

Chapter 1

Getting Started on Pinterest

In This Chapter

- ▶ Getting and giving an invitation to Pinterest
- ▶ Creating your Pinterest profile
- ▶ Finding time to use Pinterest

Pinterest is an online pinboard, a visual take on the social bookmarking site. Unlike other social bookmarking sites, such as Digg and StumbleUpon, content shared on Pinterest is driven entirely by visuals. In fact, you can't share something on Pinterest unless an image is involved.

When you share something on Pinterest, each bookmark is called a *pin*. When you share someone else's pin on Pinterest, it's called a *repin*. You group pins together by topic onto various *boards* or *pinboards* in your profile. Each board mimics a real-life pinboard.

You can share images you find online, or you can directly upload images onto Pinterest. Using the Pin It button (see Chapter 3 for more details), you can share directly in your browser from any web page. You can also share your pins on Twitter and Facebook.

The first time you visit Pinterest, you may notice immediately that it's an aesthetically pleasing site. Figure 1-1 shows the Pinterest home page. You can see how much it relies on visually stunning photos. The second thing you may notice is that you can't join without an invitation. Although I presume the site will eventually become open to public registrations, it's currently in invitation-only mode.

The sections in this chapter walk you through the processes of getting your foot in the door with Pinterest as well as getting your profile set up. At the end, I give you some tips for fitting Pinterest into your busy life.

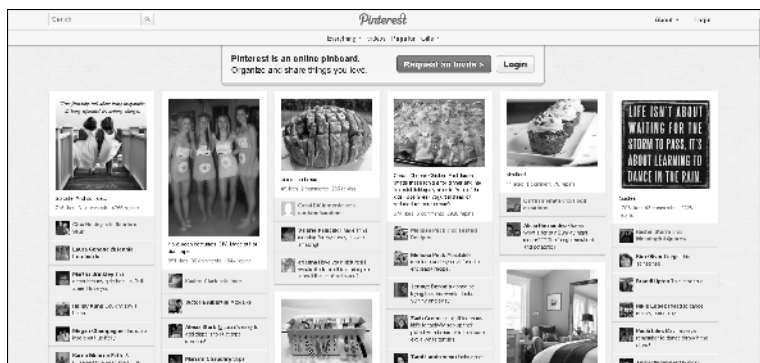


Figure 1-1: The Pinterest home page.

Joining Pinterest

You have two options for joining Pinterest at the time of this writing:

- **Request an invitation from Pinterest.** This option requires waiting until your invitation is sent directly from Pinterest. If you choose this option, you should receive an immediate e-mail from Pinterest thanking you for adding your name to the waiting list, and then you must wait for an invitation to arrive. The typical wait time is one to two days, although some have reported waiting as long as two weeks for an invitation.
- **Ask a friend to invite you.** If you know someone who's a member of Pinterest, ask her to invite you. (She'll need your e-mail address to do so.) The advantage of opting for this method is you get your invitation right away.

I explain both techniques in the following sections. Of course, after you join, one or more of your friends might come calling for an invitation, or you might just feel like spreading your love of Pinterest, so I also explain how to send invitations.



To sign up, you must either register via your Facebook account or your Twitter account. One or the other is required to sign up for Pinterest.

Requesting an invitation from Pinterest

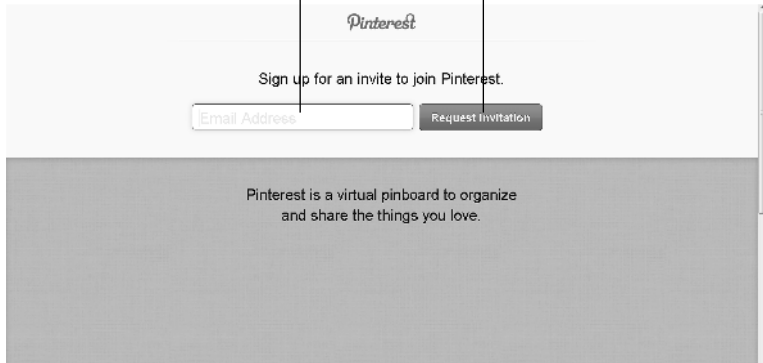
Requesting an invitation is quite simple — just follow these steps:

1. **Click the large, red Request an Invite button on the top-middle area on the Pinterest home page. (Refer to Figure 1-1.)**

A form appears, as shown in Figure 1-2.

Enter your e-mail address here...

then click this button



The screenshot shows the Pinterest sign-up form for an invite. At the top, the text "Enter your e-mail address here..." is followed by a vertical line pointing to a text input field labeled "Email Address". To the right of the input field is a dark button labeled "Request Invitation", with a vertical line pointing to it from the text "then click this button". Above the input field is the Pinterest logo and the text "Sign up for an invite to join Pinterest.". Below the input field and button is a large gray box containing the text "Pinterest is a virtual pinboard to organize and share the things you love."

Figure 1-2: Enter your e-mail address to request an invite.

2. **Enter your e-mail address and click the Request Invitation button, as shown in Figure 1-2.**

Now you just have to wait for Pinterest to send you an invite. You'll receive a confirmation e-mail letting you know you're on the wait list. Eventually, a formal invitation will arrive in your inbox in about one to two days.



If you don't receive the confirmation e-mail within minutes, check your e-mail's spam folder. If the confirmation e-mail goes into spam, the chances are good the actual invitation will land in the spam folder as well, and you'll miss it. If the confirmation e-mail did land there, use your e-mail provider's method for reporting that an e-mail is not spam.

Asking a member for an invitation

The quicker and easier method of getting an invitation is to ask for one from a friend who's already a Pinterest member. The great advantage to this method is that you get instant gratification because you receive your invite immediately (rather than being on the wait list). The disadvantage is that you need to know someone who is a Pinterest member. That might not be as difficult as you think, however. Pinterest has 4 million users (and that number is growing rapidly), and many members are happy to help newcomers join.

Here are a few ways to find a friend to ask to invite you:

- ✓ **Post a status update on Twitter or Facebook that you're seeking an invitation to Pinterest.** In many cases, you'll find that someone you know is already a member.
- ✓ **Join the Pinterest Facebook fan page and request an invitation from fellow fans.** Go to www.facebook.com/pinterest. Click the Like button at the top of the page. Then write a post on the wall requesting an invitation and be sure to include your e-mail address. (However, don't use this method if you're not comfortable posting your e-mail address, or use an e-mail address you don't mind posting.)
- ✓ **Search Pinterest on Twitter to see whether someone you know is a member already.** To do so, log in to Twitter and enter **Pinterest** as a search term in the top Search bar or visit <http://twitter.com/#!/search/pinterest>. The search results include anyone who has shared a pin on Twitter in a tweet as well as people who tweet about Pinterest.
- ✓ **Browse Pinterest.com to see whether someone already there is a friend of yours.** You can either visit the home page pins to see whether you recognize any names (a long shot) or type a name into the Search field in the top-left corner of the screen. When you get the results, click People to view search results by users' names.
- ✓ **Post on other social networks, such as Google+, to see whether someone is a member of Pinterest.**
- ✓ **Check the Pinterest page on Facebook.** Go to www.facebook.com/pinterest and click the Like button if you haven't already. You see a list of your friends who are Pinterest fans (as shown in the top right of Figure 1-3). From there, you can message a friend (either through Facebook's private messaging on your friend's profile page or, if you know it, through the person's e-mail address) and ask for an invitation.

Friends who are Pinterest fans

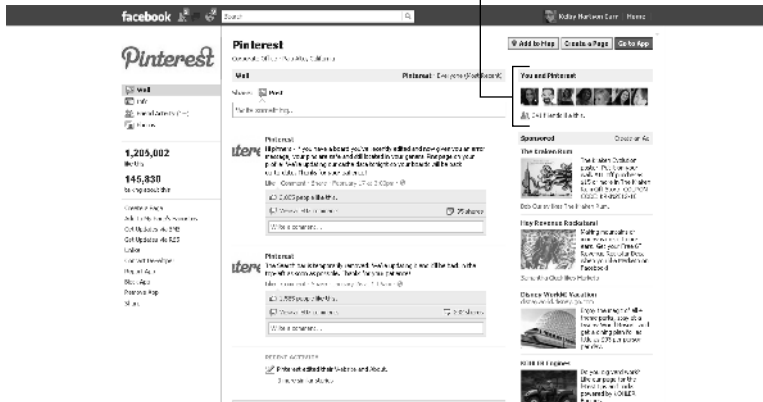


Figure 1-3: The Pinterest Facebook page showing all friends who are fans of Pinterest.

When you've found a friend who is willing to invite you to Pinterest, give that friend your e-mail address. Then your friend can formally invite you to join Pinterest using the methods I describe in the section "Integrating Pinterest with your Facebook or Twitter account."

Inviting a friend to join Pinterest

When your friends see how much fun you're having with Pinterest, they might want in on the action. You can formally invite a friend to join Pinterest by logging into your Pinterest account and choosing any one of these three methods:

- Click the Invite Now button in the top-right corner of the Pinterest home page. (See Figure 1-4.)
- Mouse over your name in the top-right corner of the Pinterest home page and choose the Invite Friends option from the drop-down menu.
- Mouse over your name in the top-right corner of the Pinterest home page and choose Find Friends from the drop-down menu. A new page appears listing Facebook friends you can invite and listing your Facebook friends who are already using Pinterest. From here, you can click the red Invite Friends button on the left side. Note that if you click the main Invite Friends button, all people will be sent an invitation (which could annoy them). Alternatively, you can click each name individually to hand-pick which friends you invite.

Click this button

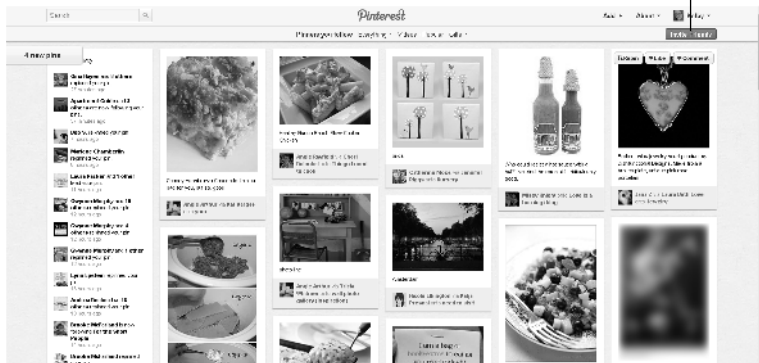


Figure 1-4: Invite Friends button on Pinterest.

Integrating Pinterest with your Facebook or Twitter account

After you receive your invitation, you're all set, right? Well, maybe. To register, you must first have a Twitter or a Facebook account. Although this might appear to be an inconvenience, restricting registrations to those already active in social media seems to have had the desired effect of preventing spam submissions on Pinterest.

To integrate your Facebook or Twitter account with Pinterest, follow these steps:

1. Get a Facebook or Twitter account.

If you don't already have a Twitter (<http://twitter.com>) or a Facebook (www.facebook.com) account, you need to create one. You can get an account for free with either one, and you can set up an account with either very easily and quickly. You also need to activate the account or accounts before you can use them for your Pinterest registration.



If you must choose only one social network to integrate, note that Facebook has the advantage of pulling in all friends on that network to allow you to easily add them as friends on Pinterest.

2. Log in to your Facebook or Twitter account.

Logging in isn't strictly necessary at this point, but doing so makes your registration go more smoothly.

3. In the Pinterest invitation e-mail you received, click the link to register.

The Pinterest registration screen appears, as shown in Figure 1-5.

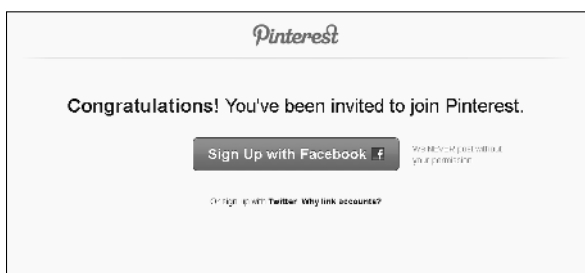


Figure 1-5: The Pinterest registration screen asks you sign up via Facebook or Twitter.

4. Click either the Facebook button or the Twitter link.

If you're a member of both, Facebook is preferable because you'll see the option to add friends from that network. However, you can add either one at registration and then integrate the other one later if you choose.

5. Enter your profile details in the text boxes provided.

You're prompted for three basic profile details, as shown in Figure 1-6:

- Your username
- Your e-mail address
- Your password



Choose your username carefully. It determines the URL for your profile on Pinterest. (For example, mine is <http://www.pinterest.com/kelby>.) Pinterest recently added the option to change your username — however, it's not ideal to do so because any links to your profile will no longer work.



If you're creating a Pinterest business account, you might want to use your company's name in your profile instead of your personal name.

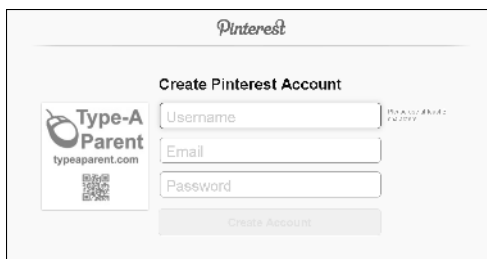
The image shows a screenshot of the Pinterest website's account creation page. At the top, the Pinterest logo is centered. Below it, the heading 'Create Pinterest Account' is displayed. On the left side, there is a logo for 'Type-A Parent' with the website 'typeaparent.com' and a QR code. To the right of the logo, there are three input fields: 'Username', 'Email', and 'Password'. Below these fields is a 'Create Account' button. The entire form is enclosed in a light gray border.

Figure 1-6: Create your Pinterest profile.

After you fill out this information, you're officially a member of Pinterest — congratulations! Continue reading the next section to find out how to complete the setup of your new Pinterest profile.

Setting Up Your Profile

After you've integrated Pinterest with your Facebook or Twitter account (see the previous section), you must go through a few steps to set up your basic Pinterest profile. This profile takes only a few seconds to complete. When you're finished, you'll be following some Pinterest members, and you'll see pins in your stream.

Some of these options appear only during the registration process (such as the suggested followers), so be aware you won't be able to return to all of these steps. To begin setting up your profile, follow these steps:

1. **Indicate your interests by clicking the images for any that apply.**

Figure 1-7 shows the Interests page with a few items already selected.



Although Pinterest tells you it's going to suggest a few members for you to follow, this statement is a little misleading. In actuality, Pinterest automatically sets up your account to follow a few members who match your interests. (If you don't want to follow these members, no problem — you can unfollow them right away as I describe in the next step.)

2. **Click the Follow People button at the bottom of the page (you may need to scroll down to view the button).**

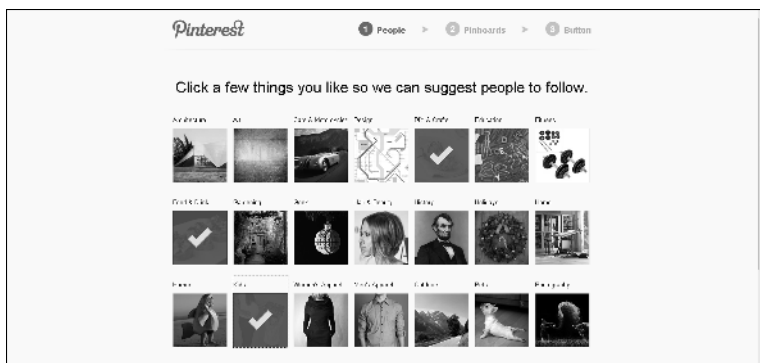
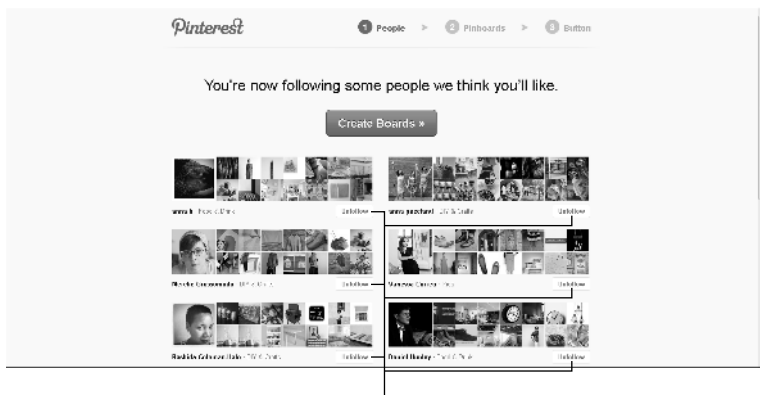


Figure 1-7: Choose interests during profile set up.

3. Review the members you're now following and make any necessary adjustments.

After you indicate your interests, Pinterest displays the list of members it has chosen for you to follow. (See Figure 1-8.) Pinterest also automatically sets up your profile to follow those friends from either Twitter or Facebook (whichever you used to register) who are already established on Pinterest. At this stage, you can click the Unfollow button to remove anyone you don't want to follow from this list.



Click an Unfollow button to remove that person

Figure 1-8: See who Pinterest followed for your profile.

4. Create your first pinboards by clicking the Create Boards button. (Refer to Figure 1-8.)

5. On the screen that appears (see Figure 1-9), name your new pinboards by using the appropriate text boxes.

Your profile and pins will be organized by these boards. Pinterest automatically suggests some boards for you to create, such as Products I Love, Favorite Spaces and Places, and Books Worth Reading. You can use those, or you can change the text in the boxes to boards you would like to create. To delete a suggested board, mouse over the right side of the box. Click the *x* that appears in the bottom-right corner of any board name to remove that board.



You don't need to agonize over boards as you go through this process. You can easily create more boards later. (I cover creating boards in detail in Chapter 2.) You can also edit the name and description of a board at any time.

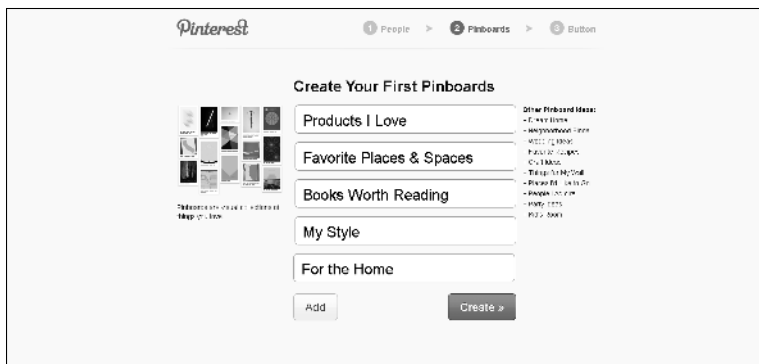


Figure 1-9: Create your first pinboards.

6. (Optional) Add the Pin It bookmark button.

Pinterest prompts you to do this now, but you don't have to. You can wait until I cover this process in detail in Chapter 3. Depending on your browser, this step shows instructions on adding a Pin It button. In most browsers, you drag the button on the screen up to your browser's top toolbar.

Adding a profile picture

When you signed up, Pinterest acquired your default profile image automatically — it copied the profile image you were using at the social network that you integrated during registration. If you'd like, you can change that image at any time.

To change your profile picture, log in to Pinterest, mouse over your name in the top-right corner of the Pinterest home page, and choose Settings from the drop-down menu. When the Settings page appears, scroll down a bit to see your Image options, as shown in Figure 1-10.

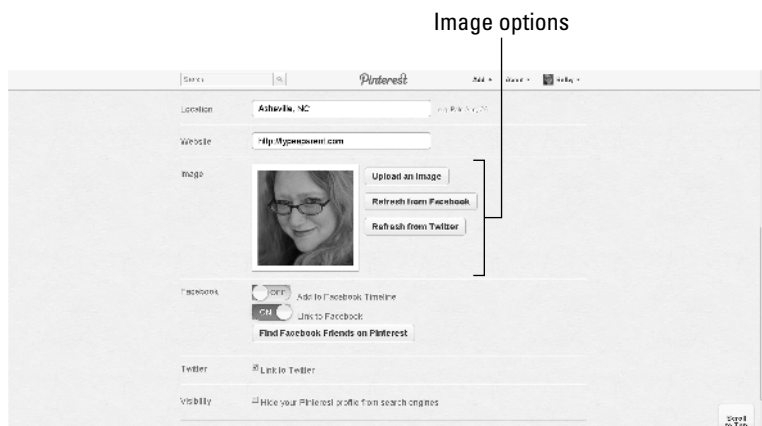


Figure 1-10: Update your profile picture.

You have three choices:

- ✓ **Upload an Image:** To upload an image from your computer, click this button. The button changes instantly to a text field and a Browse button. Click the Browse button to open the Choose File to Upload dialog box. Then navigate through your files to seek out your image, select it, and click the Open button to upload it to Pinterest.
- ✓ **Refresh from Facebook:** If you have an updated image from Facebook you would like to use, click this button. This option appears only if you have Facebook integrated with your Pinterest account.
- ✓ **Refresh from Twitter:** Like the Facebook button, this button changes your profile image to the one you're currently using on Twitter. This option appears only if you have Twitter integrated with your Pinterest account.



An ideal profile image is square. Also, it must at least be 200 x 200 pixels in size, or it will appear pixelated and distorted on your profile page.

Adding a bio

A bio helps tell others on Pinterest about you. When someone visits your profile page, your bio is displayed just below your profile picture in the left column.

To update your bio, log in to Pinterest, mouse over your name in the top-right corner of the home page, and choose Settings from the drop-down menu. (You can also find it by clicking your name or visiting your main profile page and clicking the Edit Profile link right under your picture in the left column.) To update your bio, adjust the About section of the resulting form accordingly, as shown in Figure 1-11. On this form, you can also update various other personal details such as your name, location, and website.

Enter your bio here

The screenshot shows the Pinterest 'Settings' page. The 'About' section is expanded, showing a text area for the bio. A bracket points to this text area with the label 'Enter your bio here'. The bio text is: 'Kelby Carr is the founder and publisher of Type-A Parent. She also is the organizer of the Type-A Parent Conference. You can follow her on Twitter at @typeasmom.' Other fields visible are: First name (Kelby), Last name (Carr), Username (kelby), Location (Asheville, NC), and Website (http://typeasmom.com).

Figure 1-11: Enter your bio on Pinterest.



The bio is text only. You can't use HTML coding in your bio to, say, place sections in boldface or to add a link to your site. Any HTML code will be displayed, not rendered, and if you include a full URL, it won't be made into a clickable link. You can, however, include a linkable web page or blog URL in the Website field in Settings. (See Figure 1-11.)

Setting your e-mail preferences

Do you want Pinterest to notify you of all activity related to your profile by e-mail alert? Or do you dislike e-mails and prefer to get your updates when you go directly to the site? The Pinterest

settings allow for a variety of preferences. Figure 1-12 shows a list of options you can choose to refine your updates; you access this list by clicking Settings and then selecting Email Preferences.

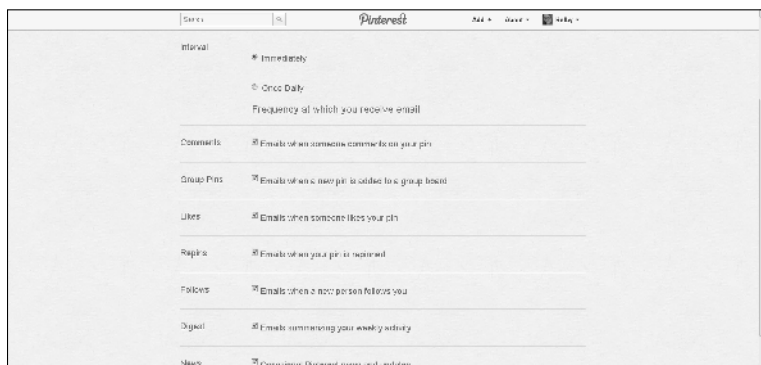


Figure 1-12: E-mail preferences in Pinterest.



E-mail alerts are handy for keeping track of activity, such as when people repin (or share) your pins, follow you, or comment on your pins. At the time of this writing, though, the e-mail sends are spotty. Pinterest is a new site, and glitches are to be expected. Don't rely only on e-mail notifications — check Pinterest as well. To access this information at Pinterest, mouse over your name and choose Pins from the drop-down menu to see the number of repins, likes, and comments for your latest pins. Pinterest also shows the latest activity in the left column on the home page when you're logged in. For more detail on a particular pin, click its thumbnail to navigate to the pin page.

Finding Time for Pinterest

Pinterest can be addictive when you get the hang of it. That can be great if you have all the time in the world. However, because I don't have all the time in the world, I've discovered many ways to be active and engaged on Pinterest without letting it get in the way of work, life, sleep, and other social networks. Here are a few tips:

- ✓ **Have dedicated Pinterest time each day for pinning, repinning, liking, and commenting.** For example, I find it can be a nice way to start the morning over coffee when I'm gearing up for doing work. You don't need to make it one time a day, because you can make pins in rapid-fire fashion, spending five minutes here and five minutes there.

- ✓ **Limit it to a certain number of minutes.** For a heavy user with many boards to maintain, this could mean 10–15-minute stretches three or four times a day for pinning and repinning, creating and populating new boards, and liking and commenting on other pins. For a new or lighter user, it could mean five minutes in the morning and five minutes in the evening of repinning others' great pins.
- ✓ **Install the Pinterest mobile app on your iPhone if you have one.** (See Chapter 7 for detailed instructions.) In fact, I use Pinterest more often on my iPhone than on my computer. It's great for those boring times in life when you need to kill a couple minutes, such as standing in a line or waiting for an appointment to start. With the app installed on your phone, you can hop onto Pinterest anywhere. At the time of this writing, the only native app is on iPhone, but there is also a mobile version of the site that you can use on any touch-screen phone or tablet.
- ✓ **Schedule your time wisely.** Allow for more time on Pinterest when you first begin. The extra time will help you get the hang of the site and get comfortable. Make plans to scale the time back as you grow comfortable with the site and build a core of followers.