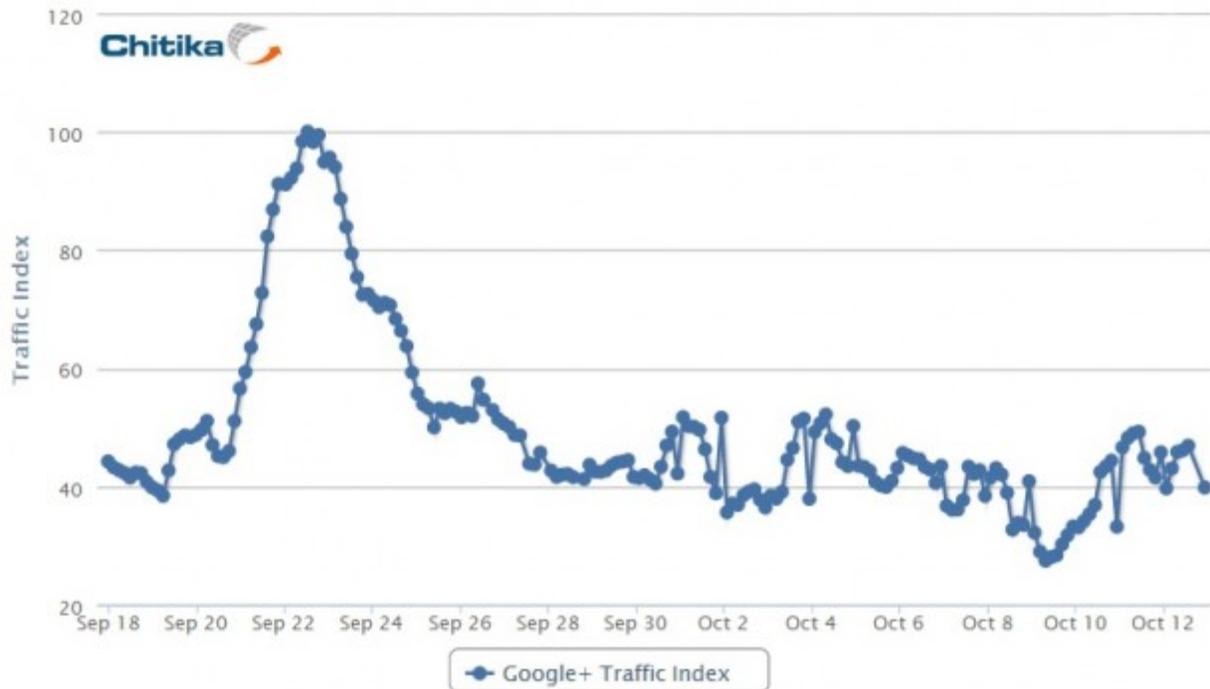


Is Google Plus Dying?

Chad Vander Veen | October 18, 2011



“The Google Plus platform is a pathetic afterthought.” These are the words posted by poor Steve Yegge, a Google engineer who late one recent night posted a screed to his own Google Plus [profile](#), mistakenly making the post viewable by everyone. Yegge has since removed the post, which was copied and saved by [SiliconFilter.com](#), and has attempted to explain what happened. To his credit, and to Google’s, he and the company seem to be moving past the mistake.

In Yegge’s post he went on to describe Google Plus as “a knee-jerk reaction, a study in short-term thinking, predicated on the incorrect notion that Facebook is successful because they built a great product.” Yegge argued Facebook succeeds because it is built to make others make it great, whereas Google tried to build a great social network internally.

As much as Yegge likely regrets his errant post, the truth is he seems to be correct. Initially launched as invite-only, Google Plus saw a meteoric rise in traffic, claiming nearly 120 million unique visitors. But since the invite-only period closed, traffic has plunged 60 percent, according to [numbers](#) released by data analytics firm Chitika.

Chitika cites two reasons for Google Plus’ sudden descent. First, “the supply of users for social media sites is limited. To survive you must stand out and provide a

service that others do not.” Second, “features unique to your site must be just that — unique and difficult to duplicate — if they are not, the competitive advantage quickly disappears.”

Google Plus, Chitika argues, has failed in both respects. Even Google CEO Larry Page went over a month [without posting](#) to his Google Plus profile. Page might be among the many users who, once they were over the newness of Google Plus, found few compelling reasons to stay.

In the meantime, Facebook has, [some argue](#), with its latest redesign cannibalized the innovative features of Google Plus, further discouraging people from using Google Plus. The future of GooglePlus hinges on its ability to keep current users engaged and attract new users going forward. But in the world of social networking that’s a tall order — one that may be beyond reach even for Google.

Discussion Starter: What do you think? Do you use Google Plus? Share your comments below.

<http://www.govtech.com/e-government/Is-Google-Dying.html>