

Social Networking 101: Reaching Library Patrons with Facebook

The Basics

What is Facebook? According to its homepage, Facebook is a "social utility that connects you with the people around you." It is sometimes referred to as a "social networking service," defined by Wikipedia as a service that "focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others." So instead of handing out business cards at cocktail hours to connect with like-minded colleagues or find new clients, you can use a web-based social networking tool to find people based on common interests and affiliations.

What can I do with it? Facebook (like other social networking services such as MySpace and LinkedIn) allows you to create a virtual representation of yourself, your "Profile," from which you can connect to other users, send messages, post links, photos, videos or personal notes, create groups of users, advertise events, and more.

Some Important Terms

Information about these and other terms can be found in Facebook's Help files, linked at the bottom-right corner of every Facebook page.

Network: Groups of Facebook users to which you belong based on your employer, educational institution, or geographic region. Users who join with a "umd.edu" email address, for example, are automatically added to the University of Maryland Network, allowing them to connect with other people in that same network. To view the profile of a person outside of your network, you must add the person as your Friend.

Profile: Your "homepage" within Facebook, through which other users find and interact with you. Your Profile includes several standard elements (picture, contact information, list of friends, messaging space, etc), which you can hide or display at your discretion. You may also limit who may view your profile. You can add content or functions to your Profile with Applications, which are nearly unlimited in their variety.

Friends: Other Facebook users with whom you have made a mutually-confirmed connection. Your Friends can comment on your photos and profile, send messages, be notified of changes to your profile (and vice versa).

News Feed: A slightly controversial Facebook innovation, through which changes to your profile are broadcast to your community of Friends. The News Feed is the first page encountered upon entering Facebook. You can control what information is released in this way via Privacy Settings or your profile's **Mini-Feed**, the list of recent activities on your account.

PART 1: Getting Started: Opening a New Facebook Account

Figure 1.1: Getting Started

If you have never used Facebook before you will need to start with this page at <http://www.facebook.com>.

Fill in the brief information on the first page (full name, email, password, sex, and birth date) and click on the green “Sign Up” to join. Note that the email address you provide is what Facebook will use to determine the “Network” to which you belong, so be sure to use your “@umd.edu” address if you’d like to be part of the Maryland Network and be able to view profiles of other UM staff and students.



The screenshot shows the Facebook homepage with the sign-up form. The form includes fields for Email, Password, and a checkbox for 'Remember me'. Below these is a 'Login' button and a link for 'Forgot Password?'. The main content area features the Facebook logo and a description: 'Facebook is a social utility that connects you with the people around you.' There are three bullet points under 'Use Facebook to...': 'Keep up with friends and family', 'Share photos and videos', and 'Reconnect with old classmates'. A search bar is labeled 'Find your Friends on Facebook' with a 'Search by Name' input and a magnifying glass icon. To the right is the 'Sign up for Facebook' section, which is highlighted. It says 'It's free and anyone can join.' and includes fields for 'Full Name', 'Your Email', and 'New Password'. Below these are dropdown menus for 'I am:' (with a 'Select Sex' dropdown), 'Month', 'Day', and 'Year' for the birthday. A 'Sign Up' button is at the bottom right of this section. At the very bottom, there is a footer with 'Facebook © 2008 | English' and links for 'About', 'Find Friends', 'Advertising', 'Developers', 'Terms', 'Privacy', and 'Help'.

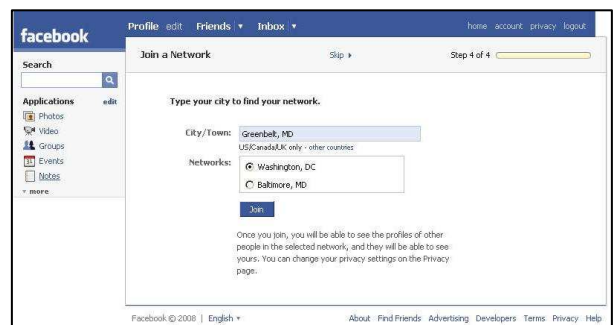
Next you will be guided through a number of steps designed to help you locate people you know who are already on Facebook. You may skip all of these steps if you wish, but I recommend completing Step 3 (education history and company) and Step 4 (city network), as in figures 1.2 and 1.3, below.

Figure 1.2:
Profile Info, Step 3: Education History and Company



The screenshot shows the 'Fill out your Profile Info' page, Step 3 of 4. The page has a progress bar at the top right. The main content area says 'Enter your education history and company (if any). This information will help you find your friends on Facebook.' There are three rows of input fields: 'High School' with 'Red Lion Area Senior High' and a 'Class Year' dropdown; 'College/University' with 'Shippensburg University' and a 'Class Year' dropdown; and 'Company' with 'University of Maryland'. A 'Save' button is at the bottom. The left sidebar shows 'Applications' with links for Photos, Video, Groups, Events, and Notes. The footer is the same as in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.3:
Profile Info, Step 4: Join a Network



The screenshot shows the 'Join a Network' page, Step 4 of 4. The page has a progress bar at the top right. The main content area says 'Type your city to find your network.' There is a 'City/Town' dropdown menu with 'Greenbelt, MD' selected. Below it, there is a 'Networks' section with two radio button options: 'Washington, DC' (selected) and 'Baltimore, MD'. A 'Join' button is at the bottom. The left sidebar shows 'Applications' with links for Photos, Video, Groups, Events, and Notes. The footer is the same as in Figure 1.1.

Once you fill out these pages, Facebook will send a confirmation to the email address you provided. You will need to log in to your email and follow the instructions in the confirmation message to finish registering your account.

PART 2: Creating Your Profile

Now comes the fun part! The profile is the online version of yourself with which other users will interact, so this is your opportunity to present yourself to the world. The profile has seven parts to fill in: Basic, Contact, Relationships, Personal, Education, Work, and Picture. You can fill in or leave blank as many details as you'd like; none of the items is required. We will deal with two of the components here: your contact information and profile picture. You can also control how much of your personal information is visible to other Facebook users by adjusting Privacy Settings.

Adding Contact Information and Adjusting Privacy Settings

Fill in as much of your contact information as desired, using the boxes in the “Contact” tab (see **Figure 2.1**).

Note that each section has a link (highlighted with **red** arrows) that will allow you to set the privacy options for that part of your profile.

For example, you can choose to allow “My networks and friends,” “Friends of friends,” “Only friends,” or “No one” to view your email address.

There are many, many additional privacy settings you can change by clicking on “Privacy” (in the upper-right hand corner of every screen, circled in red in **Figure 2.2**.) You can change settings related to your profile, search, news feed and mini-feed, applications, and more. You may also use the “Block People” function to cut off all ties and prevent communication with a particular user.

My suggestion is to first decide how you want to use your Facebook account, the kinds of people you want to meet and the types of communication with which you are comfortable. Then look carefully at the many privacy options to determine how much of your personal information you want to reveal or conceal.

Figure 2.1: Adding Your Contact Information

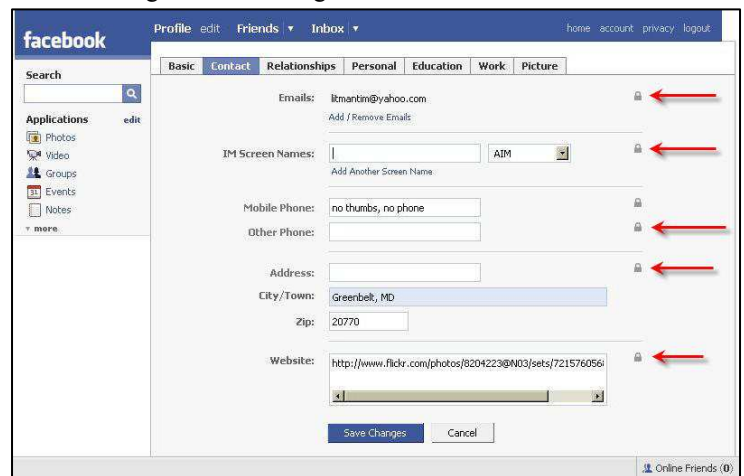
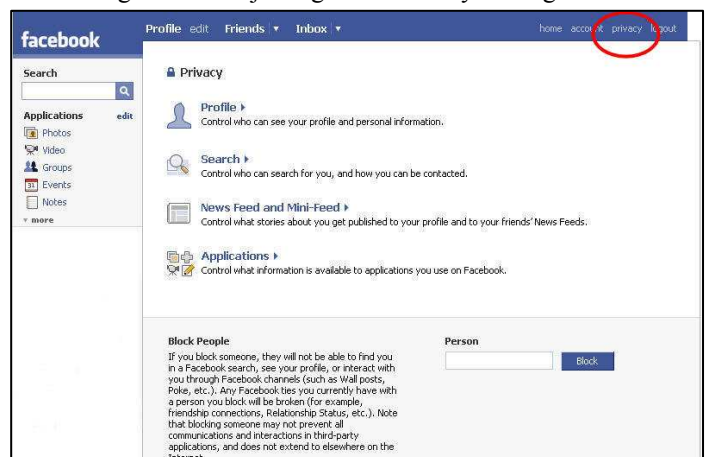


Figure 2.2: Adjusting Your Privacy Settings



You may also want to adjust your Notification preferences, which control the functions for which Facebook will send you email. Click on “Account” in the upper-right corner, then click the tab for “Notifications.” You can adjust notification options for your profile, photos, groups, events, posted items, etc. My suggestion is to leave all of the boxes checked until you get a feel for working with Facebook, and then adjust them if you find you are receiving too much email.

Adding a Profile Picture

To make your profile more friendly and inviting, you should consider adding a profile picture. Without a picture, your profile will appear to others with a large (and uninviting) question mark. It’s hard to make friends with a punctuation mark!

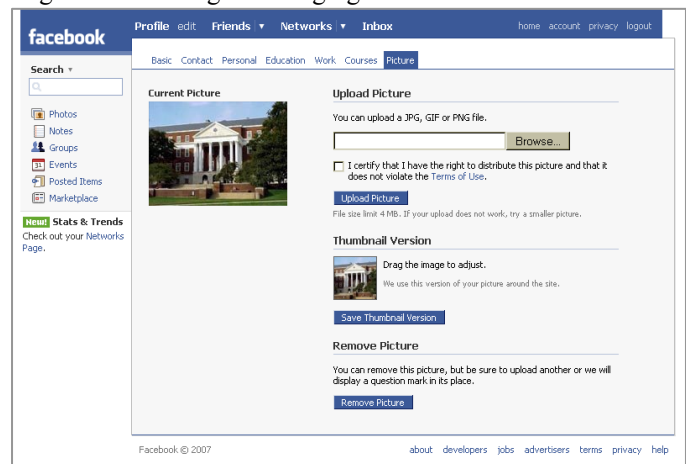
This doesn’t have to be a picture of you—it could be a picture of your dog, a peaceful nature scene, or even a cartoon character that you like. You may also want to create an “avatar” to represent yourself; see the “Further Reading” list for some Web sites that can help you really get creative.

To add a picture, you will first need to capture one that you would like to use. You can upload one from your digital camera or cell phone, or scan a snapshot. For today, let’s grab an image from the Web.

1. Go to the McKeldin Library page <http://www.lib.umd.edu/MCK/mckeldin.html>
2. Put your cursor over the image of McKeldin and right-click. From the right-click menu choose “Save as” and save the image to the Desktop as “mckeldin.jpg.”

3. Now go to your Facebook profile and click on your picture (or the question mark, if you haven’t uploaded a photo yet.) Choose “Change Profile Picture” from the next page and you will see the screen in **Figure 2.3**. Put your cursor in the “Upload Picture” box and browse to the Desktop for the McKeldin photo. Check the box for “I certify that I have the right to distribute this picture and that it does not violate the Terms of Use” and click “Upload Picture.”

Figure 2.3: Adding or Changing Your Profile Picture



Congratulations—you have now changed your profile picture! All photos uploaded in this way are added to a photo album called “Profile Picture Album.” You can change your photo at any time by clicking on your profile picture, which will bring up this album, allowing you to upload a new picture or choose an existing one.

PART 3: Finding and Adding Friends

Now that you have created an attractive, professional profile, you will want to start making “Friends” with other people in the Facebook environment. Becoming someone’s “Friend” requires confirmation from both members. Once this virtual connection is confirmed, you will be able to view your friends’ profiles and be notified of any changes, send private messages, write public messages on their Wall, and more.

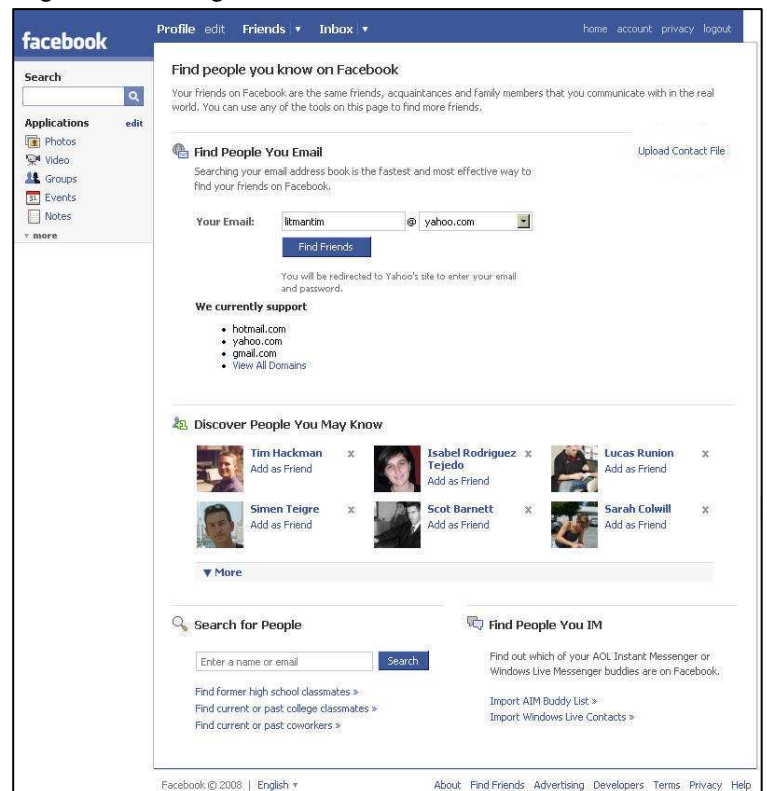
As with the privacy settings, it is up to you how to handle your friends. Among undergraduates the total number of one’s friends seems to be a mark of social standing, so they will add anyone they can find. You may wish to accept as friends only students or faculty in your academic department, or only people you actually know in real life. It is up to you; if you decide not to accept a Friend Request, that person will not be notified (and will probably not even notice).

There are several options for finding and adding friends.

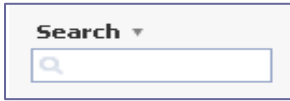
Option 1: First, you can receive invitations from current Facebook users who find your profile. When this happens you will get an email message (unless you have turned off this option) notifying you of a Friend Request, which you can then either accept or deny. Again, it is entirely up to you whether to accept or ignore a Friend Request.

Option 2: You can use the “Friend Finder” (**Figure 3.1**, under the “Friends” tab) to locate people you know. “Find People You Email” will import contacts from your Web-based email (e.g., Google Mail, Hotmail, AOL). You can also click on “Upload Contact File” to find friends from other email programs such as Outlook or Thunderbird. By following a few short steps, Facebook will look in your email program’s address book and determine which of your contacts are already members of Facebook. If your contacts are not on Facebook, you can send them email invitations to join. The Friend Finder will also suggest people you may know based on your profile info and friends of friends.

Figure 3.1: Finding Friends in Facebook



Option 3: The easiest way to find potential friends is through Facebook’s search feature. You can use simple or advanced searches to find individuals by name, or groups of people by other criteria (Linguistics graduate students or Libraries faculty/staff, for example). Additionally, entries in certain parts of your profile (Interests, Books, Movies, Music) become links that you can use to find and befriend other Facebook members who share your interests.



Let’s try some searching for some Friends among the Libraries’ faculty and staff. Click on “Search” on the left-hand side of your Profile to open the Basic Search screen.

Type “**library**” in the “Search for” box, and change the “within” box to read “**Maryland**,” as in **Figure 3.2**.

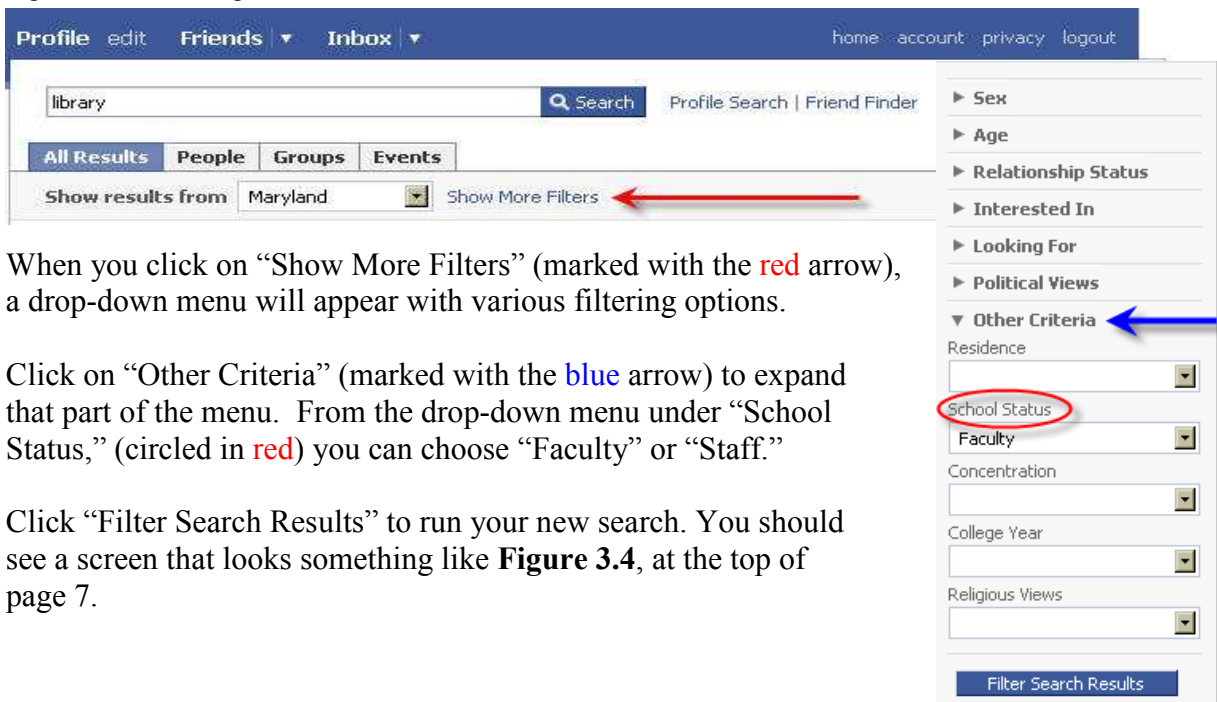
[Note: If you do not change the “within” box, you will search all 80 million Facebook member profiles!]

Figure 3.2: Searching for Friends



Results for this search will come from a variety of profile fields—Interests, Job, Concentration, Address, etc—and will include Facebook groups in addition to profiles of students, staff and faculty. This search returned 500+ profiles, so let’s use the “**Filter Results**” function to narrow it down a bit.

Figure 3.3: Narrowing Your Search Results

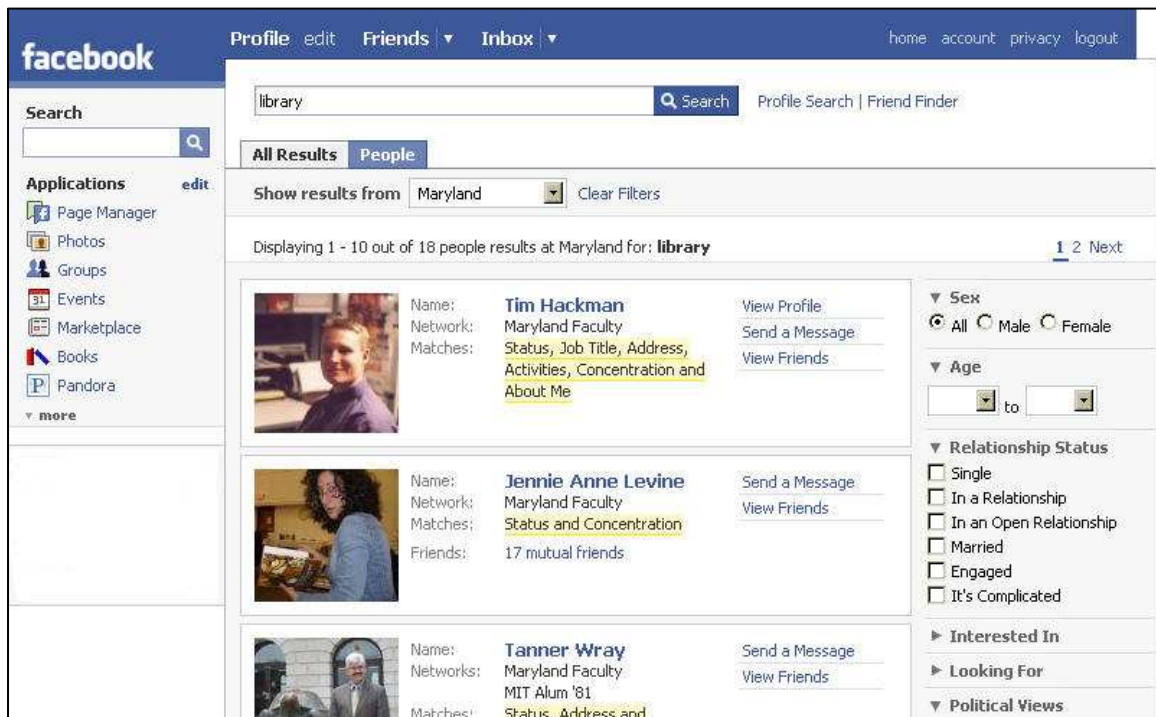


When you click on “Show More Filters” (marked with the red arrow), a drop-down menu will appear with various filtering options.

Click on “Other Criteria” (marked with the blue arrow) to expand that part of the menu. From the drop-down menu under “School Status,” (circled in red) you can choose “Faculty” or “Staff.”

Click “Filter Search Results” to run your new search. You should see a screen that looks something like **Figure 3.4**, at the top of page 7.

Figure 3.4: Search Results



If your own profile matches the search, it should appear at the top of the list. The fields that matched your search (Concentration, Status, Job Title, Address, etc.) will be highlighted in **yellow**. Note that these matches are entirely dependent on the information entered by the user into his or her Facebook profile. If a library staff member has not put the word “library” somewhere in the profile, the search will not find them.

Note that there is also an “Profile Search,” which allows you to do field searching within Facebook profiles. In **Figure 3.5**, for example, we are searching for all undergraduate students majoring in English Language and Literature who expect to graduate in 2012 (i.e., freshmen.)

Figure 3.5: Advanced Search



Adding Friends

Once you have found a Facebook member you would like to add as your Friend, the next steps are simple. Next to each member profile on the search results page you will see options to Send Message, View Friends and **Add to Friends** (marked with the red arrow in **Figure 3.6**, below).

Figure 3.6: Adding a Friend from a Search



Click on “Add to Friends” and a dialog box will appear, as in **Figure 3.7**.

Figure 3.7: Add to Friends Box




Note that there is the option to add a personal message. If you are adding someone you know well as a Friend, you probably don't need to write anything in this space. However, if you are using Facebook to reach out to your department's students or faculty, this is an excellent place to type a short introduction or welcome message. If you are befriending many students at once, you can type a short message in Word or Notepad, then cut and paste it into this space each time you make a Friend Request.


Adding a Friend is not automatic; once you click on “Add Friend,” the request will go to the Facebook member, who will then decide whether to approve or deny your request.


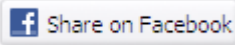
PART 4: Communicating Within Facebook


Once you have made Friends, Facebook offers a wide range of options for communicating with them, as well as with the rest of the Facebook community. Experiment with some of the following for connecting to your patrons and colleagues:


Wall: Your Wall is a public messaging space that appears on your profile; comments on the Wall are visible to all visitors to your profile, unless you adjust your privacy settings. You can delete inappropriate comments from your own Wall.

Messages: Somewhat like email, Messages are private communications between Facebook members. Your Messages can be viewed at any time by clicking on  **Inbox** in the toolbar at the top of the page. Your Sent and Received messages remain in Facebook until you delete them.

Notes: The Notes section allows for more extensive writing, and functions for some users like a blog. You can **Tag** (identify) friends that you mention in a note, thus allowing readers to connect with that person; other users can write comments on your Notes or share them with Friends. 

Posted Items: Allows you to publicly post links to websites, blogs, music and video clips, etc. on Facebook. Posted items are available to anyone who views your Profile or via the **News Feed**. Simply copy and paste the URL into the “Posted Items” page, and add your own description. You can also Post  Items by using the **Share on Facebook** button found on many websites and blogs (for example, the Diamondback offers this ) Facebook users can comment on posted items or share them with other Friends.

Groups: A big part of “Facebook life” is the ability to form and join Groups of members  based on common interests, political affiliation, academic major, or any other criteria you can imagine. Groups range from the serious (“Action to Save Darfur and Stop Genocide,” 8,656 members) to the less so (“When I Was Your Age, Pluto Was a Planet,” 1.3 million members). Groups can be “open” (anyone can join) or “closed” (new members must be approved by a moderator.) Groups can communicate via the Wall or mass-messaging, as well as through a **Discussion Board**.

Events: Facebook allows users to create Events—parties, lectures, political rallies, group meetings, etc.—and invite other users, who can RSVP online. As  with Groups, Events can be designated “open” or “closed” to control who can add themselves to the guest list. Events can also be “secret,” so that they will be visible only to those members directly invited by the creator. It is very easy to turn an Event announcement into a paid advertisement in just a few clicks.

NOTES

REMEMBER:

Detailed help files are available from the Help link at the bottom right corner of every Facebook page!

FURTHER READING

Check out the following for more information on social networking and its application in the library environment.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SERVICES

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com>
MySpace <http://www.myspace.com>
Linked In <http://www.linkedin.com>

FACEBOOK APPLICATIONS

The following applications can be added to any Facebook Profile or Page. You can find these (and thousands more) by searching the “Applications” section of Facebook.

Library Catalogs and Databases: search these popular databases and library catalogs directly from Facebook

WorldCat **PubMed Search**
JSTOR **Harvard University Library System**
UIUC Library Search (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)
UM Library Search (University of Michigan)

For Fun

Flickr: share photos from your Flickr account via your Facebook Profile
Books, Books iRead, Visual Bookshelf, or GoodReads Books: keep track of what you’re reading, share book reviews and suggestions with friends, form reading discussion groups, etc.
Library Gifts: post little library-related images on your friends’ profiles

BLOGS & WEBSITES

The Facebook Blog (“Facebook employees give first hand accounts of new features, products, and goings-on around the office.”)

<http://blog.facebook.com/>

Friends: Social Networking Sites for Engaged Library Services

<http://onlinesocialnetworks.blogspot.com/> (also a Facebook Group)

Image Generators (for creating profile pictures or avatars):

<http://www.imagechef.com/> or <http://generatorblog.blogspot.com/>

New York Times Topics: Facebook, Inc.

(New York Times Business section page collecting Facebook-related news):

http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/business/companies/facebook_inc/index.html?8qa&scp=1-spot&sq=facebook&st=nyt

LIBRARY-RELATED FACEBOOK GROUPS (just a sample)

*UM Libraries Employees on Facebook	ACRL Instruction Session
American Library Association Members	ARL Librarians
Cool People Who Work in the Nonprint Library Librarians and Facebook	FacebookAppsForLibraries Libraries and Librarians
Library 2.0 Interest Group	LITA Members on Facebook
NextGen Librarians	SciTech Librarians
Special Library Association (SLA) Members on Facebook	

ARTICLES & BOOKS

Belden, Dreanna. "Harnessing Social Networks to Connect with Audiences: If You Build it, Will they Come 2.0?" Internet Reference Services Quarterly 13.1 (2008): 99-111.

Available full-text via Academic Search Premier

Charnigo, Laurie, and Paula Barnett-Ellis. "Checking Out Facebook.Com: The Impact of a Digital Trend on Academic Libraries." Information Technology & Libraries. 26.1 (2007): 23-34. *Available full-text via Academic Search Premier*

Chu, Melanie, and Yvonne Nalani Meulemans. "The Problems and Potential of MySpace and Facebook Usage in Academic Libraries." Internet Reference Services Quarterly 13.1 (2008): 69-85.

Available full-text via Academic Search Premier

Cohen, Laura B. Library 2.0 Initiatives in Academic Libraries. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2007.

Not available in UM Libraries

Evans, Beth. "Your Space Or MySpace?" Library Journal. 131 (2006): 8-12.

Available full-text via Academic Search Premier

Evans, Woody. "My MySpace Comment." Library Journal. 132.3 (2007): 44- .

Available full-text via Academic Search Premier

Farkas, Meredith G. Social Software in Libraries : Building Collaboration, Communication, and Community Online. Medford, N.J: Information Today, 2007.

McKeldin Library Stacks Z674.75 .I58 F37 2007

_____. "What Friends are for." American Libraries 39.1 (2008): 36- .

Available full-text via Academic Search Premier

Feiler, Jesse. How to Do Everything: Facebook Applications. New York: McGraw Hill, 2008.

EPSL Stacks HM742. F45 2008

- Hermes, J.J. "Colleges Create Facebook-Style Social Networks to Reach Alumni." Chronicle of Higher Education. 54:33 (April 25, 2008): 18.
Available full-text via Lexis Nexis
- Krivak, Thomas. "Facebook 101: Ten Things You Need to Know About Facebook." Information Today. 25:3 (March 2008): 1- .
Available full-text via Academic Search Premier
- Lemeul, John. "Why I Registered on Facebook." Chronicle of Higher Education. 53.2 (2006): 113-.
Available full-text via Lexis Nexis
- Mathews, Brian S. "Do You Facebook? Networking with Students Online." College & Research Libraries News. 67.5 (2006): 306-7.
McKeldin Periodical Stacks Z671 .C61
- Millar, Erin. "We can't Stop Meeting Like this." Maclean's. 120.12 (2007): 43-.
Available full-text via Academic Search Premier
- Mitchell, Eleanor and Sarah Barbara Watstein. "The Places Where Scholars Work, Collaborate, Share and Plan: Endless Possibilities for Us!" Reference Services Review. 35: 4 (2007): 521-525.
Available full-text via Academic Search Premier
- Notess, Greg R. An about-Face on Facebook?. Vol. 32. Information Today Inc, 2008.
Available full-text via Academic Search Premier
- Smith, Steve. "My Internet, My Self." E-Content. June 2007: 6.
<http://www.econtentmag.com/Articles/ArticleReader.aspx?ArticleID=36093&ContentSubtypeID=8> (Accessed July 12, 2007.)
- Stephens, Michael, and ALA TechSource. Web 2.0 & Libraries : Best Practices for Social Software. Chicago, IL: ALA TechSource, 2006.
Not available in UM Libraries
- Stelter, Brian. "The Facebooker Who Friendened Obama." New York Times. July 7, 2008.
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/07/technology/07hughes.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=facebooker%20who%20friended&st=cse&oref=slogin. Accessed July 8, 2008.
- Stone, Brad. "Big Changes Coming to Profile Pages on Facebook." New York Times. May 21, 2008.
<http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/05/21/big-changes-coming-to-profile-pages-on-facebook/index.html>. Accessed July 8, 2008.

Thelwall, Mike. "Social Networks, Gender, and Friending: An Analysis of MySpace Member Profiles." Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology 59.8 (2008): 1321-30.

Available full-text via Academic Search Premier

Ulanoff, Lance. "MySpace, Second Life and Twitter Are Doomed." PC Magazine. June 13, 2007. http://www.pcmag.com/print_article2/0,1217,a=209428,00.asp Accessed July 8, 2008.

Van Der Werf, Martin. "Beware of using Social-Networking Sites to Monitor Students, Lawyers Say." Chronicle of Higher Education. 53.26 (2007): A28-.

Available full-text via Lexis Nexis

"Why can't we be Friends? the MSU Libraries Find Friends on Facebook." Mississippi Libraries 72.1 (2008): 3-5.

Available full-text via Academic Search Premier