**Facebook Phenomenon**



I suppose that for most people, realizing that Facebook is a monster came suddenly, recently, and as something of a shock; even if they had used the **social networking site** to some **degree** in the past. Perhaps for some it was as early as June of 2007, when worldwide traffic on this relatively new startup first exceeded that of its biggest rival Myspace. For others it was when all the major Presidential candidates posted profiles on Facebook in an effort to win younger **voters**. For the rest it was somewhere between April of 2009 and February of 2010, when its number of **unique visitors** went from 300 million (roughly the entire population of the United States) to 400 million (a bit **shy** of the **entire** population of North America). But if all of these **milestones** zoomed by you and you still find yourself in that **briskly** vaporizing **smidgeon** of the world's **populace** that has never even visited Facebook, consider yourself warned – **regardless** of your **cognitive** state, Facebook already **affects** you.

Facebook affects your career, your business and your relationships with people. If you are an **employer** you already know to check a candidate's Facebook page before **tendering** an offer letter, and if you are one of the thousands of young people who have lost a job opportunity because you expressed a partying attitude in your Facebook comments and didn't realize your employer would see them, you know it now, too. If you are a **parent** and you haven't been looking at your teenager's Facebook page you could be in for a **surprise**, and if you are a teenager and have been acting exactly the same on Facebook as you do in the restroom at school, you should think about what will happen when your parents see your page, because sooner or later they will.

I began using Facebook **regularly** a couple of years ago after meeting the woman who later became my wife on an internet **dating site**. She is a lot younger than I am and she was already **addicted** to Facebook for keeping up with her **bosom buddies** from high school and **fraternizing** with fellow students at her university. She once told me, 'I usually log onto Facebook at least **thrice** a day – when I wake up, during my lunch break, and in the evening before bed.' Throughout our intercontinental **courtship** I opened her Facebook profile almost daily since that was where she posted all her pictures. I **admired** her images of course, but I also studied the comments she and her friends made about them, as I gained a certain sense of her through the eyes of others that I could never have **acquired** any other way.

However, even though I was a Facebook 'regular', so to speak, I always thought of it as a social networking site **intended** for high school and college students like my then **fiancée**. I never filled out my own **profile** beyond the minimum required to log in; and I never posted my own photo albums on my page (I preferred using Yahoo Messenger or email to share pics with my fiancée because it felt more 'private,' and because I didn't like the way Facebook often failed during mass uploads). In my mind Facebook was for my wife's **generation**, not mine, even though I knew plenty of people my age that used it.

That changed last summer when I moved **overseas**, and suddenly discovered that my 79-year-old father was using Facebook... and had been for some time. Yes, I – the first one in my family to have his own website and the only one who ever had a Microsoft **certification** – had become the last to wake up to the fact that Facebook is more than just a highly successful social networking site: Facebook is the cultural **gathering** place of the new millennium. Facebook has knocked out Myspace, Friendster and every other **competitor**, and now **dominates** the entire globe with more than 40 percent **market share**. Facebook is the most **significant** **phenomenon** since Microsoft or Google. Facebook is the future.

**That is, if Mark Zuckerberg doesn't blow it.**

Since its **launch** in 2004, Facebook has suffered a string of publicity **blunders** relating to **privacy**. Zuckerberg, the company's **CEO** and **founder** who turned 26 last week, demonstrated back in his college days that he was anything but an **ethical** or **trustworthy** person. He **hacked** Harvard's student directory **database** to create his own website, 'Facemash', which ridiculed fellow students by comparing their school portraits side-by-side with farm animals. This past week some instant messages **purportedly** from his Harvard days – shortly after he and some dorm buddies launched Facebook's earliest version The Facebook – were published on BusinessInsider.com and they are incredibly **embarrassing** if they are real. A 19-year-old Zuckerberg tells a friend that he has the email addresses, pictures, residential addresses and student ID's of over 4.000 Harvard **attendees** available for the **mere** asking. When the friend asked how Zuckerberg got the information he explained that the students submitted it to him.

"I don't know why.
They trust me.
'Dumb f\*\*\*s."

It is almost as if Zuckerberg's **personal creed** is the antithesis of Google's former pledge to 'do no evil'.

Facebook's more recent **gaffs** have been over serious **bugs**, such as the one that allowed users interested in seeing how their page looked to a selected person in their friends list to actually view that friend's open chats in real time; or over Facebook's ever more **invasive** 'privacy policy' (or perhaps 'anti-privacy policy' would be a more accurate term), and the way in which Facebook **avidly** tells developers and advertisers that more and more personal information from users is and will be available to them, while at the same time trying to **convince** its users that Facebook 'cares' about privacy concerns.

The truth, simply put, is that Facebook's financial success is based on its ability to **monetize** user information, and the only way user information can be effectively monetized is if it is shared with advertisers. Zuckerberg knows this better than **probably** anyone on the planet, and he has made no secret in interviews pointed at developers and advertisers that he considers internet privacy to be a dinosaur. He has openly stated that if he were to launch Facebook today, it would not have a privacy policy to speak of. That, he insists, is what users (forget advertisers) want.

If Zuckerberg is right, then Facebook will continue to grow and **stomp out** all competitors, using member information freely and in any way advertisers and application developers choose for the **ultimate** goal of making as much money as possible. If he is wrong, then as some moversand shakers of the Internet world suggest, Facebook is headed for a **fall**, and a **major** one.

Perhaps the answer to that question will appear this fall after the scheduled release of a major open-source effort at social networking launches under the name of Diaspora. If users feel as **uncomfortable** with Facebook's lack of **trustworthiness** as **pundits** claim, then Diaspora's growth will be fast.

But even if that happens Facebook isn't going away any time soon.

My wife continues to use Facebook **furiously**, constantly posting pictures of our adventures in her photo albums, checking out the dresses, shoes and handbags that her friends are selling in their photo albums, and chatting away with classmates, family and **chums**. Her friends list contains over 700 people even though she tries to **purge** it occasionally, and it continues to grow. Changing to another site would be difficult for her, if not impossible, and for her the potential privacy concerns just aren't worth changing her lifestyle.

That's exactly what Zuckerberg is counting on.

Słowniczek

Degree-stopień, skala, poziom

Phenomenon-fenomen, niezwykłe zjawisko, człowiek itp.

Blunder-błąd, pomyłka, omyłka

Ultimate-ostateczny, krańcowy, końcowy (np. wynik)

social networking site-inform. portal społecznościowy (np. Facebook, Myspace itp.)

regardless-nie zważając +of sb/sth – na kogoś/coś

acquire-nabywać, wchodzić w posiadanie

addicted-uzależniony

admire-podziwiać

affect-wpływać na (coś/kogoś)

attendee-uczestnik/uczestniczka

avidly-namiętnie, z zapałem

bosom buddy-pot. dobry kumpel, dobra kumpela

briskly-dziarsko, żwawo

bug-inform. błąd (w programie)

CEO-(chief executive officer) dyrektor generalny, dyrektor naczelny

Certification-poświadczenie, uwierzytelnienie

Chum-pot. kumpel(-ka)

Cognitive-kognitywny, poznawczy

Competitor-konkurent(-ka), rywal(-ka)

Convince-przekonywać

Courtship-starania o rękę

Database-inform. baza danych

dating site-portal randkowy

dominate-zdominować

embarrassing-żenujący

employer-pracodawca/pracodawczyni

entire-cały, całkowity

ethical-etyczny

fall-upadek

fiancée-narzeczona

founder-twórca/twórczyni, założyciel(-ka)

fraternize-bratać się

furiously-z furią, z wściekłością

gaff-gafa, nietakt

gathering-spotkanie

generation-pokolenie

hack-inform. włamać się do czegoś

intended-planowany, zamierzony

invasive-inwazyjny

launch-wprowadzenie na rynek

major-poważny, olbrzymi

market share-udział w rynku

mere-po prostu

milestone-kamień milowy

monetize-zarabiać (na czymś)

overseas-za granicę

parent-rodzic

personal creed-kredo

populace-ludność

privacy-prywatność

probably-pewnie, prawdopodobnie

profile-profil

pundit-ekspert

purge-oczyszczać

purportedly-jakoby, rzekomo

regularly-regularnie

shy-(AmE.) brakujący

significant-ważny, znaczący

smidgeon-pot. odrobina, niewielka ilosć czegoś

stomp out-pozbywać się (kogoś/czegoś)

surprise-niespodzianka

tender-przedkładać, składać

thrice-trzykroć, trzykrotnie

trustworthiness-wiarygodność

trustworthy-godny zaufania

uncomfortable-niewygodny

unique visitor-inform. unikatowy użytkownik

voter-wyborca

1. The author started using Facebook after discovering his father had been using it for some time.

a) Prawda b) Fałsz

2. Facebook was launched in June 2007.

a) Prawda b) Fałsz

3. Facebook's financial success is based on user information.

a) Prawda b) Fałsz

4. Diaspora is a new social networking service.

a) Prawda b) Fałsz

5. The author met his wife on Facebook.

a) Prawda b) Fałsz