
Intro to Social Networking

Objectives:

- Learn what Social Networks are
- Different types of social media
- Benefits for Individuals, businesses and organizations
- How to use social networks
- How to create accounts
- Risks and security issues

What is Social Networking?

Social networking is any website or Internet media which allows users to connect with one other and share common interests, concerns and interesting ideas. Social networking involves interaction between two or more individuals or organizations that share likeminded interests. Social networking is an extension of what web people call Web 2.0 movement. Web 2.0 is a website or online tool that allows user interaction and participation as opposed to traditional websites that are only static. The main definition of Web 2.0 is user generated content.

Basics of Social Networking.

Participation and feedback is the cornerstone of social networking. Social networking is a two-way conversation between two or more individuals or organizations. Social networks are often defined as communities because all members share common interests, backgrounds or connections. Common features of social networks are voting, feedback, comments and other interactions. Social networks are popular because they give users a sense of community and connectedness.

Forms of Social Networking.

Social networks can take on several different forms.

Social Networking sites



Facebook: Most popular social networking sites. Started in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his friends while he was a student at Harvard University. Currently has upwards of 500 million users worldwide. Privately owned and valued at anywhere between 11 -35 billion dollars, as of August, 2010.



Twitter: Micro-blogger service where users use website or compatible smart phone to send out Tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters using SMS services. Tweets are short messages visible to people who follow or subscribe to your messages.



Myspace: Social networking site owned by News Corp. Similar to Facebook and was once the largest social media website. Surpassed by Facebook in number of users in April of 2008. Myspace is typically for a younger audience in that users share music and other media. Myspace also allows for a great deal of customization in that users can change their backgrounds and color schemes of their profile page. Myspace has had a lot of success with local, independent and unsigned music groups gaining exposure.



Friendster: Social networking site similar to Facebook and Myspace. Friendster has approximately 190 million users and is popular in Asia.



LinkedIn: Social networking site designed for business use. Has approximately 75 million users. Great tool for keeping colleagues updated on projects and employment status. Many users integrate their resumes with their LinkedIn profile.



Yelp.com: Yelp is a website that allows user reviews and local search for businesses. Yelp is unique in that it blends social media with a database of businesses that are searchable. Similar to a Yellow Page directory with people commenting on their personal experiences with those businesses.

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Blogs

The term blog is a fusion of the words web and log. A blog is a article that is written by an individual. Blogs feature several ongoing, "Posts", or entries and commentary by the authors. Blogs are popular with newspapers, television stations and magazines as a way to quickly communicate with their readers or viewers in real time.

Blogs give readers a way to communicate with the author and other readers by way of comments. Comments are viewpoints and reaction to the authors post.

Wikis

A Wiki is a community website where many different authors contribute to the content of the website. Users can add/delete or modify content in a mass collaborative effort. Some contributors are tasked with monitoring entries to ensure community standards are being upheld. The most famous Wiki on the Internet is Wikipedia.com



Podcasts

A podcast is a audio or video recording that is similar a radio or television program in that it is usually released as an series of episodes. Users can download and save Podcasts on their MP3 players or other digital music player to be listened to at a later date.

Content Communities

Content Communities are websites and allow users to upload, share and comment on media that is owned, shared or forwarded by other community members. Popular examples are: YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr and Photobucket.



Benefits of Social Networking.

Benefits for Individuals

Social Networking allows individuals to connect and reconnect with friends, family and others that share a common interest or background. There are many stories of people who have rediscovered long lost friends or family on Facebook. Another benefit is the sense of belonging and camaraderie that many social media subscribers feel.

Benefits for Business and organizations

Social Networking for individuals may be fun and slightly addicting but the real impact of social media can be felt when businesses and organizations choose to engage their customers and audience through social media. Businesses and organizations have a lot to gain by correctly managing a successful and strategic social media campaign. The subject of social media in business is entire industry upon itself. It would take many, many semesters in a good business school to start to understand the impact of social media on businesses and organizations. So here are just a few key points about how business can benefit by using social media.

- Branding – Business can promote their corporate identity very successfully through social media.
- Customer Service – Businesses can utilize the reach of social media to connect and service their relationships with customers in new ways using social media. Studies show that customers who are engaged with social media are more loyal and better customers in general.
- Low-cost marketing. Not all marketing efforts that are low cost are always effective. Social media in a business environment has a great record of success for many businesses.
- Targeted audience. Many other forms of marketing are wasteful because you inadvertently spend money on people who are not necessarily your customers. Social media has the advantage of being very specific on who receives the message and therefore is a very efficient form of marketing.
- Customer retention. Business spends lots of money on attracting new customers. Social media is an effective way to keep the customers businesses have worked so hard to earn.

Creating Social Networking accounts

Participation in social networking is easy to begin. Accounts are always free and only take a moment to set up. For example purposes Let's look at the basics of the 3 most popular social media sites, Facebook, Twitter and Linked in:

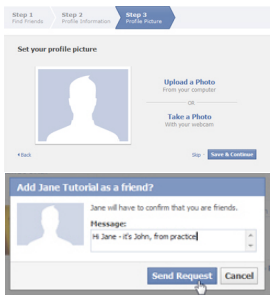


Facebook utilizes profiles for there users. Profiles are like a mini biography of the user. Profiles serve to define your likes, interests, background and network of friends. It also lets you define relationships you have with the community members.



To create an account simply visit Facebook.com

You will need to provide your name; an email address and you need to choose a password. That is all you need to create an account.



Once you have created an account and are logged in you will want to complete your profile. Here you can add your picture, establish your likes and dislikes. Examples, Where are you from? What books do you like to read? What are your favorite movies?

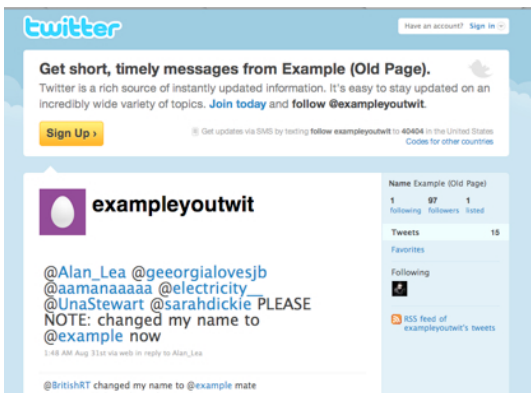
The next thing you will be asked to do is indentify and find friends, family or personal acquaintances you know that are already on Facebook. Once you have discovered who is already on Facebook you can send them a "Friend request".



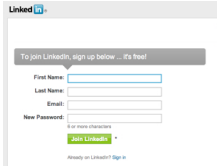
Twitter

Starting a Twitter account is also free and easy to create. All you need to do is provide your name, an email address and create a password.

One thing to consider as you create your Twitter account is what your handle is going to be? A Twitter handle is your identifying call letters so to speak. Since each Twitter handle is unique you may have to try several attempts to find one that suits your needs. If your using your Twitter account for business you will want to choose a Twitter handle that is both appropriate and relevant.

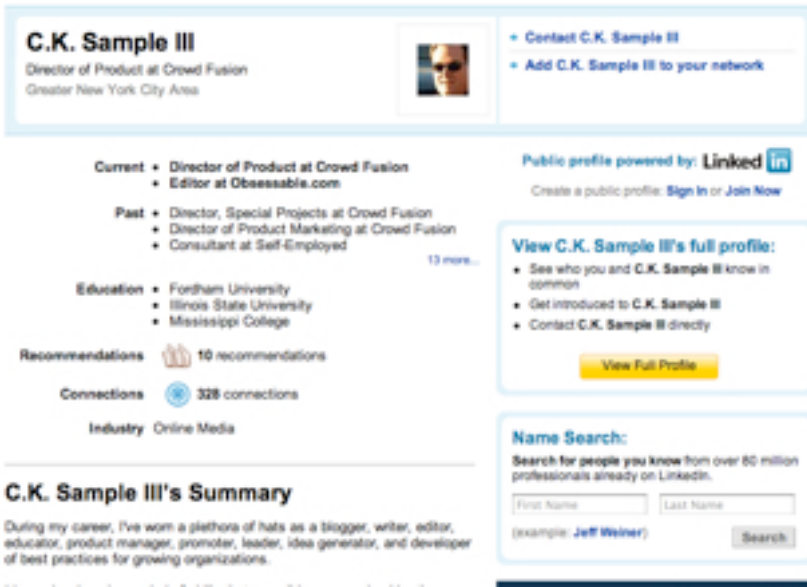


In blogging when an author writes an article we call that a Post. In Twitter when an author writes a message we call it a Tweet. Also in Facebook we learned that people you choose to communicate with are called Friends. In Twitter there are either people you follow or followers. People you follow are people that you monitor their Tweets. In Twitter you have to specifically seek them out to follow them. Twitter makes suggestions based on your users history on people you may want to follow. This could be celebrities, friends of friends, or other business people. Followers, on the other hand are people who are monitoring what you tweet about. They are following your Tweets.



Starting a LinkedIn account is also free and easy to create. All you need to do is provide your name, an email address and create a password.

Once you are logged into LinkedIn you can find business colleagues who have twitter accounts. You can keep track of their business achievement and job history. You can create or participate group discussions that are created and relevant to your business interests. You can also post your resume and any business skills or training you have.



In this example profile we can see that this user has all of his contact information posted. Phone, address, email etc. This would be important in business. He also has posted both his current position and past positions. He has 10 recommendations. These are other linkedin users who would recommend this user. These are people who have had past business dealings with this user and would recommend him, similar to an online endorsement. Also notice that his education is stated. You can see how LinkedIn is very similar to an online resume, only in greater detail and with an interactive, real-time element to it

Security concerns with Social Networking

Security for Individuals

Like all online tools if social networking sites are not used with a degree of caution and common sense individuals could experience a negative experience. Some people can become too enthusiastic and give out more personal information about them is generally considered prudent. Also social networking sites contain a lot of your personal data. Phone numbers, addresses ect. We are now generally conditioned not to give out this type of information to strangers in our everyday lives. The same is true with your online identity. The settings sections of social networking sites let you manage how much information you want to display and to whom. Be cognizant of these settings to make sure that while you are enjoying the use of social networking sites that your users experience is one you are comfortable with.

Security for Businesses and Organizations

Businesses face the same security concerns listed for individuals as well as some additional concerns. First and

concerning downside is mismanagement of a social network for business. Years of marketing efforts can be wiped out in a single breach of an account. If a business account is compromised the unauthorized users say or post something that is embarrassing to the company it could be a public relations disaster of untold proportions.