Social Networks

The way of the world is meeting people through other people.
Robert Kerrigan

By giving people the power to share, we're making the world more transparent.
Mark Zuckerberg

Do the names Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google+, etc. ring a bell? They probably do because they are some of the most popular sites on the internet today. These sites are all called 'social networking' sites because they help people meet and discuss things online. Each of these social networking sites has its own strengths, but the common thread between all of them is that they provide a place for people to interact, rather than a place to go to read or listen to 'content'.

WEB 2.0
Social networks are considered to be web 2.0. What does this mean? To understand this, it's important to understand what the original web did (often called web 1.0). Back in the nineties, the internet - or web - was a place to go to read articles, listen to music, get information, etc. Most people didn't contribute to the sites. They just 'browsed' the sites and took advantage of the information or resources provided. Of course, some people did create their own sites. However, creating a site was difficult. You needed to know basic HTML coding (the original language the internet uses to 'code' pages). It certainly wasn't something most people wanted to do as it could take hours to get a basic page just right. Things began to get easier when blogs (from web log) were introduced. With blogs, many more people began writing 'posts', as well as commenting on other people's blogs.

MYSPACE SURPRISES EVERYBODY
In 2003 a site named MySpace took the internet by storm. It was trying to mimic the most popular features of Friendster, the first social networking site. It quickly became popular among young users and the rest was history. Soon everyone was trying to develop a social networking site. The sites didn't provide 'content' to people, they helped people create, communicate and share what they loved including music, images and videos. They key to the success of these sites is that they provide a platform on which users create the content. This is very different from the beginning of the internet which focused on providing 'content' for people to enjoy.

KEY TO SUCCESS
Relying on users to create content is the key to the success of web 2.0 companies. Besides the social networking sites discussed here, other huge success stories include: Reddit, Vine, Pinterest, Ask.fm, Tumblr, Flickr, and LinkedIn. All of these companies rely on the desire of users to communicate with each other, thereby creating the 'content' that others want to consume.

1. **Read the text and choose the correct alternative.**

   1. What is Facebook?
   A) A blog ☐
   B) A content site ☐
   C) A social networking site ☐
   D) A newspaper online ☐

   2. Which phrase best describes what people do at social networking sites?
   A) They code pages in HTML ☐
   B) They interact with other people ☐
   C) They browse articles and other content ☐
   D) They listen to music and get information ☐

   3. Social networks are considered ...
   A) web 1.0 sites ☐
   B) web 2.0 sites ☐
   C) web blogs ☐
   D) web blogs posts ☐

   4. What was the original web mainly used for?
   A) Interacting with other people ☐
   B) Browsing content ☐
   C) Creating pages in HTML ☐
   D) Communicating with other people ☐

   5. Why didn't many people create web pages in the beginning?
   A) They didn't like interacting with others ☐
   B) They didn't like communicating with others ☐
   C) They didn't feel comfortable coding HTML pages ☐
   D) They didn't know they could create web pages ☐

   6. Which is the best description of web 2.0 sites?
   A) They are content driven sites ☐
   B) They are platforms for interaction ☐
   C) They are like blogs, but better ☐
   D) They are a good archive of music, images and videos ☐

   7. What do web 2.0 sites rely on?
   A) Articles written by professional journalists ☐
   B) Users creating content ☐
   C) Fast internet connections ☐
   D) Blogs posts ☐

   8. What is most important for these new sites?
   A) Users' desire to communicate with each other ☐
   B) Users' desire to read interesting content written by professionals ☐
   C) Users' desire to learn coding ☐
   D) Users' desire to download music and images ☐

A11. What are Facebook and Twitter?

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A12. Why are they called 'social networks'?

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A13. Why are they so popular?

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A14. What's the difference between web 1.0 and web 2.0?

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A15. Provide further examples of web 2.0

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A16. Do you like social networks? Why? Discuss advantages and disadvantages.

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