

How to Help Google Recognise You as an Expert with Google Authorship

In it's quest to return the most relevant search results, Google introduced Google Authorship Markup in 2011 but many people still don't know how to implement it into their websites.

Most people probably think the ability to have their profile picture come up alongside their content in search engine results is only available to Google insiders & gurus.

The truth is it is actually a simple process.

The Authorship Process

Many people still view Google Plus as Google's failed foray into social networking, but it is so much more! Google Plus is a way to bring your online presence all into one place and when you play their game and tell them what you are doing online you will benefit.

Google wants to move away from letting "mystery men" rank content for certain search terms just because they know how to play the game, rather than because they are producing high quality content from their knowledge of a particular topic.

The way they are doing this is by encouraging people to verifying ownership of their content, so wherever Google looks they see you talking about the particular topic that you want to be recognised for. They don't want some fat, fastfood junkie pounding away at a keyboard ranking low quality content over a recognised authority in the health niche, for instance.

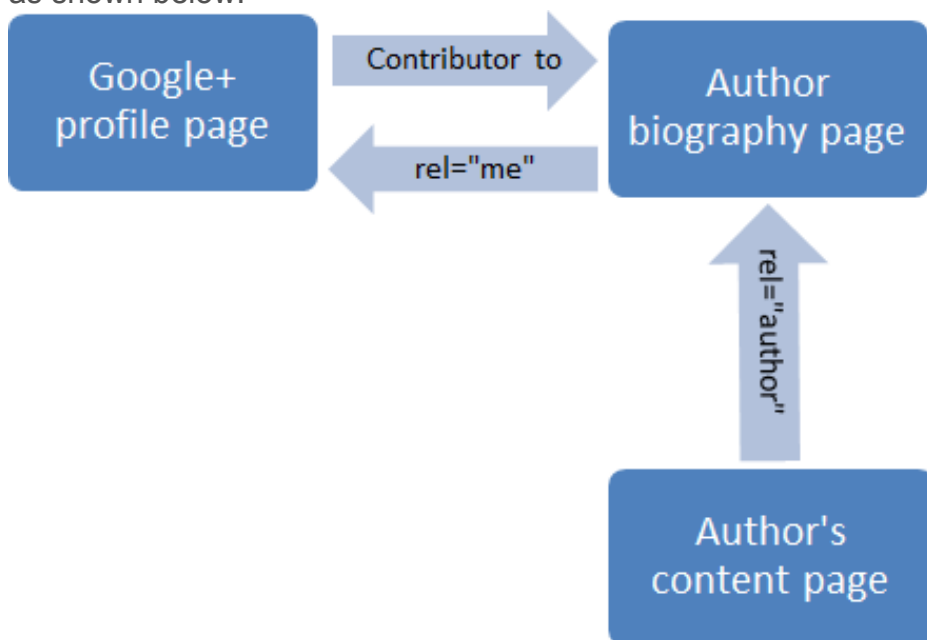
For you to start building your authority with Google, Google needs you to complete a circuit of verified trust between it and your published content. To do this, you need to have two things:

1. A verified digital identify owned by Google that links to your published content (a Google+ profile)
2. Your published content needs to reference you as the author and link back to the verified digital identity

There are 4 methods of verifying Google Authorship

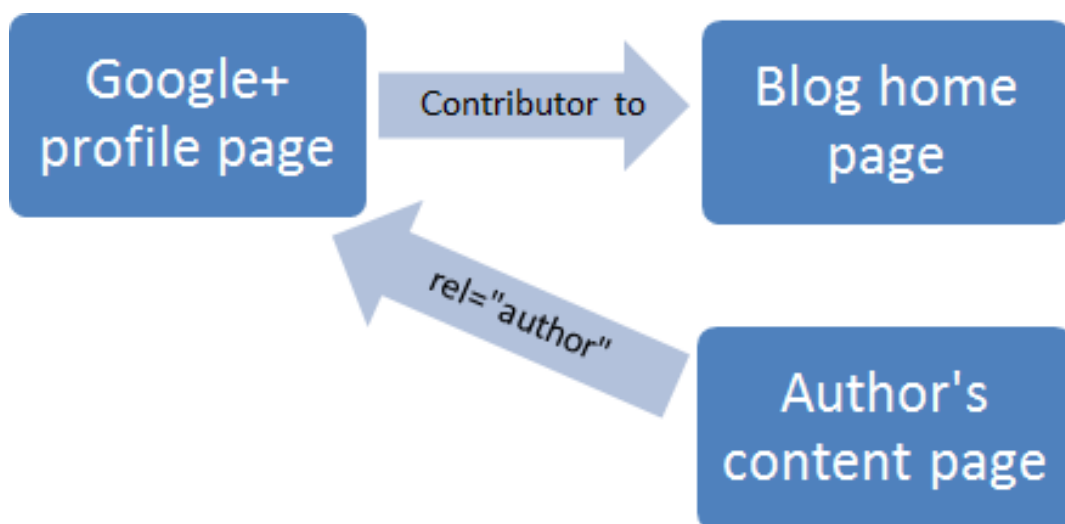
The 3-Link Method

The 3-link method is used with sites that host content pages that link to an author biography page on the same domain, typically on a site where there are multiple authors. All of the content pages link to the author biography page, the author biography page links to the author's Google+ profile, and the Google+ profile links to the author biography page, as shown below:



2-Link Method

The 2-link method is for content pages that do not link to an author biography page. Instead, they typically contain a mini author biography snippet at the bottom of each post. These posts link directly to the author's Google+ profile, and the Google+ profile links to the home page of the publishing site, as illustrated below:

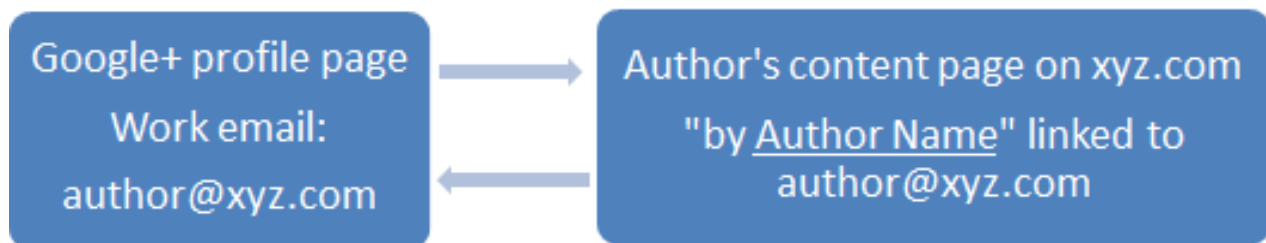


Insert rel= tag directly into your web pages code before </head>

This method may be done on a per page basis but is more often handled by page templates or plugins for websites using a content management system. This is a variation of the two link method.

Email Verification Method

The email verification method can be used when the author does not have control over author biography content anywhere in the content page (but its use is not limited to that scenario). In that case, an author byline links to an email address using the same domain name as the content page, and that email address is registered and verified in the author's Google+ profile, as shown below:

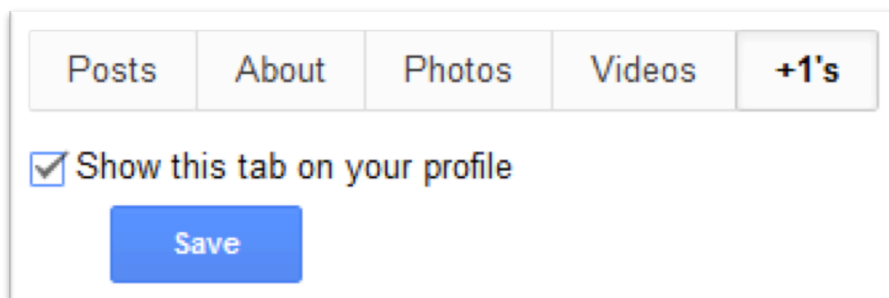


The above set of descriptions are overviews of the different ways you can set up Google Authorship for your content and will give you an idea of which method may be right for you as follows. Whatever method you choose, you will see that the first thing you need is a Google+ profile.

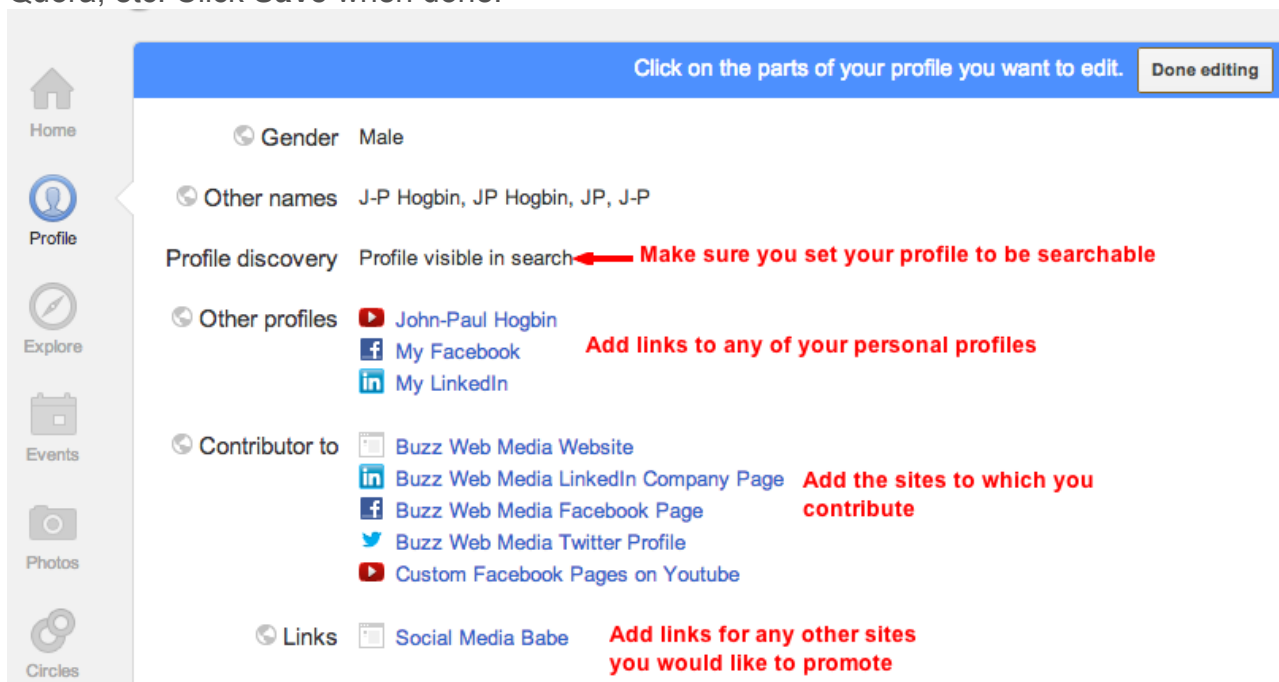
Setting Up Your Google+ Profile For Authorship Markup

If you have an existing Google account (Gmail, Google docs, YouTube, Google Webmaster Tools, etc.), then you already have a Google+ profile. It may already be at least partially complete, but there are specific data requirements for Google authorship markup. Here is what you will need to do:

1. Browse to <https://profiles.google.com/>.
2. Sign in to your Google account (or create one if necessary).
3. When prompted, upload a clear facial, head shot photo to the profile. Remember you are wanting to build authority in your niche and this is the image you are choosing to represent yourself in that role.
4. Click **Continue** until **Finish** appears, and then click **Finish**.
5. Click **Continue to Google+**, click **Profile**, and then click **Edit Profile**.
6. Click **+1's**, select the **how this tab on your profile** checkbox, and then click **Save**.



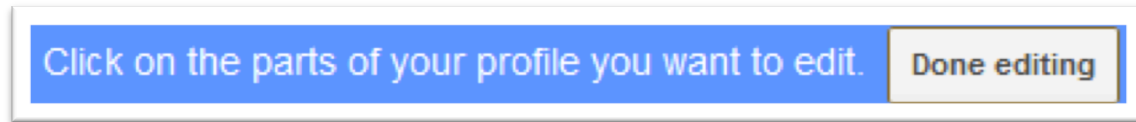
7. Click **About**, click **Other profiles**, click **Add custom link**, and then add labels and URLs for each of your other social media account profiles, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Quora, etc. Click **Save** when done.



8. You may optionally complete the sections about your occupation, employment, and other relevant information that supports your position in the field for which you want to be

recognised. These are not required for authorship markup, but are important to you appearing credible.

9. When you are done completing your Google+ profile, be sure to click **Done editing** to save all of your changes.



10. Make a note of your Google+ profile URL

Setup Your Published Content Pages For Authorship Markup

The method you use to close the circle between your published content and your Google+ profile will depend on how your web content has been published.

You may end up using several methods if you publish content on multiple sites (but only one method is needed per site). Pick and choose the sections below that apply to your situation.

3-link Method On Sites Using Author Biography Pages

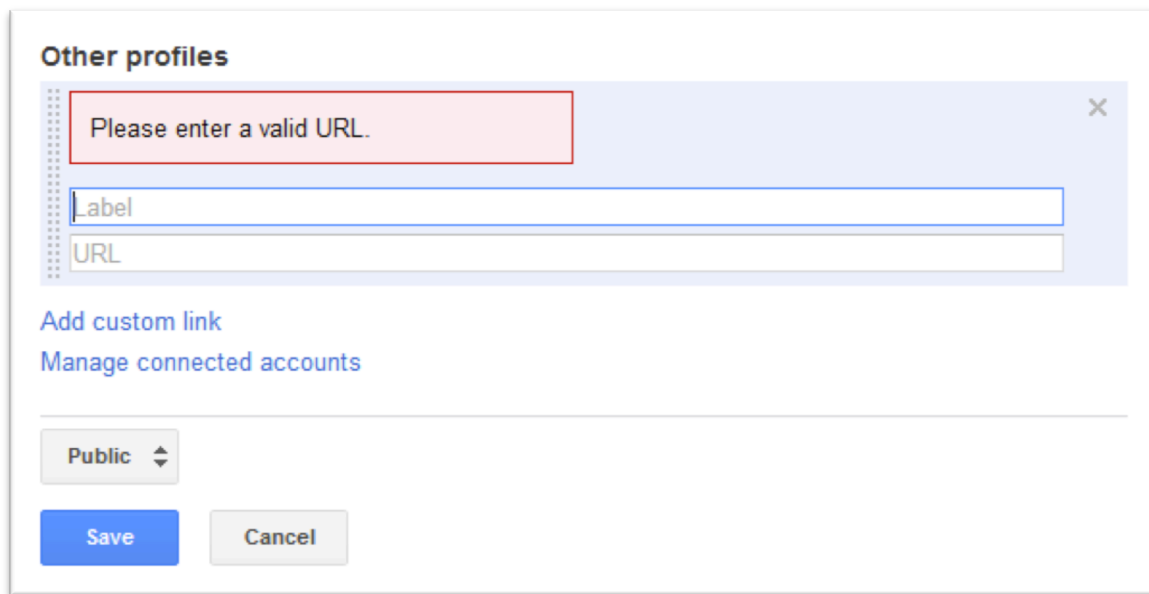
Assumptions for this method:

- The author biography page is located in the same website domain as the content pages that link to it.
- Each content page link to the author biography page includes the author's name in the anchor text.
- You have access permission rights to make source code edits on these pages.

Follow these steps:

1. On the author biography page, add a link for the author's Google+ profile using the anchor text "Google+" (*omit the quotes*).
2. In the anchor tag code for the Google+ link, add the anchor tag attribute **rel="me"**. The following is an example of such tag source code (*be sure to use your own Google+ profile URL*)
`<ahref="https://plus.google.com/101597161158855514832" rel="me">Google+`
3. In each content page, edit the existing link to the author biography page by adding the anchor tag attribute **rel="author"**. The following is an example of such tag source code (*be sure to use the URL to your author biography page in the href attribute as well as your name as the anchor text*):
`<ahref="http://site.com/YourBiographyPageURL" rel="author">Your Name`

- In your Google+ profile, click **Edit Profile**, and then click **Other Profiles**.



Other profiles

Please enter a valid URL.

Label

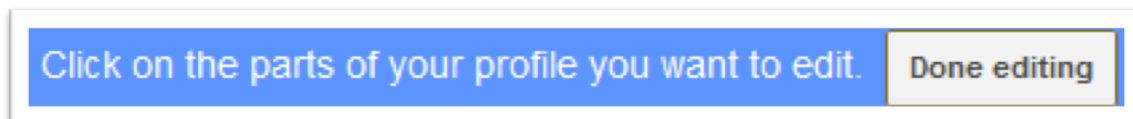
URL

[Add custom link](#)
[Manage connected accounts](#)

Public

Save Cancel

- Click **Add custom link**, and then add a label and the full URL for the author biography page.
- Click **Save** when done, and then click **Done editing**.



Click on the parts of your profile you want to edit. Done editing

If you have no more content profiles to add, skip to the section titled **Verify the Google authorship markup code is valid**.

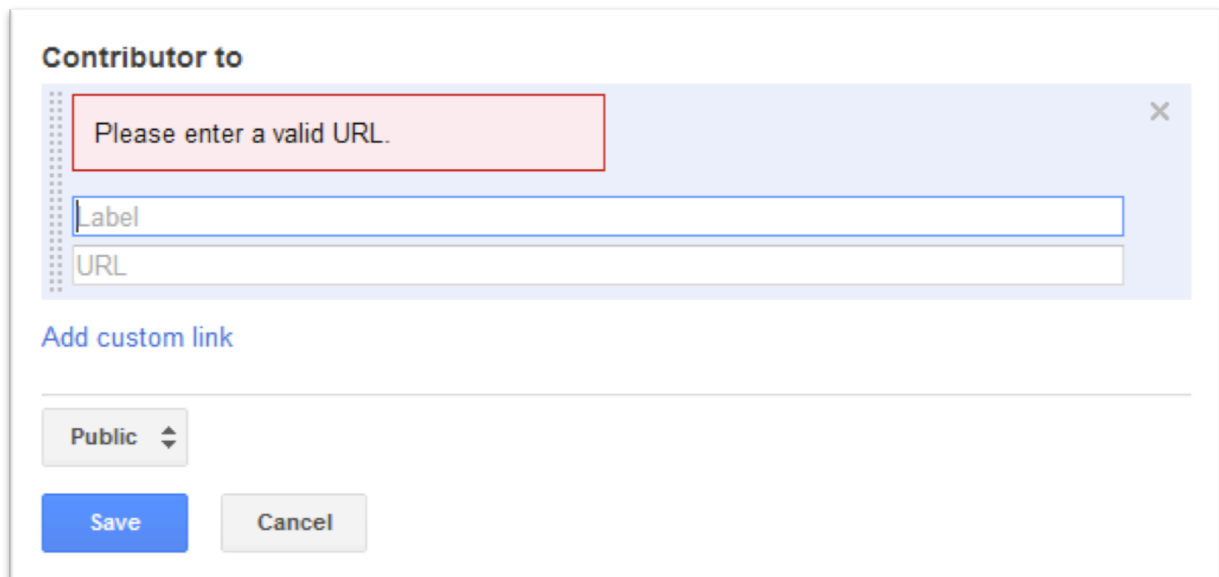
2-link Method On Sites Using Author Bio Snippets At End Of Each Post

For this to work:

- Each content page contains a boilerplate author biography sentence or paragraph snippet that contains a link to the author's Google+ profile.
- You have access permission rights to edit the author biography text snippet.

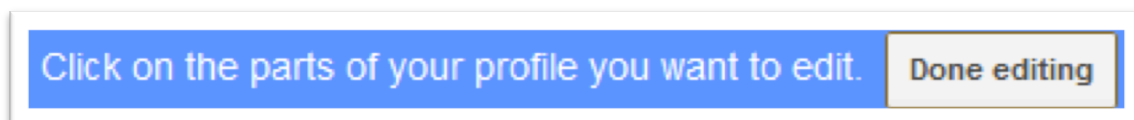
Follow these steps:

1. In the author biography snippet, add a link to the author's Google+ profile using the anchor text "Google+" (*omit the quotes*). The following is an example of such tag source code (*be sure to use your own 21-digit, Google+ profile ID number*):
`Google+`
2. In your Google+ profile, click **Edit Profile**, and then click **Contributor to**.



The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Contributor to". At the top, there is a red error message box that says "Please enter a valid URL.". Below this, there are two input fields: "Label" and "URL". Underneath the input fields is a blue link that says "Add custom link". At the bottom of the dialog, there is a dropdown menu set to "Public", and two buttons: "Save" and "Cancel".

3. Click **Add custom link**, and then add a label and the full URL for the publishing site's home page.
4. Click **Save** when done, and then click **Done editing**.



If you have no more content profiles to add, skip to the section titled **Verify the Google authorship markup code is valid**.

Email Verification Method

This method is very helpful to authors on sites in which they can't edit any anchor tag code, but its use is not limited to that scenario. As long as its criteria are met, email verification can be the primary method used for establishing authorship verification.

For this to work:

- The content page must include an author byline that starts with the word "By " followed by the exact same author name used in the Google+ profile.
- The author name is linked to an email address that uses the same domain name as the site hosting the content.

Follow these steps:

1. Browse to the Google+ page [Link your Google+ profile to the content you create](#) (you must sign in to your Google account to complete this procedure).
2. Type or paste the email address used in your content's byline link into the Step 4 text box, and then click **Signup for Authorship**.

You can link content you publish on a specific domain (such as [www.wired.com](#)) to your [Google+ profile](#).

1. Make sure you have a profile photo with a recognizable headshot.
2. Make sure a byline containing your name appears on each page of your content (for example, "By Steven Levy").
3. Make sure your byline name matches the name on your Google+ profile.
4. Verify you have an email address (such as [stevenlevy@wired.com](#)) on the same domain as your content. (Don't have an email address on the same domain? [Use this method to link your content to your Google+ profile](#))

For example:

Submitting this form will add your email address to the [Work section of your profile](#), which by default is viewable only by your circles. You can keep your email private if you wish. It will also add a public link to the domain of the email address to the [Contributor to section of your profile](#).

Signup for Authorship

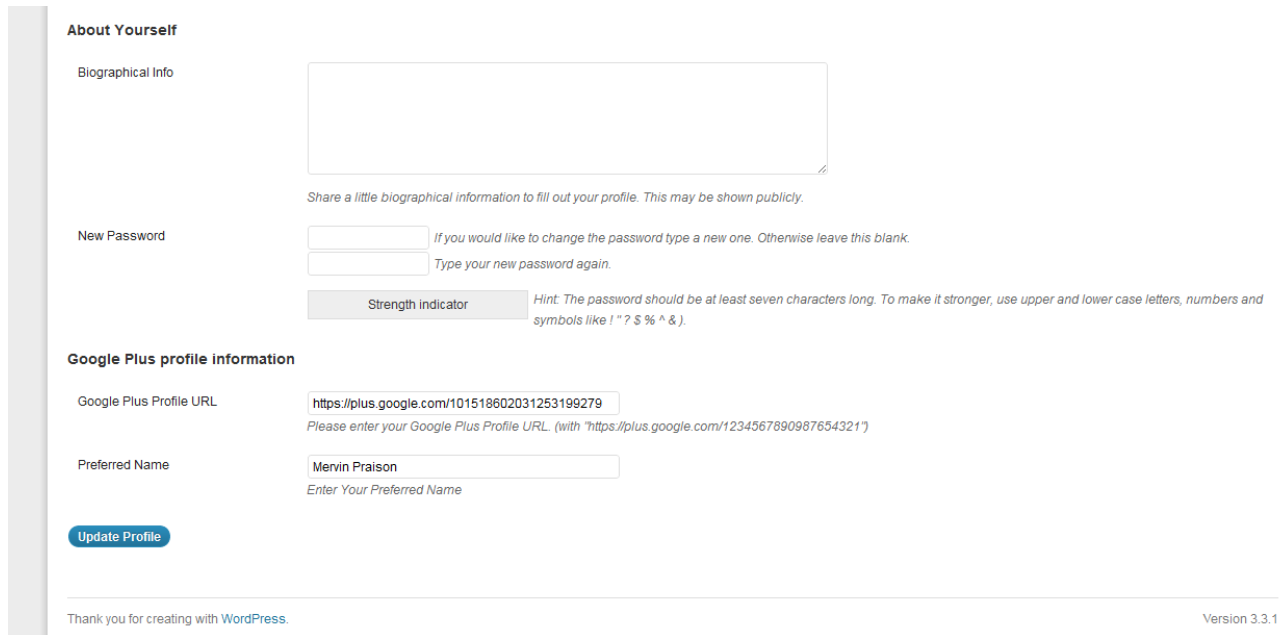
3. Look for a verification email from Google sent to that email address. Once received, click the link within the email to verify you own the email address. Google will then automatically add the verified email address to the **Work** section of your Google+ profile. It will also add a link to the domain name used in the email address in the profile's **Contributor to** section.

If you have no more content profiles to add, skip to the section titled **Verify the Google authorship markup code is valid**.

If You Are Using WordPress

Depending on the site you are publishing content on you may use different methods but typically functionality for Google Authorship may be built into the theme or added using a plugin.

An example of a plugin that you may use is [WP Google Authorship](#)



The screenshot shows the 'About Yourself' section of the WP Google Authorship plugin settings. It includes a large text area for 'Biographical Info' with a note: 'Share a little biographical information to fill out your profile. This may be shown publicly.' Below this is a 'New Password' section with two input fields and a 'Strength indicator' box. The 'Google Plus profile information' section contains a 'Google Plus Profile URL' field with the value 'https://plus.google.com/101518602031253199279' and a 'Preferred Name' field with the value 'Mervin Praison'. A blue 'Update Profile' button is located at the bottom left. At the bottom of the page, it says 'Thank you for creating with WordPress.' and 'Version 3.3.1'.

Alternatively, if the site is set to show your biographical information at the end of the post (and no dedicated field is provided for your Google+ profile URL) you should complete the Biographical Info field in your user profile, including a link to your Google+ profile using the anchor text "Google+" (*omit the quotes*), for example:

```
<ahref="https://plus.google.com/101597161158855514832?rel=author">Google+</a>
```

If the theme does not support this function, site administrators can install the WordPress plugin [WP Biographia](#) to add this functionality.

By including a link to your Google+ profile using rel=author code in the biographical snippet in each post, no author biography page is needed, eliminating the need for rel=me code.

Verify The Google Authorship Markup Code Is Valid

Once you have the Google+ profile and your content pages configured using either the 3-link or the 2-link method described above, you need to validate your work. Google makes this easy to do.

1. Browse to the [Google Rich Snippets Testing Tool](#) page.
2. Type (or paste) the URL of a content page in the text box and then click **Preview**.
3. Review the results for errors.
4. If using the 3-link method with an author biography page, type (or paste) the URL of the author biography page in the text box and then click **Preview**.
5. Review the results for errors. If you see any errors you will need to go back and check that everything was set up correctly.

In Summary

Sure it may take some time setting this up, or convincing your website administrators to set this up, but if you have followed this guide you should pretty much be set with your Google Authorship Markup all in place.

Given Google's active pursuit of verifiable, trusted expert content to improve the quality of their search results, author rank will only increase in importance. Over time, well-configured author pages containing consistent, valuable content will likely see even greater preference in search engine results, and any existing author rank may well influence the ranking of new content on the same topic produced by that established author.

Ultimately, Google's business is to return the most relevant search results. Rather than looking for the next trick to achieve overnight success, working with the way Google wants will see you start achieving better results and you will not have to continually look over your shoulder for the next Google change that will harpoon your search engine rankings.