

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 discussion hanging out strangers announced
profile poll isolate features section

- spending time with your friends, doing nothing special _____ (para 1)
- to keep in contact with other people _____ (para 1)
- a description of a person, which may include a photo, hobbies, likes and dislikes _____ (para 1)
- to separate someone from other people _____ (para 1)
- 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)
- a conversation or talk, often about important things _____ (para 9)
- a part or piece of something, a division _____ (para 10)
- a survey or occasion when people are asked to answer a particular question _____ (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. Social-networking sites let your friends and family – your social network – link to your online profile. Fans say these sites give them quicker and easier contact to their friends. But other people say too much online contact can isolate you in real life. So what's really happening?

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 interests 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 Freaney, 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."

6

In your face

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."

Emma Bowie, 20, Dara's sister, lives in Munich, Germany. "I have Facebook, so my friends and family can see what is happening in my life," she says. "I send messages to my friends and I upload photos as often as possible. I know my mum likes seeing the photos in my profile!"

7

Bebo mania

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

It's the sixth most popular website in the world and gets 80% of all visits to social-networking sites. 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

In 2004 Mark Zuckerberg, a 19-year-old Harvard student, started Facebook. It was made for university students, but now anyone can use it. More than 43 million members use the site, and it's still growing. It's the largest website for photo sharing – with 8.5 million new photos added every day. Facebook connects you with friends, and you can also have online discussions about everything from politics to your favourite stars. This is a great way to meet people who like the same things you do – and of course, to practise your English!

Bebo

It's the largest social-networking site in Britain, Ireland and New Zealand. It's the third largest in the US. 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, polls, blogs and videos. On Bebo people can also upload their music or writing for others to see and discuss.

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3 FIND THE INFORMATION

State whether the sentences are true or false according to the article, correcting the sentences that are false.

1. More than half the teenagers in the world belong to a social-networking site.
2. You should never add your personal details to your social-networking site.
3. You have to be 18 years old to join MySpace.
4. MySpace has 43 million members.
5. Facebook was set up by a US university student.
6. Bebo was started before MySpace and after Facebook.
7. Bebo is the largest social-networking site in the US.

4 TEEN TALK

Hanging out. Paragraph 1 tells us that teens around the world are *hanging out* on social-networking sites. What about you? Where do you hang out?

a) *At the weekend / sometimes hang out ... (where)*

b) *In the summer holidays / usually hang out ... (where)*

5 A CLASS SURVEY

- a) Put the words in the right order to make the survey questions.
- b) Ask the other pupils in your class about their online habits.
- c) Put a tick every time someone answers positively with "Yes, I do" and ask them for more information. Count the ticks at the end and talk about the results of your survey in class.

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

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6 WEBQUEST

a. Match the dates with the things that happened at that time. Search the Internet for the answers.

900 BC	1876	1951	1925	1972	1991
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- _____ The first digital camera was sold.
- _____ Ray Tomlinson sent the first email using the @ symbol.
- _____ John Logie Baird sent the first TV signal.
- _____ The first postal service started in China.
- _____ Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone.
- _____ Computers were first sold in shops.

b. Make a timeline poster to put the events in order. Can you think of any other communication events that you could add to the timeline? Download photos or do your own drawings to illustrate your timeline poster.

The Spot on article and these websites will help you.

- <http://www.myspace.com/>
- <http://www.facebook.com/>
- <http://www.bebo.com/>
- <http://www.flickr.com/>
- <http://www.google.com>
- <http://www.wikipedia.org/>
- <http://www.about.com/>

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KEY

1

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

2

- hanging out
- stay in touch
- profile
- isolate
- features
- strangers
- announced
- discussion
- section
- poll

3

- False: More than half the teenagers online belong to a social-networking site.
- True.
- False: You have to be 14 years old to join MySpace.
- False: MySpace has more than 200 million members.
- True.
- False: MySpace started first, then Facebook, then Bebo.
- False: Bebo is the third largest social-networking site in the US.

5

- a)
- Do you have a social-networking website account?
- Do you have a blog?
- Do you chat online with your friends?
- Do you send emails?
- Do you play online games with other people?
- Do you use photo-sharing websites?
- Do you use any other social-networking websites (apart from Facebook, Myspace or Bebo)?

6

- 900 BC: The first postal service started in China.
- 1876: Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone.
- 1925: John Logie Baird sent the first experimental TV signal.
- 1951: Computers are first sold in shops.
- 1972: Ray Tomlinson sent first email using the @ symbol.
- 1991: The first digital camera was sold.