

Social Networking

Social networking websites are an increasingly popular way of keeping in touch with friends, networking and advertising your business or organisation. Facebook and Twitter are the two most popular sites however other social networking sites do exist such as Bebo and MySpace.

Facebook and Twitter both have different configurations and different ways of functioning, however they have many similarities. Both sites allow rapid dissemination of information to a potentially large audience and both sites have their own 'language'. For instance on Facebook 'post' means to upload onto the site. Also 'friend' does not only mean existing friends it can also include acquaintances or complete strangers. On Facebook being 'friends' with someone means you are allowing them to see your personal information on your Facebook site. So think carefully about whom you become 'friends' with and how much detail you include on your page.

Facebook has over 250 million active users worldwide and is the most popular social networking site. It allows you to find people from school or acquaintances you have lost touch with. It is also a way of keeping in touch with friends when you can't find time for a phone call or to write an email. You can sign up for facebook by going to www.facebook.com

Each Facebook user has a personal profile. You do not have to post any personal information on Facebook other than your name, however you have the option of including hobbies, occupation, birthday, town, state, country and schools you attended. All this information can be set so that only people who are on your 'friends list' can view it or it can be set so that anyone on the internet can view it. Because birthdays and addresses are very sensitive information it's best to only allow people on your friends list to view your page. If you want to allow free access to a page, for instance if the page was for a business or organisation, then you will want to promote contact details.

Facebook allows you to upload photos and it gives you an inbox so you can write messages to your friends, similar to email. Facebook users can “post” pictures and videos and then other facebook users can view and make public comments on them. You can send messages to other Facebook users and even talk to them in real time using Facebook messenger which is embedded in the website.

Facebook has a status bar which constantly asks the question “What’s on your mind?” You are able to post anything in response and your friends can comment on your post. There is also newsfeed which shows updates of all your friends’ recent Facebook posts. Facebook also has many different games and applications that you can add to your profile for entertainment.

Grenfell has a few different Facebook groups. You can search for them in the search box. The main ones are “The Big G” and “Grenfell, N.S.W, Australia - There is no place like it!”

If your mobile phone is equipped with the internet you can access Facebook any time not just when you are at your computer.

Twitter is a simple social networking website that is becoming increasingly popular now more people have access to the internet from their mobile phones.

Twitter also has its own terminology. A ‘tweet’ is a comment up to 140 characters. A character is a letter in a word, so tweets are usually only a sentence or two. A ‘follower’ is someone who subscribes to your twitter page, similar to a friend on Facebook. Similar to Facebook you can block people who you don’t want to see your twitter page.

To use Twitter you need to sign up which can be done at www.twitter.com. Twitter does not have a photo and profile section like Facebook, it only has the status bar with the question “What are you doing?” This is where you can type a 140 character comment about what’s on your mind right at that instant. This is a “tweet”. When you click update, your “tweet” is now visible by your “followers”. You can subscribe and become a “follower” of other people’s profiles including friends, family or celebrities. This means your mobile phone or

computer will be updated on what's happening to these people throughout their day.

Twitter allows you to share links for pictures and videos on other websites so that if you have found something interesting you can share it with all of your "followers".

You can use the Twitter search box to find comments on particular topics. This allows you to see what the general population is thinking about a particular newsworthy topic. You are then able to reply to the person tweeting about that particular topic.

When used wisely social networking websites provide a valuable communication service to individuals, business and organisations. Like all things on the internet however commonsense and basic internet security principals should remain front of mind.

If you would like to learn more about Facebook or Twitter or if you are having problems with your computer or mobile phone drop down and see me in the Internet Centre next door to the Community Hub or give me a call on 6343 1720. I will also be running free classes in October on emailing with hotmail; I have only 16 spots left so first in best dressed.