

My Space Is Your Space: Myspace.com

Contributed by Administrator
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This article has an accompanying comic strip that can be found at: <http://www.m6.net/articles/images/myspace.jpg>

You know, I've been writing articles on the Internet for over 2 years now and it never seems to amaze me how slow I am to pick up on new phenomena that keep springing up on the World Wide Web. Just as I hear about some really cool website/web concept, I am then told about a new one that everyone else already knows about. Well, this time I feel like a total recluse. I've been walking around in my own head-space not realizing that one of the most popular sites in the world, <http://www.myspace.com/> is where much of the human community is getting together to share 'space', or if you want to look at it another way, to share life.

People are connecting with each other on the Internet for many different reasons, and most of them can be done here. Myspace.com is currently receiving more page views than the popular Google search engine, around 10 billion per month. It is essentially a social networking base-station, a place to meet and connect with other people for any and every reason imaginable. At first it looks a little like a dating site, which is definitely a huge aspect of its existence, as romantic and intimate interaction is such a massive priority in the lives' of humanity. Where it goes a few large steps further is with its integration of communication mediums and networking tools. You can have your own blog, record your own MP3 music files, and even make videos for all of your 'friends' to check out. (If you want your movie or song to get out there, make as many friends as you can!) Each person's web pages can be creatively original in their own right which brings out the uniqueness of each personality. Friendship is the main driving force behind this postmodern 'movement'. On-line groups of friends who have connected because of similar interests (there are many different categories) get to choose who they want to share their information with, so in essence, you choose who you want to meet. It is working well, as is testified by over 20 million users currently joining every month.

One obvious impact that this site has had on social and economic structures is in the music industry. If you go to the 'music' category (thousands of groups of people into similar music are listed) you will find that many bands have put up pages offering a few of their songs to download for free. I'm not talking about famous bands that you hear on radio or see on TV (although they too are joining in- and getting better sales than ever before). I'm talking about no-name groups that we never would have gotten an opportunity to hear before. Without the aid of heavy marketing, airplay, and record label support, some bands are selling millions of records. This is totally knocking out the concept of the 'middleman'. Production and promotion costs are low, and revenue that used to be obtained from CD sales is now being made by merchandise that devoted fans are ready and willing to buy. To put it bluntly, these bands are giving up their day jobs and making a healthy living without the help of the mass-market and its Top 40 hit lists.

This is a new level of social interaction. Bands are realizing that to relate to their audience, the best way is to humbly communicate with them one-on-one. Imagine the feeling of being able to send and receive emails and photos with your idols. Well, that's the ticket. Some bands are spending a lot of time on the email, and the result is a fan-base that is dedicated on a direct human being to human being level. Updating their blogs and downloadable songs regularly is quickly bringing visitors back again, making for an audience that stands by their favorite groups. Rock stars used to be untouchable, 'more-than-human' people who lived separately from the rest of us with their mansions and limousines. Now the paradigm is shifting and we are realizing they are just talented people, people like you and me.

The key to this new freedom-based communication is in Chinese whispers: Word-of-mouth. Through electronic messaging, people are spreading the word about the next cool thing faster than ever imagined. Whole groups are informing other highly defined and connected groups about which film is worth going to watch at the theater, which TV show is the one to see, and which people are spreading the 'right' messages in their blogs. It's spelling the end of programmed media. People are getting to read, listen, and watch what they are interested in, without having to change the channel or stand in line at the music store. You also have the opportunity to meet many others who are interested in the same things as yourself. The need to go on blind dates or cruise local bars is diminishing as you can read into people's personalities by seeing what they write and say about the world.

The days of being hounded by company marketers into buying an album could be on its way out. The paradoxical thing is a huge percentage of the total world web's advertising is done on this one site! The two worlds are colliding in an age-old clash that is causing some to wonder how long this great thing will last. How many times have you seen a cool band's music suddenly decrease in magic once they started making it big in the commercial realm? Sell-outs we call them. Well Myspace just got bought up by one of the richest men in the world, Rupert Murdoch. When you join Myspace the first friend you automatically connect with is Tom Anderson, one of the original founders of the site. He looks like a normal guy. He's 29 years old, into contemporary culture...a lot of girls send him email comments-I hope it's not just because he's rich! It was this guy's identity that struck a chord with so many normal people. Rupert Murdoch might be cool in the eyes of the Fortune 500 but to the rest of us we know he's not going to be having chats about the latest O.C. TV show or

his cherry red 57' Chevy (there's a category for car maniacs). Could the sellout factor take away the great possibilities this site has to offer? Will people give up on it, or stick with because of its original ideals? Will your space and my space become 'his' space? We'll have to wait and see. I still think it's awesome.

About The Author

Jesse S. Somer is seeing the human community come together like he never could have imagined. Social structures are changing because we are all thinking for ourselves more. Will the scent of the billionaire taint this new perfume of the 'informed consumer'?

<http://www.m6.net>