Social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Orkut and LinkedIn are all the rage these days. I enjoy this type of interaction although it’s important to find a niche and stick with it. We cannot all be active on all these sites, nor would we want to be.

Those of us who work in academia can find plenty of kindred spirits on both Facebook and LinkedIn. I have professional colleagues, however, who are not ready to take the plunge. There are a variety of reasons for this sentiment. Some people are worried about the invasion of their privacy. Others are not interested in this sort of interaction online, just on principle. One big difference between a social networking “interaction” and the kind you experience with email or texting, is that most of the time the social network post goes to all your “friends” at the same time. Or that is what people assume. It doesn’t have to be that way. There are a number of ways to close yourself off if you wish. Many people use their Facebook accounts as though it were email. It’s up to you how you want to use it.

All these different types of ways of communicating are getting a little hard to manage for some people. It is completely understandable that there might be some doubts or paranoia about how this works.

There are a couple of key issues to think about.
One is this: Is your life an open book? Do you have reasons to care what people know about you? If you have issues with this concept, social networking may not be for you. For numerous reasons, you might want to lay low. Or, if you do decide to sign up, be choosy about those you allow into your circle of “friends.”

I have “friendred” a number of people with whom I work. Some of these folks, frankly, are not, in “real life” people I hang out with in any way. Some of them I hardly know. But I have allowed them into my Facebook page anyway. This includes an administrator above me and several of my direct and indirect reports. My Library Dean and one of my favorite AD colleagues have both decided to keep their Facebook pages closed to just family and personal friends. That’s OK, I can respect that choice. The couple who rents our house back in Boone for example, are not “friends” since they use Facebook for professional connections to their students in a very directed fashion. It makes sense that they don’t want to be “friends” with their landlords.

I have discovered old friends from high school and even elementary school on Facebook. That’s been interesting, and fun. I did use Classmates.com and other reunion sites for awhile but they have an annoying tendency to want to charge you a fee when you’re not looking so I have pulled out of those sites.

I am not much into “MySpace” because I don’t think it caters to my age group or tastes, although I do use it to follow a favorite music group.

I’ve never used Google’s Orkut and LinkedIn seems to lack any real fun to it — it’s kind of dry. Of course, some of the features in Facebook are just silly and I ignore them. But what’s the harm in sending people “Good karma?”

There are lots of librarians on Facebook, and perhaps that is because so many of us work in academia and so we want to be where the students are. Facebook started at Harvard, so it reflects the university culture. Students typically are not thinking very seriously about what they put out there. This has been a controversy for some time, but as students mature and start realizing that their Facebook pages might not reflect positively on them, they make changes to their profiles. This is especially true close to graduation — it has become a rite of passage for seniors to take down the fluff stuff in preparation for the job hunt — you don’t want perspective employers to be viewing your spring break antics!

There are people on Facebook whose goal, it seems, is to have as many friends as possible. If that’s their desire, so be it, but I will not accept you as a friend just because you are collecting them. I received a couple of friend requests from people who seemed to be in collector mode, and I eventually cut them loose. No offense meant — if I actually do meet you some day, perhaps I’ll pick you back up. Also, I do not want vendors coying up to me on Facebook if I have not already met their acquaintance.

One big concern has had to do with the kinds of behavior young people display by posting party pictures to Facebook. I would like to suggest that this is nothing new and we need to GET OVER IT. I could (but I won’t) post a picture of my college friends and I in the 1970’s — yes, we were drunk! And we were having a great time. I could also post pictures from ALA and other professional conferences that show people relaxing and schmoozing that are not so different. Okay, we’re not in bikinis or pulling up our T-shirts, that’s true (nor would anyone expect or want this). College advisors have focused on reminding their students that what is put out on Facebook can have an effect on how people perceive their university — especially the student leaders and athletes, for example.

The latest trend is for (helicopter) parents to sign up for Facebook so they can interact with their kids. Of course for some adolescents this is the kiss of death — ick — not our parents! Go away! But since so many of them are already texting and cell calling their parents every day anyway, why not? And for parents (or grandparents) who hardly know how to use a computer, Facebook is actually easier to navigate. For one, if you have access to an Internet connection, it’s free; and you don’t have to understand email set-ups or protocols.

In my collection of “friends,” I have work colleagues, both from my current place of employment and my former jobs, people I know from the profession, family, friends, children of family and friends, my dog sitter, and a handful of people who don’t fit any of the above categories. I expect to find other connections soon since so many people are joining Facebook these days!

For more information and opinions about Facebook:

According to an article in the March 10, 2009 PC Magazine, “Blogs and social networking are consuming more online time than checking and writing personal email.” See: http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2342757,00.asp.

Another nice discussion about privacy issues on Facebook can be found on the blog, Library Garden: http://librarygarden.blogspot.com/2009/02/what-librarians-can-learn-from-facebook.html.


And here is a more scary, paranoid, disturbing vision of what Facebook is really about: http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2008/jan/14/facebook.

http://www.against-the-grain.com/
drink from a fire hose. To take on or be inundated by more of something (i.e., work, responsibility, information, etc.) than one is capable of handling. My first day on the job was like drinking from a fire hose—they threw so much at me that I don't know how I'll remember any of it. See also: drink, fire, hose. Farlex Dictionary of Idioms. Trying to get political information from the Internet is a little bit like trying to get a drink from a fire hose. Great for junkies; too much for most folks. VOTE.COM. It is like drinking from a firehose right now. There are so many high-quality projects, high-quality teams, and blue-chip financings happening in the crypto market right now. It makes my head spin just trying to stay on top of it all. It is well funded and is coming out with a token for incentivising the growth of the public ecosystem but only for accredited investors. It is an important part of the firehose blast of developments in this space, keeping track of, which as Fred points out is a very serious challenge. But extremely rewarding. See more of Firehouse Subs on Facebook. Log In. or Create New Account. See more of Firehouse Subs on Facebook. Log In. Forgotten account? Local Firehouse Subs owner Andre Lacerda celebrated with the team by bringing them subs and custom Firehouse gear. Thank you for your service, ladies! Pictured from L-R There are various social networking sites such as Twitter, Google+, Facebook which provide a platform for the people to present themselves. Twitter is an efficient micro-blogging tool which has become very popular throughout the world. Nowadays, there is an ongoing trend of posting every thought and emotion of one's life on these social networking sites. Due to this, emotion analysis has gained popularity in analyzing the thoughts, opinions, feelings, sentiments, etc., of various people. The present paper is based on the demonstration of a complete step-by-step process... Drinking from the Firehose is being a part of Stan the man's classes where you get so much information in a short amount of time and lots of information leaks out. I know that this is a lot of information, so I'm just letting you know. My class is a lot like drinking from the firehose: Lots of information so drink what you can. by youneedadrink101 April 26, 2010. Flag. Get a drinking from the firehose mug for your mother-in-law Beatrix. drinking from the firehose. to be overwhelmed (with information, work, etc.); to do something intensely; to be inundated. I'm still drinking from the firehose, learning all about working in this new world that I find myself in. I've been drinking from the firehose this semester, trying to pass all these chemistry courses. by Hypercycloid July 17, 2006. 30.