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# Becoming

# LinkedIn

An analysis and reflection of LinkedIn's platform

Allie Phillips

SI 110

Professor Erin Kruptka

On LinkedIn as: Allie Phillips

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### What is a connection?

A connection is a “friend” one makes on LinkedIn, where both users are able to see each other’s posts.



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## Background

LinkedIn is a networking website for business professionals. Through this website, one can connect with others in their field of work, find jobs, or post about their professional accomplishments. LinkedIn, known as the professional version of Facebook, connects millions of members together, making it the world’s largest professional network. LinkedIn was launched on May 5, 2003 by Reid Hoffman, Jean-Luc Vaillant, and Konstantin Guericke. The current CEO of LinkedIn is Jeff Weiner, whose previous experience includes working at Yahoo and Warner Bros (Mejia, 2017). As of January 1st, 2018, LinkedIn contained 500 million uses, with 250 million users daily (Aslam, 2018). LinkedIn helps its users through establishing one’s professional profile (2017). Once a profile is made, a user can control the top search results for their name. On the site, LinkedIn helps users build and maintain one’s professional network through providing suggestions on who to connect with. Its features allow users to find and reconnect with classmates and colleagues, thus enabling opportunities to arise. Since many companies are on LinkedIn, users have the ability to learn about other companies, and gain insights on a variety of industries. Users also are able to post one’s thoughts and insights on their own page, through status updates. LinkedIn prides itself in providing a wide variety of job opportunities, since there is the ability for different professional companies to post offerings.

The screenshot shows a list of notifications on a LinkedIn profile page. The notifications include:

- Sydney Silverstein viewed your profile (8h ago)
- Annie Brinberg liked your job update (2d ago)
- Wish Michael Steffen a happy birthday (2d ago)
- Congratulate Hannah Goff for starting a new position as fellow at The Nachshon Project (3d ago)
- Angela Srodek shared an update: This mechanical engineer should take preexisting questions on the matter of safety in the coming era of autonomous vehicles (4d ago)
- Annie Brinberg liked Mina Fedderly's post: I am happy to announce that I have accepted a job for this summer, at JCC Camp Salve, as the Camp Program! So excited to take on (6d ago)
- Congratulate Hannah Giberstadt for starting a new position as Incoming Analyst Intern at Thomson Reuters Special Services (6d ago)

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile page for Allie Phillips. A message通知 appears in the top right corner: "Allie, your profile has been viewed 59 times in the past 90 days." Below the message, there is a decorative graphic of five stylized human icons.

LinkedIn provides users with information on the website and through email.


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## The features

### Search Bar



Search

There is a search bar on the top of the screen, where users can search people, jobs, or specific posts. Users are also able to find industries or specific companies through the search bar. The search bar is at the top of the screen in order for users to always have the ability to find people or ideas on the website.

### Home Page

The Home Page is the user's home-base, where the website starts out when one first logs in. It contains the user's news feed, where one can see posts from their connections and the industries that they follow. On the homepage, the user

can see how many connections they have, and the amount of people that have viewed their profile. At the top of the homepage, there is a space to write a post, share an image, or post a video. This area is similar to Facebook, which is why LinkedIn is compared to Facebook's platform. When scrolling on the homepage, there are posts from those who one is connected with and from industries that one follows. On the right side of the page, there is a trending topics area, which shows what most people on the site are talking about. This provides users with news and current events that are happening globally.



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## My Network



The network page is where all of the

connections take place. One can see

their pending connections at the top

off the screen, indicating who they are

still waiting on to accept their

invitation. The pending invitations box

also shows invitations to connect that

one has not accepted yet. This box is

important because it prevents one

from forgetting who wants to connect with them or who they are trying to

connect with. On the left side of the network page, there is a box that enables

one to see all of their connections they already have. This is a quick way for

one to view a connection's profile. The main aspect of the Network page is

that it provides suggestions on who one should connect that. This is provided

through the "People you may know" section of the page. LinkedIn uses one's

previous connections in order to suggest new ones, providing endless

suggestions one can scroll through. LinkedIn also uses one's provided

location in order to find connection suggestions.

## Jobs



The job page contains many features which that allows one to grow

professionally. On the top of the page, there is a bar that shows how many jobs

one has saved, the amount of jobs applied to, and one's list of career

interests. One can fill out their career interests to show recruiters that they are

available. One can fill out where they are in their search, when they would like a

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a new job, the job titles one is considering, the locations one would work in, the type of jobs one is open to, the industry preferred, and the size of the company one would like to work for. Filling out this information helps LinkedIn narrow down one's interests and find jobs that one is looking for. This feature of LinkedIn is essential as growing oneself professionally includes finding jobs that coincide with one's interests. The job page also sets LinkedIn apart from other platforms, as it offers a unique and fast way for one to search for jobs.

**Messaging**

The screenshot shows a messaging inbox. A message from Larry Phillips at Log House Foods is displayed, saying "You: Thanks Larry". Below it, a message from Angela from LinkedIn dated Mar 7 says "LinkedIn Offer • How to build a LinkedIn network". A response from Larry Phillips follows, stating "Larry Phillips is now a connection" and "Wednesday Congratulations on your new position!". A reply from Larry Phillips says "Thanks Larry". At the bottom, there are buttons for "How are you?", "How are you doing?", and "Hope all i >". A text input field says "Write a message or attach a file" and a "Send" button.

LinkedIn allows one to direct message their connections.

This feature, similar to Facebook, enables one to contact those who they met on the website. This enables new opportunities and insights to be created.

**Notifications**

Through the notifications page, one can see all of the alerts from LinkedIn. This can range from notifying the user that someone viewed their profile, the alert of a connection's birthday, major milestone updates from connections, or different

The notifications page lists several items:

- Sabeen Khan liked your job update (Comment, 10h ago)
- Wish Michael Saffren a happy birthday (Say happy birthday, 4d ago)
- Congratulate Hannah Gilfix for starting a new position as Fellow at The Nachshon Project (Say congrats, 4d ago)
- Angelica Sirotin shared an update: This mechanical carnage should raise pressing questions on the matter of safety in the coming era of autonomous vehicles. (3d ago)
- Annie Birnberg liked Mina Feddeley's post: I am happy to announce that I have accepted a job for this summer, at JCC Camp Sabra, as the Camp Programmer! So excited to take on this role! (8d ago)
- Congratulate Hannah Gilbert for starting a new position as Incoming Analyst Intern at Thomson Reuters Special Services (Say congrats, 7w ago)
- We found 10 jobs you may be interested in (View jobs, 7w ago)
- Congratulate Sam Stillman for 1 year at Herzl Camp (Say congrats, 7w ago)
- Sam Stillman liked Elan Arnovitz's post: Had a great time today learning about management consulting at the Michigan Undergraduate Consulting Conference (MUC), Thank you to everyone involved! (7w ago)



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alerts from one's connections. The notification page allows one's notifications to be a central location, decreasing confusion and making the website easier to use.

## Your Profile



One has the ability to view their own profile. On this page, one can edit their profile and add in features to make themselves appealing to other professionals. The profile page contains many different ways to improve your profile.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Allie Phillips. At the top, there's a banner with her photo and the text "Allie Phillips Herzl Camp". Below the banner, it says "Profile Strength: Intermediate" with a progress bar. The dashboard shows 18 posts, 0 comments, and 9 likes. To the right, there's a sidebar for "Add profile section" with options for "Edit public profile & URL" and "Add profile in another language". A "See connections (39)" button is also present.

This screenshot shows the same LinkedIn profile for Allie Phillips with more details. It includes sections for "Experience" (Camp Counselor at Herzl Camp), "Education" (University of Michigan, Wayzata High School), and "People Also Viewed" (Benjamin Mattson). A message overlay at the bottom left says "Now when you post to Public, it's visible to anyone on or off LinkedIn. [Learn more.](#)"

Now when you post to **Public**, it's visible to anyone on or off LinkedIn. [Learn more.](#) X



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## A website that enables information flow

After using LinkedIn over a three-month span, I found that the platform enabled information flow, which positively impacts those who are using the website. Though information flow can affect many things, this platform specifically affects people. LinkedIn's platform affects people because it enables connections that, in turn, allow for information flow. It is easy to make connections, as the site uses one's previous connections in order to suggest new ones. Suggested connections are those whom one has shared connections with, are from the same area, who are in the same industry, or contain similar interests. LinkedIn functions through the connections one makes, which is why it is so highly emphasized. When first creating an account, LinkedIn has you add ten connections right away, which enables one to already begin to receive information. Information easily flows as one is able to create connections with their connections' connections. This cycle is how one is able to grow their professional network so easily, as one is able to connect with people they had never even thought of.

### People you may know



Jeremy Burton

Incoming Client Solutions Associate at FactSet

20 shared connections

[+ Connect](#)

Asher Mintzer

Technical Recruiter at York Solutions. We're Hiring!

33 shared connections

[+ Connect](#)

Samantha Freeman

Editorial Intern at Tiger Oak Media

30 shared connections

[+ Connect](#)[See more](#)

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## Social capital is created

LinkedIn's main goal is to broaden one's social network. The growth of one's professional network is primarily through weak ties, which Chris Lampe claims is a positive aspect of social networking websites. Weak ties are connections one makes with another whom they do not have a direct or personal relationship with. This helps build one's social capital, which is one's social network made up of strong and weak ties. Strong ties are those whom one has a direct relationship with (Lampe, 2015). Weak ties are enable through LinkedIn as it allows one to reconnect with old colleagues or friends from college. The creation of these weak ties positively affects the user because they are able to know of opportunities through their connection's posts that they would not have seen otherwise. Weak ties are essential as they provide individuals with access to more people, which enables one to be exposed to a diverse range of people and ideas. This provides one with views that are often less similar to ourselves, which exposes one to a different way of thought (Chandler & Munday, 2016). This is important, as ideas different from our own allow one to grow mentally, as one can make decisions on which viewpoints they agree with. Another positive of weak ties are that they enable information to reach a wide variety of people. This information can be used to organize action from or educate a large amount of people (Kavanaugh et al., 2007).

### 52 Connections

Sort by: Recently added				Search by name	Search with filters
	<b>Carly Bass</b> Student at Hopkins High School Connected 3 days ago	<a href="#">Message</a>	...		
	<b>Jacob S Smith</b> Aspiring Entrepreneur in E-Commerce Sales and Entrepreneurship Major at IU Kelley School of Business Connected 3 days ago	<a href="#">Message</a>	...		
	<b>Evana Kvasnik</b> Baker and Birth Doula Connected 3 days ago	<a href="#">Message</a>	...		
	<b>Brit Stein</b> Jr. Accounting Associate at Thomas St. John Group Connected 3 days ago	<a href="#">Message</a>	...		
	<b>Sydney Pomish</b> Engaged student on campus seeking winter and summer internships! Connected 4 days ago	<a href="#">Message</a>	...		
	<b>Danielle Pohlen</b> Journalism and French student at University of Wisconsin-Madison Connected 13 hours ago	<a href="#">Message</a>	...		
	<b>Ilyssa Gainsley</b> Student at Tulane University - A.B. Freeman School of Business Connected 14 hours ago	<a href="#">Message</a>	...		
	<b>Avi Baron</b> Engineer and teacher Connected 1 day ago	<a href="#">Message</a>	...		
	<b>Sydney Silverstein</b> University of Kansas Connected 2 days ago	<a href="#">Message</a>	...		
	<b>Michael McCormick</b> Student at University of Colorado Boulder Connected 2 days ago	<a href="#">Message</a>	...		


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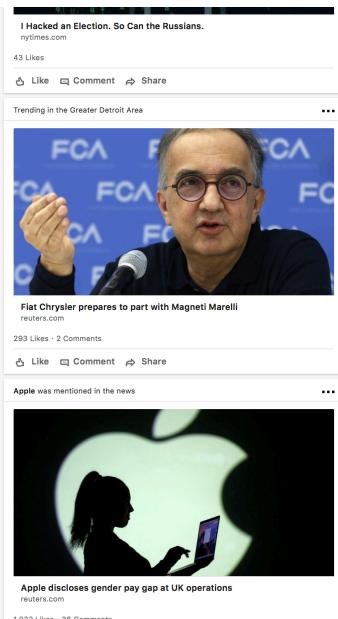
Try Premium for free


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## The Newsfeed: A main source for information flow

Information flow is also enabled on LinkedIn through the Newsfeed. This takes place on the homepage and allows one to see posts from their connections. These posts provide information, as one uses LinkedIn to post about their professional achievements or offerings. Seeing connection's posts can provide a user with information on a new job offering or insight on their connection's jobs. Another way information flows is through the ability to see posts that one's connections have liked and/or commented on. Through this feature, one is exposed to even more people on LinkedIn, and can reveal opportunities one may have never thought of. The ability to see one's connection's connections posts allows information to flow at a greater rate. This enables information to be distributed to a larger amount of people, and thus increase one's opportunities on LinkedIn. On the Newsfeed, trending posts are also made visible to users. These posts are trending ideas discussed on LinkedIn in one's current area. This provides information on current events happening in the user's area, as well as opportunities that are taking place.



### What people are talking about now ⓘ

- **Amazon, Berkshire health plan emerge...**  
6h ago • 4,217 readers
- **YouTube ups security after shooting**  
6h ago • 94,026 readers
- **Facebook: Most profiles vulnerable**  
2h ago • 17,766 readers
- **BlackRock offers gun-free funds**  
6h ago • 3,672 readers
- **Google staff protest Pentagon deal**  
6h ago • 17,713 readers

[Show more ▾](#)

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## However, there is room for improvement...

### Filter bubbles arise

Though the algorithm's LinkedIn uses to foster new connections is helpful for users, there are implications that arise as well. One's Newsfeed is constructed of posts from those they are connected with, influencers or industries that one follows, and their connection's likes or comments. One does not have the ability to see posts about events, jobs, or ideas about views that one does not agree with, because LinkedIn only provides this information from their connection's or their connection's connections. This is seen through LinkedIn's algorithm to connect a user with their connection's connections, and through LinkedIn's suggestions on which influencers or industries to follow. This relates to a concept studied in class, known as filter bubbles, which was coined by Pariser. Filter bubbles are caused through personalized algorithms, which are algorithms that suggest information, people, or ideas based on one's past history on the internet (Pariser, 2011). Filter bubbles are created through these algorithms, as one is only exposed to specific viewpoint, since many who use the Internet interact with others who have similar viewpoints. This causes many implications, as filter bubbles eliminate the ability to see information that challenges one's own ideas. argues that these filter bubbles are universal, as everyone in the Internet is stuck in one. It is difficult to escape filter bubbles because the algorithms hold so much power (Pariser, 2011). Filter bubbles are problematic because this filter personalization could become one's main source for information in society (Spohr, 2017).

Trending among professionals in the Greater Detroit Area

**10 Ways to Make Your Workplace More Human**inc.com  
We spend over a third of our day at work. Make it a positive experience by learning from companies like LinkedIn and Menlo...

13 people are talking about this

Recommended for you

**LinkedIn Unveils the Top 50 Companies of 2018**apartmenttherapy.com  
Did your company make the list?

281 people are talking about this

Recommended for you

**Retiring from EY partnership**Michael Anglie on LinkedIn  
Today I retire from EY as a Partner. I am honoured to have been a Partner of this great firm since 2000 and after commencing as a...

446 people are talking about this

Recommended for you

**A Reframe on Fulfilling Potential**David Mead on LinkedIn  
Over the years that I've been engaged in our work to inspire others, I've noticed a pattern: when it really comes down to it...

1633 people are talking about this

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This creates more narrow-minded citizens, unable to see the opposing sides of situations due to their engulfment of one-sided information. This implication could be avoided if LinkedIn reduced their dependency on algorithmic filters and worked to expose their users to different viewpoints. This could be done by suggesting connections or jobs that are a little outside of one's area of expertise, but still aligned with their interests.

### Fake news is able to thrive

Another implication that arises on LinkedIn is another topic discussed in class: fake news. LinkedIn allows users, companies, and influencers to post articles from any site on the Internet. Sharing articles enables information to flow quickly, as one's many connections can immediately see the article posted. The more connections one has, the faster the information is able to flow. Companies and influencers can share articles as well, which allows a large amount of magnitude to receive this information. LinkedIn does not have any fact checking capabilities, so articles that are posted may not always be valid. The fake news created by these articles are made up of misinformation or disinformation, which create many problems. Misinformation is information who's inaccuracy is unintentional (Jack, 2017), while disinformation is information that is deliberately misleading. Most of the fake news seen on LinkedIn is made up of disinformation because the information is from websites whose main goal is to spread fake news. Scrolling on LinkedIn for an hour, I found two articles that contained disinformation.



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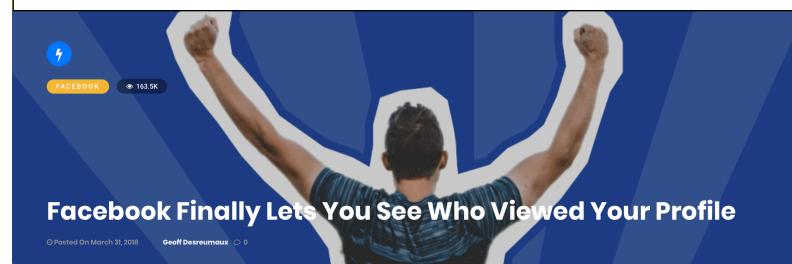


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The article with the most likes was shared by Forbes, which claimed that Facebook updated its settings to allow users to see who views their profile. This feature is similar to LinkedIn, as users can see who views their professional profile, which is why this article would become popular on the website. When one actually reads the article, they can see in the last paragraph that the entire article was fake. Since the truth is hidden in the article, it is easy for this disinformation to circulate quickly, as users may share the article without actually reading. The ability for any type of article to be shared on LinkedIn creates an unreliable source for information, which may be some user's primary source. As a result, users receive fake news, and are uneducated of the truth. To fix this implication, LinkedIn should make their users more aware of how to detect fake news by incorporated tools to detect it into their website. This information could be on a sidebar on the homepage, which would allow users to have easy access to these methods. LinkedIn should tell users to use Melissa Zimdars' methods to detect fake news, such as to pay attention to the domain and URL, look at the quotes in the story, and look at who said them (Zimdars, 2016). Incorporating this information on LinkedIn's website will create more educated users.

### Fake news article on LinkedIn



3.6k

Shares

Tweet

LinkedIn

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

email address

Close and accept

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## My Own Experience

When I first started on LinkedIn, I was confused with the type of people I should be connecting with. On other social media platforms, it is rare to be "friends" with one's boss or professor. I first started by connecting with a few close friends, and then used their connections to help build my network. As I began to create more connections, I started to understand the way the website worked, and the type of people to connect with. LinkedIn opened up more possibilities than other social media websites did, as I was able to connect socially with people who I viewed more professionally. LinkedIn's algorithmic feature of suggesting connections was extremely helpful because it allowed me to find people that I didn't know had a LinkedIn. I was able to connect with many people from high school, including my guidance counselor. I was also able to connect with family, as well as co-workers from my summer job as a camp counselor. LinkedIn put me into contact with many people who I would have never thought to connect with. Through making these

A screenshot of a LinkedIn connection request dialog. It shows a message from Jennifer Landy, a Counselor at Wayzata High School in the Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul Area. The message reads: "Hi Allie, I'd like to join your LinkedIn network." Below the message are two buttons: "View profile" and "Accept". To the right of the message, there is a box containing the text: "My high school guidance counselor."

connections, I hope to be exposed

to new and unique opportunities.

Once I understood who to make

connections with, I was

able to grow my profile and meet my goal of connecting with fifty people.

Each person adds something interesting to my news feed, and I never know what kind of information I am going to receive when I log on. As my network grew, I was able to gain more momentum professionally, through gaining

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page views. LinkedIn informs users on who their profile was viewed by,



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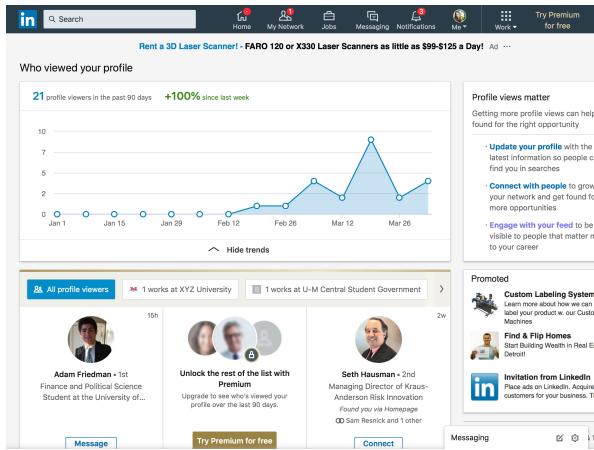
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and how many profile views a user has gotten. In the beginning, I did not get a lot of views, but as my connections increased, so did my views. I thought that a cool aspect of linked in was that it told me the percentage my profile views increased by. Through making connections, I was able to increase



the activity my profile received.

It was difficult for me to interact with users on LinkedIn, as I was not actively seeking a job. This limitation prevented me from reaching my original goal

of commenting and posting on LinkedIn. To make up for this, I adapted my plan of action and decided to join a group instead. I joined the University of Michigan Alumni association. Through joining this group, I was opened up to a large community of people who I share a commonality with; we all went to the University of Michigan. Joining this group provides me with a plethora of opportunities, as many Michigan alumni want to provide current students with jobs or internships.

The complex block contains three screenshots of LinkedIn group posts from the 'Alumni Association of the University of Michigan' group. The first post is titled 'ALUMNIADVANTAGE' and discusses an April course. The second post is titled 'Michigan Alumni Career Conference' and features a photo of a career fair. The third post is titled 'MAC CON' and features a photo of a networking event.

The complex block is a screenshot of the LinkedIn company page for 'Alumni Association of the University of Michigan'. It shows the page has over 3,400 followers and 61 employees. Recent updates include a post about the Alumni Advantage course and another about the MAC CON event. A 'Try Premium for free' button is visible at the bottom.

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## Reflection

Even though there are improvements that could be made, LinkedIn's platform enables information flow among people. Information flow is enabled through the ability to build social capital and the Newsfeed feature. My LinkedIn experience was positive, as I was able to create connections with friends, both old and new, and colleagues. I was also able to follow influencers, which provided me with opportunities to learn successful work practices and gain insight in the industries they work in.

LinkedIn allowed me to explore different industries through following those that I am interested in, enabled me to receive information on events in these



Bill Gates

Co-chair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation • Harvard University  
Greater Seattle Area

Following

...

Co-chair of the Bill &amp; Melinda Gates Foundation. Microsoft Co-founder. Voracious reader. Avid traveler. Active blogger.

Show more ▾

industries. Through using LinkedIn, I learned how to make my

**Following**Companies

Google

6,907,482 followers

X

profile more appealing, through



Amazon

4,438,392 followers

✓

Following

incorporating my skills and listing



University of Michigan

413,785 followers

✓

Following

my previous experience.



The New York Times

2,947,337 followers

✓

Following

LinkedIn's ability to build oneself



Forbes

professionally is unique,

as there are no other social media websites that are centered around

professional growth. LinkedIn's easy to use platform, and willingness to provide users with tips to grow professional, exemplify the reasons it is so popular. I believe that LinkedIn's platform benefitted me, as I was able to easily receive information while also improving myself professionally.

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This information is from the Oxford Dictionary, which is a prominent source used in academia. This information is reliable, as dictionary is constantly updated to make sure that it is valid.



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This article analyzes the role the filter bubble plays in exposure to news on social media. It highlights and questions the assumption that algorithms are one of the causes of fake news.

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It also provides a definition of fake news, and describes the implications it has on society. This is reliable because it is from a peer-reviewed journal. Before an article is published in a peer-reviewed journal, it is edited and reviewed by many experts in the field. This ensures that the information in the article is valid and reliable.

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