

Using Social Networking for Education

Overview

Lesson 1: Introducing Educational Networking

Lesson 2: Setting up a Social Network for your School on Facebook

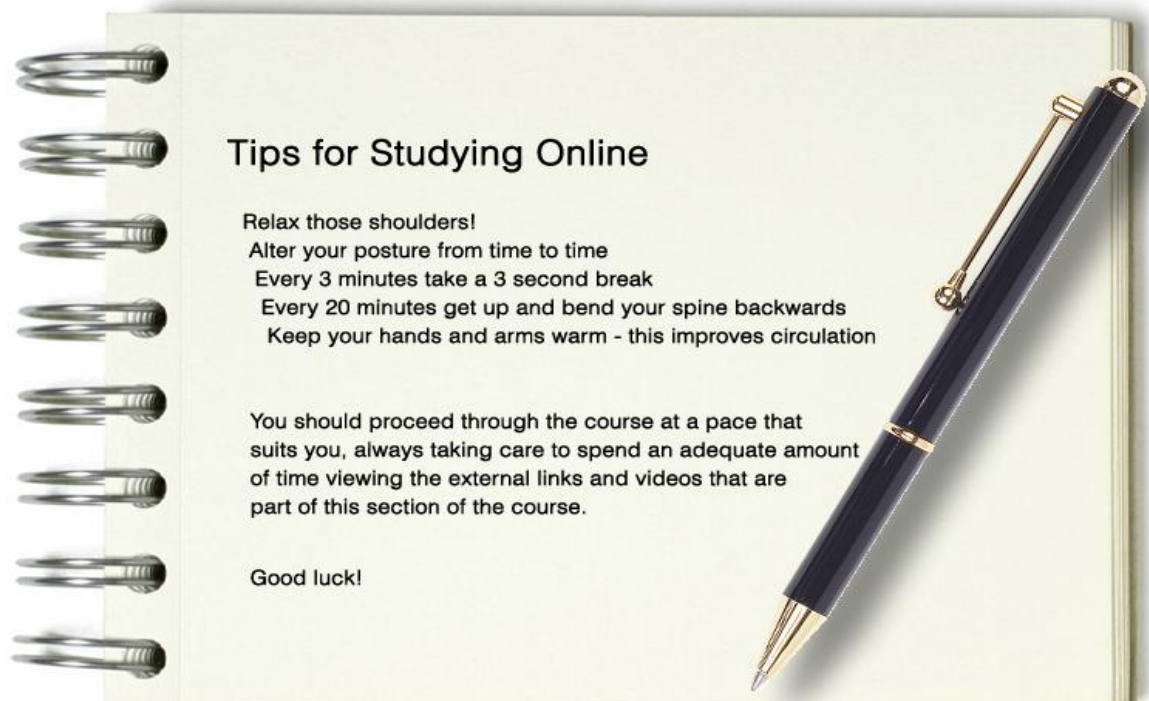
Creating a Facebook page for your school and how to admin it.

Lesson 3: Social Networking for Children

Social networking site designed for children and case study on one

Lesson 4: Social Networking Experiences in Education

Lesson 5: Social Networking Guidelines and Security



Lesson 1: Introducing Educational Networking

Social Networking

Social networking websites were originally set up in the late 1990s to enable friends to stay in touch with each other.

Social networking sites offer features such as automatic address book updates, viewable profiles, the ability to form new links through "introduction services," and other forms of online social connections. These networks tend to be organized around shared common interests. MySpace, for example, builds on independent music and party scenes.

Tribe.net is organised around geographical location.

Facebook is an online community where friends can post pictures, write blogs and send messages to one another. Each member has a personal page where information such as likes and dislikes, favourite films and music and photos can be posted for friends to see.

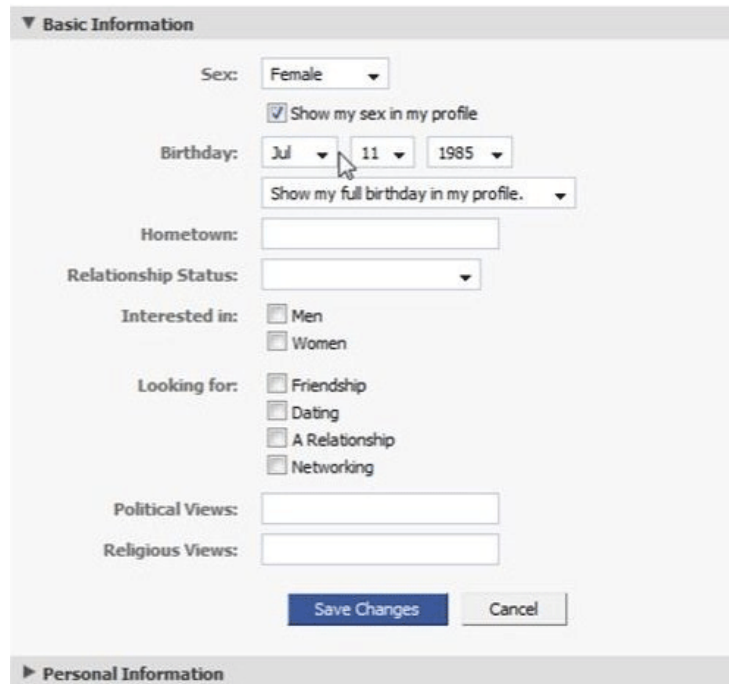


Figure 1.1 Social Networking

What are young people doing at these sites?

1. Creating profiles

Once they are registered with the website, users post a profile of themselves which can be read by others online. This usually helps to show what kind of person these people are with some personal interests.



The image shows a screenshot of the Facebook profile creation page, specifically the 'Basic Information' section. The form includes the following fields and options:

- Sex:** A dropdown menu set to 'Female'.
- Show my sex in my profile
- Birthday:** Three dropdown menus for month (Jul), day (11), and year (1985).
- Show my full birthday in my profile.
- Hometown:** An empty text input field.
- Relationship Status:** A dropdown menu.
- Interested in:** Two checkboxes for 'Men' and 'Women', both of which are unchecked.
- Looking for:** Four checkboxes for 'Friendship', 'Dating', 'A Relationship', and 'Networking', all of which are unchecked.
- Political Views:** An empty text input field.
- Religious Views:** An empty text input field.

At the bottom of the form are two buttons: 'Save Changes' (in blue) and 'Cancel' (in grey). Below the form is a section header for 'Personal Information' with a right-pointing arrow.

Figure 1.2 Profile creation page on facebook

2. Adding links to their friends profiles

The next step is to invite their existing contacts to join their profile. They are usually invited from their existing e-mail and messenger contact lists.

3. Creating their own blogs and posting comments on other people's profiles

An explicit reaction to their online presence offers valuable feedback to teenagers as they strive to create an identity. Comments are also a sign of affection and affiliation. There is a definite social etiquette at play, comments are expected to be reciprocated.

4. Sharing Photos

Photographs can be easily uploaded from digital cameras and camera phones, with descriptions and "Tags" added to each image. Friends can then look at these photographs and add their own comments.

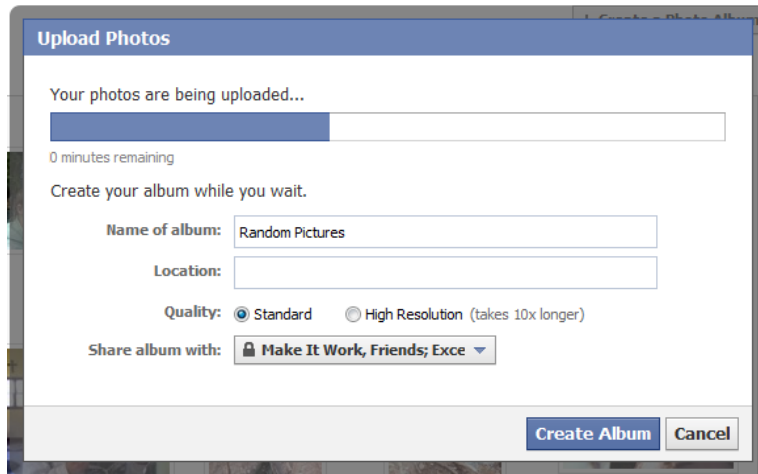


Figure 1.3 Photos being uploaded to facebook

Why do teenagers do this?

Many teens are using social networking sites everyday; it's just another part of their life. They are natural born multi-taskers and can be surfing social networking sites while doing their homework, downloading music or chatting on Instant Messenger. They want to be with their friends in a space that isn't contaminated by adults and because of the constraints imposed on them they rarely get the opportunity to do this outside their virtual environment.



Figure 1.4 Teens on facebook

Sites like Facebook become personalised spaces where they can present themselves in a way that they control. One recent observation stated that:

"Most of their [teenagers] space is controlled space. Adults with authority control the home, the school, and most activity spaces. Teens are told where to be, what to do and how to do it. Because teens feel a lack of control at home, many don't see it as their private space."

... By going virtual, digital technologies allow youth to (re)create private and public youth space while physically in controlled spaces."

In short, Facebook allows young people to experiment to try and find their own identity. They interact with friends to establish what makes them unique and different to their peers. Social networking gives young people the chance to experiment with personal taste and ideas to develop their own identity.



Figure 1.5 Teens chatting on facebook

Educational Networking

Educational Networking is the use of social networking technologies for educational purposes. "Educational networking" may be a more suitable phrase to describe the pedagogical value of these tools using social networking websites.

Social Networking: An Evolution in Communication Media (9m 56sec)

The following video clip discusses Educational Networking by illustrating the evolution in communication from early methods of communication to the various social media used today.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cma3MABaHsw>