Modern Communication

Facebook

What is it?

Facebook is a social networking site that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. People use Facebook to keep up with friends, upload photos and share links and videos.

Facebook has also become an online marketplace where people can sell used goods as well as a ‘storefront’ for many businesses. It is also used as a source for news and information. Facebook owns WhatsApp and Instagram.

How does it work?

To explore Facebook, you must create a free account on the site. Facebook’s terms of use state that members must be at least 13 years old. Facebook requires new members to provide a valid e-mail address before completing registration. Once you’ve created an account and answered a few questions Facebook will generate a profile for you.

Advantages

Facebook gives you the opportunity to decide what you want to share, what you don’t want to share, and what you want to share with selected friends. Users can create groups and discussion topics.

Disadvantages

Because of problems related to identity theft, stalking and scams, it is best to not post any identifiable information on your profile and to be careful talking to people you don’t know.

Facebook has more control over what you see in your feed than you do. It will choose to display things besides updates from your friends because the algorithm purposefully seeks out content that will maximise the time you spend on Facebook - because the longer you are on Facebook, the more money they make from adverts.

Facebook has become a place that is known as a hub for spreading fake news and disinformation.

Blogging

What is it?

A blog is a website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order.

How does it work?

To blog you will need an internet connection, an account on a blogging site and, something interesting to write about.

Advantages

A blog allows you to keep and make public a personal diary or blog. As soon as you have written the first entry, your blog will be visible in your profile.

Blogging provides freedom of speech. You can share knowledge with other people. You can also make friends online and it can be used as a diary.

Blogs are also kept by businesses to keep customers / users up to date with products and what they can be used for.

Disadvantages

You will need to keep your blog constantly updated otherwise you will lose potential readers. It is very easy to start but difficult to maintain.

Chat room

What is it?

The term chat room, or chatroom, is primarily used by mass media to describe any form of synchronous conferencing (where you talk live to a ‘room’ of people all at once live), occasionally even asynchronous (like a message board – you leave messages that everyone can read and respond to) conferencing. The term can thus mean any technology ranging from real-time online chat over instant messaging and online forums to fully immersive graphical social environments.

How does it work?

To use a chat room you must have an internet connection and register for an account on the service of your choice.

Whatsapp groups qualify as asynchronous chat groups.

Advantages

When a chat room is well monitored, you can meet people from around the world who share your interests in a safe environment.

Disadvantages

The participants need to schedule to meet at a particular time. As with any other meeting, this may be inconvenient, and it may take much administration to achieve this with busy people.

In SA law if something illegal happens in a chat room and you are just ‘lurking’ (watching without saying anything) you can be held guilty as a participant unless you actively tried to stop it – this ranges from bullying to libel and abuse.

It is rumoured that some people use chat rooms to contact potential child victims.