

# Social Media Networking

What is all the chirping about and why should you join in with the chorus?



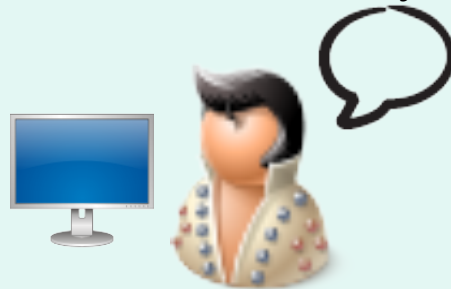
# Beginning with the basics: What *is* a “social network” **exactly**?



Worry not my friends, becoming a part of the social networking phenomenon does not mean having to take part in virtual speed dating. Rather it is a wonderful tool (and free!) that will enable you to get your word out to millions.

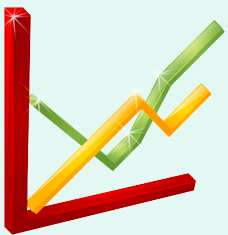
It is the joining together of individuals into **specific groups**, often times with **similar interests**. To put it in simpler terms, the I Love Lucy Club that I was an avid member of in High School is a form of social networking. However, today it is largely **done online**.

Social media networking is mostly done on websites known as social sites. They basically act as an **online community** of internet users and often times revolve around specific interests. For instance, Marilyn Monroe and Elvis impersonators could connect through their love of impersonation on a social media network for celebrity look-alikes.



# What is social media networking used for?

- **Social Media Networks can be used for:**
  - Personal Reasons
    - Connecting and making friends with like-minded individuals
    - Staying in touch with family members
  - Business Strategies: Growing Your Business
    - Building or maintaining your companies reputation
    - Establishing an online presence in countries worldwide
    - Promoting and marketing a product or service to potential clients and buyers
    - Though Social Media Networks are not used primarily for advertisements, promotions should make their way into the picture after other contributions (i.e. White Papers, Articles, Tips, etc.) have been made, increasing your company's credibility.
    - The above approach is referred to as "[DRIP](#)" Marketing, offering small deals on a timely basis to develop a pattern with website visitors and members of the Social Media Network.



# Examples of Social Media Networks and the logistics behind them

- Social media comes in multiple forms: blogs, wikis, podcasts, and pictures to name a few. It is implemented through many networks: Facebook, Flickr, Digg, Blogger, YouTube, PartnerUp, etc.
- With social networking being one of the most popular activities on the internet (“one in four (25%) US Internet page views occurred at one of the top social networking sites in December 2009, up 83% from 13.8% in December 2008” -[VentureBeat](#)), it is an excellent tool to market your brand and product.
- However, Because there are so many ways to network and media outlets to choose from it is important to qualify which ones would be most effective for your business and in what ways.
- The social media networks we will be focusing on are Facebook, LinkedIn and, Twitter. Even though we have limited our in-depth discussion to these three websites, that does not mean these are the only three to choose from or consider.





# facebook



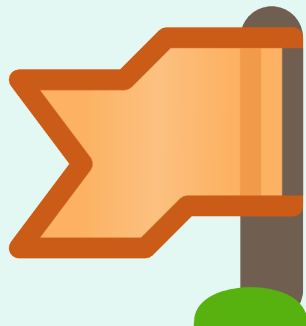
- The largest and most popular Social Media Network with over 400 million users and 1.5 million small businesses.
- Demographics provided by the site (i.e. Male, Female, Age, Location) allow companies to have a better understanding of their target audience.
- With an abundance of users, Facebook is a wonderful way for a business to create a company page, profile and enhance their web presence.



# Facebook Cont.



- The statistics below are courtesy of [Econsultancy](#). The information shows just how popular Facebook has become and why it is important to be involved.
  - There are more than 3.5 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, etc.) shared each week on Facebook
  - Purpose-built Facebook pages have created more than 5.3 billion fans.
  - More than 80,000 websites have implemented Facebook Connect since December 2008 and more than 60 million Facebook users engage with it across these external sites each month.



Linked



- Unlike Facebook and Twitter, LinkedIn is a business oriented social networking site allowing for the exchange of contact information between professionals.
- It has more than 65 million users in more than 200 countries worldwide ([About](#)). About half are from the U.S., 11 million are from Europe while, 3 million are from India ([LinkedIn Blog](#)).
- Through the exchange of business information, a network can be formed where other users' "connections" can be introduced to one another through that mutually trusted "connection." Essentially a web of professional contacts is made and at your fingertips.
- [LinkedIn](#) can be used to find former or current colleagues, classmates, jobs and help facilitate business opportunities.





## LinkedIn Cont.

- Another way in which it differs from other networks is the way “connections” or friends are acquired. Basically, preexisting relationships, or the intervention of a mutual “connection” is the only way contact with professionals can occur. This is meant to build trust among it’s users, further increasing the chances of mutual professional benefits and collaborations.
- Examples of features that enhance users interactions are:
  - [LinkedIn Answers](#): Allows users to ask the community questions pertaining to business while displaying your profile and those who answer, furthering communication.
  - [LinkedIn Groups](#) : Allows Users to establish business relationship by creating communities based on common interests.
- Take a peak at [Topica's](#) LinkedIn Account to get more information on our company!



# Twitter



- With only 140 characters per message Twitter may seem ineffective. However, it is one of the most widely used social networking applications by businesses.
- Due to the limited space, your content must be interesting as well as your profile information so the 100 million plus users worldwide may get a better understanding of your product, promotions, company or services.
- In fact, Twitter is so aware of the presence of both small and large businesses on their site that it has created [Twitter 101!](#) On the following page I have provided a brief overview of the ways in which Twitter can be helpful to your marketing, sales, customer relations and overall image.

# Twitter Continued



- Twitter allows you to share information, gather feedback in real-time, build relationships and, connect with customers.
- For example, if you had a business that made organic cleaning products you could not only advertise newly released products and discounts but have customers message you when they found the “lemon spray” to be perfect for cleaning windows but the “iron tough gel” to not work on grease stains. Twitter allows you to get both positive and constructive feedback immediately without doing any work!
- Before jumping right into Twitter, develop an idea of what you want to use it for and get out of it (i.e. customer service, marketing, promotional deals, revenue, improved customer relations, positive branding).
- No matter the business, Twitter can be extremely beneficial to your all operating needs and here are some case studies provided by Twitter to further help you decide!
  - [The North Face](#)
  - [Teusner Wines](#)
  - [Etsy](#)
- Here is a helpful [Blog Post](#) on Twitter for businesses with some more ideas for improving your experience with the application.
- Lastly, check out [Topica's](#) very own Twitter page for updates on our application, tid bits on email marketing and special promotional deals!

With all the networking tools we have at our disposal, business exposure and marketing has become a lot easier and cheaper. Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are just a few examples of free resources that can be beneficial to your business strategy and help increase revenue as well as customer relations. Though this was just a brief overview of social media networking I hope it provided some insight on the phenomenon that is involving everyone from young to old users and small to large businesses. Below are some links you may find helpful to further your research in this field.

- [Facebook](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Reflections on social media and networking](#)
- [Social Media Marketing and Optimization](#)
- [Social Media Networking and ROI](#)

Happy Emailing!