Steven Holzner

Facebook Marketing

Leverage Social Media to Grow Your Business

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Facebook Marketing: Leverage Social Media to Grow Your Business

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Introduction

Facebook has 42 million users, and they're smart, affluent, Internet-savvy people whom marketers can no longer ignore.

However, traditional marketing methods won't work here. In Facebook, the users are in charge, not the marketers, and that's a fact we have to live with.

Facebook members can comment on your brand, and there's not much you can do about it. The marketing channel is reversed—rather than top-down, things now move from the bottom up. Now that your customers can talk back, for good or ill, it pays to listen to what they have to say.

Learning to live with the new rules of social marketing is what this book is all about. If you want to survive and thrive in this world, you have to provide content, not just ad copy. Rather than interruptive advertising, you have to go viral. And spam can get you kicked out.

Facebook has tons of profit potential. Facebook users are not averse to marketing—they're just averse to unilateral marketing that feels like marketing.

What's in This Book

This book is a survey of Facebook and where marketers fit in. Facebook has many nooks and crannies that aren't obvious to the casual user, and ferreting them out can be tough. Here's what's in this book:

Chapter 1, "Targeting Your Profile"

Most social interaction on Facebook revolves around your profile, and this chapter is all about setting up this most basic of Facebook tools. You'll learn about the various sections of the Facebook profile, which is essential knowledge for the rest of the book.

Chapter 2, "Facebook Groups"

Facebook groups allow Facebook members to congregate and discuss issues—including your brand. Users can post text items, photos, and videos and hold discussions. This chapter shows you how to use groups and create your own group.

Chapter 3, "Creating Your Own Pages"

People have profiles on Facebook. Brands, bands, and companies have Facebook pages, which are much like profiles. Facebook members don't become friends of a page, however; they become fans. This chapter shows you how Facebook pages work, as well as how to create your own Facebook page.

Chapter 4, "Hosting Your Own Facebook Events"

Facebook events are, as their name implies, pages about one-time events that you want people to know about. For example, your store could be having a big sale, a company picnic, or a sponsored event, such as a music event. This chapter shows you how to get the word out.

Chapter 5, "Introducing Advertising"

Facebook now allows ads (it didn't used to). These can be displayed in various places, and you can pay using cost per click or cost per impression. Social ads tie into the actions that users perform on Facebook. We'll explore all the options in this chapter.

Chapter 6, "Optimizing and Monitoring Your Advertising"

Having spent money on advertising, you'd like to know how effective those ads are—what your click-through ratio is, how many impressions you're getting, and so on. Facebook recently added ad analytics, and they're improving all the time, so we'll take a look in this chapter.

Chapter 7, "Using the Marketplace"

If you have items to sell, Facebook is up to the task with its marketplace. You can list items for sale here, and people can get in touch with you about them. In other words, the marketplace is Facebook's classified section. It's free, and it works, and it can be useful to some marketers.

Chapter 8, "Beacon, Polls, and Networks"

Chapter 8 discusses some more-advanced marketing techniques—Beacon, polls, and handling networks.

Beacon is Facebook's effort to "Facebookize" the entire Web for the benefit of marketers. Using Beacon, sites around the Web can add Facebook users' actions on their sites to the news feeds on Facebook (for example, "Ethmoid Studge bought a book on booksbooksbooksetc.com") and include a link. Because the news feed is the chief way that marketing goes viral on Facebook, that can be pretty powerful.

Facebook polls allow you to ask your potential customers questions and get immediate results. Polls are displayed in users' news feeds, and users seem to have no problem letting their voices be heard—which is a great marketing tool.

As you'll see in this book, much of Facebook centers on what network(s) you belong to. You'll discover how to use this to your advantage—such as by posting on the network pages, which is where Facebook comes the closest to tolerating outright spam. You'll also see how to suggest a new network to Facebook.

Chapter 9, "Facebook Applications"

Facebook has recently been thrown open to third-party developers, who create applications that can be displayed in users' profiles and pages. There are many ways for marketers to take advantage of this. Many applications can display advertising, and you can buy space in them, using various ad networks. You can also use many applications to further your social networking on Facebook. And finally, you can hire developers to build your own applications, dedicated to your brand. You'll see all of that in this chapter.

Chapter 10, "Developing Your Own Applications"

The last chapter gives you an overview of what's involved in creating your own Facebook applications. You'll build an actual Facebook application and get it running. And you'll explore—and get working—various calls to the Facebook API.

What You'll Need

All you need in this book is a Facebook account. So if you don't already have one, go to http://www.facebook.com and sign up. As soon as you're on Facebook, you're ready to turn to Chapter 1.

Targeting Your Profile

In This Chapter:

- Welcome to Facebook Marketing
- Signing Up for Facebook
- Understanding Your Profile
- An Overview of Facebook

"[In] the last hundred years…the way to advertise was to get into the mass media and push out your content…In the next hundred years information won't be just pushed out to people, it will be shared among the millions of connections people have. Advertising will change. You will need to get into these connections."

Mark Zuckerberg
CEO Facebook

Welcome to Facebook Marketing

Welcome to Facebook—a premiere social networking site, meeting place for about 80 million users, and marketer's dream—if you know how to market there. We want to say from the outset that the old marketing standby, interruption marketing, in which the viewer has to sit through an ad, won't

cut it on Facebook. We're into a whole new realm of marketing now, with new terms such as content marketing and viral marketing.

It's a new world for marketers, who are just coming to grips with that new world. The potential is enormous, and the payoff is huge—if you play by the Facebook community's rules. It's not as though marketing is imposed on Facebook users who don't want to see it. Most Facebook users are interested in what you have to offer, if you present it effectively—and correctly.

That's what this book is all about—the marketing revolution that is social networking. Contrary to what you may have heard, marketing is not an anathema in social networking—far from it. But marketers have a steep learning curve.

This book penetrates the world of social networking from a marketer's perspective. Again, let me emphasize that marketing is not at all unwelcome on Facebook, but it can't look like standard, old-world marketing.

This book shows you what works and what to avoid. The main difference between old-world and new-world marketing is that now your potential customers are much more in control of their environment, and you're the one who has to fit in. Unlike the passive consumers targeted by television advertising, Facebook users can talk to each other, form groups, and polarize for or against what you have to offer.

It's no longer the corporation with the biggest budget that wins. Stunning marketing upsets are occurring in the social networks every day. Your creativity—and your ability to engage users—determine your success.

That's a fundamental change: your potential customers are now in charge of the marketing environment, and you must be the one who fits in, not the reverse. Yet the rewards are immense, so it's worth your while to understand the new rules. It's a matter of watching and learning, so we'll look at what works and what doesn't, at case studies, at interviews with marketers, and more.

Dozens of tools are available to marketers on Facebook, but you have to be careful. If you screw up, or try to bludgeon your potential customers with your message, you will be dead in the water. Either you'll be ostracized, or Facebook will remove your account for spamming.

This chapter introduces the basics of Facebook—topics and resources we'll take for granted in the coming chapters, such as Facebook profiles, the Wall, friends, and more. In other words, this chapter lays the foundation for the rest of the book.

If you're already an accomplished Facebook user, you might want to skip to Chapter 2, "Facebook Groups." Otherwise, let's begin with an overview of Facebook.

Welcome to Facebook

Facebook has about 80 million users. This is smaller than the biggest social networking site, MySpace (a whopping 200 million registered users), but bigger than the business-contact-oriented LinkedIn (about 20 million or so).

Even though it's not the biggest, I believe that Facebook provides the best opportunity for marketers. LinkedIn has a reputation for being primarily for the over-35 group, and people there are interested in their careers; they aren't as concerned with socializing. It's not a site you spend hours on; it's more of a business environment.

And, for my taste, MySpace is too chaotic and coarse to provide a fruitful environment for marketers. MySpace has the registered users, but the pages can be so hard to deal with that, unlike Facebook, I don't feel like browsing people on MySpace. People tend to spend much more time on Facebook than they do on MySpace.

The Facebook demographics are the most opportune for marketers. Facebook started on February 4, 2004 (MySpace started in August 2003 and LinkedIn in May 2003) as a site for college students. You had to have a college email address (ending in .edu) to join.

That changed in September 2006. Then anyone with a valid email address could join, but from a marketer's point of view, Facebook's beginnings were crucial. It still has the reputation of being upscale compared to MySpace, and the typical user is still college-age—with plenty of disposable income.

MySpace is a zoo that screams at you from the page, and LinkedIn is a reserved, formal world of business contacts. Facebook is home to an extremely desirable demographic—educated 18-to-26-year-olds—and it's where they feel comfortable. It's where they live with their friends online, and it's where you usually have the best chance of marketing.

What's the attraction of Facebook? What draws people and keeps them there hour after hour?

In a word: friends. That's what social networking is all about. And Facebook excels at connecting users with friends and keeping them in touch. That's a vital need for many college students—not only while they're in school, but after they leave. For that reason, you'll see the average demographic on Facebook age as time goes on.

Not only can you add other users as your friends, which gives them access to your information, you also can stay in touch with them. You can drop by their pages and leave them notes on "the Wall," as we'll see in this chapter. You can send them messages. (For some reason, many Facebook users treat Facebook messages as more handy than standard email.) You can tell them about events you've registered with Facebook.

Even better—and this is the truly valuable part, and one of the main draws of Facebook—you can watch what your friends are doing minute by minute. Facebook

watches your friends' activities and reports them to you (consistent with the level of privacy that your friends have set). So you can see what your friends are up to as they perform Facebook actions.

This is one of the main ways that Facebook forms its cohesive community—by keeping you in touch with what your friends are doing without any special action on their part. It's a sort of proximity-by-proxy thing, and it's the closest that two people in different states might come to staying in touch. For that reason, many Facebook users keep a Facebook window open at all times when they're doing other work on their computer—to watch their friends.

You can also give your status on Facebook, and anyone can see what you're doing. For example, you can list yourself as online, as working, as having fun—whatever.

From the users' point of view, Facebook is really all about connecting with your friends. In fact, Facebook offers suggestions on your Friends page, listing Facebook members you may already know. It finds these people by checking what networks you've joined and what friends you may have in common with other users.

If this chapter's overview of Facebook leaves you feeling lost, take a look at a good introductory book on Facebook, because the rest of this book takes the basics for granted.

What insightful pieces of advice would you most want new marketers on Facebook to know?

Be as authentic in your marketing as possible. Inside social networks, trusted referrals are the most powerful marketing message. Find ways to expose your target audience to people who authentically evangelize your product or service for you. This is the main value add of marketing in social networks—the social graph is available to you.

Justin Smith, Editor, InsideFacebook.com, the first blog devoted to Facebook and the Facebook Platform

Getting Started with Facebook

When you navigate your browser to Facebook at http://www.facebook.com, you see the page shown in Figure 1.1.

This page looks a little less than welcoming. To actually enter Facebook, sign up now. Enter your email address and a password in the boxes on the right, as well as your birthday. Click the Sign Up button to complete the sign-up process. Among that information is data that will appear on your profile—your geographic region and so on. (You'll see how to edit your profile later.)

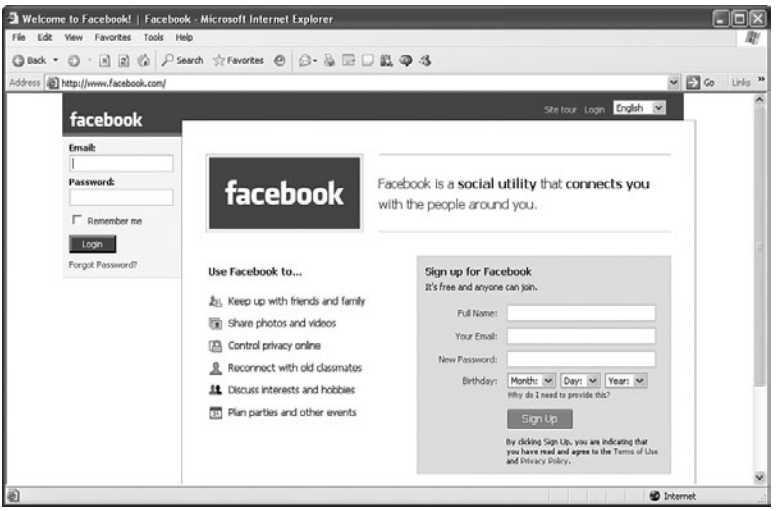

Figure 1.1
The Facebook start-up screen.

After your username (your email address) and password are set, you can enter them on the left in the www.facebook.com page, as shown in Figure 1.1. Click the "Remember me" check box to make Facebook automatically log you in every time you return.

After you've completed the sign-in process, you see the page shown in Figure 1.2, asking what you want to do next. This is your Facebook home page. It's always accessible by clicking the word Facebook in the upper left while you're logged in. (Note that the home page may have changed by the time you read this; Facebook is always tinkering with its appearance.)

Facebook offers the following items on the home page:

- Find Friends: Finding your friends makes your Facebook experience better. You can search for classmates or coworkers, for example.
- View your friends' profiles: Follow links to your friends' profiles to see what they've been doing on Facebook.
- View and edit your profile: Fill in details and upload a profile picture to help your friends recognize you.

Note that there's also a group of tabs near the top of the home page—Profile, Friends, and Inbox. Of these, the profile is where you typically spend the most time. It's how you present yourself publicly to other Facebook members.

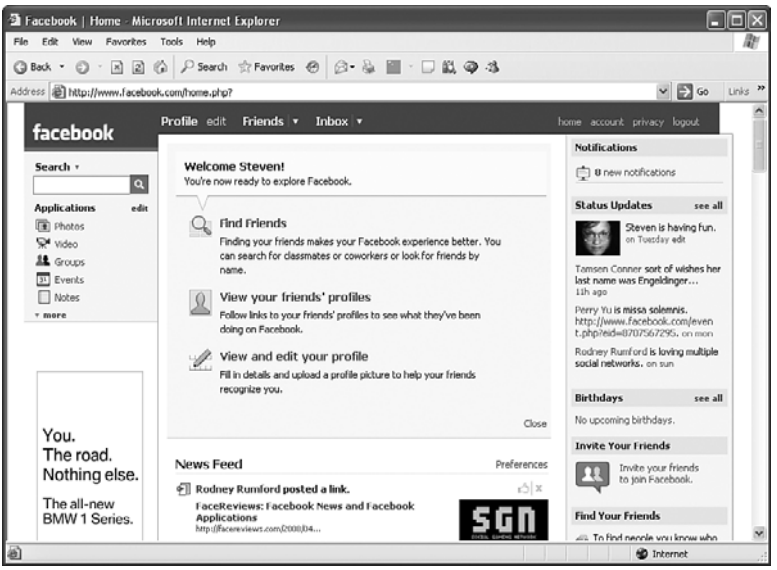

Figure 1.2
The Facebook home page.

Here's an overview of these tabs. You'll spend a lot of time with them in Facebook:

- Profile: A user's profile is usually the center of his or her Facebook experience; it displays the user to the Facebook community. Your photo is here, your personal information (as much as you want to show), your mini-feed (which keeps you in touch with the activities of other friends), and so on. This is also where other users can drop in and leave you messages (on your "Wall," as you'll see shortly).

- Friends: The Friends tab opens the Friends page, where you manage and add friends. Here you can group your friends into lists, add or remove them, and more. This is a very important page for the friend-oriented Facebook user.

  In addition, this is where Facebook suggests people it thinks you might know, and whom you might want to become friends with.

- Inbox: This is the message center of Facebook. Here's where you read your messages. (By default, you're also notified at your regular email address when a Facebook user sends you a message—but you have to log into Facebook to read it.) Here you can compose, read, and send messages to other people, friends, and lists of friends.

  That's right—you can send messages to whole lists of friends (and each friend list can contain 1,500 friends). However, you have to be careful not to spam. Users can report you with a single click if you do spam, and you risk losing your account. We'll see how to create friend lists in this chapter.

Note that you can keep track of your friends' current status on the right side of Figure 1.2. For example, you can read that "Rodney Rumford is loving multiple social networks." You can set your status on your profile at any time, and any changes you make are updated on your friends' home pages.

Note also that at the bottom of the home page is your news feed. When you get some friends, you can keep track of their doings here. Take a look at the news feed shown in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3
The home page's news feed.

Whenever a friend takes some public action (this person can decide what's publicly watchable), it shows up in the news feed. Later in this book, we'll look at how to use the news feed for business purposes.

The news feed is one of the most important parts of Facebook, because it keeps users in touch with what's going on with their friends, even when their friends don't know they're being watched. This feature is one of the primary reasons that people get obsessed with Facebook.

Because the Profile, Friends, and Inbox tabs are central to the Facebook experience, we'll look at each one in the following sections.

The Profile Tab

Your profile is your public face on Facebook. If you're a business, you might be loathe to put personal information on Facebook. Large corporations skip profiles and go directly to pages (see Chapter 3, "Creating Your Own Pages"). Pages are appropriate for businesses, bands, stars, and so on. Pages don't have friends; instead, they have fans.

But if you're not a large corporation yet, and you want to get some good Facebook publicity, I encourage you, as a business, to get some personal profiles going. If you don't want to do that, and you're not a known presence on the Internet yet, you might consider whether Facebook is right for you. Remember, it's all about content marketing, and you want to get people as involved with you as you can get them.

Figure 1.4 shows my profile (I admit the photo is a bit grim!). You can access your profile at any time by clicking the Profile tab that appears at the top of all pages while you're logged in.

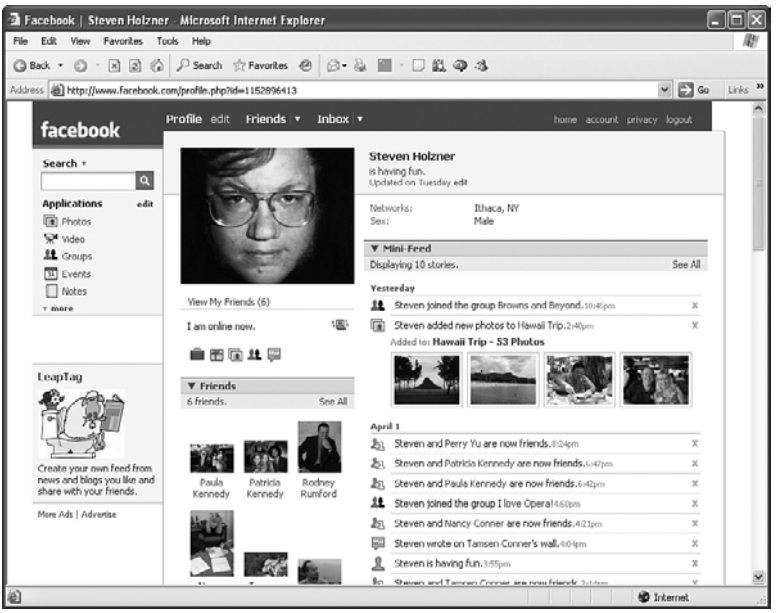

Figure 1.4
My profile page, top half.

It's a long web page, so the bottom half appears in Figure 1.5.

Because the profile is so important, let's take it apart piece by piece.

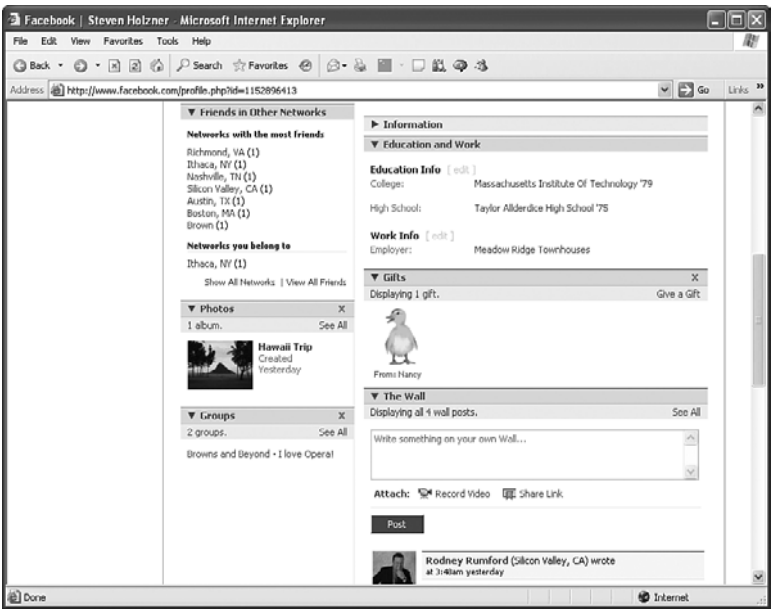

Figure 1.5
My profile page, bottom half.

Across the Top

Across the top of the profile page, you see the Facebook logo in the upper left. Clicking that at any time takes you back to your home page if you're logged in. You'll always see the Facebook logo and therefore can access your home page. You can also click the "home" link at the top right of any Facebook page to get back home. Also note the link next to the Profile tab that says "edit." You can edit your profile here, as you'll see in a moment.

The final elements across the top of the profile are these links:

- home: Takes you to your home page.
- account: Lets you set account info, such as credit card info in case you want to buy gifts.
- privacy: Lets you customize privacy settings, such as who can see what in your profile.
- logout: Logs you out.

The "account" link takes you to the page shown in Figure 1.6.

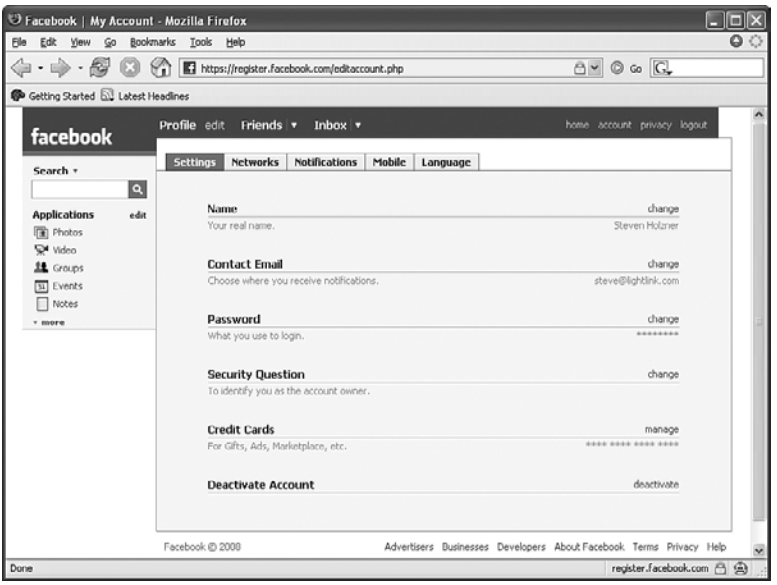

Figure 1.6
The account page.

On the account page, here are the items you can change:

- Name
- Contact Email
- Password
- Security Question: You can change the question Facebook asks you to verify that it's really you.
- Credit Cards: You can change or edit the credit card information you use to buy people gifts on Facebook.
- Deactivate Account

The "security" link takes you to the page shown in Figure 1.7.

Here are the items on the security page:

- Profile: Controls who can see what in your profile.
- Search: Controls how people can search for you.
- News Feed and Mini-Feed: Controls what's visible in the news feed and mini-feed.
- Applications: Controls the security settings for the Facebook applications you install.

We'll take another look at the security page soon. When you're on Facebook, security and privacy are major issues.

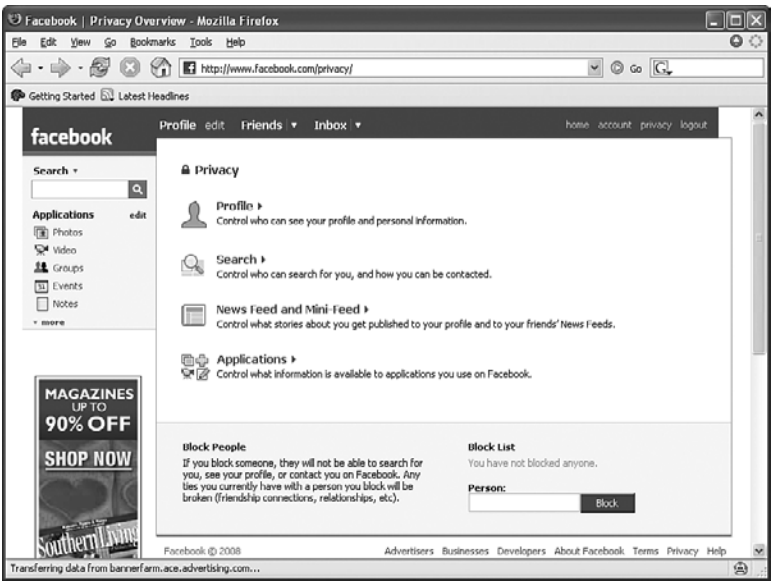

Figure 1.7
The security page.

The Search Bar

The search bar is directly under the Facebook logo in the upper left in Figure 1.4. You can search for people (as well as groups, events, applications, and so on) just by entering their name and pressing Enter.

Various search options are available. You can select them by clicking the down arrow next to the word Search. This opens the menu shown in the upper left of Figure 1.8.

The items on the search menu indicate the ways in which you can search:

- Basic Search
- Find Classmates
- Find Coworkers
- Profile Search
- Browse

Using this search box is a good way to reconnect with friends.

Figure 1.8
Search options.

Under the search box is a list of links; in my profile, they are as follows:

- Photos: Displays the photos you've uploaded—and photos from your friends.
- Video: Displays your videos—and videos from your friends.
- Groups: Displays the groups you belong to—and groups recently joined by your friends.
- Events: Lists the upcoming Facebook-registered events you may be connected to—and those of your friends.
- Notes: Allows you to publish commentary, which can include figures. Your friends can comment on your notes. And you can see your friends' notes as well.

Clicking any of these links takes you to a new page. For example, Figure 1.9 shows my notes page.

After I create this new note, a Notes section is added to my profile. It summarizes the new note so that friends visiting my profile can see there's a new note and read it. This offers marketing opportunities, because you can broadcast your notes to other friends. More about this is coming up later.

Finally, moving down in the search bar, underneath the Photos, Videos, Groups, and so on, is an ad. We'll have a great deal more to say about ads later in the book.

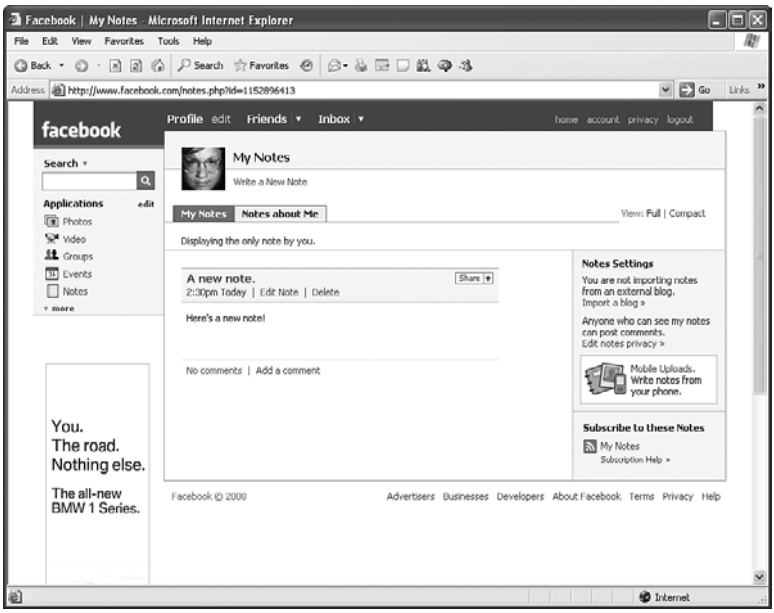

Figure 1.9
The notes page.

What, in your experience, is the single most important topic or technique to know about Facebook marketing?

Become a part of the online conversation and don't just throw up a display ad. Don't assume traditional targeting and banner creatives work within Facebook, because almost all users will simply tune out. Your audience on Facebook is primarily young adults that have been weaned on digital media who are very savvy when it comes to understanding whether they are being talked to or talked with in the online world. Talk with them by creating compelling content and applications that engage users so they share your messaging with their friends. The best advertising is a recommendation, and social networks' viral aspect enables advertisers to tap into this virality, assuming the message and the interaction with the consumer is right.

Eddie Smith, VP, Marketing & Business Development, SocialMedia Networks

Name, Photo, Networks, and Status

You can see my photo in my profile. If you want to upload or change your photo, just click the "edit" link on the Profile tab. Then click the Picture tab in the new window that opens, browse for a new photo with the Browse button, and upload the photo with the Upload Picture button.

Your name appears next to your photo, as shown in Figure 1.8. Want to change your name? Click the "account" link in the upper right of your profile, and then click the "change" link in the Name item.

Note also the status line that appears in my profile—"having fun," as shown in Figure 1.8. That status also appears in all your friends' home pages (as in "Steven is having fun"). You can set that status by clicking the status text ("is having fun"), entering your new text, and pressing Enter.

Setting your status can be a mild marketing opportunity. For example, if you were a shoe manufacturer, you might write "is enjoying his new spelunking shoes to the max." Unfortunately, you can't use any HTML, such as a link to your company's website.

You can, however, include an URL in your status. Facebook will treat it as a clickable URL.

Under your status are the networks you belong to, and your gender. As with nearly all items in your profile, these can be restricted, making them invisible to people you want to keep out.

Under my photo are five icons; they correspond to

- Education and Work
- Gifts
- Photos
- Groups
- The Wall

When you click an icon, the browser moves to the matching section in your profile. In other words, the same page stays open, but another section is moved to the top of the browser window. When you install Facebook applications on your profile, they each get an icon here too.

Note that above these icons are the words "I am online now.", indicating that I'm available for messages. If I weren't online, you'd see other items. In particular, you'd see links like these:

- View Photos of Steven (1)
- View Steven's Friends (6)
- Send Steven a Gift
- Send Steven a Message
- Poke Him!

Also note the link View My Friends (6) beneath my photo. If you click it, the browser navigates to the same page that clicking the Friends tab takes you to; this is discussed later in this chapter.

The Mini-Feed Section

On the right of Figure 1.8 is my mini-feed. This is the first of the profile "sections" we'll cover. A section in your profile has a title bar (reading "Mini-Feed" in this case), and you can rearrange sections in your profile just by dragging their title bars. So if you want the mini-feed to appear below the Photos section, just drag it there. Facebook will remember the new arrangement.

What's a mini-feed, and how does it differ from your news feed? As you saw on the home page, a news feed keeps you in contact with all your friends and what they're doing. You can also subscribe to various news sources in your news feed.

A mini-feed, on the other hand, appears on your profile page and includes items and updates about you. As you can see in Figure 1.8, for example, all the items in my mini-feed begin with my name, such as "Steven joined the group Browns and Beyond." We'll cover groups in detail in Chapter 2. A group lets friends connect around common interests, and they can leave messages for each other on the group's page.

In other words, my mini-feed keeps track of what I've been doing on Facebook for users who view my profile. (Again, you can set the access that various groups of users have to that information.) The items in the mini-feed are often hyperlinks. For example, "Browns and Beyond" in my mini-feed is a link to the group Browns and Beyond. In the mini-feed item "Steven added new photos to Hawaii Trip," Hawaii Trip is a link to my photo album of photos from our Hawaiian vacation. If you see someone's name (not your own) in your mini-feed, that's a link to that person's profile.

Note also the down-pointing arrow in the title bar of the mini-feed section. You can collapse or expand the sections in a profile by clicking that arrow. When you collapse a section, it closes to just its title bar, and the arrow turns into one that points to the right. (You can see an arrow like that in the Information section of my profile in Figure 1.5.)

The Friends and Friends in Other Networks Sections

You can see thumbnail photos of my friends in the Friends section of my profile in Figure 1.8. Clicking one of them takes you to that person's profile, which is pretty cool.

Directly under the Friends section in the profile is the Friends in Other Networks section, visible in Figure 1.5. There you can see a breakdown of my friends by network—Richmond, VA; Ithaca, NY; and so on. Clicking one of these networks opens a new page showing my friends in any of those networks. Figure 1.10 shows my friend in Ithaca, NY.

Figure 1.10
Friends in a network.

Note that there's also a "Networks you belong to" subsection at the bottom of the Friends in Other Networks section, as shown in Figure 1.5. As you can see, I belong to the Ithaca, NY network, which in my case is the default geographic network that Facebook always signs you up for.

You can join other networks if you like. Just click the "accounts" link in the upper right of any Facebook page after you're logged in. Click the Networks tab, opening the page shown in Figure 1.11.

You can join networks in this page. As the directions say, just enter a city, workplace, school, or region in the Network name box, and click Join Network.

Friends are the most intimate community you have in Facebook. After that, groups are the next community you can join—typically made up of groups of friends. After that come networks, which group people by city, workplace, school, or region. And you can set the privacy of your profile so that various pieces of data are restricted to friends and/or networks. It's all part of Facebook getting you involved.

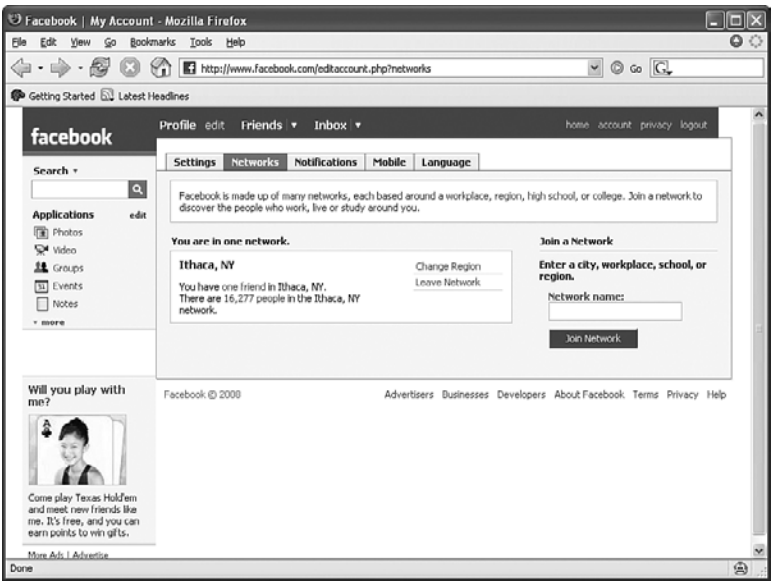

Figure 1.11
Managing networks.

The Photos Section

The Photos section of your profile gives people access to any photos you've uploaded. These don't have to be personal photos. They can be business photos of products or catalog items.

In the Photos section of my profile are my Hawaii photos. Clicking that album opens it, as shown in Figure 1.12.

Want to create your own album? Click the Create a Photo Album link shown in Figure 1.12, which opens the page shown in Figure 1.13.

You can create a new photo album on this page, as I've done in Figure 1.13. This photo album is of my trip to Hawaii, but you can upload your business offerings, creating a rudimentary online catalog for interested friends.

You can also set who can see your new album, as shown in Figure 1.13, where I'm saying the Everyone can see the new album. Other choices limit viewership to your friends and your network, or friends of friends, or just friends.

Figure 1.12
Photo album overview.

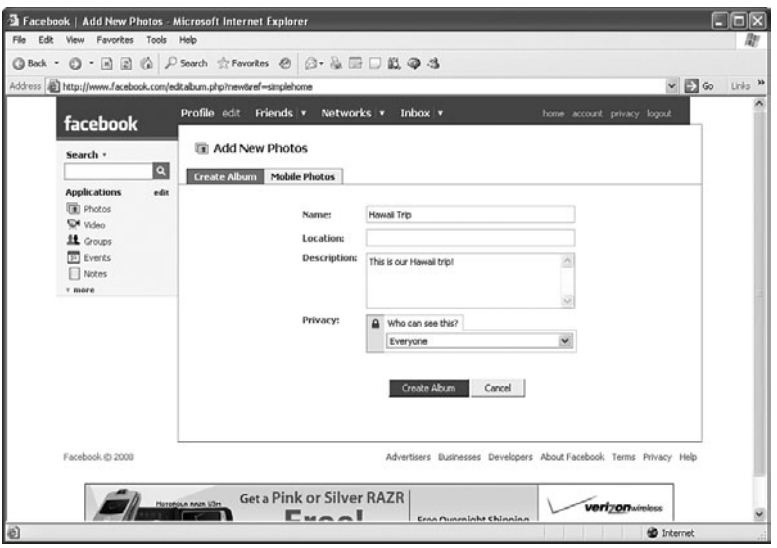

Figure 1.13
The Add New Photos page.

Clicking the Create Album button in Figure 1.13 takes you to a new page, as shown in Figure 1.14.

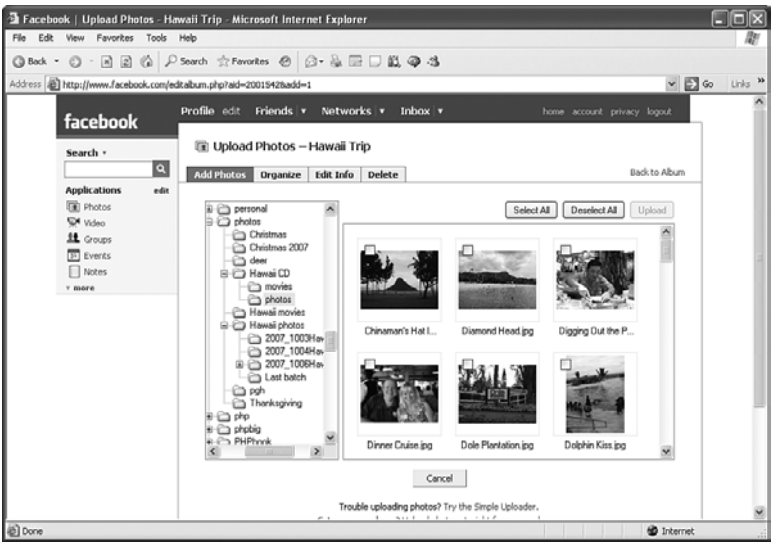

Figure 1.14
Adding photos to an album.

In Internet Explorer, Facebook asks you to install an ActiveX control to handle the uploading. Go ahead and install the ActiveX control (you have to click the yellow security bar that appears at the top of the display in Internet Explorer and select the Install item). When you install the ActiveX control, you see the display shown in Figure 1.14, where you can select the photos you want to upload to your new album.

When you click the Upload button in Figure 1.14, your photos are uploaded to Facebook.

How do you access the new album? You click the Photos icon in your profile and select the album you want, which opens the album. Nice.

The Groups Section

As you can see in Figure 1.5, under the Photos section is the Groups section, which lists the groups you belong to. I belong to two groups, and they're both listed.

As mentioned, groups are collections of users centered around a common interest, such as opera—which is why I belong to the I Love Opera! group. Clicking the I Love Opera! link in the Groups section of my profile opens the I Love Opera! group page, as shown in Figure 1.15.

Figure 1.15
The I Love Opera! group.

Groups are powerful tools for marketers, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The Information Section

Just under the mini-feed section is the Information section, as shown in the top right of Figure 1.5. This section displays the information you specified when creating your account, such as your email address and other contact info (again, you can restrict who gets to see this information).

You can fill out your profile, adding more information than the basics Facebook asks for when you sign up. We'll cover how to edit your profile in a few pages.

Be careful what you make publicly visible in your Information section. There might be no need for casual browsers to see your email address, for example. You can set privacy levels using the "privacy" link that appears on any Facebook page when you're logged in. We'll cover that in this chapter as well.

The Education and Work Section

As you can also see on the right of Figure 1.5, your profile also contains an Education and Work section, allowing you to list your high school and college, as well as your place of work. In fact, Facebook asks you for this information when you sign up.

Like the Information section, you can restrict who gets to see what information in your Education and Work section.

The Gifts Section

You can give gifts to others in Facebook; they appear in the Gifts section of your profile. As you can see in Figure 1.5, someone sent me a duck, one of the few free gifts on Facebook.

Usually, gifts aren't free—you have to pay for them. It doesn't mean anything more than just getting a virtual gift that you can display, but it costs real money. The fact that thousands of people buy gifts is a testament to the power of Facebook as a marketing tool.

The Wall Section

At the bottom right of Figure 1.5, you can see the Wall section—a wildly popular item in Facebook. Here you can leave messages, links, or videos for others.

The Wall is a way to connect to your friends. As you see in Figure 1.5, some of my friends have been connecting to me. You can even leave yourself a note on the Wall. Just type into the "Write something on your own Wall..." box and click the Post button. You can attach video and links with the links under that box.

When you get a message on your Wall, several links appear at the bottom of the new message. For example, if you get a message from Albert Einstein, you see a link to "Write on Albert's Wall," which allows you to get back to Einstein immediately by writing on his Wall.

There's also a Message link, that, when clicked, opens the Message system. You can message the person who posted on your Wall. All you have to do is to enter your subject and your message and click Send.

There's also a Delete link that lets you delete Wall posts, which is a good idea when things start to get too cluttered.

That completes our overview of what's in your Facebook profile. Your profile might acquire more sections over time. For example, as you add Facebook applications (discussed in Chapters 9 and 10), each application may get a new, titled section in your profile.

What if you want to change your profile information? That's easy.

Editing Your Profile

You can edit your profile at any time. Just click the "edit" link on the Profile tab. This opens the profile editor, shown in Figure 1.16.

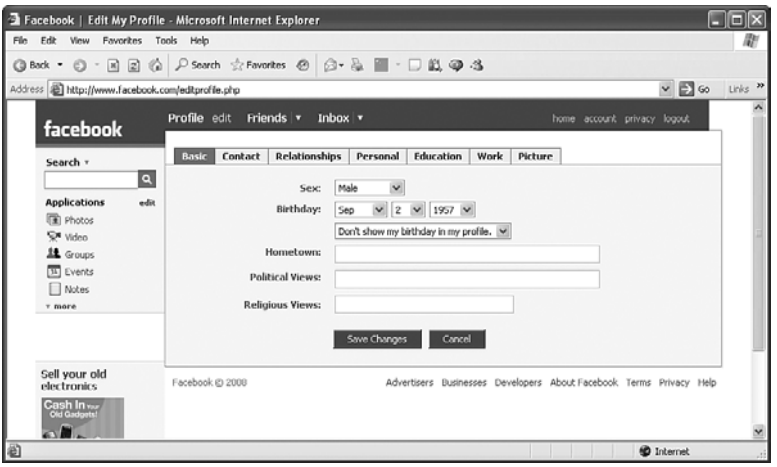

Figure 1.16
Editing your profile.

Facebook wants you to enter as much information about yourself as it can get. Although you might think that's not a good idea, there are trade-offs—ones that might be of interest to marketers. The more information you enter, the more Facebook targets the unsolicited information it sends you.

In other words, Facebook targets ads to specific demographics in a way that's more precise than just about any other marketing platform you can name. That's one reason your marketing dollars on Facebook can go further than many other places.

Another aspect of the unsolicited information that Facebook hones according to the information you give it about yourself has to do with which friends it suggests you might want to add. And that can be useful.

Facebook is always after you to add more information to your profile. For example, if you open the Information section in your profile, you'll probably see a yellow box with a link to "Fill out your Profile." That link opens the profile editor shown in Figure 1.16.

The tabs in the Facebook profile editor are as follows:

- Basic: This is basic information, such as sex, birthday, hometown, and so on, but the information here can get pretty personal—such as what your religious beliefs are.
- Contact: This tab asks for your contact information. It's pretty probing, asking for your phone number, cell number, email address, and street address.

  You might feel queasy about supplying such a depth of personal information, and if so, by all means, don't. Many young people, raised in an environment where everything is shared, seem to have no problems putting down the most intimate details. But that doesn't mean you have to.

If you're a marketer, on the other hand, this may be information that you'd love to share—such as your phone number. Note that there's also space for a website URL here—prime contact info for businesses.

- Relationships: This is where you can use Facebook as a dating service. You can list yourself as single or "In an open relationship." And you can indicate your specific relationship preference by selecting a check box in the "Interested in:" section: Men or Women. The "Looking for:" section lets you check Friendship, Dating, A Relationship, or Networking.
- Personal: This tab lets you list your interests. There are text boxes here for Activities, Interests, Favorite Music, Favorite TV Shows, Favorite Movies, Favorite Books, Favorite Quotes, and About Me.
- Education: The Education tab lets you list—surprise!—your education history. You can list your high school and multiple colleges/universities, including your major.
- Work: There are boxes on this tab for Employer, Position, Description, City/Town, and Time Period. There's no option if you're an employer or self-employed, though.
- Picture: This tab allows you to upload the profile photo you want and delete photos you don't like.

You won't edit your profile every day, but it's good to know that you can do so when needed.

But what about that sensitive data you entered? How can you restrict who sees it? For that, take a look at the next topic.

Setting Profile Privacy

As mentioned, privacy is a big issue on Facebook. Fortunately, you can set the privacy level for a great number of items in Facebook.

To customize your privacy settings, click the "privacy" link in the upper left of any Facebook page when you're logged in. You see the page shown in Figure 1.17.

The sections shown in Figure 1.17 are as follows:

- Profile: Controls who can see your profile and personal information.
- Search: Controls who can search for you and how you can be contacted.
- News Feed and Mini-Feed: Controls what stories about you get published to your profile and to your friends' news feeds.
- Applications: Controls what information is available to applications you use on Facebook.

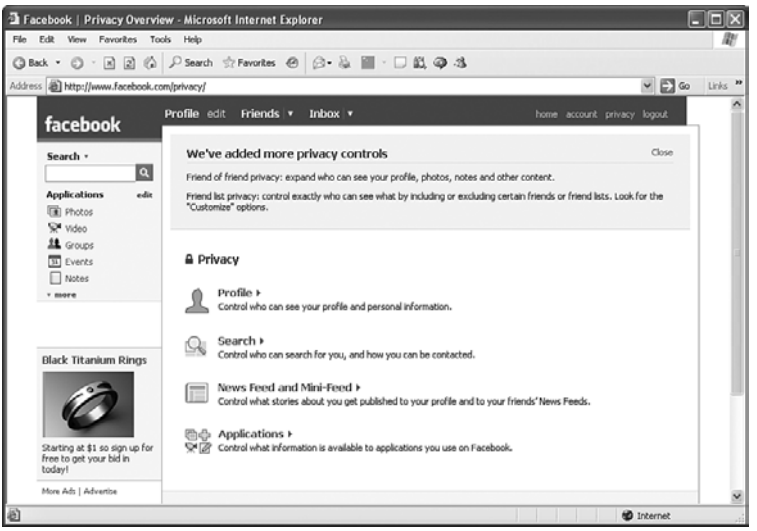

Figure 1.17
Setting your privacy.

Let's look at the profile security settings. Click the Profile link, opening the page shown in Figure 1.18.

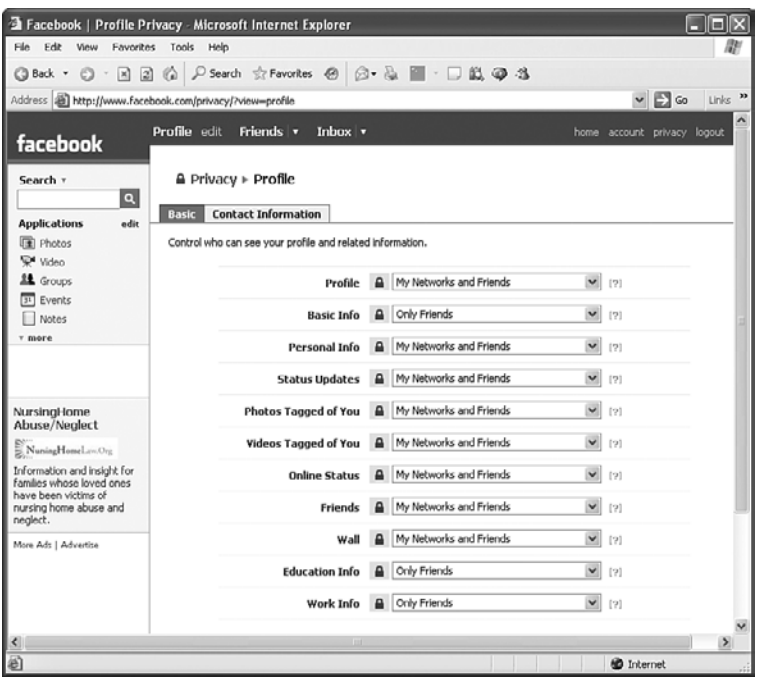

Figure 1.18
Setting your profile privacy.

Note that the Basic tab is chosen by default. Here are the items in this tab:

- Profile: Controls who can see your profile.
- Basic Info: Sets access to your Sex, Birthday, Hometown, Political Views, and Religious Views.
- Personal Info: Sets access to your Activities, Interests, Favorite Music, Favorite TV Shows, Favorite Movies, Favorite Books, Favorite Quotes, and About Me.
- Status Updates: Sets access to your status data (such as "Steven Holzner is having fun.").
- Photos Tagged of You: When you upload photos, you can tag each one with the names of the people in the photo. This box lets you set access to such photos.
- Videos Tagged of You: You can also tag uploaded videos with people's names. This box lets you set access to such videos.
- Online Status: Specifies whether people can see if you're online.
- Friends: Controls access to your friends list.
- Wall: Controls access to your Wall.
- Education Info: Controls access to your education info—college and the like.
- Work Info: Controls access to your job info.

Each of these items can be set—using the drop-down list box next to it—to one of these values:

- My Networks and Friends
- Friends of Friends
- Only Friends
- Customize

As you can see, the primary groups you can restrict access to are the groups that social life on Facebook revolves around—friends and networks. Friends you select yourself, but by choosing a network, you may be letting in swarms of people you don't know, so being able to restrict network access is great.

In fact, you might want to restrict the access of certain networks while allowing access by others. That's what the Customize item is for. Clicking that item displays the window shown in Figure 1.19.

Using the customize window, you can admit everyone in the Ithaca, NY network while excluding everyone in the Gonzo Wackos network. (Actually, there is no such network—not yet, anyway.)

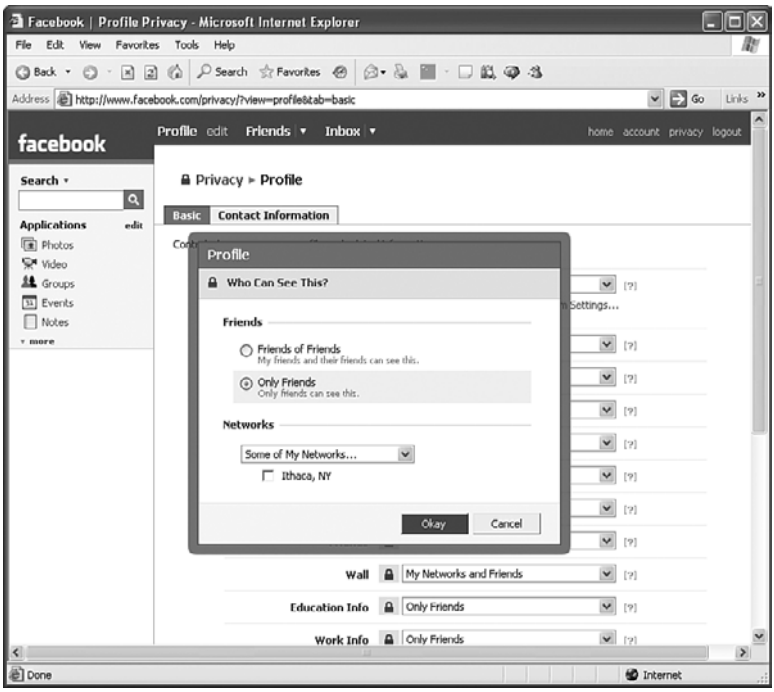

Figure 1.19
Customizing network privacy.

That's all fine, but what about the more personal information, such as your email address, home address, and phone numbers? You don't have to share your address or phone numbers with Facebook, but you need to give Facebook your email address, or it won't open an account for you.

You set the privacy of these items using the Contact Information tab, as shown in Figure 1.20.

Here are the contact information items you can set privacy for:

- IM Screen Name
- Mobile Phone
- Land Phone
- Current Address
- Website
- Email

As with the Basic privacy information, you can set these items to My Networks and Friends, Friends of Friends, Only Friends, or Customize.

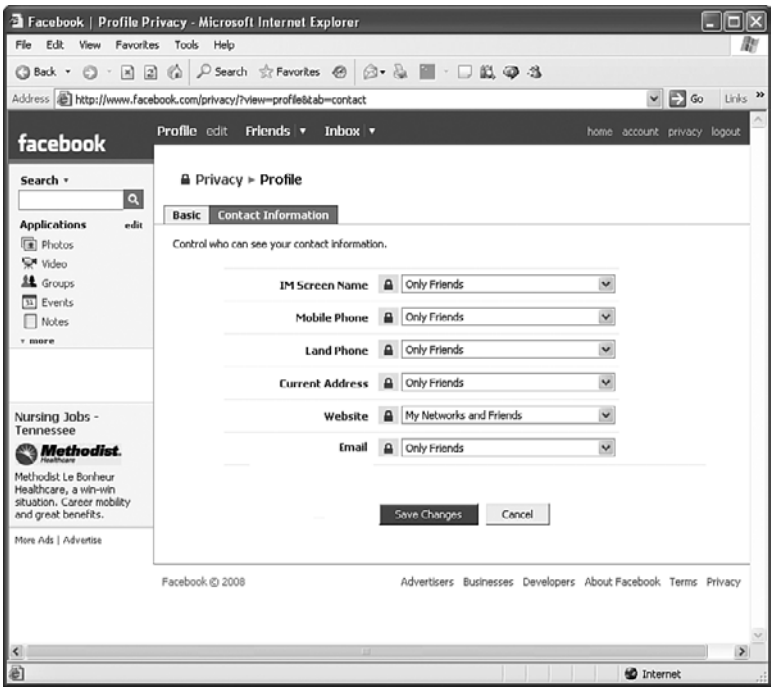

Figure 1.20
Setting your contact information privacy.

That completes our overview of setting profile privacy items. As you can see, you can restrict access to your data. But note that the most restrictive settings still allow friends, so if you're a privacy freak, plan accordingly.

That completes the first of the three main tabs you see in every Facebook window when you're logged in—the Profile tab (including the edit link in that tab). There are two more tabs—Friends and Inbox—and we'll take a look at them next.

The Friends Tab

The Friends tab is all about managing your friends. How do you acquire friends on Facebook?

Searching for Friends

You do a search. Just enter the name of someone you're searching for in the Search box in the upper left, and press Enter. A list of matches to your search appears, as shown in Figure 1.21.

Figure 1.21
Searching for potential friends.

Note the Add to Friends link next to the first match. Clicking that link opens the page shown in Figure 1.22, which allows you to add a personal greeting to your prospective friend.

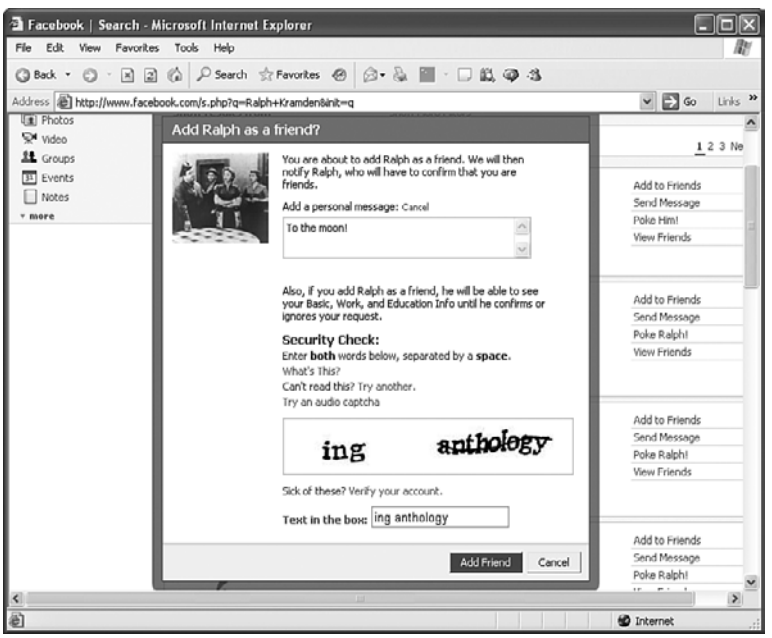

Figure 1.22
Adding a friend.

Facebook also displays a graphic with two words in it that you're supposed to enter, as shown in Figure 1.22. You'll see this every time you want to send a message; it's a spam-avoidance measure. (If you're thinking of spamming Facebook messages on behalf of a business, you should rethink.) Clicking the Add Friend button sends this message to your prospective friend by email, and a link if he agrees to add you as a friend. After this person adds you, he appears in your collection of friends.

Managing Your Friends

To manage your friends, click the Friends tab, opening the page shown in Figure 1.23.

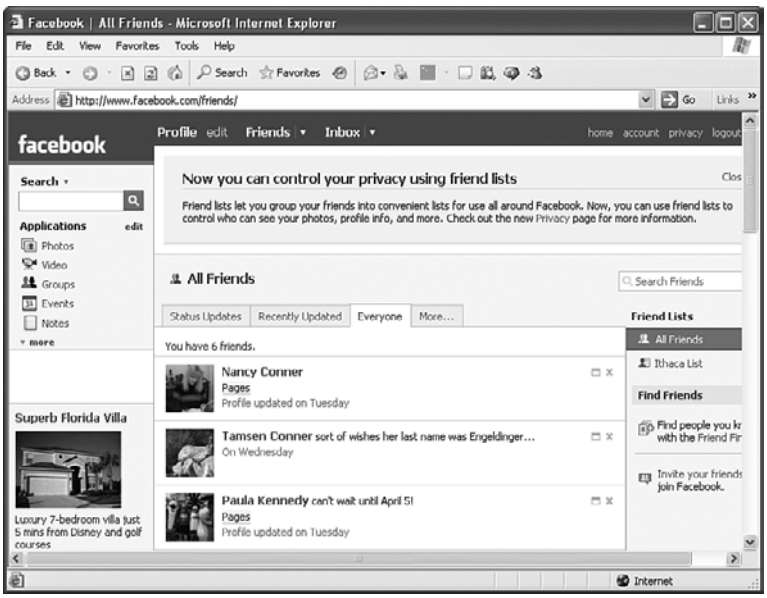

Figure 1.23
Managing your friends.

Want to leave a message on somebody's Wall? Just click her image, and you'll go to her profile.

By default, all your friends are displayed, but you can look at various subsets. Clicking the down arrow on the Friends tab displays the menu shown in Figure 1.24.

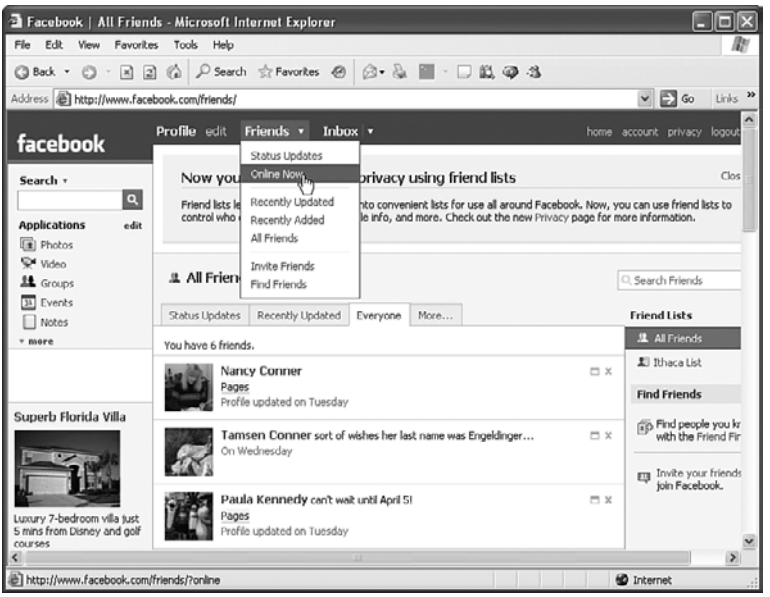

Figure 1.24
The Friends tab's menu.

The items are as follows:

- Status Updates: Shows friends with updated status lines.
- Online Now: Shows your friends who are online now.
- Recently Updated: Shows which of your friends have recently updated their profiles.
- Recently Added: Shows your most recently added friends.
- All Friends: Shows all your friends (the default).
- Invite Friends: Allows you to email friends who aren't already on Facebook to invite them to join.
- Find Friends: Opens a page that has various ways of searching for prospective friends.

For example, selecting the Online Now item opens the page shown in Figure 1.25, listing which of my friends are online right now.

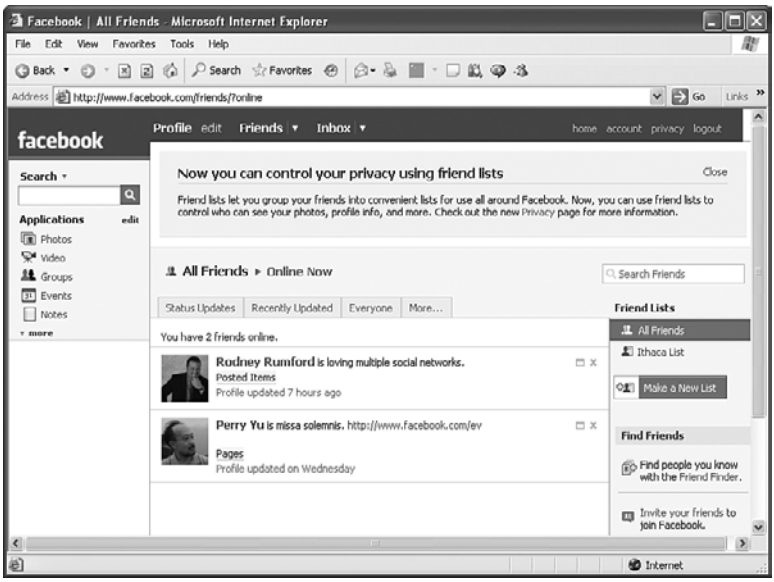

Figure 1.25
Which of my friends are online now.

Creating Friend Lists

You can also organize your friends into lists, which is convenient when you want to email a bunch of friends at once. You can have up to 1,500 friends in a list, which is good for getting the word out.

To create a friends list, click the Make a New List button on the right of the Friends tab. Enter the name of the new list, as shown in Figure 1.26 (in this case, that's Ithaca List).

The next step is to add the friends you want in the new list, as shown in Figure 1.27. Here you type the names of the friends you want to add—or you can select multiple friends at once using the Select Multiple Friends link.

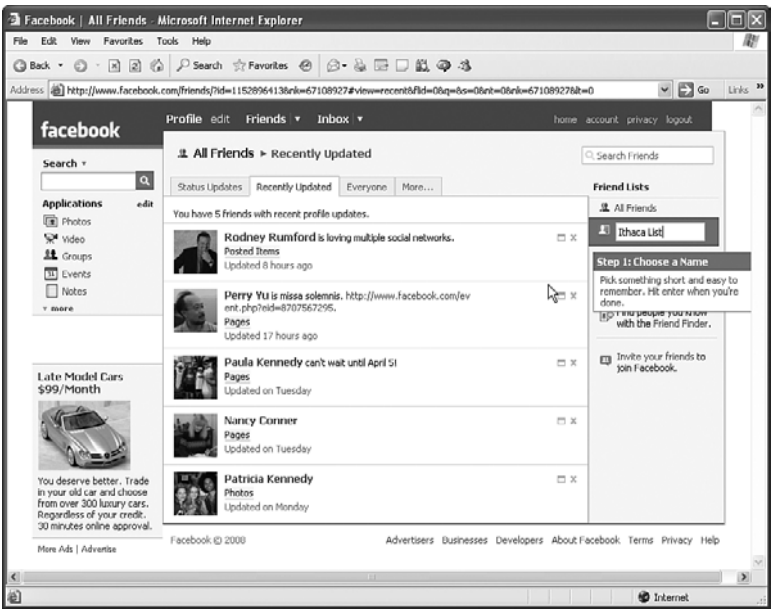

Figure 1.26
Creating a new friend list.

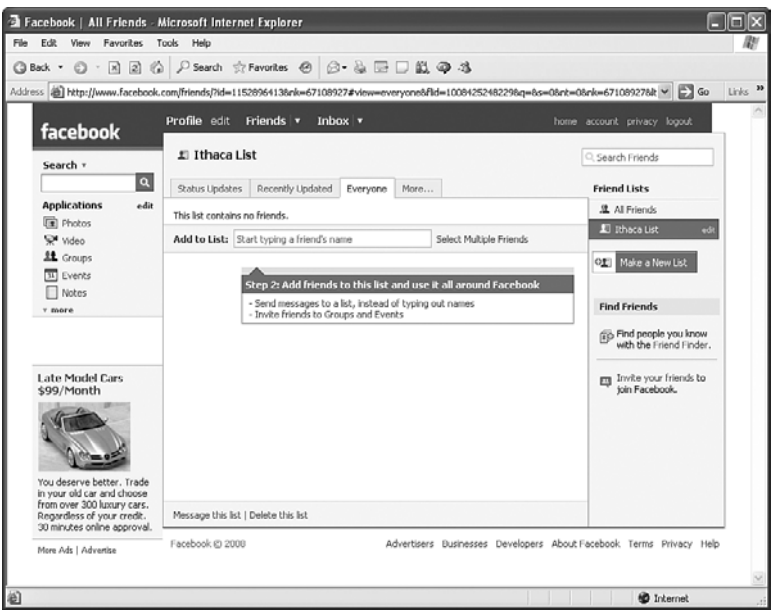

Figure 1.27
Selecting friends.

As you add new friends to the list, they appear on the page, as shown in Figure 1.28.

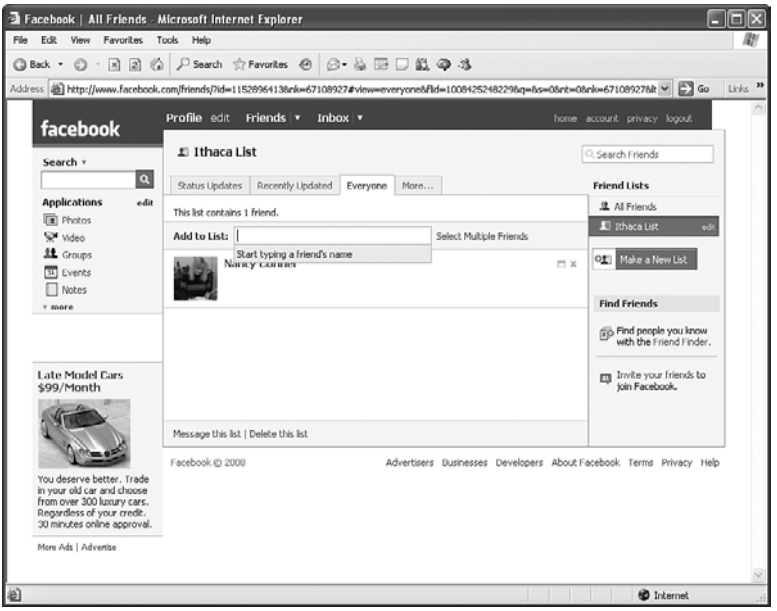

Figure 1.28
Adding friends.

Later you can manage the list using the "Manage this list" and "Delete this list" links you see near the bottom of Figure 1.28.

That introduces as much as you need to know about friends and managing friends for the chapters to come.

Next up: the Inbox tab.

The Inbox Tab

Clicking the Inbox tab displays the page shown in Figure 1.29.

As you can gather from the name, the Inbox is how you handle messages in Facebook. The name is actually somewhat of a misnomer, because you send messages from here as well (although Inandoutbox doesn't have quite the same ring to it).

Five tabs are visible in Figure 1.29:

- Inbox: Shows your inbound messages.
- Sent Messages: Shows your sent messages.

- Notifications: Shows your notifications, which happen when someone adds you as a friend or writes on your Wall.
- Updates: Shows the updates Facebook wants you to know about.
- Compose Message: Lets you create messages and send them.

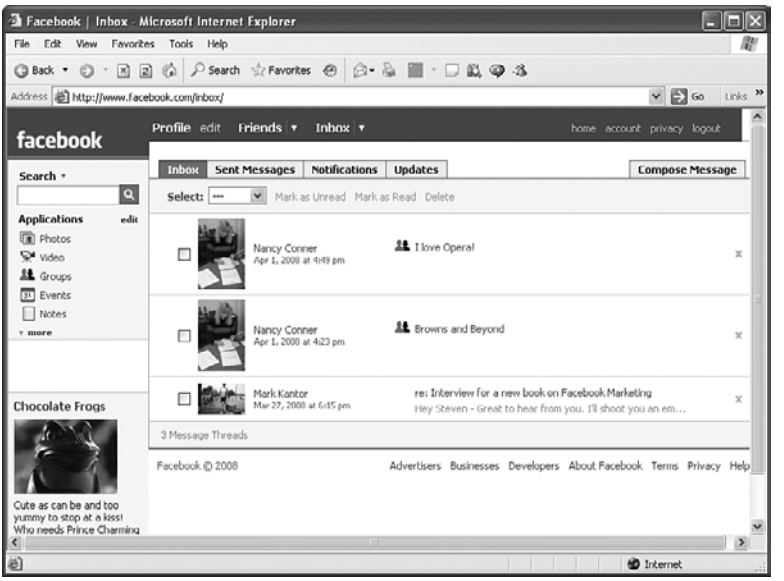

Figure 1.29
The Inbox.

Reading Messages

Want to read an entire message based on the summary you see in the Inbox? Just click the text of the message in the overview. A new page with the full message appears, as shown in Figure 1.30.

You can type a reply and click Send to answer the sender.

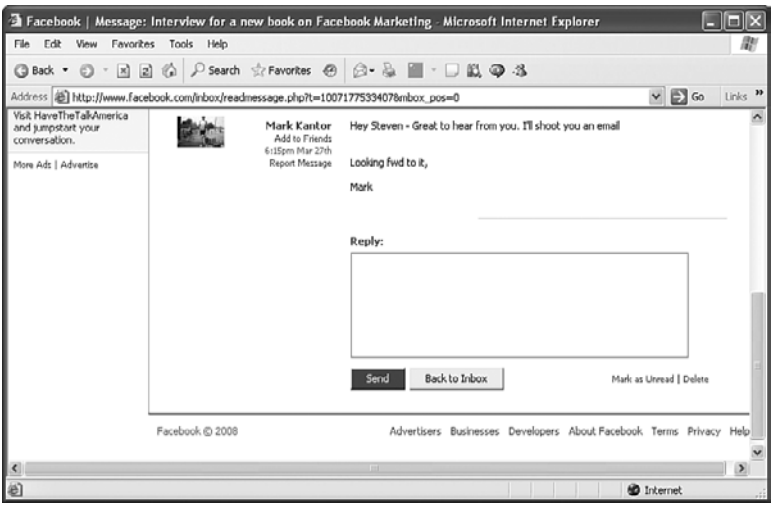

Figure 1.30
Examining a message in the Inbox.

Avoiding Spam

If you receive a message from someone who isn't your friend, you see the Report Message link when you read the message, as shown in Figure 1.30. You can use it to report a message as spam. Here's what Facebook's help topic on Report Message says:

> "I was warned for sending spam messages.
>
> "You received this warning because you sent messages that other users reported as spam. Facebook does not allow users to send messages promoting or advertising a product, service, or opportunity. In order to prevent this from happening in the future, please refrain from sending messages of this kind."

Obviously, you want to avoid spamming members using messages, or you could lose your Facebook account.

Reading Notifications

Also check out the Notifications tab, shown in Figure 1.31.

Your news feed tells you what your friends are doing, your mini-feed tells your friends what you are doing, and your notifications tell you what's been happening to you.

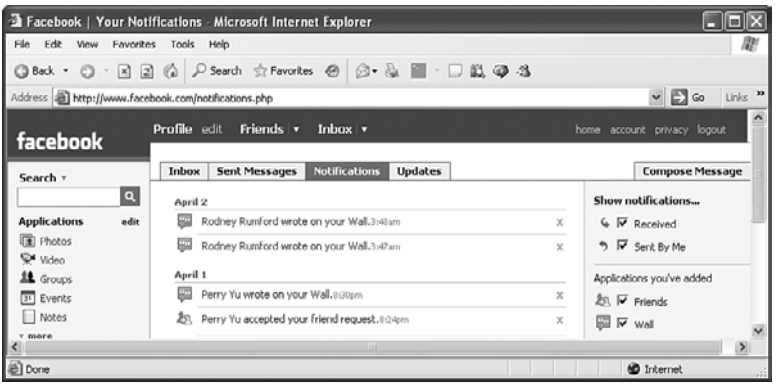

Figure 1.31
Some notifications.

Composing Messages

You can create and send messages by clicking the Compose Message tab, as shown in Figure 1.32.

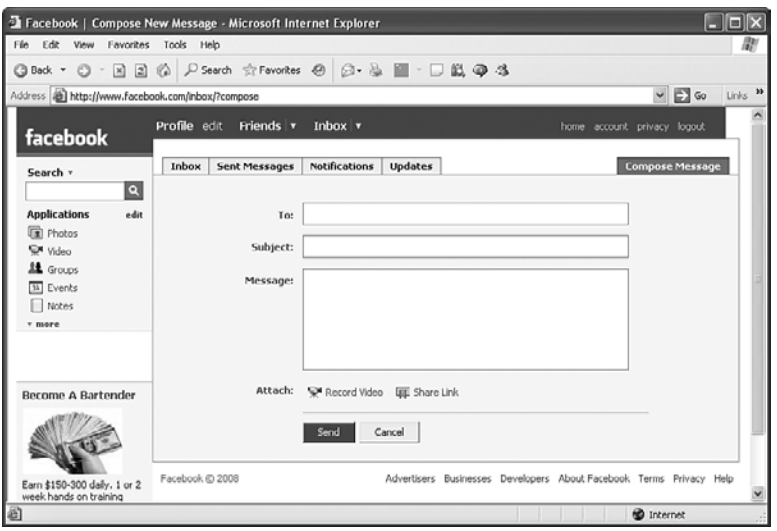

Figure 1.32
Composing a message.

Type the name of a friend, a friend list, or an email address in the To: box. Enter the subject of the message in the Subject box and the body of the message in the Message box. Attach any videos or links you want, and click Send. Presto.

We're almost done with this foundation chapter. But what would an introduction to an online resource be without the help system?

Getting Help

You can access Facebook's help files by clicking the Help link at the bottom right of any page. Clicking the link opens the page shown in Figure 1.33.

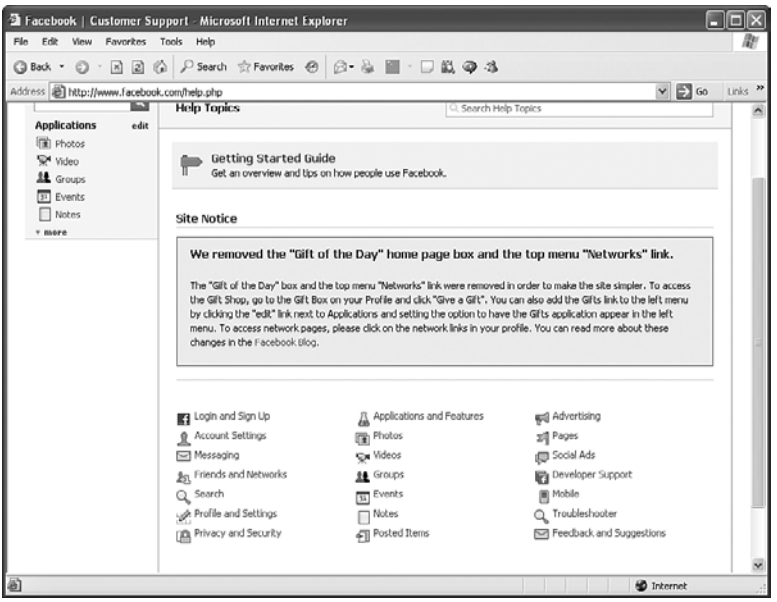

Figure 1.33
The help page.

Note in particular the Getting Started Guide link at the top of the help page. That link used to be the first thing you saw on your home page—until recently, when Facebook moved it to the help page.

The Getting Started Guide, shown in Figure 1.34, is a fine resource for new Facebook users.

In the guide, you'll find information on—most important in Facebook—how to find friends, how to search for coworkers and classmates, and how to search by name. You'll also find a tour of what Facebook has to offer; it's extremely useful to new Facebook users.

In other words, the Getting Started Guide is highly recommended.

Figure 1.34
The Getting Started Guide.

The rest of the help system is set up as a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) list. For example, selecting the Friends and Networks link in Figure 1.33 takes you to the friends FAQ.

Questions in the friends FAQ function as links to explanatory articles:

How do I add a friend?

How do I suggest a friend to someone?

Is there a way to cancel a friend request?

If I ignore a friend request, will they find out?

How do I remove a friend?

If I remove someone as a friend, will they be notified?

Who shows up in the "friends box" on my profile?

FAQs are fine, but if you're like me, you want to be able to contact someone in case your question isn't in the FAQs (although, they are pretty thorough). You can contact a real person for help at http://www.facebook.com/help/contact_generic.php, as shown in Figure 1.35.

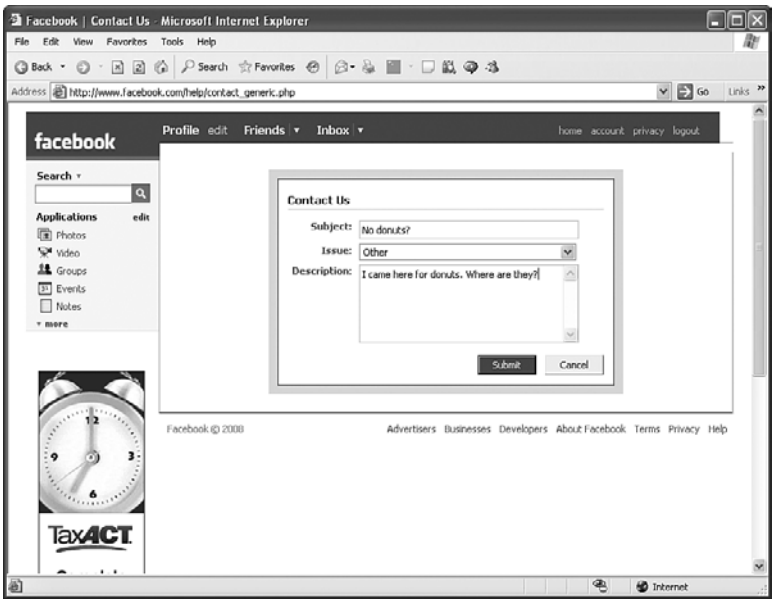

Figure 1.35
Contacting a real person for help.

Index

A

accessing network pages, 212-215
accounts, setting up to pay for ads, 142
AdBrite, 238-239
administrators, adding to groups, 68-69
Admins section (events), 110
Ads page, 143-144
advertising
    bidding for ad presentation, 141-142, 163
    billing
        daily spending limits, 166-167
        integrated solutions, 167-168
        viewing, 166
    budgets, 163
    campaign insights
        discussion topics, 171
        page views, 171
        photo views, 172
        reviews, 171
        unique users, 171
        video plays, 172
        viewing, 170-171
        wall posts, 171
Campaign Performance
    average cost-per-click (CPC), 160
    click-through ratio (CTR), 160
    daily details, 161-162
    exporting reports, 168-169
    number of impressions, 159-160
    overview, 157-159
cost-per-click (CPC), 141
cost-per-thousand impressions (CPM), 141
creating ads, 164-166, 185-190
    account setup, 142
    choosing audience, 145-147
    choosing what to advertise, 144
    Create Ad tab, 147
    example, 154-156

Facebook ad guidelines, 148-151
Facebook Ads page, 143-144
setting budget, 151-153
deleting ads, 164
editing ads, 164-166
managing ads, 191-192
news feed advertising
deleting posts, 137-138
overview, 131
posting items from external sites, 131-133
posting items from Facebook, 134-135
posting items from partner websites, 135-136
posting items with Share on Facebook button, 135
onsite versus offsite landing pages, 176
optimizing for target audience
determining audience size, 172-175
overview, 172
selecting keywords, 175
overview, 129-130
pausing ads, 164
with prebuilt applications, 222, 237-241
AdBrite, 238-239
Blog RSS Feed Reader, 242
iLike, 241-242
Lookery, 239-240
My LinkedIn Profile, 242
Sticky!, 242
Super Mini Feed and Notifications, 241
Super News Feed, 241
reviewing ads, 153
rules and restrictions, 175-176
social ads, 139-140
standard ads, 139
viewing, 180-181
albums, creating, 21-23
API (Facebook), 259-262
application configuration form, 255-257
Application Directory, 224-226
applications
adding to profiles/pages, 227-230
advertising with prebuilt applications, 222, 237-241
AdBrite, 238-239
Blog RSS Feed Reader, 242
iLike, 241-242
Lookery, 239-240
My LinkedIn Profile, 242
Sticky!, 242
Super Mini Feed and Notifications, 241
Super News Feed, 241
custom applications, 223, 242-243
Developer
installing, 250-252
starting, 253
developers and Facebook, 263-264
extending contacts with, 222
Facebook API, 259-262
finding in Application Directory, 224-226
Guessing Game example, 245-246
application configuration form, 255-257
Begin function, 247
converting into Facebook application, 253-255
Guess function, 247-249
installing, 257-259
testing, 249-250, 257-259
writing, 246-247
installing, 257-259
managing, 230-236
overview, 221-222
Super Wall, 227-230
testing, 257-259
viewing, 227
writing, 223, 245-250
audience
choosing for ads, 145-147

optimizing ads for
determining audience size, 172-175
overview, 172
selecting keywords, 175
targeting for polls, 202
authenticity of pages, 74-75
average cost-per-click (CPC), 160

B

Beacon, 199-201
Begin function, 247
bidding for ad presentation, 141-142
billing (advertising)
changing, 163
checking, 166
daily spending limits, 166-167
integrated solutions, 167-168
Blog RSS Feed Reader application, 242
browsing
events, 113
groups, 49-50
Marketplace, 182-184
pages
all pages, 79-80
by type, 78
budgets for ads, 151-153, 163

C

campaign insights (ads)
discussion topics, 171
page views, 171
photo views, 172
reviews, 171
unique users, 171
video plays, 172
viewing, 170-171
wall posts, 171
Campaign Performance (ads)
average cost-per-click (CPC), 160
click-through ratio (CTR), 160
daily details, 161-162
exporting reports, 168-169
number of impressions, 159-160
overview, 157-159
categories (Marketplace), 178-179
click-through ratio (CTR), 160
closed groups, 54
composing messages, 40-41
Confirmed Guests section (events), 109
contacts, extending with applications, 222
cost-per-click (CPC), 141
cost-per-thousand impressions (CPM), 141
costs of ads, 141, 151-153, 160, 166-167
CPC (cost-per-click), 141, 160
CPM (cost-per-thousand impressions), 141
creating
ads, 185-190
account setup, 142
based on current ads, 164-166
choosing audience, 145-147
choosing what to advertise, 144
Create Ad tab, 147
example, 154-156
Facebook ad guidelines, 148-151
Facebook Ads page, 143-144
setting budget, 151-153
events, 115-116
groups, 55-57
networks, 217-219
pages, 86-92
polls, 203-205
CTR (click-through ratio), 160
customizing
applications, 223, 242-243
events, 117-118
event access, 119
event options, 118-119
images, 118
groups, 58-60

D

daily details (ads), 161-162
daily spending limits (ads), 166-167
deleting
ads, 164
discussion boards, 69
groups, 70
posts, 137-138
demographic poll results, 207-208
demographics of Facebook, 7

Description section (events), 107-108
Developer application, 253
developers and Facebook, 263-264
discussion boards, 53, 69
discussion topics (ad campaigns), viewing number of, 171

E

editing
- ads, 163-166
- events, 126-127
- pages, 94-98
- profiles, 25-27

education and work section (profiles), 24-25
event lists, 110-112
event manager page, 102
Event Type section (events), 110
events
- access, 119
- adding to event list, 110-112
- Admins section, 110
- browsing, 113
- Confirmed Guests section, 109
- creating, 115-116
- customizing, 117-118
  - *event access, 119*
  - *event options, 118-119*
  - *images, 118*
- definition, 101
- Description section, 107-108
- editing, 126-127
- event manager page, 102
- Event Type section, 110
- example, 104-106
- images, uploading, 118
- Information section, 106-107
- inviting entire groups to, 68
- inviting people to, 119-126
- managing and publicizing, 124-127
- options, 118-119
- Other Information section, 109
- Other Invites section, 109
- overview, 102
- Photos, Video, and Posted Items section, 109
- searching for, 113-114
- signing up for, 110-112
- viewing, 122-123
- viewing friends' events, 103-104
- wall section, 110

exporting Campaign Performance reports, 168-169
external sites, posting items from, 131-133

F

Facebook API, 259-262
fans of pages
- becoming, 80-83
- updating, 98

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions), 42
finding
- applications, 224-226
- events, 113-114
- friends, 31-33
- groups, 47-49
- pages
  - *browsing all pages, 79-80*
  - *browsing pages by type, 78*
  - *overview, 75-76*
  - *searching for pages, 76-78*

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), 42
friend lists, 35-37
friends
- inviting to events, 119-126
- managing, 33-34
- organizing into lists, 35-37
- overview, 19-20
- searching for, 31-33
- viewing friends' events, 103-104

functions
- Begin, 247
- Guess, 247-249

G

Getting Started Guide, 41-42
gifts section (profiles), 25
global groups, 54
groups
- administrators, 68-69
- browsing, 49-50

closed groups, 54
creating, 55-57
customizing, 58-60
deleting, 70
discussion boards, 53, 69
global groups, 54
inviting friends to join, 61-64
inviting to events, 68
joining, 54-55
managing, 67-70
messaging group members, 46, 67
network groups, 54
offensive groups, 47
officers, 69
open groups, 54
overview, 23, 45-46
searching for, 47-49
secret groups, 55
spam, 46-47
sponsored groups, 46-47
viewing, 51-53, 65-66
Guess function, 247-249
Guessing Game application, 245-246
application configuration form, 255-257
Begin function, 247
converting into Facebook application, 253-255
Guess function, 247-249
installing, 257-259
testing, 249-250, 257-259
writing, 246-247
guests, messaging, 124

H

help, 41-42
home pages
friends
managing, 33-34
organizing into lists, 35-37
searching for, 31-33
Help link, 41-42
Inbox
avoiding spam, 39
composing messages, 40-41
overview, 37-38
reading messages, 38
overview, 9-11
profiles
editing, 25-27
education and work section, 24-25
elements across top of profile, 13-14
friends, 19-20
gifts section, 25
groups, 23
information section, 24
mini-feeds, 19
names, 18
networks, 18
overview, 12
photos, 21-23
privacy settings, 27-31
search bar, 15-16
status, 18-19
Wall, 25
Hu, Sherman
on advantages of Facebook, 75
advice for branding on Facebook, 223
advice for new marketers on Facebook, 161, 201
advice on targeting specific markets, 250
on getting traffic, 205
on value-added videos, 257

I

iLike application, 241-242
images, uploading for events, 118
impressions, number of (ads), 159-160
Inbox
avoiding spam, 39
composing messages, 40-41
overview, 37-38
reading messages, 38
Information section
events, 106-107
profiles, 24
insights (ad campaigns)
discussion topics, 171
page views, 171
photo views, 172
reviews, 171
unique users, 171
video plays, 172
viewing, 170-171
wall posts, 171
installing
applications, 257-259
Developer applications, 250-252
integrated solutions (ads), 167-168

interviews
Hu, Sherman
on advantages of Facebook, 75
advice for branding on Facebook, 223
advice for new marketers on Facebook, 161, 201
advice on targeting specific markets, 250
on getting traffic, 205
on value-added videos, 257
Owyang, Jeremiah, 85
Pincus, Mark
advice for new marketers on Facebook, 142
on viral marketing, 138
Singh, Sunmit
advice for messaging, 110
advice on targeting markets, 122
on company branding, 182
on mistakes to avoid, 168
on what Facebook users want, 61
vision for future Facebook marketing, 190
Smith, Eddie, 17, 51
Smith, Justin, 8, 263
Zuckerberg, Mark, 5
inviting
friends to join groups, 61-64
group members to events, 68
people to events, 119-126
items, posting
deleting posts, 137-138
from external sites, 131-133
from Facebook, 134-135
from partner websites, 135-136
with Share on Facebook button, 135

J-K-L

joining
groups, 54-55
networks, 210-212

keywords, 146, 175

landing pages, 176
LinkedIn, 7
listings. *See* organizing
friends into lists, 35-37
Lookery, 239-240

M

managing
applications, 230-236
events, 124-127
friends, 33-34
groups, 67-70
Marketplace
ads, 191-192
Marketplace
ads
creating, 185-190
listing wanted items, 193-197
managing, 191-192
viewing, 180-181
browsing other regions and networks, 182-184
categories, 178-179
overview, 177-178
searching, 181-182
members of groups, sending messages to, 46, 67
messages
composing, 40-41
reading, 38
sending to all guests, 124
sending to group members, 46, 67
spam, 39, 46-47
mini-feeds, 19
monitoring polls, 205-207
My LinkedIn Profile application, 242
MySpace, 7

N

names in profiles, 18
networks
creating, 217-219
joining, 210-212
network groups, 54
network pages
accessing, 212-215
posting on, 215-217
overview, 18, 209-210

news feed advertising
deleting posts, 137-138
overview, 131
posting items from external sites, 131-133
posting items from Facebook, 134-135
posting items from partner websites, 135-136
posting items with Share on Facebook button, 135
number of impressions (ads), 159-160

O

offensive groups, 47
officers, adding to groups, 69
offsite landing pages, 176
onsite landing pages, 176
open groups, 54
optimizing ads for target audience
determining audience size, 172-175
overview, 172
selecting keywords, 175
organizing friends into lists, 35-37
Other Information section (events), 109
Other Invites section (events), 109
Owyang, Jeremiah, 85

P

page views (ad campaigns), 171
pages
adding applications to, 227-230
authenticity, 74-75
becoming fan of, 80-83
creating, 86-92
editing, 94-98
examining, 83, 92-94
finding
browsing all pages, 79-80
browsing pages by type, 78
overview, 75-76
searching for pages, 76-78
home pages. *See* home pages
overview, 71-73
promoting, 99
sharing, 85-86
updating fans of, 98
viral marketing with, 73-74
partner websites, posting items from, 135-136
pausing ads, 164
photo views (ad campaigns), viewing number of, 172
photos
albums, 21-23
viewing, 21
Photos, Video, and Posted Items section (events), 109
Pincus, Mark
advice for new marketers on Facebook, 142
on viral marketing, 138
Place Order button, 153
polls
creating, 203-205
demographic results, 207-208
monitoring, 205-207
number of responses, 208-209
overview, 201-202
quoting results of, 209
spam, 209
targeting audiences for, 202
posting items
deleting posts, 137-138
from external sites, 131-133
from Facebook, 134-135
on network pages, 215-217
from partner websites, 135-136
with Share on Facebook button, 135
privacy settings (for profiles), 27-31
profiles
adding applications to, 227-230
editing, 25-27
education and work section, 24-25
elements across top of profile, 13-14

friends, 19-20
gifts section, 25
groups, 23
information section, 24
mini-feeds, 19
names, 18
networks, 18
overview, 12
photos
albums, 21-23
viewing, 21
privacy settings, 27-31
search bar, 15-16
status, 18-19
Wall, 25
promoting pages, 99
publicizing events, 124-127

Q-R

quoting poll results, 209

reading messages, 38
reports, Campaign Performance reports, 168-169
reviewing ads, 153
reviews, viewing number of, 171

S

search bar (on profiles), 15-16
searching
for applications, 224-226
for events, 113-114
for friends, 31-33
for groups, 47-49
Marketplace, 181-182
for pages, 76-78
secret groups, 55
sending messages
to all guests, 124
to group members, 46, 67
setting up accounts for ads, 142
Share on Facebook button, 135
sharing pages, 85-86
signing up for Facebook, 8-9
Singh, Sunmit
advice for messaging, 110
advice on targeting markets, 122
on company branding, 182
on mistakes to avoid, 168
vision for future Facebook marketing, 190
on what Facebook users want, 61
size of audience, determining, 172-175
Smith, Eddie, 17, 51
Smith, Justin, 8, 263
social ads, 139-140
spam, 39, 46-47, 209
spammers, 46
sponsored groups, 46-47
standard ads, 139
starting Developer application, 253
status in profiles, 18-19
Sticky! application, 242
Super Mini Feed and Notifications application, 241
Super News Feed application, 241
Super Wall application, 227-230

T

target audience, optimizing ads for
determining audience size, 172-175
overview, 172
selecting keywords, 175
targeting audiences for polls, 202
testing
applications, 257-259
Guessing Game application, 249-250

U

unique users (ad campaigns), viewing number of, 171
updating fans, 98
uploading images for events, 118

V

video plays (ad campaigns), viewing number of, 172
viewing
advertising billing
daily spending limits, 166-167
integrated solutions, 167-168
applications, 227

campaign insights, 170-171
discussion topics, 171
page views, 171
photo views, 172
reviews, 171
unique users, 171
video plays, 172
Wall posts, 171
events, 103-104, 122-123
groups, 51-53, 65-66
Marketplace ads, 180-181
photos, 21
viral marketing, 73-74

W-X-Y-Z

Wall, 25, 110, 171
wanted items, listing in Marketplace, 193-197
writing applications, 223, 245-250

Zuckerberg, Mark, 5, 200