

Marketers Watching Google+ For SEM Impact

Contributed by eMarketer
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Online marketers focusing on SEO and SEM look to Google+

Google+ doesn't have the user base or marketer interest of Facebook or Twitter, but its connection to search results is causing marketers to closely watch the growth of the site.

In September 2012, Google announced that 400 million people had signed up for Google+ worldwide and that there were 100 million actively monthly users. But according to an August 2012 study from SEO software provider SEOmoz, only 54.9% of online marketers worldwide said Google+ was one of their top five most-used sites for social media marketing, compared to 87.7% who cited Facebook and 82.7% who cited Twitter. Google+ did, however, come in above YouTube, which 48.9% of respondents cited.

Additionally, 63.8% of respondents told SEOmoz that they had set up a Google+ business profile, compared to 75.8% of respondents who set up or ran a Facebook business page.

When looking more closely at trends marketers believe will have a big impact on the future of online marketing, however, Google developments, including Google+, registered high for marketers surveyed by SEOmoz.

The highest percentage of marketers cited changes in Google's algorithm, like Google Panda, and Google+ as likely to make authorship, site and author ownership of content more important in the coming years (85.9%). Additionally, 56.4% said Google+ was likely to become massively influential in search engine results pages. Adoption and use of mobile and Facebook's domination were also mentioned by 81.7% and 69.1% of online marketers, respectively.

Looking at why marketers use Google+ also shows its importance within SEO and SEM. In the SEOmoz study, compared to the other social networks, the highest percentage of respondents said they used Google+ for SEO (56.1%), and 65.9% said they used it to help with branding. Interestingly, despite the lack of user numbers and buzz about the site, 66.6% said they wanted to use Google+ for social media's most basic purposes: gaining followers and making connections. Unsurprisingly, this percentage still lagged behind Twitter and Facebook.

Google+ is a bit of a sleeper social network in terms of its user numbers and usage metrics. In an increasingly integrated marketing industry, however, its impact is likely to be felt by search marketers.

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