

Why Google Buzz will work - sort of

By [Matthew Buckland](#)

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So we have another social/microblogging/lifestreaming service, called Google Buzz. It is, without a doubt, Google's boldest social play yet. Despite dominating pretty much all the key areas of the Internet, it's no secret that social is one area that has eluded the search giant so far.

Orkut, its social network, has largely failed to catch the world's imagination (although apparently it's big in Brazil). Google Latitude came and went. Many, myself included, have yet to quite figure out a reason to care about Google Wave, where it fits, or rather, what it is exactly. Today, Wave still remains a highly-geeked out curiosity — and I predict it will probably stay that way.

There's a feeling, one I agree with, that - unlike Google's other poor attempts at social - this latest will most likely work. And that's largely down to the Gmail integration, the simple user interface, and the initial auto-following - removing the initial fatigue factor, getting you right into it.

Most valuable, most irritating

But along with Buzz comes more noise, more distraction, less time. Less valuable time. Buzz's most valuable feature may also be its most irritating. Without a doubt it was a genius move to house Google Buzz in Gmail. It makes sense because this is where most of our communication happens, so why not see your “buzzes” there too? (Is that what we'll call them?)

In fact, on the one hand, by making Buzz part of our email, Google may be taking micro-blogging/lifestreaming to more of a mainstream audience. Those who never found reason to tweet may now find a reason to buzz.

On the other hand, our email boxes are cluttered places these days, so we don't need more distraction and more noise — no matter how pithy a buzz or a tweet. No, of course we don't, but the answer to this probably lies in personal discipline and improving algorithms that filter important conversations in a more sophisticated way. Look forward to that day.

What I like about Buzz:

- Integration with email
- Auto-following
- Public and private sharing
- The mobile site

- Relatively clean user interface (UI)
- Takes microblogging/lifestreaming more mainstream
- That it's a Google product

What I dislike about Buzz:

- Integration with email.
- The vanilla, non-descript name. Boring, UnGoogle.
- It's not easy to link Buzz to your Twitter and Facebook statuses.
- The Buzz UI on your [Google Profile account](#) is hidden away, too low down the page.
- The split functionality between your profile and Gmail — meaning you have Buzz settings in two areas (ie needing to link your other social media sites to your profile)
- Twitter won because of its simplicity; Google Buzz could be simpler.

• Adapted from [original blog post](#) published 11 February 2010.

ABOUT MATTHEW BUCKLAND

Matthew Buckland is GM of Publishing at 24.com. He's the former boss of the M&G Online and co-founder of blog aggregator Amatomu.com and group editorial blog Thought Leader. He has spoken locally and around the world on online media issues, including New York, London, Amsterdam, Germany, Dublin and Kenya. He's a prominent blogger, blogging regularly at www.matthewbuckland.com on new media, Web 2.0 and technology issues.

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