

# Social Networking Gains Popularity with All Ages



Social Networking, Mobile Social Networking, MySpace, Facebook, Friendster, Couch Surfing (I love that one) — what exactly are these things and why are they now such a significant part of people's lives, particularly teenagers? I had to get a "crash course" recently from my sixteen year old niece to find out.

They are all names of popular social networking websites offering an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music and videos. Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging services. In the U.S., MySpace.com is considered the leading social networking site among PC users and is also the most popular mobile Internet social networking site. Social Networking, already considered a global phenomenon, now accounts for almost 40 percent of worldwide mobile web traffic, topping the 60 percent mark in some countries including the U.S., South Africa and Indonesia, according to browser development firm Opera Software's first "State of the Mobile Web" report.

And apparently consumers are taking this service one step further. Millions of social network users have interacted with their virtual spaces while they are in transit. Consumer demand for mobile social networking may be the next significant driver of mobile service pricing models. One example is the recent announcement that Samsung has signed a multi-year deal with location-based social networking provider GyPSii. GyPSii has created a geo-spatial mobile platform that allows for the constant use and analysis of a user's location for various social interaction applications.

In addition to providing powerful new ways to communicate and share information, Social Networking has demonstrated potential in both business and medical applications. LinkedIn.com, which aims to interconnect professionals, is just one example of a business application. Professional networking sites function as online meeting places for business and industry professionals. Since social networks are still a free-based service, it offers entrepreneurs and small business a low cost method to expand their contact base.

Healthcare professionals are beginning to adopt social networks as a means to manage and distribute institutional information across a broad range of networks.

## **Social Networking Gains Popularity with All Ages**

Published on Wireless Design & Development (<http://www.wirelessdesignmag.com>)

---

Social networks have also been created to help its members with various physical and mental ailments. Networks such as PatientsLikeMe offers its members the chance to connect with others dealing with similar issues and research patient data related to their condition.

So, I guess it is safe to say that social networking, and particularly mobile social networking, is here to stay. Above all it has the potential to function on a much higher level than a place where teens can post their vacation photos. However, it is not without its caveats. There is a potential for misuse resulting in libel and breach of privacy issues. We'll just have to wait and see how this new phenomenon evolves.

**Source URL (retrieved on 07/25/2014 - 7:51pm):**

<http://www.wirelessdesignmag.com/articles/2008/09/social-networking-gains-popularity-all-ages>