Grou.ps

MAIN WIKI PAGE

Grou.ps Research Page

Grou.ps Group Member Introduction Page

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"Roll Your Own Social Network"">"Roll Your Own Social Network"

How does GROU.PS work?">How does GROU.PS work?

GROU.PS is a do-it-yourself social networking site where people can meet, talk, and chat with each other from anywhere in the world. More formally, GROU.PS considers themselves to be a "social groupware" or "social operating system." 6   GROU.PS allows you to make an account on their website, and users are able to connect through Facebook to make the account creating process easier.   After creating an account, members can invite friends by email to join GROU.PS and become members of viewing your profile. On GROU.PS, the users are able to share photos, videos, events, and games. Users can also create a wiki to share information between different members. GROU.PS is a community based website that allows users to connect with friends and family and share information easily and efficiently. Members can add friends and invite them to different locations. This site allows users to create their own "community" and keep close contact with all of their friends. 1

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The following information was obtained through personal communication with the GROU.PS developer, Emre Sokullu:

"GROU.PS is a do-it-yourself social networking platform that allows people to come together and form interactive communities around a shared interest or affiliation. The functionality of any online group is limited only by the members' collective imagination and ambition. The GROU.PS platform is used to create a wide variety of community sites, including online gaming forums, e-learning classrooms, fan clubs, charity fundraising campaigns, college alumni societies, and event planning portals. In short, any organization seeking to aggregate and organize people online can greatly improve its effectiveness, engagement and appeal by migrating to the GROU.PS platform. By giving any user the ability to create an easy-to-use, yet powerful, social network, GROU.PS is propelling online collaboration, communication and content sharing in a new socially-aware direction. The platform, with its 20+ modules including wiki, forum, videos, photos, blogging and funds, responds to 4 basic needs of online groups; sharing, collaboration, conversation and collective action. The site's open architecture allows 3rd parties to create their own modules as well - so the functionality is further extensible to a virtually unlimited extent."

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Emre Sokullu

Founder and CEO of GROU.PS

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The Grou.PS Team
From Left to Right: Emre Solluku, Serkan Alp, Mustafa Sapcili, Onur Karakas, Ozgur Kuru, Yusuf Koc, Ismail Izgi

Who uses GROU.PS?">Who uses GROU.PS?

Anyone can use this site! GROU.PS has 2.5 million visitors per month. The number of users quickly increased from 1 million to 2 million in just six months. Each month, GROU.PS has 60 million page views with 25% of the traffic coming from the United States. It is most popular in Japan and Brazil. 1

I. History">I. History

I.1Development">I.1 Development

GROU.PS is funded by Golden Horn Ventures, an entrepreneur investment company based in Turkey. They specialize in working with people who have great ideas for a website and then forming the ideas into a company. They then provide funding for the company and become investors. Besides investing in GROU.PS, they also fund the sites Befunky, Soundklan and Yogurt. 3

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The following information was also obtained through personal communication with the GROU.PS developer, Emre Sokullu:

"What made me build this site; it was 2004 and I had this open source project called Turkix, which was pretty successful back in my native country, Turkey; I had a large community of open source enthusiasts there and we were using stuff like phpbb (as a forum), mediawiki (as a wiki)

and planetplanet (as a blog aggregator) to stay organized and work collaboratively. However, there was a problem; there was no single sign-on and no single identity among these tools - which means if you were to sign up for the wiki, you also had to sign up again separately for the forum and you had to keep different identities for each of these. Also they were all looking very different from each other, so there was lack of consistency among our community tools. The GROU.PS idea came to me to solve that problem.... Oh... and also after graduating from high school, we started using Yahoo Groups to keep in touch with my high school friends. But again, Y! Groups was not enough for us, the interface wasn't any good, there was a lack of sense of belonging due to its poor customization - plus, it was just about conversation, although we needed extra functionality like fund-raising and wiki."

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I.2 Additional Information About GROU.PS">I.2 Additional Information About GROU.PS

GROU.PS is always creating new ideas and is full of innovation. GROU.PS has linked up with many other websites to make your time on GROU.PS as enjoyable and efficient as possible:

- GROU.PS Open Source --- first and only open source do-it-yourself social network software.

- OpenHuman.org -- a social networking based privacy experiment.

- undisposable.org -- blacklist against disposable email addressing problem.

- Open Advertising Network

GROU.PS is trying to connect its customers with as many different websites and social networking ideas as possible. Members can create their own "group" on the website and actually get paid. After creating a page about anything, users get approached by advertising firms, and can charge a small fee and end up making money from the company. This is a nice feature because a page that is free for users to use initially can make a profit for them in just a short while. 4

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Check out a review done for GROU.PS:

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Privacy in GROU.PS">Privacy in GROU.PS

GROU.PS also offers their members various privacy settings. Members can control who is able view their profile page. You can choose from everyone, only group members, or just my friends. Members can also control who can view or comment their blogs and photos. This feature makes GROU.PS safe for young students. Parents can feel comfortable letting their child use GROU.PS, knowing strangers cannot view their child's information and profile.

II. How GROU.PS Relates to other Applications">II. How GROU.PS Relates to other Applications

GROU.PS works like many other social networking sites. You can connect with friends all over the world and share your information and interests with others. GROU.PS uses similar technology to that of Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace. There will be a very small learning curve for those who already have a social networking account. The adjustment to GROU.PS is very smooth and the transition should be relatively easy. 4

II.1 Comparison to Competitors">II.1 Comparison to Competitors

- Ning is GROU.PS' leading competitor. Ning has raised a considerable amount of money. However, Ning also pays for advertising while GROU.PS does not.

- For status updates, your profile says "What are you doing?" which is similar to Myspace.

- The GROU.PS creators use the word "tag" like Facebook. For Facebook, this applies to pictures, but for GROU.PS, this is a way to organize the data on your profile.

- The majority of the data on your profile is status updates, which makes it very close to the style of Twitter.

- GROU.PS successfully uses similar phrases from common Applications, so new users will be familiar with the setting. GROU.PS knew that by using similar words and ideas as many other leading social networking sites. This appeals to the GROU.PS audience because they are able to see similarities to other websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace.

- Below is a chart explaining the pros and cons of using GROU.PS versus similar social networking sites:
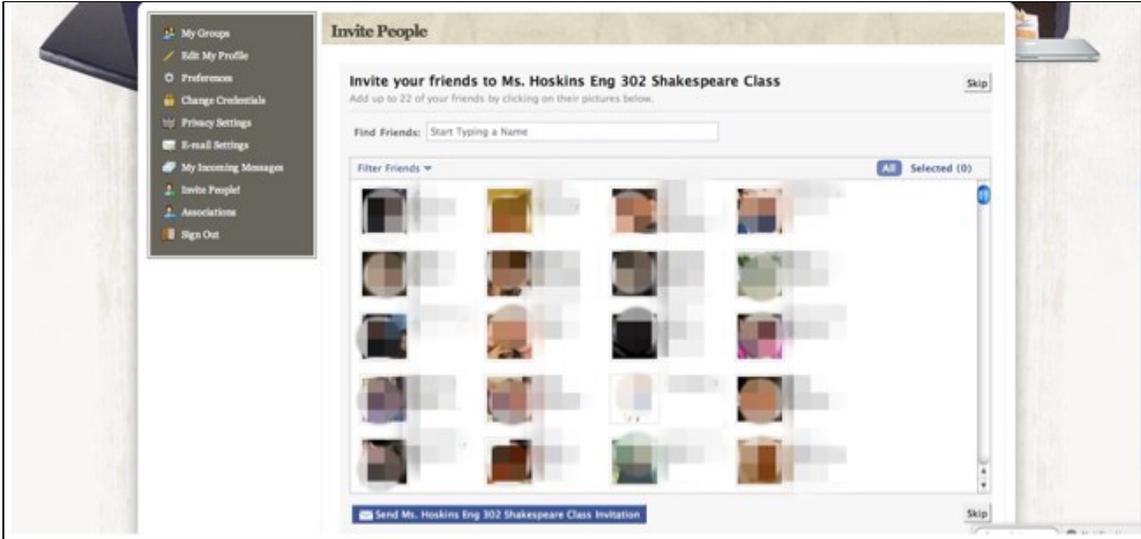
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PROS	CONS
Easy to use Offers many options to explore	Not as popular as Facebook, Myspace, or Twitter, due to limited budget and advertising
Ability to customize is unlimited—one can create their own homepage	Created and maintained by foreign individuals, therefore harder to maintain compared to competitors
Many third party widgets	It is not mainstream—many people do not realize its unique features
One can connect their profile to Facebook or Google	Uploading videos are rather confusing/challenging
Utilizes common social networking features such as "tagging" and "status updates"	Many people never leave the mainstream "loop", so not many Americans use this site compared to other foreign countries

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Using GROU.PS and Facebook Together

The fantastic thing about Grou.ps is that it embraces Facebook. Grou.ps makes it easy to share information and updates with your friends on Facebook. In fact, when you create a Grou.ps account, Grou.ps gives you the option of connecting your account with your Facebook account. This even enables you to invite people to your group directly from your Facebook friends list.

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II.2 Unique Uses">II.2 Unique Uses

Although GROU.PS is similar to Facebook and Myspace, there are a few aspects that make GROU.PS unique. Instead of each member having their own profile in this network, they create their own website. GROU.PS lives up to its name because it allows members to create a place on the web where groups of friends, family and people with similar interests can communicate and share information. Members can blog, watch videos (like on youtube), link to other websites, and easily create a wiki to share documents and collaborate ideas. GROU.PS also tries to make it easy to advertise for their site. It encourages users to invite other people. On the home page, a user can click the "Tell a Friend" button and you can log in to your email on the GROU.PS website. From Gmail to Yahoo to AOL, almost all of the popular e-mail providers are offered. You can access your address book through GROU.PS and ask your friends to join too. 1

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III. Real World Application ">III. Real World Application

III.1 Educational Lesson Plans">III.1 Educational Lesson Plans

i. Elementary">i. Elementary

1. Internet Safety: In this lesson plan, the students will have to use GROU.PS to post information about internet safety.

   Internet Safety (.docx)

   Internet Safety (.pdf)

2. Learning Around the World: In this lesson, the students will research other countries around the world and post information on a GROU.PS page.

   Learning Around the World (.docx)

   Learning Around the World (.pdf)

3. Weather!: In this lesson, students will use GROU.PS to present a project about facts they have researched about the weather.

   Weather! (.docx)

   Weather! (.pdf)

4. Rainforests: In this lesson, students will learn about the butterflies of the rainforest through the use of a GROU.PS page.

   Butterflies of the Rainforest (.docx)

   Butterflies of the Rainforest (.pdf)

ii. Secondary">ii. Secondary

1. Country Researching: In this lesson plan, the students will use GROU.PS to post and view information about different cultures and geographies from all over the world.

   Country Researching (.docx)

   Country Researching (.pdf)

2. Great American Novels: In this lesson, the students will need to use GROU.PS in order to work with other students to present a project about American Novels.

Great American Novels (.docx)

Great American Novels (.pdf)

3. Modern Pen-Pal: In this lesson, students will communicate back and forth between students from other countries using GROU.PS.

Modern Pen-Pal (.docx)

Modern Pen-Pal (.pdf)

4. Ecosystems Around the World: In this lesson, students will explore the ecosystems around the world and communicate with other students with GROU.PS.

Ecosystems Around the World (.docx)

Ecosystems Around the World (.pdf)

iii. Post-Secondary">iii. Post-Secondary

1. Blogging with GROU.PS: In this lesson plan, the students will have to use GROU.PS to submit a short piece of literature.

Blogging with Grou.ps (.docx)

Blogging with Grou.ps (.pdf)

2. Creative Online Blogging: In this lesson, the students will need to use GROU.PS in order to turn in a composition to the teacher.

Creative Online Blogging (.docx)

Creative Online Blogging (.pdf)

3. Statistics: Students will help each other learn about statistics by submitting projects and communicating with each other about various projects.

Statistics (.docx)

Statistics (.pdf)

4. Shakespeare: In this lesson, students will use GROU.PS to submit weekly assignments through blogging/comments:

Shakespeare (.docx)

Shakespeare (.pdf)

III.2 GROU.PS in Business/Industry">III.2 GROU.PS in Business/Industry

GROU.PS can be used as a very successful tool in the Business Industry. A specific way that GROU.PS can be used is creating a page for each department within a business. The department head can be the "creator" of the page and then invite his or her co-workers to be his or her "friends". By doing this, it will allow co-workers to easily communicate about certain tasks, upcoming projects, and it can also be used as a place to post possible ideas about how to make the company run smoother. The GROU.PS page can also be used as a place to have an online calendar so everyone will know when the next staff meeting or deadline is. This will greatly reduce the amount of confusion at greatly increase the amount of success the company can have. Email is a great way of communicating now, but by having a GROU.PS page, co-workers can communicate and share ideas in much easier fashion by keeping everyone informed. The following video is a great example of how social networking can be so important in the business industry.

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IV. Demonstration of Educational Value">IV. Demonstration of Educational Value

Technology can be beneficial in numerous way when utilized inside a classroom. Any type of technology greatly enhances student learning and engages learners at a new level, in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary. Take a look at why technology would be beneficial in a 21st century classroom at an elementary and secondary/post-secondary standpoint:

K-12

Post-Secondary

GROU.PS is a great educational tool for the classroom. Teachers can use GROU.PS for many different lesson plans and teaching opportunities. GROU.PS is a great place to create a page for your classroom in order to share information, homework assignments, and keep students up to date with what to expect in class. Teachers could also use GROU.PS as a tool for an assignment such as creating a page based on a character in a book or connecting with someone for another country in order to learn about their culture and customs. Let's take a look at some more specific ways that GROU.PS could successfully and efficiently be used in the classroom.

- By using GROU.PS and other similar social networking sites, students are able to communicate with their fellow classmates in regards to assignments much easier than even a text message. By having a GROU.PS profile, you can share information with your classmates much more efficiently outside of class.   Take a look at this video to look at many other benefits of social networking:

- GROU.PS could be used in a classroom setting with relative ease. The teacher can design a page and post information such as test dates, homework due dates, upcoming events and activities, or just a summary of the day for students who were unable to attend class that particular day. Students would be able to stay in-tune with what was going on in the classroom and would not have to worry about talking to the teacher in regards to missed assignments. The teacher would also be able to learn more about social networking which would help him or her be more up to date with what the students were accustomed to using.

- Using GROU.PS can also be very helpful in terms of doing a group assignment. Students can create a page where they can "share" or post information about the project along with post questions or comments about the project. Students can also chat about their project so they can rapidly brainstorm ideas to make their project as successful as possible.

- GROU.PS works very well in the educational setting and can be used for many different projects and or lesson plans for any group of students. Check out this video for more ideas on how to implement social networking into the classroom:

V. How GROU.PS is used Internationally">V. How GROU.PS is used Internationally

GROU.PS is free to use for people of all countries who have access to the internet. 5 By using GROU.PS you have the possibility to chat, write messages and share interesting links with people all over the world. There´s no form of automatic translation on the site, so users are forced to share a common language with the person they are communicating with. The possibilities of using GROU.PS are almost unlimited no matter if it is for local,national or international use.
There is also a map available on the site, which make it possible to pinpoint exactly where the person you are talking to is located. This is extremely beneficial if you are talking to someone from another country. 1

Although there is no language translator, GROU.PS is available in many different languages that are seen on the home site including English, French, Greek, Swedish, Turkish, Hebrew, and Japanese. You can customize a group page by selecting whichever language you would like to be used. This can be done on the language customization page. By having more languages available, more people are able to use this site internationally. 2

As you can see, GROU.PS is becoming a major factor in the social networking world, not only in America but all across the globe.

You can easily check where in the world your friends are.

VI. References">VI. References

1. http://grou.ps/

2. [[http://grou.ps/jmurphy/admin/languages|

3. http://goldenhornventures.com/

4. [http://grou.ps/groudotps/wiki/21343 |

5. [http://grou.ps/groudotps/wiki/171314 |

6. [http://grou.ps/groudotps/wiki/28172|