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The State of Social Networking, 2011 Update  
March 30, 2011  
Debbie Ginsberg

**Facebook 101**  
Facebook’s interface and features are constantly changing. The basic site now includes:

- **News Feed** – Displays updates from your friends and pages you “like.”
- **Profile Pages** – Displays personal information, your updates, photos in which you are tagged, and messages posted to your wall.
- **Privacy Settings** – Use the settings to control who sees your information (warning: these are complicated and change often).
- **Latest features**—Questions (create instant polls); Profile Pages (they have been simplified); Groups (organize your Facebook friends into personal or professional communities).

**Other Social Networks**  
Facebook is great for maintaining personal connections, but other social networks are better for public conversations and managing professional connections.

- **Twitter** – Follow short posts from other users to learn the latest news and trends. Great for following conferences remotely or participating in conference backchannels.
- **LinkedIn** – Manage your professional reputation and contacts.

**Trends for 2011**  
Social networking has become increasingly ubiquitous. Recent trends include:

- **Geolocation** – *Where are you?*  
  Foursquare (http://foursquare.com/): check-in and let your friends and followers know where you are. Can be used for status updates or to organize groups.

- **Photo Sharing** – *What did you see?*  
  Instagram (http://instagram.am/): edit iPhone photos and share them instantly.

- **Group Buying** – *What’s on sale?*  
  Groupon (http://www.groupon.com): features a local “deal of the day” – generally about 50% off a local restaurant or service, but only if enough people agree to buy the deal.

- **Question & Answer** – *What would you like to know?*  

- **Mobile** – Sharing all of this anywhere  
  All of the above social networks have iPhone apps (note that the Quora app is not official).
Why use social networking?
At 500,000,000 registered users, Facebook is the most popular social network. But others are catching up – Twitter now has 175,000,000 users and LinkedIn has 100,000,000. What are these networks used for?

- **Establish personal and professional connections** – users can easily find family, friends, and colleagues on social networks.
- **Control personal and professional reputations** – active participation allows users to better control the personal and professional information they wish to showcase as well as track what others are posting about them.
- **Share information** – social networks are increasingly becoming the main forum for sharing news and important updates.
- **Have fun** – social games like Farmville aren’t for everyone, but they can be a great way to take a short break and connect with friends.

More Information


Mashable (http://mashable.com/). Useful blog for learning more about social media trends.