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# EVOLUTION OF THE WEB AND CONSCIOUS USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS





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## THE EVOLUTION OF THE WORLD WIDE WEB

The creation of the web dates back to 1991 and is attributed to Sir Timothy John Berners-Lee who put online, on the internet, the first website initially used only by the scientific community. In 1993, CERN decided to make this technology public, ushering in the "Web era".

But what is the web? One of the definitions, by Bernars-Lee himself, considered complete and still current, is the following:

***"W3 is a distributed heterogeneous collaborative multimedia information system".***



Regardless of the definition, the key point is that the World Wide Web is able to access, via a computer network, a variety of information and services. The www allows you to access internet services, e-mail, access files, save them, etc.; the principle on which it is based is the HTML (HyperText Markup Language). Through this language it is possible to insert a document, use links, i.e. links to other documents present in other computers and accessible through the web, implement hypertextuality and all this through a click that represents the main feature of the web.





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## Web 1.0

Initially, the web was defined as "cyberspace", the user "browsed" by viewing what others decided to communicate. In the Web 1.0 era, in order to build a website, you needed to know the HTML programming language.

The WEB of the beginning, from now on web 1.0, was characterized by the presence of static websites: in practice, the user could visit the different websites, navigate between the pages, read the texts and use the contents, go from one site to another through the links, that is, through the hypertext links that may be present between one site and another. The search for information took place through search engines that gave – as results – a series of pages/sites corresponding to what was sought, but without any interaction with the user.





In web 1.0 there is the presence of an author responsible for the published content; The communication model is unidirectional, i.e. from the author to the user. The user is a passive actor who can only view content without being able to interact, the communication model is unidirectional, but at the end of the twentieth century sites began to spread thanks to which one not only receives the information created by others, but the user can become a content creator, express his ideas, create his own web space.

The transition from the first generation web to a more dynamic web, web 2.0, begins.

## Web 2.0

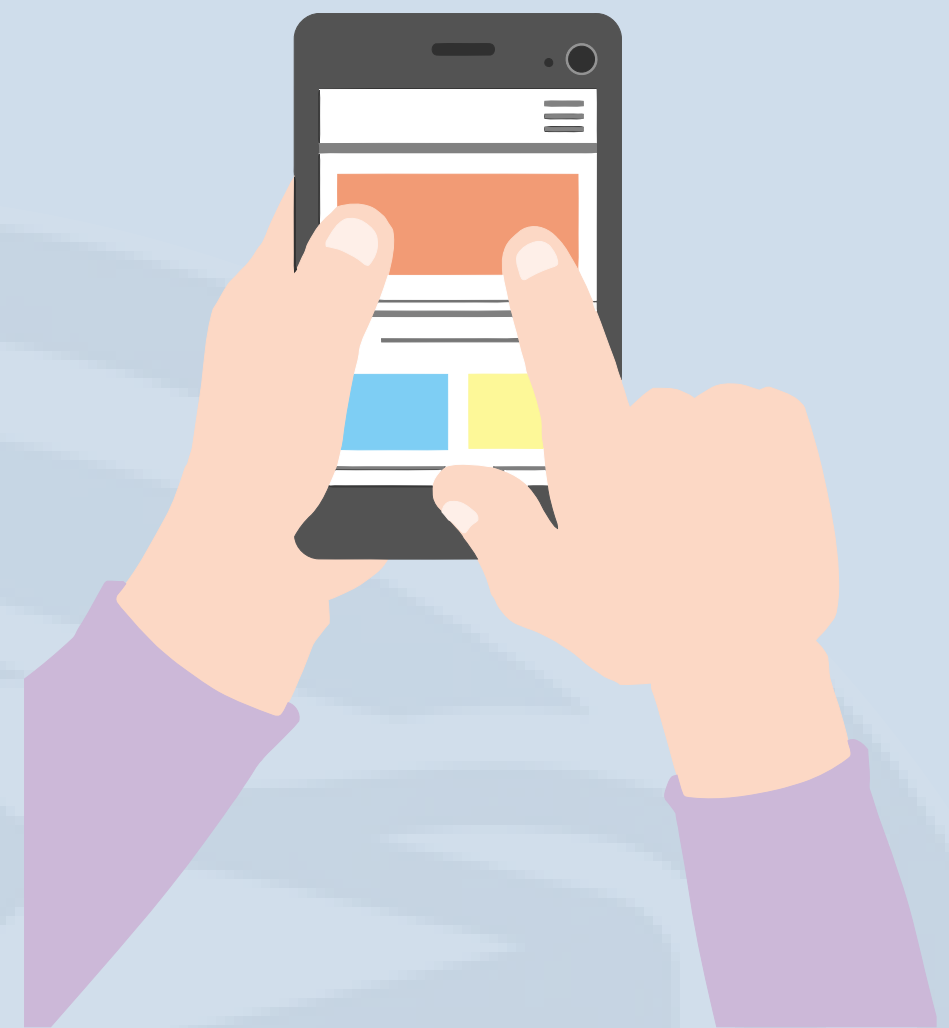


The terminology "2.0" is an expression often used to indicate a state of evolution with respect to a previous condition. Web 2.0 is therefore defined as the set of all those online applications that allow a high level of interaction between the website and the user such as blogs, forums, chats, wikis, media sharing platforms such as Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, social networks such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Foursquare, etc.,





typically obtained through appropriate Web programming techniques and related web applications related to the paradigm of the dynamic Web in as opposed to the so-called static Web or Web 1.0."



The term WEB 2.0 is of very recent origin since it was coined in 2004 and announced on September 30, 2004 in the "web 2.0 conference" promoted by O'Reilly Media, Dale Dougherty and Tim O'Reilly, respectively vice president and president of the publishing house. This event formalizes the birth of web 2.0.

The term refers to a predisposition to cooperation and content sharing, enabled by software created to support exchanges in the network.

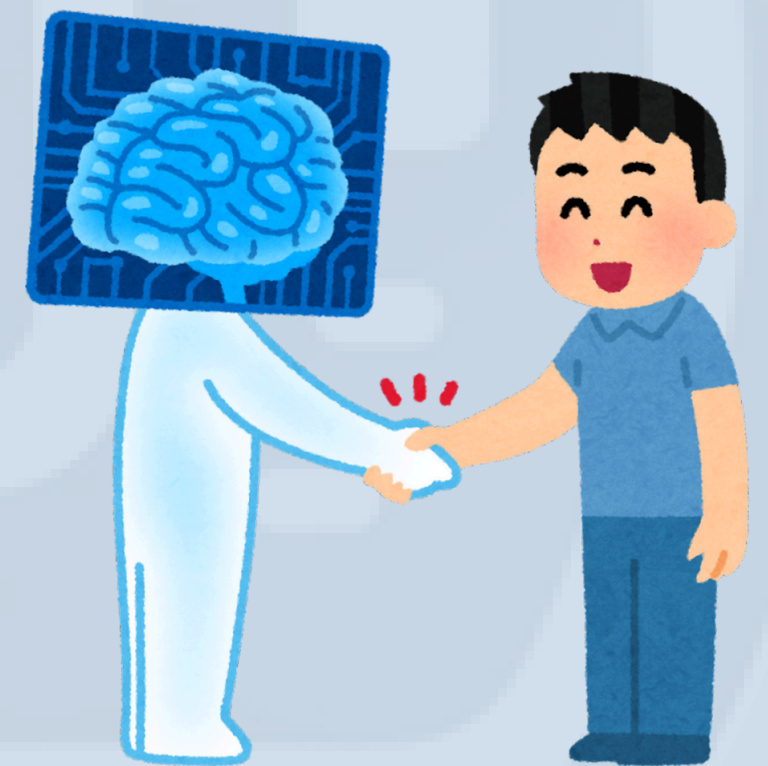
There is no unequivocal definition as it is not a question of defining a new phenomenon, but a set of technological and non-technological characteristics.





"Web 2.0 is the network understood as a platform with all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that allow you to obtain most of the intrinsic advantages of the platform, providing the software as a service that is continuously updated and that improves with the use of people, exploiting and mixing data from multiple sources, including users, who provide their content and services in a way that allows them to be reused by other users, and creating a series of effects through an 'architecture of participation' that goes beyond the metaphor of Web 1.0 pages to produce *more meaningful* user experiences."

Despite these multiple definitions, the characteristics and elements useful to understand what is meant by web 2 compared to web 1.0 are the following:



- **The collaborative approach: The role of network users has changed.** Users are no longer passive actors, simple users of the content made available by the authors of the site, as was the case during the web 1.0 era, but they themselves become creators of the web, they can enrich and update the contents, collaborate online by making their own contribution and sharing knowledge

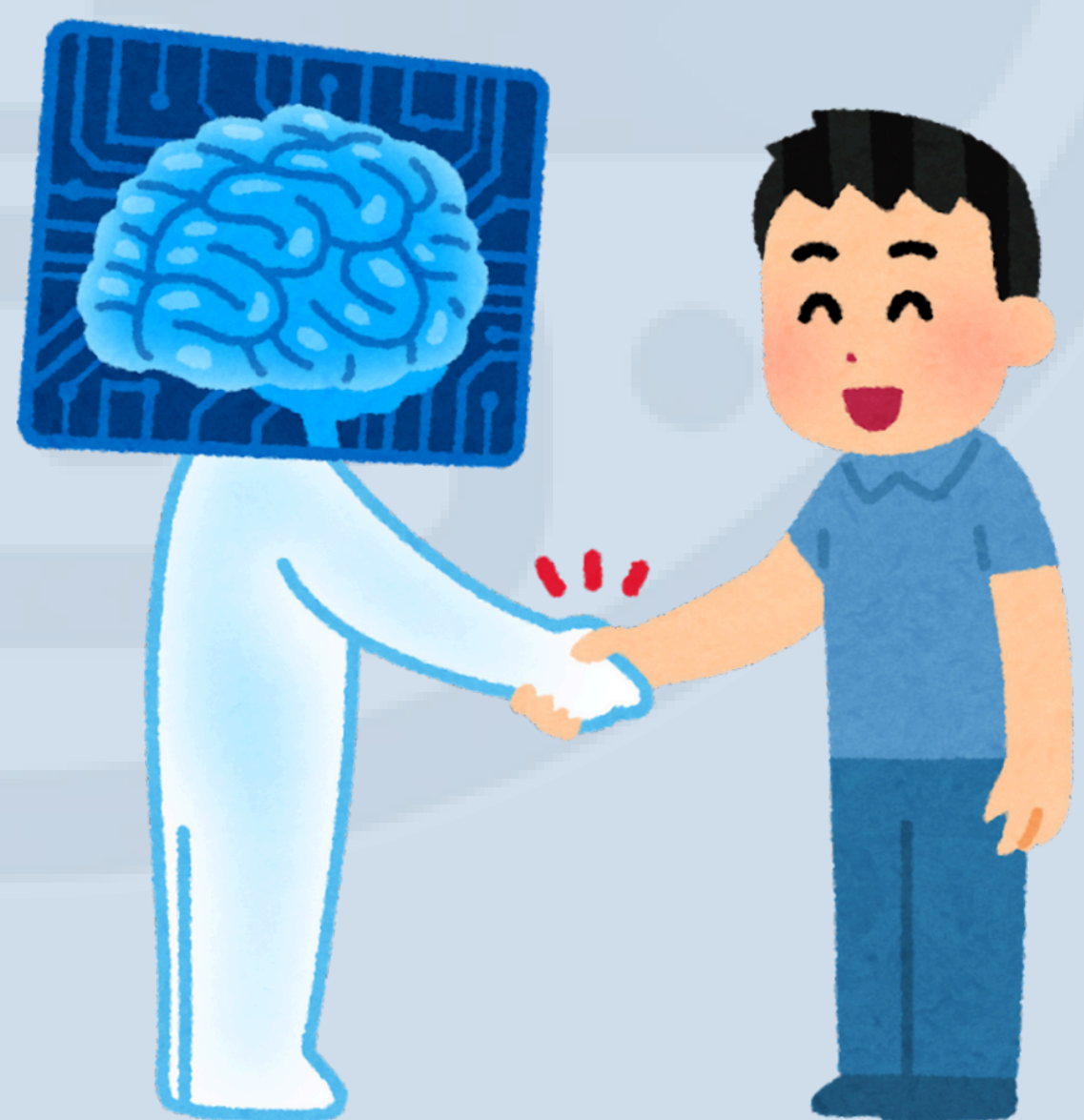




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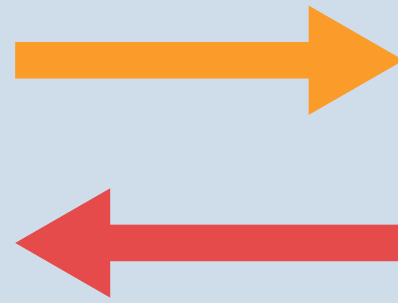
The role of network users has changed. Users are no longer passive actors, simple users of the content made available by the authors of the site, as was the case during the web 1.0 era, but they themselves become creators of the web, they can enrich and update the contents, collaborate online by making their own contribution and sharing knowledge through interaction and collaboration with other subjects. We then move from a hierarchical system to a reticular system.







- **Bidirectionality:**



the concept of the unidirectionality of web 1.0 in which the transmission of information took place from top to bottom is outdated in favor of bidirectionality. The fruition of materials is no longer static but dynamic, there is an exchange of roles and contents. Communication thus becomes participatory, each user, user of the network becomes the author himself, can contribute to the dissemination of content and make it accessible.

- **The centrality of the user:**



The consideration of the user changes, who is no longer considered as a simple consumer, a passive user, but as a protagonist, as a subject who also assumes the role of author and this also thanks to the implementation and use of easy IT tools.

To create WEB 2.0, the technologies already present in the web 1.0 era were used but used in a different way. In the era of Web 1.0, to build a website you needed to know the HTML programming language;



Today, with blogs, it is not necessary to have a specific technical preparation, anyone can publish their content, without having a specific technical preparation, also enriching them with personal graphics.

At the end of the 90s there were only 23 blogs, according to Technorati, one of the search engines for blogs, at the end of 2004 they became over five million and this is also thanks to the spread of the internet and much faster connections, ISDN first and ADSL later, which allowed a greater and faster circulation of digital information in various formats, including photos and videos.



Web 2.0 indicates an evolutionary state of the World Wide Web and is represented by all those online applications that allow high interactions between the Web and the user.

Applications such as blogs, forums, chats, wikis, media sharing platforms such as Youtube, Vimeo, Flickr and social networks such as Facebook, Myspace, twitter etc., are in contrast to the so-called Static Web or Web 1.0.





## WEB 2.0 VS WEB 1.0

In Web 2.0 you can:

- create content, such as blogs;
- connecting people with social networking;
- collaborate online with GoogleDocs;
- Connect services/databases with Flickrmaps.



This turning point is due to the multiplication of new IT tools, in particular smartphones and tablets, which allow the online sharing of information, overcoming both temporal and spatial limits.

This sharing is possible thanks to the simplicity of the use of social networks, the possibility of staying constantly in touch in order to share opinions, news, experiences.

**The peculiarities of Web 2.0 are:**

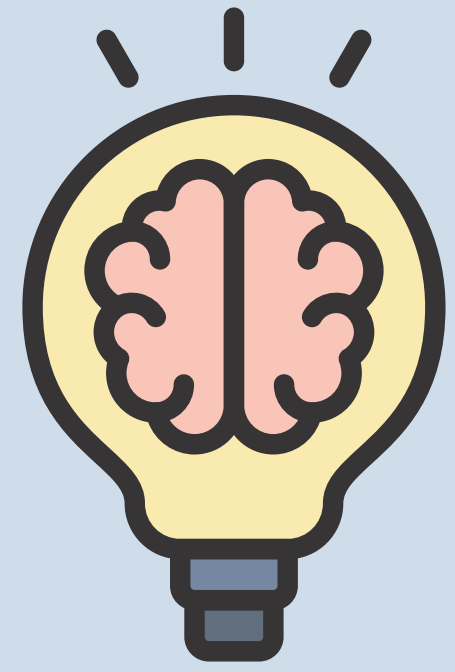


information, interaction, sharing, participation, contributions created by users, connection to social networks through the dissemination of easy-to-use tools and applications.



## WEB 2.0 VS WEB 1.0

The two key concepts of web 2.0 are:



1. Sharing
2. participation.

The rapid evolution of the internet has allowed the creation of new services that form the basis of web 2.0 applications.

The evolution of some tools, such as e-mails, mailing lists, web forums, has generated the birth of the so-called "learning communities" (Anne Brawn and Joe Campione 1990) that collaborate for the construction and sharing of knowledge in virtual environments.

These learning communities have changed as they have been influenced by the advent of technologies that have imposed new forms of learning.





With the widespread use of technologies, which take on the role of knowledge mediators in the field of education, the concept of shared and negotiated know-how is accentuated.

Knowledge is built through interaction with other users of the network, resulting in knowledge sharing and enhanced learning.



The online meeting of different people has given rise to another type of community, the virtual one, thus new forms of communication have been born that have brought radical changes to our way of thinking, our habits and customs: social networks.

Social networks are virtual communities, groupings of people that allow users who access them to be part of and create networks of individuals (social); They are portals where people can meet, communicate and share their lives with other individuals, without limits of space.





To join a social networking community, you must register by providing the data for filling out your profile with information about yourself.

The member can enrich his/her profile with photos, videos, music, can interact with other users both through thematic groups participating in discussions, and with personal messages, and exchange material; You can create a list of "friends" with whom you can share information and interact with other users on your list.



Social networks also become search engines, in fact, the user can search for people by specifying some criteria such as age, gender, place of residence, common interests.

Social networks are therefore considered as virtual squares that expand the possibility of communicating about specific, professional and political issues.





From what has been explained, it is possible to understand how a new world has opened up with the social network, that of digital communication where various activities are concentrated: user profile, blog, messaging, photo gallery, the community.

The Community is made up of a group of people who come together to:

- socialize
- find information,
- share interests,
- looking for a job,
- Develop your company's business



to exchange information, seek confrontation and in turn develop new, more specific communities.



The individual who is part of a Community, develops a sense of identification and belonging to a group, accesses the cultural background of the users who are part of it.



The use of social networks has had a great exploit in recent years and has involved an increasing number of users, not only young people, they have become indispensable for dialogue, for frequenting blogs, using e-mail, buying online, for searching and disseminating information even in real time.



## FEATURES OF SOCIAL NETWORKS



The characteristics of social networks are characterized by three elements:

1. the **creation of the profile**, with all the information needed to identify the subject;
2. the **establishment of a chain of friends**, relatives, co-workers or simple strangers, friends of friends, who want to be counted among the "friends";
3. the **management of comments**, i.e. the exchange of information through a "discussion" with an exchange of comments.







However, there are free access social networks, to which everyone can subscribe after filling out a format, and another type concerns the "closed" ones that can be accessed if invited.



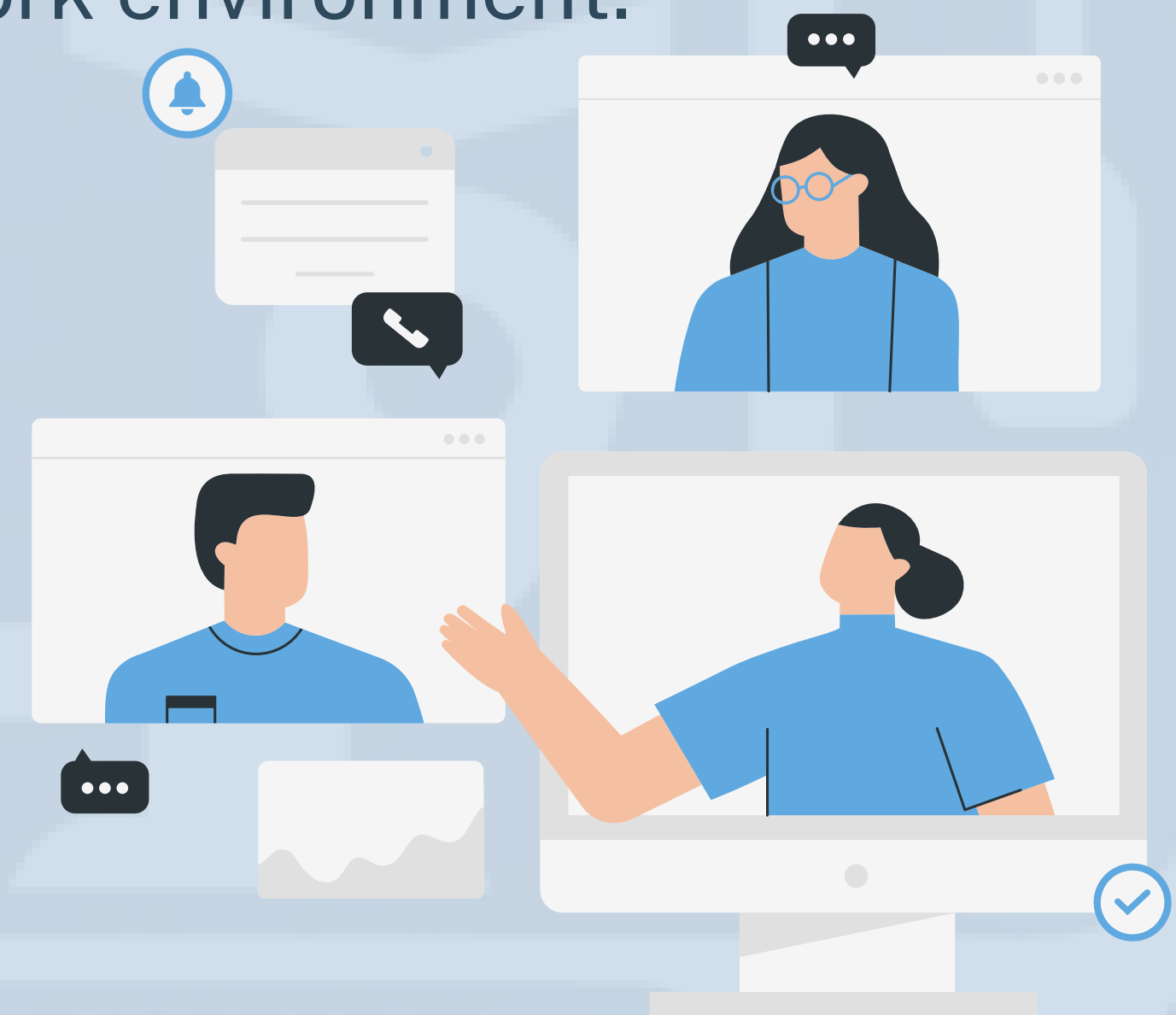
Some social networks are also used to stimulate learning, to support teaching, stimulating communication, peer e-learning.

The most popular social networks in Italy are:

- **Facebook:** it is free to access, you must be at least thirteen years old, an email address, and it can be used as a search engine to track people and is the most popular site in the world.
- **LinkedIn:** This is a site designed for professional purposes, to look for a job, or to discover sales opportunities. You should always create a profile for membership.



- **MySpace:** it is a virtual community that offers its users blogs, professional profiles, photos, music, to access you must be at least fourteen years old and create a profile.
- **Twitter:** it is a free social networking service that can be accessed by signing up with your profile, choosing the language to use, and offers users a personal page that can be updated via text messages, it is also used for educational purposes, as it offers a collaborative work environment.

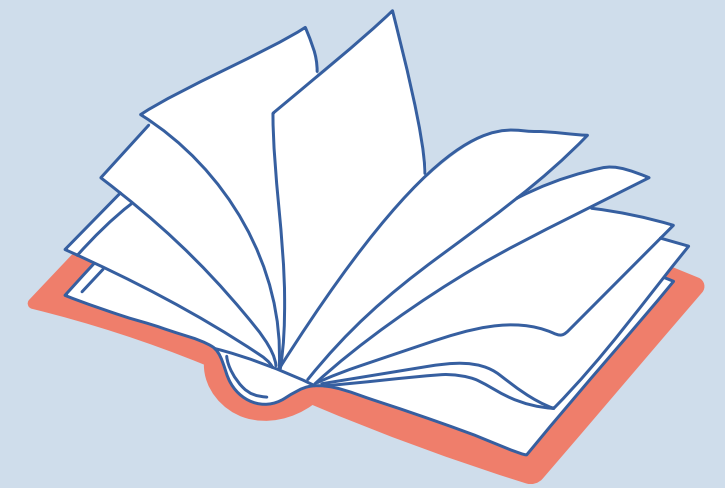


- **Badoo:** is a multilingual social networking site, free of charge, that identifies users' places and allows them to meet up with people who are geographically close.
- **Instagram:** is a social network that allows users to take photos, apply filters, and share them online.





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The most popular social networks are Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, which have the largest number of subscribers, but all these sites offer users multiple services, allow them to create content, give rise to conversations, bonds, create communities and contribute to the construction of knowledge.

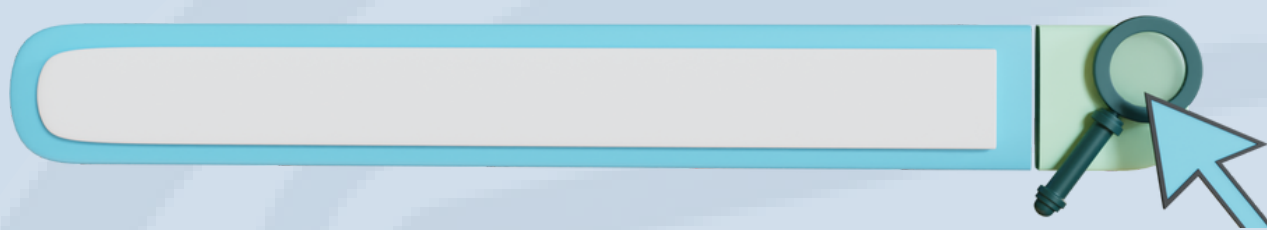
Knowledge is potentially available to everyone with a single click, and the user has gained more and more power. Social networks have taken on an informative and communicative role, they cancel the barriers of space and time and are used both as a work tool and for fun.

Social networks are constantly evolving, their development is unpredictable, they are versatile tools that live on user interactions, but they are also real environments and bring out more and more the centrality of the user, of their choices in friendships, information and in the selection of content to be disseminated.





Social networks are also strongly influencing historical sectors such as education. Today, more and more teachers feel the need to join a community to share ideas, practices, opinions, and who see in them new training opportunities that can be personalized.



## CONSCIOUS USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

*What are social media?* Social networks are modern tools for interaction between users, now widely used on the web, to publish content and create networks of contacts, between people we already know and possibly to create new friendships.

There are now many web users who use these tools on a daily basis. They are simple to use, they keep us in touch with our friends, they help us find new ones, they often offer pastimes and games, most of the time they are free.

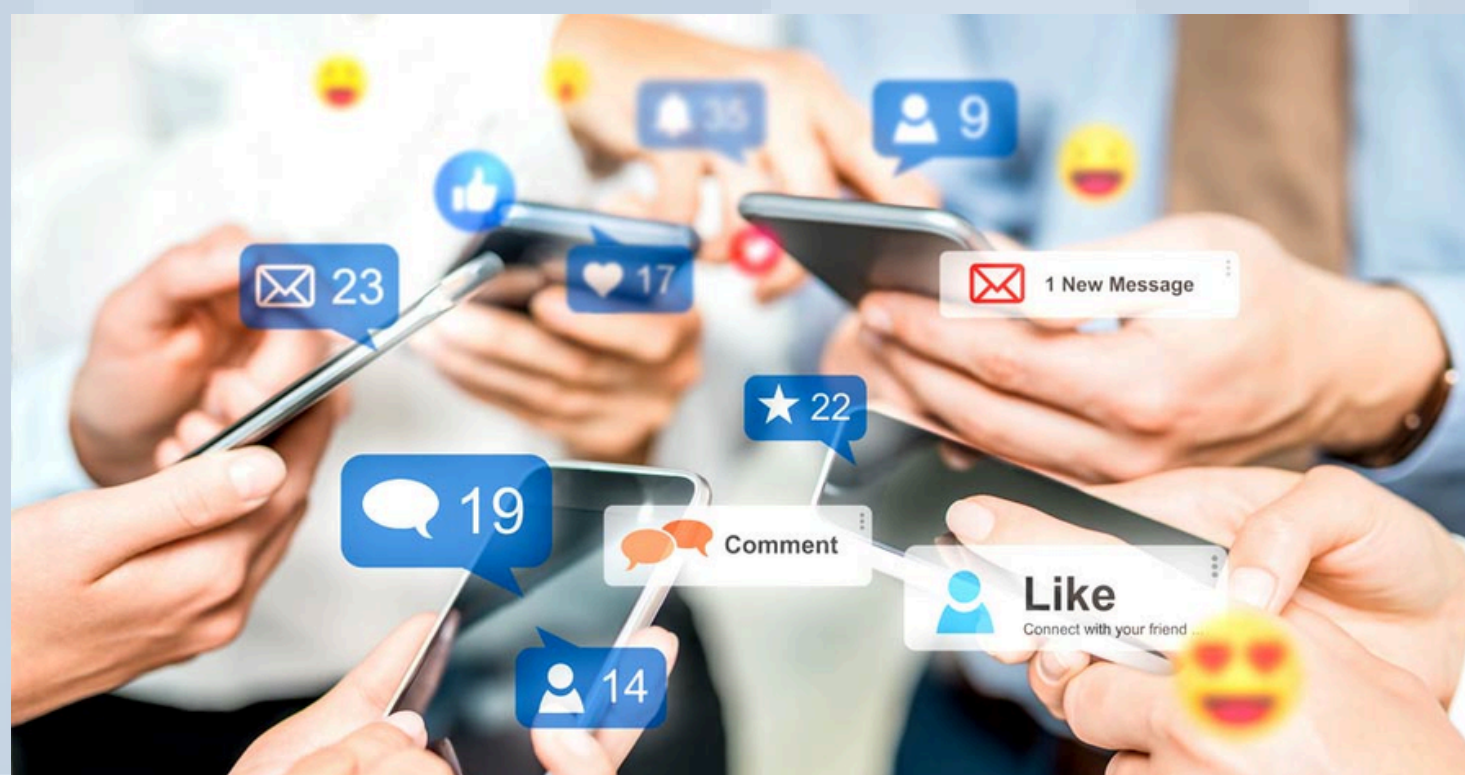
The names of the so-called "social networks" are more or less known: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Flickr, Badoo etc. All together they have hundreds of millions of users scattered around the planet and their growth seems unstoppable.





Each of these tools has its own characteristics and different purposes of use. For example, Facebook is a generalist container that focuses everything on friendships, Twitter is a so-called "microblogging" that aims to share thoughts and moods, Youtube and Flickr share videos and images respectively.

In short, there is something for everyone, not to mention the rest of the other more or less well-known social networks: from musical or literary tastes, to work experiences, any aspect concerning our interests and more generally of our lives can be compared and shared with others.



## GUIDELINES ON THE GOOD USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

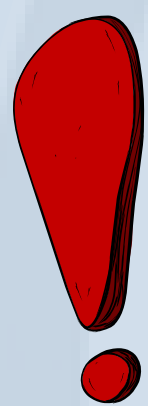
The variety offered by these services leads us to make a first reflection: all these tools, or a good part of them, potentially offer a very precise profile of who we are, and our information, even private information, can be available to everyone, or at least to users who have registered for that service.





## GUIDELINES ON THE GOOD USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

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As a first simple rule, when we use any social network, **we must therefore decide how much personal information to publish on our profile and how to share it.**

In fact, if on the one hand it is fun to include our information, our tastes and interests in our personal profile, on the other hand it can be risky to make this data public and available to everyone. Ultimately, it is enough to think a little before entering this information, and determine what we want to publish and to whom we want to make it visible.





All social networks, in fact, allow you to change privacy settings, in a more or less simple way. It is therefore necessary to have the patience to explore these areas and set the criteria for publishing our data, depending on our preferences.



There is another aspect to be borne in mind. Many of these social networks offer a free service, but they often use advertising to finance themselves. Based on the personal information we choose to publish, companies that have created a social network software may decide to resell this data to advertisers. As you can well understand, this can be "improper" use of our personal data.



Here are some key rules on the use of social networks:

- **use different passwords** if you use multiple social networks, and from other accounts created elsewhere (email accounts, forums, chats, etc.). Avoid using the same password for any service you decide to use. And most importantly, we create a password that only we can remember, so we avoid generic names that are easily found by others.





- **Don't spend too many hours in front of your PC.** Spending a lot of time on social networks can lead to isolating ourselves from others.
- **Do not post material (e.g. images and videos) that you do not know where it came from.** Given the nature of the network, it is easy to unknowingly publish copyrighted material and incur penalties.



## REAL AND VIRTUAL IDENTITY

These elements lead us to another reflection: many of us are used to using chats or forums, blogs. Compared to these tools, which are still widely used in reality, social networks offer an important novelty.

They introduce the correspondence between the identity of the real world and the "virtual" one.





If in chats and forums it was common practice to use nicknames, in modern social networks such as Facebook, we usually enter our first and last names. On the contrary, we often include a photo of ourselves, if not real image galleries (perhaps of our last beach holidays or our birthday party). Therefore, not only do we publish aspects of our lives, but we clearly trace them back to ourselves, in a unique and evident way.



We therefore also keep this in mind from the moment we decide to use these services.





## PRIVACY AND THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS



Social media is mainly used to communicate with our friends and make new ones. Having a lot of friends is certainly an important thing, and even on the net it can be nice to make new contacts and acquaintances. But every time we add a contact, of a person we don't know directly or even don't know at all, we have to keep in mind that **the latter will access all the information that we have published on our profile**. For example, the list of our friends, our photos and/or videos, our thoughts posted on the wall, or any other element that we have decided to make public in our profile.



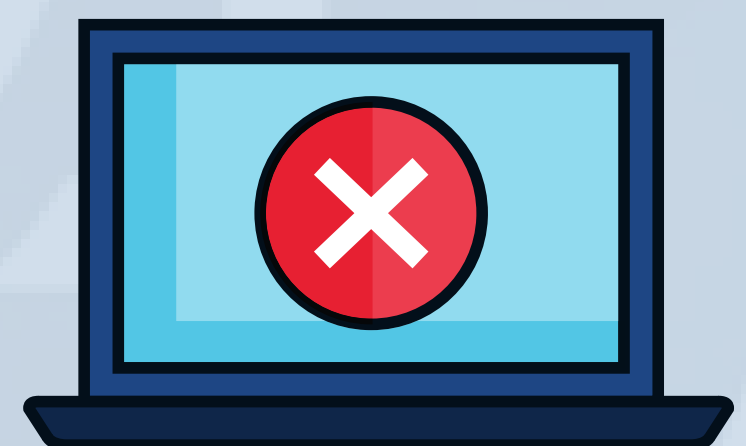
It sometimes happens that many users compete to have as many friends as possible among their contacts. In fact, it is not uncommon to see users with hundreds and thousands of contacts. This habit is largely useless (how many of those contacts will actually be friends?) and ultimately risky for our privacy.





In fact, how much can we really be pleased that a complete stranger knows our business? Probably not much. This then leads us to reflect on another aspect: it is important to select our contacts, carefully evaluating both the friendships that are requested of us, and those that we request. Or at least, if we have really decided to accept as many friends as possible, try to understand who our new contact is and possibly eliminate him later if he really does not convince us.

The basic rule that we should keep in mind would be to include in our network of contacts only the people we know even in "real" life.



## CYBER BULLYING AND IDENTITY THEFT

Not everyone is who they say they are. Identity theft is possible online, also due to forms of "cyberbullying" (perhaps by classmates that the user is adding to their friendships) that aim to damage or simply make fun of the victim on duty. Simply put, the new contact we add to our contacts, in some cases, could be a fake profile.





## MISUSE AND UNDESIRABLE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

When we act within a social network, we often assume a false sense of security, because we think we are acting in a virtual context disconnected from everyday events. In reality, some of the things we write and publish on a social network could end up having unwanted repercussions in real life, even after a long time.

In fact, it happens more and more often to read news stories that report layoffs or tensions in the workplace, or more generally about embarrassments consumed by someone who has published private facts too casually on the web.





For this reason, let's remember to be very careful about expressing thoughts about things and people, which could then be read by someone who may not like it (for example, an employer).

And more than anything, we determine how much we want to make our content public. An easy example can be that of a personnel manager of a company to whom we have sent a curriculum vitae.



It is now common practice to search for candidate data on the web, and making our social profile completely public could prove counterproductive.





## RESPECT FOR OTHERS

When we interact with these tools, we are actually relating mainly to other people, who like us populate that community. As in any context, whether real or virtual, respect for others and the use of appropriate language is very important.

Each of the social networks has its own precise policy (rules of conduct to be followed), which it would be good to always read before starting to use these tools, the violation of which can result in the suspension of the account and the definitive ban in the most serious cases.



But in general, if you want to interact with others in the most civilized and correct way possible, it is good to always remember not to use offensive language, and not to create or join groups that incite hatred against particular categories of people.





Sometimes it can also happen that we can hurt the sensibilities of others even without wanting to. Let's imagine posting (or "tagging") images of our friends that they don't want to make public, or making fun of someone on the net for something they did or said. It is very easy in such a context, even if you have no bad intentions, to run into unpleasant behaviors that can have concrete repercussions in everyday life.

So let's always think twice before publishing something about another person's private affairs, whether they are our acquaintance or not.

## **DELETING YOUR ACCOUNT FROM A SOCIAL NETWORK**

If we decide not to use a certain social network anymore, perhaps because we think it is boring or because it is no longer fashionable, always remember to close our account.





In particular, we pay attention to which deactivation options are offered by the service. Often the procedures for closing our account are not so immediate, because obviously social networks do not usually have an interest in abandoning their software. In particular, we learn to distinguish between "deactivation" and "deletion":

- Deactivation simply "suspends" our account, our data is stored on the servers of the social network in question, and can always be reactivated at a later time.
- Deletion means the permanent closure of the account and the loss of all data entered by us in our profile.

Usually it can be more difficult to delete yourself permanently, because the deletion entry can be hidden in the service options.



Delete my account

