

# Figuring out Facebook made easy

**Book:** *Facebook Me! A Guide to Socializing, Sharing, and Promoting on Facebook*

By David Awl

Peachpit Press, 229 pages

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Rating: ★★★★★

I'm not much into Facebook for many reasons, the main ones being time, privacy, and security. But, as a computer tutor and business person, many expect me not only to be on Facebook, but also to be an expert at it.

I do have a Facebook page that I don't use much. I'm not sure if it's worth the time to do so. At the same time, I'm wondering if I'm missing out on something here. I need convincing. To help me decide, I read *Facebook Me!*, which is reviewed toward the end of this discussion.

## Just the facts, ma'am

- The world has 6.96 billion people (U.S. Census Bureau).
- Facebook has more than 750 million active users (*that's over 9% of the world's population!*).

From [www.checkfacebook.com](http://www.checkfacebook.com) (July 26, 2011):

- Ages of users: 13 years and under: 0.5%; 14-17: 9.9%; 18-24: 24.6%; 25-34: 23.6%; 35-44: 12.5%; 55-65: 7.7%; 65+: 4.6% (**75.1% are 44 or younger!**).
- United States is #1 with almost 153 million user accounts.
- Facebook usage: Males: 45.3% Females: 54.7%.

According to Ken Burbary, who wrote *Facebook Demographics Revisited—2011 Statistics* on his website [www.kenburbary.com](http://www.kenburbary.com), the average user...

- Spends 15 hours and 33 minutes on Facebook per month.
- Spends 23 minutes on each visit.
- Has 130 friends on the site.
- Sends eight friend requests per month.

## What is Facebook?

Many of us know that **websites** generally are public sites created and controlled by businesses, organizations, or individuals. We access them via the Internet to share information and to buy, sell, and trade stuff.

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## Facebook, cont. from page 8

**E-mail** accounts, on the other hand, let you communicate privately to select individuals and groups. Any e-mail you send can be shared by forwarding it to others without your consent or knowledge though.

**Blogs** combine websites and e-mails and encourage interactive public discourse. People post (write) comments and whatever they find interesting (articles, images, and videos) on a blog that is on the blog (short for *web log*), hoping to generate comments from others who visit their blogs. Some blogs require you to register by entering your e-mail address before you can post your comments for public viewing. But, usually, anyone can read the blog.

**Facebook** is like having a blog, but you have to join “the club” first by registering for entry, providing an e-mail and birthday. No one under age 13 may register. But, my sister, a middle school teacher, and others know that a lot of under-age Facebooking is going on.

Once you register, you can't play yet. You have to find people you know and sent them a request to be “friended.” You can only comment on the “walls” of those who have accepted your friendship.

This is the socially tricky part; what if *they* don't want you to be their friend? What if someone asks you to be their “friend” but *you* don't want to be their friend? I have one “friend” request in my profile that I don't know what to do with yet. It's a guy from high school that I knew but rarely interacted with. I checked his profile and he has 900+ friends! Why is he asking me to “friend” him when I haven't heard from him for over 30 years? Is he on the high school reunion committee?

I really don't have time to find out, nor to cough up my personal history. Facebook creates this dilemma. What to do? The book *Facebook Me!* does an excellent job at helping you navigate this social labyrinth.

### What others say about Facebook

Even after reading *Facebook Me!*, I still wasn't convinced I wanted to actively participate in Facebook, so I surveyed family, friends, and colleagues (ages 20 to 65+) asking their opinions. On the next page are some gleanings:

(Facebook, cont. on page 10)

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## Facebook, cont. from page 9

“I’ve reconnected with people I would never have sought out before and had rewarding experiences as a result. And I’ve made new friends, both locally and far away, as a result of interactions, photos, and whatnot people posted.” —**Jory Prum** (36) *Sound Guy*, [www.studio.jory.org](http://www.studio.jory.org)

“Facebook is a convenient way for me to stay in touch with friends and acquaintances from all over the world....But people post *way* too much about their personal life, and far too often.”

—**Maya Goody** (19) *Student, Production for Level Studios*

“Issues of security on Facebook strike the most vulnerable—those too young, too unfamiliar with technology, or too shortsighted to realize what information is safe to post.” —**Amber Clark** (21) *College student*

“I don’t [like Facebook, but] it can be used to invite people to an event without the awkward need for them to decline if they can’t make it. Other people post pictures, which I can grab for scrapbooking. Overall, though, I think it’s a waste of time.” —**Sasha Sproch** (20) *Electrical and computer engineering summer intern for NASA-Goddard*

“I only use online networking for professional purposes, so I use LinkedIn.” —**Kris Hamner** (36) *Executive director, HR at Hewlett-Packard*

### Book review

I read *Facebook Me!* cover-to-cover. It is an easy read: the layout and graphic designs are casual but artistic with side bar comments that invite

you to read them so as not to miss any tidbits. The book is a must if you are a computer novice who wants to join Facebook. But even experienced users will benefit from reading this book. Before you join Facebook, read this book to learn how to set up your account for maximum privacy and security.

In addition to the how-to list for writing on the “wall” and uploading (attaching) pictures, it also helps you navigate and use the different features, including cautionary tales of whom to “friend” or “unfriend,” along with how to “hide” postings and block “app” requests from others (applications: stupid time-consuming group games).

*Facebook Me!* answered many of my questions and solved some mysteries. It’s a great resource to use to help you register, set up your profile, and adjust your privacy settings. It covers full descriptions

of the various pages you can visit or use on Facebook.


**Note:** Another way to learn about Facebook before you register is to join Wayne’s GGCS Computer Class on Monday, Oct. 10, 2011, at 6:30 p.m. in the GGCS Classroom in San Anselmo. At that meeting, leader Wayne Johnson will focus on Facebook and its uses. And, for those who already use Facebook, you can become a “fan” at the Golden Gate Computer Society’s Facebook page.

—By *Veronica C. Valero, GGCS. Veronica started her own computer tutoring business in 2002 (www.ComputerTutorMarin.com) or 415-897-2302.*



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