a much greater chance of being discovered by other Google+ users. This is how a post goes from being lost in the shuffle to receiving hundreds of interactions.

#### **Metrics Available**

- Total +1's
- Total Shares
- Total Comments
- Total Engagement (combining +1's, Shares and Comments)

#### KPI

 Total Engagement of 5 Actions Per Post: A good KPI for starters is to average 5 or 10 total engagements per post. Some posts will receive no engagement, while others may receive 100+ engagement actions, so looking at the average will help keep you sane when your posts don't work as well as you had hoped.

#### **Tactics for Reaching Goals**

Learn from others who are doing Google+ properly and see what makes them engaging. Photos are often the most engaging content on Google+ because of their prominence in the news feed. Eyes are automatically drawn to images when everything else that you see is text based content.

I will be honest and say that most of what I post on Google+ has minimal engagement (less than 5 total engagements). Then I will have some posts that receive 1,000+ engagements to significantly impact my average.

Self-promotion is often necessary for increasing engagement on your posts. I personally try to spend a proportionate amount of time promoting content as I did creating this content. For example, if I spend 40+ hours on a post or case study, I try to make sure no stone is uncovered when I share on Google+. For content that takes less time to create, I spend less effort promoting.

#### **Resources for Google+ Engagement**

Start with reading <u>How to Grow Your Google+ Engagement</u> from Social Media Examiner and then study the list of <u>People with Highly Engaged Content on Google+</u> from Circle Count.



# One of the original killer features of Google+ was the ability to view "<u>ripples</u>" of public activity surrounding a Google+ post. When a post becomes popular in Google+, it's not only shared by the original content publisher, but also ripples to many more individuals. In many cases these people have even larger networks that the content publisher and draw more attention the post through their influence.

You can use Google+ Ripples to learn who has been influential in promoting your post and thank them for their help. You may even be able to network with them to promote future posts of a similar topic, knowing that they are both influential and willing to share great content.

It's worth noting that I have found the viewing of ripples to be imperfect. The example above is from when I shared my <u>Google+ and Search Rankings</u> case study and does not include many of the public shares I received from other influencers on Google+. This is why I recommend using Ripples mainly as a discovery tool and *not* as a reporting tool.

#### Why Ripples are Important

While we all have theories as to what makes a post go "viral" and who is an "influencer" on our content, rarely do we have more than anecdotal evidence to prove our point. With Ripples, we can view exactly who was influential in making our content spread across the network. For example, this is how I personally discovered the profiles of several influencers who helped one of my posts go viral.



Behind each large ripple that spreads your content you can see the name of the person who originally shared the content as well as the comment they used while sharing the content. Even better, you can view their entire post and even see the reactions and comments that it generates. For example, when I click on the share from <u>+Rand Wilson</u>, I can see that his share of the URL generated far more shares than my original comment and also started a lively conversation about the topic.



Rand Wilson

Shared publicly - Apr 11, 2013

Study Confirms: Google Plus has an immediate impact on your SEO results This study, conducted over the course of 3 weeks between February and March of 2013 looked at the SEO impact of Google+ on 4 brand new sites that had never been promoted by anything but Google+. The results provided extremely revealing insights into the value of Google+ in search results.

I wonder what some of my favorite SEOish people like +Mark Traphagen, +AJ Kohn, +AI Remetch, +J.C. Kendall, +Max Minzer and +Joshua Berg think about the data and the conclusions.



#### **Metrics Available**

• Total public shares

#### KPI

• **Generate a Ripple:** If you are just starting out with Google+, a good sign of success is that you create a post that actually generates a ripple. As you grow more comfortable in what generates public shares, start to focus on creating content that will generate the most public interest.

#### **Resources for Finding Ripples**

You can view Ripples for any page using the <u>Find Ripples bookmarklet</u> from Blind Five Year Old. You can also access this page directly by going to: <u>https://plus.google.com/ripple/details?url=YOUR FULL URL</u> - replace YOUR FULL URL with the URL you wish to check.

Note: The count of public shares in Google+ Ripples does not always appear to be accurate when I compare this to the actual number of public shares I see for a post, so use this as a directional indicator of performance and not absolute.

# Measuring Activity Surrounding Your Website in Google Plus

Now that we have discussed some of the metrics and KPIs you can use to measure your performance within Google+, it's time to bring focus to measuring activity that G+ drives to our website. While much of the activity that occurs on Google+ is endemic to the network, sharing links on G+ posts can also drive a significant amount of interest and traffic to your website. Here are the useful actions that you can measure between Google+ and your website.

### 4) Total Plus +1's for a Blog Post



Perhaps the easiest metric to obtain for those with social sharing buttons on their website, the total number of +1's received for a post is an indicator of your total reach on Google+. While it's not exactly easy to verify the total count of +1's listed on the Google+ button, this appears to be a fairly accurate representation of how many times a particular page has received a +1 on the network.

#### Why Total +1's are Important

Have you ever glanced at a blog post and noticed an abnormally large (or small) number of social media shares and made a judgement on whether it was worthy of reading? I do this all of the time, and many others do as well. A high +1 count for a post implies high credibility for the content provided within and also sends a strong signal to Google that this piece of content is particularly notable and important to notice.

#### Metrics Available

• Count of +1's for a page

#### KPI

• **Total +1's > 10:** If you <u>automatically post your blog updates to Google+</u>, you should have at least a few +1's for your site as soon as it is published, so we need to set the bar a little higher. I recommend targeting 10 +1's for your posts as an indicator that you are on the right track.

#### Resources

Check the number of +1's for a page using a site like <u>Plus One Checker</u>. You can also use the <u>Google+</u> <u>API</u> to programmatically capture +1 data for a series of posts.

### 5) Followers of Your Google+ Business Page



One of my favorite features within Google+ is the ability for a Google+ Business Page to act in a similar manner to a Google+ profile, with some advanced features added into the mix. One of those advanced features is the ability to establish a link between your <u>G+ page and your website</u> using a website badge or hyperlink to your Google+ profile. Many early adopters of Google+ business pages are seeing counts of hundreds, thousands or even millions of followers on their websites. Not only does the badge provide them with an enormous amount of credibility, these people are also seeing their updates from within Google+ whenever new content is added to the site. Talk about an amazing built in audience.

#### Why Measuring Business Page Followers is Important

Individuals on Google Plus may be associated with more than one business, industry, niche or brand. They contribute to multiple sites as an author or spread their time managing several brand pages. They may gain followers based on their personal brand or activities that not related to a single business. A business page, on the other hand, is a dedicated entity that is related to a local business, product/brand, company, entertainment industry or just about anything else. Employees may come and go, but the business will live on in its own right on Google+.



As Google continues to roll out <u>Suggest User Lists</u>, pages that have a certain number of followers may find themselves showing up as a suggested page for Google+ users. Being featured on a list of this nature can result in thousands of new followers per day. If there is a minimum number followers needed to become a suggested user, early adopter business pages are at a clear advantage when it comes to being a suggested user.

#### **Metrics Available**

• Total Followers for Google+ Page

#### KPI

• **Total Followers > 1,000**: Having over 1,000 followers to your business page provides credibility, increases your audience reach and *may* position you as a suggested user in the future.

#### Resources

Direct link to the <u>create a Google+ Page</u> section of Google's website. <u>Get your Google+ Badge</u> to place on your website directly from Google.

## 6) Google Author Stats

Google			
Webmaster Tools			
Home	This page shows search statis	tics for pages for which you are the veri	fied author. Learn more about verifying authorship
Home All Messages (92) Labs	This page shows search statis	tics for pages for which you are the veri	fied author. Learn more about verifying authorship

If you have established <u>authorship</u> for your website, you may have wondered how often your profile is showing up in search results as well as how often people are clicking through to articles that you have written. There's good news for authors: within Google Webmaster Tools, accounts that have established authorship for one or many websites will see an option for <u>Author Stats</u> under the labs section of <u>Google Webmaster Tools</u>. These statistics are not tied to a single web property or profile you track, but rather to the individual verified author. That means that you can view all of your individual author stats in one location.

Author stats can be used in order to help you understand the individual pieces of content that tend to resonate well with Google for placement in search results. For those of us who obsess over our search traffic in Google Analytics, we may already know about our successes. What about the impact of guest posting on other blogs? Google Author stats can help provide you insights into the impact of those guest posts as well. Take a look at my author stats for example, there are 8 unique sites listed within the first 16 results.

Page	Impressions	Clicks +	CTR	Avg. position
http://analytics.blogspot.com/	5,000,000	6,500	0%	6.2
http://www.jeffsetter.com/hilton-honors-devaluation-2013/	1,200,000	6,500	1%	4.7
http://www.jeffalytics.com/best-wordpress-plugin-social-m edia-auto-posting/	40,000	4,500	12%	14
http://www.jeffsetter.com/delta-platinum-or-delta-reserve- or-amex-platinum/	35,000	900	3%	12
http://www.nationalpassportprocessingcenter.com/	18,000	900	5%	7.8
http://www.jeffalytics.com/establish-google-plus-authority/	8,000	600	8%	16
http://www.jeffalytics.com/google-tag-manager-troubles hooting/	4,500	600	14%	14
http://www.jeffalytics.com/customize-addthis-wordpress- plugin/	5,500	500	10%	13

While some may debate the accuracy of the numbers provided in Webmaster Tools, I feel that author stats provide me with a lot of credibility when it comes to future guest posting opportunities. Savvy content marketers can use this information to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with publishers.

#### Why Google Author Stats are Important

Authorship is a hot topic at SEO conferences, on <u>Google+ Communities</u> and across the web. Studies have shown that your <u>profile picture can influence click thru rates</u> of search results, which may also lead to more traffic. If Google is truly going to act on their <u>Agent Rank</u> patent, measuring authorship will only become more important in the future.

As authorship grows in adoption and prevalence within Google search, proving your value as an author will become mandatory for anyone producing content regularly.

#### **Metrics Available**

- Total Search Impressions
- Total Search Clicks
- Individual Post Click Through Rate
- Individual Post Average Position

Note that since Author stats are showing up for an individual article and not for a keyword, you will run into scenarios where click through rates and average position are not accurate on a keyword level basis. Since many keywords can make up traffic being driven to a page, the metrics available provide an aggregate picture of all keywords.

I would not recommend using these metrics as absolute truths when it comes to reporting success. Instead, I would use them as a reference point when analyzing website performance in your web analytics tool.

#### KPI

• Search Clicks > 500 in 30 days: While impressions are nice, it's clicks to our website that we seek, so I recommend setting a goal for driving over 500 visitors to your collective websites from articles that you write. While this may seem like a daunting number to new authors, one or two well positioned articles can help you reach your goal fairly easily.

#### **Resources for Google Author Stats**

Direct link to Google Author Stats in Webmaster Tools.

## 7) Social Data Hub Activity



Several social networks have agreed to share their data amongst each other in order to provide an "open" data source for measuring social media activity. This is called the <u>Social Data Hub</u> and Google+ is a founding member. Social data hub activity for your website is readily available in Google Analytics in the Data Hub Activity report. What this means for website owners is that we can view all public Google+ conversations related to our website from right within Google Analytics.



Instead of sifting through Google+ to find this information, it's all available in one place with Google Analytics.

1	Brookside Dental Jun 1, 2013 - 15:15	+Lori Thomas Dickert Assume article thanks for sharing. I am convinced that G+ is the number one game in town for rank on the big G and FB is the #1 item to help on Bing and possibly Yahoo. http://www.jeffalytics.com/establish-google-plus-authority/
8	Nenad Lozevski May 26, 2013 - 12:00	Еве сме се собравме сите 4ца :) ej еве добар саse study зошто сите што се озбилни со работење преку интернет и имаат свој блог треба да ce на g+ http://www.jeffalytics.com/establish-google-plus-authority/ http://www.jeffalytics.com/establish-google-plus-authority/
	Lori Thomas Dickert May 24, 2013 - 12:17	1 of 8 reasons Why You Need to Establish Yourself as an Authority on Google+ "A single +1 from an authoritative Google+ account can propel a brand new site to a top 10 ranking with no other promotional activity involved, as long as the site being promoted is in the same niche as the Google+ account." Expand this comment * http://www.jeffalytics.com/establish-google-plus-authority/
Scra <u>w</u> l	Scrawl Media May 19, 2013 - 18:28	PROOF #googleplus http://www.jeffalytics.com/establish-google-plus-authority/ http://www.jeffalytics.com/establish-google-plus-authority/

Much like the process of viewing ripples mentioned earlier in this post, the social data hub provides another way to discover Google+ activity related to your website where you may not specifically be mentioned. I have used this method to discover and join conversations about my content - both to answer questions and set the record straight when misinformation is being spread.

In addition to seeing conversations about your content, you can also see unique events that take place - like each time you receive a +1.

#### Why Social Data Hub Activity is Important

While we don't always have time to research everything being said about our content online, we can surely add social data hub activity to our Google Analytics dashboard for consistent review. Having this data come to you is much more sustainable than having to seek out social mentions each time you publish something new.

#### **Metrics Available**

- Total Conversations
- Total Events

#### KPI(s)

• **Start 10 Conversations a Month**: If you are engaging with Google Plus and writing compelling content, make it a point to try and start 10 conversations about your content each month.

#### **Resources for Social Data Hub Activity**

Install <u>Google Analytics</u> on your website and start collecting data about your website.

# Measuring Activity On Your Website Driven by Google Plus

While Google Plus is fun in itself, as marketers our responsibility is to drive visitors to our website in hopes of converting them into customers. That means it is important to look at your web analytics tool in order to measure the impact that Google+ has on traffic to your site as well as conversions. I use Google Analytics as my web analytics tool of choice, so these examples are specific to that network. Those of you who use other tools will be able to measure traffic driven to your site from social media, but you may not have access to specialized social media reports like those available within Google Analytics. Check with your vendor to see if they have a comparable offering.



## 8) Google Analytics Social Media Reports

Within Google Analytics there is a wealth of information available about how your site interacts with various social networks. Valuable information such as how many people were driven to your site by each social network and how many conversions came from social media. While these reports continue to evolve and impress me with their utility, I rarely hear people talking about them! That's a shame, because these reports are valuable for website owners who are actively engaged in social media.

Each of the reports on the left hand navigation of the Social reports in Google Analytics are quite useful, covering anything from Trackbacks for your posts from other websites through tracking how many people used the social sharing buttons on your site in the "Plugins" section.



Want to know how many people gave your content a +1, shared your content or added you to a circle on Google+? All of that information is available from within Google Analytics!

#### Why Google Analytics Social Media Reports are Important

Visits to your website from social media are often more colorful than the visits we receive from traditional referring traffic sources, so this information helps add some color to our reports.

#### **Metrics Available**

- Top social networks driving traffic
- Total interactions with your Social media sharing buttons/plugins
- Conversions from Google+ Traffic

#### KPI

• Achieve 100 visits a month from Google+: Set a goal for yourself to have Google+ drive 100 visits per month to your site. If you are active on the network, you can quickly see this grow to thousands of visits a month.

#### **Resources for Google Analytics Social Reports**

Introduction to <u>Social Sharing</u> from Google Analytics.

## 9) Traffic Sources Report in Google Analytics

Secondary dimension + Sort Type	n: Default 🕶		plus	Q advanced	6 E 2 4 III
Source / Medium	Visits $\circ$ $\psi$	Pages / Visit 🗉	Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits 0	Bounce Rate
	6,070 % of Total: 9.82% (81,782)	1.28 Site Avg. 1.29 (-0.87%)	00:02:16 Site Avg: 00:02:00 (13.02%)	70.48% Site Arg: 74.57% (-5.48%)	76.85% Ste Avg: 77.66% (-1.07%
1. plus.url.google.com / referral	5,958	1.28	00:02:15	70.66%	76.91%
2. plus.google.com / referral	105	1.40	00:02:50	60.95%	73.33%

In addition to the specialized Social Media reports in Google Analytics, you can also learn a lot about how traffic driven to your site from Google Analytics impacts other key metrics. The main difference between the specialized social reports and the traffic sources report is that you can do more with the traffic sources report. Within your traffic sources report you can add secondary dimensions, build advanced segments and measure individual conversion goals triggered by Google+. This means that you will have the opportunity to perform a much deeper analysis of how Google+ impacts your site.

#### Why the Traffic Sources Report is Important

The traffic sources report is one of the most commonly used reports in Google Analytics, so allowing you to compare traffic from plus.google.com alongside your search traffic, paid media, campaigns, referrals and direct visitors allows you to view all traffic on a level playing field. If you want to make a fair comparison between Google+ and other traffic sources for your site, the traffic sources report is where you should be looking.

#### **Metrics Available**

- Visits from Google+
- Visit Duration and Pages Per Visit
- Bounce Rate
- Conversion rate
- Revenue (for e-commerce sites)

#### KPI

• Increase conversion rate from Google+ by 10%: Whatever your conversation rate may be from Google Plus traffic, it is important to understand why you achieve those numbers and how you can work to improve them. Setting a goal to make improvements is the first step in making Google+ behave as well (or better) than other networks.

#### **Resources for Google Analytics**

How are traffic sources / campaigns determined in Google Analytics?

## **10) Google+ Powered Blog Comments**



With Google introducing the capability for websites to power their blog comments using Google+ earlier this year, bloggers can seek more engagement with Google+ by giving users the option to post website comments to both the website and Google+. This functionality provides another direct link between a website in Google Plus, and goes one step further: It makes it super easy to engage Google+ from within your site. Google Plus comments may be even easier to use than the +1 button! I recently installed the <u>Comments Evolved for WordPress</u> plugin and have been pleased with the look and feel of the implementation.

#### Why Google+ Blog Comments are Important

Engagement with Google+ is important, and blog comments are an indicator of site engagement. Having these comments post to Google Plus can be a significant driver of more traffic to your website. You are creating a virtuous cycle that continues to bring interested parties back to your site.

#### **Metrics Available**

- Average comments per post before G+ Comments
- Average comments per post after G+ Comments

• Average total engagements on posts after G+ Comments

KPI

• **2X Interactions After G+ Comments**: Set a goal for yourself to have twice as many interactions between your website content and Google+ after implementing Google Plus comments. While this may not be the case on every post, successful content should receive more engagement overall.

#### **Resources for Google Plus Blog Comments**

Announcement of <u>Google+ Comments in Blogger</u>. <u>Comments Evolved for WordPress</u> plugin. <u>Google</u> <u>Plus Powered Blog Comments – Should You Jump Onboard?</u>

# Your Turn: Measure the Impact of Google Plus on Your Bottom Line

If you have read this far, you have survived over 4,000 words on measuring Google Plus. Now, it's time for you to look at your metrics, establish KPIs and dominate your niche on Google Plus!

Have any measurements that you would like to see added to this list? Let me know by sending an email to jeff@jeffalytics.com