

Answer all the questions and check your answers at the end.

Social networks

Business applications

Social networks connect people at low cost; this can be beneficial for entrepreneurs and small businesses looking to expand their contact base. These networks often act as a customer relationship management tool for companies selling products and services. Companies can also use social networks for advertising in the form of banners and text ads. Since businesses operate globally, social networks can make it easier to keep in touch with contacts around the world.

Medical applications

Social networks are beginning to be adopted by healthcare professionals as a means to manage institutional knowledge, disseminate peer to peer knowledge and to highlight individual physicians and institutions. The advantage of using a dedicated medical social networking site is that all the members are screened against the state licensing board list of practitioners. The role of social networks is especially of interest to pharmaceutical companies who spend approximately "32 percent of their marketing dollars" attempting to influence the opinion leaders of social networks.

Languages, nationalities and academia

Various social networking sites have sprung up catering to different languages and countries. The popular site Facebook has been cloned for various countries and languages and some specializing in connecting students and faculty.

Social networks for social good

Several websites are beginning to tap into the power of the social networking model for social good. Such models may be highly successful for connecting otherwise fragmented industries and small organizations without the resources to reach a broader audience with interested and passionate users. Users benefit by interacting with a like-minded community and finding a channel for their energy and giving.

Business model

Few social networks currently charge money for membership. In part, this may be because social networking is a relatively new service, and the value of using them has not been firmly established in customers' minds. Companies such as MySpace and Facebook sell online advertising on their site. Hence, they are seeking large memberships, and charging for membership would be counter productive. Some believe that the deeper information that the sites have on each user will allow much better targeted advertising than any other site can currently provide. Sites are also seeking other ways to make money, such as by creating an online marketplace or by selling professional information and social connections to businesses.

Privacy issues

On large social networking services, there have been growing concerns about users giving out too much personal information and the threat of sexual predators. Users of these services need to be aware of data theft or viruses. However, large services, such as MySpace, often work with law enforcement to try to prevent such incidents. In addition, there is a perceived privacy threat in relation to placing too much personal information in the hands of large corporations or governmental bodies, allowing a profile to be produced on an individual's behavior on which decisions, detrimental to an individual, may be taken.

Investigations

Social network services are increasingly being used in legal and criminal investigations. Information posted on sites such as MySpace and Facebook, has been used by police, probation, and university officials to prosecute users of said sites. In some situations, content posted on MySpace has been used in court.

1 According to the text, social networks

- ☐ are being used by businesses for marketing.
- ☐ are about friendships.
- ☐ can damage business reputations.
- ☐ advertise on business web sites.

2 Why do advertisers like social network sites?

- ☐ Detailed information on each user allows targeted ads.
- ☐ They are cost-effective to advertise on.
- ☐ Most users have high disposable income.
- ☐ They can influence consumer behaviour.

3 What does the word 'Few' at the beginning of paragraph 6 mean?

- ☐ Hardly any
- ☐ Not any
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Only

4 What should users not do on social networks?

- ☐ be too free with their personal information
- ☐ download viruses
- ☐ contact predators
- ☐ upload copyrighted music

5 Personal information on social network sites

- ☐ can be used in court
- ☐ gives a good description of the user's personality

- ☐ is sold to the government
- ☐ is translated into many languages

6 Social networking is great for

- ☐ groups of people separated over wide areas
 - ☐ academic organisations
 - ☐ people who write too much information about themselves
 - ☐ the law enforcement agencies
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