

Expand your online audience with

Google Plus!

What is Google Plus?

In 2011 Google launched its own social media site called [Google Plus](#) in response to Facebook's purchase of the search engine Bing. Google's main fear was that once a user had logged into their Facebook account they would automatically use Bing for internet searches rather than Google which would result in them losing dominance as the leading search engine provider.

Google Plus takes elements of Facebook and Twitter and includes access to all of Google's other applications such as Google search, Images, Maps, Play, YouTube, News, Gmail, Drive, Calendar and many more! In this way, Google Plus is regarded as more than just a single website, rather as a website that enables 'social layering' allowing the user to freely navigate between sites.

With more than 500 million registered users and 235 million active users, Google Plus is a social media site you may consider using to get your message across and build online supporters.

Getting started

1. Click on the following link to sign up for a [Google Plus](#) account, then click on the red button called 'Sign Up' on the top right hand side as illustrated below in Figure 1

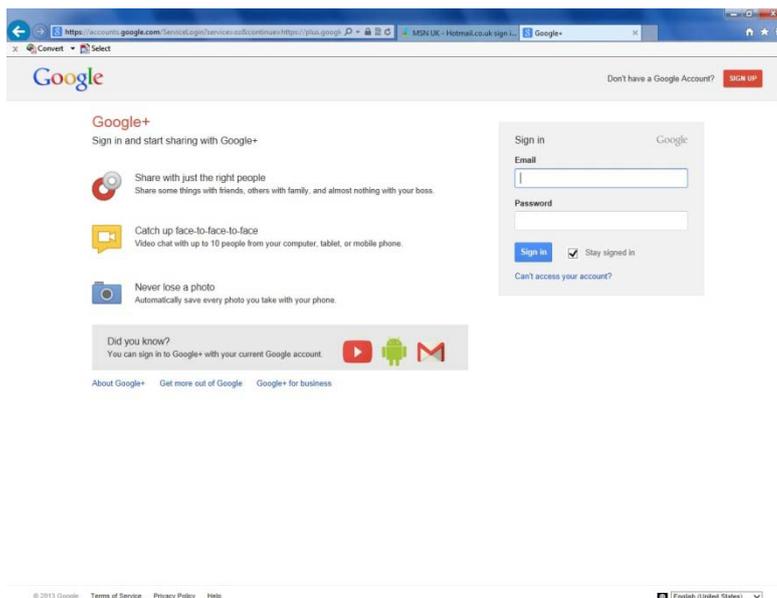


Figure 1 - Sign up to Google Plus

- You will be asked to complete a new Google Account as in **Figure 2** and will need to include your name, user name, password, birth date and mobile number

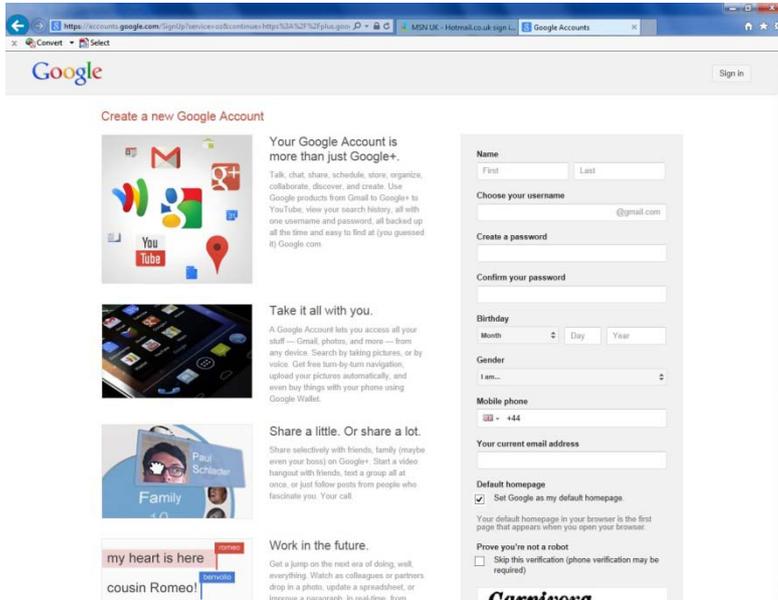


Figure 2 - 'create a Google Account'

- Once you have completed the registration process and you are signed into your Google Plus account you can continue to **'create a page'** for your organisation. Click on the profile tab on the left hand side of your page and scroll down to the bottom where you will see 'create a page'. Click on this and follow the steps required for setting up a non profit organisation page using the appropriate drop down menu. Here you can add your organisations name, logo and email address as well as informing supporters of your groups role in the local community remembering to include your website, social media and www.localgiving.com address

Once registered with Google Plus, when someone searches for your organisation on Google, they will automatically see your latest updates on the right hand side of the SERP's page

- Now you are ready to start creating **'Circles'** of people you wish to share information with. The main difference with 'circles' and Facebook's 'friends' is that circles allows you to filter who receives information from you; that is you can create circles of volunteers, donors, employees and supporters. This is important as you can post tailored messages to individual groups of people

5. **'Hangouts'** are a useful way of getting in touch with supporters on a face to face basis as it allows you the opportunity to video chat, so a great way of introducing question and answer forums about your cause or for live video streaming of fundraising events
6. **'Sparks'** is a feature that automatically loads articles and videos to your 'stream' (similar to Facebook's Newsfeed) based on your interests. Simply click on 'sparks' on the left sidebar and add keywords or phrases of interest to you. Again, another useful way of keeping up to date with the latest news about the voluntary sector and issues affecting your organisation
7. **'Recommendations'** enable you to put your public stamp of approval on anything of interest you have discovered while trawling the internet. Using the Google +1 button you can recommend content to appropriate circles - so an article about volunteering will be more appropriate for your circle of volunteers rather than donors
8. As with Facebook, Google Plus allows you to create **'Events'**, inviting circles and uploading photos and media in real time from the event. Any event that you create is automatically integrated with your calendar
9. **'Communities'** is a feature that allows you to join relevant groups or set up your own private group where you can engage in conversations directly with supporters on key subjects
10. **'Ripples'** enables you to track and analyse the impact of your public post by identifying the number of times its been shared viewing key statistics of those contributing

As with other social media activity, the way of deciding whether Google Plus is the best method of communicating with your supporters is to try it out!

For further information on social media can form part of your marketing strategy, please contact [Carol Strachan](#) – Donor Marketing Officer Slough CVS on 01753 524176.

