

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' for people to enjoy, they helped people create, communicate and share what they loved including music, images and videos.

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.

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

- A. MySpace
- B. LinkedIn

- C. Facebook
 - D. Friendster
2. Where is Orkut especially popular?
- A. In Japan
 - B. In South Korea
 - C. In the United States
 - D. In Brazil
3. Why does the writer mention **CyWorld** in paragraph 2?
- A. to give an example of a strong point of a social networking site
 - B. to emphasize the importance social networking sites
 - C. to demonstrate the popularity of social networking sites
 - D. to express the common feature of social networking sites
4. Which phrase best describes what people do at social networking sites?
- A. They comment other people's blog.
 - B. They code pages in HTML.
 - C. They browse articles and other content.
 - D. They interact with other people.
5. What was the original web mainly used for?
- A. Interacting with other people
 - B. Browsing content
 - C. Creating pages in HTML
 - D. Writing on blogs
6. What does the word **they** in paragraph 2 refer to?
- A. resources
 - B. the sites
 - C. most people
 - D. social networks
7. The word **mimic** in paragraph 6 could be best replaced by:
- A. imitate
 - B. imagine
 - C. eliminate
 - D. utilize
8. What does the writer imply about MySpace?
- A. It was the first social networking site.
 - B. It was successful.
 - C. People could enjoy the content it provided.

- D. It destroyed the internet like a storm.
9. What is most important for web 2.0 companies to be successful?
- A. Users' desire to communicate with each other
 - B. Users' desire to read interesting content written by professionals
 - C. Users' desire to learn coding
 - D. Users' intelligence
10. What is the writer's purpose?
- A. to advertise for web 2.0 companies
 - B. to persuade people to develop social networking sites
 - C. to give information about social networking sites
 - D. to criticize social networking sites