

# More than MySpace

A Social Networking Web Sites Guide for Investigators



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# MySpace

([www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com))

- Users: 167 million
- Ages: 14 – 35
- Background Information:



MySpace is a social networking Web site that allows users to share pictures, videos, blogs and MySpace "e-mail". Users can also post messages on each other's MySpace pages.

Generally, MySpace profiles are viewable without having a profile of your own. However, if a MySpace user's profile is private, it means that the profile is only viewable by that user's "friends."

As of Feb. 2007, MySpace had an 80% share of the social networking market, but other sites like Facebook and Bebo are growing at a faster rate.

Gang members have been known to post pictures of themselves or friends on the site. Pictures include: flashing gang signs, wads of money, drugs and guns.

If MySpace were a country, it would be the 8<sup>th</sup> most populous country between Brazil and Pakistan. MySpace was purchased by News Corp. in 2005 for \$580 million.

Law enforcement contact: 310-969-7399 or [lawenforcement@myspace.com](mailto:lawenforcement@myspace.com).

# Facebook

(www.facebook.com)

- Users: 18 million
- Ages: 14 – 25
- Background Information:

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, is displayed within a dark rectangular box.

Facebook began in 2004 as a social networking site for college students. According to media reports, 85% of college students have a Facebook account.

In 2005, Facebook became available to high school students, as well as college students. Today, similar to MySpace, Facebook is open to anyone with a valid e-mail address.

Facebook members use the site for networking, sharing pictures, dating, and sending messages to their "friends".

Over 6 million photos are uploaded to Facebook each day.

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# Twitter

([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com))



- Users: 1 million
- Ages: 16 – 35

- Background Information:

Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service that allows users to send "updates" (text-based posts, up to 140 characters long) via SMS, instant messaging, email and the Twitter Web site.

Users typically post several messages a day, usually about mundane tasks and activities. Some Twitter users post messages about meetings times and places.

"Friends" and "followers" can receive a text message, e-mail, or instant message every time a Twitter user posts a new message.

According to Twitter, the number of users and messages have been doubling every three weeks over the past three months.

Twitter could be used to quickly notify hundreds of people by sending just one text message.

# Craigslist

(minneapolis.craigslist.com)

- Users: 10 million
- Ages: 18 - 35
- Background:

craigslist

Craigslist is a centralized network of online urban communities, featuring free classified advertisements and forums sorted by various topics.

There have been several reports of solicitation for prostitution and escort services posted on Craigslist. St. Paul PD and Brooklyn Park PD have recently broken-up prostitution rings in their cities after investigations were started from postings on Craigslist.

Check scams have also become commonplace on Craigslist, especially in the Seeking Roommate Forum.

# Bebo

(www.bebo.com)

- Users: 31 million
- Ages: 14 - 20
- Background Information:



Bebo's main audience remains staunchly European (#1 Web site in Ireland), but it is fast becoming the preferred networking site for middle school and high school students in the U.S.

Bebo has experienced 17% growth so far this year, to become the third most popular social networking site on the Web.

Bebo's increased popularity can be accounted to the ability of similarities to MySpace and Facebook, plus the ability to share a "White Board" and other Web 2.0 technologies

A quick search of Bebo in April 2007, revealed several suspected Crips Gang Members living in Minneapolis.

# Hi5

(www.hi5.com)

- Users: 50 million
- Ages: 13 - 24
- Background Information:



Hi5 is one of the fastest growing social networking Web sites. It's growth can be attributed to U.S. high school students and a global reach. Hi5's Web site is translated into 7 different languages.

Hi5 is similar to other networking sites (MySpace, Facebook, Bebo, etc.) where members use the site to send messages to each other, post pictures, and post comments.

# BlackPlanet

([www.blackplanet.com](http://www.blackplanet.com))

- Users: 16 million
- Ages: 18 – 30
- Background Information:



BlackPlanet was launched in 1999 and has become the most popular social-networking site for African-Americans.

BlackPlanet is similar to the MySpace and Facebook formats, where members use the site for networking, sharing pictures, dating, and sending messages to their “friends”.

Gang members have been known to post pictures of themselves or friends on the site. Pictures include: flashing gang signs, wads of money, drugs and guns.



# MiGente

([www.migente.com](http://www.migente.com))

- Users: 3 million
- Ages: 20 - 30
- Background Information:

MiGente ("My People") is a social networking Web site that targets Hispanic populations. MiGente is not limited to Hispanics, as it also counts other ethnic groups as members.

While similar to other social networking sites, MiGente has created more of a community feel by having forums about restaurants, community notifications and news.

MiGente also includes a "Rate Me" section, similar to the Web site HotorNot.com.



# Xanga

(www.xanga.com)



- Users: 40 million
- Ages: 16 - 30
- Background Information:

Xanga began as a site for sharing book and music reviews. It has since become a social networking revolving around blog content.

Xanga is a basic site, as far as social networking sites go, but searching for blog content is very organized.

There are over 21 million active blogs on Xanga.

# Photobucket

([www.photobucket.com](http://www.photobucket.com))

- Users: 39 million
- Ages: 18 - 45
- Background:



Photobucket claims to have 39 million users who have uploaded 2.6 billion photos. Users can upload photos on Photobucket and use the photos as a depository for Facebook and MySpace photos.

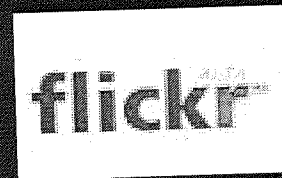
Photos are shared with other Photobucket users. Photos are searchable by title, tags and descriptions.

Photobucket users are also able to post and share videos.

# Flickr

([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com))

- Users: 5 million
- Ages: 18 - 35
- Background Information:



Flickr is a photo sharing and depository site. All photos are searchable by tags or text that the originator attached to the photos.

Most photos are available to the general public, though there are settings to make photos available to only a select group of people.

There is an estimated 200 million photos on Flickr.

# Retaining Profiles and Information Gathered

The improper collection and retention of intelligence information can be a serious civil rights violation resulting in civil suits as a federal "color of law" violation. Minnesota data practices law is very restrictive regarding intelligence information at this time.

Profiles and posting histories can easily be found on the hosting Web sites.

If profiles or postings are deleted by the user, in many cases the information can be found by searching cached on Google or Yahoo.

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