

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TAKEN FROM THE AIDS.GOV BLOG

SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

What are social network sites?

Social network sites are online communities that give you opportunities to connect with, or provide resources to, clients, colleagues, family, and friends who share common interests. In each social network, you create a profile that describes you or your organization, and then invite people to join you as “friends.” There are many different types of social network sites, many of which are free, and they range from general to those tailored for a specific demographic or interest area.

Why would I join a social network site?

Social network sites allow you to engage with people who share similar interests or are a part of your organization’s target audience. Many social network sites allow you to upload videos, photos, create a blog, post events, join groups, and send messages.

Who uses social network sites?

- As of June 2008, there were 120 million social network profiles.¹
- More than half (55%) of all online American youths ages 12-17 are social networkers.²
- Over 11 million blacks visit black websites or social network sites.³
- The number of U.S. Hispanic and Puerto Rican social network site users increased 48% in 2007.⁴

How are people using social network sites to respond to HIV?




- To reach at-risk young people with HIV prevention, testing, and treatment information.
- To form support groups for those living with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS.
- To recruit people for focus groups.
- To inform people about HIV/AIDS-related events or activities.

What technology do I need to access a social network site?




You need Internet access to visit a social network site.

Where can I learn more about social network sites?

Examples of social network resources include:

- Common Craft’s Video “Social Networks in Plain English”: www.commoncraft.com/video-social-networking 
- Facebook: www.facebook.com 
- MySpace: www.myspace.com 

Examples of social network sites addressing HIV/AIDS include:

- PatientsLikeMe: www.patientslikeme.com 
- Daily Strength: www.dailystrength.com 
- New Mexico AIDS Services’ MySpace page: www.myspace.com/nmas1 

¹ Social Times, “Top Social Network Age Distribution,” Available at <http://www.socialtimes.com/2008/06/top-social-network-age-distribution>. Accessed on 8/29/08.

^{2,3} Pew Internet & American Life Project, “Pew Internet Net Project Data Memo: Re: Social Networking Websites and Teens: An Overview” (January 3, 2007).

⁴ Analytics 2.0, “White Paper III- Social Networks in Latin America,” Available at: <http://www.analytics20.org/?s=white+paper+III++social+networks>. Accessed on 7/31/08.