## **Chapter 1**

## **The Many Faces of Facebook**

#### In This Chapter

▶ Discovering Facebook

. . . . .

- ▶ Knowing what you can and can't do on Facebook
- Finding out how Facebook is different than other social sites
- Seeing how different people use Facebook . . . differently

magine trying to get from New York to California via some way other than riding an airplane. Try baking a pie (pecan, please) without an oven? Or getting to the seventieth floor without riding an elevator. Certainly there are ways to achieve those tasks, but without the right tools, they may take longer, come out less-than-perfect, and *really* make you sweat.

Like an airplane, an oven, or an elevator, Facebook is a tool that can make life's *To-Dos* fun and easy. Facebook enables you to manage, maintain, and enhance your social connections. Think about how you accomplish these tasks:

- Getting the phone number of an old friend.
- Finding out what your friends are up to today.
- Making a contact in a city you're moving to or at an office where you're applying for a job.
- Planning an event, tracking the guest list, and updating everyone when the time changes.
- ✓ Garnering support for a cause.
- ✓ Getting recommendations for movies, books, and restaurants.
- ✓ Showing off the pictures from your latest vacation.
- ✓ Telling your friends and family about your recent successes, showing them your photos, or letting them know you're thinking of them.
- ✓ Remembering everyone's birthday.

The preceding list is merely a sampling of life's tricky tasks that Facebook can help you accomplish more easily and enjoyably. The list could go on, but we need to leave *some* space in the book to tell you how to solve these problems.

Facebook facilitates and improves all your social relationships — we realize that's a big claim. Almost as big as the claims about the blender that can prepare a seven course meal in six minutes, the pill that can give you the abs of Chuck Norris and the legs of Tina Turner, or the six easy steps that can make you a millionaire. However, Facebook is a little different than these in at least three ways. First, we won't claim it's so easy your Chihuahua can do it. Getting set up and familiar with Facebook does take a little work (which you know or you wouldn't be starting out on this 360-page journey). Second, Facebook costs only three low payments of \$0, but if you aren't totally satisfied, you can be fully refunded. Finally, unlike the blender or the pill, Facebook *will* actually change your life, make it better, more fun, easier, and, did we mention . . . more fun?

## Figuring Out What Facebook Is Exactly

Think about the people you interacted with in the past day. In the morning, you may have gone to get the paper and chatted with the neighbor. You may have asked your kids what time they'd be home and negotiated with your partner about whose turn it is to cook dinner. Perhaps you spent the day interacting with co-workers, taking time out for lunch with a friend who's in town for business. In the evening, you may have shot off an e-mail to an old college roommate, called your mom (it's her birthday after all), and made plans with the gang to get together this weekend. At the end of the day, you unwound in front of your favorite newscaster telling you about the various politicians, athletes, businessmen, and celebrities whose lives may (or may not) interest you. Every day, you interact with so many different people in unique ways. You exchange information: "Did you catch the news this morning?" You enjoy another's company: "Who's up for a good joke?" You enrich lives: "I made you something at school today." Throughout your day, most of the decisions you make and actions you take are thanks to, or on behalf of, someone that you know.

That's a one-foot view of the world in which you're the center. Pan the camera back a ways (farther . . . farther . . . even farther), and you see that each person you interact with — family, friends, the newspaper delivery guy, the lunch lady, your favorite musician, and even the people who are writing this book — are at the center of their own realities. So is each person *they* know. The connections between every single person in the world intertwine, interplay, and interlock to form *the social graph*. Bold claim: This living, throbbing, shifting, growing web of human relationships is one of life's most awe-some and powerful concepts.

The power of the social graph refers to how information travels quickly and (somewhat) reliably among folks who are connected with one another. Facebook's function is to make the social graph accessible — that is, to help people keep track of and reach the people they know and help individuals leverage the power of the graph by enabling them to communicate and exchange information with anyone or everyone they trust.

Another powerful aspect of the social graph on Facebook is that it builds and maintains itself. Each member helps define his or her place in the graph. When you sign up for Facebook, you start by finding the Profiles of the people you know and establishing your virtual connection to them. As a Facebook user, it's in your best interest to keep your portion of the graph mapped as accurately as possible — form a complete set of connections to the people you know. Facebook can become your single access point for the people you know, so it becomes more useful when you can confidently find exactly who you're looking for. Because of how Facebook is built, you are not the only one responsible for connecting with everyone you know (imagine the longest game of Hide and Seek *ever*). After you make a few connections, mutual friends are automatically made aware of your presence on the site, and they seek *you* out to establish a connection. *Remember:* It's also in their best interest to keep their contact list up to date.

#### Discovering What You Can Do on Facebook

Now that you know that Facebook is a means by which you can connect with people who matter to you, your next question may be, "How?" It's a good question — such a good question that we spend almost the rest of this book answering it. But first, an overview.

### Establish a Profile

When you sign up for Facebook, one of the first things you do is establish your *Profile*. A Profile on Facebook is a social résumé — a page about you that you keep up-to-date with all the information you want people to know.

Facebook understands that if you were handing out résumés in the real world, you'd probably give different documents to different people. Your social résumé may have your phone number, your favorite quotes, and pictures from that crazy night in you-know-where with you-know-who. Your résumé for a potential employer would probably share your education and employment history. Your résumé for your family may include your personal address as well as show off your recent vacation photos and news about your life's changes. You show different slices of your life and personality to different people, and a Facebook Profile, shown in Figure 1-1, allows you (no, *encourages* you) to do the same. To this end, your Profile is set up with all kinds of privacy controls to specify *who* you want to see *which* information. Many people find great value in adding to their Profile just about every piece of information they can and then unveiling each particular piece cautiously. The safest rule here is to share on your Profile any piece of information you'd share with someone in real life. The corollary applies, too: Don't share on your Profile any information that you wouldn't share with someone in real life. We provide more detail about the Profile in Chapter 2. For now, think of it like a personal Web page with privacy controls for particular pieces of information. This page accurately reflects you so that you hand the right social résumé to the right person.

facebook 110	me Profile	Friends	Inbox				Leah P	carlman	Settings	Logout
200		Leah Pearlman "wondered whether the psculiar solemnity of looking at the sky comes not from what one contemplates, but from the uplifting of one's head." "B" an inumbry								
1 0 2	121	Wal	Info	Photos	Boxes	Notes	Graffiti			
CODE	12	Basic Information								
		Networks:		Faceb Brown Micros	Alum '04					
	stat 1	Birthd	ay:	Janua	ry 12					
10 March	Series -	Home	town:	Denve	r, CO					
A COS		Paren	ts:		Pearlman Pearlman					
A	2	Sibling	5:	Dainna	ariman e Peariman a Peariman - Heinzow					
- Cut	Religio	Religious Views:		istics machine						
		Educa	ation and V	Vork						
		Colleg	College:		Brown '04 Computer Science					
View Photos of Leah (6	534)	High S	chool:	Georg	George Washington High School '00					
View Videos of Leah (1	(8)									
Send Leah a Message		Employer: Time Period:			Facebook October 2006 - Present					
Chat with Leah						enc				
Poke Leah		Employer:		oft						
i sere a soll		. Time P	eriod:	Augus	t 2004 - Augu	st 2005				

Figure 1-1: Leah's Facebook Profile.

> The motivations for establishing a Profile on Facebook are twofold. First, a Profile helps the people who know you in real life find and connect with you on Facebook. Each individual is actively (or actively trying) to keep track of the people she knows. If your name is something relatively common, such as James Brown or Maria Gonzales, it's difficult for people to find you without additional identifiers. Information about you, such as your home town, your education history, or your photos, help people find the right James or Maria.

The second (and way cooler) reason to establish an accurate Profile is the work it saves you. Keeping your Profile detailed and relevant means that your friends and family can always get the latest information about where you live, who you know, and what you're up to. You no longer have to read your phone number to someone while he fumbles to find a pen. Just tell him, "It's on

Facebook." If a cousin wants to send you a birthday present, he doesn't have to ruin the surprise by asking you for your address. When your Profile is up to date, conversations that used to start with the open-ended, "How have you been?" can skip straight to the good stuff: "I saw your pictures from Hawaii last week. *Please* tell me how you ended up wearing those coconuts."

#### **Connect** with friends

After you join Facebook, start seeing its value by tracking down some people you know. Facebook offers the following tools to help you:

- Facebook Friend Finder: Allows you to scan the e-mail addresses in your e-mail address book to find whether those people are already on Facebook. Selectively choose among those with whom you'd like to connect.
- ✓ Suggestions: Will show you the names and pictures of people you likely know or celebrities whose news you'd like to follow. These people are selected for you based on various signals like where you live or work, or how many friends you have in common.
- Search: Helps you to find people whom you expect are already using Facebook.

After you establish a few connections, use those connections to find other people you know by searching through their connections for familiar names. We explain how to find people you know on Facebook in Chapter 3.

### Communicate with Facebook friends

As Facebook grows, it becomes more likely that anyone with whom you're trying to communicate can be reached. These days it's a fairly safe assumption that you'll be able to find that person you just met at a dinner party, an old professor from college, or the childhood friend you've been meaning to catch up with. Digging up a person's contact information could require calls to mutual friends, a trip to the white pages (provided you know enough about that person to identify the right contact information), or an e-mail sent to a potentially outdated e-mail address. You may have different methods of reaching people depending on how you met the person, or what limited information you have about him or her.

Facebook streamlines finding and contacting people in a reliable forum. If the person you're reaching out to is active on Facebook, no matter where she lives or how many times she's changed her e-mail address, you can reach one another.

#### Share your words

You have something to say. We can just tell by the look on your face. Maybe you're proud of the home team, maybe you're excited for Friday, or maybe you can't believe what you saw on the way to work this morning. All day long, things are happening to all of us that make us just want to turn to our friends and say "You know what? . . .That's what." Facebook gives you the stage and an eager audience. In Chapter 6, we explain how you can make short or long posts about the things happening around you, and how they're distributed to your friends in an easy, non-intrusive way.

#### Share your pictures

Since the invention of the modern day camera, people have been all too eager to yell, "Cheese!" Photographs can make great tour guides on trips down memory lane, but only if we actually remember to develop, upload, or scrapbook them. Many memories fade away when the smiling faces are stuffed into an old shoe box, remain on undeveloped rolls of film, or are forgotten in some folder on a hard drive.

Facebook offers two great incentives for uploading, organizing, and editing your photos:

- Facebook provides one easy-to-access location for all your photos. Directing any interested person to your Facebook Profile is easier than e-mailing pictures individually, sending a complicated link to a photo site, or waiting until the family reunion to show off the my-how-the-kidshave-grown pics.
- ✓ Every photo you upload can be linked to the Profiles of the people in the photo. For example, you upload pictures of you and your sister and link them to her Profile. Whenever someone visits her Profile, he sees those pictures; he doesn't even have to know you. This is great because it introduces a longevity to photos they've never had before. As long as people are visiting your sister's Profile, they can see those pictures. Photo albums no longer have to be something people look at right after the event, and maybe then again years later.

#### Plan events, join groups

Just about anything you do with other people is easier on Facebook . . . except cuddling. Facebook isn't meant to be a replacement for face time; it's

meant to facilitate interactions when face time isn't possible or to facilitate the planning of face time. Two of the greatest tools for this are Facebook Events and Facebook Groups.

*Groups* are basically Web pages people can subscribe to, or *join*. One group may be intimate, such as five best friends who plan several activities together. Another group could be practical, for example, PTA Members of Denver Schools. Some groups garner support, such as AIDS Awareness. Others exist for solidarity; for example, When I Was Your Age, Pluto Was a Planet Groups allow people to come together in the name of some common interest or goal. Depending on the particular group's settings, members may upload photos or videos, invite other people to the group, receive messages, and check on news and updates.

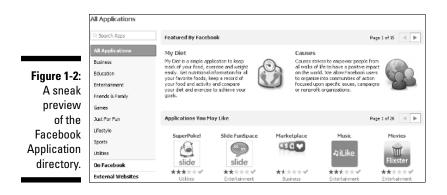
*Events* are similar to groups, with the addition of being time-based. Rather than joining, users RSVP to events, which allows the event organizers to plan accordingly and allows attendees to receive event reminders. Facebook Events are often used for something as small as a lunch date or something as big as a march on Washington, D.C. Sometimes events are notional rather than physical. For example, someone could create an event for Ride Your Bike to Work Day and hope the invitation spreads far and wide (through friends and friends) to promote awareness. At Facebook headquarters, Events are used to plan company meetings, happy hours, ski trips, and more. Read more about Facebook Groups and Facebook Events in Chapter 10.

#### Facebook and the Web

Facebook Photos, Groups, and Events are only a small sampling of how you can use Facebook to connect with the people you know. In Chapter 13, we explain in detail the *Facebook Platform*. In short, Facebook is a service that helps you maintain connections with your friends, but any company can build the tools, Web sites, or *applications*, that allow sharing. Photos, Groups, and Events are tools that are built on top of the Facebook Platform; they are the means by which people can use share information through their social connections.

Examples of Web sites and applications that have been built by other companies include tools to help you edit your photos, create slideshows, play games with friends across the globe, divvy bills among people who live or hang out together, and exchange information about good movies, music, and books. After you get a little more comfortable with the Facebook basics, you can try some of the thousands of applications and Web sites that allow you to interact with your Facebook friends through their services. One example is shown in Figure 1-2. We simply mention it here to pique your curiosity about the potential; Chapter 13 gives all the juicy details about third-party applications.

#### Part I: Getting Started with Facebook



#### Promote your business

Say, you have something to sell — that fancy blender, maybe. How do you get people's attention? You don't go to a deserted parking lot and yell, "Hey! Buy my blender!" do you? Of course not. You go to where the people are, and the people are on Facebook. Although anybody can (and should) use Facebook to connect with their friends and family, more and more people are using it to connect with their patrons, fans, or supporters. In addition to their personal Profiles, people create additional Profiles to promote their bands, businesses, brands, products, services, or themselves, in the case of celebrities or politicians. These Profiles are similar to user Profiles in that they're a page on Facebook meant to

- ✓ Represent a specific real-world entity.
- ✓ Consist of truthful, necessary information required to engage with that entity.

These Profiles differ from user Profiles in that the relationships are essentially one way. We may have a relationship to Starbucks, but Starbucks doesn't really have a specific relationship with us, which leads to a number of differences in the functionality of business Profiles. We discuss the details of those differences and explain the benefits of promoting your business on Facebook in Chapter 12.

Chapter 15 discusses how you advertise your business without, or in addition to, establishing a business Profile on Facebook. Because Facebook users enter detailed information about themselves (and their actions on Facebook reveal even more about the kinds of people they are), Facebook can offer a compelling advertising platform by allowing advertisers to reach a targeted audience based on who people are and what they like.

Facebook also offers another kind of targeting, which is *social targeting*. For many kinds of commercial goods, we're often more likely to buy something if we know people who've already had a positive experience with the particular good or the company selling it. When Facebook shows someone an ad, it lets that person know whether any of their friends had an experience with that product, service, or business. In fact, if that person has a friend who interacted an ad, that person is more likely to see that same ad than someone with friends who haven't interacted with that ad. This type of targeted advertising is a win-win for business owners and consumers because business owners don't have to waste money or dilute their message on people who don't care about their product, and users are more likely to see ads for products that actually interest them — or, at the very least, tell them something about their friends' consumer habits.

### Keeping in Mind What You Can't Do on Facebook

Facebook is meant to represent real people and real associations; it's also meant to be safe. Many of the rules of participation on Facebook exist to uphold those two goals.

*Note:* There are things you can't do on Facebook other than what we list here. For example, you can't message multiple people unless you're friends with all of them; you can't join the school network of a school you didn't attend (or a workplace network of a company you don't work for); and you can't spin hay into gold. These rules may change how you use Facebook, but probably won't change *whether* you use it. We separate the five rules in this section because, if any are a problem for you, you probably won't get to the rest of the book.

#### You can't lie

Okay, you can, but you shouldn't, especially not about your basic information. Lying about your identity is a violation of the Facebook Terms of Use and grounds for Profile deactivation. In other words, thank you, bye-bye. Although many people try, Facebook doesn't let anyone sign up with an obviously fake name like Marilyn Manson or Fakey McFakerson. Those who do make it past the name checks will likely find their account tracked down and deactivated.

Some fake accounts survive on Facebook undetected for a very long time because the Facebook user operations team goes after people who are breaking serious and safety-compromising offenses first. So, if you're considering setting up a fake Profile to test our claim, you're probably better off just going outside to play. Take a Frisbee.

#### You can't be twelve

Or younger. Seriously. Facebook takes very seriously the law that prohibits minors under the age of 13 from creating an online Profile for themselves. This rule is in place for the safety of minors, and it's a particular safety rule that Facebook takes extremely seriously. If you or someone you know on Facebook is under 13, deactivate (or make them deactivate) the account now. If you're reported to the Facebook user operations team, your account is deleted instantly, and Facebook (and Carolyn and Leah as well) will be very unhappy. Facebook is vigilant about keeping minors off the site, so if you're under 13, be aware that the people you hang out with won't be on Facebook either. If you happen to be older than 13 and looking for people under 13, check out the next section for what else you can't do.

#### You can't troll

We can't stress this enough, and putting it in bold definitely isn't enough stress. Maybe we should add underline, italics, or all caps. Let's try.

#### YOU CAN'T TROLL.

Facebook is about real people and real connections. It's one thing to message a mutual friend or the occasional stranger whose Profile implies being open to meeting new people if the two of you have matching interests. However, the moment the people you contact have a problem with you sending unsolicited messages, your account is flagged; if the behavior continues, your account is deactivated.

Imagine going to a coffee shop and introducing yourself to each and every person while they try to mind their cup of Joe. That is how we view the sending of unsolicited messages on Facebook, and the user operations team will make like an angry barista and kick you to the coffee shop curb.

## You can't upload illegal content

Respecting United States law is something Facebook has to do regardless of its own position on pornography (where minors can see it), copyrighted material, hate speech, depictions of crimes, and other offensive content. However, doing so is also in line with Facebook's value of being a safe, happy place for all people (older than the age of 12). Don't confuse this with censorship; Facebook is all about freedom of speech and self-expression, but the moment that compromises anyone's safety or breaks any law, disciplinary action is taken.

# Realizing How Facebook 1s Different from Other Social Sites

Several social sites besides Facebook try to help people connect. Some of the most popular sites are MySpace, Friendster, Orkut, LinkedIn, Windows Live Spaces, Bebo, Meebo, Match.com, Twitter, and QQ.

In some cases, these sites have slightly different goals than Facebook. LinkedIn, for example, is a tool for connecting with people specifically for career networking. MySpace initially started out as a way for small, local bands to gain popularity outside of the politically-complicated music industry by creating a space for people to connect with others who had similar tastes in music. Match.com is a social networking site specifically geared toward people looking to date. Alternatively, other sites have the same goals as Facebook; they just have different strategies. MySpace gives users complete customization over the look and feel of their Profile, whereas Facebook maintains a pretty consistent design and expects users to differentiate their Profiles by uploading unique content. On the other extreme, Twitter allows its members to share only very short bits of text to achieve super-simple and consistent information sharing, whereas Facebook allows more flexibility with respect to sharing photos, videos, and more. That's not to say one model is better than another; different models may appeal to different people.

## Who Is on Facebook

Originally, Facebook was created as a way for students at a particular college or university to find and connect with each another. In fact, when Facebook launched, only those people with a verified college e-mail address were permitted to sign up.

After the success of the university-only model, Facebook opened its doors to high school students in the United States as well. High school students don't have e-mail addresses to verify which high school they attend; therefore, Facebook has a fairly complicated system that relies on students verifying one another before gaining access to a particular high school network.

Facebook took off in high schools with such momentum that Facebook next opened its doors to workplace networks. Workplace networks followed the same model as the college networks — in order to join, you had to sign up with a verified e-mail address, this time, from a particular corporation. Therefore, workplace networks existed only for the companies big enough to offer its employees e-mail addresses, such as Microsoft, Apple, Amazon, and others. Finally, in the fall of 2004, rather than opening any more doors, Facebook just knocked down its walls. Today, anyone with any e-mail address is welcome to join the Facebook party.



People can still limit the visibility of any part of their Profiles to people in their verified networks, or they can open up parts of their Profiles to anyone. Now that Facebook is used by more than 200 million people, the name of the game is control and choice. You can share as much or as little with as many or as few people as you so desire. Put under lock and key the parts of your Profile you *don't* want to share with everyone. Chapter 5 goes into much greater detail on how to protect yourself and your information.

Here are two reasons Facebook made the leap from *verified networks* (those in which you must offer some kind of proof of identity, such as an e-mail address, in order to join) to enabling people to share with everyone:

- Facebook was offering a tremendous amount of utility to the people who had access to it. Before opening to the general public, about 85 percent of registered users were logging in at least once per month, and 75 percent of those people were logging in daily. Numbers like that proved Facebook creators were onto something special and that other people in addition to students and employees of large corporations — could gain value from access to Facebook.
- ✓ Facebook is better when lots of different people are active on Facebook. This reason for allowing any and everyone on Facebook is a little less obvious, so we offer this example as an explanation:

A University of Colorado alumnus wants to throw himself a birthday party. At college, he used Facebook to plan his events and manage his guest lists, but now some of his friends are older and were out of college before Facebook became popular. Creating the event on Facebook could lead to an incomplete guest list. If he chooses not to use Facebook, he may end up using a less efficient means of communicating, such as e-mail, which requires that he dig up the e-mail address of everyone he wants to invite and then manage all the RSVPs as they flood his inbox. He may also decide that it's not worth the hassle and invite only people who are on Facebook. Facebook actually allows him to create an event and generate special invites to those not on the site, but he still has to locate those friend's e-mail addresses and enter them on Facebook.



Facebook has great tools for organizing people, information, and communication. Their utility, however, depends on you being able to reach your friends with them. The more contacts you have on Facebook, the more useful each of these tools become. Significant to the utility of the social graph is its reliability. Having a single source to find and interact with friends, mutual acquaintances, family, or others with shared interests and beliefs would be one of the greatest solutions to many of life's most complicated tasks. Managing our relationships with everyone we know or want to know is the service Facebook is trying to provide. To anyone for whom Facebook has become the primary source for information and interaction, the moment someone in particular isn't represented on Facebook, the whole service becomes less powerful because its reliability for finding whomever you're looking for is reduced. To that end, welcoming everyone onto Facebook was a way to make the service more valuable to those already using it.

A majority of Facebook users are not, nor have ever been, part of a school network, and most of Facebook's growth is in demographics other than high school or college. In the following sections, we talk about how people in different demographics use Facebook. Note that these cases aren't exclusive to the particular category they're listed under; people in workplace networks may use many of the same features and functionality as students, and international users clearly span all three of the demographics. These sections simply emphasize the general trends in particular demographics and highlight some of the differences between them.

#### Students of the 'Book

Students live in somewhat of a unique environment in that the shared affiliation to the same school implies a level of trust. This allows students to create Profiles for themselves, and if they choose, share their information only with other students at their school (and people they manually verify). Because of the close quarters and accountability of their peers, students are perhaps the most open about the information they exchange on Facebook. As long as students are safe about the information they choose to share (see Chapter 5), this abundance of information flow is actually a very good thing that can make their lives and relationships extremely rich.

Students use Facebook for all kinds of fun and practical things:

- Getting information: Students can easily connect with others who live in their dorm or take the same classes. This can be great for (approved) collaboration on class work, finding out when homework's due, or borrowing a book for research.
- Planning events: A big source of student engagement is event planning. Say, Tau Phi Beta wants to plan an event. The fraternity's officers can create the Event page on Facebook, and with a few clicks of a few buttons, invite

everyone they want to. They can specify whether the invite should go only to those initially invited — say, a Tau Phi Beta brothers–only dinner — or whether anyone can be invited (a must for a giant frat party — er, *fund-raiser*). This is just one example, but events are rampant across universities. Every club, dorm room, sports team, and group of friends organize their events on Facebook.

✓ Tagging photos: The Photos feature is one of the most popular on Facebook. Students regularly engage in a lot of memorable activities, such as dances, games, and rallies. Generally a large number of students and a nearly-as-large number of cameras attend these events. We hear many students confess that in the time it takes them to hop a shuttle or stumble to their dorm room, someone has already uploaded photos from the event to Facebook. No sooner does a student experience a magical moment than she gets to remember it.

One of the fancy aspects of Facebook Photos is that each photo can be tagged with links to the Profiles of the people in the photo. All the photos a particular person is tagged in are aggregated into one album, so when you look at a person's Profile, you see all the photos he's ever been tagged in. After a big night on campus, students can see all the pictures their friends took or go straight to all the photos of them. Narcissistic maybe, but also human.

- ✓ Keeping up with friends from home: Sometimes college can feel like its own little universe, especially for those who travel far from home to attend. By establishing friend connections with those friends they *don't* see every day, they can more easily stay in touch. When they upload photos from the University Gala, friends from home can send a message to say, "Nice dress!" or "Who's the boy?" An RSVP to an event, such as the National Championship Dinner, informs friends from back home of their friend's recent success. And, even though students often get caught up in the action of campus life, sometimes they'll hear a song or read a passage that reminds them of a friend back home. Rather than digging for the e-mail address or finding time to call, they can just use Facebook to drop their friend a *thinking of you* Wall post, Poke, or message. (Find out more about these options in Chapter 9.)
- Flirting and gossip: We should've stuck this bullet point first because it's probably the biggest piece of the time-spent-on-Facebook pie.
  Mmmm, Facebook pie. Throughout this book, you read about messaging, poking, chatting, and gifting, which are all ways that students virtually bat their eyelashes at one another — and avoid doing their homework.

Everyone has the ability on their Profile to inform people who they're looking to meet (women, men, or both) and for what purpose (relationship, dating, friendship, and so on). Those already in a relationship can link to their significant other for the world to see. Provocative *Wall posts* (one friend can write a public message on a friend's *Wall*), intriguing photo uploads, and changing relationship statuses are all sources of juicy gossip without which high school or college just wouldn't be the same.

## The School of Life

Chronologically speaking, there's only a small difference between someone nearing the end of their school career (whether that be high school, college, or graduate school) and someone starting life after school. But these two phases share a few other similarities. During school, most people have a set crowd of folks they interact with. They're very familiar with the city or town they live in and the daily routine (class, sports, studying) they've been doing for years. After school, things can change. Many folks move to new cities, start new jobs, and meet new people. Their groups of friends start to disperse (geographically and emotionally), and creating environments for social interaction requires more effort when people cut out lunch time, study hall, or Friday nights at the student center. Because Facebook is all about nurturing relationships, when the nature of people's relationships change, their usage of Facebook changes as well. After school, people find different kinds of utility from their social graph:

✓ Moving to a new city: Landing in a new city with all your worldly belongings and an upside down map can be hugely intimidating. Having some open arms or at least numbers to call when you arrive can greatly ease the transition. Although you may already know some people who live in your new city, Facebook can help connect with all the old friends and acquaintances you either forgot live there or have moved there since you last heard from them.

When Leah first moved to the Bay area, she filtered her Friend List to everyone in the San Francisco and Silicon Valley networks. The final list probably contained four times as many people as she remembered living in the area. She sent messages announcing her imminent arrival and then connected with her various contacts to get settled into an apartment, meet other people, and find doctors, bike routes, Frisbee leagues, and restaurants. Even if you don't have friends or acquaintances in your new city, someone you know probably does. Your friends can give you names of people to look up when you arrive — use Facebook to do that.

- ✓ Getting a job: Recently, more and more people began using Facebook as a tool for managing their careers as well as their social lives. If you're looking at a particular company, find people who already work there to get the inside scoop or to land an interview. If you're thinking about moving into a particular industry, browse your friends by past job and interests to find someone to connect with.
- ✓ Finding activity partners: Many folks would agree that it's harder to meet people after they leave school. Facebook is a great tool for meeting new friends with similar interests, activity partners, or even potential love interests. You can browse Profiles of people in your network based on various kinds of information, such as age, political views, and work history. Plenty of online sites offer these kinds of services, but Facebook works particularly well because the connection you make is often based on mutual acquaintances, making them less awkward, better informed, and safer.

#### Putting Facebook to work at work

Facebook is still finding its footing within the workplace networks. Therefore, it's tricky to generalize how people in workplace networks use Facebook because it really depends on the particular workplace. However, here are some uses we've heard about anecdotally:

- ✓ Getting to know co-workers and putting names to faces.
- Hosting events specific to the company. Facebook uses Events to plan company parties and host happy hours.
- ✓ Using Groups for people in the company with similar interests or needs. This may range from those with similar athletic endeavors, carpool requirements, or artistic interests.
- These days, many companies have a business presence on Facebook. Advertising on Facebook is one way to use Facebook at work. Additionally, when companies work together, sometimes their employees become fans of one another's businesses on Facebook to show support.
- $\checkmark$  Posting and sharing stories about the company relevant to the business.

### Facebook maturing

Facebook isn't just for students. Anything you've heard to the contrary is dated information. Like we mention before, the fastest growing group of Facebook users is those for whom school is a distant memory. Many of these folks find the same value in Facebook as people in other demographics; however, they also use it for some different kinds of interactions.

#### Keeping in touch with family

These days, families are often spread far and wide across state or country lines. Children go to college, parents travel for work, grandparents move to Florida. These distances make it hard for families to interact in any more significant way than gathering together once per year to share some turkey and pie (pecan, preferably). Facebook offers a place where families can virtually meet and interact. Parents can upload photos of the kids for everyone to see, grandparents can write notes about what everyone is up to, and college students can gather support for a cause, plan a graduation party, or show off their class schedule — great information for family members who may have a hard time extracting the information in other ways.

We often hear parents and older family members say they feel being on Facebook may infringe on their kid's social life. If you fit this description, we have a few comments for you:

- ✓ You may be right that your kids want you nowhere near their social lives. If that's the case, and you respect that, don't connect with them on Facebook. Exist within your social graph on Facebook, and let them exist within theirs you never have to interact with one another whatsoever. Not joining Facebook because your kids are using it is like not eating ice cream because your kids eat ice cream. Sure, you can go for ice cream together (or be connected on Facebook), but you certainly don't have to. Don't deprive yourself of the sweet creamy deliciousness just because your kid may be offended that you have similar taste in desserts.
- ✓ You may be wrong that your kids don't want you on Facebook. Depending on your kids' age and personality, they may actually prefer that you join Facebook. Some kids, especially the college-aged or twenty-somethings, are very busy and active. It can be hard for them to remember to call home, let alone call the grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Even when they do, they may leave out interesting information about their lives simply because they forget (this hypothetical is coming from personal experience). These relationships can be much stronger when everyone is on Facebook. Relatives can always see the latest news or photos even when they've been out of touch for some time; they can also connect in a lightweight way in between longer phone conversations. (See Chapter 10 on communicating through Facebook.)
- ✓ Kids are *really* good at using Facebook. If you are connected to your children on Facebook and they want to upload something they don't want you to see, they know exactly which privacy controls to put in place so that you don't see it. It may be easy for them to connect with you and share only the information they want to and hide the information they (and you) may be better off not sharing. Whether this is a relevant concern to you, we recommend sitting down with your kids (sometime after the birds-and-bees conversation but before the how-to-pay taxes conversation) and figuring out how to happily cohabitate on Facebook.

#### Facebook reunion

Thanks to life's curve balls, whoever your friends are at any given time may not be the people in your life at another. People you consider to be most important in your life fade over the years so that even trying to recall a last name causes you pause. The primary reason for this is a legitimate one: There are only so many hours in a day. While we make new, close friends, others drift away because it's impossible to maintain many intense relationships. Facebook is an extremely powerful tool; however, it hasn't yet found a way to extend the number of hours in a day, so it can't exactly fix the problem of growing apart. Facebook can, however, lessen the finality and inevitability of the distance. Assuming Facebook achieves the longevity and reach it's striving for, those who have started using Facebook at a young age (13 is the minimum) will, at an old age, actually have a lead on every single person they've ever been friends with. This extremely powerful concept actually alters how people keep and maintain human relationships. Thirty years after you last speak to someone, you may have a funny memory, something important to share, or just genuine curiosity about that person's whereabouts. If you keep her on your Facebook Friend List, it doesn't matter how many times you both move, change your phone numbers, or get married and change your name, you can still get in touch with each another. If that concept scares you, Facebook also has the tools to explicitly sever connections with people you'd rather didn't find you.

Because Facebook is fairly new (and because you're reading this book), you probably don't have your entire social history mapped out. Some may find it a daunting task to create connections with everyone they've ever known, which we don't recommend. Instead, build your graph as you need to or as opportunity presents. Perhaps you want to upload a photo taken from your high school graduation to tag various classmates. Search for them on Facebook, form the friend connection, and then tag them. Maybe you're thinking about opening a restaurant, and you'd like to contact a friend from college who was headed into the restaurant business after graduation. Perhaps you never told your true feelings to the one who got away — your unicorn. For all these reasons, you may find your cursor in the Facebook Search box.



Frequently, we receive reports from adopted children who connect with their biological parents, or estranged siblings who find each other on Facebook. Carolyn recently heard from her sixth-grade bully, who found her on Facebook to apologize for how he terrorized her back then.

#### Organizing groups

Unlike students, adults don't often have the luxury of participating in lots of events organized by other people. Instead, they organize their book clubs and cooking groups or gather to watch sporting events and have dinner parties. Facebook Groups can add value to all these events. Creating a group on Facebook for your book club makes it easy for someone to update everyone each week about times, dates, locations, who should bring what, and what everyone should read before attending. People can join and leave groups as they see fit, so you never have to worry about notifying those who've moved or are no longer interested in your group.

#### The birth of the 'Book

In the old days, say, four or five years ago, most college freshmen would receive a thinly bound book containing the names and faces of everyone in their matriculating class. These *face books* were useful for matching names to the students seen around campus, or for pointing out particular people to friends. There were several problems with these face books. If someone didn't send his picture in, they were incomplete. They were outdated by junior year because many people looked drastically different, and the book didn't reflect the students who had transferred in or who were from any other class. Finally, they had little information about each person.

In February 2004, Mark Zuckerberg, a sophomore at Harvard, launched an online "book" that people could upload their photos and personal information to, which solved many of these problems. Within a month, more than half the Harvard undergraduates had created their own Profiles. Zuckerberg was then joined by

others, including Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes, to help expand the site into other schools. Your very own author, Carolyn Abram, was the first non-Harvard student to receive an account. During the summer of the same year, Zuckerberg, Moskovitz, and another partner, Andrew McCollum, moved the company to Palo Alto, California, where the site and the company kept growing. By December 2004, the site had grown to 1 million college students. Every time Facebook opened to a new demographic — high school, then work users, then everyone - the rate at which people joined the site continued to increase. In November 2006, the site had more than 11 million users: by November 2007, it had grown to 50 million active users (active users are defined as unique accounts that accessed the site in the last 30 days). By August 2009, only two years later, Facebook reached more than a guarter of a billion users and 1,000 employees. At this point, Facebook's growth shows no sign of slowing.

For one-time gatherings, such as a Super Bowl party, Facebook Events offers a great solution. All you have to do is fill out the guest list and event description — the rest takes care of itself. For the three days prior to the event, everyone receives a reminder on their Facebook Home pages, so they have no excuse for not showing (unless someone invited them to a better party). If you want to ensure your guest list is accurate or that people don't forget, message everyone who RSVP'd (attending or tentative, that is) or who hasn't replied. After the event is over, upload photos or leave funny comments and quotes on the event's Wall. Your Super Bowl party is forever immortalized online — and everyone who RSVP'd has total access.

#### Le Facebook International

Facebook launched in universities in the United States and then spread to U.S. high schools. As a result, it wasn't until the fall of 2006 (when Facebook opened to everyone) that Facebook started making a showing in any other

country. When Facebook finally ventured into Canada and the United Kingdom, it took off fast, like Vin Diesel fast. Many people speculate that the reason for Facebook's insta-popularity in these countries, more so than in the United States, came from the fact that citizens in Canada and the U.K. (and, randomly, Norway) didn't have the same preconception that U.S. citizens had: that Facebook was only meant for students. People in the United States had heard the buzz about Facebook for two years when it was only for students. This stigma used to be a significant hurdle for Facebook's growth in older U.S. demographics. However, for the last year, the fastest growing demographic of U.S. Facebook users has been in the over thirty-five age group, and the notion that Facebook is only for the kiddies is becoming a distant part of Facebook history.

The next major leap for Facebook's growth came at the start of 2008, when it was clear that many people on Facebook wanted to be connecting with people who spoke other languages. Facebook is more valuable for each person when more of their friends use the site. Facebook's strictly English interface was keeping many people from connecting with people they knew. So Facebook launched the Facebook Translation Application. This allows any bilingual (English + Other) user of Facebook to volunteer to help translate Facebook into other languages. Volunteers are shown various English text on the site, and they can either offer a translation, or vote on translations that other people have suggested. When a suggested translation receives enough votes, that translation becomes the text that other people using the site in that second language see. People can sign up for the site and change their language setting to Spanish. Rather than seeing all the English text, they see all the text that the Spanish speaking volunteers have suggested and approved. In this way, Facebook has been translated into 60 languages in just more than a year.