

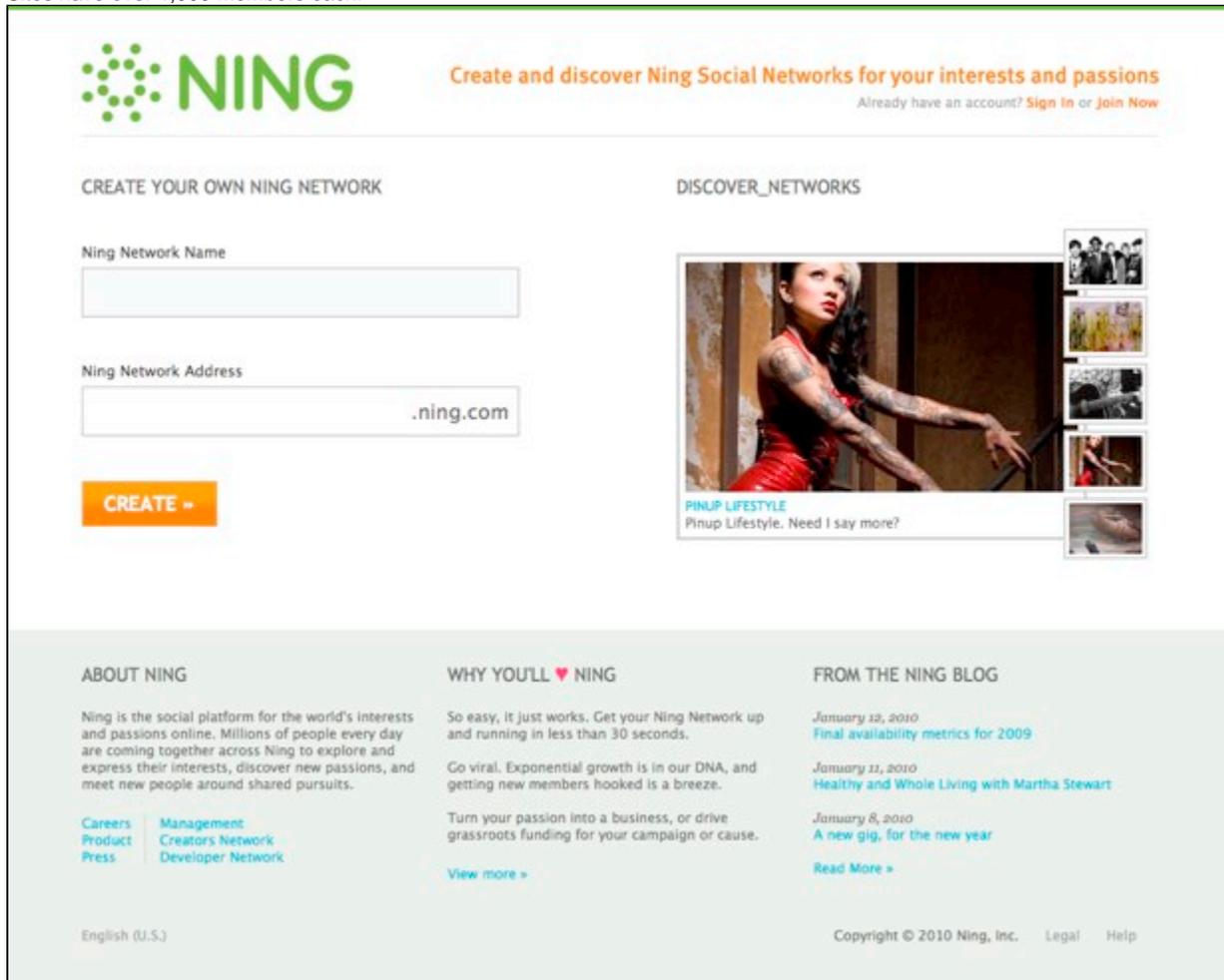
Ning



What are the uses of Ning?

Ning has a variety of uses. Super Fans will operate Fan Club Ning Sites for their favorite star or band. In other cases, the star or band members or staff operate the fan site themselves. The Ellen DeGeneres Show Ning is created and run by staff from The Ellen DeGeneres Show and currently has over 35,000 members. SOULJA BOY TELL 'EM is a project conceived by Deep Fried Productions and Cando Entertainment. According to Cando Entertainment, "Interscope Records worked with Cando to develop and relaunch his new social network dedicated to his millions of fans worldwide. The Cando team assisted Interscope in evaluating social network platforms, but ultimately Ning's platform proved to be the clear winner based on features and market share, the choice was obvious." Many companies have created Ning pages for their co-workers to talk and discuss business. Often, these types of Ning pages are restricted to members or alumni of that company. Another interest genre that has taken to Ning is Religion. PaganSpace.net, a Ning group for Pagans, has over 13,000 members to date and Everyone's Apostolic, a Ning page catering to Apostolic Pentacostals, currently has the second highest number of members of all Ning Groups. Because of the attractiveness of a place to congregate on the internet, many of these Ning sites have become exceedingly popular. Hundreds of these Ning

Sites have over 1,000 members each.



This is the home page view of Ning.com

Who uses Ning?

These groups could find a common denominator of any type. The beauty of Ning is that many different types of people can use it. From the *Indian a Fire and EMS Network* to the *George Clooney Rules* group, anyone and everyone can find something that interests them that is either already a group on Ning or that they could create in a new group about. Indeed, another great thing about Ning is that people can create webpages in their own language. For example, *Taiwan Yes* is a group completely in Chinese and *Singles Madrid* is a group for single people who live in Spain and is entirely in Spanish. #5

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I. History

Ning means peace in Chinese, but the meaning actually has relevance as to why it was picked. The name Ning was picked simply because it "was short, sweet, and wouldn't take away from the main focus of our service: your social networks. We wanted you to have domain names that were easy to remember and emphasized what was unique about your network (Bianchini, 2007)." #2

I.1 Development

Co-founded by Marc Andreessen and Gina Bianchini, Ning began development in 2004 and launched in October of the following year. Ning is Andreessen's third startup, who is credited for starting both Netscape (computer service) and Opsware (software company) which gives Ning much credibility. Ning began as a startup company named 24 Hour Laundry and grew to become what is now known as Ning.1



Marc Andreessen



Gina Bianchini

I.2 How Ning Works

Joining Ning is easy, but there is a cost. If you are undecided about whether or not you want to use Ning there is a free thirty day trial that you can sign up for. Otherwise there are three different pricing options that you can choose from when signing up for Ning. The first one is called "mini" which is best for small groups and costs \$2.95 monthly. The next option is called "plus" which has more advanced options than "mini" and costs \$24.95 monthly. The third and final option is called "pro" which has more features than both "mini" and "plus", this option costs \$59.95 monthly. When the site is accessed, "Sign In", "Sign Up" or "Popular Sites" can be seen at the top of the page. By clicking on "Sign Up" one can create their own account and immediately start using Ning. Identification information, a password, and verification of existence to prevent spam bots will be required. Once completed, joining of groups or creation of social network pages can begin. Returning to the website is as simple as signing in by entering a login name (email address) and a user created password.

Individuals can search and join popular networks that others have created within Ning, or create their own social network and website.

To make a social network page within Ning, users must first sign in and the site will display a list of a few popular networks that might interest the user in joining. Also at the top of the page is a section in which new social network pages can be created. The user will then be directed to a setup process for their new page. In the first text box, a custom name for the page can be created, for example a country music fan can create a page called "Country Music Fans". In the second text box, the web address that allows public access to your network's page will be entered. Again for example with the country music fans, the web address could be *countrymusicfans.ning.com*. The process is simple and provides instruction on each page. From there users can create and decorate their home page. There are several features to choose from on the home page such as contacts and members, and themes to choose. Also, if you prefer, Ning provides the service of having someone set up your page based on the preferences you give them. There are also privacy settings that can be changed to fit how much privacy the user may want for their page, including blocking others to prevent them from viewing videos, pictures, and information about the page. Ning is full of possibilities for many creative users and creative networks.^{#8}

Watch the video below to see how to use Ning.

[Click on this link for Ning.com](#)

I.3 Getting More Out of Ning

As far as uses in the classroom go a Ning page could be used for individual classrooms or Pods(set of rooms that work together). A teacher or Pod could create a page that allows students to check for new homework assignments or view videos that go along with a homework assignment. It can also be a place for students to express ideas/answers to homework problems if they are having trouble figuring out solutions.

The only downfall to this would be students giving away all answers to a homework assignment. In this case the teachers can tell the students that they will regularly be checking/monitoring the site to make sure no cheating is going on. And of course instructors will need to make sure that each student has access to a computer at home for this to work.

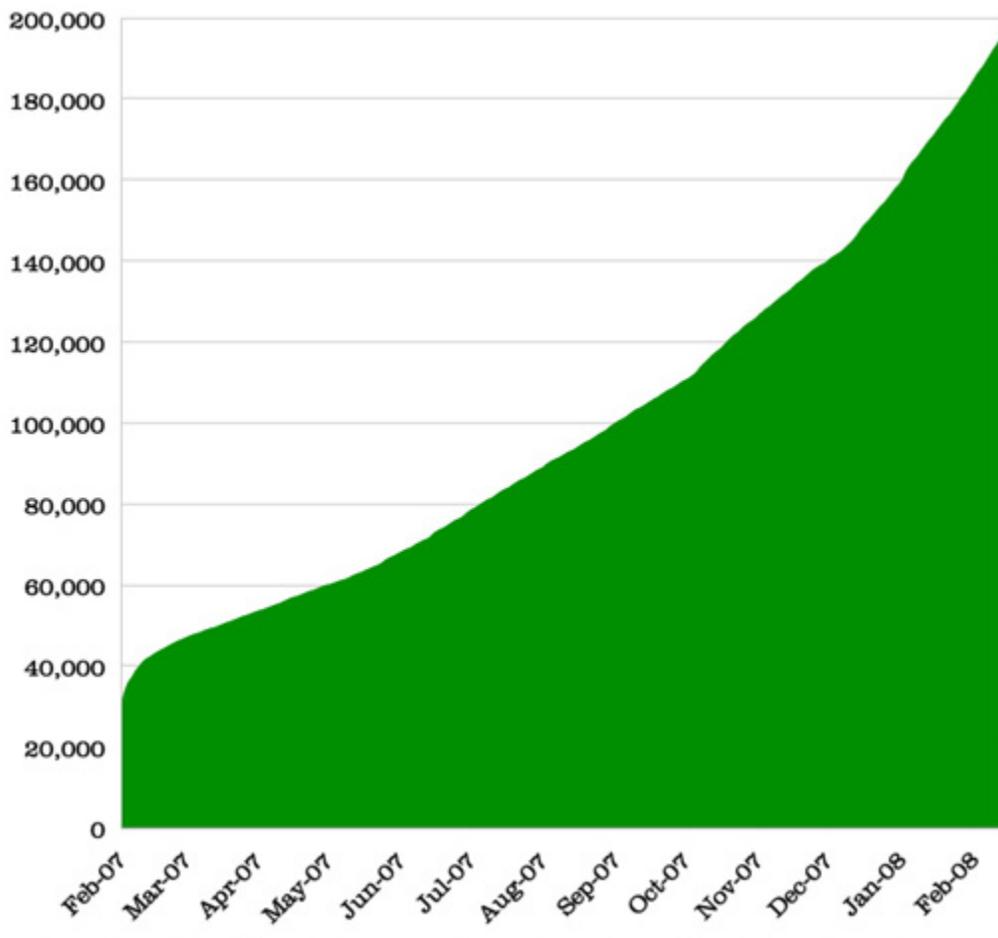
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II. How Ning relates to other applications

II.1 Comparison to Competitors

While there are some similarities to [Facebook](#) and [Myspace](#) in terms of socialization and networking being facilitated, the main function of Ning is to serve the will of an abundance of small groups. Ning is definitely more group orientated than Facebook and Myspace. One appeal of Facebook and Myspace is creating one's own page. Ning is group focused and creating 'your page' is less important. Another appeal of Facebook and Myspace is networking. Networking in Facebook and Myspace is more about finding old, current, and new friends. The networking in Ning is usually associated within the groups so friends are found through common interests. ^{#1}

The graph below shows the growing popularity of Ning.



II.2 Unique Uses

Unlike MySpace and Facebook, Ning is a social network where users can create networks about specific interests. The unique feature of Ning is that anyone can create their own custom social network for a particular topic or need. Ning is also very easy to use. Becoming a member of Ning creating a unique page is as simple as signing up by providing a name and an email address. ^{#1} These are some of the many ways someone can use Ning to interact with others:*

- raise awareness
- exchange parenting tips
- connect with event attendees

- brag about your wheels
- make your "website"
- create community with customers
- unite athletes and sports fans
- share tricks of the trade
- discover new recipes and cuisine
- appreciate independent artists
- build your career
- keep in touch with classmates
- find new travel destinations
- share insights and find support #6

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III. Real World Applications/Demonstration of Educational Value

1. Teachers Helping Teachers: <http://teachershelpingteachers.ning.com/>

This site is used for teachers to share ideas of things that are working really well in their classroom so others can try out the ideas too. It also allows teachers to express their concerns if they are having trouble with a specific student, so they can receive advice from other teachers. Pictures, videos, and forums are all available on this page. I think a downfall of this website however is that it only has 18 members.

2. Teachers 2.0: <http://teachers20.ning.com/>

This site is to help educators learn about the new technology that is developing and helps them with learning how to use it. I think this is a great website for older teachers who were not raised in the new technological era because it helps them discover news ways to teach and new ways to reach their students through technology. There are forums and blog posts available on this page. I think this site really works and can be very useful considering it has 275 members to exchange information.

3. International Teachers: <http://globalreach.ning.com/>

This site allows teachers from anywhere in the world to exchange ideas and lesson plan ideas. The site offers forums, videos, and groups within the site for different kinds of teachers. I think this is a great idea and a very good site. It is actually what our group plans on starting on our own Ning site. The downfall again I see on this site is the number of people involved, being only 286. Again I think in order for it to really be a successful resource more people need to be involved.

III.1 Educational Lesson Plans

These are the various lesson plans that can be used to incorporate Ning into your classroom.

They range from elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education lesson plans.

[Lesson 1.docx](#)

[Lesson 2.docx](#)

[Lesson 3.docx](#)

[Lesson 4.docx](#)

[Lesson 5.docx](#)

[Lesson 1.pdf](#)

[Lesson 2.pdf](#)

[Lesson 3.pdf](#)

[Lesson 4.pdf](#)

[Lesson 5.pdf](#)

[Animal Adaptation Lesson Plan.docx](#)

[Exploring Horticulture.docx](#)

[Forestry Lesson Plan.docx](#)

[Animal Adaptation Lesson Plan.pdf](#)

[Exploring Horticulture.pdf](#)

[Forestry Lesson Plan.pdf](#)

III.2 Business/Industry

Ning can not only help with creating your own social network, but through your network it provides other options as well. On the business and industry side of things Ning allows users to run their own ads for their business or products it also allows the user to sell branded merchandise. This can be useful to small business owners to large companies wanting to market and sell their products.

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IV. How Ning is used internationally

In today's world, getting connected to areas around the world is becoming more and more important. Ning is used by many people in varying countries. This creates a large opportunity to use Ning as an international tool both inside and outside the classroom. As teachers, we can use this site to communicate with teachers in other parts of the world. This will allow us to learn from the teaching techniques used in other countries. This can add to the students interest and add diversity to our classrooms.

Ning is used in many different countries. While 44.9% of the users are in the US, over half are outside the US. Among these countries India accounts for 4.5% of users, Germany accounts for 2.9% of users, and the UK accounts for 3.5% of Ning users. This creates a vast diversity among the users, not only in geographic location but also in ethnicity, race, and culture.

In the classroom, this tool can be invaluable. Creating an Ning page can allow students from countries around the world to connect with each other. This can add understanding in many different subjects. Students can learn the effects of wars on students in countries that are currently at war or speak to latin students when learning Spanish.

These experiences will not only enhance their learning but also their interest. Connecting with students from other countries can encourage students to think beyond their current environments and promote the diversity of their knowledge.

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V. References

1. [Ning Wikipedia Article](#)
2. [The Story Behind the Ning Name](#)
3. [The Ning Platform: A Few Updates](#)
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5. [Ning Networks](#)
6. [About Ning: Why Create a Social Network?](#)
7. [Ning Overview](#)
8. [Pod Tech: Build your own social space with Ning, version 2]<http://www.podtech.net/home/2239/build-your-own-social->

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