

# Facebook 101

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Facebook is a social utility tool that allows family and friends to stay connected, share photos and videos, and reconnect with old classmates. Currently, there are 70 million active users.

When Facebook was launched in February 2004, it was a hobby project by Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg. His goal was to allow Harvard college students to stay connected with each other. Soon this phenomenon spread across not only Harvard, but also Yale and Stanford. Facebook opened to the public in 2006 and became the 6<sup>th</sup> most trafficked website in the United States. It has spread to various English speaking countries making it possible for individuals across the world to stay in touch with each other.

Below are some important items for a new user to know about:

**Profiles** - Each individual that signs up for Facebook will have a profile on the website. The profile consists of a number of different informational items including Status, Friends, Friends in Other Networks, Photos, Notes, Groups, and The Wall.

**Photos** - Over 14 million photos are uploaded daily onto Facebook, which is the most popular feature. It is the number one sharing application on the Web.

The photos provide opportunities for other users to see what other friends have been doing. Photos can be uploaded from cell phones or through its java-based web interface. The only restriction is a limit of 60-photos-per-album.

**Groups** - Groups allow users to connect with other like-minded users. Users can create new groups or join and participate in existing ones. The groups that a user participates in are displayed in their profile and usually indicate the hobbies and interests of the user. Additionally, there are secret groups, which are not shown on the profile.

Groups have been used for collaborating on university projects and provide a way to have closed discussions. Around 80% of the groups are fun-related and some companies even sponsor pages like Apple.

With the political season in high gear, John McCain has created a challenge online for users to join to help get more young people involved in the political process. Furthermore, the Republican Party of Texas has also created a Facebook page.

**Events** - Facebook has been a great way for users to organize, be part of and plan events. After the event is organized, users then are able to invite others and recommend others to events. Many Republican groups such as the various Texas Young Republican Federation clubs organize and invite attendees to their events via Facebook.

Facebook is a great way for individuals to connect with others and interact. Many individuals have found old classmates through the process. Think what opportunities the Republican Party has with this great asset!

Statistics were taken from: <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>.