



FAST TAKE

The Launch Of
Google Feed

Google retire "Google Now" and launch a new feed based news format within the Google App

GOOGLE ARE DEPRICATING GOOGLE NOW AND LAUNCHING GOOGLE FEED

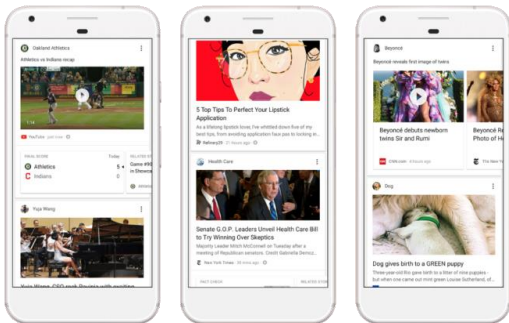
On the 18th of June 2017 Google announced the deprecation of its long standing Google Now product, and ushered in the new era of Google Feed.

Google Feed is touted as Google's response to the growing volume of feed based social experiences, with Facebook being the main leader in the world of social feed based content consumption.

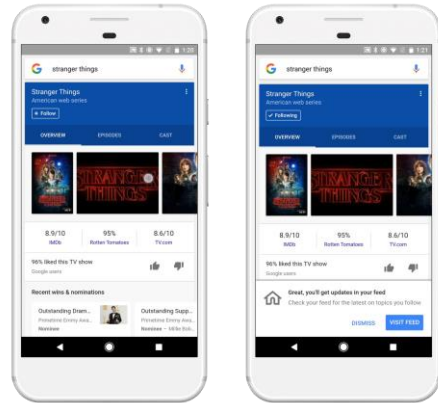
So what is Google Feed?

Google Feed, aside from being an upgrade of the previous news and story surfacing card system of Google Now, is a big step towards Google creating not only a space for people to discover highly relevant content geared to their likes, interests and behaviours, but also a step into creating a link between a content feed and Google search results.

Google Feed will live in the iOS and Android app aptly named "Google" and in line with Google's ambition of mobile first innovation the product was launched as a mobile only solution (with a future chrome extension in the pipeline). Feed will surface articles and content that are specifically geared to a users interests. In a demo at Google's offices in San Francisco, a product manager's feed included articles about Oakland Athletics, a trending article about the Tour de France, and a 10-month-old blog post about a classical musician who she had previously seen in concert, showcasing feeds prioritisation of relevance over content freshness.



Google are giving users more control over their feeds than was present within Google Now, with the preserved ability to tell Google to stop following something ("I'm done with this story") but perhaps most interestingly Google are introducing a Follow button into a subset of their search results to indicate things to ensure are followed. This addition is being rolled out predominantly to news, entertainment and sports based results and will enable users to directly follow (selected) search topics. To complete the search loop, Feed cards all have headers which will be able to initiate a mobile search result when tapped.



So is this Google competing against the Facebook feed?

At first glance it may look like that, but Google have managed to create a product that is all about the user, in contrast to Facebook's feed which is populated in part by what a user follows, but more so what a user's friend network are liking, sharing or commenting on. In contrast, Google has created a friend free feed.

In an article by Josh Constine for Tech Crunch, he stated that Google have solved the problem that killed Google Plus, the need for friends, and the lack of your friends' endorsements for links means that a user is never persuaded to click something Google didn't think you cared about.

Now we are probably not going to see a large wave of people moving their consumption from Facebook to Google Feed, mainly because the feed is built to allow you to delve deeply into topics and subjects that are tailored to you, whilst Facebook allows you to discover topics that are popular in your network which could be contextually irrelevant but nonetheless fascinating. What Google will do is give people a great place to collate and engage with practical content.

What does this mean for brands?

Whilst this should have little impact in the short term for businesses and brands, it certainly indicates a big step by Google towards further cementing the importance of relevant and well written content. It also underpins the notion that great content can still be relevant over a long period of time.

In the longer term the follow feature in search could move users away from consuming content via searched topics and see users put more faith in Google's machine learning algorithm to deliver the right content directly to them. For businesses, this further emphasises the need for relevant content creation. In a world where Google is selecting the content for people without them asking, the key is to ensure that brands are playing by Google's rules and making their content easy and exciting for Google to feature in Feed.