**Social Networking**

A **social networking service** (also **social networking site**, **SNS** or **social media**) is an online platform that is used by people to build [social networks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_network) or [social relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_relation) with other people who share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_networking_service#cite_note-Buettner2016b-1) The variety of stand-alone and built-in social networking services available online in the 2010s introduces challenges of definition, but there are some common features: (1) social networking services are [Web 2.0](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0) [Internet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet)-based applications, (2) [user-generated content](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User-generated_content) (UGC) such as text posts, digital photos and videos, is the lifeblood of SNS organisms, (3) users create service-specific user profiles for the site or "[app](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/App)" that are designed and maintained by the SNS organization,[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_networking_service#cite_note-SMDefinition-2)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_networking_service#cite_note-SNS-Def-4) and (4) social networking services facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals and/or groups. Most social network services are [web-based](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web-based) and provide means for users to interact over the [Internet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet), such as by [e-mail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-mail) and [instant messaging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant_messaging) and online forums.

Social networking sites are varied and they incorporate new information and communication tools such as mobile connectivity, photo/video/sharing and [blogging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blogging). [Online community](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_community) services are sometimes considered a social network service, though in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centered service whereas online community services are group-centered. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, digital photos and videos, posts, activities, events, and interests with people in their network. While in-person social networking has probably existed since the earliest times, the Web enables people to connect with others who live in different locations, ranging from across a city to across the world. Depending on the [social media](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media) platform, members may be able to contact any other member. In other cases, members can contact anyone they have a connection to, and subsequently anyone that contact has a connection to, and so on. Some services require members to have a preexisting connection to contact other members.

**Issues :**

**Privacy**

[Privacy concerns with social networking services](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privacy_concerns_with_social_networking_services) have been raised growing concerns among users on the dangers of giving out too much personal information and the threat of [sexual predators](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_predators). Users of these services also need to be aware of [data theft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_insecurity) or [viruses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_virus). However, large services, such as [Myspace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MySpace) and [Netlog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netlog), often work with law enforcement to try to prevent such incidents. In addition, there is a perceived privacy threat in relation to placing too much personal information in the hands of large corporations or governmental bodies, allowing a profile to be produced on an individual's behavior on which decisions, detrimental to an individual, may be taken. Furthermore, there is an issue over the control of data and information that was altered or removed by the user may in fact be retained and passed to third parties. This danger was highlighted when the controversial social networking site [Quechup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quechup) harvested e-mail addresses from users' e-mail accounts for use in a [spamming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-mail_spam) operation. Privacy concerns also play an important role in explaining why a lot of employees avoid using their (internal) company social network site.

In medical and scientific research, asking subjects for information about their behaviors is normally strictly scrutinized by [institutional review boards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional_review_board), for example, to ensure that adolescents and their parents have [informed consent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Informed_consent). It is not clear whether the same rules apply to researchers who collect data from social networking sites. These sites often contain a great deal of data that is hard to obtain via traditional means. Even though the data are public, republishing it in a research paper might be considered [invasion of privacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_privacy).

### Data mining

Through [data mining](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data_mining), companies are able to improve their sales and profitability. With this data, companies create customer profiles that contain customer [demographics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographic) and online behavior. A recent strategy has been the purchase and production of "[network analysis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_network_analysis) software". This software is able to sort out through the influx of social networking data for any specific company. Facebook has been especially important to marketing strategists. Facebook's controversial "Social Ads" program gives companies access to the millions of profiles in order to tailor their ads to a Facebook user's own interests and hobbies. However, rather than sell actual user information, Facebook sells tracked "social actions". That is, they track the websites a user uses outside of Facebook through a program called [Facebook Beacon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook_Beacon).

### Notifications

There has been a trend for social networking sites to send out only "positive" notifications to users. For example, sites such as Bebo, Facebook, and MySpace will not send notifications to users when they are removed from a person's friends list. Likewise, Bebo will send out a notification if a user is moved to the top of another user's friends list but no notification is sent if they are moved down the list. This allows users to purge undesirables from their list extremely easily and often without confrontation since a user will rarely notice if one person disappears from their friends list. It also enforces the general positive atmosphere of the website without drawing attention to unpleasant happenings such as friends falling out, rejection and failed relationships.

### Access to information

Many social networking services, such as [Facebook](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook), provide the user with a choice of who can view their profile. This is supposed to prevent unauthorized users from accessing their information. Parents who want to access their child's MySpace or Facebook account have become a big problem for teenagers who do not want their profile seen by their parents. By making their profile private, teens can select who may see their page, allowing only people added as "friends" to view their profile and preventing unwanted viewing of the profile by parents. Most teens are constantly trying to create a structural barrier between their private life and their parents. To edit information on a certain social networking service account, the social networking sites require you to [log in](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Login) or provide a [password](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Password). This is designed to prevent unauthorized users from adding, changing, or removing personal information, pictures, or other data.

### Impact on employability

Social networking sites have created issues among getting hired for jobs and losing jobs because of exposing inappropriate content. Social networking sites are places on the Internet where users can update their statuses and express their personal opinions about life issues to their friends. This is controversial because employers can access their employee's profiles, and judge them based on their social behavior. According to *Silicon Republic's* statistics, 17,000 young people in six countries were interviewed in a survey. 1 in 10 people aged 16 to 34 have been rejected for a job because of comments on an online profile. This shows the effects that social networks have had on people's lives. There have been numerous cases where employees have lost jobs because their opinions represented their companies negatively. In September 2013, there was a case when a woman got fired over Facebook because she posted disruptive information about her company stating that military patrons should not receive special treatment or discounts. A manager of the company found her opinion online, disagreed with it, and fired her because it completely went against the company's mission statement. In November 2012 there was a case in which a woman posted a racist remark about the President of the United States and mentioned content about a possible assassination. She lost her job, and was put under investigation by the Secret Service.

### Potential for misuse

The relative freedom afforded by social networking services has caused concern regarding the potential of its misuse by individual patrons. In October 2006, a fake [MySpace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MySpace) profile created in the name of Josh Evans by Lori Janine Drew led to the suicide of [Megan Meier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide_of_Megan_Meier).The event incited global concern regarding the use of social networking services for bullying purposes. In July 2008, a Briton, Grant Raphael, was ordered to pay a total of GBP £22,000 (about USD $44,000) for libel and breach of privacy. Raphael had posted a fake page on [Facebook](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook) purporting to be that of a former schoolfriend Matthew Firsht, with whom Raphael had fallen out in 2000. The page falsely claimed that Firsht was homosexual and that he was dishonest

**Trolling**

A common misuse of social networking sites such as [Facebook](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook) is that it is occasionally used to emotionally abuse, harass or bully individuals. Such actions are often referred to as trolling. It is not rare for confrontations in the real world to be translated online. Trolling can occur in many different forms, such as (but not limited to) defacement of deceased person(s) tribute pages, name-calling, playing online pranks on volatile individuals and [controversial comments with the intention to cause anger and cause arguments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flame_bait).Individuals troll for what seems to be a multitude reasons. The psychology behind why people troll according to Psychology Today is potentially down to eight reasons, these being: 1. Anonymity 2. Perceived obscurity 3. Perceived majority status 4. Social identity salience 5. Surrounded by 'friends' 6. Desensitization 7. Personality traits 8. Perceived lack of consequences (Fox, 2014). As these eight reasons behind the thought processes of trolls suggest individuals thrive behind being able to create a false identity and the premise that they have 'friends' on social networks that agree with their outlook on certain topics, thus join in trolling. The idea behind the perceived lack of consequences is because they believe they have created an identity in which they can not be seen as a real life human and more of a persona they create, therefore meaning that they will not face the consequences of being an online troll.

### Online bullying

Online bullying, also called [cyberbullying](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyberbullying), is a relatively common occurrence and it can often result in emotional trauma for the victim. Depending on the networking outlet, up to 39% of users admit to being "cyber-bullied". In her article, "Why Youth (Heart) Social Network Sites", [danah boyd](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danah_boyd), a researcher of social networks, quotes a teenager. The teenager expresses frustration towards networking sites like MySpace because it causes drama and too much emotional stress.There are not many limitations as to what individuals can post when online. Individuals are given the power to post offensive remarks or pictures that could potentially cause a great amount of emotional pain for another individual.

**The essential elements which you should keep in mind while building a social networking site.**

1. Registration Form : Keep your registration form as simple as possible. Broken down to the bare bones a simple email and password field may suffice but you may want to include fields for first and last name.
2. Profile and Feed : Ideally this will be the most viewed page of your website. Apart from the general fields remember to keep fields which will be of interest to other users and which will be in coherence with the general theme of your site. You can check out the profile pages of[couchsurfing.org](http://www.qed42.com/blog/couchsurfing.org) specially in reference to the last point. Here's one. Also as facebook and twitter have proved its a good idea to have a "what are you thinking/doing" feed. Even linkedin has one now. So do some of the other sites like [brazen careerist](http://brazencareerist.com/).
3. Easy interaction between users : The success of a social networking site is based on the conversation of its users. So make it easy for users to communicate between each other either actively or even observe what other users and their connections are doing. Also it should be easy to communicate with users of other sites, for example through FBConnect or even their twitter id.
4. UI : Having a simple yet interactive user interface is a must for a successful User Experience. If the UX is good users will return to your site. One of the ways to keep the UI interactive is by using ajax and javascript. Page refresh should also be reduced to as minimum as possible. Some other things to consider are
   * A navigation menu which lets the user access all the elements of the site of which he is a part of.
   * Layouts should be consistent. Header and footer should take no more than 30% of your real estate, if possible may be even less. User should be able to see the content in any resolution. If its not so you may end up in a situation that if the user is at a low resolution, the header occupies 50% of the page and he may need to scroll multiple times.
   * Logo should be the identity of your site and it must be clickable!
5. Ability to import users from other sites : One of the key reasons why facebook was successful over orkut was that it gave the option to people to import their contacts from gmail and other email providers. This helped in the viral growth of facebook and is one of the major reasons why facebook is what it is.
6. Search : Your site should have the option to search through users, communities etc. Ideally if the user is new you can even suggest him what networks might be interesting to him based on his location or interests