

# Social Networking Sites: What They Are and How to Navigate Them

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## Description:

The use of social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn has dramatically increased in recent years. Today, over 50 percent of teens and 35 percent of adults in the U.S. are using at least one type of social networking site. If used well, these sites can have many personal and professional benefits. Social networking can be a fun way to communicate with others, and an effective way to expand one's social and professional connections. It is important to practice good judgment and proper "netiquette" when developing personal profiles and interacting with others through such sites. This community program will introduce participants to social networking sites.

## Goal:

Participants will increase their knowledge about social networking sites and how to effectively use them.

## Objectives:

- Participants will understand what a social networking site is, including the benefits and potential challenges of its use.
- Participants will visit one social networking site and create a profile.

- As a group, participants will brainstorm possible ways they can use a social networking site in a positive and responsible way.

## Before the Meeting:

- Read the Leader and Participant Guides.
- Plan how you are going to conduct the activities. Ideally, activities will be done in person with one or more computers with Internet access. Alternatively, you can assign participants to explore on their own, and then come together as a group to process their experiences.
- Download or bookmark the four videos referred to in this program:
  - Social Networking Sites: The Basics (<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/hef602/build/hef603basics.m4v>)
  - Privacy and Safety (<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/hef603/build/hef602safety.mp4>)
  - Create a Facebook Account (<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/hef602/build/hef603facebook.mp4>)
  - Create a LinkedIn Account (<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/hef602/build/hef603linkedin.mp4>)



## **Introduction:**

Social networking sites are websites that allow users to connect with others. These websites differ widely in what they offer, but most are designed to allow users to:

- create a profile that can be viewed by others;
- define a network of connections among other users of the site;
- interact with others in their own “networks” and, sometimes, with people in the networks of their connections (e.g., friends of friends).

Social networking sites provide many benefits. The following activities will help participants learn more about social networking sites, understand the different ways they can use the sites, and learn about responsible ways to navigate these sites.

### **Activity 1. Social Networking Sites: The Basics**

Watch the video “Social Networking Sites: The Basics.” This activity will help participants think about whether they want to use a social networking site and determine for what purposes they would use it.

### **Activity 2. Safety and Privacy**

Watch the video “Privacy and Safety.” Safety and privacy are two of the biggest issues that face users of social networking sites. This activity is intended to help participants consider and understand how to protect themselves. This includes choosing the types of information they share with the public and exploring the security settings of the social networking site they’re using.

### **Activity 3. It’s Time to Sign-On**

Watch the video “Create a Facebook Account” and/or “Create a LinkedIn Account.” In this activity, the group will choose a social networking site and create an account/profile. Participants can do this as a whole group and choose just one site, or each person can do it on his or her own. There are many different social networking sites but two of the most popular are Facebook (for personal and professional networking) and LinkedIn (for professional networking).

### **Questions, Comments or for Additional Information**

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