Social Networking

Social networking is the practice of expanding the number of one's business and/or social contacts by making connections through individuals, often through social media sites such as [Facebook](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Facebook), [Twitter](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Twitter), [LinkedIn](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/LinkedIn) and [Google+](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Google-plus).

Based on the [six degrees of separation](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/six-degrees-of-separation) concept (the idea that any two people on the planet could make contact through a chain of no more than five intermediaries), social networking establishes interconnected online communities (sometimes known as [social graphs](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/social-graph)) that help people make contacts that would be good for them to know, but that they would be unlikely to have met otherwise. Social networking applications make use of the associations between individuals to further facilitate the creation of new connections with other people. This could be used to meet new friends and connect with old ones, as many people do on Facebook, or to expand one’s professional connections through a business network like LinkedIn.

While social networking has gone on almost as long as societies themselves have existed, the unparalleled potential of the Web to facilitate such connections has led to an exponential and on-going expansion of that phenomenon. In addition to social media platforms, the capacity for social interaction and [collaboration](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/collaboration) is increasingly built into business applications.

# Advantages

1. **Connectivity –** The first and main advantage of the social media is connectivity. People from anywhere can connect with anyone. Regardless of the location and religion, the beauty of social media is that you can connect with anyone to learn and share your thoughts.
2. **Education –** Social media has a lot of [benefits for the students](https://www.techmaish.com/positives-negatives-social-networking-portals-students/) and teachers. It is very easy to educate from others who are experts and professionals via the social media. You can follow anyone to learn from him/her and enhance your knowledge about any field. Regardless of your location and education background you can educate yourself, without paying for it.
3. **Information and Updates –** The main advantage of the social media is that you update yourself from the latest happenings around in the world. Most of the time, Television and print media these days are biased and does not convey the true message. With the help of social media, you can get the facts and true information by doing some research.
4. **Promotion –** Whether you have an offline business or online, you can [promote your business to the largest audience](https://www.techmaish.com/why-you-need-social-media-promotion-for-successful-business/). The whole world is open for you, and can promote to them. This makes the businesses profitable and less expensive, because most of the expenses made over a business are for advertising and promotion. This can be decreased by constantly and regularly involving on the social media to connect with the right audience.
5. **Noble Cause –** Social media can also be used for the noble causes. For example, to promote an NGO, social welfare activities and donations for the needy people. People are using social media for donation for needy people and it can be a quick way to help such people.
6. **Awareness –** Social media also creates awareness and innovate the way people live. It is social media which has helped people discover new and innovative stuffs that can enhance personal lives. From farmers to teachers, students to lawyers every individual of the society can benefit from the social media and its awareness factor.
7. **Improves Business Reputation –** Just like it can ruin any business reputation, it can also improve business sales and reputation. Positive comments and sharing about a company can help them with sales and goodwill. Since people are free to share whatever they want on the social media, it can impact positively when good words are shared.
8. **Helps in Building Communities –** Since our world has different religions and beliefs. Social media helps in building and participating in the community of own religion and believes to discuss and learn about it. Similarly, people of different communities can connect to discuss and share related stuffs. For example – gamers can join communities related to gaming; car lovers can join communities related to cars and so on.

# Disadvantages

1. **Cyber bullying –** According to a report published by PewCenter.org, most of the children have become victims of the cyber bulling in the past. Since anyone can create a fake account and do anything without being traced, it has become quite easy for anyone to bully anyone on the Internet. Threats, intimidation messages and rumours can be sent to the masses to create discomfort and chaos in the society.
2. **Hacking –** Personal data and privacy can easily be hacked and shared on the Internet, leading to financial losses and a loss of one’s privacy. Similarly, identity theft is another issue that can cause financial losses to anyone by hacking their personal accounts. Several personal Twitter and Facebook accounts have been hacked in the past and the hacker had posted materials that have affected the individual’s personal lives.
3. **Addiction –** The addictive part of the social media is very bad and can disturb personal lives as well. The teenagers are the most affected by the addiction of the social media. They get involved very extensively and are eventually cut off from the society. It can also waste individual time that could have been utilized for productive tasks and activities.
4. **Fraud & Scams –** Several examples are available where individuals have scammed and commit fraud through the social media.
5. **Security Issues –** Nowadays, security agencies have access to people personal accounts, compromising people’s privacy. You never know when you could be visited by an investigation officer regarding an issue that you mistakenly or unknowingly discussed over the internet.
6. **Reputation –** Social media can easily ruin someone’s reputation just by creating a false story and spreading across the social media. Similarly businesses can also suffer losses due to bad reputation being conveyed over the social media.
7. **Health Issues –** The excess usage of social media can also have a negative impact on the health. Since exercise is the key to lose weight, most of the people get lazy because of the excessive use of social networking sites, resulting in a disorder in the routine life.
8. **Glamorizes Drugs & Alcohol –** One of the disadvantages of the social media is that people start to follow others who promote drugs & alcohol, which eventually inspiring others to follow the same and get addicted to the drugs and alcohol.

# Popular Social Networks

1. Facebook
2. Google+
3. Twitter
4. LinkedIn
5. WhatApp
6. Instagram
7. YouTube
8. Tumblr
9. Reddit
10. SnapChat
11. Flickr