

Google+ 10 day challenge

Day One: Get a Google account

To start using Google+ you will need a Google account.

As school email addresses belong to the school, think about setting up a personal GMail account to use as your Google+ profile. This way if you move to other job setting you can continue to access your information.

To create a GMail account click here: <https://accounts.google.com/SignUp>

Day Two: Create a Google+ profile

Now you have a Google account you are ready to join Google+.

- Log into your Gmail account and click on **+Your name** in the top right hand corner.
- Go to **Home** then **Profile**.
- Add a photo so people know who you are. To do this click on the **blue person image** and follow the prompts.
- Add a cover photo (background) to reflect your personality or interests. To do this click on the **background image** and follow the prompts.
- Familiarise yourself with the interface.

Help link: <https://support.google.com/plus/answer/1057172?hl=en>

Day Three: Add information about yourself

So now you have a Google+ profile, it is helpful to tell others a little bit about yourself.

- Go to **Home** then **Profile** then **About**
- Chose a box to edit, e.g. Work. To add information click **Edit** (at the bottom of the box). Tell people about yourself so they know who you are, where you work and what interests you.
- Select the information you want people to see (or keep private) by clicking the **Public** dropbox at the end of each section.
- Once you have finished entering information, click **Save** (at the bottom of the box).
- To view your profile as others will see it, click on **View profile as:** dropbox (top left hand corner of the screen) and change this to **Public**.

Here is a Google video about how to introduce yourself:

<http://www.google.com/+/learnmore/getstarted/guide.html#1>

Day Four: Create circles

One of the unique features of Google+ is Circles. Circles are groups of people created by you who have something in common, e.g Family, Friends or Work Colleagues. Circles are how you, your followers and the people following you communicate and interact.

This short YouTube clip explains the difference between Facebook and Google+ circles:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hC_M6PzXS9g

To create a circle:

- Go to **Home** then **People** then **Your circles**.
- Click on the **+**
- **Name** your circle then click **Create empty circle**

You can read and share content with exactly who you want to through the circles system.

Some things to remember:

1. There is no limit to how many (or how few) circles you have, you might have 3, 30 or 300.
2. You can call circles whatever you want; no one else can see what you have called a circle!
3. You can name, rename, delete and move people between circles as you want to; people can also belong to more than once circle at a time.

4. You can set up circles based on your interests, how you want to interact with others or any other criteria you wish (for example, you might set them up as: 'I am a fan of', 'People that post great photos', 'Friends and Family', 'People I have worked with' etc.)
5. It's up to you what you share with which circle
6. You can only follow a total of 5,000 people.

Help link: <https://support.google.com/plus/answer/1047805?hl=en>

Day Five: Add people to your circles

Now you can add family, friends and colleagues to your Circles to see what they are sharing and interact with them.

- Go to **Home** then **People**
- Use the search bar at the top to look for someone you know.
- Once you have located the person, click **About** on their profile to confirm their identity. (This is why it is helpful to have a photo and profile information to identify yourself).
- Click **+ Add to circles** and tick the circle/s you want to place their profile into

If you want to see who other people are following:

- Click **About** on their profile
- Next to the heading Have in her/his circles click the **number of people**
- If you see someone you know, click **+Add** and **tick the circle/s** you want to place their profile into.

Help link: <https://support.google.com/plus/answer/1047805?hl=en>

Attached is a useful resource: [Your first month on Google+](#)

Your first month On Google+



To Begin...

Arriving in Google+ is like setting up your home in a new, exciting metropolis. The thing is...to get yourself known, you will need to go out and meet the neighbours. They've been having a street party for quite a while now!

So, you could have the best health tips, give sound business advice, be the most brilliant author or even make the best cupcakes, but they don't know you've arrived yet.

Your Profile



Set up your profile with a clear headshot and an attractive image as the 'cover photo'. If you want your image to be associated with content in Google Search.

Profile/Pages/ Website



Link your website to your Google+ Profile and add some Google+ badges. Don't rush to set up a Page unless you are a company. People tend to relate best to 'profiles' when they are new.

Find People to Whom You Relate



As such, use a hashtag to search for people with similar interests (e.g. #health #science #cupcakes). Add those people into your circles.

Add in Whole Circles

Search for hashtags and 'circle' e.g. #ScienceCircles and add those - if people relate to your profile it is quite possible many people will add you back.



Engage

Then go and +1, comment and share those people's content when you relate to it. But don't just share, add your own commentary and views about the content in the box above. Tip: if you are adding in lots of circles then you can 'hide who you have in circles' as it may look a little unbalanced until more people add you back.

Join Communities



Check out communities you find interesting and focus on commenting. Instead of posting your own content.

Watch Events And Make Comments



As well as seeing great content, these are often excellent social occasions and you can meet some new people in the live comments.

Use Hangouts



Hangouts really help you to connect with people on Google+ and working in teams. If you are not using them the you are really missing out!

Things to Avoid:



Just like a party, just be social - don't run around handing out your business cards. As such, best not to ask people to share your content or beg people to add you to circles. Don't check 'notify by email' and +mentioning every time you are posting - this will tend to get a 'reaction' from old hands on Google+ and many people get muted or blocked before they get going.

Sites and tools you need to know:

- circledcount.com - great for seeing stats on engagement, who has added you into circles and much more.
- circloscope.com - this helps you do things such as 'uncircleunciclers' i.e. people who don't circle you back.

Google+ is A Friendly Place

As such, let people know you are 'new here' - people are friendly and will usually assist. From there you feel part of the global party that keeps on getting better.



Infographic by

AIJAZ AHMED

<https://plus.google.com/+AliJazAhmedSEO>



Day Six: Join Communities

Communities are groups of people with a commonality or similar interest. Communities can be public or private.

Burnside Learning Community is a private Google+ community established for staff who work within our cluster of schools/ECEs to communicate. This is where events are advertised, resources are shared and minutes are posted.

To join the Burnside Learning Community:

- Go to **Home** then **Communities**
- In the **Search for Communities** bar type **Burnside Learning Community**
- Click **Request to join**.

Your request will be sent to the moderators of the community. It is important that your profile gives basic information such as your name and where you work so they can identify you easily and approve your request.

There are many other great Google+ communities relevant to teachers.

Some suggestions are listed below:

- GAFE Summit Christchurch
- GEG NZ (Google Educator Group)
- Google Apps in Education
- NZ School Leaders
- Connected Educator Month NZ-Aotearoa
- Scratch Programming for Beginners
- Minecraft in NZ Classrooms

You may also like to look for communities on your other areas of interest ... jazz music ... photography .. rugby ... and more. You can even create your own!

Want to know more about Google+ communities?

Then one community you'll definitely want to check out is [Google+ Updates](#), the community run by [+Google Plus Daily](#). You can find out more about communities in general [here](#) and there's also this guide to getting the most out of [Google Plus communities](#).

Day 7: Learn about notifications

Notifications are the little red numbers that appear in the box next to your name and picture in the top right of Google Plus pages. Although notifications come from Google Plus, you can actually see them across multiple Google properties (YouTube, Gmail, Reader etc.) when you're signed into your account.

So, why might you receive a notification?

- If you are added to someone else's circle (whether you previously added them or they are adding you for the first time)
- A person interacting on a post that you've made (e.g. by sharing it, plussing it or making a comment)
- Follow up comments if you've already commented on a post
- People might share posts with you directly, in which case you will be notified
- Several other reasons

Notifications are a useful way to stay up to date with what's happening across Google+. If you don't want to receive notifications for a particular post, you can choose to 'Mute' it when you next get a notification from it.

To turn notifications from a Google+ community (e.g. Burnside Learning Community) on or off:

- Go to **Home** then **Communities**
- Select a Community
- Underneath the name of the community you will see a bell icon. Click **Notifications on / off** to change this.

Help link: <https://support.google.com/plus/answer/1054277?hl=en>

Day 8: Share something

Now that you understand the basics of Google+ and you belong to at least one community, why not share something? Think of teaching strategy, resource, piece of research or interesting information others may benefit from reading.

To share with all the members of the Burnside Learning Community:

- Go to **Home** then **Communities**
- Select **Burnside Learning Community**
- Click on **Share what's new** and type in your information
- Add a **photo**, **website link** or **video** by clicking on the icon
- **Stop Check** Confirm who you are posting to. This is recorded in the **To:** box
- Click **Share**

Help link: https://support.google.com/plus/answer/1053549?hl=en&ref_topic=3049662

Comments and +1

Now read posts made by other members of the community. If you want to leave a message for the author, you can add a comment.

To add a comment:

Click Add a comment at the bottom of the post.

Type in your comment

Click Post comment in the bottom left of the box.

If you like it a post or found it useful click the **+1** button. This indicates to others who see the post in the future that you liked it, agree with it or think it was interesting. A post that has several +1s therefore indicates people have found it valuable so it is probably worth reading.

Help link on comments: <https://support.google.com/plus/answer/1252648?hl=en>

Help link on +1: <https://support.google.com/plus/answer/1047397?hl=en>

Day 9: Create a poll

Google+ can be used to gather information by creating a poll. This can be as simple as a question with a Yes/No/Maybe response.

To create a poll:

- Go to **Home** then **Communities**
- Select the community you wish to survey
- Under the Share what's new box click **Poll**
- Type in a question
- In the boxes marked **Choice 1** and **Choice 2** record a possible responses
- Add further responses by clicking **+ More choices**
- **Stop Check** Confirm who you are posting to. This is recorded in the **To:** box
- Click **Share**

Day 10: Invite others and explore more features

Now that you can see the benefits of using Google+ you can invite others to join.

Why not run a 10 day Google+ challenge with your staff and encourage them to be part of the Burnside Learning community?

You could even set up your own school or teaching team private community to share ideas and resources!

To invite others to a community:

- Go to **Home** then **Communities**

- Select the Community you want to invite others to
- Click **Share this community**
- In the box titled **Add a comment** write a brief welcome message
- In the box titled **To:** add the name or email address of the person
- Click **Share**. Your recipient will then receive an email invitation to join.

Photos? Hangouts? There are other features of Google+ not covered in this 10 day challenge so now it's up to you to explore further. Have fun!

Help link for all Google+ topics: <https://support.google.com/plus/#topic=3049735>