

The Financial Times engages followers through rich content and a personalised approach



Background

The Financial Times is one of the world’s leading business news and information organisations. Online and in print, the FT provides a broad range of essential services to a growing readership of internationally-minded business people. The audience varies greatly depending on where and how content is consumed, and the breadth of the FT’s content means that it is constantly attracting new audiences. The US in particular is a key focus, and social media allows a unique opportunity for connecting with this diverse audience spanning a large geography, whilst delivering a personalised social experience.

The FT’s social media approach

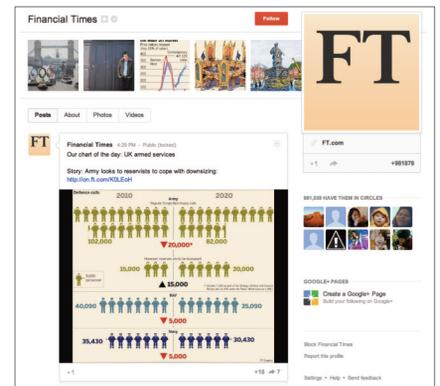
“Social media has been encouraged and embraced throughout the Financial Times,” explains FT Community Manager Rebecca Heptinstall. “As social media has the ability to affect so many areas of our business, we felt it imperative to have a strong strategic team at the helm to empower our employees to go out and do it well.”

About The Financial Times

- Among the world’s leading business news and information organisations
- Average daily print and online readership of 2.2 million
- More than 4.5 million registered users on FT.com
- Headquartered in London, UK

With this focus on achieving a high-quality social media presence, Google+ was a natural choice for the organisation. “We decided to create a Google+ page to add another touch point for our readers,” says Rebecca. “We want to allow people to read our content where and however they choose. The search capabilities that Google offers also meant this platform had a huge chance of succeeding, and we have definitely seen evidence of that at the Financial Times.”

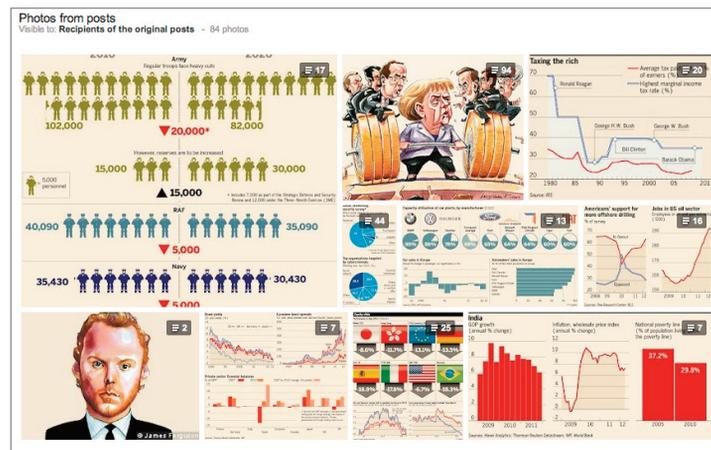
“We also want to continue to push ourselves as an early adopter of technology. That doesn’t mean jumping on the latest social network or piece of software: it’s about making an intelligent judgment that can strengthen the FT brand.”



The FT measures social media success against hard metrics such as traffic to FT.com, subscribers or attendees to events. “However, we know social media is about much more than that,” Rebecca reveals, “so we look at comments, shares, and growth by platform. We are constantly in beta, looking at what content works where, how and why. Was it the time of day? Was it the topic? Quite often it’s easy for a brand to forget its consumers, so we’re always trying to put ourselves in their shoes to question our thinking, to test and to learn.”

Using Google+ to share rich media content

In developing its Google+ page, the FT opted to emphasise captivating content and exclusive reporting. “Early adopters quickly took to Google+ and it would be so easy for us to just push tech and digital content here. However, we know social media is constantly changing and we believe that is true of the Google+ audience,” says Rebecca.



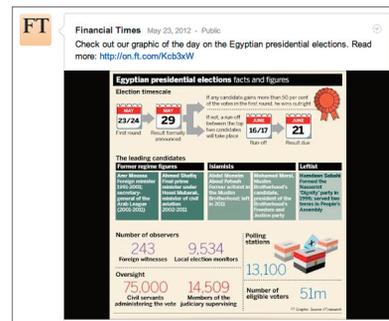
“Our strategy for Google+ is to play up to the highly visual nature of the platform. We also have a rich stream of content from our correspondents around the world and we’re keen to share a variety of stories.”

In particular, Rebecca has found rich media content to work particularly well. “Google+ is a hugely visual platform for the FT and that is where we see the highest degree of engagement. Whether it is a video, image or infographic, the interface of Google+ just works well.”

Using Google+ to share content tailored to interest

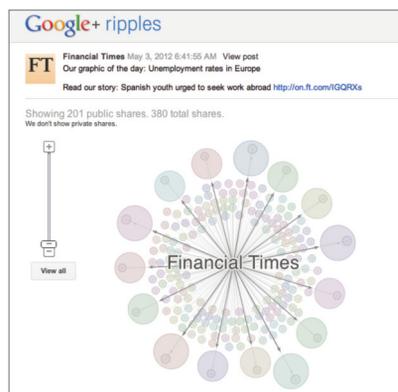
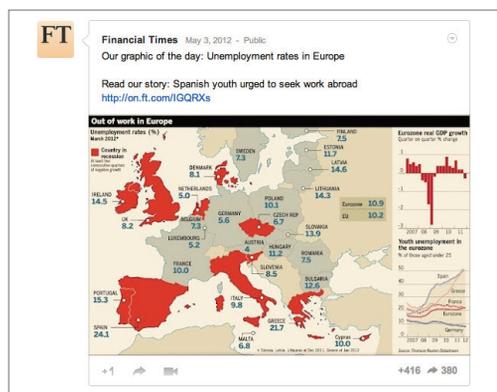
In terms of advantages Google+ offers, Rebecca is quick to cite its distinctive capabilities in the area of personalisation. “Our readers come to us for very different things, and Google+ offers a unique opportunity for us to decide what to share with certain groups based on what they’ve told us they’re interested in.”

The FT is keen to rapidly tailor messaging that’s relevant to particular audiences. “Our focus is on showcasing FT content,” explains Rebecca. “This means it’s very difficult to plan too far ahead as we are guided by live events and the news.”



Monitoring results to drive engagement

With its combination of rich, unique content and a personalised approach, the FT has reached a significant milestone in achieving over 1 million followers on Google+. What has proved most engaging so far? “As we’re so driven by our editorial content, it really depends on what is news at the time. For example, one month the post that drove by far the highest amount of engagement was a news analysis and graphic piece about unemployment in Europe, however, last month it was a graphic about North Korean rockets and their ranges.”



About Google+

Google+ brings the benefits of personal recommendations to Google Search and ads, delivering recommendations when people need them most and making it easy to start conversations with those that care about your brand. Linking your site to your page unifies your +1's across search, your Google+ page and your homepage. Google+ pages let you share your content with new audiences and connect with them in more engaging ways.

To learn more about Google+ pages, visit www.google.com/+business

The FT has added the +1 button on its blogs and core article pages, while Rebecca says further developments on the platform are imminent. “In terms of the future, we’re looking at live hangouts so watch this space - and expect some high-profile contributors. Otherwise, as with other social networks, we will continue to test what content works well so that we’re giving our social audience more of what appeals to them.”

