

Facebook is like a what?

Author : Cat

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For anyone else finding it hard to keep track of which social networks are out there and what they all do, I have come up with a set of analogies to help out. Rather than just tell you what the network is, let's talk about what it is like....

Ask.fm is like ... being in a dark interrogation room.

You put yourself out there and then anonymous and random people fire questions at you. Often the questions are very personal or inappropriate. This site has the highest known incidence of cyber bullying. They should rename it the Spanish Inquisition.

Facebook is like ... a house party.

You open your house to everyone you are 'friends' with. You let them in to view all the pictures that you have on display, rifle through your DVD collection and sift through your library. Randomly, you make announcements that some people listen to and that may prompt discussion amongst your friends.

Occasionally a friend will come to you and ask if you like their shirt. You may say yes, and that is cool. Sometimes that person is carrying a recording device when they ask if you like the shirt [public item]. You say yes and then the company that makes the shirt hears the recording and notes that you are a fan. You can watch for people with recorders but sometimes you don't notice.

You also need to make sure that no one else knows about your house party so be sure it is closed invitation only for friends.

Foursquare is like ... giving everyone you know a receiver for your GPS tracking device.

The site is designed to let your friends know which restaurants and places you frequent, but really it just turns you in to a human beacon so people know where you are at all times.

Google+ is like ... a house party with party games and your guests sectioned off in rooms.

A lot like the Facebook party only in a Google+ party your friends, family and acquaintances get moved to separate rooms depending on which circle they fall in to. You can also pull out the party game to play with friends at this party. If you want to chat with just a few friends then you can *hangout*.

Instagram is like ... renting out a billboard and posting your photo.

Though your billboard may be in an unpopulated part of town, typically it is available for anyone to see. You can also tell people where your billboard is so you get more people coming to look at it. Your billboards are now owned by Facebook so you can chose to display it at your party.

Imgur is like ... an art gallery where you vote for the images in the front room.

Put up a picture, maybe a short description and leave it up for the world to see. If people like it then it gets moved to the front of the gallery where more people will see it. The more entertaining the better.

Kik is like ... standing in a room and sharing your cell phone media with friends.

Hanging out with one or more friend and chatting or saying "check out this cool picture I took". Kik is popular because it is an instant messenger that runs on all platforms.

LinkedIn is like ... a business network cocktail party.

Everyone is in suits and a little more formal. Usually people have their resumes taped to their backs. But you can tell who-knows-who and ask them to introduce you. You can even share a business story.



Meetup is like ... a list of all the extracurricular clubs you may want to join.

Interesting example of using online networks to facilitate offline meetings. You can join a specific group or just browse by taste and you will get a list of all the relevant events that *Meetup* groups create.

Myspace is like ... sharing a picture of your favourite room filled with all of your personal stuff.

You get to design your room and what goes in it and then put it on display. The best part is to share your music. Myspace is now owned by Justin Timberlake so be sure to have a JT album or two in your room!



Omegle is like ... passing notes with a stranger through a wall.

You cannot see or hear the person you are talking to. You can exchange pictures but no guarantee it is of your stranger. Their tagline is "talk to strangers" though it's been more accurately parodied as "talk to pedophiles".

Pheed is like ... volunteering for the Truman show.

You can put anything in your feed on Pheed, including a continuous stream of your life. Because who wouldn't want to watch you 24/7?

Pintrest is like ... making a collage with every magazine on the planet and sharing it.

Imagine being able to neatly cut and glue pictures to an infinitely large bristol board! Create different boards for different topics (Hairstyles, do it yourself projects, hallowe'en costumes, articles) and share them with others. When browsing, quickly pin any picture you want to a board.

Reddit is like ... a bulletin board in the centre of campus where you vote for the papers that stay on top, and you can post comments.

Post an entertaining idea, a picture, or a blog. Even ask a question. People will comment. People will vote. Popular stuff rises to the top. Reddit's tag line is "the front page of the internet". You decide.

Snapchat is like ... mission impossible self-destruction with teens' photos.

Once you open the photo it will self destruct in set amount of time. Don't be fooled though; the recipient can take a screenshot of the photo before it disappears. Take that MI6.

Tinder is like ... getting people who know to propose potential dates in the area.

Based off of GPS and your Facebook information (including likes and number of mutual friends), possible candidates will be shown to you and you can literally wave them away with a finger by swiping their photo if you don't think it will work out.

Tumblr is like ... a place where everyone can share their themed scrapbook.

Do you have a set of clever drawings? Pictures of your 3 year old crying? Short videos of cats dancing? Make a Tumblr (short for Tumble blog), put them in to a scrap book and pass them around.

Twitter is like ... walking down a public road with a megaphone.

Make an announcement for the world to hear. No more than 140 characters or you will run out of breath. Want to know everything someone else is saying? You can follow them and get a list of those things later. The trouble with your megaphoning is that you are never quite sure how many people are listening.

Vine is like ... renting out a digital billboard and posting your video on loop.

Much like Instagram only video form, Vine is that billboard that plays your video on 6 second loop. There is a lot you can do in 6 seconds. Vine is now owned by Twitter so make sure you are carting your billboard down that road while you megaphone about it.

Wanelo is like ... Christmas catalogue shopping with others.

Share all the things you Want, Need and Love with your friends. With the option to buy them too.

YikYak is like ... writing on a bathroom wall.

Using GPS and centred around school campuses, people can leave anonymous messages for others in the area. Was designed for "Anyone know our math homework?" but has become "For a good time call....".

4Chan is like... an anonymous bulletin board in the centre of campus where you vote for the papers that stay on top and you can post comments.

Much like the Reddit board, you can post ideas or images and have people like and comment on them. The catch here is that it is anonymous so the comments here tend to the critical side. If there is something of questionable ethics, it often pops up here first - like the iCloud breach of 2014 with all the celebrity nude photos.

Make sure to bookmark this page or print out our [cheat sheet](#) so that you'll always know which networks people are talking about.