

Social Networking Platforms

Computer Literacy 1 Lecture 19
03/11/2008



Topics

- Social Networking - offline and online
- Examples
 - Facebook
 - Developing a Facebook application
 - Twitter
- Other online social networking possibilities



Social Networking

- Talking to friends and family
- Meeting colleagues after work
- Going for dinner with friends, family, etc... to a restaurant
- Inviting friends, family, etc... to your home
- And many more



Social Networking goes Online

- Stay in touch with friends and family by email
- Using a blog to let everybody know what you're up to
- Using a website which was especially created to stay in touch with everybody



Facebook History



- Launched February 4th 2004
- Originally called "The Facebook"
- Funded by Mark Zuckerberg
 - Computer Programmer
 - Harvard drop out
 - Entrepreneur
- Started Facebook from his room in Harvard
 - Within first 2 weeks over two thirds of students signed up
- Moved from Harvard to Palo Alto Ca. (Silicon Valley)

Facebook History



- Membership was first restricted to Harvard students
 - but because of it's success Zuckerberg and his room mate now turned business partner Dustin Moskovitz invited other Ivy League (e.g. Stanford, Yale) Universities to join in (March 2004)
- High School version launched in September 2005
- Open to everyone above the age 14 since September 2006
- New international headquarters in Dublin since August 2008

Facebook - MySpace



- Facebook is sometimes compared to MySpace since they seem so similar
- BUT they have a significant difference:
- MySpace allows users to decorate/create their profiles using **HTML** and **Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)**
- While Facebook only allows **plain text**

Facebook Developers



- Website to build your own application on Facebook
- Includes tutorials to explain user how to build an application
- Includes PHP clients libraries
- PHP is a scripting language suitable for web development and can be embedded into HTML
- There's a Wiki that documents how Facebook is build

Facebook Developer Wiki



- What can you find in this Wiki?
- Articles
 - Mark Up Language
 - Query Language
 - JavaScript
 - Code testing Tools
 - FAQs
- Discussion
- http://wiki.developers.facebook.com/index.php/Main_Page

Facebook Usage



- Mainly social connection
 - Facebook connects over 30 Million people worldwide
 - It connects you with e.g. friends, family, classmates.
 - Possibility to join social networks
 - There are groups that can be joined or created
 - And many more...

Facebook Controversy



- Facebook Beacon
 - Marketing initiative that allows websites to publish a user's activity to their Facebook profile as "Social Ads" and promote products
- Facebook stated: "No personally identifiable information is shared with an advertiser in creating an Social Ad."
- Not true: Facebook collected more information from users for advertiser than stated → Zuckerberg had to publicly apologies

More Controversy



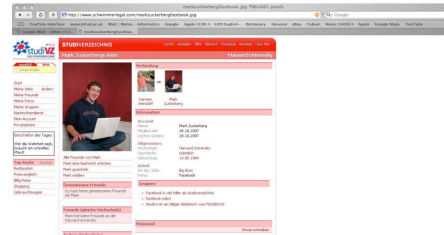
- How can I delete my account?
 - Not as straight forward as it should be
- Privacy
 - Concerns have emerged regarding the use of Facebook as a means of surveillance and data mining (2 MIT students were able to download 70,000 profiles using an automated shell script)
 - The BBC technology program "Click" demonstrated that personal details of users and their friends could be stolen by submitting malicious applications

StudiVZ



- German equivalent to Facebook
- Sued by Facebook in July 2008 on basis that StudiVZ has stolen its looks, features and services
 - Interesting coincidence: In July 2008 Facebook was introduced to German users for the first time

StudiVZ



StudiVZ



- Set up by 2 students in Berlin, 2005
- Sold in 2007 to one of its investors
- Has greatest server cluster in Europe after Google in London but only uses 1 database for requests
- Criticism:
 - Companies practice might include spamming, cybersquatting (Buying a domain name that reflects the name of a business or famous person with the intent of selling the name back to the business or celebrity for a profit) and over-reliance on volunteers

Twitter



- Another free social networking service
- Differences to other social networking services:
 - It's a micro-blogging service
 - Only short text messages are allowed (140 character)
 - Also operates in Japan, having a great fan base over there

Twitter structure



History and Uses of Twitter

- Started as research and development project inside start-up company Obvious, San Francisco 2006
- Spun off and is now Twitter.inc
- Is for example used by:
 - Los Angeles Fire department
 - The BBC
 - Barack Obama
 - Gordon Brown
 - Some University use it to relay information to students

Why used by BBC and Fire Department

- Twitter gives you the possibility to send short messages directly to mobile phones
- Also instant messaging possible
 - Meaning each message you're writing on twitter to let you're friends know what you're doing can be received by them in no time wherever there are without logging into their twitter home

Twitter Specs

- Written in Ruby on Rails
 - Open Source web application
- Uses JavaScript
- Mostly used for client driven projects (Twitter's blog like structure)

Twitter's Security and Failures



- Security:
 - Due to it using SMS, its vulnerability is to secure user's mobile-phone numbers
 - Failures:
 - At the beginning Twitter used to crash fairly often but it's better now
 - No more free SMS services in most of the world
- http://voices.washingtonpost.com/washingtonpostinvestigations/2008/10/twitter_as_a_terrorists_tool.html

More Social Networks Online



- Blogs
- Bebo
- Business networking with Xing or LinkedIn
- Second Life:
 - In second life you can socialise using your avatar and chat away with other "avatars"

Cons of Social Networks



- Time consuming
 - You end up spending more time in front of computer than face to face with your friends who live in the same city as you
- Network dependence or overload
 - Either you and all your friends are part of one Network
 - Or you have accounts everywhere (Facebook, Bebo, Twitter, etc...)
- And more...

Key points



- What's social networking online?
- Facebook developers
- Getting text messages from your online social network
- Huge number of social network sites online
 - Sometimes lots of accounts involved
 - Time consuming