

Battle of the Sites: Facebook vs. MySpace

BY KATIE O'NEAL

Many students at Martinsville High School spend countless hours each night logged onto Facebook or MySpace. They are looking at their friends' profiles, leaving comments, or viewing pictures. Students use these websites to connect with friends or express themselves by personalizing their spaces. But which one is better?

Both sites are free to register and millions of people worldwide use them, though MySpace is the current leader with 61.3 million users. But, Facebook is catching up with 34 million members. Many students find themselves glued to the Internet at night instead of doing their homework. "I spend around three hours a night logged onto MySpace," said freshman Garrett Kinton.

Facebook was created by Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg in February 2004, in order to let Harvard students connect with each other more easily. It later expanded to other Ivy League schools, but by the end of 2004, Facebook had millions of members. Finally, in September 2005, Facebook allowed high school students to use their site. The name Facebook was coined because of the paper "facebook" that are issued to incoming students and faculty at the beginning of the year to help them become familiar with the campus community.

Since Facebook was designed for college students, it is popular with the student body because it's easier to communicate with their other college friends. Senior Olivia Heady said, "I think I will use Facebook in college to talk to my classmates because it's easy to use."

Courtney Albers, 2007 MHS graduate, said, "Facebook was really helpful to me as I prepared for college. I met and talked to people that I might not have met otherwise. I got to know some of the girls that would be in my building. It also helped me get to know my roommate. I'd encourage

anyone to join your college's network as soon as you know where you're going!"

MySpace was created in August 2003 by Tom Anderson and Chris DeWolfe. The site was first developed as an upgrade from the popular Friendster website. It soon passed up Friendster and became the

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world's sixth most popular English-language website. MySpace attracts over 230,000 new users everyday, and has 12.5 billion page views a month.

MySpace is used more by middle and high school students, because you can customize your backgrounds and change your page to fit different personalities.

Junior Brittany Elkins said, "I like MySpace better because Facebook is too plain and boring. MySpace is much more colorful." For most college students, they don't have enough time in their busy schedules to design their page.

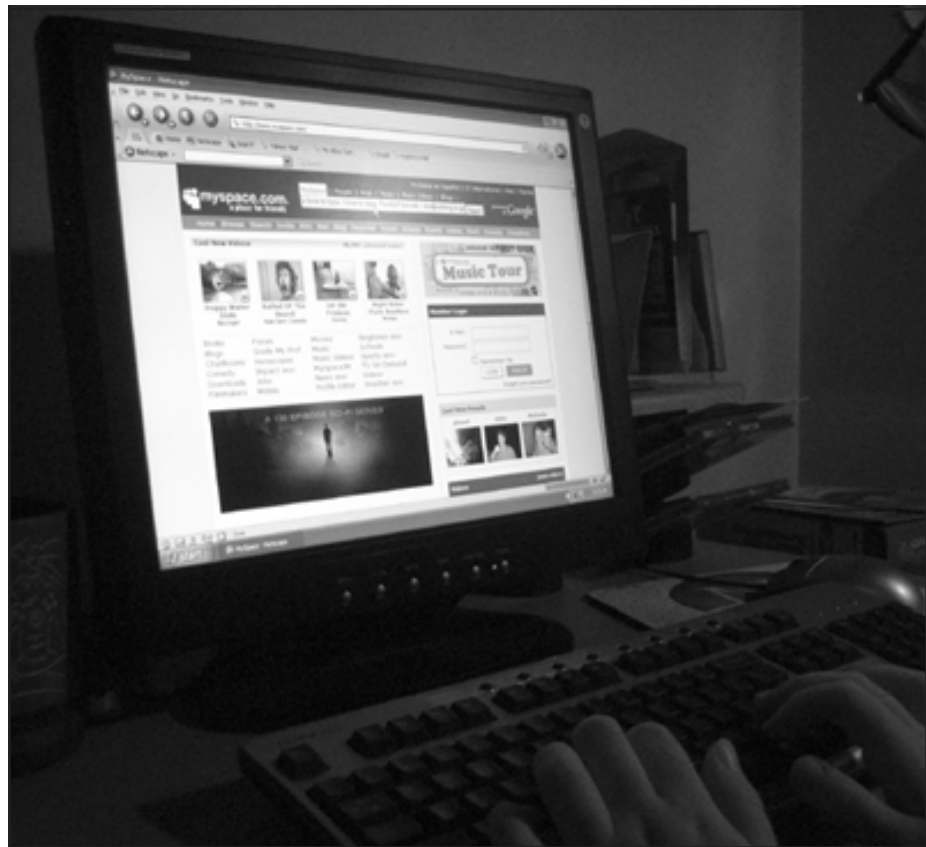


Photo Courtesy: Sarah Mosier

Above: Over the past few years, many students have signed up for MySpace. Many students spend their free time on this website. Below: Facebook originated for college students to keep in touch with other college students, but quickly spread through to the high school students.

User safety has become a major issue in today's society. Facebook is considered to be the safer of the two because the user must be a part of a closed network and cannot be under 13. On MySpace anyone over 16 can sign up. Junior Brittany Debrew said, "I definitely prefer Facebook because I'm not worried about pedophiles."

Both sites allow users to share information about themselves on their pages. On MySpace, there are two "blurb" sections: "About Me" and "Who I'd Like to Meet." Facebook offers a section where members can put their favorite quotes, interests, and activities on their page. If users want to leave a short note for a friend or show them a new picture on Facebook, they can post it on their "wall", but on MySpace the user would post a comment on the page.

Facebook has now started allowing companies to put their applications on the site. Popular applications are Superlatives, iLike, and Graffiti. Superlatives are where the user can vote on which friend is most likely to "party like a rockstar", "bring sexy back", "be a soccer mom", and "be the next Martha Stewart." iLike lets users put music on their profile, compare their tastes in music with their friends, and see when their favorite band's concert is coming to a town near them. Graffiti lets users draw pictures on their friend's profile using a "graffiti" type style.

Facebook also allows users to send their friends gifts through the site. Users get one free gift, and all others after that cost one dollar. There is a wide variety to pick from including: a roll of toilet, chocolate covered strawberries, pacifier, and even a Motorola Razr.

MySpace likes for its users to be able to express individuality. MySpace was the first of the two sites to allow music to be played on their site. More than 600,000 bands have profiles that allow users to listen to their music, view music videos, promote new albums, and find upcoming tour dates. MySpace Music attracts all kinds of bands, ranging from world famous country band, Rascal Flatts, all the way to Martinsville's own VISE.

