

Social Networks

ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY

<i>an activist</i>	un militant
<i>banner advertising</i>	un bandeau publicitaire
<i>brand image</i>	image de marque
<i>to broadcast</i>	diffuser, partager
<i>bullying</i>	harcèlement scolaire
<i>to charge</i>	faire payer
<i>consuming habits</i>	habitudes de consommation
<i>cyberbullying</i>	le harcèlement sur internet
<i>to keep in touch</i>	rester en contact
<i>to get in touch</i>	contacter
<i>globally</i>	dans le monde entier
<i>instant messaging</i>	messagerie instantanée
<i>live feed</i>	le fil d'actualités
<i>membership count</i>	le nombre de membres
<i>personal data</i>	les données personnelles
<i>privacy breach</i>	une violation de la vie privée
<i>privacy settings</i>	les paramètres de sécurité
<i>a profile page</i>	une page de profil
<i>to promote an agenda</i>	promouvoir une cause
<i>to raise funds</i>	lever des fonds
<i>self-esteem</i>	estime de soi
<i>a social network</i>	un réseau social
<i>a social link</i>	un lien social
<i>to stream</i>	diffuser ou lire un contenu en streaming
<i>to target</i>	cibler
<i>targeted advertising</i>	la publicité ciblée
<i>to upload</i>	mettre en ligne

Introduction

The internet might be **dubbed** the greatest technological revolution since the invention of the A bomb, and there is no denying that the impact of social networks not only on human relationships but also on the way information gets disseminated has been profound over the last decade. Their popularity is still on the **rise**, as is their use in increasingly varied contexts. Are social networks **valuable** actors in the "global village" or are they largely responsible for our narcissistic age? Are they a passing **fad** or are they here to stay, **for better or for worse**?

WRITING TIPS

- **Le modal MIGHT** est le prétérit de "may". "Might" peut ainsi servir à exprimer une plus grande incertitude que "may" ("Il se pourrait qu'il"). Cependant, il est ici plutôt l'équivalent de "can" et marque l'éventualité en suggérant une interprétation possible donnée à un phénomène actuel ("On pourrait dire que...").
- **Le PRESENT PERFECT + over** ici accompagne d'un complément de temps introduit par *over* ("au cours de(s)"), il permet ici de faire un bilan provisoire et démettre un jugement sur une évolution ayant commencé dans le passé et se poursuivant aujourd'hui.
- **AS et LIKE**: peuvent tous deux se traduire par "comme" dans le cadre de comparaisons, mais tandis que *as* sera suivi d'une proposition grammaticale composée de son propre sujet, verbe et complément ("as we told you"), *like* sera suivi d'un groupe nominal ("like a professional").

VOCABULARY

<i>to be on the rise</i>	augmenter
<i>to dub</i>	qualifier
<i>a fad</i>	une lubie
<i>for better or for worse</i>	pour le meilleur et pour le pire
<i>valuable</i>	précieux

COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

The term "**global village**" is thought to have been coined by Canadian philosopher and media theory expert Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) in his seminal works *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964). He described how the planet has shrunk into a village thanks to electric technology and its simultaneous and instantaneous movements of information.

Definition

Although social networks should really be called "social networking websites" or "services" in order to highlight the difference from their real-life counterparts, the shorter phrase has now **made its way into** the English language to refer to websites such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, which **enable** members to share opinions, pictures, events or interests with the people in their network. Usually starting from a **profile page**, users are encouraged to **build up a list of contacts** and connections, which can then be **cross-referenced**. These websites often combine **instant messaging**, e-mail services, **blogging as well as** the sharing of videos and photos in an **all-inclusive way**.

Social networks do not tend to **charge** for membership, which might be explained by the fact that social networking is still a **fairly** recent service, and that its commercial worth remains unclear in the minds of users. However, several social networks generate extremely large benefits from the sale of online advertising (often **targeted banner ads**) thanks to their high **membership count**.

WRITING TIPS

- **Although** se traduit par "bien que". Il marque le contraste, l'opposition ou la concession.
- **Le modal SHOULD** exprime ici un conseil, ce qu'il conviendrait de faire.
- **IN ORDER TO + INFINITIF**: cette structure sert à exprimer le but en anglais, et se traduit par *pour + infinitif* (ou *afin de + inf.*).
- **As well as**: "ainsi que", "ou encore". Cette locution est utile lorsque l'on énumère des exemples.
- **Le PASSIF**: La voix passive d'un verbe se forme avec l'auxiliaire être suivi du participe passé du verbe et marque une action subie par le sujet. L'auxiliaire se conjugue au même temps que le verbe de la voix active. À noter que la voix passive est beaucoup plus utilisée en français qu'en anglais.

VOCABULARY

<i>all-inclusive</i>	tout-en-un
<i>as well as</i>	ainsi que
<i>to build up a list</i>	constituer une liste
<i>to charge</i>	faire payer
<i>a counterpart</i>	un homologue
<i>to cross-reference</i>	recouper (des informations)
<i>to enable so to do sth</i>	permettre à qqn de faire qqch
<i>fairly</i>	assez
<i>to make its way into</i>	s'insinuer dans
<i>membership count</i>	nombre d'inscrits
<i>targeted banner ads</i>	bannière publicitaire ciblée

Facts and figures

As of September 2017, Facebook was the world's largest social network with 2 billion members, ahead of Youtube which now boasts 1.5 billion users. Among the world's ten largest social networks, it is **worth mentioning** that 3 are mainly prominent in China (Wechat being the most popular with 963 million members).

LinkedIn, which is a professional networking site counting 500 million users and Instagram, a video and photo sharing website with 708 million members are currently listed in the top twenty, like Twitter and Snapchat whose memberships reach 328 and 255 million respectively.

The majority of social networking websites appeared in the **early noughties**, with the notable exception of Classmates.com created in 1995 and now counting 50 million members globally. They tend to be open to people 13 and older, but in most cases, it is impossible to verify the age of users, which can be problematic.

According to experts, most social network users today can be found in the Asia-Pacific region with around 6 billion people. As a matter of fact, India registered the fastest expansion in 2013.

WRITING TIPS

• **AS OF + complément de temps**: cette locution pourra tantôt se traduire par "à partir de" ("as of now"), tantôt par "pour l'heure" ("as of this moment") ou encore, comme ici (et si elle est suivie d'une date passée), par "en". Elle est très fréquente dans l'anglais des médias.

• **Les chiffres en anglais**: Il faut se souvenir que "dozen", "hundred", "thousand", "million" ou encore "billion" ne prennent jamais de -s dès lors qu'ils sont précédés d'un adjectif numéral et marquent une quantité précise.

• **It is worth mentioning that**: Il n'est pas inutile de rappeler que...

• **UNLIKE + groupe nominal**: contrairement à.

• **As a matter of fact**: à vrai dire, en fait.

VOCABULARY

to boast	se targuer, se vanter de
the early noughties	le début des années 2000
unlike	contrairement à

COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

→ **LinkedIn** is mostly a business-oriented social networking service with headquarters located in Mountain View, California. Founded in 2002 by Reid Hoffman and some founding team members of Paypal, it was launched in May 2003, and is mainly used in the context of professional networking. LinkedIn came on the stockmarket in January 2011. Its net income in 2015 was \$166 million and it currently employs 9,730 people.

How it all started

Social networking on the internet came about as online communities such as Geocities (1994) or Tripod.com (1995), which aimed at bringing people together through chat rooms, and invited users to **disclose** personal information as well as express ideas through individual webpages. At the end of the 1990s, user profile pages became a **key feature** of social networking sites, **enabling** members to compile lists of "friends" and search for other users sharing similar interests.

As innovative social networking tools had been developed by the late 1990s, the resulting newer generation of social networks began to **thrive** with the creation of SixDegrees.com in 1997 and Friendster in 2002, to quote but a few. MySpace and LinkedIn subsequently emerged in 2003 and Facebook famously started in 2004 as a Harvard-based social networking site which rapidly spread to other American universities before **hitting the world stage**. By 2009, it ranked as the world's largest social networking site.

WRITING TIPS

- **Such as se traduit par "tel(les) que"**. Cette expression permet d'introduire un exemple sans avoir à répéter "for example".
- **Information a un sens collectif mais ne prend jamais de -s en anglais**. Pour parler d'une seule information, il faut employer "a piece of".
- **To quote but a few**: pour n'en citer que quelques-uns.
- **By + complément de temps**: faire attention à "by" + date passée ("en") et "by Monday" ("d'ici lundi").

VOCABULARY

to compile	compiler, constituer (le)
to disclose	divulguer
to hit the world stage	devenir mondial
a key feature	un élément clé
to thrive	prosperer

COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

→ **Facebook** is an online social networking service whose headquarters are based in Menlo Park, California. It was initially launched in February 2004 by its founder Mark Zuckerberg along with some college roommates from Harvard University. Initially restricted to Harvard students, it was gradually made accessible to the Boston area, other Ivy League universities before opening up to the rest of the world in 2005. Out of 2 billion registered members in September 2017, 1.3 billion use the website daily. On the stock market since 2012 and valued at a record \$104 billion, the company made \$10 billion in revenues in 2016.

Benefits

The advantages of social networks are numerous. Clearly, it has never been easier to **get in touch** with relatives, friends, colleagues and acquaintances, and to share opinions, pictures or videos freely. Social networks both allow the maintenance of existing **social ties** and the formation of new connections. Many have additional **features**, such as the ability to create groups with common interests or affiliations, to **upload** or **stream** videos, and to hold discussions in forums. Interestingly, it **would appear** that more and more relationships (and friendships) now start online to then carry on offline, as social networks are fast becoming people's preferred socializing method. **Besides**, it **has been shown** that social networks can boost our self-esteem as we **edit** and construct ourselves online.

The immediacy of exchanges (either via posts, e-mails or instant messages) combined with the fact that they are free of charge certainly **goes a long way towards explaining** the rapid success of social networks. Twitter, founded in 2006, first set the **trend** for "real-time" services, since users could **broadcast** to the world what they were doing as they were doing it, or what was on their minds at a particular instant (within a 140-character limit). Facebook then followed with the "Live Feed" on which users' activities are streamed as soon as they happen, while Foursquare (45m users) gained popularity by allowing users to "check-in" to places that they are frequenting at a specific time.

WRITING TIPS

- It would appear that...: Il semblerait que...
- Besides: par ailleurs, en outre.
- It has been shown that...: On a montré que...
- It goes a long way towards explaining...: Cela explique en grande partie...
- BY + ...ING: sert à exprimer le moyen en anglais, la façon dont une action s'est faite. L'expression se traduira par le gérondif précédé de la préposition en.

VOCABULARY

to boost	stimuler, regonfler
to edit	modifier, corriger
a feature	une fonctionnalité, une caractéristique
social ties	les liens sociaux
to set a trend	lancer une mode

It is hardly surprising therefore that social networks should regularly be used by local, national or international activists, campaigning in their own name or as part of an organisation (FEMEN, Friends of the Earth) in order to **promote** a particular **agenda**, but also to **raise funds** or organize **grassroots rallies**. The examples of the Arab Spring (December 2010) and the Occupy Wall Street movement (September 2011) are often quoted in this latter context. As such, it is possible to view social networks as democratic tools keeping equality, freedom and the rule of law alive in Western nations and helping spread those ideals to repressive nations (unless access has been banned, as is the case in Iran).

Of course, social networks are increasingly used by politicians, religious leaders and other public figures as a means to communicate directly with people. Benedict XVI famously became the first Pope ever to open a Twitter account in December 2012, while Barack Obama made an **extensive** use of social networks during his 2012 Presidential Campaign. Moreover, most celebrities now have Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram accounts which they regularly update. In order to share opinions or information directly with their fans or followers. For example, Lady Gaga is currently "liked" by 60 million Facebook users.

Furthermore, social networks should increasingly be regarded as professional tools. For instance, LinkedIn **targets** companies and professionals **eager** to establish new business contacts or **keep in touch** with previous colleagues, partners and clients. As a matter of fact, a growing number of companies have understood that Facebook and Twitter are great ways to consolidate and manage their **brand image**, but also to recruit, find out about competitors and **reach out** to potential consumers. In addition, more and more college students use those services to network for **internship** and job opportunities.

Given the popularity of social networking services among teenagers, teachers and educators are more and more likely to use social networks on top of traditional teaching and learning methods in classroom environments, as they can offer new opportunities to enrich the existing curriculum through creative and interactive learning experiences which can increase pupils' engagement. The **advocates** of learning via social media through micro-blogging (Twitter), podcasting (Audacity) or RSS readers (Google Reader), are convinced that they **enhance** the development of useful transferable technical and **social skills**.

WRITING TIPS

- It is + ADJ + le modal SHOULD: cette périphrase à valeur de subjonctif est très utile pour émettre des jugements ou faire un commentaire.
- Hardly: à peine.
- Therefore: donc, dès lors.
- Furthermore: de plus, en outre.
- In addition: de plus.
- On top of: en plus de.

VOCABULARY

advocates	partisan
to campaign	militier
to enhance	améliorer
extensive	étendu, considérable
eager to	désireux de
grassroots rally	rassemblement populaire
internship	stage
reach out to	attirer
social skills	qualités relationnelles
to target	cibler

COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

→ **Friends of the Earth International (FoEI)** is an international network of environmental organizations over 74 countries. It was founded in 1969 as an anti-nuclear group by Robert Anderson along with David Brower, Donald Aitken and Jerry Mander. It now campaigns in favour of economic justice, biodiversity, food sovereignty and against global warming.

→ **Occupy Wall Street (OWS)** was a protest movement that began on September 17, 2011, in Zuccotti Park, in New York City's Wall Street financial district. The call for a rally first appeared in a Canadian, anti-consumerist, pro-environment magazine called *Adbusters*. The main issues raised by the movement were social and economic inequality, greed, corruption and the perceived undue influence of corporations on government – particularly from the financial services sector. The OWS slogan, "We are the 99%", referred to income inequality and wealth distribution in the US between the wealthiest 1% and the rest of the population. The protesters were eventually dislodged from Zuccotti Park on November 15, 2011.

→ **RSS (Rich Site Summary)** is a type of software allowing the publishing of frequently updated information such as status updates, blog entries, news headlines, audio or video content. An RSS document (called "feed", "web feed", or "channel") includes full or summarized text, and metadata, like the publishing date and the author's name. Subscribing to the RSS of a website saves the user from having to manually log onto the website to check for new content. Software called "RSS reader", "aggregator", or "feed reader", are essentially XML formatted and can be web-based, desktop-based, or mobile-device-based.

Limits

Nevertheless, the growing success of social networks also raises a number of concerns, some of which very serious indeed. First among them is the question of how much personal information users should divulge and the consequences of sharing excessive amounts of **personal data**. Social networks certainly encourage members to be as open and transparent as possible about their age group, tastes or **consuming habits** while guarantees are not always given that this type of information will not be sold to **third parties** such as companies or government bodies. The theft or loss of control of data are concrete threats social network users should be **acutely aware of**. Facebook for one has often been criticized for its lack of transparency regarding its use of deleted content and its overcomplicated **privacy settings**. **Unsuspecting** users thus become exposed to a **misuse of** their private data by identity fraudsters and hackers, **given that** social networks still have not found any secure way to check the identity of their members and to prevent ill-intentioned individuals from stealing posted content (as the recent **celebrity privacy breach** in the United States reminded us recently).

It has to be said that free and easy communication on the internet also means the sharing of heinous messages. Indeed, **cyberbullying**, which consists in using

the internet to harass other people in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner, from the posting of rumours to the publication of humiliating material (including so-called "revenge posts"), is on the rise. Moreover, internet trolls make sure they sow online discord by starting arguments or posting **inflammatory**, often irrelevant messages, on internet pages or forums. Sadly, social media are also a preferred method of communication for extremist groups such as ISIS, which rely on them to propagate their terrorist agenda.

WRITING TIPS

- Nevertheless: néanmoins.
- Some of which: dont certains...
- Given that: étant donné que.
- It has to be said that: il faut préciser que...

VOCABULARY

acutely	extrêmement
concern	inquiétude
for one	quant à...
inflammatory	incendiaire
misuse	abus
to sow	semer
a third party	un tiers
unsuspecting	peu méfiant

COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

→ **Celebrity privacy breach:** In September 2014, several high-profile celebrities including Jennifer Lawrence and Rihanna were the victims of a large privacy breach, resulting in photographs and videos apparently showing them in the nude being widely circulated on the internet. These photographs appeared online after an anonymous hacker posted supposedly authentic images on the Achan website, an online message board used for sharing pictures.

→ **ISIS** is a Sunni Islamist rebel group that controls territory in Iraq and Syria and also operates in eastern Libya, the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, and other areas of the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. The group has been designated as a terrorist organization by the United Nations, the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States. Over 60 countries are directly or indirectly waging war against ISIL, which is led by Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. The group started in 1999 and pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2004. In June 2014, the group proclaimed itself to be a worldwide caliphate ISIL is known for its well-funded web and social media propaganda, which includes internet videos of the beheadings of soldiers, civilians, journalists, and aid workers.

Besides, not all educators would agree that social networks are valid learning tools in schools. Some still consider that they represent a waste of time, a very real danger to the privacy of pupils and that they encourage **bullying** (and intellectual laziness!). Besides, as social networking services **blur the limit** between the private and the public (two notions children do not always understand clearly

in the first place), younger users become easy targets for sexual predators, and for all these reasons, Twitter or Facebook are still often banned in schools.

Last but not least, several studies have put forward the argument that social media reflect and amplify today's growing level of narcissism. We are now more connected than ever, but also arguably less interested in other people, except, it would seem, when it comes to their opinion of us. Flamboyant exhibitionism and unabashed self-promotion are rife on Facebook or Twitter: how tempting to be the star of your own 24/7 show! This might chiefly apply to the so-called Generation Y, but not exclusively, as social media are now used across the generations and in different ways to boost under-inflated self-esteem and control others' perceptions of them (a phenomenon which could be illustrated by the current *selfie* epidemic). Indeed, users do not necessarily share with others what is of most interest to them, but rather the content which conveys a desirable self-image, even if it is totally unrealistic.

WRITING TIPS

- In the first place : en premier lieu.
- To put forward an argument : avancer une idée.
- Arguably : peut-être.
- Last but not least : enfin et surtout.
- When it comes to : quand il s'agit de, pour ce qui est de.

VOCABULARY

banned	interdit
to be rife	être monnaie courante
selfie	selfie, égoportrait
unabashed	sans complexe, honte

COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Generation Y is also known as the Millennial Generation, whose birth years are believed to range from the early 1980s to the early 2000s. Although there is some divergence regarding the characteristics of that generation and sweeping generalizations are to be avoided, author Jean Twenge explains Generation Y youngsters are often confident and tolerant, but also tend to display a sense of entitlement and narcissism. The Pew Research Center issued a report in March 2014 about how adult "Millennials" are "detached from institutions and networked with friends." Besides, William A. Draves and Julie Coates, authors of *Nine Shift: Work, Life and Education in the 21st Century*, believe Millennials have different values and attitudes from previous generations, regarding for example the technological and economic implications of the Internet or the importance attached to wealth.

Conclusion

Despite the name "social network," much user activity on these sites is individual, and this is not the least of their many paradoxes. On the one hand, they build social connectivity, but they also isolate people and lead to "alone together" situations. They can boost self-esteem in a healthy way, but can also encourage excessive narcissistic tendencies. Social networks can strengthen friendships, but can also destroy relationships. They are essentially democratic, but can serve as vehicles of terror and oppression. They can make you instantly famous, and destroy your reputation just as quickly.

Social media have come a long way since their humble beginnings and now lie at the heart of vast media empires that are reshaping the way we engage with one another. What does the future hold for them? As our collective attention span continues to diminish and the value we attach to anecdotal digital content grows, we can expect to see the wave of "15-minute-celebrity" (to paraphrase Andy Warhol) keep on flourishing. While social media will never replace face-to-face relationships, it has been suggested that social networks might carry on reducing social serendipity, and that our attitude to relationships may become more and more defined by efficiency and instant gratification. Unless Facebook starts ignoring consumer demand, failing to predict new trends and losing touch with its competitors, it could well continue on its current path and reach the 3 billion user mark in the next ten years. It is difficult to tell whether one of today's social networking giants will experience a sudden drop in membership (as MySpace did) but thorough big data analysis and the ability to learn from rivals mean that it is highly unlikely.

WRITING TIPS

- Despite: malgré.

VOCABULARY

attention span	capacité de concentration
big data	mégadonnées
to come a long way	faire du chemin
to lie at the heart of	être au cœur de
to lose touch with	perdre de vue
serendipity	heureux hasard

COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

"15 minutes of fame" refers to short-lived media publicity or celebrity of an individual or phenomenon. The phrase is credited to Andy Warhol, who wrote: "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes" in the program for a 1968 exhibition of his work at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Sweden. The expression is often quoted in relation to figures in the entertainment industry or other areas of popular culture, such as reality television and YouTube.

Quotes

“At Facebook, we’re inspired by technologies that have revolutionized how people spread and consume information. We often talk about inventions like the printing press and the television – by simply making communication more efficient, they led to a complete transformation of many important parts of society. They gave more people a voice. They encouraged progress. They changed the way society was organized. They brought us closer together.” (Mark Zuckerberg)

“Thanks to social media such as Facebook and Twitter, a far wider range of people take part in gathering, filtering and distributing news.” (Lionel Barber)

“Technology and social media have brought power back to the people.” (Mark McKinnon)

“Social media is changing the way we communicate and the way we are perceived, both positively and negatively. Every time you post a photo, or update your status, you are contributing to your own digital footprint and personal brand.” (Amy Jo Martin)

“Like all technology, social media is neutral but is best put to work in the service of building a better world.” (Simon Mainwaring)

“The information you get from social media is not a substitute for academic discipline at all.” (Bill Nye)

“The Internet has given us the illusion of intimacy. But that illusion of intimacy is just that – an illusion. It distracts us from the important principle of reaching out to them personally first, and making the sometimes difficult effort of keeping it private and saving the relationship.” (Phil Cooke)