

Social Networking Sites

This reading comprehension focuses on social networks. It's followed by key vocabulary relating to social networks and technology and a follow-up quiz to test understanding.



Social Networks

Do the names MySpace, Facebook, Orkut, etc. ring a bell? They probably do because they are some of the most popular sites on the internet today. These sites are all called 'social networking' sites because they help people meet and discuss things online. Each of these social networking sites has its own strengths: MySpace is especially popular among teenagers, Facebook is popular with college age people, Orkut is especially loved in Brazil, and CyWorld is the site to visit in South Korea. The common thread between all of these social networks is that they provide a place for people to interact, rather than a place to go to read or listen to 'content'.

Web 2.0

Social networks are considered to be web 2.0. What does this mean? To understand this, it's important to understand what the original web did (often called web 1.0). Back in the nineties, the internet - or web - was a place to go to read articles, listen to music, get information, etc. Most people didn't contribute to the sites. They just 'browsed' the sites and took advantage of the information or resources provided. Of course, some people did create their own sites. However, creating a site was difficult. You needed to know basic HTML coding (the original language the internet uses to 'code' pages). It certainly wasn't something most people wanted to do as it could take hours to get a basic page just right. Things began to get easier when blogs (from web log) were introduced. With blogs, many more people began writing 'posts', as well as commenting on other people's blogs.



MySpace Surprises Everybody

In 2003 a site named MySpace took the internet by storm. It was trying to mimic the most popular features of Friendster, the first social networking site. It quickly became popular among young users and the rest was history. Soon everyone was trying to develop a social networking site. The sites didn't provide 'content' to people, they helped people create, communicate and share what they loved including music, images and videos. The key to the success of these sites is that they provide a platform on which users create the content. This is very different from the beginning of the internet which focused on providing 'content' for people to enjoy.

Key to Success

Relying on users to create content is the key to the success of web 2.0 companies. Besides the social networking sites discussed here, other huge success stories include: Wikipedia, Digg.com and the latest success - Twitter. All of these companies rely on the desire of users to communicate with each other, thereby creating the 'content' that others want to consume.

Choose the correct answer to these questions based on the reading selection on the Social Networking Sites. Each question has only one correct answer.

1. Which social networking site was not mentioned in the reading?

- A. MySpace
- B. LinkedIn
- C. Facebook

2. What is Facebook?

- A. A blog
- B. A content site
- C. A social networking site

3. Where is Orkut especially popular?

- A. In Japan
- B. In South Korea
- C. In Brazil

4. Which phrase best describes what people do at social networking sites?

- A. They interact with other people.
- B. They browse articles and other content.
- C. They code pages in HTML.

5. Social networks are considered:

- A. Web 1.0 sites
- B. Web 2.0 sites
- C. Web blogs

6. What was the original web mainly used for?

- A. Interacting with other people
- B. Browsing content
- C. Creating pages in HTML

7. Why didn't many people create web pages in the beginning?

- A. They didn't like communicating with others.
- B. They didn't feel comfortable coding HTML pages.
- C. They didn't know they could create web pages

8. Which is the best description of web 2.0 sites?

- A. They are content driven sites.
- B. They are platforms for interaction.
- C. They are like blogs, but better.

9. What do web 2.0 sites rely on?

- A. Articles written by professional journalists
- B. Users creating content
- C. Fast internet connections

10. What is most important for these new sites?

- A. Users' desire to communicate with each other
- B. Users' desire to read interesting content written by professionals
- C. Users' desire to learn coding

Key Vocabulary

English	Galego
social network	rede social
to ring a bell	sonar
site	sitio (internet)
strength - weakness	puntos fortes / puntos débiles
common thread	fio conductor
to interact	interaccionar
content	contido
nineties	os anos noventa
to contribute	contribuir
to browse a site	navegar por unha web
to create	crear
code / coding	código
blog - web log	bitácora (blog)
to comment on	comentar
to take by storm	tomar ao asalto / (<i>figurado</i> . ter grande éxito)
to mimic	reproducir, copiar, imitar
to develop	desenvolver, crear
platform	plataforma
the key to success	a clave do éxito
rely on	confiar

Answers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B	C	C	A	B	B	B	B	B	A

Web 2.0 Vocabulary

Below is a basic vocabulary list of new technology surrounding the idea of “web 2.0”.
Match the words on the right with their definition

1	Web 2.0	A	An online journal or diary which chronicles one person’s perspective, sometimes with others contributing comments.
2	Blog	B	A 3D virtual world where “avatars” represent real people. People create other lives for themselves, complete with houses, jobs, bank accounts, etc.
3	Facebook	C	A social networking site where people share personal information about themselves, their lives.
4	Flickr	D	A way of creating online communities where the user can control who is networked to their piece of the community and what information they share about themselves.
5	MySpace	E	A social networking website for sharing pictures.
6	Podcasts	F	A search engine. It allows you to find materials by browsing through various topics simply by clicking on words.
7	Second Life	G	A list of words that is used to browse by subject. The list is weighted such that words with more “hits” are in bold and bigger font.
8	Social Networking	H	A social networking site where people share personal information about themselves, their lives.
9	Browser	I	A website for sharing home videos. Started in February of 2005, it was bought out by Google in October of 2006 for \$1.65 billion
10	Tag Cloud	J	Audio and/or video recordings that have been created for use with MP3 players (the name coming from iPods + broadcasting). Recordings are saved on a website and can be downloaded individually to a computer and/or MP3 player.
11	YouTube	K	A method of sending messages via cell phones or pagers. Text is typed onto the screen using a keypad from a cell phone or from an email editor and then sent electronically. Also called Short Message Service or SMS in some countries
12	Text messaging (Texting)	L	A new set of tools that let users interact in some fashion on the Internet. As more people become participants, there is a move away from a “finished” version of a web page, to a constant “beta” version.

Answers

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
2	7	3	8	4	9	10	5	11	6	12	1

1. Match the both columns to make a sentence



Mix and match

You'd better not tell him or	you'll get a punishment.
I'd better get back to work or	he'll be very angry.
I'd better do it now or	we can't go out.
You'd better pass your exams or	I will be late.
You'd better invite them or	it will be too late.
I'd better take the early train or	you'll be cold.
We'd better find a babysitter or	I won't get finished before 5.
You'd better hand in your homework or	you won't get into university.
You'd better put a coat on or	they will be offended.

Answers

you'll be cold.	You'd better put a coat on or
you'll get a punishment.	You'd better hand in your homework or
we can't go out.	We'd better find a babysitter or
I will be late.	I'd better take the early train or
they will be offended.	You'd better invite them or
you won't get into university.	You'd better pass your exams or
it will be too late.	I'd better do it now or
I won't get finished before 5.	I'd better get back to work or
he'll be very angry.	You'd better not tell him or

Mix and match



Exercise 1. Common mistakes

You are going to look at the text from three emails that contain words which can often be confused.

Underline the correct or most appropriate word.

EMAIL 1

I am writing with (1) *connection/reference/regarding* to our telephone conversation this morning about your order 7895LG. I must (2) *regret/apologise/sorry* for the delay in processing this order. I can now confirm that the goods have been shipped and should (3) *arrive/reach/deliver* you within 10 working days. We have taken special (4) *care/attention/caution* to make sure that the items are exactly as you requested.

Once again, please (5) *take/have/accept* our apologies. If you have any further questions, do not (6) *stop/fail/hesitate* to contact me again.

EMAIL 2

I was (1) *sorry/unhappy/afraid* to hear about the damage to the products that you received this morning. However, I am (2) *afraid/apologise/regret* that we cannot (3) *accept/except/have* responsibility in this (4) *topic/material/matter*. All our products are (5) *controlled/checked/looked* very carefully before leaving the factory, and the damage in this case must have been caused in transit. I (6) *propose/suggest/tell* that you contact the shipping company directly about possible compensation.

In the meantime, we can ship the same order to you again, if it would help. If you give us a firm instruction to do so (7) *until/by/within* the next few days, it should reach you (8) *until/by/within* the end of the month.

EMAIL 3

I am writing to you (1) *affecting/connecting/concerning* the meeting that we (2) *combined/appointed/arranged* for this Friday. I am afraid something urgent has come up and I will not be able to attend. Can we (3) *cancel/postpone/schedule* the meeting until next week? I can make any time Wednesday or Thursday.

I apologise for any (4) *disadvantage/inconvenience/unfortunate* this may cause, and I (5) *look forward/wait/anticipate* to (6) *hear/hearing/know* from you.

Answers

Email 1: (1) reference, (2) apologise, (3) reach, (4) care, (5) accept, (6) hesitate

Email 2: (1) sorry, (2) afraid, (3) accept, (4) matter, (5) checked, (6) suggest,
(7) within, (8) by

Email 3: (1) concerning, (2) arranged, (3) postpone, (4) inconvenience, (5) look forward,
(6) hearing

Exercise 2: Missing words and abbreviations

Write an informal email to a friend, missing out words that are not necessary.

Some ideas are given below, but adapt and change them as you wish.

- *Ask your friends how they are.*
- *Ask about their recent holiday.*
Idea: say you'd like to see the photos.
- *Ask what they have been doing since they got back.*
- *Give your friends your own news.*
- *Invite your friends to come and stay with you.* *Idea: suggest a time and some things you could do.*
- *Say you are looking forward to hearing from them.*

When you finish, you can email a partner. Check each other's grammar, spelling, punctuation and style. Is everything clear, well-structured and easy to understand?

FOLLOW-UP

You can email your teacher asking any questions about this unit.