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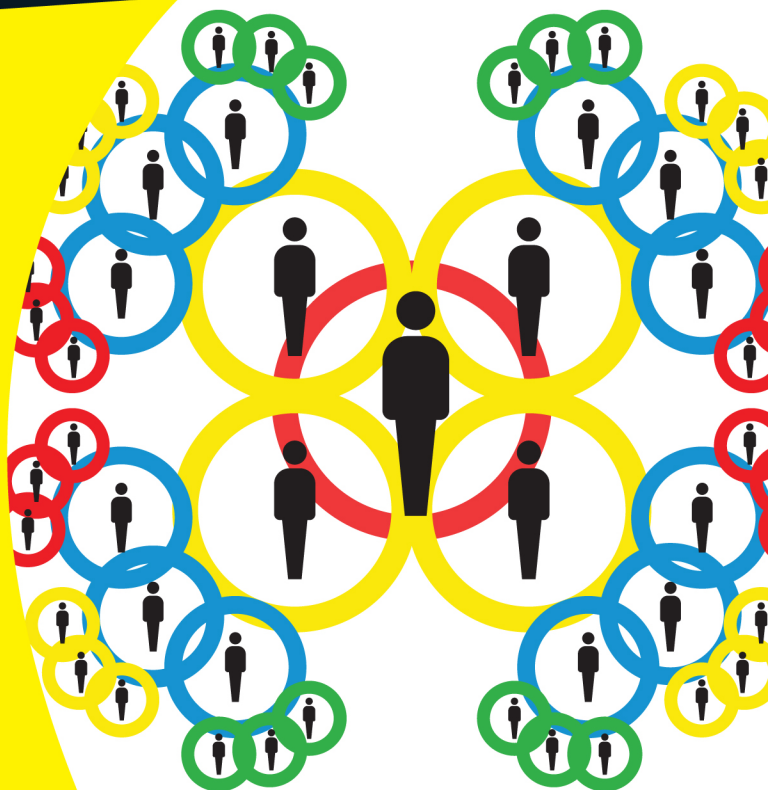
Google+™ Marketing FOR DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Create your account and set up your brand profile
- Use Circles, craft targeted messages, and build relationships with Hangouts
- Discover content and the value of the +1 button
- Launch a product or promote an event with Google+

Jesse Stay

Author of Google+ For Dummies



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About the Author

Jesse Stay began his career as a software developer, where in an era of social media he quickly became immersed in the world of marketing technologies. An entrepreneur at heart, he has consulted with industry players both large and small to create some of the most social technologies on the web. Jesse's approach is not a one-size-fits-all approach of just Google+ and Facebook Pages or Twitter accounts, but rather looking at the overall business objectives of each business he consults with to build the most effective strategy available. Author of three other books on social media, Jesse has also helped write documentation for blogs such as AllFacebook.com, has contributed to InsideFacebook.com and TechCrunch.com, and has even helped document, as clients, some of the major social networks themselves. Jesse was named by both *Mashable* and *Entrepreneur* magazine as one of 20 developers to follow on Twitter and by *Mashable* as one of 10 entrepreneurs to follow on Twitter. This inside knowledge of the industry has enabled Jesse to understand the ins and outs of how social networks work and set the stage for documenting an emerging network like Google+. It has enabled him to provide a unique view into marketing that all can understand.

Jesse is currently employed as a social strategist for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In his spare time he runs his current entrepreneurial endeavor, socialtoo.com, and continues to document the social networks he uses in his marketing approaches on the educational site, Pluralsight.com. Jesse also consults for businesses large and small as he gets time. He is a professional speaker and loves to share his techniques with all that want to learn.

You can follow Jesse on his blog at <http://staynalive.com/> and you can always circle him at <http://google.com/+jessestay>.

Dedication

To Rebecca, Elizabeth, Thomas, Joseph, JJ, Alex and baby-on-the-way.

Author's Acknowledgments

Thanks to my beautiful wife for putting up with me while spending late nights working on this. I'm grateful for all of her hard work — without her, I couldn't do this. She deserves all the credit for this book.

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Introduction

As a prolific user of Google's early attempts at socializing their services — such as Google Buzz or even Wave — I've been through the wringer when it comes to Google and social media. I've been burned, time and time again, so I entered Google+ with skepticism. Google was going to have to prove to me that this was *the* social network.

I was pleasantly surprised at first use of the service — Google had finally created a social application that had a future! The more I used it, the more I realized that this venture into social networking wasn't going away. It had, and has, a real audience and real users, and I was seeing its growth — practically in real time — on my individual Google+ profile. It was an online social experience like no other.

The success of this new Google product spelled opportunity for me. Here I was, on a social network owned by a huge company like Google, one of the first users trying out the service. I'd used social networking before, but here was a fresh range of new opportunities:

- ✓ I could grow my audience and meet new people in the process.
- ✓ I could introduce the brands I work with to new people.
- ✓ I could participate in an active online community — very friendly to brands — whose members were all anxious to see the community grow.

As I got to know the Google+ team, I realized that this project was top priority for Google. The Google+ team was working late hours, full speed ahead, hoping to catch up with other equivalent social networks on the market. The effort was impressive.

Even as new as it was, Google+ had one secret weapon that its competitors didn't — Google itself. That's because Google+ is essentially a social layer on top of all Google products and services. It's not really a standalone social network at all, but a second — socially networked — version of Google. This "Google 2.0," if you will, was a network with vast capabilities already in place, beyond those of Facebook or Twitter or similar social networks.

Here's how it works: Google+ serves as the lifeblood of Google by connecting all the other Google properties together. If you're currently using Google+ — especially if your brand has established a presence on the service — you're poised to have a more prominent place in the rankings that show up in all of Google's properties. That's right — search, YouTube, hosted images, Gmail, Google Contacts, and Google Voice are all now integrated with Google+.

A word to the wise: The more your brand is integrated with Google+, the more your brand will appear in the results that Google shows to your fans on each of the Google properties.

Google+ is legit, thriving, and a serious contender for your brand's attention in this era of social networking.

I wrote this book to help you get a handle on where to start with Google+, why it is a valuable tool for your brand, and how you can get the most out of the service. My hope is that you can grab that handle and make the most of the fast-growing value of Google as a marketing tool that can also create a whole new bond between your brand and your followers, fans, and customers.

About This Book

Whether you're an experienced online marketer, a marketer just now getting your feet wet with social media, or a newcomer to marketing in general, this book will be comfortable for you. I wrote this book to help marketers, small businesses, and even enterprise-level business owners and executives understand the value of Google+ and how it can help your brand's presence on the web through the power of Google itself.

This book covers a range of approaches to revving up your market presence — from search engine optimization to building an audience, to using Google+ as a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) tool for tracking the people you interact with across Google properties. And that's just for openers. I also cover strategies for making the most of your ads and analytics to increase your brand's online voice using Google+.

Feel free to pick and choose your favorite topics and chapters as you read this book; you can get something from any part you read, in whatever order you read. You don't have to read it right through from front to back — although if you do read it that way, you'll see it from the perspective of how I wrote it. Whichever way you read it, you'll grow your understanding of Google+.

That said, keep in mind that Google+ changes — frequently — as does any social network. Some of the features I describe may have changed by the time you read this book. That's okay; I've set up a Google+ Group where you can ask questions at <http://stay.am/gplusmarketinggroup>. Feel free to join and ask questions as you read, or share a success story or two with the rest of the readers of this book!

Conventions Used in This Book

If you've read a *For Dummies* book before, you're probably familiar with the convention I use in this book. It's pretty simple. For code snippets, HTML, and URLs, I use a monospace font like this:

```
www.staynalive.com/dummiesbook
```

Foolish Assumptions

Just so you know, I don't claim to be an SEO (Search Engine Optimization) expert, and this book's focus isn't on SEO per se. Because Google+ is so engrained in Google.com search, I offer a close-up view of how a social product like Google+ can affect the process of online search. Always consult an SEO consultant as you take my advice on using Google+ as a marketing tool — and before you do, consider doing some supplemental reading on SEO. There are entire books on that subject, including Peter Kent's *Search Engine Optimization For Dummies* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)

This book gives you a thorough understanding of “thinking social” as you work out your online marketing strategy. You take into account why people share, how to get people sharing, and how to bring more eyes to your content on Google+. I give you a crash course in customizing and tailoring your content, and in shaping your web presence or mobile app into a more social and engaging experience. You'll get the goods on building community and getting more people interacting with every piece of content you post.

This book assumes that you've used a Google product or two before, although even that isn't 100 percent necessary. To get the most out of this book, just give it a good read, watch online for examples of what it presents, and follow the directions I include.

Oh, and keep in mind that the *most* up-to-date information probably hasn't made it into print yet! This book will give you a firm foundation for using Google+, but treat it as a starting point. The service is also a living, evolving platform; it changes frequently. Always verify that the data you read here is still applicable, and when you have questions, ask in this book's Google Group at <http://stay.am/gplusmarketinggroup>. If there are updates, you'll also find them at dummies.com/go/googleplusmarketingfordummiesupdates.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized to help you understand why Google+ is a valuable social network. I start there and then take you on a journey through the elements of Google+ that will help your brand or company grow. If you read through the entire book, you'll have a thorough understanding of what you can get from Google+ and how you can integrate your brand into a Google+ presence.

Part I: Seeing How Google+ Benefits Marketers

In this part, I show you why Google+ is important. I talk about how Google+ is about people and how it's more than just a social network. I also talk about ways you can use it to get benefits and cover the basics of what Google+ is.

Part II: Fishing Where the Fish Are

In this part, I talk about finding your market — a concept that marketers call “fishing where the fish are.” I show you how to bring your brand presence and messaging to the places where your customers hang out online — focusing on the elements of Google+ you can embrace right away and use as places to insert your messaging. You'll learn about Facebook Pages and messaging, how to build your audience on the network there as well, and how to link the two venues.

Part III: Going from Fisher to Fish-Farmer

Here's where I show you how to expand your Google+ presence beyond the `plus.google.com` website and onto your own website. I show you how to use Google+ to grow your audience on your website, bring more referrals, keep customers on the site longer, and improve your website's search presence — all by using Google+.

Part IV: Taking Google+ Further

Here's where I get to have some fun and show you a few advanced tips and tricks for improving your Google+ presence. I zoom in on how to use Google+ APIs to improve your website, as well as other advanced topics to hone your edge as a marketer.

Part V: The Part of Tens

For some folks, this is the best part! Here, I give you three chapters with ten tips each, showing you how to improve your presence on Google+. I cite some prime examples of successful Google+ use and offer some practical Google+ tips for the small-business owner.

Icons Used in This Book

Where necessary, you'll see little icons that call attention to information you can respond to in various ways — some you ignore, some you pay attention to so as to nail down the subject matter, and some you (ahem) just heed, okay? Hey, at least you get some cute little pictures to look at instead of just writing.



Wherever you see this cute little Dummies head, I'll leave a tip that will sharpen your savvy about the subject matter. These are the places you'll probably find yourself saying, "Hmm, I didn't realize that!"



I promise not to bore you by becoming too repetitive, but if I get a sudden urge to remind you to duct-tape something to your memory, this is where I put it. If it's here, there's a good chance you should pay attention. These are the things I want so stuck in your head that you'll be able to recite them by memory when you're done with the book. (Just kidding. There won't be an exam. Honest.)



Anywhere you see this, you should probably pay attention. It means there's something you should watch out for — and I don't want you to run afoul of it.



If you're a dyed-in-the-wool marketer, you can probably ignore these tidbits, but if you really want to understand the tech that makes this process tick, you'll want to read 'em. They're where I get back to my techie roots for a minute.

Where to Go From Here

Well, the first step is to start reading! Go ahead — pick any chapter. Some like to read from the beginning and go to the end (that's how I wrote it). But you can drop into the book anywhere and go from there if you like. Pick a chapter that looks useful to you and get going!

You might want to start by following this book's Google+ Page, as well as my personal account and this book's Google Group. You can find those here:

- ✔ *Google+ Marketing For Dummies* Google+ Page: <http://stay.am/gplusmarketing>
- ✔ Jesse's personal Google+ profile (This is my personal profile, so you'll get some personal things here! Follow at your own risk, but all are welcome!): <http://profiles.google.com/jessestay>
- ✔ *Google+ Marketing For Dummies* Google Group (Ask questions here, and share your success stories!): <http://stay.am/gplusmarketinggroup>

I hope you'll come by and say, "Hi — I'm your biggest fan!" (or just "Hi!") at any of the channels listed here. Above all, get out there and create a Google+ account. Then create a Google+ Page for your brand, and start following people online who are interested in your brand. Soon, you'll see the value of Google+ that I saw when I first joined.

Part I

Seeing How Google+ Benefits Marketers

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



“Has the old media been delivered yet?”

In this part . . .

I've heard it over and over again: "I get on Google+, and no one ever talks to me over there, so I go back to Facebook." Or perhaps you've seen others find success on Google+ — and you want to learn how you can do it too.

Whatever the reason, Google+ is a tool all marketers should consider as an option to increase the presence of the brands they represent. In this part of the book, I show you why you can, and how you can see the success that many others have seen through the use of Google+. You'll learn what Google+ is, and why it's a valuable tool for anyone trying to build a network, an audience, or even more clicks that lead new customers toward their brand or website.

Chapter 1

A Marketer's Overview

In This Chapter

- ▶ Understanding the Google+ audience
 - ▶ Getting around in Google+
 - ▶ Focusing on people over content
 - ▶ Measuring your Google+ campaign
-

The future of Google+ is Google.

If there's one phrase I want you to remember, it's that one. The fact is, as a marketer you're not going to get the same results on Google+ (said *Google Plus*) as you do on Facebook or Twitter or any other social network.

Google+ is a social layer on top of the entire Google experience. The destination site centralizes it all: `plus.google.com`. The cool part is that you don't even have to visit `plus.google.com` to use Google+. The team working on Google+ frequently calls it "the Google+ Project," and for a reason — it's a layer (maybe even a glue?) that gives the entire Google infrastructure a common social bond.

In this chapter, I give you a look at what Google+ is and help you get acclimated to the environment. You'll quickly find it isn't the same as Facebook or Twitter. It has its own personality, strengths, and quirks. This chapter gets you going quickly so you can hit the ground running and not the wall.



This book doesn't explain how to set up a Google+ account or how to circle people. For that information, I recommend my other book, *Google+ For Dummies*, Portable Edition (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.). However, I do show you the different pieces of Google+ so you're familiar with the tools at your disposal.

Appreciating the Typical Google+ Audience

As with any social network — or marketing strategy — understanding your audience is your number-one priority. The minute you set up your Google+ profile, or a Google+ page after that, you'll notice that your audience just isn't the same as the one you're seeing on Facebook or Twitter. Maybe you're seeing no audience at all. That's okay, because on Google+, you have opportunities to grow new audiences while bringing existing audiences to your Google+ presence through Google search.



Besides remembering that the future of Google+ is Google, keep in mind that Google+ is about people. The more you focus on people and building real relationships, the more success you're going to see on Google+.

The following points can help you:

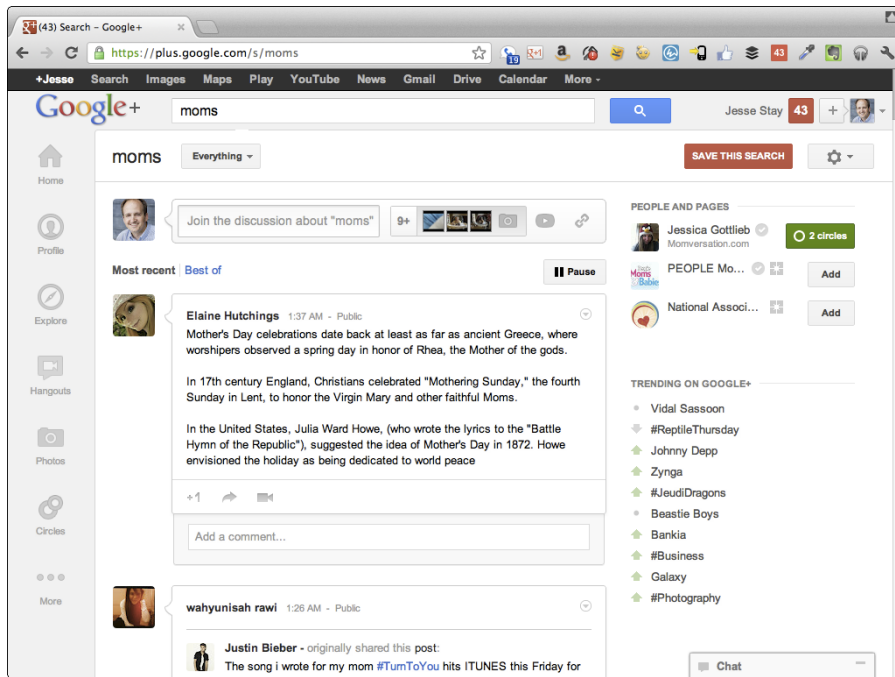
- ✓ Google+ is a powerful way to bring together like-minded interests. This point is most important for effective marketing.
- ✓ If you focus on just your brand, and not the people within your brand, you probably won't survive on Google+.
- ✓ Audiences on Google+ are typically a little more analytical than usual.
- ✓ Typically, at least at the start, you won't find close friends and family of individuals on Google+.



Because Google+ caters to a more analytical audience, it's easy to find people who like the same things you do — or people who like the same things your customers like — and start conversations with them. Photographers are a good example: They can see their photos right in line with the stream. In addition, I can search for *photography* and find a whole list of people with the same interest.

As a marketer or business owner, you can take advantage of how easy it is to find people this way. Say your customers are moms. Search for *mom* and you'll find a whole bunch of moms on Google+. (See Figure 1-1.) Add your favorites to your circles and have a few conversations with them; you'll be building community and relationships with other moms all around the world. That's when you start to create a platform for your brand.

Figure 1-1: Searching for *moms* on Google+ reveals a list of people who are mothers (or are interested in moms).



Becoming a Member of the Google+ Community

As I mentioned, Google+ is about people. This means you have to focus on people to see results. Building community and relationships within your community is an important aspect of your Google+ strategy. Think about who your audience is, and how you can build community with those folks from the very start.



Reading books and influencing people

Consider reading *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie or *Enchantment* by Guy Kawasaki for some great

tips on how to build genuine relationships with people and build your network the way Google+ intended.

Because you can bring people with like interests together so easily with Google+, seek out people who have interests like yours. As a marketer or business owner, you may also consider seeking out people whose interests match those of your customers. If your customers like toothbrushes, find people who like toothbrushes and participate in the conversation with them. Use your own personal profile and employee profiles to do so.



Consider these tips when you're trying to make yourself or your brand a member of the Google+ community:

- ✓ **Treat people with respect.** Remember that others do have different ideas and interests — and that you represent more than just yourself; you represent your brand. Users are always notified when you comment on their posts or mention them. If you say something negative, you can get blocked — possibly resulting in a loss of respect for you and your brand.
- ✓ **Comment, comment, comment.** Of course, commenting on every single post a person makes can make you come across as annoying, but showing interest in an individual — and in what he or she says — has a personal effect. Commenting on someone's posts leaves an impression on that individual, and the more you participate in his or her conversations — especially when you build up and contribute to what that person has to say — the more he or she remembers you. That person is more likely to follow you in return and participate in your conversations.
- ✓ **The power of the +1.** A +1 button is next to every post (and now on many websites). If you like the post, click the +1 button. (To see what the +1 button looks like, look at Figure 1-2.) When you "+1" a post (click the +1 button), its author sees that you've done so. People notice +1s especially well among the people they're following — and they take note. The attention you generate by +1'ing posts helps you build further relationships.
- ✓ **Participate in Hangouts.** I have a tough time doing this myself. Believe it or not, I'm actually a shy person and would much prefer to write out my thoughts than to engage someone in person. Participating in Google+ Hangouts, which allow up to ten people at a time to chat through video, can be a painless way to build relationships. Start your own Hangouts or join others. The more potential customers see your face and hear your voice, the more "real" the Google+ experience becomes for them; in turn, they recognize and pay attention to you. In addition, you can broadcast your Hangouts to the world through Google's On Air feature, giving even greater opportunities to meet new people. You can read more about Hangouts in Chapter 9.



Figure 1-2:
The +1 button looks like this.

➤ **Focus on relationships.** Find ways to help and build up relationships with the people you're following.



The word *hate* should not be in your vocabulary. Avoid harsh criticism. Instead, seek to grow — and to show you're on the same team as those you're following. The words your mom always told you ring true: If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all. This is especially true on Google+.

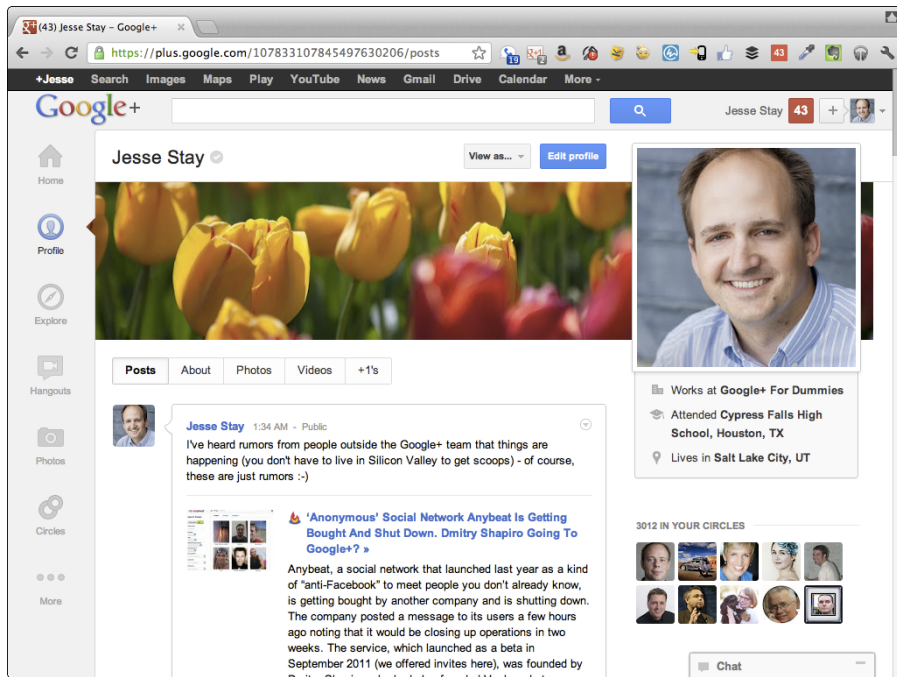
Discovering Google+ Tools

The following sections explain the most important components, which are the basic building blocks for your marketing strategy on Google+.

User profiles

Your user profile is the foundation of Google+; look at Figure 1-3 to see my profile. Every post on Google+ is by an actual person. Even brands, through Google+ Pages, have to be linked to an actual person's Google+ profile in order for that person to post on behalf of the brand. (In Chapter 12, I talk later about linking content from your website to the Google+ profiles of people who create that content.)

Figure 1-3:
Your Google+ profile is an opportunity to say, "This is the real me."



When, as a marketer, you're thinking about Google+ profiles, think about *who* in your company is behind the brand. Your Google+ presence should be less about the brand itself than it is about the people who make the brand what it is. For example, your employees or notable execs can share content from your Google+ page or participate in Hangouts representing your brand. Or your Google+ page can share experiences of actual people who have Google+ profiles and use your product. These people and their user profiles are critical in your marketing strategy on Google+.

Circles

On Google+, instead of following, friending, or subscribing to someone, you add a person to one of your circles. The Google+ Circles feature gives you a way to gather individuals into a group by clicking the Circle button.

By using Circles,

- ✔ You can connect individual user profiles.
- ✔ Users can organize the content they share on the web.
- ✔ You can separate your friends and associates into groups.

Separating people into groups, from the very start of your marketing campaign, allows for some unique opportunities:

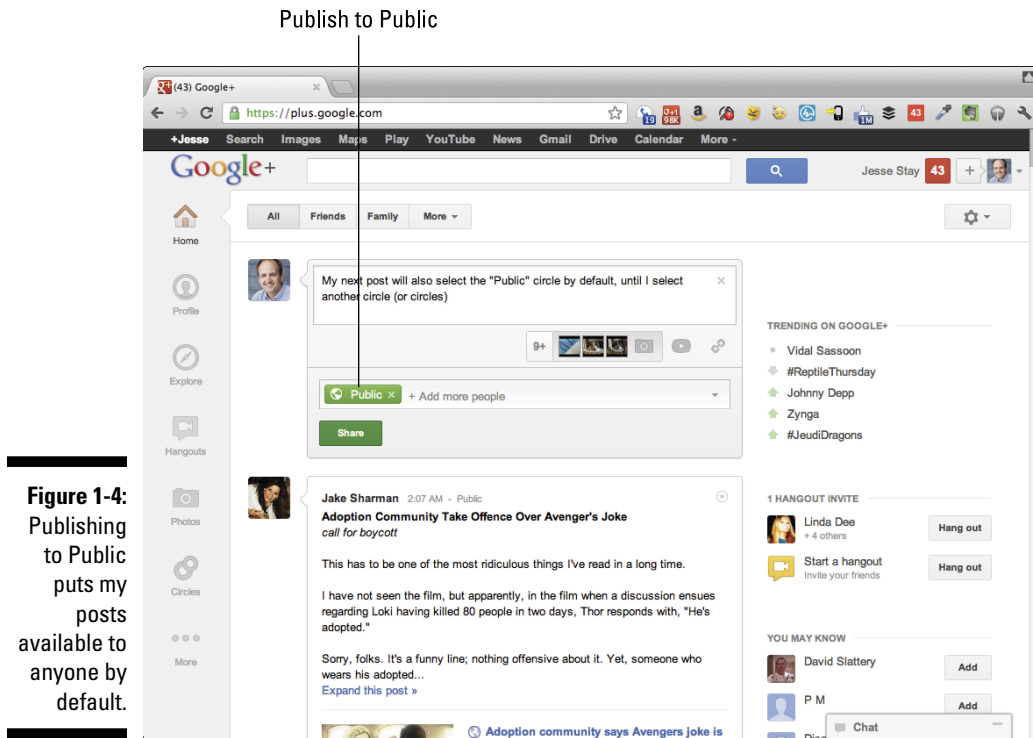
- ✔ You can target content to audiences who will be interested in that content.
- ✔ Staying on top of the activities of people with similar interests becomes easier because you can separate your news feed into content only from specific circles you select.
- ✔ You can send an e-mail notification to an entire circle, notifying as many as 100 people of your post.

You must choose which circles to share with when you post content. Google+ leaves the Add Names, Circles, or Email Addresses field blank by default. If you select Public, your posts default to Public until you change the setting (see Figure 1-4). That's important to you as a marketer because you may not see every post that your customers (or folks in other relationships with you) share. Consider it one more reason to focus on relationships among those you work with: You want to get into as many circles as possible so you can see what your contacts are sharing.

You can benefit your marketing strategy in many ways with Google+ Circles. I share several such techniques throughout the book.



In addition to circles, you can target posts to individual people or e-mail addresses. You can have fun with this. For instance, you can use a special e-mail address Evernote gives you to archive certain posts from Google+. Or you can decide which posts you want to send to your blog.



Google+ Pages

Google+ Pages are your brand's presence on Google+. When this book went to press the pages were sparse, but expect them to become more a part of the core Google experience when they represent businesses on Google itself.

The pages created in Google+ Pages are timeless, and specific to your brand. Google+ Pages can add people to circles, but only people who have added *them* first. People with Google+ profiles can add brands to their circles just as they can add people. Make sure, however, that your employees, owners, and executives are interacting on your brand's Google+ pages in a responsible manner.



To help prevent spam, Google+ holds a No Touch policy for Google+ Pages. Bottom line: Your Google+ page can't *touch* (circle, interact with, or notify, among other things) anyone's Google+ user profile unless that person has already added your Google+ page to his or her circle. Thus the following restrictions apply until each user profile you want to touch has first circled your Google+ page: