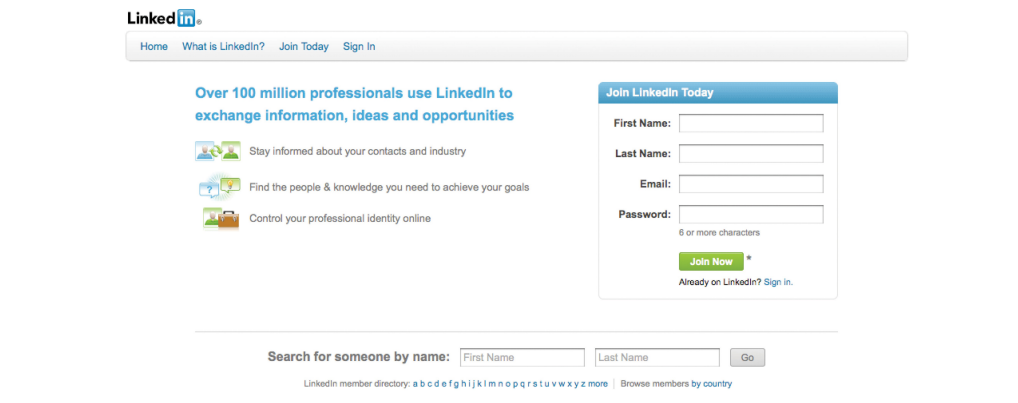


11.1 Social Media Sites for the Job Search

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Get an overview of different social media sites.
2. Understand how social media sites assist your job search.

LinkedIn



As of December 2010, LinkedIn had ninety million members and is adding new members every day. **LinkedIn** is a social media site designed to share your professional information. Much like a traditional résumé, the standard profile includes sections for a summary, education, experience, and additional information. You can also upload a picture, as well as attach presentations and your blogs and websites to your profile.

The social, interactive component of LinkedIn is your ability to connect to people and to see their **connections** (or people who have connected to them). You can reach out to these secondary connections by asking for an introduction from someone with whom you are already connected. In fact, you can reach out to connections of connections through the introduction process, so you have access to not just your circle but two circles removed from you. This greatly expands your network.

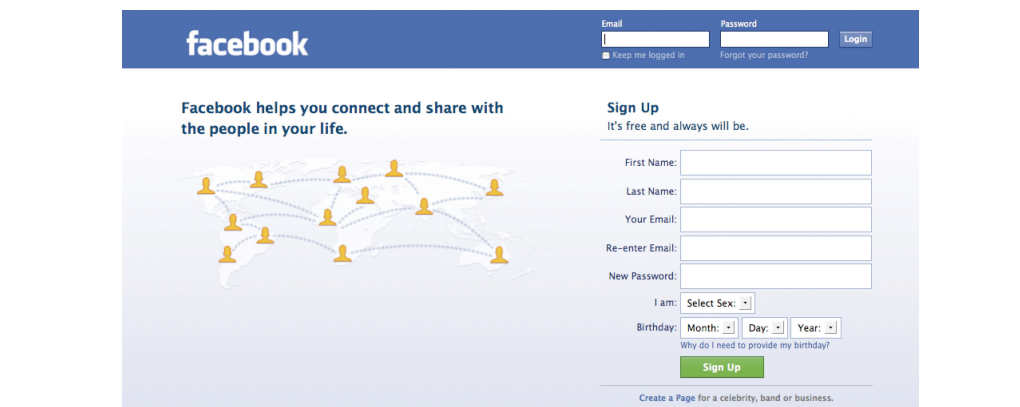
Another interactive component is the Groups function. LinkedIn has Groups based on a mutual interest or other commonality, such as university affiliation, professional goal, or geography. Anyone with a LinkedIn profile can create and run a Group, so you could use LinkedIn to create an online community for your specific interest or goal.

The following is a cursory overview of LinkedIn's basic features, but you can see that having a LinkedIn profile can add tremendous advantages to your job search:

- You can upload your résumé details online and be able to point people to your LinkedIn hyperlink rather than an attached document. This is very useful when requesting informational interviews where you want the person to have your extended background, but you don't want to be presumptuous and attach a résumé.
- You can share additional information that would be cumbersome on a traditional résumé.
- You can network with ninety million members regardless of where you are physically based.

- You can use the connections feature to keep track of your network and to meet new people, thereby facilitating your job search through networking.
- You can use the Groups function to meet people with similar interests and goals, such as people in your target industry, function, or geography.

Facebook



The screenshot shows the Facebook homepage from December 2010. At the top left is the Facebook logo. To the right are login fields for 'Email' and 'Password', with a 'Login' button and links for 'Keep me logged in' and 'Forgot your password?'. Below the login section is a sign-up area titled 'Sign Up' with the tagline 'It's free and always will be.' The sign-up form includes fields for 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Your Email', 'Re-enter Email', and 'New Password'. There are also dropdown menus for 'I am:' (with a 'Select Sex' option), 'Birthday:' (with 'Month', 'Day', and 'Year' dropdowns), and a 'Sign Up' button. A link at the bottom says 'Create a Page for a celebrity, band or business.' On the left side of the sign-up area, there is a graphic with the text 'Facebook helps you connect and share with the people in your life.' and a network diagram showing people icons connected by lines.

As of December 2010, **Facebook** reported over five hundred million users. Facebook originated as a personal social platform, so its profile includes basic information, such as education and interests, but is more geared toward sharing ideas, comments, and photos. Like LinkedIn, you can attach your blog to your Facebook profile so your posts will appear on your profile.

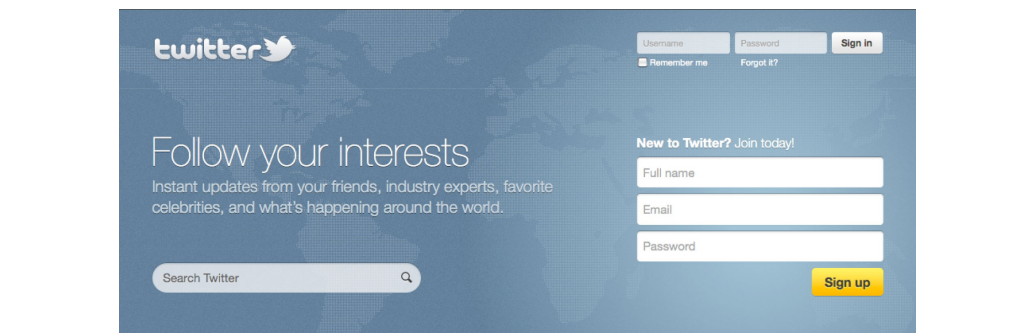
Like LinkedIn, the social, interactive component of Facebook enables you to connect to people as “Friends” and to see their Friends. You can send messages to your Friends and sometimes to their connections, so you have the ability to organize, maintain, and grow your network via Facebook.

Facebook has a Pages function, which works like the Groups function in LinkedIn. The range of Page subjects is much wider on Facebook, because it is predominately a personal site. You will see opinions, cultural themes, and other non-career-related Pages. At the same time, some Pages are dedicated to organizations where you may be able to see job posts and breaking news. Other Pages are dedicated to professional and career-related subjects, and you may see advice or resources on them.

Facebook is predominately a personal site, but there are advantages to your job search from having a Facebook profile:

- The reach is much wider, so you may be able to connect with more people. If you can't find someone on LinkedIn, Facebook provides another option.
- The best networking starts with developing rapport, so the predominately personal environment of Facebook may be less intimidating for both job seeker and prospective networking targets.
- Organizations and people interact differently on different social media, so Facebook provides another data point for reaching organizations and people of interest.

Twitter



Once you sign up for a profile, which is just your **Twitter** handle (i.e., name), Twitter enables you to post Tweets (i.e., ideas, comments, and thoughts) of 140 characters or fewer in length. You connect to other Twitter users by “following” their Tweets. People can also follow your Tweets, and if someone is following you, you can send them a message.

As of December 2010, Twitter is one of the top ten most visited websites, as reported by **Alexa.com**. Alexa.com is a widely used tracking site to measure visitors and page views to websites. Most Tweets are not specifically job or career related. However, there are advantages to using Twitter for your job search:

- Organizations post job openings via Twitter.
- Individuals who may be instrumental to your job search might be on Twitter, and following them is another way to show your interest and possibly connect with them.
- Your posts reveal your ideas and expertise, so you could Tweet about items that showcase your industry or functional knowledge.

Other Niche Online Communities



The value of social media sites is putting your information out there and being able to connect with people, so it makes sense that communities have been established around very tight niches. The value of being active in a niche community is that the participants have a natural rapport already established from sharing a common affinity. This facilitates networking.

One example of a niche online community is Brazen Careerist, a site targeted at career issues for **Generation Y** (the generation of people born between 1980 and 1995, also known as Millennials and Trophy Kids). Similar to other social media sites, Brazen Careerist allows you to create a profile, post ideas, and connect with other members. The Groups function is where communities specific to industry, function, geography, interest, or goal connect. Organizations post jobs or sponsor events via the site. Because you know that Brazen Careerist is specifically targeted at Generation Y, you can become active on

the site if you are trying to reach Generation Y contacts, including organizations that target Generation Y.

Another example of an online community, though not a social media site in its strict definition, is Meetup.com. Meetup.com posts live meetings around specific topics. You can set up an account so you can search for events and groups near you. The networking happens live, so it is not social media per se, but clearly the online component is greatly facilitating the targeted networking.

The value of niche online communities to your job search is in the targeted networking:

- If you want to reach a targeted group, by identifying a social media site for that group, you focus your networking efforts.
- Your ability to interact and build connections with this tight community is a way to gauge if you are indeed interested in this group and if they are interested in you. This can help you position your overall marketing.
- Organizations are also active on niche online communities, so you can find organizations that are predisposed to your profile.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Examples of social media sites include LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and niche online communities.
- The value of social media sites to your job search is in the ability to push out your information and to connect with people in a targeted way.

EXERCISES

1. Which social media sites will you select for your job search? If you are not familiar with these sites, visit the ones mentioned in this section to get a feel for each site.
2. What specific steps do you need to take to increase your activity in the social media space? Do you need to establish a profile? Do you have a profile but need to update it or post ideas? Pick one social media site (again, LinkedIn is recommended for its focus on professional careers) and create or update your profile.
3. How will you incorporate social media activity into your job search going forward? Set calendar reminders each month to update your social media profiles.