

# Social Media and other Online Networks for Business

*Expert knowledge means success*



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## Introduction

The connections you and your business make are of paramount importance today. Developing strategic relationships via networking events has been the traditional means of making new business contacts.

Today, the internet is becoming a meeting place in its own right. With advanced communications technology now available, face-to-face meetings can be just as rewarding and productive when conducted online.

Traditional networking events are increasingly giving way to online alternatives, as business leaders realise that cost and efficiency gains can be made by avoiding a physical networking event.

The rise of non-business social networking also offers new opportunities for businesses to communicate directly with their customers, promote their products through both online advertising and viral marketing and generally increase their web presence.

This publication will give you a better understanding of how online networking including social media has evolved and how your business can use them to gain a commercial advantage. It will also provide advice on the types of events you can 'attend', identify some of the risks involved and outline what is considered good online etiquette.

## How Online Networks work

Online networking has become a reality because of two key technologies. The first is the availability of fast broadband access to the internet. The second is the continued development of computers that can handle full-motion video and graphics. Text, audio and video have come together to offer online networking as a practical proposition for even the smallest enterprise.

### Word of mouse

As an owner/manager you understand that the connections you make in business are essential for the long-term profits of your enterprise. Networking events had long been the way that business relationships have been built. The internet has provided yet another

way for businesses to communicate with each other.

There are a number of different online networks that your business can participate in, including:

- e-mail lists;
- chat rooms and forums;
- video conferencing;
- social networks.

Each of the different types of online network has its pros and cons. It is vital that you think through what you want to achieve by taking part in an online network. This will guide you to the networking format that is right for your business.

### Building business relationships

Online networks enable you and your business to maintain close relationships with other enterprises over long geographical distances. Physical networking events often only take place once a month. You can communicate with other businesses via online networks on a daily basis. This close connection fosters a much more intimate working relationship that you can build on over time. The commercial aspect being that a business looking to buy goods or services will instinctively look for partners that they already know via the online networks they are members of.

## Business benefits of Online Networking

Online networks give your business an opportunity to gain new contacts from the comfort of your office. Don't underestimate the savings in cost, time and other resources such as travel that not having to attend a physical networking event can bring to your enterprise. With nothing more than your computer and an internet connection you can be networking with hundreds of other businesses in minutes.

40% of users who engage with a brand on a social network remember the advertiser when shopping on the high street or online.

**Source: AD TO FRIENDS published by MySpace and Jam**

*"Depending on your vantage point, social networking Represents:*

- *A fad, especially among the young and tech-obsessed*
- *An unprecedented tool for keeping in touch with friends and family*
- *A disruptive, unscripted environment*
- *An unparalleled opportunity for brands and consumers to make real connections*
- *Some combination of all of the above"*

**Never Ending Friending Research Summary, April 2007**  
[http://creative.myspacecdn.com/groups/\\_ms/nef/images/40161\\_nef\\_online\\_book.pdf](http://creative.myspacecdn.com/groups/_ms/nef/images/40161_nef_online_book.pdf)

## Business benefits

Online networks can offer an enterprise the chance to improve their businesses in a number of key areas:

- recruitment;
- marketing;
- brand building;
- customer interaction;
- locating strategic commercial partners;
- gathering business intelligence.

It is important that you understand your business' motivation for joining one or more online networks. Think about what you want to gain from building a relationship with other businesses. If you focus your needs the type of online network that is ideal for you will become clear.

## Targeted advertising

Online networks are now becoming a hotbed for advertising space. Businesses have been quick to realise that the captive audience of online networks are ideal for focused marketing messages for goods or services.

Placing advertising within online networks is gathering pace. As with your business' other marketing spend, carefully consider which online networks to use and the marketing message you want to get across. This will ensure a good return on your investment.

Social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace offer a number of different advertising options including pay per click, pay per view, banner ads, Flash ads and classified notices. Advertising can be targeted against a variety of demographic criteria (e.g. age, marital status, location) relating to network members. Some sites have tools that can be used for research giving your business valuable customer profile information. This will allow you to make informed decisions about whether a particular social networking site is appropriate to your marketing strategy.

More information on internet advertising can be found at the Internet Advertising Bureau at: [www.iabuk.net/en/1/home.html](http://www.iabuk.net/en/1/home.html)

77% of UK adults aged 15+ use Social Networks

Source: ComScore, March 2009

## How to choose and join online networks

With so many different online networks available, from simple e-mail lists to complete virtual worlds, it can be difficult to choose the right network for your business. Joining several networks is an option, but it is still important to spend your time and resources with online networks that actually deliver real benefits to your business.

### How to choose the right network

The criteria you use to make a decision about which online network(s) are ideal for your business will ultimately depend on what motivates you to join the network initially. Ask yourself the following questions to help you identify the right kind of online network that will deliver the benefits you're looking for:

- What is your key reason for joining the network?
- What level of return do you expect?
- What kind of businesses are already members of the network?
- Do you have the time and resources to commit to your network membership?

The internet is now awash with networking websites that cover just about every conceivable business sector. You may already be aware of the high profile business networks like LinkedIn, but there are a great number of smaller networks that may be a better fit with your business. This is especially true if your business operates in a niche market.

### Online networks explained

There are many different types of online network your business could join. However, they do fall into distinct categories that include:

- profile/market building networks - BT Tradespace, Network 2012;
- social information exchange - Facebook, MySpace, bebo;
- microblogging - Twitter;
- referral and connection building - LinkedIn, Plaxo, Ecademy;
- e-mail connection and network building - Yahoo! Groups, Windows Live Groups;
- book marking and reviewing - Digg, Stumbleupon;
- image sharing and storing - flickr, iStockphoto.

*"Social networks are relatively new vehicles for communication, and, more recently, commercial trade and promotion. It's important to remember that it's the users who are driving the evolution, not the organisations behind the networks. The brands that have most successfully engaged with this audience are those who understand what social network users gain from sites such as MySpace: what they find valuable, what they are prepared to share with their friends and how they want advertisers to acknowledge and reward them are key.*

*Advertisers can learn from brands who are using social networks as environments for audience building, trendsetting, entertainment and commerce. Whether it is Pepsi enlisting contemporary British musicians to guide MySpace users through new music or Grime emcee, JME selling over 32,000 T-shirts promoting his MySpace profile; social networks represent enormous opportunities for major brands to sell and market themselves."*

**AD TO FRIENDS  
published by MySpace  
and Jam**  
[http://creative.myspacecdn.com/uk/trademaking/downloads/adtofriends\\_brochure.pdf](http://creative.myspacecdn.com/uk/trademaking/downloads/adtofriends_brochure.pdf)

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. Examples of these types of online networks are included in later sections.

There are also other online resources including blogs where you can post or respond to questions, online platforms that allow you to build your own social network and video networks such as YouTube.

Before you become active on any of these networks, it is vitally important that you understand the profile of the other people and businesses already using the network.

Posting inappropriate messages, or worse still placing advertising that is not welcome by the members will damage your business' brand and reputation. Spend some time researching the networks you think are ideal for your business. This is time well spent, and will deliver the results you are looking for.

## How to use online networks for marketing

Making connection with other businesses via online networks ultimately means marketing your goods or services. It is, though, important to realise that online networking isn't just another sales channel that you can approach in just the same way as your other online marketing. Special attention has to be paid to the network members themselves and what level of advertising they are prepared to tolerate on their network. There are risks involved in using online networking as a marketing channel and it is important to approach this type of advertising with care.

### Networking and marketing strategies

The types of advertising you can use within the online networks you join are similar to those that you may already be using across the web. These include:

- **Banner advertising** - banners occupy a designated area for rent on web pages, and can include video, audio and interactive capabilities. Usually work on 'click-through' - users click on the banner and are linked to the website that is paying for the advert.

- **E-mail campaigns** - sending targeted e-mails to selected customers or potential new customers, sometimes containing special offers, discounts and other promotions.
- **Viral marketing** - online 'word-of-mouth' or 'tell a friend' campaigns that encourage users to spread the message to their social networks.
- **Link building** - some social networking sites provide profile pages, blogs or other editable spaces that allow keyword rich links to be added. This can contribute to your search engine optimisation strategy.

### 5 ways in which social network users engage with a brand

- 34% of users do so by instant message
- 28% post comments on chat rooms and forums
- 24% text their friends
- 20% give an advertiser's space or profile a good ranking
- 18% write or upload content about the brand on their blog or website

*Source: AD TO FRIENDS published by MySpace and Jam*

### Understanding online network users

You may already be using each of the above types of advertising to promote your business online. Remember that networks are collections of people and businesses that have chosen to join that network to gain business contacts and not necessarily to see advertising messages.

You must evaluate the level of advertising and promotional material you can push to these members. Also, the kind of advertising you use is also important. A viral ad campaign may be wholly inappropriate within a network of company directors for instance.

Understand the audience you are marketing to, and their likely response to the advertising approach you intend to use. You should also check the terms and conditions of any online network that you intend to use, to ensure that any marketing activity that you do is acceptable.

### Ad to Friends study

The Ad to Friends study into digital marketing effectiveness and social network brand behaviour has been published by MySpace and Jam, the social media division of digital agency, i-level.

The full report reveals:

- How users feel about brands being on social networks
- How brands should behave in this environment
- The value of word of mouth within social networks
- What makes a successful branded community
- If there is greater trust of brands on social networks
- The ROI that brands can expect from social networks if they get it right

The study is available at: [http://creative.myspace.com/uk/trademarketing/downloads/adtofriends\\_brochure.pdf](http://creative.myspace.com/uk/trademarketing/downloads/adtofriends_brochure.pdf)

## Network marketing dos and don'ts

If you intend to use online networking as part of your marketing mix, there are a number of dos and don'ts you should comply with:

Do:

- Ensure you are aware of and comply with all the regulations and legislation that now applies to online marketing.
- Thoroughly research the network(s) you want to advertise on. Understand who the participants are, and what marketing messages they are open to.
- Develop metrics to enable you to track and analyse the return you are getting from your marketing spend.

Don't:

- Make assumptions about the people and businesses on the network you are targeting. Marketing messages that are effective need to be highly focused.
- Spam your fellow network users with messages. With online network marketing quality is much more favourable than quantity.
- Ever sell or otherwise pass on any personal details about the people or businesses on your target network without their permission.

## 5 Do's of using social networks for marketing

- **Be honest, original, thought-provoking or shocking:** Social networks are the playgrounds and test centres of cutting-edge innovation and experimentation.
- **Offer digital booty Banners, wallpapers, screensavers:** people enjoy being able to download and share well-designed 'digital booty'.
- **Be stringent about design:** Social networks are dominated by the creative community and poor design will make a brand look amateur. If general users can make their profiles look beautiful, a leading brand has no excuse.
- **Find your brand soldiers:** Like rock bands and football teams, brands have fans and it's up to you to track yours down and reward, involve and thank them.
- **Be picky:** Nobody makes personal friends with someone unless they share common ground, so why would a brand? Screen requests, build bespoke networks and create tight friend lists.

**Source: AD TO FRIENDS published by MySpace and Jam**

## Etiquette and online networks

Online networks have their own rules that should be followed, just like face-to-face networking events. Whether you are joining a network as a member or starting your own - which means that you become the moderator of the network - you must ensure you abide by the etiquette that has been developed since online networks first appeared.

When using online networks, try to apply the following principles:

- Don't make each of your posts on a network an advertisement for your business' services or products. Blatant self-promotion is usually frowned upon by other network users.
- Always read the network's guidelines before you make any posts. This will ensure you don't make any beginner's mistakes.
- Don't post inappropriate or off-topic questions or comments. If in doubt contact the network's moderator.
- Never make personal criticisms of other network users or their businesses. This is very bad etiquette and could result in your business being thrown off the network entirely. In the most serious cases, it could even lead to legal action against you, e.g. for libel or defamation.
- Think about privacy. Some e-mail lists are read by thousands of people. If you want a private conversation with someone you have met via a network, exchange private e-mail address and continue the conversation through that channel.
- Carefully read the terms and conditions for any network in which you participate.

## Security and online networking

Whether you intend to join one or a number of online networks, security should be at the top of your agenda. With the rise of identity theft, fake e-mails and security threats to small and large companies, ensuring you are using online networks safely is essential.

### Security in a Web 2.0 world

Each time you login to use an online network you expose yourself and your business to a level of attack from hackers and other malicious groups. However, you are not

## Social Networks on the Rise

A new survey confirms that over three-quarters of UK businesses already use Web 2.0 as an alternative to email and information sharing. The survey looked at drivers and barriers for adoption of Web 2.0 technologies in organisations. It shows that nearly half of respondents believe there will be a steady increase in the use of Web 2.0 over the next 12 months, and over 81% are already using it as an alternative to conventional email and for sharing information in business.

The survey was conducted by Mesmo, an email training consultancy, in partnership with Inbox /Outbox, a forum for e-marketing and collaborative communications. It investigated the adoption in business of social networking and collaborative tools - generally referred to as Web 2.0 technologies - among 315 IT, marketing and business professionals.

Dr Monica Seeley, managing partner of Mesmo, says the results indicate that the main driver behind increasing Web 2.0 adoption is the need to reduce email volume.

"We are seeing companies promptly dealing with customer gripes that have been 'tweeted' and maintaining Facebook and other network 'pages' to extend and enhance their brand reach," says Seeley.

Despite the increase in interest towards social networking websites, blogs and wikis, there is still some scepticism - with 40% saying their organisations are not using Web 2.0 technologies. The top three reasons given are security concerns, doubts about effectiveness, and the time the media take to use.

**Source: Winning Edge, ISMM, September /October 2009**

powerless in the face of what may seem like an unstoppable wave of identity theft and threats to your security. Follow the guidelines below to ensure you use online networks safely:

- Keep your login details secure and regularly change your password.
- Be suspicious of anyone who contacts you out of the blue claiming to be part of one of the networks you are a member of. This could be a phishing attack. Phishing is where legitimate looking e-mails seemingly from a reliable source, e.g. a bank, are used with the aim of obtaining personal details.
- Watch out for corporate identity theft. Your business name could be used within online networks without your knowledge or permission. Contact Companies House Contact Centre on Tel 0303 1234 500 for more information about this type of security threat.
- Never reveal any sensitive information about yourself or your business without first checking the credentials of the enquirer.
- If you use e-mail-based online networks, use filtering software to reduce the instances of spam and phishing attacks.
- If you access online networks via wireless internet access ensure you have adequate security to protect your wireless network from eavesdropping and hacker attack.

## Checklist: online networking

Whether you are looking for one or more online networks to join, or are thinking about starting your own network, there are a lot of factors to consider. Planning is vitally important to ensure you join the right network(s) that will deliver the business benefits you are looking for.

When joining a network, ensure that you:

- Choose the right network for your business goals. Ask yourself why you are joining an online network. What do you want to get out of this activity?
- Develop your user profile. Networking is all about relationships. The more people and businesses know about you, the closer that relationship. However, be careful when exposing information about yourself and your business. Always check your data is being held securely.

- Avoid the hard sell. Your core motivation for joining an online network may be to sell your business' goods or products. Try to avoid hard sales pitches on your networks as these are usually rejected.
- Obey the network rules. Every network has its own rules. Ensure you are aware of the etiquette that is in place.
- Commit enough resources. When joining one or more online networks that support your sector, think about how much time and resources you have available. You and your business need to maintain these network connections, which can take more time and resources than you might initially think.
- Maintain contacts. It can be difficult to maintain a large number of contacts as you join more networks. Identify the key contacts you want to maintain a relationship with. This will enable you to better budget your time and resources.
- Enhance your business brand. Joining a network can have a great positive impact on your business' brand. The close working relationships you can build via networks is now an essential component of modern branding practice.
- Include online networking within your marketing mix. Online networks may have marketing at their heart, but don't forget the other forms of promotion your business is using. It's easy to disproportionately assign resources to online networking. Don't forget your other forms of advertising and promotion, as they are effective as well.
- Create new, original and engaging content. No one wants to read boring posts on the networks you are a member of. Try to write relevant and engaging content each time you contribute to a network.
- Place advertising on carefully chosen networks. The online networks that have developed over the last few years are clearly a great location for your business' advertising. Banner ads are now appearing on network websites. Careful consideration must be given to what kind of advertising is placed on these networks and what messages they contain. Research the profile of network members to help you design an engaging advertising message they will positively respond to.

## Profile/market building networks

### BT Tradespace

BT Tradespace was launched in April 2007. It is an online community that brings businesses and their customers together to do business and build relationships.

Anyone can join BT Tradespace and it is free to join. You can use it both to shop online, sell or simply to promote or advertise your business.

#### *Promoting your business*

BT Tradespace allows you to create an online identity and become part of the BT Tradespace community. Your business will be featured in the Businesses section, while your products and services will be featured in our Marketplace section. Content from your Tradespace may occasionally be featured on other areas of the website, and the more often you update your Tradespace, the more attention you get - both on the BT Tradespace website and on external search engines like Google.

Your Tradespace lets you showcase your products and services, but more importantly, your story. You can promote your business and tell your story using the social media tools like a blog, podcasts and video - absolutely free.

BT Tradespace lets you create your own or join other people's communities to connect with and build relationships with your customers or potential customers. You can also use the communities to swap ideas, share expertise with other like-minded people plus meet potential business partners.

You don't need any technical expertise to set up a Tradespace - all you need on hand is some information about yourself and your business, a few pictures of the stuff you want to flog, and you're ready to roll.

Even if you already have an existing website, having a Tradespace will add to it. Apart from using the social media tools it helps to increase your online exposure and ranking on search engines. You can also drive traffic to your website using the communities.

Giving your customers what they want, when they want is great for your business. So to help you sell online via your Tradespace, BT has teamed up with PayPal to provide ecommerce functionality that allows you to sell your products directly from your Tradespace or via the Marketplace section. You don't need additional software or expert knowledge to list your products. There are no charges for listing your products and you only pay transaction fees to BT and PayPal when you receive a payment.

There are also special discounts available through business service providers that have partnered with BT Tradespace.

For more information visit [www.btradespace.com/Businesses](http://www.btradespace.com/Businesses)

### Network 2012

Network 2012 is a social enterprise. It is online business and social network and events company and has been developed and will continue to develop in a spirit of making a contribution to social enterprise and business that becomes sustainable. It provides a marketplace for the promotion of goods and services and a supportive network of individuals and businesses who are committed to making a positive difference in the world through business.

Network 2012 and its members contribute to the growth of social enterprise through small membership fees which allow them to provide bursaries for others who wish to start social enterprises. A proportion of those bursaries go to marginalised individuals and groups who would otherwise struggle for start up finance.

Network 2012 provides free to its members:

- A Business Networking Community.
- Business Support and Resources.
- Networking Tools and Resources .
- Marketing and Promotional Platforms for Goods, Services and Events.
- Advertising Opportunities through a Weekly Newsletter.

For more information visit [www.network2012.net/community/index.php](http://www.network2012.net/community/index.php)

### BT Tradespace reaches 350,000 members

BT Tradespace marked its second anniversary in June 2009 by signing up its 350,000th member.

The site has grown by 400% year-on-year over the past year, with an average of up to 500 members joining each day since the launch.

In the past two years, nearly 3,000 different communities have been set up by BT Tradespace members to share information and expertise. The most popular BT Tradespace communities include a group for people who run home-based businesses and a community where new or seasoned entrepreneurs can leave advice, ask questions and share top tips.

## Social information exchange

### Facebook

A Facebook Page is a public Profile that enables you to share your business and products with Facebook users. You can create a user profile to connect and engage with your customers and amplify your voice to their friends.

When your potential customers interact with your Facebook Page, stories linking to your Page can go to their friends via News Feed. As these friends interact with your Page, News Feed keeps driving word-of-mouth to a wider circle of friends.

### Facebook Advertising

Facebook Advertising allows you to reach over 200,000,000 active Facebook users. You can create demand for your product with relevant adverts and attach social actions to your adverts to increase relevance.

You can create both image and text-based ads and advertise your own web page or an event. You can choose to pay for your advert on a pay per click (CPC) or impression (CPM) basis.

You can track your progress with real-time reporting and gain insight about who's clicking on your advert. You can then make modifications to maximise your results.

### Facebook Lexicon

Facebook can count the number of occurrences of terms across Profile, group and event Walls every day. All the information is aggregated so it is never tied to a specific person. This gives you the ability to hear the diverse voices of Facebook while maintaining users' privacy. For a particular term, you can view results in multiple ways, giving you greater control over how you analyse your data. View by number of posts or percentage of total posts, gender, age and even geographic location.

### Facebook Connect

Facebook Connect enables a viral sharing loop on your site and increases social engagement. With Facebook Connect, users can easily share your content and their actions with their friends on Facebook. As these friends discover your content, they click back to your site, engaging with your content and completing the viral loop. Creating deeper, more social integrations

keeps users engaged with your site longer, and more likely to take actions they share with their friends. For example, don't just show users what's most popular on your site, but what's most popular with their friends on your site.

### Facebook Surf

Keep track of your potential customer base by closely monitoring the web pages they visit on a daily basis. Utilize this information by combining it with Facebook Social Ads to then market your product directly to specific users who may be interested.

### Facebook Receipt

Allow your customers to share with their friends the actions they take in your physical store. Their purchases will be published in their News Feed for all their friends to see, and a copy of the receipt will be published in their Photo Album.

### Facebook Image Scan

Facebook Image Scan uses a sophisticated computer algorithm to filter through every image in the user's Photo Album, identifying brand markings and products and tagging them with links back to your homepage.

### Facebook Locate

Do you know where your potential customers are, physically, at all times? Facebook Locate does just that, using cell phone and GPS technologies to pinpoint a customer's location, create a route to your nearest store location, and text a map to the user.

### Facebook Recycle

The items a user deletes on their own personal computer can be very important data for a business to uncover. Facebook Recycle harvests files from a user's Trash Bin and posts the findings to their News Feed, as well as sending a copy to your business.

### Facebook Diary

Sometimes you have to dig a little deeper to discover a user's true affinity for your brand. Facebook will search the user's diary/journal and all relevant information will be published to the user's News Feed.

For more information visit [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

## 80% of companies are planning to use social networks to find or attract candidates

Jobvite, a recruitment solutions provider, today issued the results of its second annual Social Recruitment Survey. The data shows that employers are more and more extensively recruiting on social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. It also shows that the companies appear more satisfied with these types of recruits versus the ones they find solely from job boards.

According to the survey, due to these satisfaction levels companies are likely to invest more in these type of candidate sources in 2009, trimming down their spend with job boards and even search firms. Here are some more data points:

- 76 percent of companies surveyed plan to invest more in employee referrals
- 72 percent plan to invest more in recruiting through social networks
- 80 percent of companies are planning to use social networks to find or attract candidates
- LinkedIn use grew from 80 percent in 2008 to 95 percent in 2009
- Facebook use grew from 36 percent in 2008 to 59 percent in 2009
- Twitter ranked third at 42 percent

### Source:

<http://blogs.zdnet.com/feeds/?p=1197>



## MySpace

MySpace is a free social networking website with an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos and music.

### *Sponsorship opportunities*

MySpace offers businesses the opportunity to advertise through sponsorship, for example by:

- **Headline sponsor** – storyline integration, product placement, exclusive content as well as “brought to you by...”, customisable/co-branded media, in video ads.
- **Major storyline integration** – “in association with...”, competitions, character sponsorship, apps/wallpapers etc.
- **Minor storyline integration** – “in association with...”, competitions, character sponsorship, apps/wallpapers etc.

Advertisers benefit from a bespoke sponsor evaluation system to calculate effect of brand placement/integration.

MySpace have created the world’s first user generated radio station. The station showcases the latest emerging talent and invites user audition for a chance to be the show's weekly co-host and, as you would expect from a user generated station, their fate is decided by the listeners. Sponsorship opportunities include: Total brand integration via station name & profile, on-air branding, association with MySpace Music and offline branding, including the station podcast.

Freak is the next original content production from MySpace. It’s a broadcast-quality coming of age drama following the lives of a group of teens. Users can watch episodes on the MySpace Freak profile and view texts, videos, e-mails, IM, blogs, twitter feeds etc on the characters' profiles. Users can give the characters music/fashion/love advice and ultimately dictate the script. Sponsorship opportunities include: seamless script interaction and product placement, in-video advertising, character sponsorship, applications and wallpapers.

Other opportunities are available at:  
<http://creative.myspace.com/uk/trademarketing/downloads/moreopps.pdf>

### *Bulletins*

Posts can be posted on to a "bulletin board" for everyone on a MySpace user's friends list to see. Bulletins can be useful for contacting an entire friends list without resorting to messaging users individually. A business could use a bulletin board to contact all their customers in this way. However, bulletins are deleted after ten days.

### *MySpaceTV*

MySpaceTV is similar to the YouTube video sharing website. Users can upload and watch videos.

### *MySpace News*

MySpace News displays news from RSS feeds submitted by users. It also allows users to rank each news story by voting for it. The more votes a story gets, the higher the story moves up the page.

### *MySpace Classifieds*

MySpace has offered a full service classifieds listing since August 2006. It has grown by 33 percent in one year since inception. Sponsored links are available on the search page and jobs can be advertised.

## bebo

Bebo, an acronym for "Blog early, blog often", is a social networking website. Bebo is similar to other social networking sites in that you create your own user profile and communicate through that profile with friends. Each profile must include two specific modules, a comment section where other users can leave a message, and a list of the user's friends. Users can select from many more modules to add.

Bebo offers three privacy levels: public, private and fully private. Public profiles can be seen by any user, except that profiles of users younger than 16 years are seen only by logged in users. Private profiles are seen only their friends and members of any school or college they have joined. Fully private profiles are ones that have not joined any school and so only their direct friends can view their profile. If a user chooses the 'Public' option, they can also set age restrictions on who can contact them. Age restrictions do not apply to direct friends. Bebo also allows a user to set their photos to private, so only friends can see them and can stop others from copying them too.

## MySpace is forced to slash workforce as social network users flock to Facebook

MySpace, the networking site that helped launch the careers of Lily Allen and Arctic Monkeys, said today it would cut two-thirds of its workforce outside the US, in a stark reminder of how quickly internet phenomenons can burn out.

The company is cutting 300 jobs from a workforce of 450 and closing at least four offices. The retrenchment also illustrates how media bosses, apart from a fortunate few, are still struggling with the conundrum of how to make money from the internet, even when a site has millions of users.

Analysts blamed the decline of MySpace on the inexorable rise of the rival social networking site Facebook, as well as the broader difficulty in attracting advertising online, a situation made worse by the global recession.

MySpace has 127 million users around the world and built a reputation for being a showcase for new music and a springboard for careers. But recent data has shown that it has gone into decline. The metrics firm ComScore shows that Facebook overtook MySpace in Britain by number of users early last year and has continued to move ahead.

**Source:**  
[www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)  
**23 Jun 2009**

Members can view the recent changes friends have made to their homepage from the 'Home' menu. These changes can include uploaded photos, updated flashboxes and newly added videos and friends.

## *Social Inbox*

Bebo allows you to organise all your messages in one inbox. It supports links to other social media including Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Delicious, Twitter, AIM, AOL Mail, Google Mail and Yahoo! Mail.

## *Bebo Open Media Platform*

Bebo Open Media Platform is a platform for companies to distribute content to the Bebo community. Content providers can bring their media player to Bebo, and monetize the advertising within it. Each content provider has a specialised page designed for video which showcases any Adobe Flash video content at the top of the profile. Many networks are signed up for the service, including the BBC.

Professional media companies, content creators, and content owners, can create an Open Media account. You must hold distribution rights for any content you make available on Bebo. More information is available at [www.bebo.com/OpenMedia.jsp](http://www.bebo.com/OpenMedia.jsp)

## *Map*

A map feature enables members to see who has been viewing their profile. However, the viewer must be logged in while viewing and have their profile set to public in the map section, in order for this to be possible. This could be a useful feature for your business.

## *Video box*

A 'Video Box' may be added to a user's profile, either hot-linked from YouTube, uploaded directly to Bebo's servers via VideoEgg or copied from a Bebo Media Content Provider's page. This allows your customers to view your information or advertising videos directly from your website.

More information is available at: [www.bebo.com](http://www.bebo.com)

## Microblogging

### Twitter

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read each others' updates, known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters, displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to other users - known as followers - who have subscribed to them.

Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow open access. Users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website, Short Message Service (SMS) or external applications. The service is free over the Internet, but using SMS may incur phone service provider fees.

Businesses can use Twitter to send messages, listen, or both.

### *Tweeting*

A business can use Twitter as a marketing or public relations channel and use it to send out short marketing messages or advertisements to potential customers. They can tweet corporate messages or even links so that listeners can access a webpage for more information.

Businesses allowing employees to tweet about their work should ensure that they have a public Web participation policy in place as Twitter is very much a public forum.

Twitter can also be used as an internal communication forum to allow employees to share ideas and information. **Yammer** and **present.ly** are two tools designed to offer a Twitter-like platform for the workplace.

### *Listening*

You might prefer to just listen to Twitter messages. Search tools such as [search.twitter.com](http://search.twitter.com) or desktop applications like TweetDeck allow you to keep track of what's being said about your company, its product names, or even the industry as a whole to get early warnings of problems and to collect feedback on product issues or ideas. Microsoft's Twendz also tracks sentiment, as well.

For more information visit <http://twitter.com>

### Moonfruit Twitter promotion proves a massive success

Moonfruit, the web design software company, has found itself one of the most tweeted about subjects in the world as word spread of its Twitter-based MacBook Pro giveaway.

Moonfruit is giving away 10 MacBook Pros over the next 10 days, to mark its 10th year of operation.

People are invited to tweet the term as many times as possible, leading to Moonfruit becoming a trending topic.

These appear on the front of the Twitter site and encourage thousands more users to click and see what it is that everyone is talking about on the site.

Moonfruit makes software that lets people build websites without having any design or web building experience. It offers users a choice of subscribing, to receive the software without advertising, or using it for free with advertising.

In January this year, Lenovo (the brand formerly known as IBM) used Twitter to run a discount promotion giving people as much as £200 off a new laptop.

**Source:**  
[www.brandrepublic.com](http://www.brandrepublic.com)  
**1 July 2009**

## Seismic

Seismic is the “Twitter of video”. It is a video blogging web application that makes it easy for contacts to share text, links, photos and videos all in one screen. It is still at an early stage of life and changes are being made on a regular basis.

It can be used by businesses to manage a brand and hear what people are saying about your business. As with other types of blog it is easy to respond quickly to users, stay engaged, and strengthen your community.

Seismic shows all your accounts together so for example, multiple Twitter accounts and Facebook updates can appear together in one single, easy-to-follow column of your video page.

Seismic can therefore be used as a “control panel” of your business’ social networking activity. On a single screen, you can follow multiple contacts’ updates, replies, private messages and as many search terms as you want to monitor your brand or business.

More information is available at:  
<http://seismic.com>

## Referral and connection building

### LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a free business-oriented social networking site launched in May 2003 mainly used for professional networking. As of June 2009 it had more than 42 million registered users, spanning 200 countries. A mobile version of the site was launched in February 2008 which gives access to a reduced feature set over a mobile phone. The mobile service is available in six languages: Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese and Spanish.

When you join, you create a profile that summarizes your professional expertise and accomplishments. You can then form enduring connections by inviting trusted contacts to join LinkedIn and connect to you. The “gated-access approach” (where contact with any professional requires either a pre-existing relationship, or the intervention of a contact of theirs) is intended to build trust among the service’s users.

Your network consists of your connections, your connections’ connections, and the people they know, linking you to a vast number of qualified professionals and experts. You can invite anyone (whether a site user or not) to become a connection.

Through your network you can:

- Manage the information that’s publicly available about you as professional.
- Find and be introduced to potential clients, service providers, and subject experts who come recommended.
- Create and collaborate on projects, gather data, share files and solve problems.
- Be found for business opportunities and find potential partners.
- Gain new insights from discussions with likeminded professionals in private group settings.
- Discover inside connections that can help you land jobs and close deals.
- Post and distribute job listings to find the best talent for your company.

### LinkedIn Answers

This feature allows users to ask questions for the community to answer. This feature is free questions are generally business-oriented, and the identity of the people asking and answering questions is known.

### LinkedIn Groups

This searchable feature allows users to establish new business relationships by joining alumni, industry, or professional and other relevant groups.

### LinkedIn DirectAds

This feature is a form of sponsored advertising.

### LinkedIn Applications Platform

LinkedIn has enabled an “applications platform” that allows other online services to be embedded within a member’s profile page. For example, among the initial applications were an Amazon Reading List that allows LinkedIn members to display books they are reading and a Six Apart and WordPress application that allows members to display their latest blog postings within their LinkedIn profile.

More information is available at:  
[www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

*“You would never call 200 people to ask if they know anyone at XYZ Company. It just isn’t practical. It is easy to search through that many people on LinkedIn; then you are calling one person to ask them to introduce you to their contact at XYZ Company.”*

**Steven Tylock, author of The LinkedIn Personal Trainer**

## Plaxo

Plaxo is an online address book and social networking service. It provides automatic updating of contact information. Users and their contacts store their information on Plaxo's servers. When this information is edited by the user, the changes appear in the address books of all those who listed the account changer in their own books. Once contacts are stored in the central location, it is possible to list connections between contacts and access the address book from anywhere.

A Plaxo plug-in supports major address books including Outlook/Outlook Express, Mozilla Thunderbird, and Mac OS X's Address Book, though other ones can be supported through an application programming interface. Additionally, Plaxo can also be maintained through an online version.

### Plaxo Pulse

Plaxo Pulse is Plaxo's social networking service. It enables sharing of content from multiple different sources across the social web, including blogs, photos, social networking services, rating services, and others. Users can selectively share and view content according to either pre-determined categories (e.g. friends, family, business network) or customized groups.

For more information visit [www.plaxo.com](http://www.plaxo.com)

## Ecademy

Ecademy is a business social network now with millions of users of the site each year worldwide.

It enables business people to connect through online networking, at business networking events and 1-2-1 meetings.

### Networking opportunities

Ecademy provides networking opportunities by allowing you to:

- Have an online profile - tell others about yourself and what you do.
- Join clubs - these are business networking groups based around expertise and topics.
- Network online - exchange messages with other members through our private messaging system.
- Ask for introductions through "friends of friends".

- Search for old friends and former colleagues.
- Add your CV so people can find out more about your skills and experience.

### Advertising

Ecademy can fit into your advertising strategy to help grow your business by allowing you to post adverts in the Marketplace. You can then opt to receive e-mail alerts when another member visits your listings helping you find new customers, contacts, jobs or suppliers.

Adverts are seen by other Ecademy members and those who visit Ecademy. Also, automatic search engine submission gives listings high visibility on Google and other search engines.

### Business support

You can post and respond to blogs - ask questions, debate topics, share business advice and offer help. You can also join topic specific networking groups and interact with other members who have the expertise you seek.

### Networking events

Ecademy also offers you the opportunity to attend offline networking events around the world. These events are run by Ecademy and approved Ecademy regional leaders.

You can also run your own business networking events.

For more information visit [www.ecademy.com](http://www.ecademy.com)

## XING

XING (originally Open Business Club) is a social software platform for enabling a small-world network for professionals. The company operating it claims that it is used by people from over 200 countries. Available languages include English, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French, Dutch, Chinese, Finnish, Swedish, Korean, Japanese, Russian, Polish, Turkish and Hungarian. By displaying how each member is connected to any other member, it visualises the small-world phenomenon.

The platform offers personal profiles, groups, discussion forums, event coordination, and other common social community features. Basic membership is free, but many core functions, like searching for people with specific qualifications or messaging people to

## Listen to your customers

When C.C. Chapman noticed a blemish in his high-definition television's reception during the NBA playoffs recently, he blasted a quick gripe about Comcast into the online ether, using the social network Twitter.

Minutes later, a Twitter user named Comcast Cares responded, and within 24 hours, a technician was at Chapman's house in Milford to fix the problem.

"I was so floored," said Chapman, who runs a digital marketing agency and advises companies to do what he experienced with Comcast - listen to what customers are saying about them online and respond. "When it actually happened to me, it blew me away," he said. "Now I have a case study."

Chapman's experience is one example of the ways customer service is changing in an age when a single disgruntled consumer with a broadband connection can ignite a crisis. It also shows the potential of the Internet to turn miffed customers into fans in a more organic way than an advertising campaign. Chapman, for example, made a podcast about his visit from Comcast.

**Source:**  
[www.boston.com](http://www.boston.com)  
**7 July 2008**

whom one is not already connected, can only be accessed by the premium members. The platform uses https and has a rigid privacy and no-spam policy. Unlike many other networking websites, XING provides its paying members very easy e-mail access to any members.

### *Ambassador program*

XING has a special Ambassador program for each city or region around the world with a substantial constituency. The Ambassadors hold local events that promote the use of social networking as a business tool, letting members introduce business ideas to one and other, and get to know each other on a personal level.

### *Enterprise groups*

XING also offers the system for closed communities, called Enterprise groups with their own access paths and interface designs. The platform serves as the infrastructure for corporate groups, including IBM, McKinsey, Accenture and others.

### *XING jobs*

XING Jobs is an updated version of a standard job portal, matching employers and recruiters with job seekers. Businesses can:

- Reach over 7 million highly qualified experts and decision makers everywhere around the world.
- Reach people who aren't actively looking for a job.
- Use the Intelligent matching system - suitable jobs are automatically displayed on candidates' home page.
- Use the benefits of a social network to research candidates and get references.

Job postings are charged on a "Pay-per-click" model.

### *Advertise on XING*

Businesses can advertise on XING and target an audience of decision makers from over 200 countries. XING claims to be Europe's market leader in Online Business Networking with 300 million page views per month and over 7 million unique users per month. Advertisements can be targeted to a specific age cluster, gender, job level, region or industry.

### *XING Best Offers*

XING BestOffers is a benefit program for XING members, offering exclusive deals on products and services for home and office. Premium Members have access to all offers, while basic members can take advantage of

selected offers.

For more information visit: [www.xing.com](http://www.xing.com)

### *Viadeo*

Viadeo started as a private business social network in France in 2004. Since then localised versions have become available for several European countries, including the UK, Germany, Spain, Italy and Portugal. It currently has 7 million professional listings.

Viadeo is similar in functionality to LinkedIn in that it allows you to create your own professional profile and then build up a network of contacts up to 4 levels and invite non-members to join.

It also allows you to post advertisements and forward your advertisement to your contacts to reach more people.

For more information visit [www.viadeo.com/en/connexion](http://www.viadeo.com/en/connexion)

## E-mail connection and network building

### *Yahoo! Groups*

Yahoo! Groups is a community-driven Internet communication tool, a hybrid between an electronic mailing list and an Internet forum.

New members can join groups by themselves, or may be invited by a moderator to join. A Group receives a web address and an e-mail address when it is created, and can be listed in one of the Yahoo! Group directory categories if desired.

Group messages can be posted and read by e-mail or on the Group homepage, like a web forum. Members can choose whether to receive individual e-mails or daily digest e-mails, or to read the posts at the web site. Some Groups are simply announcement lists, to which only the Group moderators can post, while others are discussion lists. As well as providing e-mail relaying and archiving facilities for the many lists it hosts, the Yahoo! Groups service provides additional functions on the web site, such as voting and calendar systems and file uploading. The basic mailing list functionality is available to any e-mail address, but a Yahoo! ID is required for

### **Facebook takes on Twitter**

Facebook has launched a new beta feature that drags the social-networking site another step closer to Twitter.

The "improved" Publisher feature allows users to share selected status updates, photos and videos with everyone on the internet, while allowing them to keep certain messages confined to their circle of friends.

Previously, users have only been able to make their entire profile public. The new feature will let Facebook members choose whether they want individual posts sent to everyone or only subsets of their friends and networks. The new feature is, however, only open to members who choose to make their profile page public.

The two sites have grown closer and closer in functionality over the past year, with many users choosing to synchronise their tweets and their Facebook status updates, and vice versa.

Third-party applications such as TweetDeck also allow users of both sites to post updates simultaneously.

**Source:**  
[www.pcpro.co.uk](http://www.pcpro.co.uk)  
**26 June 2009**

access to other features.

## *Business & Finance Groups*

There are many business and finance groups available. Some focus on a specific employment category, for example Human Resources; others focus on an industry or a business topic.

More information is available at:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/>

## **Windows Live Groups**

Windows Live Groups is an online service provided by Microsoft as part of its Windows Live range of services that enable users to create groups for sharing, discussion and coordination. The service allows users to form their own community groups allowing members of the group to participate in group discussions.

Group membership can be by invitation only or can be set up so that anyone can ask to join but the owner has to approve membership requests.

Groups with up to 20 members can have group conversations using Windows Live Messenger. Members will be able to see the e-mail address and online status of other members in Messenger.

Windows Live Groups integrates with the following Windows Live services to provide collaboration and sharing features:

- Windows Live Calendar provides a group calendar function which allows all members of the Group to add or keep track of calendar events for their Group.
- Windows Live Messenger allow users to create Groups in their contact list and start conversations with these Groups.
- Windows Live SkyDrive allows members of the Group to upload and share their files and documents for others in the Group to download.
- Windows Live Photos allow members of the Group to upload and share their photos with each other.

- Windows Live Hotmail allows users to send mass group e-mail messages to all members of a particular Group.

For more information visit:  
<http://home.live.com/allservices.aspx>

## **Book marking and reviewing**

### **Digg**

Digg is a social news website where people can discover and share content by submitting links and stories, and voting and commenting on submitted links and stories. Voting stories up and down is the site's cornerstone function, respectively called "digging" and "burying".

Many stories get submitted every day, but only the most Dugg stories appear on the front page. Digg's popularity has prompted the creation of other social networking sites with story submission and voting systems.

### *Business & Finance*

Digg has a Business & Finance section for stories on business and finance. At the time of writing stories included "Why you should avoid shady companies claiming to reduce debt" and "GE exploits loophole to benefit big."

### *Advertising and Partnerships*

Digg offers various ad packages and custom opportunities. It also offers partnership opportunities. For example, your business website could put a "Digg This" button on your site to make it easier for their users to submit stories to Digg. When a story from your site gets enough votes to make it to the Digg homepage, you can expect to see a substantial spike in traffic. More information is available at <http://digg.com/advertise>

### *Facebook Connect/Twitter*

Facebook connect allows users of Digg and Facebook to connect their accounts. When a Facebook account is connected to a Digg account, Digg articles can then be shared on the user's Facebook page. Facebook Connect also allows Facebook users to log into Digg with their Facebook account, thus bypassing the normally required Digg registration.

Every time you Digg or favorite something, you can automatically 'tweet' it to your friends with TwiggIt.

## **Are social networking tools legitimate business tools for accountants and other professionals?**

Certainly the American Certified Public Accountants (CPA) seem to think so. Let us answer this question by looking at the volume and momentum of some of the social media tools in use today:

- Facebook currently reports over 200 million active users, over half of whom log on to the site at least daily.
- The fastest growing demographic in Facebook is those 35 years old and older.
- Plaxo currently has over 20 million users.
- LinkedIn had over 12 million unique visitors and 48 million visits in the month of April.
- Usage of Twitter is increasing rapidly, with over 19 million unique visitors and 125 million visits in the month of April.
- All of the Big Four CPA firms have a presence on Facebook.
- The AICPA along with a large – and rapidly growing – number of state CPA societies have presences on both Facebook and Twitter.
- Intuit, Thomson Reuters, and Sage Software all have a presence on Facebook and many of their team members use Facebook, Twitter, Plaxo, and LinkedIn to communicate.

Based on both the volume and the breadth of usage, there is little doubt that social networking tools are legitimate tools for accountants and other business professionals.

**Source:**  
[www.theprogressiveaccountant.com](http://www.theprogressiveaccountant.com)  
**6 June 2009**

## *Digg Dialogg*

Digg Dialogg allows Digg users to submit questions to a pre-selected famous individual who agrees to do an interview with a reporter chosen by Digg.

## *Digg Bar*

Digg Bar provides a toolbar above the top of a site allowing the user to produce shortened urls, or access Digg comments and analytics without leaving the page.

For more information, visit: [www.digg.com](http://www.digg.com)

## **StumbleUpon**

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StumbleUpon is an Internet community that allows its users to discover and rate Web pages, photos, and videos. It is a personalised recommendation engine which uses peer and social-networking principles. Web pages are presented when the user clicks the "Stumble!" button on the browser's toolbar. StumbleUpon chooses which Web page to display based on the user's ratings of previous pages, ratings by his/her friends, and by the ratings of users with similar interests. Users can rate or choose not to rate any Web page with a thumbs up or thumbs down, and clicking the Stumble button resembles "channel-surfing" the Web.

StumbleUpon also allows their users to indicate their interests from a list of nearly 500 topics to produce relevant content for the user. There is also an in-built blogging service.

## *Advertising*

StumbleUpon uses knowledge of user preferences to deliver targeted advertising. A small proportion of the "stumbles" users come across (typically less than 2%) are sponsored pages matching their topics of interest. For example, those signed up for photography will occasionally see an ad related to photography. Such content is vetted by humans for "quality and relevance" prior to its delivery. A sponsored site is identifiable by a green "person" logo on the toolbar. Paid accounts (referred to as "Sponsors") have a variety of options, including the ability to turn off such advertising. To find out more, visit [www.stumbleupon.com/ads](http://www.stumbleupon.com/ads)

## *Site Promotion*

You can promote your business website with StumbleUpon Buttons & Tools. Adding a button to your site makes it easy for your visitors to submit your content to StumbleUpon. Simply copy and paste the

code into your site and start receiving free exposure on StumbleUpon.

## *StumbleThru*

StumbleThru searches for content from some of the most popular sites on the web, including Flickr, MySpace, Wikipedia, YouTube, BBC, CNN, and Physorg.

This makes it easy for users to discover new content on these sites that has been given a thumbs-up ranking by other StumbleUpon users, theoretically making it easier to find the better quality content on these sites.

## *Partner Program*

The partner program allows you to add StumbleUpon Discovery to your website so that your visitors can StumbleThru and rate the best of your content while remaining on your website. This increases your potential for viral distribution.

For more information, visit: [www.stumbleupon.com](http://www.stumbleupon.com)

## **Image sharing groups**

### **Flickr**

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Flickr is a free image and video hosting website, web services suite, and online community platform. In addition to being a popular Web site for users to share personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers as a photo repository.

Flickr allows you to:

- Upload from your desktop, send by e-mail, or use your cameraphone.
- Get rid of red eye, crop a photo, or add fonts and effects.
- Use collections, sets, and tags to organize your photos and videos.
- Use groups and privacy controls to share your photos and videos.
- Share where your photos and videos were taken, and see photos and videos taken near you.
- Make cards, photo books, framed prints, DVDs, etc.
- Get updates from family and friends.

Flickr asks photo submitters to organize images using tags (a form of metadata), which allow searchers to find images related to particular topics, such as place names or subject matter. Flickr was also an early website to implement tag clouds, which provide access to images tagged with the most popular keywords.

Flickr also allows users to organize their photos into "sets", or groups of photos that fall under the same heading. However, sets are more flexible than the traditional folder-based method of organizing files, as one photo can belong to one set, many sets, or none at all. Flickr's "sets", then, represent a form of categorical metadata rather than a physical hierarchy. Sets may be grouped into "collections", and collections further grouped into higher-order collections.

Flickr provides both private and public image storage. A user uploading an image can set privacy controls that determine who can view the image. A photo can be flagged as either public or private. Private images are visible by default only to the uploader, but they can also be marked as viewable by friends and/or family. Privacy settings also can be decided by adding photographs from a user's photostream to a "group pool". If a group is private all the members of that group can see the photo. If a group is public the photo becomes public as well. Flickr also provides a "contact list" which can be used to control image access for a specific set of users.

Flickr also has a "guest pass" system that allows private photos to be shared with non Flickr members. For instance, a person could e-mail this pass to parents who may not have an account to allow them to see the photos otherwise restricted from public view. This setting allows sets to be shared, or all photos under a certain privacy category (friends or family) to be shared.

Many members allow their photos to be viewed by anyone, forming a large collaborative database of categorized photos. By default, other members can leave comments about any image they have permission to view, and in many cases can add to the list of tags associated with an image.

## *Business use*

You can not post a photo specifically for the purposes of advertising your company, your products or services. You can however use your web site address as your Flickr screen name which will then be attached to every photo you upload and every message you post in a Group discussion. You can also make your company logo your Flickr icon for more exposure.

You can also link from your business website to your Flickr photostream to allow your site visitors to view your photos.

More information is available at:  
[www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

## *iStockphoto*

iStockphoto is an online, royalty free, international provider of photos, illustrations, video, audio and Flash files. Files start at \$1 and go up according to size. To buy files from iStock, you'll need credits, iStock's very own currency, available in three plans.

- The Pay-as-you-go credit system makes it easy to get the files you need, whenever you need them. Buy Pay-as-you-go credits as you need them in packages of 12 to 2,000.
- A Subscription plan gives you a daily credit limit for a fixed time period. Subscriptions give you access to a regular supply of credits for your ongoing projects.
- High-volume credit packages are available to users with Corporate Accounts.

Businesses can also upload images, illustrations and videos for sale and earn at least 20% of every credit that's used to download their artwork.

More information is available at:  
[www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com)

## Online Platforms

### *Ning*

Ning is an online platform for people to create their own social networks for their specific interests with their own visual design, choice of features and member data.

Anyone can create their own social network for a particular topic or need, catering to specific membership bases. At its launch, Ning offered several simple base websites developed internally and by members of a closed beta. In late September 2006, Ning

### **Ning Apps bring a new dimension of flexibility and power to the social network platform**

Ning's social network-building platform has just launched Ning Apps, a new suite of applications and features that Network Creators will be able to deploy across their networks with only a few clicks.

The news has been a long time coming - network administrators have long been asking for features that could enhance their networks. But because of the nature of Ning, which houses hundreds of thousands of unique social networks, Network Creators were often requesting totally different things. Now they'll be able to make everyone (or nearly everyone) happy.

At launch, Ning Apps is offering 90 new features to Network creators, built by 52 different developers that encompass a wide variety of web services. Network creators will now be able to integrate live video chat through TokBox, conduct contests with Wildfire, and create Wikis.

Even better: network administrators will be able to easily integrate monetisation options, selling merchandise through Cartfly and tickets through Amiamo and other ticketing apps.

The Ning site recently saw the creation of its 1 millionth network (of which 200,000 are active), and is seeing 85,000 to 100,000 new users per day across all of its networks.

**Source:**  
[www.techcrunch.com](http://www.techcrunch.com)  
**6 May 2009**



narrowed its focus to offering a group website, a photos website, and a videos website for people to copy and use for any purpose. These three templates were later superseded by a single customizable application aimed at enabling anyone to easily create their own social network. However, Ning does allow developers to have some source level control of their social networks, enabling them to change features and underlying logic.

Ning has both free and paid options. When someone creates a social network on Ning, it is free by default and runs ads that Ning controls. If the person creating the social network chooses, they can pay to control the ads (or lack thereof), in exchange for a monthly fee. A few other premium services such as extra storage and bandwidth and non-Ning URLs are also available for additional monthly fee.

For more information, visit: [www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com)

## KickApps

KickApps is a hosted platform for creating social networks and adding social software features, video players and widgets to websites. More than 50,000 sites use KickApps, including major media companies (e.g. ABC Family, The BBC, The CW, and Scripps Networks) and a wide variety of niche websites.

KickApps is a hosted platform (SaaS) that provides a range of social media applications to website developers and publishers that accelerate deployment of more sophisticated and costly applications such as social networking, user-generated content, media management and sharing, profiles, programmable video players, webcam applications and widgets.

A SaaS platform allows websites to deploy a wide range of user experiences in a variety of ways: REST and SOAP APIs, feeds, programmable widgets and video players, customizable templates and single-sign services.

- Members select a username and password (or use their existing site ID) to join your social network.
- Members can upload videos, photos, and audio.

- Member profiles contain standard social networking features, including: blogs (video, audio, and plain text), RSS feeds, guest books, friends, multi-media message boards, widgets and groups.
- Includes online media management, member management, reporting and advertising administration.

For more information visit [www.kickapps.com](http://www.kickapps.com)

## Kwiqq

Kwiqq is a social networking platform that offers a comprehensive range of features completely customisable to help you build a social network to meet your business needs.

Kwiqq provides a fully adaptable software framework so that the time it takes for a project to roll out is greatly reduced. It includes an extensive library of reusable code and comprehensive community management tools to give you complete control.

Kwiqq is fully scalable and supports many languages. It is designed to integrate with both front-end and back-end systems. Kwiqq clients also benefit from any upgrades and additions they build into their software in the future.

More information is available at: [www.kwiqq.com](http://www.kwiqq.com)

## Other Social Media

### YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing website on which users can upload and share videos. Most of the content on YouTube has been uploaded by individuals, although media corporations including the BBC and other organisations offer some of their material via the site, as part of the YouTube partnership program. HM Government provide information videos on the site and businesses upload information videos and interviews.

Unregistered users can watch the videos, while registered users are permitted to upload an unlimited number of videos. Videos that are considered to contain potentially offensive content are available only to registered users over the age of 18. The uploading of videos containing defamation, pornography, copyright violations, and material encouraging criminal conduct is prohibited by YouTube's terms of service.

### Revlon turns to social media to build buzz for major product launch

Cosmetics giant Revlon has launched a social media campaign as part of its biggest ever product launch, for Ultimate Lip Colour lipstick. The two-month campaign, developed by Soup, aims to drive awareness of the lipstick and engage customers through dedicated pages across social media sites such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

A campaign site invites users to become the next Lauren Luke – the make-up artist made famous on YouTube – by asking them to write a review of the product. Users can write or film their review, which will be hosted on the site and YouTube. The winner will become Revlon's official online reviewer.

Revlon's integrated agency Soup also kicked off a PR campaign on blogs and forums to encourage influential bloggers to discuss the product.

Revlon hopes to appeal to a younger audience by running online ads across women's sites and social media sites such as Facebook.

Last month Revlon rolled out a digital campaign for the launch of two new fragrances within its Charlie range, Chic and Spirit.

**Source:** [www.nma.co.uk](http://www.nma.co.uk)  
**25 June 2009**

## Advertising

YouTube offers a number of advertising opportunities. You can create a video promotion by choosing one of your videos, writing some promotional text, and selecting which keywords should trigger your promotion. Your video promotion will then appear next to contextually relevant search results. When a YouTube viewer clicks on your promotion, they see your video. You only pay when people click to see your video - not when people see your promotion. For more information, visit:  
[www.youtube.com/advertise](http://www.youtube.com/advertise)

## Partnership

YouTube runs a partner programme; as a partner you may:

- Share revenue from relevant InVideo ads overlaid onto your videos and banner ads running next to your videos to earn money.
- Participate in co-marketing & branded entertainment opportunities with top-brand advertisers.
- Utilise your own sales to sell your own ads.

To qualify for the YouTube Partner programme, you must meet some minimum criteria, including owning the copyrights and distribution rights for all audio and video content that you upload. More information is available at:  
[www.youtube.com/t/partnerships\\_faq](http://www.youtube.com/t/partnerships_faq)

For more information, visit:  
[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

## AudioBoo

AudioBoo is a website and iPhone OS application designed to allow users to post and share sound files on the AudioBoo website. It allows iPhone users to record and playback digital recordings up to 5 minutes long which can then be posted on the AudioBoo website where users have their own pages or channels similar to Twitter or Youtube. The website is still undergoing further development.

These recordings are referred to as 'boos' and photos can be added to the boo from the iPhone library along with a title. Currently the ability to upload to the website is limited to the iPhone OS but it has been indicated on the AudioBoo website that in future this capability will be extended to more file types and operating systems.

More information is available at:  
<http://audioboo.fm>

## Blogs

A blog is an online message board, typically covering a chosen subject area. Contributions are organised by date with the most recent contributions at the top. Visitors to the blog can comment on other entries, pose a question, or simply express a view.

A blog is simply a website. As with other websites, it requires an IP address and a domain name to be accessed. It therefore needs to be hosted on a web server like any other website.

Blogs are typically single pages of text with little or no graphics, making them very easy to create and update with minimal storage requirements. Their innate simplicity and low cost has led a number of hosting providers to offer free blogging services (sometimes in return for advertisement) and software that allow a user to create and update a blog without any technical knowledge. Most of these services provide some sort of index to help you draw readers to your blog.

More information about blogs can be found in our publication: *409 – What can a blog do for your business?*

## Wikis

A wiki is a website that uses wiki software, allowing the easy creation and editing of any number of interlinked Web pages, using a simplified markup language or a WYSIWYG text editor, within the browser. It is in effect an online database.

Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community websites. The collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia is one of the best-known wikis.

Wikis are used in business to provide intranet and knowledge management systems. They provide easy access and simple tools for editing.

## Recommended Reading

### **The Social Media Bible: Tactics, Tools, and Strategies for Business Success**

(Paperback) by Lon Safko, David Brake. Published by John Wiley & Sons, ISBN-10: 0470411554, ISBN-13: 978-0470411551



### **Facebook Marketing: Leverage Social Media to Grow Your Business**

(Paperback) by Steve Holzner. Published by QUE; 1 edition, ISBN-10: 0789738023, ISBN-13: 978-0789738028

### **Twitter Power: How to Dominate Your Market One Tweet at a Time**

(Hardcover) by Anthony Robbins (Foreword), Joel Comm, Ken Burge. Published by John Wiley & Sons, ISBN-10: 0470458429, ISBN-13: 978-0470458426

### **YouTube for Business: Online Video Marketing for Any Business**

(Paperback) by Michael Miller. Published by QUE; 1 edition, ISBN-10: 0789737973, ISBN-13: 978-0789737977

### **Social Media Marketing: An Hour a Day**

(Paperback) by Susan Bratton (Foreword), Dave Evans. Published by John Wiley & Sons, ISBN-10: 0470344024, ISBN-13: 978-0470344026

### **Secrets of Social Media Marketing: How to Use Online Conversations and Customer Communities to Turbo-Charge Your Business!**

(Paperback) by Paul Gillin. Published by Quill Driver Books, ISBN-10: 1884956858, ISBN-13: 978-1884956850

### **Twitter Revolution: How Social Media and Mobile Marketing Is Changing the Way We Do Business & Market Online**

(Paperback) by Deborah Micek, Warren Whitlock. Published by Xeno Press, ISBN-10: 1934275077, ISBN-13: 978-1934275078

### **The New Influencers: A Marketer's Guide to the New Social Media**

(Hardcover) by Paul Gillin. Published by Quill Driver Books, ISBN-10: 1884956653, ISBN-13: 978-1884956652

## Further Information

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues.

We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.

If you would like to receive further information about this subject or other publications, please call us – see our contact details on the next page.

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