

What's in a Name?

WHEN *CYBERPSYCHOLOGY & BEHAVIOR* was founded more than a dozen years ago, the name of this refereed journal was so new that it needed a tag line to explain its purpose: “the impact of the Internet, multimedia, and virtual reality on behavior and society.” The concept of “cyberpsychology”—encompassing all psychological concepts associated with or affected by emerging technology—was new and exciting. Today, this peer-reviewed journal is indexed in Medline and PsycINFO, and many of the technologies reported at its inception are now decidedly mainstream.

What is new and exciting today, with its largely untapped potential, is social networking—defined in this context as the act of an individual using a Web-based service to connect with others who share common interests or activities. Almost everyone has heard of Facebook, with more than 400 million users, and Twitter, with 75 million users. In the United States, LinkedIn is a popular business-networking site, with 60 million users. In Europe, three-quarters of non-mobile Internet users visited social networks in December 2008. In Japan, most social network Web sites are accessed through mobile devices.

The growth of social networking sites is phenomenal. Facebook, for example, added 100 million U.S. users from January 2009 to January 2010. In comparison, the entire Internet didn't have 50 million users until 1997.

At the heart of every social networking site is the user profile. The more detailed a user profile, the more helpful it is as a baseline for building relationships with other people who share the same interests. These relationships are primarily online, though a little USB keychain device called Poken enables swapping of online profiles with people you meet in person.

Special-purpose social networking sites include YouTube for videos and Flickr for photos. One special-purpose social networking site is Cloudworks, designed to promote exchange of learning and teaching designs and ideas. As part of the Open University Learning Design Initiative, Cloudworks aims to bridge the gap between technologies available and technologies actually used for teaching. Users are contributing case studies, interviews, and in-depth course evaluations to a resource library, and engaging in discussions about best-practice learning design. An RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed, published in XML (Extensible Markup Language) enables subscribers to read updated comments in a desktop or mobile reader.

Social networking sites such as Zimride provide innovative services. Zimride is a social networking carpool and ride-sharing service popular at college campuses. Students counting their pennies know that sharing a ride can save \$1,000–\$2,000 per year. Best of all, Zimriders can view Facebook profiles before deciding whether to share a ride.

Social networking sites for humanitarian purposes are on the rise. A November 2008 editorial in *The Lancet* called for cancer-fighting organizations to embrace social networking tools, which could result in unduplicated resources, coordinated services, and enhanced communication among their members. People living with cancer and their loved ones have paved the way for such collaboration as they embrace social networking sites wholeheartedly in their quest for information, hope, and support.

Babajob.com seeks to become the LinkedIn for rural India. Babajob pays people to take photographs of poor people looking for jobs and put them on the Web site, thus clearing the no-computer hurdle faced by many in poverty. It also makes extensive use of SMS (Short Message Service, a cell-phone text message), which is widely available in rural India. A recent view of its site showed 350,000 jobs available and 66,000 job seekers registered.

Biomedexperts is a literature-based social networking platform for the life-sciences research community. It used PubMed to create profiles of 1.8 million scientists from more than 190 countries, networked to their coauthors. To date, one-quarter million of them have joined the network, which aims to promote global collaborative medical research and development.

In this virtually networked world, businesses are changing their mantra from “need to know” to “need to share,” recognizing that the collective wisdom in their employees will keep them one step ahead in this changing economy. A social networking site can bridge traditional corporate structures to foster innovation and strategic intelligence.

Innovation used to be launched by a new technology, but now it takes *personal* innovation to help people adapt to change and compete in a global economy. Today's innovations result from a collaboration of people who transfer knowledge and spur new research and development opportunities. This journal is positioned to integrate the psychology of technological, personal, and business innovation, and to create something greater than the sum of its parts. Our aim is to inspire scientists and clinicians from multiple disciplines to form new online collaborations to create new knowledge, thereby promoting innovation.

So let's raise a glass in a toast to the new name of this journal: *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*—your key to the impact of social networks, Internet, multi-media, and virtual reality on behavior and society.

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