

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.

stay in touch interest groups strangers announced
profile poll isolate personality

- to separate someone from other people _____
- a description of a person, which may include a photo, hobbies, likes and dislikes _____
- to keep in contact with other people _____
- people you do not know _____
- when something was said publicly _____
- the aspect of a person that makes them behave in a particular way, e.g. friendly, unfriendly, shy, etc.

- groups of people who are all interested in a particular subject _____
- a survey or occasion when people are asked to answer a particular question _____

3 WHAT ARE THE HEADINGS?

Skim-read the article and write the headings above the sections a-f that they relate to.

How do I stay safe?
In your face

Bebo mania
Your space

What are they?
How do I use them?

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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. But other people say too much online contact can isolate you in real life. So what's really happening?

a)

2 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!

b)

3 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.

c)

4 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!

d)

5 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."

e)

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." And Dara says, Facebook is great for staying in touch with friends who are far away – like my sister Emma, who lives in Germany." Emma Bowie, 20, lives in Munich. "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!"

f)

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, which you can change as much as you want to fit your personality."



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The big three

8 MySpace

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. Many people find MySpace complicated to use.

9 Facebook

In 2004 Mark Zuckerberg, a 19-year-old Harvard student, started what is now 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, but also lets you join interest groups – where you can 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!



facebook



10 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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4 FIND THE INFORMATION

1. What are the names of the three social networking websites in the article?
2. Which is the most popular in Ireland?
3. Which is said to be the most complicated to use?
4. Which was set up by a US university student?
5. Which started first?
6. What advice does the article give about online safety?

5 TEEN TALK

Hang out. Paragraph 1 tells us that teens around the world are *hang out* on social networking sites. What about you? Complete the sentences.

a) *At the weekend I hang out with ...* (names of your friends)

b) *In the summer holidays I hang out at/in ...* (where)

c) *After school we usually hang out until ...* (time)

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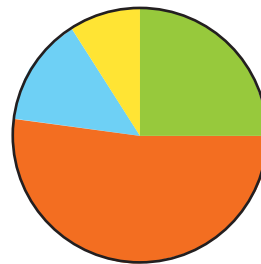
6 A CLASS SURVEY

In pairs, prepare a class survey.

- Find out how many hours a week people in your class spend online.
- Write and then ask questions to find out what they do online, which social networking websites they use, which games they play, how many emails they send a day, whether they have a blog, whether they use chat or forums, whether they watch films or download music, etc.
- Put the results of your survey into charts, e.g.

How often do you play online games?

Every day	25%
Once a week	52%
Occasionally	13%
Never	10%



- Every day
- Once a week
- Occasionally
- Never

7 WEBQUEST

Alone or in small groups, prepare a history of communication poster.

Find the answers to these questions. Then put the events in order on a time-line. 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.

1. When did the first postal service start in China?
2. When was the telephone invented?
3. When was the first TV signal sent?
4. When were computers first sold in shops?
5. When was the first email using the @ symbol sent?
6. When was the first digital camera sold?
7. When did the social-networking websites, Facebook, MySpace and Bebo, first go online?

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

- isolate
- profile
- stay in touch
- strangers
- announced
- personality
- interest groups
- poll

3

- What are they?
- How do I use them?
- How do I stay safe?
- Your space
- In your face
- Bebo mania

4

- Bebo, Facebook, MySpace
- Bebo
- MySpace
- Facebook
- MySpace
- 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.
Follow the tips the sites give about online safety.
Never set up a profile without telling your parents!

7

- 900 BC: The first postal service starts in China.
- 1876: Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone.
- 1925: John Logie Baird sends the first experimental TV signal.
- 1951: Computers are first sold in shops.
- 1972: Ray Tomlinson sends first email using the @ symbol.
- 1991: The first digital camera is sold.
- 2003: MySpace was started.
2004: Facebook went online.
2005: Bebo was started and went online.