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History of social networks

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Every human being needs communication. Centuries ago, people could communicate on a distance only by posting letters. It was a very slow process. A simple conversation could take several months. With the invention of electricity and telephone, people had an ability to speak with each other ignoring the distance. But there were some issues — telephones were, hard to connect immobile, massive, connected by lots of cables. Also telephones could transmit only voice. That wasn't enough. People wanted to share other information. That became possible with the invention of internet. Internet gave lots of new abilities. All digitized information such as audio, video, text, images could be transmitted all over the world. But unfortunately users didn't have convenient tool to share this information. So that first social networks were created to solve this problem [1].

The first social media site that everyone can agree actually was social media was a website called Six Degrees. It was named after the '*six degrees of separation*' theory and lasted from 1997 to 2001. Six Degrees allowed users to create a profile and then friend other users. Six Degrees even allowed those who didn't register as users to confirm friendships and connected quite a few people this way.

From Six Degrees, the internet moved into the era of blogging and instant messaging. Although blogging may not seem like social media precisely, the term fits because people were suddenly able to communicate with a blog other instantly

as well as other readers. The term “blog” is a form of the phrase “Weblog” which was coined by Jorn Barger, an early blogger that was the editor of the site “Robot Wisdom.”

Although the younger generation of today might not know about it, back in the early 2000’s the website MySpace was the popular place to set up a profile and make friends. MySpace was the original social media profile website, leading into and inspiring websites like Facebook.

But even though MySpace has a very small user base today compared to Facebook and Twitter, there are musicians who have used MySpace to promote their music and even be heard by record producers and other artists. Colbie Caillat is an example [1].

Another website that was one of the beginning social media websites was LinkedIn, still a social media website today, geared specifically towards professionals who want to network with each other.

In fact, most of the social media websites we have today are similar to LinkedIn, in that they are specifically about one particular thing, or they have some kind of unique quality that has made them popular. While MySpace was a general social media site, LinkedIn was, and is still is, meant for professional businesspeople to connect with each other to network, find jobs and socialize [2].

In 2004, Mark Zuckerberg launched what would soon become the social media giant that would set the bar for all other social media services. Facebook is the number one social media website today and it currently boasts over a billion users.

However, back in 2004, Facebook (TheFacebook.com then) was launched just for Harvard students. Zuckerberg saw the potential and released the service to the world at the website facebook.com.

In 2006, the popularity of text messaging or SMS inspired Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, Noah Glass and Evan

Williams to create Twitter, a service that had the unique distinction of allowing users to send “tweets” of 140 characters or less. Today, Twitter has over 500 million users.

Social media today consists of thousands of social media platforms, all serving the same – but slightly different purpose. Of course, some social media platforms are more popular than others, but even the smaller ones get used by a portion of the population because each one caters to a very different type of person.

For example: Instagram caters to the kind of person that communicates through photographs best, and other platforms such as Twitter are perfect for those who communicate in short bursts of information. As mentioned, businesses are using social media to promote their products and services in a brand new way and so each form of social media serves a purpose that the others available may not.

References:

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