

Google throttles back vision for its social network

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Google on Monday said it is throttling back on its vision of having profiles at its social network serve as people's identities across its range of online offerings.

"Important changes" coming to Google+ in the months ahead will include users no longer needing an account at the social network to post videos or comments at YouTube.

"When we launched Google+, we set out to help people discover, share and connect across Google like they do in real life," [vice president](#) of streams, photos and sharing Bradley Horowitz said in a blog post.

"While we got certain things right, we made a few choices that, in hindsight, we've needed to rethink."

Google+ launched four years ago as a social network that could provide users a single identity to use across the California-based Internet firm's popular online services.

"People have told us that accessing all of their Google stuff with one account makes life a whole lot easier," Horowitz said.

"But, we also heard that it doesn't make sense for your Google+ profile to be your identity in all the other Google products you use."

YouTube will be among the first products to uncouple itself from Google+ profiles.

Google has slowly been backing away from linking services to the social network.

Google recently moved popular picture handling features into a separate Google Photos apps for mobile devices, and said it is putting location sharing into other applications such as Hangouts "where it really belongs."

Horowitz said Google+ will live on in a more focused form, with

enhancements including a "Collections" feature for organizing posts by topic.

Google+ launched in June of 2011 in a challenge to Facebook, but still has a small fraction of its rival's huge user base.

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