

What Is Social Networking?

Social Networking. . . It's the way the 21st century communicates today. Want to know what it really means?

Social networking is the grouping of individuals into specific groups, like small rural communities or a neighborhood subdivision, if you will. Although social networking is possible in person, especially in the workplace, universities, and high schools, it is most popular **online**. This is because unlike most high schools, colleges, or workplaces, the internet is filled with millions of individuals who are looking to meet other people, to gather and share first-hand information and experiences about cooking, golfing, gardening, developing friend-ships or professional alliances, finding employment, business-to-business marketing and even groups sharing information about the end of the Mayan calendar and the Great Shift to arrive December 21-2012. The topics and interests are as varied and rich as the story of our world.

When it comes to **online social networking**, websites are commonly used. These websites are known as social sites. Social networking websites function like an online community of internet users. Depending on the website in question, many of these online community members share common interests in hobbies, religion, or politics. Once you are granted access to a social networking website you can begin to socialize. This socialization may include reading the profile pages of other members and possibly even contacting them.

The friends that you can make are just one of the many benefits to social networking online. Another one of those benefits includes diversity because the internet gives individuals from all around the world access to social networking sites. This means that although you are in the United States, you could develop an online friendship with someone in Denmark or India. Not only will you make new friends, but you just might learn a thing or two about new cultures or new languages and learning is always a good thing.

As mentioned, social networking often involves grouping specific individuals or organizations together. While there are a number of social networking websites that focus on particular interests, there are others that do not. The websites without a main focus are often referred to as "traditional" social networking websites and usually have open memberships. This means that anyone can become a member, no matter what their hobbies, beliefs, or views are. However, once you are inside this online community, you can begin to create your own network of friends and eliminate members that do not share common interests or goals.

As I'm sure you're aware, there are dangers associated with social networking including data theft and viruses, which are on the rise. The most prevalent danger though often involves online predators or individuals who claim to be someone that they are not. Although danger does exist with networking online, it also exists in the real world, too. Just like you're advised when meeting strangers at clubs and bars, school, or work -- you are also advised to proceed with caution online.



By being aware of your cyber-surroundings and who you are talking to, you should be able to safely enjoy social networking online. It will take many phone conversations to get to know someone, but you really won't be able to make a clear judgment until you can meet each other in person. Just use common sense and listen to your inner voice; it will tell you when something doesn't feel right about the online conversations taking place.

Once you are well informed and comfortable with your findings, you can begin your search from hundreds of networking communities to join. This can easily be done by performing a standard internet search. Your search will likely return a number of results, including MySpace, FriendWise, FriendFinder, Yahoo! 360, Facebook, Orkut, and Classmates.

(ORIGINAL INTERNET SOURCE: http://www.whatissocialnetworking.com/)