


Social Networking

1. Social networking is a means of keeping in touch with your friends or making new friends using the internet. Some of the best known of these websites are:-

Facebook www.facebook.com 

MySpace www.myspace.com 

MSN www.uk.msn.com 

Yahoo groups <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com>  and for calling up your friends on the web

Skype www.skype.com . 

But there are many others and you can even start your own.

2. What these have in common is that you can access information as to what your "friends" are up to. Your "friends" are those whom you have agreed to allow access to your information and vice-versa and they make up a group or community. You can post (i.e. make available for viewing on the web) photos as well as text in order to keep your "friends" up-to-date with what you are doing. You can keep a blog (short for weblog) online which is essentially a diary to give as much or as little information about you as you want to share. As My Space puts it you can "Express who you are".

3. Social Networks can help us find new friends, or jobs, or houses or whatever you think that other people might be able






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to help you with. They help us make contact with people whom we may not already know e.g. friends of friends. They also allow us to contact members of online communities who might share a common interest such as hobbies,

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religion, or politics. Some will allow you to create your own web address.



4. You first of all have to sign up by providing an email address and password and fill out your details known as a profile. The profile might  contain items such as which town you live in, your  occupation, your interests, favourite music, movies  and books. Then you can look to see whether any of your friends are already members in which case you can add them as "friends" within the network. Now you and that person have a connection on the website that others can see. You also now know who your "friend" knows.



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5. Just as in "real life" there can be dangers associated with social networking. People can pretend to be someone they are not really and so you need to proceed with caution when making new "friends". Make sure that you keep to yourself details about yourself which you would be reluctant to share with a stranger until you are absolutely sure that the "friend" is trustworthy. Remember also that "friends" of "friends" might soon discover just as much about you as the first "friend" until the whole world knows! Especially if you arrange to meet in "real life" see that you are accompanied by a real friend. People, unfortunately, are not always what they seem on the web.



6. Another use for these sites is to provide a place to meet and discuss the merits (or otherwise) of your interests, perhaps a forum for supporters  of your favourite band or customers of your  product if you are in business.