

Unit 02: Digital jungle

1

Reading: A blog post on social networking sites

Read the text below, then answer the questions (1–6) using a maximum of four words. Write your answers in the spaces provided. The first one (0) has been done for you.

“62% of all Facebook users update their status every single day” – that’s what an online article I read the other day said. You are not impressed? Then let me fill you in on the magnitude of this for a second.

Facebook has currently got 850 million users. About 20 months ago it “only” had 400 million fans. But that’s not what I mean. What’s really mind-blowing is that if every active Facebook user updated their status once a day for about a year, all these single updates would amount to a total of approximately 290 billion updates altogether. Can you believe that? I know, we are only talking about status updates – but we are talking about 290 BILLION of updates!

What I’m personally really amazed by is the popularity of Facebook and other social networking sites. Most of the people using Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn or other sites like that will tell you that they are usually with multiple social networking sites. Instead of focusing on their preference, they feverishly try to keep up with answering their mails, chatting, posting news on their walls, accepting invitations to all sorts of quizzes, playing games and checking their alleged friends’ status updates on various websites. There are more and more people spending hour after hour every day doing almost nothing but that. Their fascination with the seemingly endless possibilities of these networks seems to be on the increase rather than the decrease lately.

But when did that happen? Seriously, can you tell me when we started using Facebook or similar sites as a way of socialising instead of meeting our friends for real? After all, chatting online lacks many of the aspects that make actual personal contact so much fun. Just think about watching your best friend crack up about a joke you just told them or giving them a hug after they got some bad news. There is nothing better than singing along with your favourite song or watching a really bad film and making fun of it.

It’s not as if I lived in a world without the internet. I have got an Facebook account too, but I hardly ever use it. To be honest, I find it quite tedious to follow every single post on my wall and react to it. Plus, I don’t really get the hype. Most things people write are downright stupid and provide only plain information. I could not care less about Maggie having just eaten her second yoghurt or Stan having caught the flu and sneezing every five seconds. More often than not I would like to tell them to get a life instead of spending it posting messages no one wants to read anyway.

What I do know, however, is that with the advent of the internet a lot of aspects of our lives have undeniably changed, with communication probably adapting to the new conditions the most. Are all these changes to our advantage? I’m not so sure.

2

Speaking: Social networking

Read the text on social networking again; this text was written about 10 to 15 years ago. Get together with a partner or in a group and discuss what has changed. Do you think it's important to keep your offline life separate from your online presence? Why?/Why not?

0	What does the writer of this blog try to impress the reader with?	<i>the magnitude of Facebook</i>
1	Which number does the author refer to as mind-blowing?	
2	What is typical of users of social networks like Facebook or Twitter?	
3	Which development of the users' fascination with those networks can be observed recently?	
4	What are social networking sites commonly used for?	
5	According to the blog, what is <u>one</u> example illustrating the benefits of face-to-face contact?	
6	What is the problem with Facebook posts?	

3 Language: Google

You are going to read a text about Google. In most lines of the text there is an unnecessary word. Write the unnecessary word in the space provided after each line. Some lines are correct. Indicate these with a tick (✓).

Google

Google is an American multinational public corporation. It also operates in the fields	_____
of internet search, from advertising technologies and cloud computing, which is	_____
internet-based computing.	_____
Sergey Brin and Larry Page, who also known as the 'Google Guys', founded the	_____
company in 1998. Its initial public offering took place in 2004. Their headquarters	_____
are in around Mountain View, California, where they have been since 2006. The	_____
company's mission statement has always been to make all the information available	_____
in the world to accessible to everybody.	_____
While the company's core is its web and search engine, Google now offers a wide	_____
variety of applications and from tools, including online productivity software like	_____
Gmail and social networking tools as well as the web browser Google Chrome	_____
or as the service Google Books.	_____
Google Search, Google's web search engine, is still being the company's most popular	_____
service. In the United States alone, Google is the dominant search engine only,	_____
holding a market share of approximately 66%.	_____

Key

exercise 1, A blog post on social networking sites

- 0 the magnitude of Facebook
- 1 290 billion status updates
- 2 member of several networks/with different social networks/follow various websites
- 3 is on the increase/fascination is increasing
- 4 socialising
- 5 watching friends laugh/giving friends a hug/singing along favourite song/having fun together/making fun of films
- 6 downright stupid/give plain information/tedious to follow

exercise 3, Google

Google is an American multinational public corporation. It also operates in the fields of internet search, from advertising technologies and cloud computing, which is internet-based computing.	also from ✓
Sergey Brin and Larry Page, who also known as the 'Google Guys', founded the company in 1998. Its initial public offering took place in 2004. Their headquarters are in around Mountain View, California, where they have been since 2006. The company's mission statement has always been to make all the information available in the world to accessible to everybody.	who ✓ around ✓ to
While the company's core is its web and search engine, Google now offers a wide variety of applications and from tools, including online productivity software like Gmail and social networking tools as well as the web browser Google Chrome or as the service Google Books.	and from ✓ as
Google Search, Google's web search engine, is still being the company's most popular service. In the United States alone, Google is the dominant search engine only, holding a market share of approximately 66%.	being only ✓