

**THE TRUTH
ABOUT**

PROFITING FROM SOCIAL NETWORKING

“Use social networks to
supercharge your career,
business, life...”

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Introduction

Social networking is just one component of what's called Web 2.0, the next generation of websites and services that emphasize collaboration and connectivity. Although the experts continue to debate the exact definition of Web 2.0, one thing is certain: Social networking sites, blogs, and wikis are connecting the online world like never before. Web 2.0 has changed the way the world connects and communicates, and the evolution is continuing.

Social networking has generated a lot of buzz, media coverage, and conversation in the past few years. In spite of all this attention, however, many misconceptions remain. Social networking isn't just for the young. It now reaches a large, mainstream audience. Many popular sites report that half their visitors are over age 35. It isn't just for fun or pure socializing, either. Companies, organizations, and individuals around the world are profiting from their participation on popular social networks such as MySpace, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Social networking also isn't just for the tech-savvy. Strategy counts far more than technical skill in developing a successful social networking campaign. In this book, you learn 50 "truths" about real-world social networking and how you, too, can profit from your social networking experience.

This book is written for anyone who wants to tap the power of social networking for professional reasons. Marketers, publicists, small business owners, independent professionals, job seekers, fundraisers, and activists all can find ways to profit from strategic social networking. It's a viable business tool that opens up new ways to connect with others who can help you achieve your business goals. The goal of this book is to provide you with a solid foundation on the basics of social networking, give you some insight into future trends, and encourage you to think strategically about the best ways you can leverage the power of social networking to enhance your business, your cause, and your life.

PART I: THE TRUTH ABOUT THE
SOCIAL NETWORKING PHENOMENON

TRUTH

1

Social networking is a lot
more than
MySpace and YouTube

Just what is social networking? Ask three people, and you'll get three different answers. Although most people have a general idea of the basic concept, social networking means different things to different people depending on their background, interests, goals, and level of computer savvy.

MySpace (www.myspace.com) and YouTube (www.youtube.com) are two of the most popular sites on the web. For many people, these two sites satisfy all their social networking needs. But the world of social networking is much larger than its two highest profile sites.

Business networkers could determine social networking isn't right for them after visiting MySpace and YouTube if they didn't also check out the many business-oriented sites that could offer them much greater benefits.

In other words, the world of social networking is wide and diverse. Although early adopters of social networking skew to the young, the trend has now moved into the mainstream with sites for all ages, backgrounds, and interests. There's something for everyone, but you need to know where to find it.

A quick tour of the world of social networking gives you an idea of the vast differences between these sites as well as the possibilities for how social networking could benefit you. Some of the best-known and most-visited social networking sites include

- **Bebo** (www.bebo.com)—Bebo reports more than 25 million members and is particularly popular in the UK. Bebo Bands and Bebo Authors draw musicians and writers looking to connect with their audience.
- **Ecademy** (www.ecademy.com)—A business networking site with 150,000 members, Ecademy offers numerous networking groups based on your interests. It also offers in-person networking events, primarily in the UK.

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- **Facebook** (www.facebook.com)—Starting as a community for Harvard students, Facebook opened its doors to anyone with an email address in September 2006 and increased its membership by 89 percent in less than a year.
- **Friendster** (www.friendster.com)—Friendster has a member base of 50 million users worldwide and is particularly popular in the Asia Pacific region.
- **hi5** (www.hi5.com)—With more than 60 million registered members and 25 million unique visitors per month, hi5 aims for an international audience with a localized interface available in multiple languages.
- **LinkedIn** (www.linkedin.com)—The largest and most popular of the business networking sites, LinkedIn offers profiles of more than 19 million professionals and is particularly popular with recruiters...and those who want to capture their attention.
- **MySpace** (www.myspace.com)—Arguably the most popular social networking site on the web, MySpace is expanding from a youth-dominated demographic to encompass members of all ages. Although poor site design and numerous less-than-professional MySpace pages can be a detractor, MySpace is still a great networking tool for the right people (think musical artists, marketers aiming for a general audience, authors of mainstream novels, and so forth).
- **Orkut** (www.orkut.com)—Google may have founded Orkut, but that hasn't translated into worldwide popularity. Its most significant user base is in Brazil and India, where it captures a high market share.
- **Ryze** (www.ryze.com)—Another business-oriented social site, Ryze has more than 500,000 members and offers a number of special interest networks.
- **XING** (www.xing.com)—An active business-oriented social networking site that is particularly popular in Europe. XING was renamed from openBC/Open Business Club in November 2006.
- **YouTube** (www.youtube.com)—The world's most popular video-sharing site.

Want even more options? Niche social networking is a hot trend, with microsites sprouting up for almost every conceivable niche audience. Some examples include

- **aSmallWorld** (www.asmallworld.net)—By invitation only, for celebrities and the business elite
- **BlackPlanet.com** (www.blackplanet.com)—Emphasizing connections between African Americans
- **85 Broads** (<https://secure.85broads.com>)—For career women who attended a select list of leading universities
- **CafeMom** (www.cafemom.com)—A networking site for mothers
- **Dogster** (www.dogster.com)—For dog lovers everywhere
- **Gaia** (www.gaia.com/community)—For the socially conscious crowd
- **GLEE.com** (www.lee.com)—For the gay and lesbian community
- **MilitaryPlanet** (www.militaryplanet.com)—For members of the military
- **New England Venture Network** (www.venturenetwork.vc)—Social networking for venture capitalists
- **Ning** (www.ning.com)—For do-it-yourselfers who want to create their own social network
- **Shelfari** (www.shelfari.com)—A site for book lovers and authors
- **ShoutLife** (www.shoutlife.com)—A Christian social network
- **Ultrafan** (www.ultrafan.com)—For sports fans

Although these “person-to-person” sites represent the most common type of social networking, other sites also fall under the realm of the somewhat fuzzy definition of social networking.

These include

- **Photo-sharing sites**—Flickr (www.flickr.com), Zoomr (www.zoomr.com), and Photobucket (www.photobucket.com).
- **Social bookmarking sites**—Digg (www.digg.com), del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us>), and StumbleUpon (www.stumbleupon.com), which enable you to share your favorite sites and news stories with other users.
- **Micro-blogging sites**—Twitter (www.twitter.com), Pownce (www.pownce.com), and Jaiku (www.jaiku.com), which merge brief blog-like text updates with social networking functionality.
- **Video-sharing sites**—Revver (www.revver.com), Veoh (www.veoh.com), and Google Video (video.google.com), as well as the frontrunner YouTube.

Savvy social networkers have found ways to promote their businesses, products, and causes—and even themselves—on the variety of social networking sites available on the web.

