

# #thebrief

## Social Networks

**We've talked about the super powers of social networking - Facebook and Twitter – but what about the others?** Sites such as ask.fm, Pinterest, and google+ are becoming more and more relevant as teens move away from Facebook. These other sites allow teens to avoid the daily drudgery of seeing someone they barely know's dinner on their Newsfeed, can be simpler to use, and are less popular with adults and parents. This week we'll look into the other Social Networks that millions of people use to connect with one another.

Get Connected

Version 14.06

**Ask.fm** is a social networking website that allows users to ask each other questions. Users can then respond by typing or posting a video.



The service is available on computer, iPhone and Android. The site has a history of being used for cyberbullying, some incidents of which led to suicides, particularly in teens.

Ask.fm does contain features to protect users from harassment. Firstly, users can choose not to accept questions anonymously. Secondly, questions sent to a user's profile aren't published until a user chooses to answer – users have the option to delete offensive messages without answering. Thirdly, you can block specific users from asking questions. Finally, Ask.fm has a 'Report' button for users to notify moderators of inappropriate content.

**Did you know?** Many users choose to keep anonymous questions enabled even after receiving unsavoury messages – seeing it as part of the "fun" of Ask.fm.



**Pinterest** is a content-sharing website that allows users to upload, save, and manage images and other media, known as pins. Pins are stored in collections, known as pinboards. Users can have several Pinboards, which can be used to plan events and projects, save articles and recipes, and even to plan lessons. Other users can "repin" items, meaning that they can "pin" another user's image to their board as well. Users can follow other user's pinboards, the content of which is then displayed on a "pin feed" on the main Pinterest page.

Pinterest has relatively strict rules of service – explicit images, images promoting self-harm, eating disorders or hard drug abuse, threats to safety, and bullying are banned. Pins breaking these rules can be reported.

**Did you know?** Globally, 80% of Pinterest users are women. Britain, however, is an exception, with 56% of the users being male.



**Myspace** is a social networking service with a focus on music. From 2005 until early 2008, Myspace was the most visited social networking site in the world. Since then, Myspace's popularity has declined steadily despite undergoing several redesigns – although a recent takeover by Justin Timberlake and Specific Media could give the site a new lease of life.

**Did you know?** Corey Worthington, a sixteen-year-old from Australia, advertised a party he was hosting on Myspace – resulting in 500 people attending. The police, a dog squad and a helicopter had to be called in, and the incident received international coverage. Worthington went on to work as a party promoter.

**LinkedIn** is a social networking service, primarily for professional networking. Registered users build a contact list with whom they have some level of relationship, called Connections. Users can invite anyone to become a connection. However, if the invitee selects "I don't know" or "Spam", this counts against the inviter. If the inviter gets too many of such responses, the account may be restricted or closed.



**VK** is the second largest social network in Europe after Facebook. It is available in several languages, but is particularly popular among Russian-speaking users. VK allows users to message one another, send e-mails, share media and status updates, create online communities, and upload and stream videos and music. VK 'like' buttons operate differently to those on Facebook; liked content is saved in a private favourites section instead of being automatically posted on a user's wall. VK has a second 'share with friends' button to share an item on their wall.

**Did you know?** Alongside the standard Russian language option, users can choose a Soviet and a Pre-Revolutionary version. Private messages in the Soviet version have a stamp saying 'passed server censorship', with the pre-revolutionary version using old Russian words and grammar.



**Google+** is a social networking website owned by Google. A Google+ account includes a huge range of services, such as: a User Profile, with all the usual trimmings (profile photo, about section, interests, and so on); Circles, which allows users to organize friends into groups; Hangouts, which allows free video conferencing calls with up to 10 people; a +1 Button, which allows people to recommend sites; as well as various location services and games.

Although it is currently one of the most popular social networks, the future of Google+ is uncertain. Vic Gundotra, the main man behind Google+, recently left the project and employees working on google+ will be moved to different teams.

**Did you know?** Google is integrating its Gmail service and Google+ so that people without your Gmail address can send you emails by a name search. Many are concerned about the privacy implications, as the new service has already caused problems.

A transgender woman who used her old (male) name at work, sent an e-mail to her work colleague using her Gmail account. The Gmail account connected to her Google+, and sent the e-mail using her female name, outing her to her colleagues.

