Introduction to LinkedIn: Purpose, Uses

LinkedIn on its homepage states four main functions / abilities:
1. To exchange information, ideas and opportunities
2. Stay informed about your contacts and industry
3. Find the people & knowledge you need to achieve your goals
4. Control your professional identity online

LinkedIn is an online professional network aimed at promoting the interaction of customers and companies. LinkedIn allows customers to create profiles that companies can view (possibly leading to potential work positions). Therefore, customers benefit from this network by creating profiles that companies can view, and companies benefit by finding suitable candidates for job openings. Also, companies can post jobs that they need filled (helping users find jobs even easier.) Not only do businesses use LinkedIn, but LinkedIn is also used by friends and associates to find old classmates or colleagues. In this way, LinkedIn is similar to Facebook or Monster.com, but it incorporates the positive aspects and unique features of both.

LinkedIn also provides a search tab for customers. There you can search jobs, people, updates, answers to any questions, groups and even companies. This allows individuals to post questions, and other viewers or users can answer them. This is a special feature that promotes user interaction on the site. Though LinkedIn originated in the United States, it operates worldwide, and LinkedIn on cell phones is available in other countries as well. Because of all the unique applications, LinkedIn is a must for future entrepreneurs and business.

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>How to Change LinkedIn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>History and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Unique Uses of LinkedIn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Related Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>International Appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Learning and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI.1 Lesson Plan for Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI.2 Lesson Plan for Post Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>Additional Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VII.1 LinkedIn Contact Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VII.2 Sponsors and Investors of LinkedIn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VII.3 Team LinkedIn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VII.4 TechCrunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VII.5 References</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. How to Change LinkedIn
How does LinkedIn work?

LinkedIn is an online network that permits business professionals to stay informed about their contacts in addition to their colleagues' contacts. With LinkedIn, one is capable of finding people and acquiring knowledge needed to achieve specific work goals. After creating a LinkedIn profile, one can then control that profile and the information that employees or future employers see. As an example of just one of its numerous capabilities and applications, LinkedIn helps people find jobs all over the world in many different types of industries. [3]

How can a person start using LinkedIn?

The screen used to set up a LinkedIn profile account. Image adapted from: [http://www.linkedin.com/]

LinkedIn is completely free to join, but in order to take advantage of more tools that help each individual find and reach people who may or may not be in a specific network, a paid account can be created. By joining for free, however, profiles that summarize individual professional accomplishments can be created. The created profile will help each person to be found by past employees, clients, partners, and future employers. One can create and add more connections by inviting contacts to join the LinkedIn network [1].

What materials does a person need to start using LinkedIn?

To start taking advantage of the fantastic benefits of LinkedIn, future customers only need a computer with internet access. To create a profile, have personal information concerning past positions as well as an educational background ready for submitting. Along with this information, one also has the ability to add a picture and paragraph that represents yourself and what you are capable of doing in the business world. After completing this action, the customer can also use webmail to import the information of the people that you already know on LinkedIn. Then, you can choose, from these people, who you would like to join your new network. Contacts can also be uploaded from Mac Address, Outlook, Palm, or ACT[4]

What else might a person need to do to be able to use LinkedIn?
To successfully use and benefit from LinkedIn, it is very important to have an impressive profile. To do this, the user should highlight all jobs, current and past, and past education. (All of this information should be as up to date as possible.) When creating the profile, the user needs to keep in mind that this will be looked at by future employers. After the creation of your profile, you are ready to use and take advantage of LinkedIn.

II. History and Development

Reid Hoffman, a former executive vice-president of PayPal, founded LinkedIn in December 2002, but he didn't launch the site until May 2003. In 2007, Dan Nye became the CEO of LinkedIn, and Reid Hoffman continued as the Chairman of the Board and the President of Product [1]. Jeff Weiner was named CEO of LinkedIn in June of 2009, after joining the company as Interim President in December 2008. Jeff Weiner had previous experience as an Executive Vice President of Yahoo's Network Division, overseeing 3,000 plus employees.
In the first few years of its existence, LinkedIn developed slowly. Unlike Facebook and MySpace, LinkedIn does not rely on advertising to produce revenue. Instead, LinkedIn obtains its cash flow through the number of visitors and the types of services and applications that the customers utilize. The year 2006 was an important year for LinkedIn because it reached profitability in March. Similarly, the past few years have been prolific for LinkedIn. According to an article by CitizenTrack, LinkedIn experienced an increase in the amount of visitors from 500,000 to 3.2 million visitors per month in December 2007, equating to a 485% increase from 2006.

LinkedIn now boasts 150 MILLION plus users as of February 9, 2012 in 200 states and territories according to updated LinkedIn website. Monthly visitors to LinkedIn. Image adapted from: http://fusion.dalmatech.com/~admin24/files/linkedinsocialvalue.pdf

Furthermore, LinkedIn is now used in 150 industries with more than 30 million registered users. More and more companies have invested in LinkedIn, including Greylock Partners and Sequoia Capital, both of which purchased 5% stakes in the online network, giving LinkedIn around one billion dollars.

LinkedIn continues to grow at an alarming rate, even faster than Facebook and MySpace. This shows the development of LinkedIn in continuous.

III. Unique Uses of LinkedIn

People mostly use LinkedIn to connect with people form a partnership, make a sale, or get a job. It is a great tool that has over 8.5 million professionals from around the world making up the online network. Although LinkedIn is a tool that is not always used to its full capacity, there are unique ways to use LinkedIn.

Make Yourself Noticeable

Add as many people, friends and associates as possible. This will ensure that your profile appears first in a search for potential employees. Companies would rather hire mutual friends that are trustworthy rather than strangers with no credibility or recommendations.

Keep Everything Organized

Along with the ability to add as many friends and associates as you want and/or need, you can keep a record of all of their contacts. LinkedIn acts as an address book as a way to help keep all of your friends organized. Not only can you keep a list of your contacts, but you also have the option of sending them personal messages which acts as an email.

Don't Limit Your Connections

By only listing the current company one works for, it limits his/her options. Instead, list all previous jobs and activities in order to maximize connections with people. Also add credentials in an email address or list them on the LinkedIn profile page.

Develop Your Google PageRank

When searching for things on Google, profiles from LinkedIn come up on the search. So, it's important to make the information available so that the search engines can make that connection. To do this, make the profile as Full View, and do not use the default URL (instead use your actual name). Then to make the visibility of the profile better, use this link in various places on the web.
Search Through Filters

Like any other website, on LinkedIn you can use your typical search bar at the top of the page. However, if you are searching for new people or businesses with similar interests, there are different ways in which you can filter them out. By simply selecting which groups or companies, you can narrow your search very easily.

Create Search Engine Results

By using one's name, you can promote blogs or websites on Google and other search engines. The profile on LinkedIn allows you to promote websites. If you select "Other" you can edit the name of the link. If you're linking to your personal blog, include your name or descriptive terms of the link. Make sure that the public profile setting is set to "Full View."[2]

Job Search

LinkedIn allows users to search for other employees and workers that have similar work experience. This makes it easier for users to find jobs[2] by allowing discussion between those who are looking for jobs and those who already have them. The best way to use LinkedIn for a job search is to find people that have the same education or work experience and ask them for help.

Job Posting

Businesses can also post jobs that need filled. This allows users with profiles to also find jobs with a simple click. All users would need to do is go to companies' LinkedIn profiles, and then find out if that company is hiring. This is also really easy when you are following certain companies on LinkedIn. You would know immediately if that company posts a job.

Improve Interview Skills

Before an interview, it is always wise to know a few facts about the person who is interviewing you. LinkedIn allows future workers to search interviewers. By knowing small facts and similarities between you and your interviewer, it improves your candidacy and avoids awkward silences.[2].

Track the Quality of a Company

Go to the advanced search for company name and then uncheck the "Current Companies Only" box. This allows you to see the opinions from former employees and current employees regarding a certain company. In retrospect, former employees will have more negative things to say about a company than current employees.[2].

Gauge the Health of an Industry

Before starting your own company, observe the financial status and success/failure of other companies. Use LinkedIn to search for competitor companies or people who worked for competitors to observe the industry's strength. This will prevent future financial hardship.[2].

Follow Companies

Unlike most networking websites, LinkedIn allows the user to follow more than other users. On this website, it is very easy to follow companies or corporations. The user can follow the company that has employed them to keep up to date or a prospective company to learn more.

IV. Related Applications

As of July 2010, EBizMBA.com published a chart ranking "Top 20 Most Popular Social Networking Websites." Despite the huge surge of Facebook the past couple years, LinkedIn is still a sizable and growing network, in a respectable 4th place on the list, not far behind 3rd place Twitter, (#2 is MySpace). Despite Facebook and Twitter's buzz-worthy growth, LinkedIn continues to grow as well, most notably due to it's unique corner on the job market and professional connections.

LinkedIn is essentially a social networking site. This particular Web 2.0 technology can be used for education and business networking. Related applications could extend of any aspect of this social networking site, but some are more alike LinkedIn than others. Listed below are websites and descriptions that should help for a more comprehensive understanding of social networking sites. They are listed from most popular to least popular.

| Facebook is a social networking website that is becoming very popular. Facebook allows users to upload pictures, videos, and post other networking applications to their personal profile. This is a website that can be used for social interactions, networking, advertising, entertainment, etc. |
Owned and operated by Twitter Inc., Twitter is a social networking and microblogging website. It got its name from the “Tweets” that are posted on the users wall. (Tweets are text-based and can be up to 140 characters.) These Tweets are either public or restricted, depending on the user’s preference. A person can choose to read another’s Tweets by following them.

Myspace is a social networking site that is used by many people to keep in touch with friends and/or make new friends. Users can post all their likes and dislikes on the website as well as music they enjoy. It is a great way to have personal expression, yet it lacks a professional quality like that of LinkedIn.

XING is a small-world networking site for professionals. It supports personal profiles, groups, discussion forums, event coordination, and other social features. It is a free website; however, many applications, like searching for people with specific qualifications or messaging people who are not already connected, can only be accessed by the premium members, who pay a monthly fee of around nine dollars.

“Ryze helps people make connections and grow their networks. You can network to grow your business, build your career and life, find a job and make sales, or just keep in touch with friends.” It is similar to LinkedIn because of its business networking aspect more than that of a social aspect.

Jigsaw is a business networking site that allows users to find business cards and other professionals. It also allows people to research companies and share ideas. In addition, it allows users to access company data and millions of business contacts.

Diigo allows users to share research and knowledge through a social network. In this way, customers can distribute and organize new information more effectively with others. People who share the same interest are able to socialize by using this site. Diigo is similar to LinkedIn because it allows people with similar interests to connect and discuss ideas online.

Glue is a simple way to microblogging across different social networking sites. Easily microblog across different sites right from Glue using your mobile phone or web browser. It can post your message on Facebook, Twitter WordPress, Blog, MySpace and many more. Using their private API and feeds it is even easier to sync, share and publish content on multiple networks.

The Gup Shup is a mobile group SMS service that allows users to create mobile communities and broadcast messages. GupShup is growing rapidly with thousands of groups on topics such as finance, entertainment, lifestyle, health, sports and technology.
<table>
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<th>Plurk is another social networking site that is used mainly for a purely social aspect (comparable to Myspace). Users can express their feelings on the website and write messages to their friends. It features privacy settings standard to most websites in order to keep the user's personal feelings private from the world. It is similar to LinkedIn in that it allows for people of similar interests to connect and share ideas.</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Ecademy is an organization for entrepreneurs and business owners who belong to a community that connects, supports, and transacts with one another. So, it is similar with LinkedIn and it is free. You can advertise and post blogs just as you would on any other professional business/job networking website.</td>
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### V. International Appeal

Although LinkedIn originated in the United States, it has an elevated international appeal. Not only can users digitally connect with other professionals in other countries, but LinkedIn also provides web sites in different languages. For example, in July of 2008, LinkedIn launched a Spanish version of the site. This allows Spanish-speaking professionals "to enjoy the benefits" of using this online network in a native language. Advancements such as this broaden LinkedIn's attractiveness to global companies and businesses. Florencia Pettigrew, LinkedIn's International Marketing Manager, states, "By offering our site in Spanish and providing local users a relevant experience, we expect to double our user base in Latin America by year end." New users are already aiding this process, with one million new users joining every month. In addition, adding a Spanish site appealed to Latin America and Spain (as well as other Spanish-speaking countries). This further promotes the growth of this network. LinkedIn not only offers a Spanish site, but also offers the option of changing your profile into a different language such as French, German, Italian and Portuguese.

Similarly, LinkedIn gains new users through its investor companies. Companies/businesses such as: Greylock Partners, Bessemer Venture Partners, and Bain Capital Ventures financially support the online social and business network. Furthermore, a European firm, European Founders Fund, also promotes LinkedIn. Though LinkedIn is supported and used by American corporations, new overseas corporations are beginning to join the network. LinkedIn is used internationally by businesses in London, the United States, and Canada. However, many other countries are now beginning to use LinkedIn in order to obtain valuable information about overseas companies. Due to their wide, and still growing range of language options, many foreign companies are using LinkedIn in order to find the best candidates for each job.

Spanish version of LinkedIn.

![Image adapted from: http://www.linkedin.com/nhome/](http://www.linkedin.com/nhome/)

In addition, LinkedIn has become very popular in India. There are now over six million Indian LinkedIn members and India has one of the fastest growing bases in the LinkedIn network. Professionals believe that this is due to the large respect for the business world in India. Because most people getting involved in social networking are young adults who are trying to find jobs, there is an expected boom in LinkedIn members across the globe.

Also, in 2009, LinkedIn expanded to European countries including Germany. This is Germany's fourth country-focused site, and LinkedIn has been developed to translate all user profiles into the language each specific user chooses as the default. For example, if you were here in America, and wanted to view the LinkedIn profile of someone whose profile is in German, the site will translate that German user's profile to English automatically when you set your default language to English.

Adapted from:  http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/pda/2009/feb/04/socialnetworking-web20

Even more recently, in 2011 LinkedIn launched 3 new languages: Bahasa Malaysia, Bahasa Indonesia, and Korean. The industry has now grown to over 135 million users from it's launch date to December 2011.

VI. Learning and Education

Students

LinkedIn is primarily used for businesses, but it has uses in the learning environment as well. "Answers" is one applications of LinkedIn that students can use. LinkedIn advertises "Answers" as a place where you can ask questions and get fast and accurate feedback from other experts and customers in your network.

This means that if a student is searching for answers, he or she can simply type in the question, and a huge number of experts worldwide can review the question and answer the question accurately. Sometimes this answer will be even better than the answer provided by the teacher [1].

Also, a student could take a survey from his or her colleagues on LinkedIn. A student might need to take a poll or survey for research. LinkedIn Answers is a fast and efficient way to poll a large amount of very qualified people about certain issues [1].

LinkedIn also allows for group projects to be coordinated from home. If all students in a project group are LinkedIn users, then announcements, file sharing, discussions, and ideas can be transferred online securely. Instead of using basic email to do all of these applications, LinkedIn can be a better-organized solution [1].

As the content and complexity of LinkedIn is set for the corporate world, the uses of LinkedIn in education are more directed towards upper-level education. Elementary school students on the whole are not as Web 2.0 knowledgeable as high school and college students; therefore, LinkedIn's applications are more useful for students ranging from middle school and above [1].

Teachers

Teachers can also use LinkedIn in a variety of ways. They can use it to find ideas for lesson plans. They can use it to ask highly-qualified teachers and professors about useful techniques in teaching. For example, an elementary school teacher from California can learn about child psychology from a professor at Harvard. LinkedIn makes it easy for that teacher to get expert advice from a renowned source. Teachers can also cooperate with other teachers at their schools through LinkedIn to spread department announcements or exam policies and ideas.

Note about Lesson Plans for LinkedIn

Because LinkedIn is specifically designed for the business world, it is not recommended to use LinkedIn in an elementary classroom. There are ways in which you can incorporate LinkedIn into an elementary lesson plan, it just happens to be a little more difficult in doing so than with secondary and post secondary education. Also, there are not STEM and non-STEM lesson plans for this Web2.0 application because of the previously mentioned singular purpose of the website. Therefore, the two lesson plans below are interchangeable and both can be used in either Secondary or Post Secondary lessons.

VI.1 Lesson Plan for Secondary Education

Secondary STEM Lesson Plan

Secondary STEM Lesson Plan (PDF)

VI.2 Lesson Plan for Post Secondary Education

Post Secondary Lesson Plan

Post Secondary STEM Lesson Plan (PDF)

VI.3 Lesson Plan for Elementary Education

Performing Orchestras lesson plan.docx
VII. Additional Information

VII.1 LinkedIn Contact Information

The headquarters of LinkedIn are located in Mountainview, California. The enterprise can be contacted at the address listed below or by visiting the website http://www.linkedin.com. [1]

Address
LinkedIn Corporation
2029 Stierlin Court
Mountain View, CA 94043

Tel. # 650-687-3600
Fax # 650-687-0505

VII.2 Sponsors and Investors of LinkedIn

VII.3 Team LinkedIn

Pictured: Top Row Left to Right: Craig Reckelhoff, Peter Knickbocker, Ross Fields, Zachary Haselhorst
Bottom Row Left to Right: Whitney De Wees, Erin McKeon, Tricia Ritter, Jenna Witte, Cassidy Bowling, Megan McAninch, Jeffrey Moody

VII.4 TechCruch: LinkedIn
TechCrunch is an online website which evaluates and predicts trends in web 2.0 sites. TechCrunch blogs about LinkedIn explaining the purpose, goals, and expansion ideas of the company. It also compares other similar websites to LinkedIn and their current ratings. To hear what they have to say about LinkedIn, visit: www.techcrunch.com and search "LinkedIn"

VIII.5 References


SOME USER REVIEWS and COMMENTS ABOUT LINKEDIN.com

May 19, 2011..."LinkedIn is the most developed business- and career- oriented networking site and service out there. It's the way millions of career-minded people will find new jobs and opportunities, and build their reputations."

March 25, 2011..."LinkedIn opens doors; allows members to connect, and to get introduced into organizations they are targeting."

Feb 16, 2010..."Best site to promote yourself to other companies! Thanks to LinkedIn I always feel like I have an advantage when looking for a new potential job."

Dec 27, 2009..."LinkedIn is the Best Business Site on the Internet. I use LinkedIn everyday to connect with my clients and associates. We used to have to Google prospects prior to a meeting to gather as much information about them such as schools they attended, previous jobs that they held, country club they belong to, groups they associate with and of course who did we know that they know. Now with LinkedIn, it is already done. Simple."

July 27, 2009..."Every professional who cares about networking needs to be a member of this site. I've personally gotten someone a job where I work because she contacted me through LinkedIn. My fiance got his current job because someone he worked with in the past found him on LinkedIn. In a tough economy like today, it's about WHO you know, not WHAT you know."
### External Links

| Presentation Handout | Power Point Presentation | Presentation Poster | Navigate Linkedin (You Tube Video Tutorial) | LinkedIn^4^ |