

Google+ What makes “What's hot” hot?

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Written Language in a Digital Era  
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**WAKE FOREST**  
UNIVERSITY

# Agenda

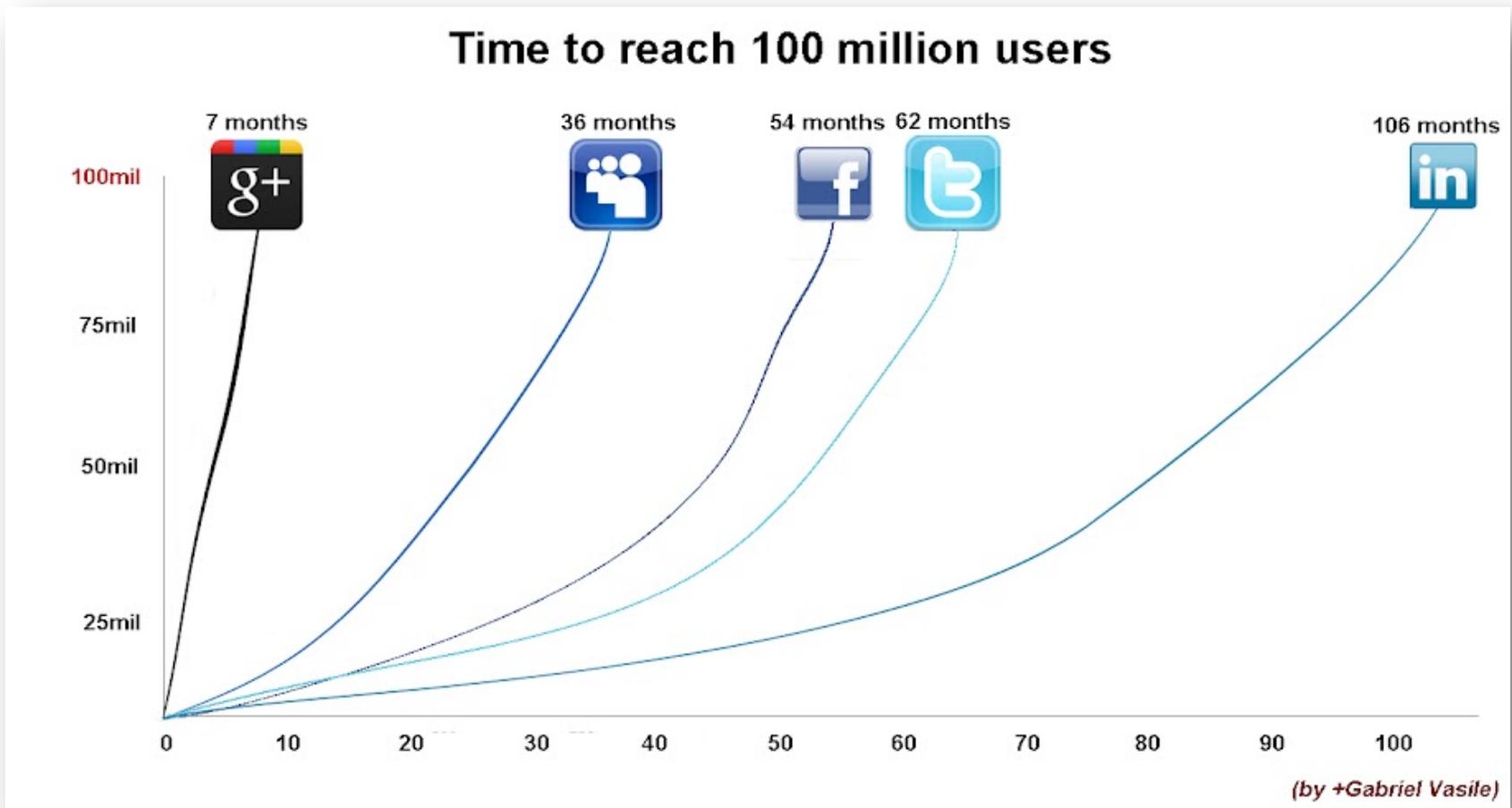
- Google+ What's Hot
- Characteristics investigated
- Findings

# Introduction: Google+

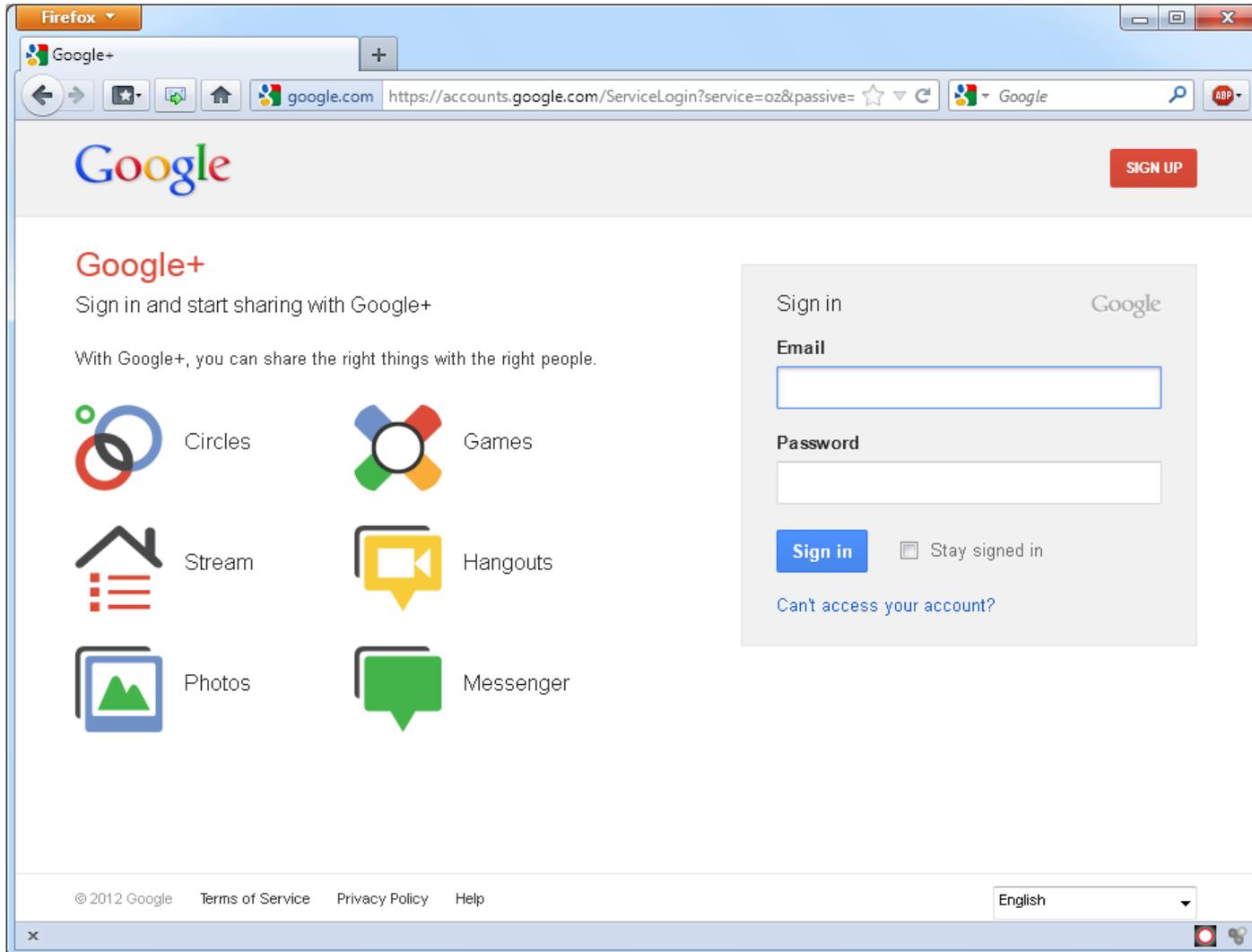
<http://plus.google.com/>

Newest social networking site - Jun 28, 2011

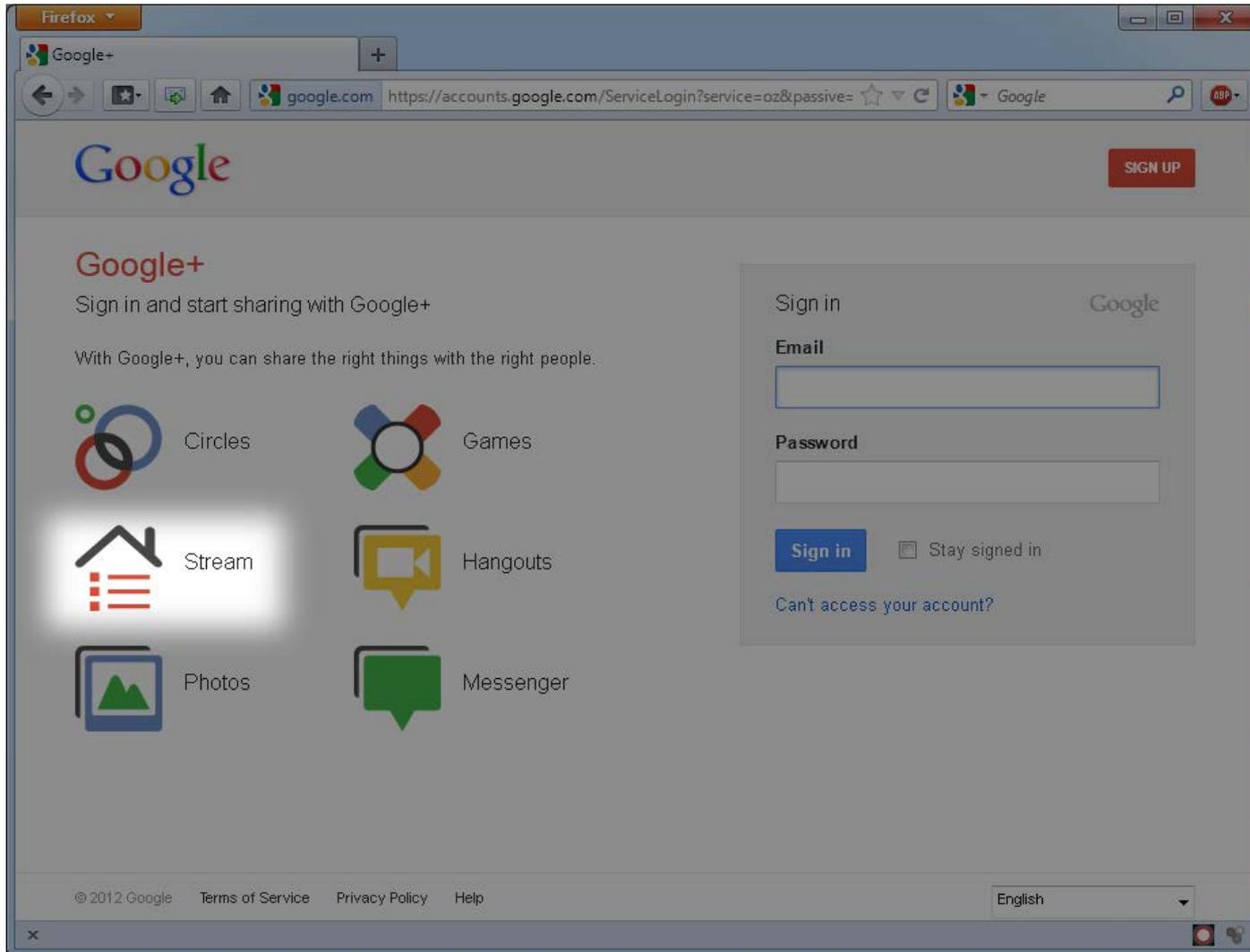
Currently 170+ million users (April 12, 2012)  
vs Facebook 900+ million (Apr 23, 2012)



# Introduction: Google+ Stream



# Introduction: Google+ Stream

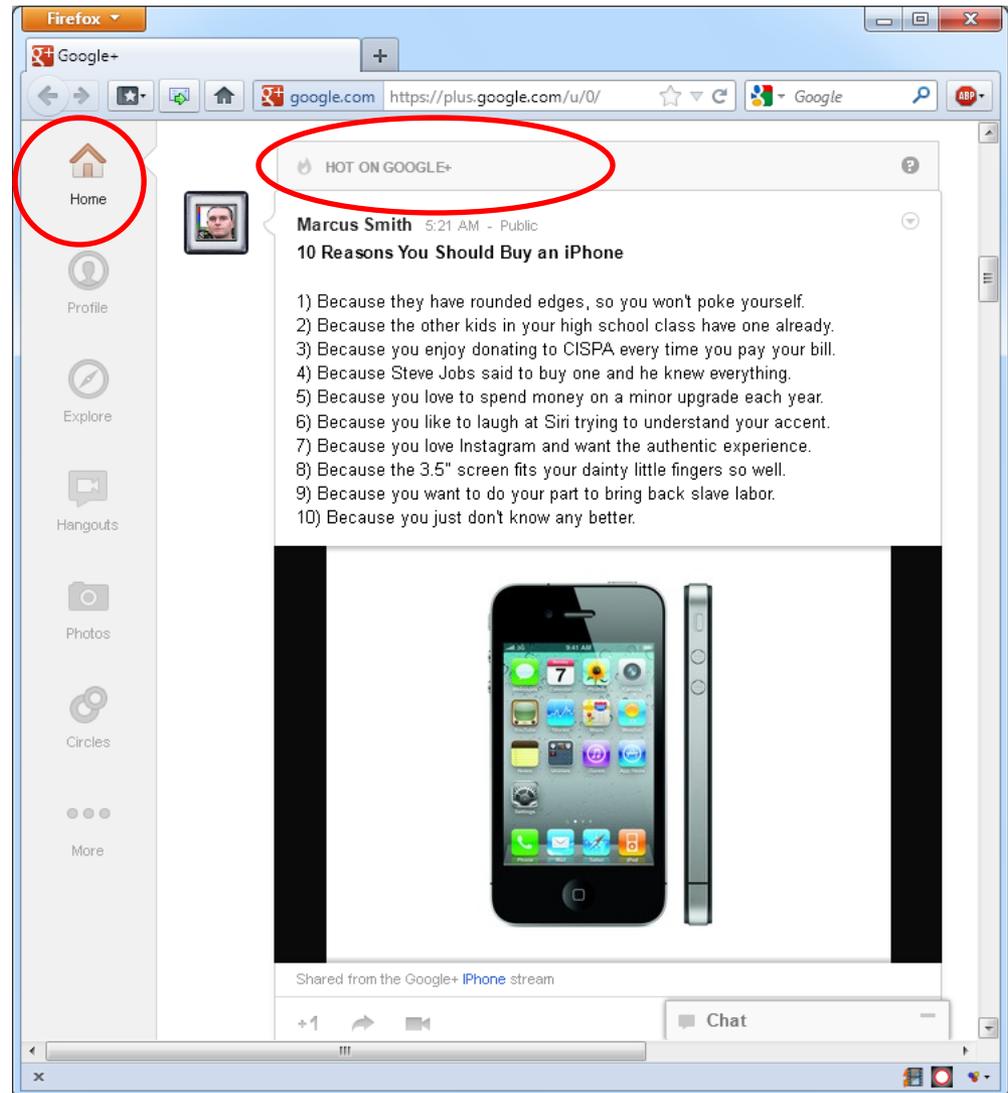


# Introduction: Google+ What's hot

Launched October 24, 2011

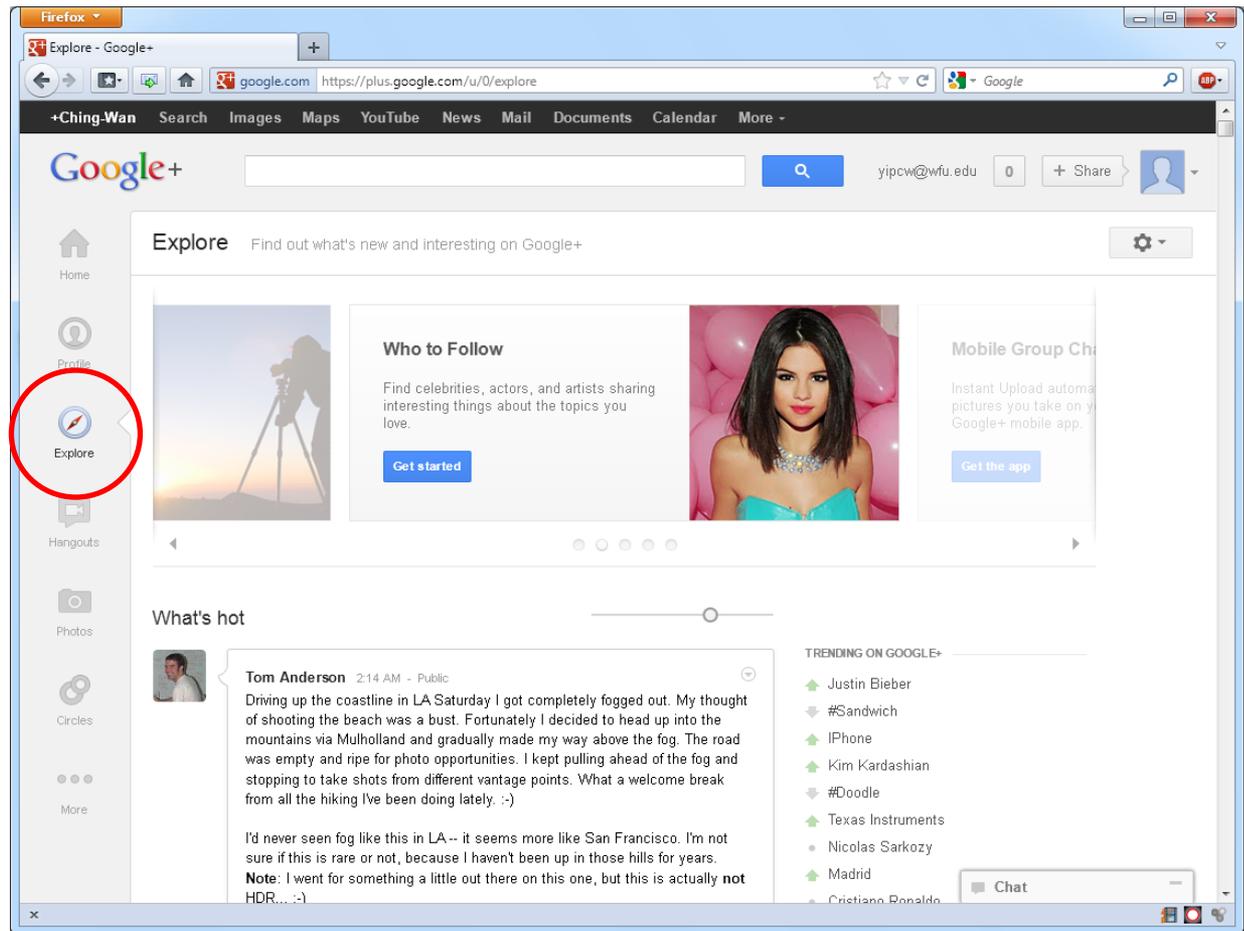
8 posts in user home stream

cannot be turned off initially



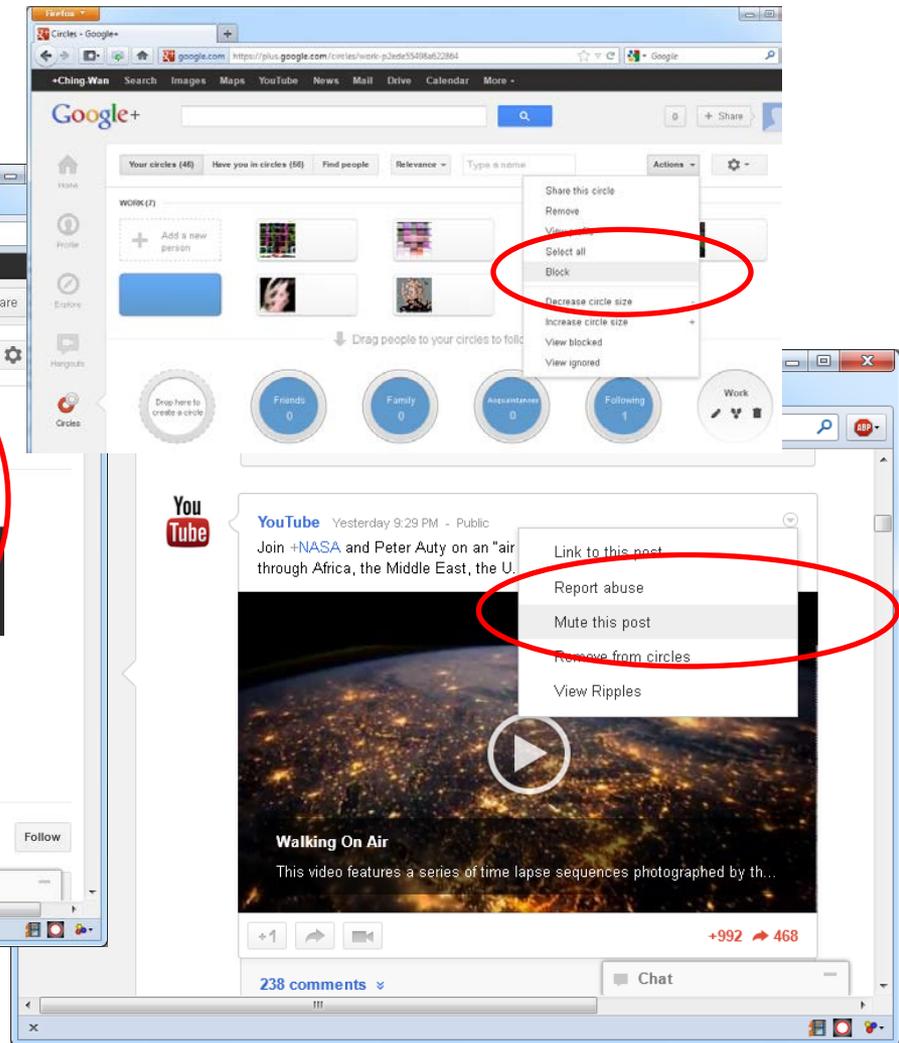
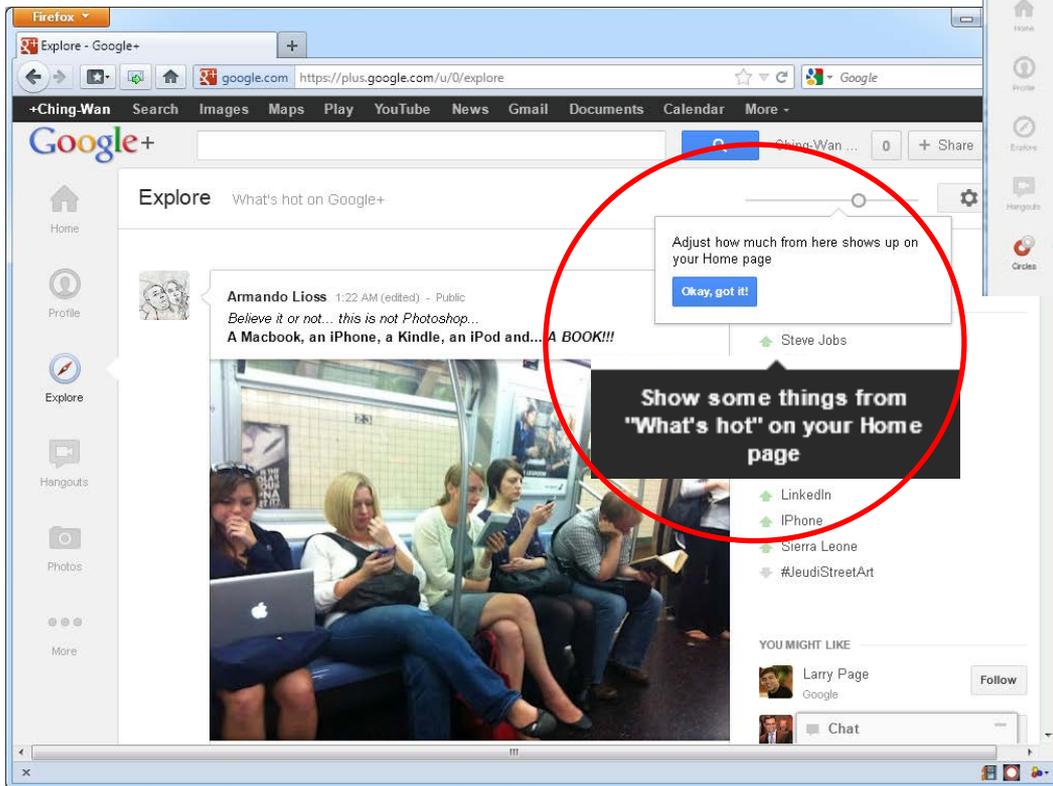
# Introduction: #whitespace redesign

also in explore tab after  
April 2012  
UI update



# Introduction: volume control

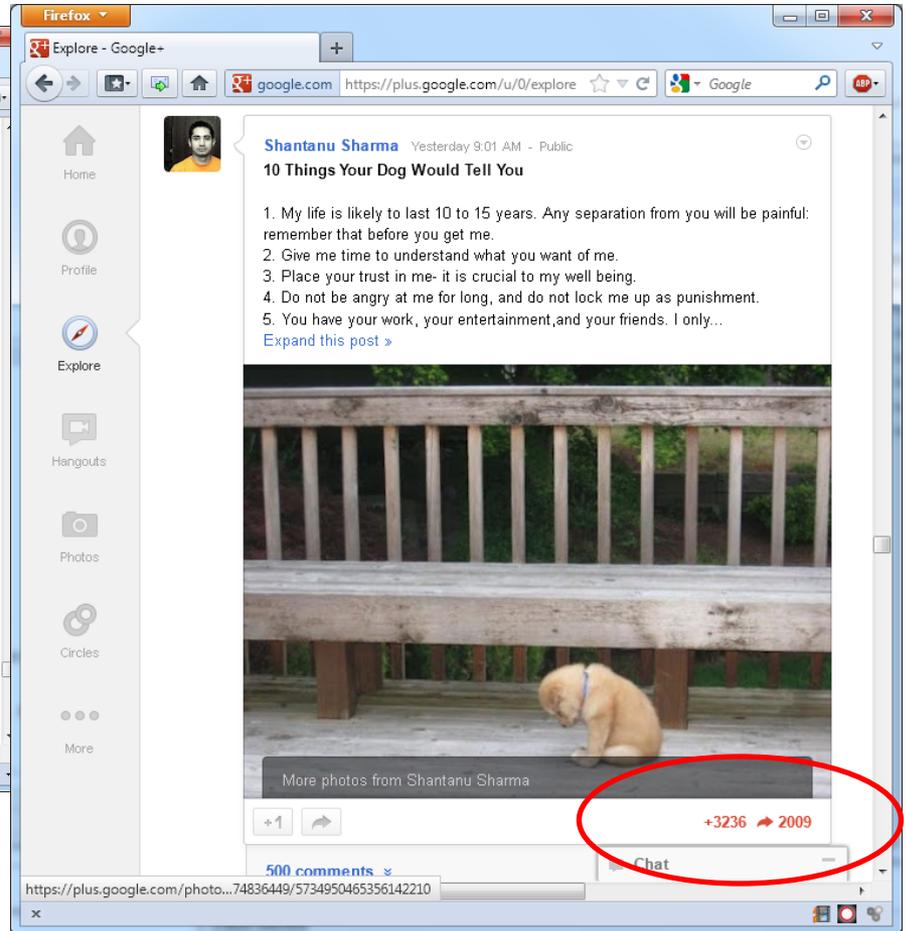
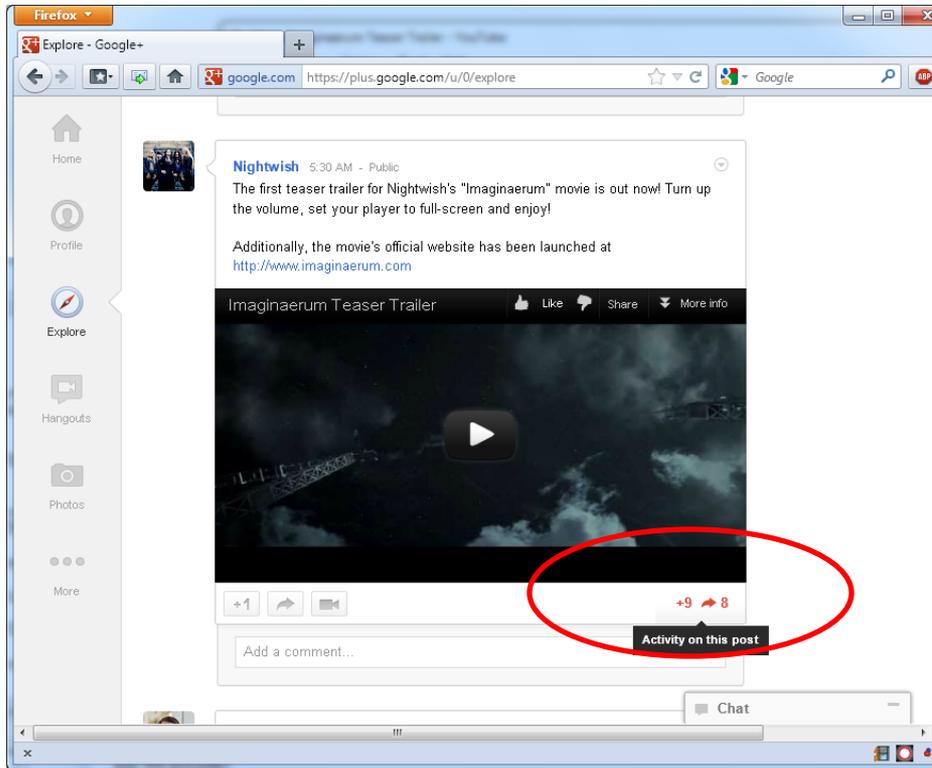
"volume control" available.  
See Baron 2008, Vaughan-Nichols 2012



# Introduction: how?

exact algorithm not known

- not just  ,  , comments (maximum 500)



# Introduction: why? marketing

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) → social media optimization
- Inc. 500 fast growing corporations  
company blogs 2010:50% ↓ 2011:37%  
Facebook, Tumblr , Twitter etc.  
see Yu 2012

# Methods: What makes posts hot?

## Research Questions

- Linguistic Features
  - compare with other DMC
- Authors characteristics

## Methods: Data Collection from

- 14 days - 2012.03.07-2012.03.21  
(continuing)
- use 40 posts each day total 560 posts  
(collect 50 posts for rejects, max. ~64)
- between 12am-8am

## Methods: discards

- duplicate content from different sources
- remove http:// links to youtube and vimeo, more photos from (no longer necessary after recent UI change)

# Methods: blank

Firefox - Explore - Google+

google.com https://plus.google.com/u/0/explore

Home

Profile

Explore

Hangouts

Photos

Circles

More

**Bill Brown** 3:46 AM - Public

More photos from Bill Brown

+1

+14 13

**6 comments**

**Hayden Jenkins** 5:17 AM +1  
That's sorted the pecking order out. Next item of business...

**Bill Brown** 5:19 AM  
lol

Add a comment...

Firefox - Kevin Staff - Google+

google.com https://plus.google.com/u/0/117

Home

Profile

Explore

More

**Kevin Staff** 9:44 AM - Public

+1

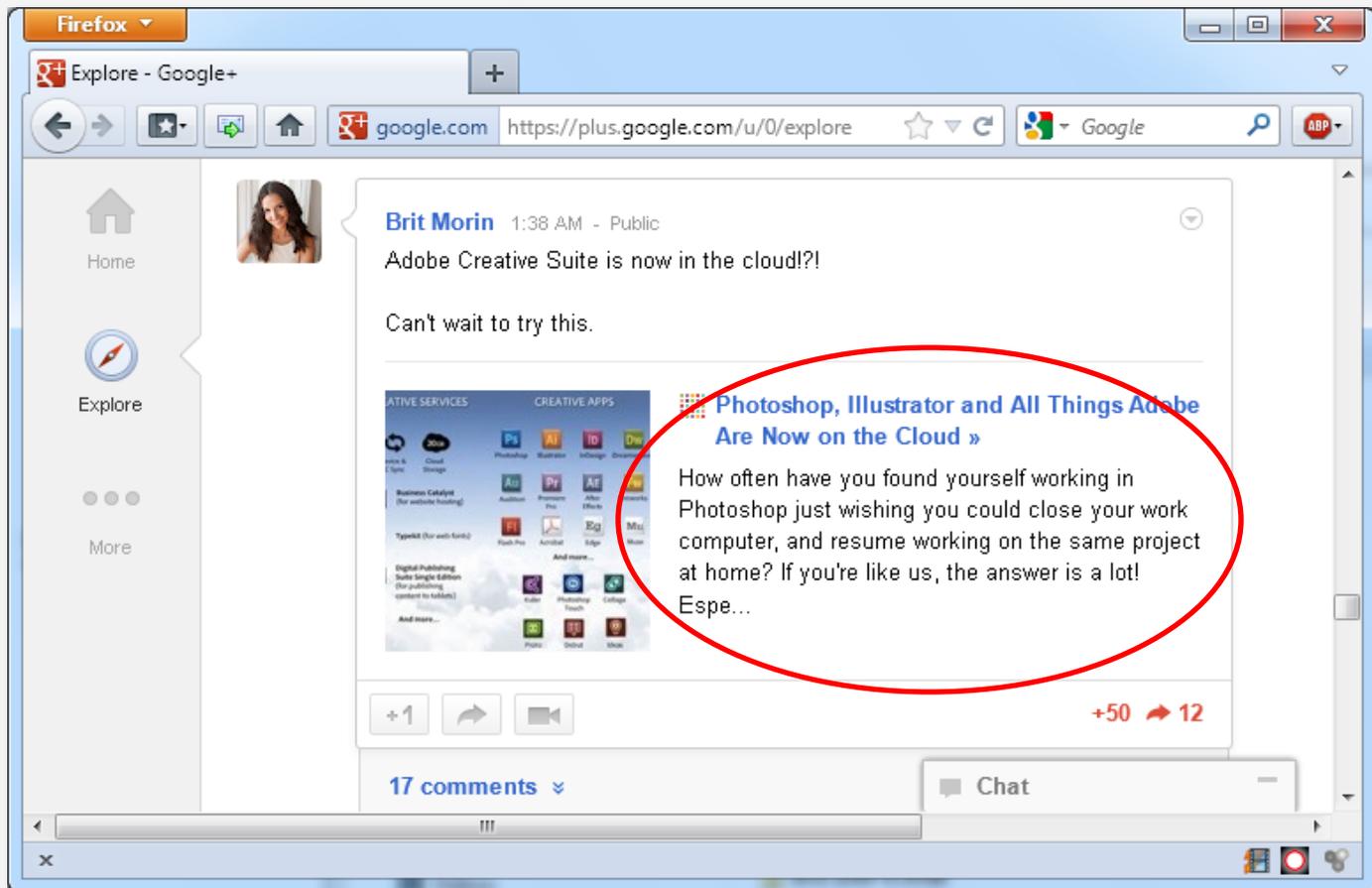
+15 9

**4 comments**

Chat

# Methods: embed text

- Most of time not by author, is it content?



## Methods: Software

- Laurence Anthony antconc 3.2.4w  
(Oct 4 2011)
- Cygwin wc utility
- Microsoft Excel 2010

# Methods: Author

This screenshot shows the Twitter profile for BMW Group (@BMWGroup). The profile information is circled in red and includes:

- Profile picture: BMW Group logo
- Username: @BMWGroup
- Location: München
- Website: <http://www.bmwgroup.com>
- Follow button
- 711 TWEETS
- 36 FOLLOWING
- 49,742 FOLLOWERS

The main content area shows a list of tweets from the account, including replies to customer service requests.

This screenshot shows the Google+ profile for BMW. The profile information is circled in red and includes:

- Profile picture: BMW logo
- Tagline: Sheer Driving Pleasure
- Website: [www.bmw.com](http://www.bmw.com)
- +301805 followers

The main content area shows a post from BMW at 12:11 PM, which is also circled in red. The post text reads: "Get ready for a diverse mix of topics: Exciting videos, intriguing animations and direct internet links provide plenty of interactive reading and listening pleasure. Welcome to the BMW Magazine app 1/2012. With it you can watch a clip showing a book driving through New York or see Katy Perry heading down to the beach in a BMW Convertible. How did you like it? Please tell us what you think in the comments below." Below the text is a link to the BMW Magazine app on the iTunes App Store.

## Results: counts

- word types: 9,026
- word tokens: 46,608
  
- average “lines” (paragraphy): 6.0
- average words: 80.7
- average chars: 490.0
  
- median “lines” (paragraphy): 3.0
- median words: 49.0
- median chars: 309.5

# Results: counts

	G+	TXT (Baron 2008)	IM (Baron 2008)
post	560 (14*40)	191	191
total words	46,608	1,473	1,146
average words/transmission	80.7	7.7	6.0

## Results: features

- emoticons - :D ^\_^ etc.
- acroynms - DMCA POV FDA FBI LTE BFF etc.
- abb. - c'mon, specs, admin etc.
- contractions - 'em here/there's, don't etc.
- punctuation - ! ? ... etc.
- ALL CAPS - INGENIOUS SO NOT EVER etc.

# Results: features

	G+	TXT (Baron 2008)	IM (Baron 2008)
	of posts	of words	of words
emoticons	13%	< 1%	< 1%
acroynms	23%	< 1%	< 1%
abb.	8%	3%	0%
contractions	33%	85%	68%
apostrophes		32%	94%
punctuation	58%		
ALL CAPS	11%		
		of sentences	of sentences
overall sentence punctuation		39%	45%
transmission-final punctuation		29%	35%
transmission-internal punctuation		54%	78%
use of required question mark		73%	100%
use of required period		30%	41%

# Results: authors

user ID	# of posts	category	in # of circles	# of twitter followers
Mike Shaw	12	photographer	1,076,596	N/A
Trey Ratcliff	10	photographer	1,866,504	32,380
Mike Elgan	9	executive	969,232	18,895
Alex Koloskov	8	photographer	1,060,812	6,012
Cadbury UK	8	company	853,744	11,700
Tom Anderson	8	executive	1,834,245	192,393
Amanda Blain	7	executive	971,718	15,846
Felicia Day	6	celeb	1,910,120	1,896,041
IGN	6	game	380,590	409,456
The Hunger Games	6	entertainment	967,682	434,632
BBC News	5	news	384,418	653,497
Hugh Jackman	5	celeb	1,938,792	1,235,457
Jay Patel	5	photographer	1,104,512	N/A
Jim Goldstein	5	photographer	1,083,729	10,944
Mashable	5	website	353,093	108,346
The Next Web	5	website	506,584	695,842
Victor Bezrukov	5	photographer	1,111,814	2,352
Angry Birds	4	game	993,226	415,885

# Discussion - situation

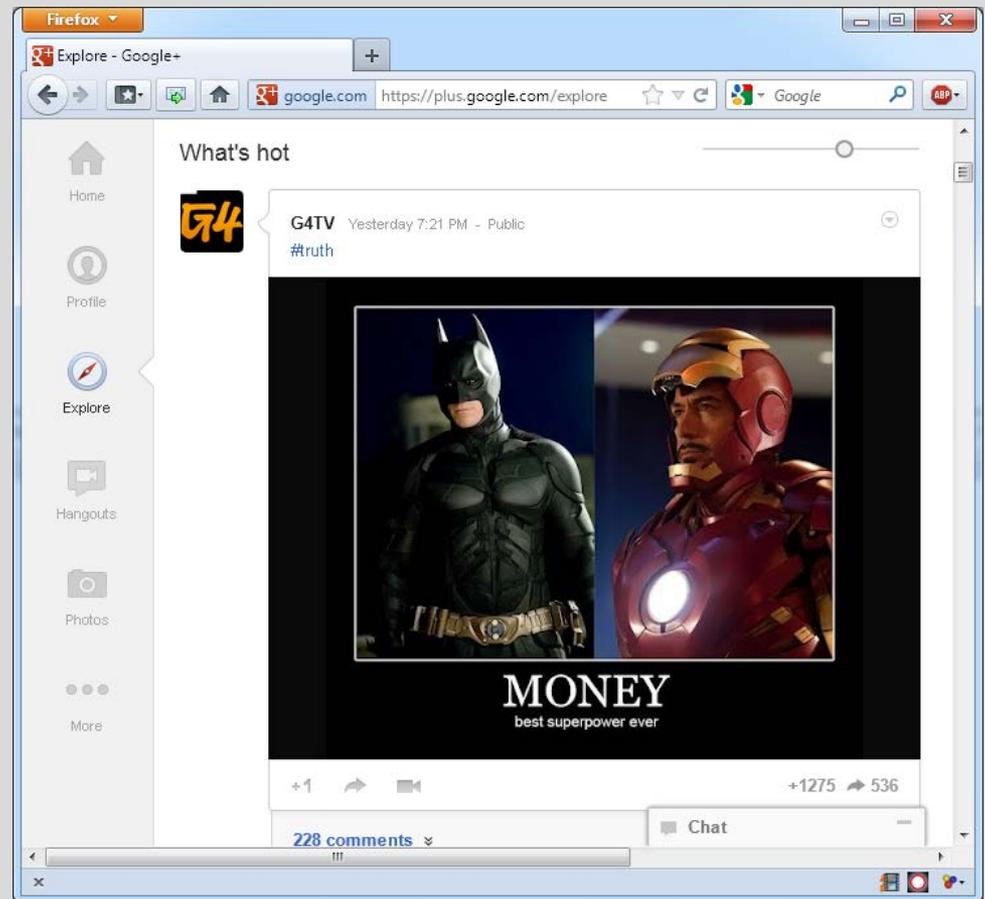
- public posts, target audience
- "on stage"

# Discussion - real authors?

- male/female/company?
- demographics?

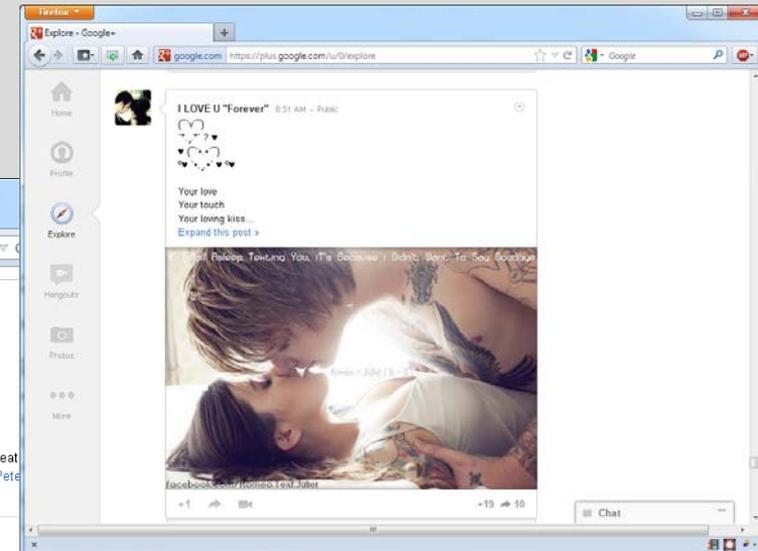
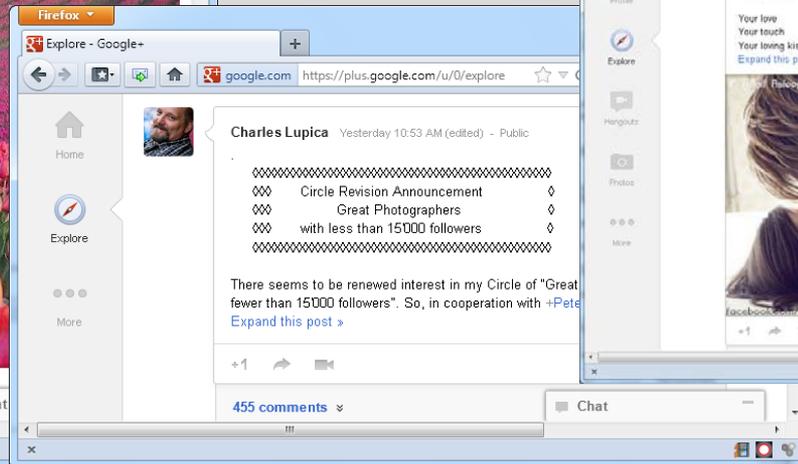
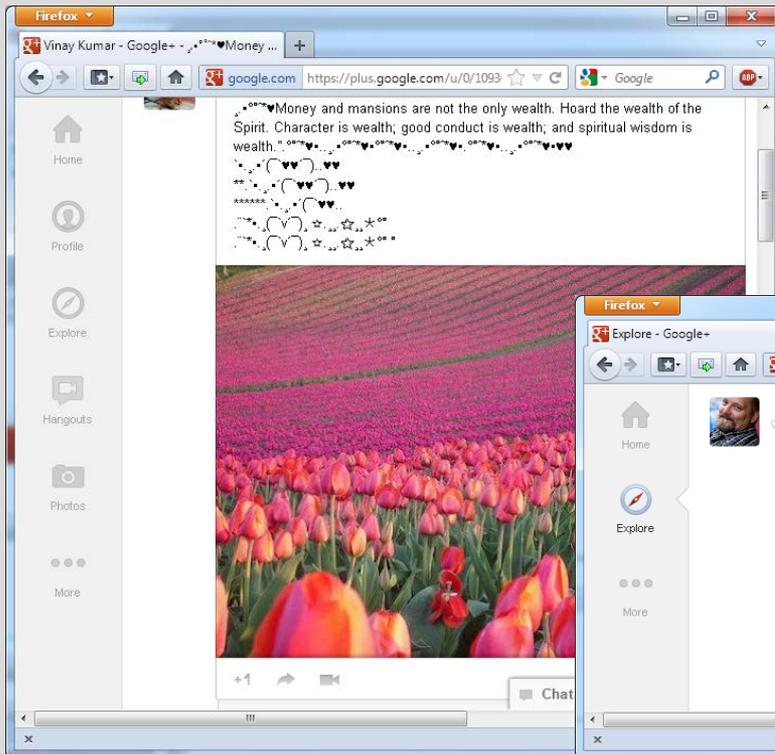
# Discussion – thousand words

- heavy on media sharing – images, videos
- One liners - context



# Discussion - emoticons

- emoticons as graphics elements



# Discussion – 2008+

- textism more common?

	G+	TXT (Baron 2008)	IM (Baron 2008)
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ALL CAPS	11%		

## Discussion - further analysis

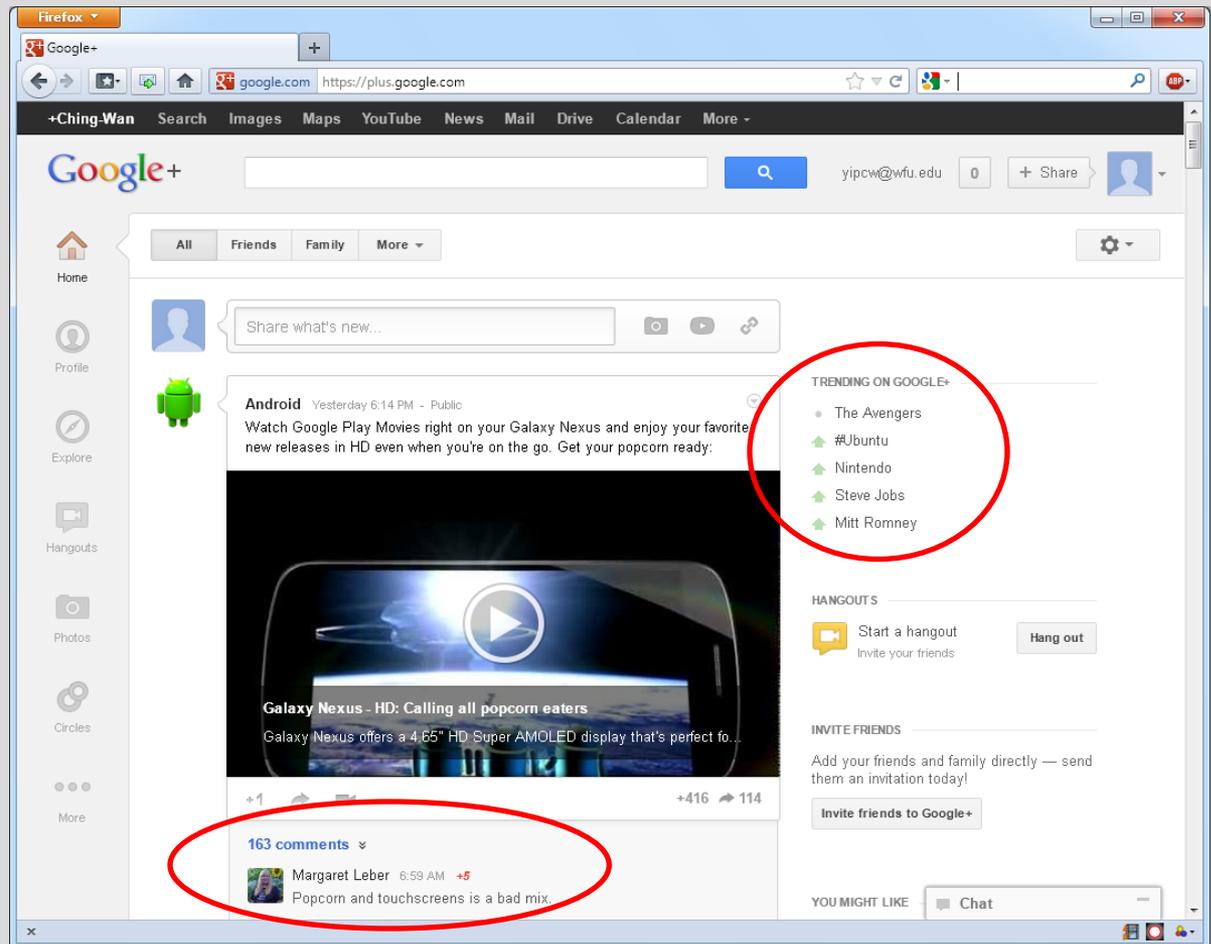
- Tagliamont and Dennis (2008) break out of characteristic IM forms - frequency and proportion of total word count, distribution of first-person singular pronouns, laughter variants etc.
- Rosen (2010) linguistic textisms vs contextual textisms, quantitative statistics - std. dev., p-value etc.

## Discussion - future research

- compare with Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter for “professional”, post length limit effects
- almost no foreign language posts (at least not in the one we can access), could content be different in other locales?

# Discussion - future research

- including other users comments
- trending topics



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