

Getting connected

1 QUICK QUIZ

Test your knowledge of the Internet.

- What is a social-networking site?
- Who uses social-networking sites?
- Can you think of three social-networking sites?

2 WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Write the key words from the article next to the definitions below. The paragraph numbers will help you.

stay in touch photo-sharing hanging out strangers announced
profile popular details features section

- being with your friends, doing nothing special _____ (para 1)
- a _____ thing is one that many people like (para 1)
- to keep in contact with other people _____ (para 1)
- a description of a person, maybe with a photo, hobbies, likes and dislikes _____ (para 3)
- special parts of a website about something in particular, e.g. videos or music _____ (para 2)
- people you do not know _____ (para 6)
- when something was said publicly _____ (para 7)
- small facts and information _____ (para 7)
- a type of website where other people can see your pictures _____ (para 9)
- a part or piece of something, a division _____ (para 10)

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1 Teens around the world are hanging out there. More than half of all teens on the Internet belong to one and go there every day. Everybody's talking about **social-networking sites!** MySpace, Facebook and Bebo are some of the most popular websites in the world – and they are changing the way we meet and stay in touch with people.

2 **What are they?**
Social-networking sites give you a web page that you control. On most sites, you can add photos and write about yourself. Sites have different features – like videos, music and blogs. Your page can be connected to other people's pages by adding them as friends. You can see your friends' pages, they can see yours and you can write to each other – maybe even in English!

3 **How do I use them?**
To join a social-networking site, you need an email address. Some have rules about age – to join MySpace, for example, you must be 14. After you fill out your profile, you get a web page. You control your page and can change it as often as you like. You can write about your hobbies and what music you like. Then you link to your friends' pages – and decide who can link to yours.

4 **How do I stay safe?**
Be careful about the information you give and who you give it to! Set your profile so only your friends can see it and only add people who are your friends. Never write your address, phone number or email address online for others to see! Never agree to meet up with someone you've met online without telling your parents. Many sites have safety features. Follow the tips they give about online safety. Never set up a profile without telling your parents!

5 **Your space**
Nearly everyone has heard of MySpace! Most big stars have MySpace pages where you can read about them and listen to their music. And millions of teens all over the world use MySpace to stay in touch with friends and family. Hannah Freney, 15, from Skelton in England, has had a MySpace profile for more than a year. Hannah told us why she uses MySpace. "I talk to my friends and meet new people. I have 261 people connected to me – friends, friends of friends, and also bands. Meeting new people is my favourite thing."

In your face

6 Some people say social-networking sites are dangerous if strangers can see too much personal information. But most teens know they need to be safe. Dara Bowie, 16, from the Canadian province of Ontario, uses Facebook. She says, "My profile is private, so only people I choose as friends can see it. I don't want strangers to see it and don't add people I don't know."

Bebo mania

7 In 17 March 2007, Bebo announced that it was the most popular website in Ireland. More than one million young Irish people have profiles on this social-networking site. Brenda Rouse, 18, from Cork in Ireland, uses three social-networking sites. She says, "I use each site for different things: MySpace for music, Facebook is good for uploading photos. But all my friends use Bebo – so I use that the most. Bebo is really easy to join – you just fill in a few details about yourself and a webpage is made for you."

The big three

MySpace

8 MySpace started in 2003 and now has more than 200 million profiles. MySpace includes pictures, a message board, personal profile and MySpace music – where you can add songs to your page or sell your own songs.

Facebook

9 In 2004 Mark Zuckerberg, a 19-year-old university student, started Facebook. It's the largest website for photo-sharing – with 8.5 million new photos every day. Facebook connects you with friends, and it is a great way to meet people who like the same things you do.

Bebo

10 Bebo was started in 2005. Now it has more than 34 million members. A Bebo profile has a section about you, a section that shows your friends, photographs, a whiteboard for drawing pictures, a message board for comments and other extras – like quizzes, blogs and videos.

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3 FIND THE INFORMATION

Find the second half of each sentence to complete the information about social networking.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. More than half the teenagers online ... | ... a great way to stay in touch with friends. |
| 2. You should never add your personal ... | ... a US university student. |
| 3. You have to be 14 years old ... | ... million members. |
| 4. MySpace has 200 ... | ... Facebook, then Bebo. |
| 5. Facebook was set up by ... | ... details to your social-networking site. |
| 6. MySpace started first, then ... | ... to join MySpace. |
| 8. Social-networking sites are ... | ... belong to a social-networking site. |

4 TEEN TALK

Hang out. Many teenagers around the world are *hang out* on social-networking sites. What about you? Where do you hang out?

a) *At the weekend I sometimes hang out ...*

b) *In the summer holidays I usually hang out ...*

5 A CLASS SURVEY

Ask the other pupils in your class about what they do online. Put a tick when someone answers "Yes" and ask them for more information. Then talk about the results of your survey in class.

For example: *Kevin, Maria and Marc have blogs. Ali and Anna use photo-sharing websites.*

	YES	NO
Do you have a social networking website?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a blog?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you chat online with your friends?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you send emails?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you play online games with other people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use photo-sharing websites (e.g. Flickr or Picasa)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use any other social-networking websites (apart from Facebook, Myspace or Bebo)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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6 WEBQUEST

Alone or in small groups, make an Online Safety Code poster. Use the safety tips from the article. Can you think of more tips? Have a look at this website for more ideas: <http://www.safekids.com/kidsrules.htm>

<h1>Online Safety Code</h1> <h2>Safety Online</h2>	
<p>Do ...</p> <p>Set your profile so only your friends can see it.</p>	<p>Don't ...</p> <p>Write your address, phone number or email address online for others to see.</p>

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KEY

1

- a) A social-networking site is a website which you can use to talk to your friends and relatives, upload photos and many other things.
- b) Everyone, from teenagers to adults, uses social-networking sites.
- c) Three social-networking sites mentioned in the article are: Facebook, My Space and Bebo.

2

1. hanging out
2. popular
3. stay in touch
4. profile
5. features
6. strangers
7. announced
8. details
9. photo-sharing
10. section

3

1. More than half the teenagers online belong to a social-networking site.
2. You should never add your personal details to your social-networking site.
3. You have to be 14 years old to join MySpace.
4. MySpace has 200 million members.
5. Facebook was set up by a US university student.
6. MySpace started first, then Facebook, then Bebo.
7. Bebo is the third largest social-networking site in the US.
8. Social-networking sites are a great way to stay in touch with friends.