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How MySpace Works

By: [Julia Layton](#) & [Patrick Brothers](#)



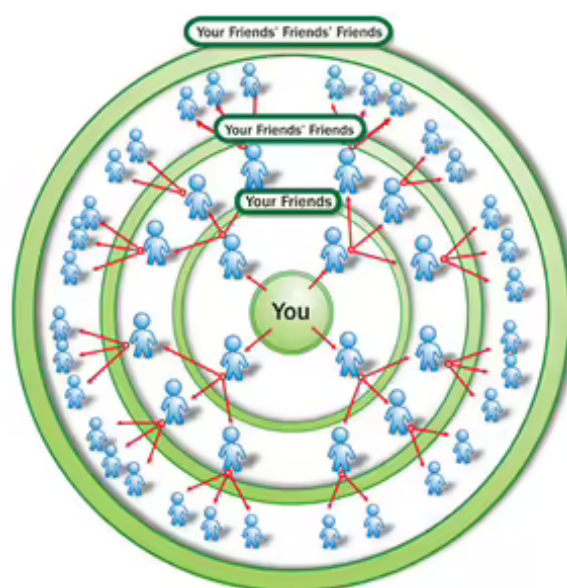
MySpace is a popular website for connecting with friends all over. [TEERA KONAKAN / GETTY IMAGES](#)

The idea isn't new: "Social networking" has been around forever. It's the simple act of expanding the number of people you know by meeting your friends' friends, their friends' friends and their friends' friends' friends. And MySpace isn't the first (or the last) Web site to take the concept online. So why does MySpace have more than twice the traffic of Google within four years of its 2003 launch?

Fifty-four million people have profiles on MySpace as of February 2006, and 180,000 more register to use the site every day. By all accounts, it's a phenomenon. Some

On MySpace, your social network starts growing from day one without much effort on your part. That's part of the draw. Basic MySpace networking works something like this:

- From what the author can tell, there's no way to actually view your Extended Network in any collective way. But this is the idea:



2 of 30

Now, technically, everyone on MySpace is in your Extended Network, because when you create a profile, MySpace co-founder Tom Anderson is automatically added to your Friend Space. We're all connected through Tom. To explore your Extended Network, you can go to one of your friends' profiles, see who's in his Friend Space, click on a picture to visit one of those people's profiles, see who's in that person's Friend Space and work your way down the line. (It's definitely not the easiest way to play the [Kevin Bacon game](#) once you take Tom out of the equation.) You can request to add anyone to your Friend Space, and if your invitation is accepted, you can send that person [e-mail](#), [instant messages](#), links to a band you discovered in MySpace Music and anything else you might share with your friends.

There's a lot more to MySpace than networking, but that's the core concept. The big question is why MySpace has succeeded where so many others have failed. Lots of people expound on this mystery from a business or philosophical perspective, but there are at least a few obvious answers. First and possibly foremost, there's the **music connection**. See the next page to learn more.

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MySpace Users

Some of the first people to utilize MySpace were musicians and bands, who may have heard about it in the first place from the Web site's founders, who were active in the L.A. music scene. Bands used it to establish a free online presence to post performance dates and communicate with their fans. In 2004, MySpace became a full-fledged [Internet](#) indie-music portal with the creation of **MySpace Music**, a subsection on MySpace. The new area let bands not only create an online presence, but also stream their music through their MySpace profiles and let people download [MP3s](#) of their songs, all for free. This attracted even more musicians, along with the

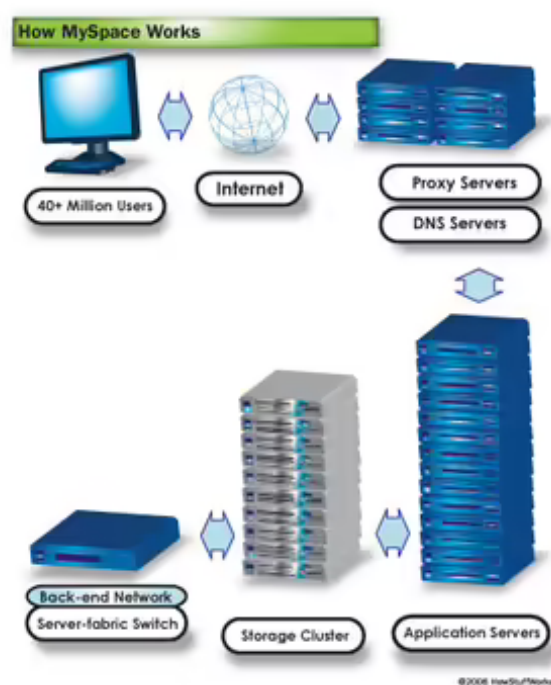
demographic most known for consuming music: teenagers and 20-somethings.

And what do teenagers and 20-somethings desire most? Many would tell you it's freedom to express themselves without censorship, and MySpace got it right in this area. The only things MySpace censors is hate speech and extreme nudity (you'll find some bare breasts and buttocks, but that's about it). It's more **accessible** and more **customizable** than any networking site that came before it. Users can add music, video, graphics, new fonts and crazy layout schemes to their profiles. They can use graphics and video files that are hosted elsewhere. The "do what you want, we don't care" attitude is a big draw for 16- to 25-year-olds (and everybody else except their parents, probably). Everyone can access full profiles, even if they haven't registered, and they don't need to have any particular affiliation (with a school, business or interest) to use the site.

So, if MySpace is for everyone, who is actually using it? Sixteen- to 25-year-olds make up the majority of MySpace users, and 25 percent of users are registered as minors (aged 14 to 17 -- you need to be at least 14 to register). But you'll find people of all ages using the site for all reasons. There are kids who are clearly about 12 lying about their age because MySpace is the place to be. There are 30-somethings looking to meet people because it's hard to make friends once you're out of grad school, 50-somethings embracing the online networking trend to find new business associates, and 70-somethings looking for a date. You can switch up all of those ages and purposes. You'll find people looking to publish their poetry online or advertise and accept orders for their latest book through their profile page. Unsigned bands use the site to get their music out there and build a following. Established artists like Madonna, the Black Eyed Peas, Audioslave and Billy Corgan use the site to communicate with fans and get feedback on tracks.

It's probably starting to become clear why Rupert Murdoch thinks MySpace is worth more than half a billion dollars. MySpace is a popular-culture magnet.

Behind the Scenes: MySpace Technology



In 2005, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. bought InterMix Media, the company that had controlling interest in MySpace, for \$580 million. Most analysts think that what Murdoch was really interested in buying was MySpace. With more than 15 billion page views per month (in January 2006 by [Alexa's count](#)) and millions of digital-media-gobbling young people in rapt attention, MySpace is a potential-consumer windfall. It's also a major technological undertaking.

The MySpace technology setup looks roughly like this:

- **Domain name servers:** When you type [www.myspace.com](#) into your browser bar, you're requesting the [IP address](#) for MySpace.com from a domain name server (or DNS -- see [How Domain Name Servers Work](#) to learn more). Instead of owning and maintaining its own DNS servers, MySpace uses a "Managed DNS" service called UltraDNS. UltraDNS basically handles user IP requests through a huge network of [servers](#), distributing the load based on which servers are available at any given time. This system cuts down on congestion, resulting in fewer slowdowns and DNS errors for users at peak access times.

- **Proxy servers:** Proxy servers sit between a user [computer](#) and MySpace's main servers. They deliver [cached](#) content to users to limit redundant requests to MySpace's application servers. Enabling content caching at this level cuts down on congestion.
- **Application servers:** For applications like [e-mail](#), [instant messaging](#) and [blogging](#), MySpace uses BlueDragon.NET software running CFML (ColdFusion Markup Language) code on Microsoft-IIS servers.
- **Database:** MySpace has a 20-terabyte (TB), scalable cluster of Isilon IQ 1920i servers. (A terabyte is 1 trillion bytes.) The cluster stores users' uploaded media files (images, videos, songs), among other things. It runs on 3.2-GHz Intel Xeon [processors](#) and has 10 server nodes storing 1.92 TB each. The nodes communicate on the InfiniBand architecture, which establishes point-to-point, serial connections between each server node. Isilon reports that data-transfer speeds are in the neighborhood of 3 GBps.
- **Back-end:** MySpace's back-end is an InfiniBand server switch. A server switch facilitates communication between multiple servers on multiple platforms -- in this case, between all of the servers in the MySpace infrastructure and between the MySpace servers and the external servers that deliver content to the end user. The Equinix Exchange central server switch in Los Angeles hosts MySpace's content delivery. Equinix Exchange is an Ethernet-based peering service that connects MySpace to all of the top-tier Internet [backbones](#) through a single hub -- a "fabric" of server switches connecting all Equinix networks. Content travels from MySpace through any of the Equinix-connected networks based on the most efficient route to the user and the available bandwidth on a network at any given time.

The setup seems to focus on maximum efficiency and load-distribution to minimize downtime and delays. It's not perfect: Alexa ranks it in the bottom 25 percent of Web sites by speed as of February 2006, and the author received quite a few error messages while trying to navigate MySpace to gather information. But MySpace has more traffic than Google and a lot less capital (at least before Murdoch stepped in), and speedy, round-the-clock content delivery to millions of users simultaneously

requires a lot of cash. The two largest infusions of capital happened in 2003, when MySpace received an undisclosed amount of funding from InterMix Media (which bought 53 percent of MySpace), and in 2005, when MySpace got \$11.5 million through an agreement between InterMix and Redpoint Ventures (which bought Redpoint's 25 percent of MySpace). After the purchase by News Corp., MySpace presumably will be able to buy a lot more toys to increase its speed and accessibility.

As for revenue generators that don't cost stock, MySpace currently has just one: **advertising**. It's advertiser heaven. MySpace's core user profile -- Web-surfing 16- to 25-year-olds -- is the most desirable advertising demographic out there. According to Alexa, MySpace reached a peak 16 billion page views in January 2006 -- that's a lot of ad impressions. Estimates have the company taking in \$30 to \$40 million in ad revenue in 2005.

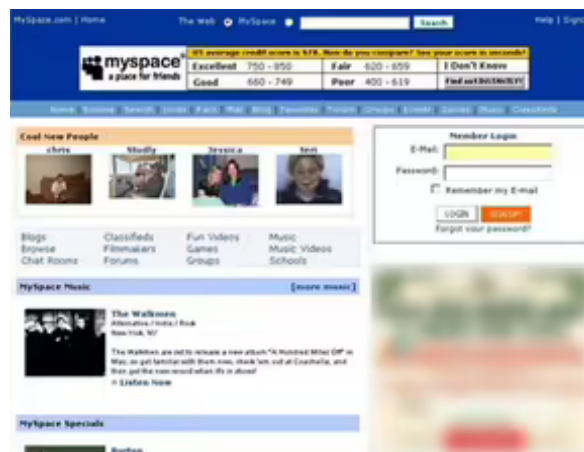
Now, let's check out the Web site. The author's dog, Ellie, would like to create a MySpace profile and expand her social network.

MySpace Background

MySpace was founded in 2003 by **Chris DeWolfe** and **Tom Anderson**. It began as social-networking site along the lines of Friendster. That same year, industry leader Friendster had a major technology setback -- it couldn't keep up with its increased traffic. During peak hours, the site slowed to a crawl, or users got DNS errors and couldn't access the site at all. Tons of Friendster users got fed up and ended up migrating to MySpace through word of mouth, which began with the founders' own friends and MySpace employees, along with some media promotion through InterMix, the company that owned a controlling

share in MySpace at the time. When Anderson and DeWolfe noticed that musicians and music fans were utilizing MySpace more than any other single group, they created MySpace Music, and the site's traffic skyrocketed.

Using MySpace: MySpace Interface



MySpace homepage

Ellie doesn't have any money, but that's OK -- MySpace is entirely **free**. Here's what we see when we arrive at the site:

Signing up for MySpace takes about two minutes. To register and create our basic **profile**, all we need to do is enter a few details on a form: name, **e-mail** address, password, country where we live, postal code (for **United States**, **Canada** and **United Kingdom** residents), gender and birth date. During the initial sign-up, we're also prompted to upload a photo and invite our friends to join.

 A screenshot of the 'Invite Your Friends' form on MySpace. The form has a blue header with the text 'Invite Your Friends!'. Below the header, it says 'Use this email form to invite your friends. Just enter each friend's email, separated by commas:'. There are three main sections: 'Subject:' with a text box containing 'Ellie invites you to MySpace', 'From:' with a text box containing 'Ellie (your name)', and 'To:' with a large text box for email addresses. Below the 'To:' box is a note '(separate multiple emails with a comma)'. At the bottom is an 'Optional Body:' section with a text box.



Ellie's going to skip this part because most of her current friends don't have e-mail accounts.

Ellie is now a registered MySpace user with a profile and all of the goodies that go with it -- an e-mail inbox, a blog, space for her photos, a URL (she can create a MySpace name to get a custom URL, too), an address book and lots of other features.

Ellie



Female
17 years old
BOULDER, Colorado
United States

Last Login:
2/24/2006

[View More Pics](#)

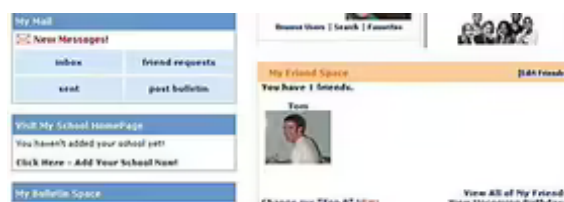
Contacting Ellie

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Send Message | Forward to Friend |
| Add to Friends | Add to Favorites |
| Instant Message | Block User |
| Add to Group | Rank User |

Ellie's Details

Status:	Single
Zodiac Sign:	Libra
Smoke / Drink:	No / No

And look -- Ellie already has a friend!



You don't have any bulletins yet.

It's Tom Anderson, president and co-founder of the Web site. Ellie is now connected to everyone on MySpace.com. To build her network of friends, Ellie can **invite** her current friends to join and **search** for any friends who are already on MySpace. She can search by name or e-mail address, and MySpace lets her import her entire e-mail address book from Yahoo!, Hotmail, AOL and Gmail to automatically scan for an address connected with a MySpace account. Other search methods are by school affiliation (find people you go/went to high school or college with -- colleges actually have their own sections on MySpace) or by business affiliation.

To make **new connections**, Ellie has a bunch of options:

- She can **browse** by certain criteria.

Browsing criteria include gender, age and location.

- She can get involved in the MySpace **forums**.

Forum Home

Forum Category	Rooms	Topics	Posts	Last Post
Automotive Talk about your ride. We did it for TheBot.	Chat	19509	45566	Fri Feb 24, 2006 8:11 AM by: DQAM > View Post
Business & Entrepreneurs Need advice or a partner for your latest venture?	Chat	4205	24734	Fri Feb 24, 2006 7:49 AM by: RANDY > View Post
Campus Life Study partners, PARTIES, and plums.	Chat	4529	43323	Fri Feb 24, 2006 1:16 AM by: > View Post
Career Center Career advice, discussion and opportunities.	Chat	4867	21899	Fri Feb 24, 2006 1:17 AM by: > View Post
Computers & Technology From PCs to iPods; techoid congregation.	Chat	14501	106705	Fri Feb 24, 2006 12:24 AM by: > View Post
Culture, Arts & Literature The finer things in life be here.	Chat	4995	71996	Fri Feb 24, 2006 1:18 AM by: > View Post
FilmMakers Forum for FilmMakers	Chat	2031	14154	Thu Feb 23, 2006 9:00 AM by: > View Post
Food & Drink Best food in town is where...?	Chat	5631	57928	Fri Feb 24, 2006 6:08 AM by: Nerg > View Post
Games Video games improve motor reflexes and strategy skills.	Chat	15062	206706	Fri Feb 24, 2006 2:56 AM by: > View Post
General Discussion Whatever doesn't fit everywhere	Chat	2229	517742	Fri Feb 24, 2006 8:51 AM by: Steph > View Post

- She can join **groups** based on her hobbies and interests.



Group categories include
Automotive, Computers & Internet,
Family & Home, Fashion & Style,
Music, and Religion & Beliefs.

When she finds someone she's interested in becoming friends with, she just clicks the **"Add to friends"** button on the person's profile page.



If Ellie wants to become friends with
Julia, she'll click **"Add to Friends"** on
Julia's profile page.

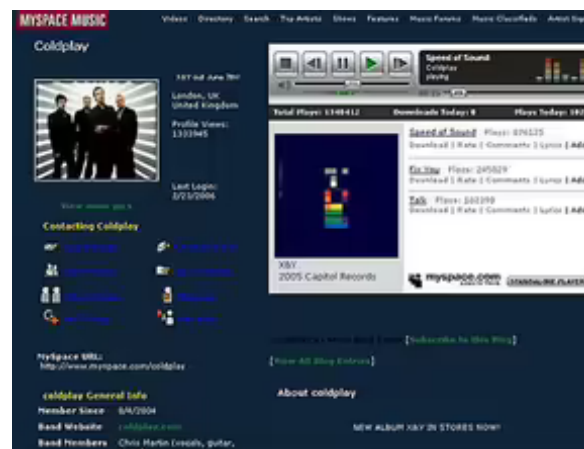
MySpace will send a message to that member saying that Ellie wants to add him or her to her Friend Space, and that person can either approve or deny the request. If the request is approved, that person will automatically show up in Ellie's Friend Space.

Besides finding and contacting new friends, you can use MySpace to:

- Create your own [blog](#)
- Rank other peoples' profile photos
- Grade your college professors
- Post and view events going on in your area
- Play games
- Post and view classified ads
- Discover new music and artists at MySpace Music

MySpace Music, as you'll see on the next page, is a destination unto itself. MySpace isn't the first site to try to remake the music industry via the Web, but it's the first to succeed in any large-scale way.

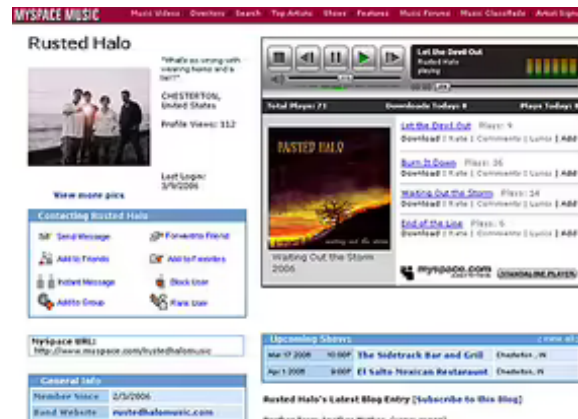
MySpace Music



SCREENSHOT BY
HOWSTUFFWORKS.COM

Established artists and unsigned bands alike use MySpace Music to get their songs out there and connect with fans. It's a special section of the MySpace Web site (along the line of eBay Motors within [eBay](#)) with music-related features.

Artists like REM, Franz Ferdinand, Billy Corgan, the Black Eyed Peas and Nine Inch Nails have all released albums or tracks on MySpace before the official release in stores. Nearly 600,000 bands have profiles, with Coldplay right alongside Rusted Halo, an unsigned band in Chesterton, Ind.



For unsigned artists, MySpace's social-networking setup is ideal. Local bands have always developed a following through word of mouth. With MySpace, they have instant access to potential fans outside their geographic region. A San Francisco band can end up in the Friend Space of someone in Germany in a matter of minutes. Some of the MySpace Music features include:

- A built-in music player
- User ratings/reviews
- Artists rankings (by page views)
- Featured bands
- Show listings by location
- Music videos by MySpace artists

And MySpace offers the most valuable asset an unsigned band can hope for:

Exposure. No one is entirely sure why MySpace has become what other sites have dreamed about -- a place where musicians can get their music out there in a major way without the help of a label. Maybe it's the site's initial connections to the L.A.

music scene; maybe it's a combination of unbelievable traffic numbers and custom music functions.



MySpace Records Vol. 1

PHOTO COURTESY
AMAZON.COM

But however it happened, it's changing the music industry in a real way. Bands like Hawthorne Heights, My Chemical Romance and Arctic Monkeys have developed huge followings and garnered [record-label](#) attention via the Internet and MySpace in particular. Through Web-based "guerrilla marketing" techniques, the Arctic Monkeys released a single that landed at No. 1 on the UK Music Chart before the band's debut album even hit the shelves. My Chemical Romance has sold more than 1 million copies of its 2004 debut CD, and Hawthorne Heights has sold more than a half-million copies of its debut CD released the same year. All of these bands are now signed with record labels, but they'd built a tremendous fanbase on the Internet (and sold a lot of [CDs](#)) before they negotiated contracts, giving them significantly more leverage than an artist with a small local following who's discovered by an A&R rep at a gig.

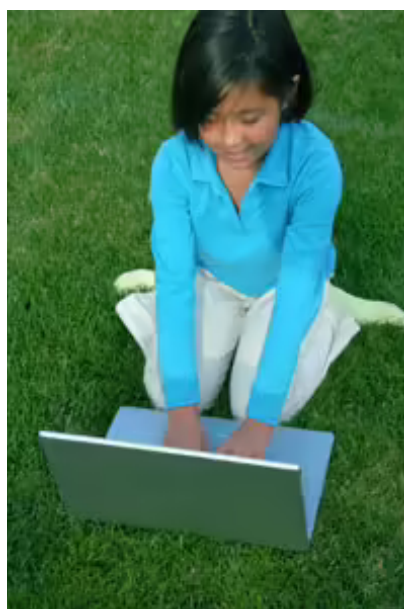
In at least one known case so far, a band's MySpace profile led directly to a record deal. A little-known California band called Hollywood Undead popped up on MySpace in June 2005. Within a week, it was No.4 on the MySpace music chart and had 65,000 loyal fans in its Friend Space. Six months later, Hollywood Undead signed

with a brand new indie record label: **MySpace Records**. The MySpace record label is the result of a partnership between MySpace and Interscope Records. It operates as an indie label but relies on Interscope for retail and industry connections.

MySpace president Tom Anderson is creative director and head of A&R for MySpace Records. The most amazing thing about the whole setup is how the label finds its artists: through the MySpace artist ranking system and user feedback. MySpace Records' first release was a compilation album called "MySpace Records, Vol.1," in November 2005. It features unsigned artists and artists signed with other labels, all with a presence on MySpace. Hollywood Undead's debut album is planned for release sometime in 2006.

MySpace's resounding success has brought with it concerns about the safety and privacy of its members. Read on to see how MySpace is dealing with these issues.

MySpace Safety



MySpace requires users to be 14, but there are ways around that rule.

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0TKR0YTE | AGENCY:

DREAMSTIME

In addition to the discovery that at least seven nonviolent sexual assaults on minors could be traced to meetings on MySpace, at least one murder has been linked to initial contact on the Web site. While these problems are in no way exclusive to MySpace -- the Internet in general is a playground for predators by nature of its anonymity -- the press has latched on to MySpace in particular because a lot of its users are under 18 and the site doesn't verify users' identities.

The site does have rules in place intended to protect its users. You have to be 14 or older to register, and if you're younger than 16, only people in your Friend Space can access your profile. But kids lie about their age when they register, and so do people who are looking for underage sex partners.

So MySpace finds itself in something of a Catch-22. A big part of the reason that MySpace is so successful is its "hey, whatever" openness. If the site employs identity-verification procedures, it will probably chase off the predators and the kids who are lying about their age. It will also potentially alienate a lot of the legitimate users who just want a cool place to hang out online without being asked for a credit card or [social security number](#).

According to MySpace representatives, the company dedicates one-third of its 175-person workforce to policing profiles for inaccuracies, although it's unclear whether that began before or after the media started referring to MySpace as "a parent's nightmare." These employees are looking for age discrepancies (matching stated ages with pictures), other profile "errors" and inappropriate material that might be accessed by underage users. The MySpace "Safety Tips" section asks users to report MySpace users who appear to be younger than 14. It also offers good advice that you'd find on any other social-networking or online-dating Web site:

- Do not to post any personally identifiable information (like your address or

phone number).

- Only meet other MySpace users in public places unless you already know them in "real life."
- Employ safe surfing techniques to avoid [identity theft](#), [phishing](#) and other scams.
- Immediately report a suspicious MySpace communication, and save the message so the police can trace it to the sender if necessary.

To view the complete MySpace Safety Tips, [click here](#).

On April 11, 2006, MySpace announced that it had hired a former federal prosecutor to be its first-ever chief security officer. MySpace says it is also working with WiredSafety.org to implement additional safety procedures on the site. But the cat's out of the bag. In the corporate advertising world, the revelation that your anonymous, full-of-teenagers Web site is attracting sexual predators is probably in the realm of catching Kate Moss with a straw in her nose -- sure, nobody's genuinely surprised, but having proof is a different story. MySpace has taken an active approach to solving its image problem by effectively banning 29,000 registered sex offenders from the site.

There's no doubt that MySpace is popular -- so popular that people want to be able to take their MySpace with them -- and now they can with MySpace Mobile. Read on to find out about MySpace Mobile and an another highly anticipated recent application, MySpace IM.

More Places to Network

- [Facebook](#)
- [Friendster](#)

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Orkut](#)
- [Ryze](#)
- [TagWorld](#)
- [Tribe](#)

New MySpace Applications



MySpace has gone mobile.

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DREAMSTIME

MySpace Mobile

MySpace's popularity has become somewhat of a phenomenon since its debut in 2003, and the [brains](#) behind the site are still coming up with ways to attract new members and appease the existing ones. To answer rising demand, MySpace has gone to great lengths in order to make social networking available to users wherever

AT&T customers can elect to receive MySpace Mobile Alerts, which are SMS messages sent to a customer's **phone** when there are updates to his or her profile. Currently, the **text messages** are free from MySpace, but other costs depend on the user's carrier plan. AT&T Mobile subscribers can opt to pay \$2.99 a month for the MySpace Mobile service, which, after downloading a Java application, allows users to upload photos, post and view blogs, view friends, send and receive **e-mail** and more. But don't think you're getting all of this for that flat rate. While the service is subscription-based, cell phone plan data rates also apply. For example, estimates show that uploading a photo from a 1.2 megapixel **camera** could cost as much as \$1.50, so if you're on a budget, you'll want to keep that in mind. Myspace mobile service is also available on Helio brand devices. Helio, which is backed by EarthLink and SK Telecom, provides a custom application for using MySpace, and most of its plans cover unlimited data, so using MySpace comes at no extra charge.

Given that people today crave immediate gratification, it comes as no surprise that MySpace users want their alerts faster and easier. So, in order to keep its millions of users happy, MySpace officially launched its **instant messenger** function, MySpaceIM, on June 20, 2007, giving users another way to keep in touch with their friends. MySpaceIM, a downloadable program, incorporates chat into the user's experience. Before the introduction of MySpaceIM, MySpace users had to use other instant messenger functions, such as the popular AOL Instant Messenger (AIM), in order to satisfy their chatting needs, but now they won't have to.

adjustable conversation views, custom backgrounds and avatars, plus a skinnable interface. You can import your friends list to MySpaceIM, which makes the transition fairly simple. It also allows you to send sound bites, called "zaps," to your friends. Avid users will most likely enjoy the one-click login and the instant alerts for messages, requests and comments.

Cerulean Studios, the company that developed instant messenger client Trillian, is supporting MySpaceIM with the release of Trillian Astra. MySpace is hoping to make MySpaceIM work as smoothly as possible, so it is also having a Pidgin plug-in developed for the new IM. It connects MySpaceIM to an IM library called libpurple, and it should help iron out any of the kinks found after the test launch. The requirements for running MySpaceIM are Microsoft Windows (98/2000/XP/[Vista](#)) and Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher.

While keeping up with your friends is key, MySpace also wants to help you keep up with important issues with the recent addition (as of 2007) of MySpace Impact. The section allows users -- both individuals and organizations -- to post information about different causes, which in turn spreads awareness and gains supports for those causes. Read on to find out how MySpace is making an impact.

MySpace Impact



Barack Obama had a MySpace Impact

page during elections.

PAUL J. RICHARDS/AFP/GETTY
IMAGES

Many important and influential people have gone to extreme measures trying to get young people interested in politics, but polling statistics have shown that their efforts were mostly wasted. Now MySpace is trying its hand at popularizing politics by introducing **MySpace Impact**. MySpace Impact is a political section of the site devoted to educating MySpace users on the world of politics. Even though the site is international, the focus of MySpace Impact is on American politics. Adding MySpace Impact was one of the site's most selfless endeavors, given that the section is focused more on educating users and creating an online dialogue than it is on generating revenue.

MySpace gives out Impact Awards, which are divided into six categories -- International Development, Poverty Relief, Social Justice, Health and Safety, Environmentalism and Community-building. Only one Impact Award is given out each month, and the candidates are user-nominated. After the contest is under way, a user can [vote](#) for the organization that he believes best serves the specific category. ONE.org: The Campaign to Make Poverty History won the Impact Award for Poverty Relief on June 25, 2007. The organization received \$10,000, a monthlong link on the MySpace Impact community page, a mention in the monthly newsletter and a MySpace-wide bulletin announcing its victory. The winners' causes benefit greatly because of the public exposure offered by MySpace.

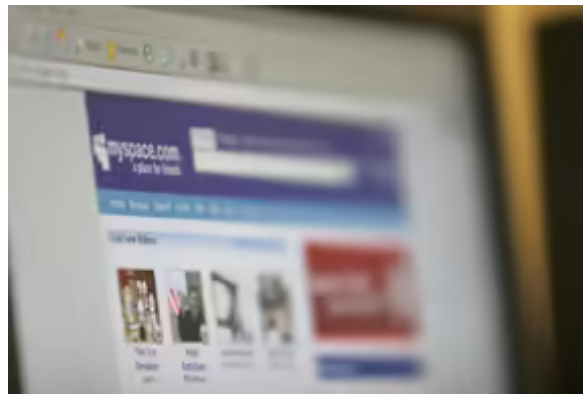
MySpace Impact also has a section called "Presidential Focus" that contains links to the presidential candidates' MySpace pages. Every candidate, from Barack Obama to John McCain, is on MySpace Impact, and each candidate's page explains his or her stance on hot-button issues like education, health care and immigration.

MySpace Impact also provides links to political events around the world and even

videos to help keep users up to speed on the current political climate.

Possibly the greatest aspect of MySpace Impact, however, is the link to begin the voter registration process. Many young people use MySpace, so it's a great way to get previously uninterested potential voters into the booths on Election Day.

MySpaceTV



MySpaceTV is a video site that launched in June of 2007, which features user-generated content and other online video.

NICHOLAS KAMM/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

MySpace's video-sharing capabilities have helped make the site the social-networking giant that it is today. And in June 2007, MySpace launched an improved video site called MySpaceTV.com. It is an international site that is available in 15 countries and seven languages. The site not only features user-generated content and other online video programming, but also **Sony Minisodes**, five-minute clips of classic TV shows. MySpace set up deals with Reuters, the New York Times and National Geographic to bring quality content to MySpaceTV.com. Users can also create their own customized channel pages. These customizable channels will allow users to save videos, comments and playlists, and the channels can also be linked to a user's regular MySpace profile. MySpaceTV is available to nonmembers, but only registered MySpace users will be able to upload content. Other MySpaceTV features

include:

- Video charts
- Categorical organization
- Featured channels
- Featured videos
- Hot video of the day

News Corp., which owns MySpace, has joined NBC Universal to embark upon a venture that will help the two media companies air their TV shows and movies over the [Internet](#) in a legal and profitable manner. MySpaceTV is set to be one of the outlets for the partnership. This partnership should aid MySpace in its quest to surpass other major video sites like YouTube and Yahoo.

Many [bloggers](#) and online video connoisseurs believe that MySpaceTV copied YouTube's format too closely. Everything from MySpaceTV's page layout to its video organizational method is questionably similar to that of YouTube. Some people believe that MySpaceTV intentionally copied YouTube in order to achieve comparable success, but other people think that there really was no other way to construct the site. YouTube set up its site so perfectly that there was little to no room for improvement and no chance to succeed without following its example. Either way, both sites do function in similar ways. The deciding factor for many Web video fans will be whether they are already on MySpace.com when they decide to hunt for online videos.

On the next page, we'll learn about MySpace's expansion into movies, news and comedy.

Other MySpace Site Sections





MySpace was one of the sponsors of the Cinevegas Film Festival in 2007.

PHOTO COURTESY GETTY IMAGES

MySpace Movies

Movie fans from around the world use MySpace Movies to find information on new releases and [films](#) that are still in production. It's a special section of the site that provides users with access to video clips and summaries of movies that they want to see. MySpace Movies offers Hollywood news and a search field that lets users find show times and purchase tickets online. Other features of MySpace Movies include:

- Photos
- Cast and crew info
- Two featured movies
- Links to movies' MySpace profiles
- Box office rankings

Even though MySpace Movies doesn't offer any services that are above and beyond those of ordinary movie Web sites, it gives users one less reason to exit MySpace's domain. Plus, avid movie fans enjoy adding movie profiles to their friends list.

MySpace NewsIn April 2007, MySpace launched MySpace News. MySpace News is a news aggregator that takes [algorithms](#) and user ratings into account. It draws news articles from reputable sources as well as from personal [blogs](#), all in real time.

MySpace users can submit Web sites to the aggregator database, and the stories are then rated by users on the site. In this way, Myspace positions itself between fully aggregated news sites like Google News and fully user-submitted news content like Digg.com. MySpace News engages its community by allowing users to rate and comment on the stories. Users can browse news items by common topics such as sports, politics and travel, and the results can be narrowed by location. Although it is far from being the site's most widely used section, MySpace News will undoubtedly grow in popularity, especially as longtime users mature into adulthood. The fact that MySpace has moved into more serious realms of media, like news and politics, is evidence of the site's desire to bring every aspect of the Web to one place.

MySpace Film Novice and expert filmmakers alike use MySpace Film as an opportunity to promote, share and discuss their work in a social network setting. Like MySpace's other artistic channels, MySpace Film features rotating banners that spotlight user-generated content on its homepage. As you can imagine, films featured on MySpace Film's homepage can gain popularity throughout the world, which is more exposure than most amateur filmmakers ever dream of getting.

MySpace Film has a section called Festival Focus, which promotes independent film festivals and has links to festivals' MySpace pages. Some of the MySpace Film features include:

- An advanced search tool
- List of film screenings and locations
- A section on film-related jobs
- A User's Choice Award

Every filmmaker on the site has a chance to win the User's Choice Award, which brings the winner fame and notoriety. Matt Riddlehoover won the User's Choice Award in June 2006 for his film "To a Tee." The exposure that Riddlehoover received

from winning the MySpace award has brought him all sorts of media attention, including direct quotes in an article in Filmmaker magazine.

MySpace Comedy Amateur comedians and seasoned professionals alike use MySpace Comedy to advertise and promote themselves. Although frequenting open-mic nights is good practice, it is no longer the only way for an amateur comedian to gain recognition. In the summer of 2006, MySpace launched a new section called MySpace Comedy. Some of the section's features include:

- A list of upcoming shows and tour dates
- Improv picks of the week
- Sketch comedy section
- A featured blog
- Featured videos
- A festivals and events section

Even though the MySpace Comedy channel focuses more on commercial rather than user-generated content, it still provides amateur comedians with great opportunities for networking. Dane Cook is a good example of the modern [Internet](#) comedian. Cook created a profile for himself in late 2003. Although MySpace Comedy wasn't yet up, Cook utilized the social-networking of MySpace to connect with his audience. He posted bits of comedy on his page every day and added links to his own site, DaneCook.com. Since Cook created his MySpace profile, more than 2 million people have added him as a "friend."

For more information on MySpace and related topics, check out the links on the next page.

Lots More Information

Related HowStuffWorks Articles

- [How Facebook Works](#)
- [How Blogs Work](#)
- [How Domain Name Servers Work](#)
- [How eBay Works](#)
- [How File Sharing Works](#)
- [How MP3 Files Work](#)
- [How Online Dating Works](#)
- [How Wikis Work](#)
- [How did a programmer find sex offenders on MySpace?](#)

More Great Links

- [MSNBC: Boys' MySpace prank results in sex crime arrest](#)
- [MSNBC: MySpace users to get their own cell phones](#)
- [MySpace.com](#)
- [SiliconBeat: Web 2.0 peak? MySpace sells for \\$580 million](#)
- [Software Tricks and Tips: How to Block MySpace.com](#)

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Myspace Maxed Out

Explode Your Popularity, Secure Your Privacy and Buzz Your Band on Facebook

By Bottletree Books, Editors of Bottletree Books LLC · 2006

Preview

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Table of contents

Become MySpace royalty. Explode your career. Secure your privacy. With over 120 million users MySpace is the world's largest social networking site. Feel lost and overwhelmed? Don't be! "MySpace Maxed Out" is an extensive guide on all areas of MySpace. Dominate it instead of being just part of it. Got a band? Learn 75 ways to get thousands of fans. Are you a filmmaker, politician or author? Find out how to launch your career to 120 million potential customers. Learn how to get insanely popular. Concerned about privacy? Read how to secure it in every area. Here are a few of the topics covered: 75 Ways to Buzz Your Band; Popularity Tips and Tricks to Make You Internet Royalty; HTML & CCS Boot Camp with Tons of Code; Coolest Profile Names and URLs; Get Celebrities and Famous Bands as Y...

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MYSPACE MAXED OUT

EXPLODE YOUR POPULARITY, BUZZ YOUR BAND AND SECURE YOUR PRIVACY ON MYSPACE

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What You'll Experience

Before You Sign Up

MySpace Terms of Use

Types of Personal Information

Email Address & Privacy

Chapter II Intro to Privacy

A. Before You Sign Up

You should know what you are getting into before signing up for MySpace. Privacy of personal information is of utmost importance to most people, so let's take a look at some key information and what will be disclosed. MySpace will only show the information you tell it to show. Just as importantly, MySpace keeps *most* of your personal information private and confidential. Divulge only the amount you want to the MySpace community.

CHANGE PROFILE INFORMATION AT ANY TIME

If your likes and dislikes change over time, you can change your profile information at any time under Edit Profile or Account Info within your account.

1. Types of Personal Information

Of course, the whole reason you join MySpace is to *disclose* information about yourself to build an online community of like friends. It is important to divulge only the amount of information you need to create a MySpace experience that is optimized for you, and not one piece of information more. Below is a list of the various types of information MySpace collects, how it is disclosed, and to whom.

Info Type	Info	Info Disclosed by MySpace	To Whom
Sign-Up	Email, First and Last Name, Password, Country, Postal Code, Gender, Birthdate, Age	Email, First Name, Gender, Age	MySpace Community
Profile	Photos, Personal Interests, Gender, Age, Education and Occupation	Photos, Personal Interests, Gender, Age, Education and Occupation	MySpace Community
Non-Personally Identifiable Info	IP Address, Profile Information, Aggregate User Data, and Browser Type	IP Address, Profile Information, Aggregate User Data, and Browser Type	Third Party Vendors to MySpace

FULL NAME NEVER DISPLAYED

Your last name will never be divulged by MySpace, only your first name. You can always email or chat with your network of friends and divulge any information you want. Keep in mind, however, that MySpace lets other users search for first *and* last names. So if you don't want your last name being searched on, delete it from your profile. Log in to your account, click on Edit Profile then select Name.

Below is the basic information that MySpace members and even Non-MySpace members can use to browse upon. These include age, relationship status, type of people you are seeking, location and photos. If you do not have a photo, browsers have the option of excluding you from the search results.

Set Browse Criteria

Basic **Advanced**

Browse For:
☐ Women
☐ Men
☒ Both

between ages: 21 and 30

who are:
☒ Single
☐ Married
☐ In a Relationship
☐ Divorced

and are here for:
☒ Dating
☐ Relationships
☐ Networking
☒ Friends

located within:
Country: United States
Postal Code: Any miles of (US, AU, Canada, or UK only)

photos:
 Show only users who have photos ☒
 Show name and photo only ☒

Sort Results By: ☒ Recently Updated ☐ Last Login ☐ New to MySpace ☐ Distance **Update**

CHECK LAST LOGIN WHEN BROWSING

When browsing MySpace for new friends be sure to check their “Last Login” next to their photo. If someone hasn’t logged into MySpace for six months don’t waste your time trying to contact them.

When a person browses for new friends on MySpace, this is called “friending”. They can also search advanced information that includes the basic search criteria plus personal items such as ethnicity, body type, and height. Also included are background and lifestyle choices like whether a person drinks, smokes, what education level they have completed, their religion and income.

DEFAULT PROFILE & BROWSING

When you sign up for MySpace your default profile will include the same lifestyle you have been browsing on. For example, if you have been looking for non-smokers who want children, these lifestyle choices will be placed in your default profile.

Only fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds can keep their profiles private. Everyone else’s profile is adrift in the MySpace ether for anyone to view and contact you.

VIEW MYSPACE’S SAFETY TIPS

MySpace has a number of safety tips that can be found at:
<http://viewmorepics.Myspace.com/misc/safetytips.html>.

MySpace Unraveled

What it is and how to Use it Safely

By [Larry Magid](#), [Anne Collier](#) · 2006

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Do you know what your children are up to on MySpace? MySpace Unraveled: What it is and how to use it safely discusses the booming MySpace social-networking phenomenon and shows you exactly what you need know about MySpace and how to create a safe online experience for your kids. Written by Larry Magid and Anne Collier of Family Tech Talk, this short and extremely useful guide discusses what children are doing on social-networking Web sites and why they have become so popular. While other books on this subject discuss how to use social networking sites, this is the first guide to address the topics important to parents. With this book parents will learn: The basics of online social networking. How children are using MySpace. Positive and negative aspects of social networking Web sites. Internet safety for kids. How to communicate with children

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MySpace

Unraveled

**A Parent's Guide
to Teen Social Networking**
from the Directors of BlogSafety.com

Larry Magid and Anne Collier

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Contents

CHAPTER 1 Online Socializing Basics

What Is Social Networking?

Creative Networking

A Parents'-Eye View

Teens Are Figuring It Out

Multiplying Like Rabbits

Not Their Parents' Web

CHAPTER 2 The Scene

Creating a Self, Online

How Public Is It?

Many Little Worlds

Acting Up in Public

Are They Overexposed?

CHAPTER 3 MySpace for Parents

Setting Up an Account

Personalizing Your Profile

Adjusting Other Account Settings

Turning MySpace Into YourSpace

Calendars

Canceling an Account

CHAPTER 4 Managing the Social Stuff

Making and Managing Friends

Using MySpace Mail

[Using the Address Book](#)

[Using Bulletins](#)

[Modifying Your Top 8](#)

[Deleting Friends](#)

[Commenting on Other People's Profiles](#)

[MySpace Events](#)

[Photo Rankings](#)

[MySpace Communities](#)

[Instant Messaging](#)

[Blogging](#)

[Tackling Safety Issues](#)

[CHAPTER 5 Social Networking Safely](#)

[First, the Research](#)

[Assessing the Risks](#)

[What's a Parent to Do?](#)

[CHAPTER 6 A Parents' Toolkit](#)

[Kids Want Parental Input](#)

[Privacy Options for Older Teens](#)

[Reporting Misconduct on MySpace](#)

[Finding Your Child Online](#)

[Monitoring and Filtering](#)

[Canceling Your Child's Account](#)

[CHAPTER 7 MySpacers' Advanced Tricks and Tips](#)

[Pimping and Hacking: Oh My!](#)

[HTML Is Key](#)

won't be a quiz, and we don't expect you to master every feature we talk about!

Setting Up an Account

Setting up a basic MySpace account is fast and easy. Follow these steps:

1. On the www.myspace.com home page, click **SignUp** in the top-right corner (FIGURE 3.1).

Figure 3.1. To sign up, click the orange button on the right side or click **SignUp** in the top-right corner.



This takes you directly to the signup page (FIGURE 3.2).

Figure 3.2. The signup page.

Transferring data from 02_presence.userplane.com...

2. Provide your email address, first and last name, date of birth, gender, country, and zip code.

Your email address and last name won't appear in your public profile automatically, but your first name, age, and location will unless you delete them later. (We'll show you how.)

3. Create a unique password with six or more characters, containing at least one number or punctuation character.
4. Agree to comply with basic site-security protocols and the terms of the site by checking the appropriate check box.
5. Enter the characters displayed in the Verification box.

You may have trouble deciphering the verification text, but if you get it wrong, MySpace will display a different one for

you to try again.

6. Click the Sign Up button.

Key Parenting Point

Parents may want to take a look at MySpace's terms of use and safety tips, and go over them with their kids. MySpace is getting more responsive to complaints about violations of these terms, including deleting the accounts of people under the minimum age of 14 and accounts that violate its terms.

Uploading a Photo

The next step is uploading a photo to your MySpace profile. Or you can choose to skip this step until later by selecting the Skip for Now link at the bottom of the page (**FIGURE 3.3**). See "Turning MySpace into YourSpace" later in this chapter if you want to upload your photo later.

Figure 3.3. Here, you can upload a photo or click Skip for Now to do it later.