

Why Social Network anyway?

Lots of internet users avoid social networking, i.e. they don't participate in **Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+** and the rest, nor do they use **Skype** or **Facetime** instant messaging. These users tend to be older individuals with no reason to communicate via these means...email works just fine. However many times these same people are catapulted into the cyber mainstream by their children/grandchildren who are all social networking. Others join this social avenue to enhance their businesses – notice how more mega-companies have Facebook accounts?

How are these networks different – or alike – and who is their user? In simple terms, **Skype** and **Facetime** are useful for inexpensive phone calling, video calls and conferences. Software installation is quick and easy, and both require the normal “user name” and “password” setups. Calls of these types are great for those who want to connect visually with others thousands of miles away. Past business video conferences were a difficult and expensive process to set up; today, the hardest part is synchronizing time zones so all parties are available simultaneously. Video quality has improved tremendously and depend too on a device's operating system and graphics properties. Airline and hotel companies have no doubt lost revenue from business people not having to travel repeatedly for conferences....one could be home in their pajamas to attend a company meeting!

Facebook, Twitter and the rest are much more interactive and constantly “ON” – i.e. information is transferred 24/7/365....and like email, can be accessed from anywhere when the user desires. Setup is the same but how you create your personal page is another matter. To be honest, one needs to be somewhat computer-literate as all these sites **EXPECT** the user to know how to create their profiles, create groups, manage their account(s), upload and edit their photos, etc. etc.....which can be daunting for people who are not very PC-friendly. The upside to these social networks is pretty broad: e.g. one young woman we know has both personal and business accounts on **Facebook**, sells for her business, has bought and sold her cars, and met numerous new clients; a man we know has linked up his tourist travel website on **Facebook** with travel groups and individuals from across Europe; another woman who had been unemployed for almost a year used **LinkedIn** to find a job and when she did, to capture new clients via other

members; an authoress we know is using **Facebook** and **Twitter** to promote her new book due in October, and another woman found an old high school friend she had not seen in 50 years and met up with her.....the stories go on and on.

Thus there are benefits to using social networks....in this day of robots, automation and remote conversations, humans still have a need to bond with friends, family, acquaintances and partners. People like Mike Zuckerberg have found a way to address that need. We just need to find our personal niche to use what works for us.