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Why we've finally joined Google+ [1]

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We've set up an Adam Smith Institute page on Google+ [3], and ? more importantly ? a Google+ community for libertarians and classical liberals [4] (and fellow-travellers) to share and discuss ideas and articles they find interesting.

To be honest, I've always been pretty sceptical about Google+. Though I think the functionality is superior to Facebook, it's not better enough to entice people to use it instead. And we have so many fans on Facebook [5] and Twitter [6] that I've always been wary about splitting the audience too much.

So why the change of heart? Two reasons. One, we've wanted to set up a forum for liberty-minded people in the UK to talk about things online for a while. Message boards are unwieldy, and the other social media sites aren't very good at allowing people other than page managers or prominent Tweeters to start discussions that go out to larger audiences. Google+'s communities are remarkably bottom-up: if you want to start a conversation about something in the group, you can.

The second reason is the thing I'm most excited about. Google+'s Hangouts functionality is superb. Hangouts allow us to broadcast live video conversations between up to eight users, with chat contributions from anyone else who wants to take part. The Real Asset Company [7] has done this to great effect. I'm hoping that, if there's enough interest, we can start doing regular online conversations with all sorts of people who it wouldn't be easy to bring to events at the Institute, broadcasting to all the people who can't make it to those events.

If there's anyone you think we should ask to 'Hangout' with, let me know in the comments and we'll see what we can do. In the meantime, join the Google+ community [4] and let's try to get the ball rolling.

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