

Google Search Plus Your World: Will it Affect Your Online Presence?

Google Search Plus Your World is changing the online landscape, including your ranking



By Mike Wilton

2011 was a year of big changes at Google. The advent of new social features like Google +1 and Google+ brought this search giant into the social media realm currently dominated by the likes of Facebook and Twitter. According to a report from the analytics firm Chitika, Google had attracted as many as 62 million users by the end of 2011, and by mid-January, Google reported it had reached the 90 million registered users mark.

And just 10 days into the new year, Google unveiled a significant update to its search interface – Google Search Plus Your World. This new program may severely compromise your online presence and rankings, but taking simple steps today with your setup, including setting up a Google+ Page for your practice, can help you remain on firm ground even as your competitors lose footing.



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SEARCH PLUS YOUR WORLD AND YOUR INTERNET MARKETING STRATEGY

Search Plus Your World provides personal results to logged-in users. This comprises close to 8% of total plastic surgery searches, according to a recent study commissioned by Plastic Surgery Studios. The results feature content from your own Google+ account as well as from those in your circles. Content can include pictures, profiles, and pages in addition to shared content or posts from Google+. Though personalization and localization have been at the forefront of Google search for a

number of years, the impact of Search Plus Your World on rankings is much more drastic than anything we have seen in years past.

In an initial test run by Plastic Surgery Studios, a search for “plastic surgery” delivered four different sets of results among eight different users—all in the same office location. The only consistent result was in the No. 1 slot, with results varying greatly from No. 2 on.

Rankings as a stable SEO metric have been a dying breed for a number of years. The introduction of Search Plus Your World may be the straw that breaks the camel's back. For now, the new interface seems to mostly affect broad or topic-based searches. However, with Google integrating Google+ into more and more products, it's only a matter of time before it makes its mark on Google Places and the local search space.

YOU HAVE TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT

Search Plus Your World is driven by the social element. If you haven't already done so, set up a Google+ Page for your practice ASAP. Early adopters who learn to use the social network will have an advantage over doctors who are slow to join. Even if a user has set up a Google+ account and never uses it, their search results can still be influenced by users in their circles.

Many businesses live and die by the search engines. If you fall into this camp, you're setting yourself up for failure. You cannot control an algorithm. The same search engine that makes you is also the search engine that can break you. Finding a balanced way to generate traffic to your Web site is the best way to ensure that your Web site can weather any changes that may come at the hands of Google.

You shouldn't feel powerless in the face

of these changes. Remember that content is still king. Creating engaging, share-worthy content on Google+ and on your Web site will give you a better chance of showing up in Google Search Plus Your World, and online in general. ■

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Setting Up a Google+ Page for Your Practice

To set up a Google+ Page for your practice, you must first have a personal Google+ profile. Simply go to Google and click on +You in the upper left corner of the page or visit plus.google.com.

Once you're up and running on Google+, you can create a Page in three easy steps:

- 1) Click on “Create a Google+ page” in the right sidebar of your Google+ home screen.
- 2) Select “Local Business or Place” from the category and then input your practice phone number to search for your Google Places information. (If you're not on Google Places, you can add your business to Google in this step.)
- 3) Verify your business information and click “Create.”