

# Google+

## for Photographers



Colby Brown



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Peachpit Press

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**Colby Brown**

### **Peachpit Press**

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*To my supporting and loving wife, Sarah; my adorable son, Jack; and all those who choose to follow their passion for the art of photography.*



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# Introduction

When I first started my career as a photographer, online networks for photographers were still in their infancy. Yahoo's Flickr was easily the most prominent, but even then it was only a fraction of what it is today. At the time, I saw no point in utilizing these resources because in reality I did not know they were viable resources. Instead of having the ability to easily share my work with the world, I relied on the support of friends and family. Instead of increasing my knowledge of postprocessing my images by watching a YouTube video or stumbling across a blog article, I read every book I could find on the subject. Instead of finding a wide variety of potential customers and clients in a single location, I marketed myself the old-fashioned way, by word of mouth. Although I am certainly grateful for these experiences because they have helped shape my various photography businesses and me into what we are today, I can't help but look at how much online networks have helped change the photo industry.

One of the most exciting aspects of being a photographer today is not only the access to affordable camera gear, but also the ability to engage and interact with other individuals who share in your passions and interests. It doesn't matter if you are a seasoned professional or a novice with your first digital camera, the opportunity to connect with others to increase your knowledge, share your experiences, and even market to new customers and clients is just a mouse click away. Between message boards, photo sharing websites, and online social networks, photographers have more than their fair share of choices. However, for many, it has been confusing to figure out where to spend their time and energy. But once Google entered the online networking world with Google+, that all changed.

## A Photographer's Perspective

Although Google+ has one of the most active and engaging communities of photographers on the Internet, finding your footing in a new network can be challenging. This book originally started out as a guide on my blog titled "Google+: A Survival Guide to a Photographer's Paradise," which was read by over 500,000 people. Although the guide focused purely on step-by-step instructions on how the features of the network worked, my

goal with this book was to expand upon just the feature set and show you how to best utilize the network to help you build a following and establish an online presence as a photographer. Each chapter features an interview—"A Photographer's Perspective"—with some of the most influential photographers in the photo industry, giving you an inside look at how these professionals utilize Google+ on a daily basis. By working directly with the Google+ team of engineers and employees, I was able to make sure the information in this book is accurate and relevant.

## What Google+ Means to You

In the end it is the photo community that makes any network a great resource for photographers. In December 2011, I held an open contest on Google+ that gave four aspiring photographers the opportunity not only to be featured in this book, but to tell their personal stories of why they have made Google+ their home. Spread throughout this book you'll find the winners of this "What Google+ Means to You" contest. These essays reflect the growing and supportive nature of the network and will hopefully give you some insight to the endless potential that can be found with Google+.

With this I want to welcome you to join Google+, get your feet wet, and utilize the content of this book to help guide you along the way. If you still have questions, do not hesitate to engage with the photography community on the network or ask me directly. Needless to say, a simple Google search will point you in the right direction.

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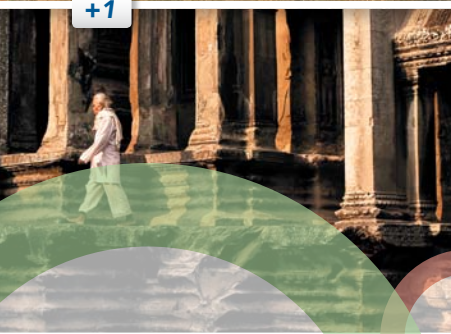
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# Working with Circles to Stay Organized

Circles are Google's answer to the diverse social layer issue that is found in most online social networks. In the digital age we live in, we are constantly trying to simplify our lives. Although this is possible with menial tasks, such as paying our bills online or researching the next piece of camera gear we want to purchase, the various degrees of human interactions are far more complex.

A computer system cannot predict the organic and dynamic flow of a relationship over time. Life is not stagnant, but instead is dynamic—always changing and always moving forward. To accurately and effectively manage your interpersonal relationships online, you need control. You need choice. This is where the Google+ Circles feature steps in.

In this chapter, I'll explain what circles are, how to use them, and how to organize them so that you can get the most out of your time on Google+.



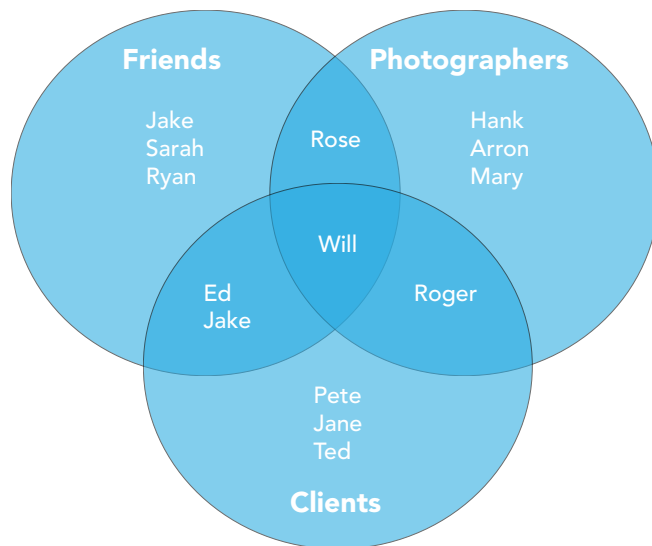


# What Are Circles?

As individuals, we are constantly interacting with a multitude of different types of people throughout life. On a given day you might pick up the phone and call a friend or a professional colleague, or maybe even a family member to share and receive specific information. Although you wouldn't necessarily have the same conversation with all three, there might be some overlap. For example, in **Figure 4.1**, you might have three groups of individuals that you connect with on a regular basis: Friends, Clients, and Photographers. Even though Rose is a friend, she also happens to be a photographer. However, she is not one of your clients. So although you might share with her some personal information because she is a friend or ask her to go on a photography trip with you because she is a photographer, you would not send her the marketing newsletters that you send your past clients.

Interpersonal communication is rich, has depth, and is not always symmetric. Google+ addresses these complexities by allowing you to selectively gather those you want to connect with into various groups, otherwise known as *circles*. Circles are arguably the most important feature of Google+ you need to understand because they control how you communicate and connect with customers, clients, photographers, and everyone else on Google+.

**Figure 4.1** An example of the often complex interpersonal relationships we all have in our daily lives.





**Figure 4.2**

A selection of my top Google+ circles containing people I connect with more frequently than others.

## How Do Circles Work?

Circles (**Figure 4.2**) act as filters for all content being shared on Google+. They allow you to control not only who you share your content with, but whose content you want to view as well.

They function in a manner very similar to how lens filters work. For example, as photographers, we have the ability to filter out certain spectrums of light or even color with specific filters that we attach to our lenses. These tools give us more control over what we see and what we are capable of capturing with our cameras. Google+ circles work in the same way. You have the ability to create a circle that contains just your family members, your clients, or other local photographers. By doing so, you can then share content and information with just those individuals. On the flip side, you can utilize those same circles to filter out content, information, and media coming to you through Google+. If you want to only see what your clients, friends, or other local photographers are publishing, it is as simple as a mouse click (see Chapter 5).

## Circle Organization

All of your circle management needs are on the Circles page. To access that page, locate the gray Google+ navigation bar located near the top of your screen (**Figure 4.3**) and click the Circles icon, which is the second from the right.

The Circles page appears. **Figure 4.4** shows the general layout of the Circles page. Let's explore this page and some of its key elements.

### Colby's Quick Tips

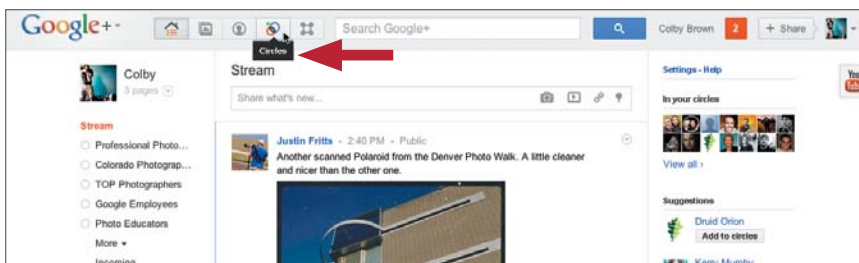
Circles are private in that if you add me to one or more of your circles, I am notified that you have added me to your circles, but I do not know which circles I have been placed in.

### Colby's Quick Tips

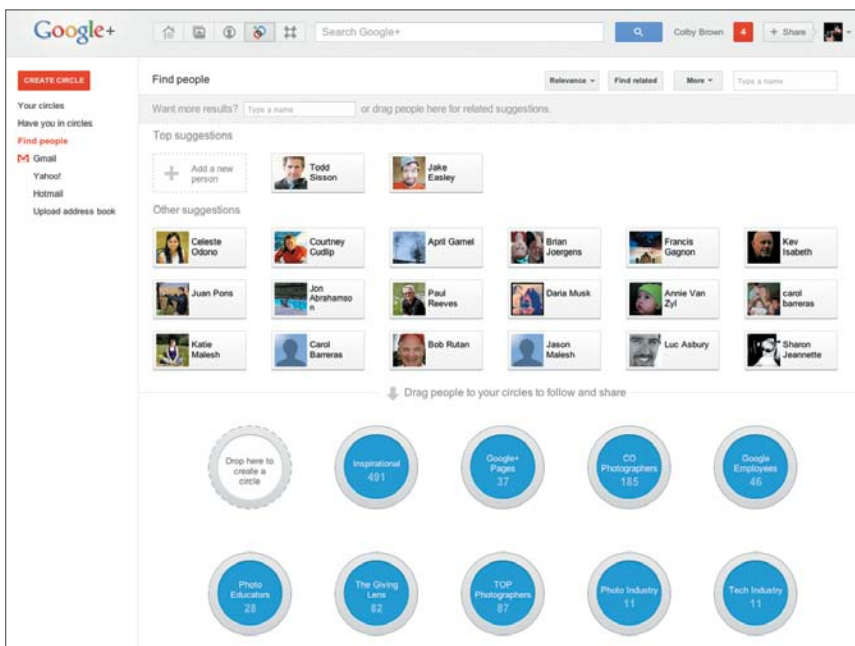
When you hover your mouse over a Google+ profile name, a box will appear that shows a larger profile thumbnail, a tag line, the circles you have that profile in, and how many people you know in common.

Near the top of the screen you'll find three main tabs—People in your circles, People who've added you, and Find people—that allow you to filter through the individuals that you are connected with. In the middle of your screen are the Google+ profile thumbnails, and at the bottom of your screen are your circles.

**Figure 4.3** The Google+ navigation bar makes it easy to navigate through not only the various Google+ features, but all Google products as well.



**Figure 4.4** The Google+ Circles page allows you to easily manage all of your connections with Google+. Here you can sort individuals into circles, view who has circled you, and import people from your computer address book.



## Advice on Setting Up Your Google+ Circles

Before you begin adding Google+ profiles into your circles, it is important to understand why you signed up for the service. Here are some helpful questions to consider before you get started:

- What are your goals for signing up for Google+?  
Many photographers wander aimlessly in the social networking world. By defining your goals, you can devise a better plan for how you want to engage other individuals on Google+.
- Are you using Google+ to expand your photography business?  
If you are using Google+ to sell photography prints, you need to look for customers. But first you need to determine who your clients are. Unless you are a photo educator, typically, photographers are not your clients.
- Are you using the service to learn from professionals?  
If you are using Google+ to improve your photography skills, you should add professional photographers you admire to your circles. There are thousands of professional photographers that are eager to share their knowledge and experiences with you.
- Are you interested in finding inspiration from other photographers?  
If you are using Google+ to find inspiration from other photographers, you certainly will not find a shortage of amazing images to view. Google+ is a global network with millions of people from all over the world. Check out the "Making Connections" sidebar later in this chapter to find lists of photographers on Google+.

The answers to these questions should help dictate your approach to connecting with people through Google+. Remember to be selective and only circle individuals that you want to connect with. Photographers commonly make the mistake of always wanting or needing the approval of other photographers. Google+ is not a popularity contest, and it is much more important how you interact with those you circle than the sheer number of people in your circle or that circle you.

A great starting point is the Google+ search box located at the top of every page. Here you can search all of Google for people by location, keywords, and names of individuals that you want to connect with.

# Creating a Circle

To create a circle, you have three main options:

- You can drag and drop multiple Google+ profile thumbnails into the first circle (**Figure 4.5**) and click Create Circle. Then click the blue Create Circle link inside the first circle to easily name and finalize the creation of the circle (**Figure 4.6**).
- You can move your mouse over the first circle (**Figure 4.7**), and the text inside the circle will change to a “Create circle” link (**Figure 4.8**). Click that link to open the box that will allow you to easily name your new circle as well as populate it with the desired profiles (**Figure 4.9**).

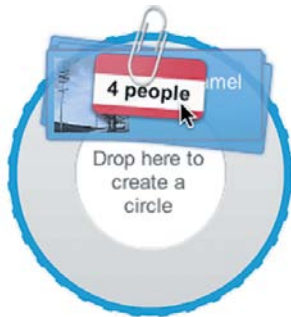


Figure 4.5 Drag Google+ profiles to add people to a new circle.

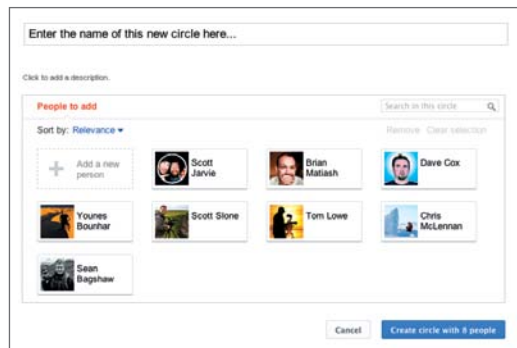


Figure 4.6 Name the newly created circle using a descriptive name that represents its members.



Figure 4.7 The standard view of your Google+ Circle section.



Figure 4.8 By hovering your mouse inside the white circle, the text changes to “Create circle.”

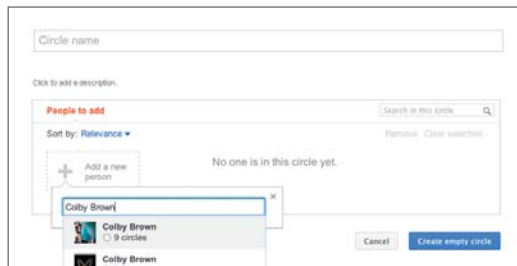
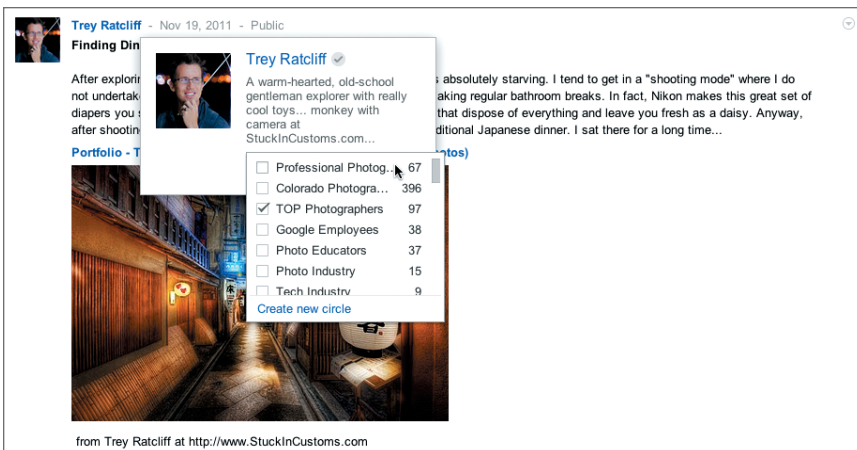


Figure 4.9 Now you can name and populate your new circle.

- When browsing through Google+, hover your mouse over a Google+ profile name. A box appears that allows you to click the Add to Circles button, which then displays a number of options. At the bottom of your Circle options is the “Create new circle” link (**Figure 4.10**). Click that link and add the selected profile to a brand-new circle.

### Colby's Quick Tips

There is no limit to the number of circles you can create. Get creative and plan ahead. It is much easier to think proactively from the start about the kinds of people you want to connect with than it is to work backwards after you have circles containing 1000 people.



**Figure 4.10** After you have clicked the Add to Circles button, a box appears allowing you to add the profile to a new circle or a circle you have already created.

## Making Connections

Google+ is unique in that it allows you to have total control over your user experience. Making connections with other individuals and businesses will help dictate whom you interact with and what information you see coming through your streams. As a photographer, you have a multitude of third-party websites that can help you find and connect with the thriving photo community on Google+.

Here are a few examples:

- **Group/As ([www.group.as](http://www.group.as)).** A website that allows users to create custom lists of Google+ users.
- **Recommended Users ([www.recommendedusers.com](http://www.recommendedusers.com)).** A website that offers its own curated lists, which include groups of photographers, such as Most Followed, Inspirational, Landscape & Wildlife, Portrait / Wedding, and more.
- **Google+ Counter (<http://gpc.fm>).** Similar to Group/As, this website offers users the ability to create custom user lists of various kinds.



## Scott Jarvie: A Photographer's Perspective

*Scott Jarvie is a wedding and portrait photographer and photo educator based out of Salt Lake City, Utah. He puts a piece of himself into everything he does, which is a testament to his success as a professional photographer and the reason his images are full of personality and emotion. When he is not giving presentations or capturing a bride's most special moment, he is partaking in his love of travel photography through various trips around the world. It doesn't hurt that he is fluent in five different languages.*

**Website:** [www.jarviedigital.com](http://www.jarviedigital.com)

**Google+:** <https://plus.google.com/100962871525684315897>

### **Q Why are circles an important feature of Google+?**

Circles create the foundation of our communication on Google+. Circles dictate who you're speaking to (when you have something to share) and who you're listening to (when you feel like seeing what's going on). For me, circles also help me remember how I know this person, like quick labels.

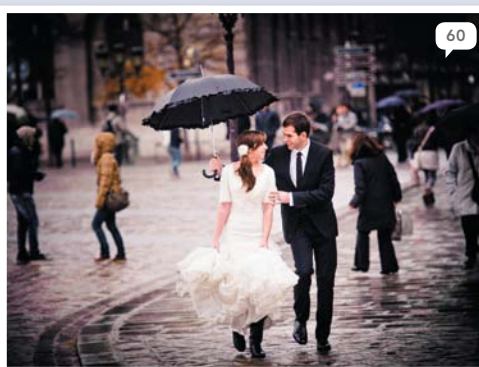
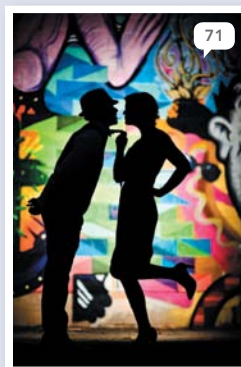
### **Q Does organizing your circles make a difference in your Google+ experience? Why?**

Yes. I have a lot of circles, and keeping them organized helps me apply the circles quicker so that it is less of a chore. I organize my circles by putting the most important or most used circles higher in the list so I don't have to scroll down to find them. Using a number in addition to naming my circles helps me by associating the numbers and finding the circles faster when publishing content to those circles.

### **Q What are the top five circles you think every photographer should create on Google+?**

The five types of circles I think every photographer should create include:

- **Photographers by location.** Especially those in your own region.
- **Photographers by style.** Especially those using the same style of photography as you do. For me, that's weddings and travel photography.
- **Photography business pages.** Because the vendors and product makers are great to





follow. My tip is to name the circle using (p) in front so you know it's a circle of pages.

- **Nonphotographer circles.** This circle is probably the most important because if the majority of what you share is photography, then most times the only things you'll direct specifically to a circle are nonphotography posts.
- **Most interesting.** Whether it be lists of the most interactive photographers, photographers you are friends with, or the photographers that inspire you the most, you'll need a couple of circles that will be your go-to circles when you want to quickly and easily find helpful content.

**Q What tips do you have for maintaining your circles in the long run?**

Besides all the tips I've already listed, I think people should

- Remember that creating circles and then adding lots of people to them later on when your circles have already been established is a lot of work.
- Make a list of all the circles (based on the five types of circles listed previously) you think you might ever use or want to use. Circle people from the get go. Users will naturally find that they gravitate to using certain circles; later on they can decide to remove the ones they didn't use often.
- Do everything I stated in question 2.
- Most of all, don't stress about circles, and don't let them become a deterrent to using Google+.





The sky is the limit when it comes to the kinds of circles you can create. **Table 4.1** lists a number of potential circles that you can create and utilize.

**Table 4.1** Different Types of Circles

Circle Type	Definition
Family	This circle consists of family members.
Friends	This circle consists of friends.
Coworkers	This circle consists of coworkers.
Local Photographers	This circle consists of photographers who are based out of your current location.
Clients	This circle consists of clients you have worked with in the past.
Photo Industry	This circle consists of key players in the photo industry who work for various companies.
Photo Educators	This circle consists of photographers who teach photography classes, workshops, seminars, and webinars.
Google Employees	This circle consists of Google employees who share information and new Google+ features.
Google+ Pages	This circle consists of various business pages found on Google+

## Renaming Circles

As you continue to become more engaged within Google+ and you begin to connect with a variety of different people, you might need to refine the names of your circles to stay accurate. For example, you might have created a circle called Colorado Landscape Photographers only to realize that you want to add Colorado Wildlife Photographers to it as well. To rename a circle, perform the following steps.

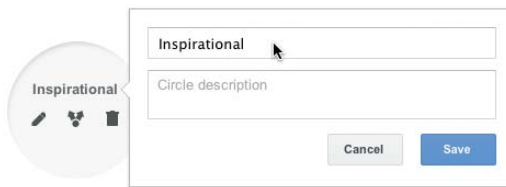
1. Click the title of the circle you want to rename (**Figure 4.11**).

**Figure 4.11** Select the circle you want to rename.





**Figure 4.12** Click Edit to make any changes needed.



**Figure 4.13** Rename your circle and enter any descriptive text desired.

2. Click the Edit icon, represented by a graphic that looks like a pencil. (**Figure 4.12**).
3. Fill in the necessary information in the correct boxes (**Figure 4.13**).
4. Click Save.

## Reordering Circles

Changing the order of your circles not only allows you to customize your Google+ Circles page, but it makes filtering the content you view on Google+ that much easier. Google+ will display the first five circles you have listed in your Circles page in the sidebar on the Google+ home page. Selecting one of these circles allows you to view published content from only individuals in the selected circle. The circles you interact with the most should be first.

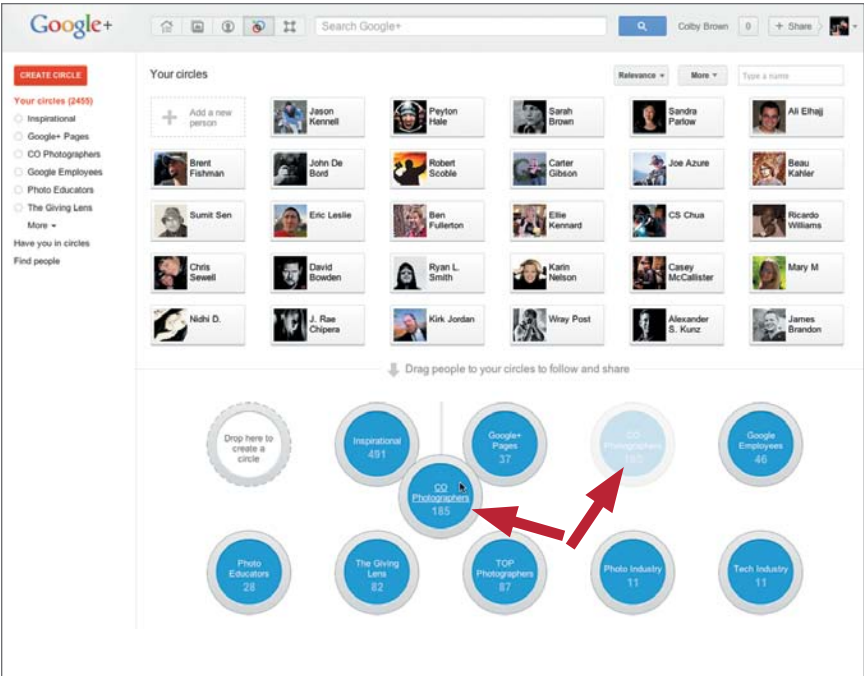
To change the order of your circles, follow these steps.

1. Click and hold on a circle that you want to reorder.
2. Drag the selected circle to the location at which you want to place the circle.
3. A gray line appears (**Figure 4.14**) to indicate the placement of the circle being moved.

### Colby's Quick Tips

When you're looking for people to connect with on Google+, the Search bar is a great place to start. For example, you can search for "Colorado Photographers" and find a dynamic list of people to add to your circles.

**Figure 4.14** Reordering your circles helps to prioritize your circles for easier and quicker access.



## Removing Profiles from Circles

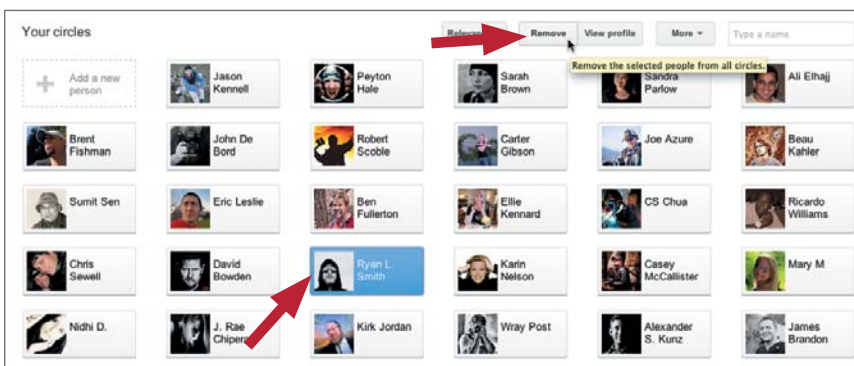
As you continue to engage and interact with more and more photographers and clients on Google+, you might find the need to remove certain individuals from your circles that you no longer want to connect with. You can remove profiles using the Circles page or the Profile page. Let's look at both ways to do this.

To remove profiles using the Circles page, follow these steps.

1. Click the title of the circle you want to remove (**Figure 4.15**). All of the Google+ profiles in that circle will populate the profile thumbnail area above the Circle section.
2. Click the profiles you want to remove. When clicked, the selected profiles will turn blue (**Figure 4.16**).
3. Click the Remove button located just above the profile thumbnails.



**Figure 4.15** Select the circle that you want to modify.



**Figure 4.16** Select the Google+ profiles you want to remove, and then click the Remove link.



**Figure 4.17** Click the green box at the top right of the Google+ Profile page to see which circles contain this profile.



**Figure 4.18** Deselect all the circle boxes containing the profile.

To remove profiles using the Profile page, follow these steps.

1. Go to the Profile page of the individual or business you want to remove.
2. Click the green box in the top right of the web page (**Figure 4.17**). This box represents the circles you currently have this profile in.
3. Deselect the check boxes next to the circles that you currently have this profile in (**Figure 4.18**).

# Sharing Circles

Circle sharing is one of the best ways to get people to circle you. If you see others asking for “landscape photographers,” and you happen to photograph landscapes, comment on their post and try to get them to add you to their circle. When they share that circle to the public or with their circles, you have a good chance of other photographers connecting with you and adding you to their circles.

To share a circle from your Circles page, follow these steps.

1. Click the name of the circle you want to share (**Figure 4.19**).
2. Click the Share link in the circle you originally selected (**Figure 4.20**).
3. Add text in the Comments section to describe the circle you are sharing, and then choose the circle you want to share this group with (**Figure 4.21**). Sharing to Public will always allow you the most visibility.
4. Click the green box titled Share.

**Figure 4.19**  
Select the circle you want to share with others.



**Figure 4.20** By clicking the Share icon, a box will open, allowing you to easily share your Google+ circle with others.

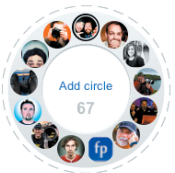


**Figure 4.21** Add text to the Comments section of the circle shared to provide details about the circle.

### Share circle

Share a copy of this circle for others to add to their circles.

Insert your text here to explain what this circle is about.



Colby Brown shared a circle with you.  
Scott Jarvie, Brian Matlash, Nicole S. Young and 64 more

[View shared circle](#)

Public x

+ Add more people

Share

Cancel

☐ Include yourself in shared circle.


## Colby's Quick Tips

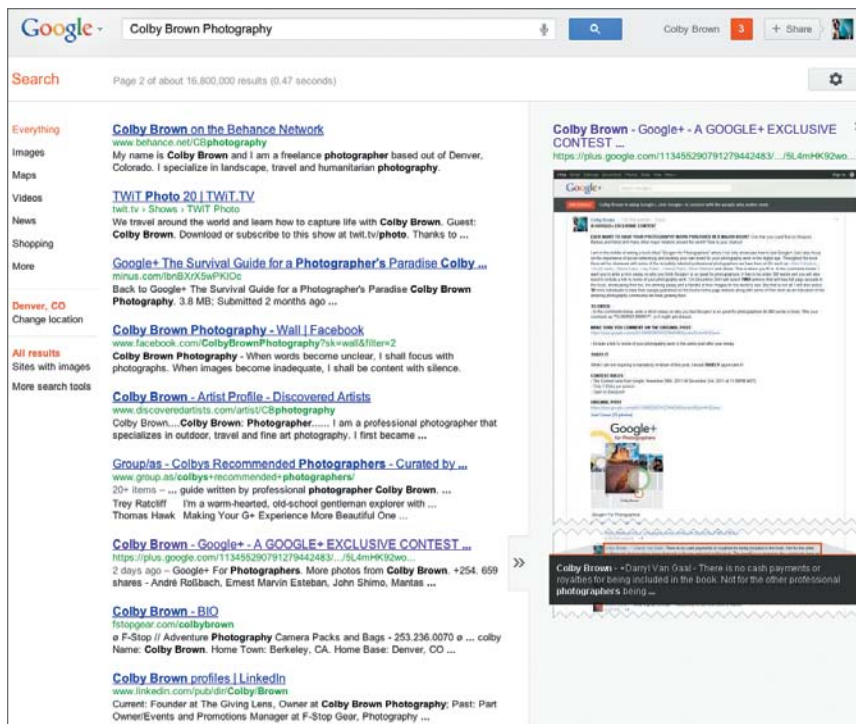
Currently, there is a 500 person limit to the circles that you can share. If you share a circle with 1000 people in it, it will only share the names of 500 individuals.

# Public vs. Extended Circles

When you get ready to start sharing photographs and content on Google+ (see Chapter 6), you will find two main circles that come standard with every Google+ account: Public and Extended Circles. Understanding the difference between the two is important.

## Public Circles

 When you share content to the Public circle, it is visible to everyone on Google+ as well as the entire World Wide Web. As a search giant, Google works hard to make sure it indexes all public Google+ posts for search results. By performing a Google search of "Colby Brown Photography" (**Figure 4.22**), you'll notice that not only does my Google+ profile appear as a result, but a popular Google+ post as well.



**Figure 4.22**  
A Google search reveals that Google+ posts are searchable.

### Colby's Quick Tips

Always post your photography work to your Public circle to ensure that the largest number of people possible will see your images.

Although the benefits of posting to your Public circle are that everyone can see what you publish, it can also be a drawback. Not everyone who adds you to his or her circles might want to see everything you send out via Google+. As a rule of thumb, I never publish content that talks about religion, politics, or polarizing topics to my Public circle unless I truly feel compelled to. As a photographer, my name is my

brand, and I don't want to alienate potential clients, customers, or friends because of my beliefs.

## Extended Circles



Understanding what happens when you publish content to your Public circle is fairly

straightforward, but publishing to your Extended Circles is not as clear-cut. The reason is that the group of people in your Extended Circles is constantly changing. Your Extended Circles are in essence everyone in your circles, plus everyone in their circles. Think of it as your circles' circles. However, Extended Circles only go two connections deep.

For example, if I am in your Colorado Photographer's circle and you publish content to that circle, I will be able to view it. But my friend Scott Jarvie in Utah would not be able to because he is not in that specific circle. However, if you publish your content to your Extended Circles, Scott Jarvie would be able to see the content, because even though he is not in your circles, he is in mine.





## Melaine Schweighardt: What Google+ Means to You

*As a freelance photographer and a photo enthusiast, I'm always searching for that amazing shot. I love it all; from majestic landscapes to an emotional portrait and everything in between. My inspiration comes from so many amazing people (family, friends, and other photographers). I just hope I can pay it forward to a fellow photo enthusiast. That would be amazing!*

**Website:** <http://photoswithhardt.blogspot.com>

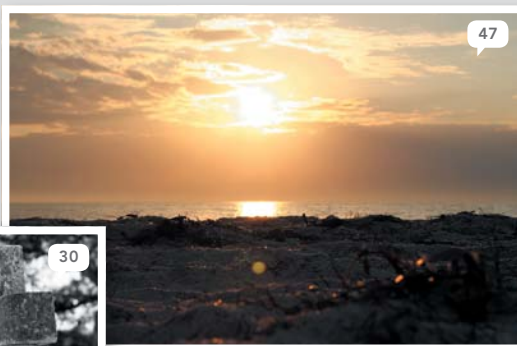
**Google+:** <https://plus.google.com/u/0/100019364506073195455>

### Essay

Photography is a passion that ignites a feeling, a conversation, a memory, a moment in time. It captures someone's vision. It is a link to our past and leaves a legacy for our future. I have been interested in photography since I was 4. My mother is also a photographer. She took me to the Appalachian Trail (High Point, New Jersey) during autumn when the leaves were changing. She put

a Kodak Instamatic camera in my hand and said to me, "Look out there; when you see something interesting, click this button." We spent the next few hours hiking and taking pictures. She let me get familiar with my camera and my surroundings and guided me toward some great shots. It's the common bond that linked us from that moment on. Her passion became my passion.

That's the thing I love about Google+. I am able to share that passion with amazing photographers. It doesn't discriminate; amateurs and professionals meld together, inspiring one another. It is a community of artists that teaches, shares, and showcases these wonderful creations. Every day I am inspired to grab my camera and try something new. It's a way of sharing what you know, what you do, and who you are. It gives me a place to get lost and enjoy myself while I journey through other people's adventures, and it inspires me to share mine. I am grateful and excited to be part of a circle of amazing people. Now, I just have to get my mom to sign up.





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