

DU Learning Guide

Social Networking

"It's not just for kids!"

What's it all about?

It seems that almost anyone who is anyone has a *MySpace* or *Facebook* entry, but what are they?

A social networking site is a combination of many web facilities brought together in one place. It will normally give members the facilities to blog, send messages and use online chat, form groups and share files, photos and videos.

The idea is to get together online communities of people to communicate with one another. Some sites started off as groups of people with a similar interest or background, and developed into larger groups with many different interests.

Try this

The top social networking sites are MySpace (www.myspace.com) Facebook (www.facebook.com) and Bebo (www.bebo.com). Although they may seem to be aimed at young people, they are increasingly drawing older participants.

Late in 2007 Saga, a company that specialises in products and publications for the over 50's, joined the social networking trend by creating SagaZone (www.sagazone.co.uk).

SagaZone works in a similar way to Facebook, Bebo and My Space but with one very important difference – it only accepts the over 50's!

All social networking sites require you to register. They are normally free, but you do need to give them personal information. See the guide **LZ3-16 Join a Social Networking Site** for further details on how to do this.

More websites to explore

As well as the general sites, there are sites dedicated to a common interest.

Books www.shelfari.com Share your opinions of favourite books with others and get their recommendations.

Genealogy www.geni.com You can build your family tree with other members of your family.

Music www.last.fm Listen to your music online and find other fans of your favourite performers.

Pets www.catster.com www.dogster.com Everything you ever wanted to know about cats and dogs, and the people who love them!