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## **SOCIAL NETWORKS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF MARKETING AND PR**

A social network is a social structure made of individuals (or organizations) called "nodes," which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships, or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige.

Usually site network may provide information about yourself (date of birth, school, college, hobbies, etc.), on which user account will be able to find other participants. There are both open and closed social networks. One of the common features of social networks is the system of "friends" and "groups".

In different regions the popularity of social networks varies. Thus, the network MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are more popular and prevalent in North America. Other networks are Nexopia (Canada); Bebo (UK); Facebook, Hi5, dol2day (Germany), Tagged.com (Engl.), XING (Engl.) and Skyrock (in different European countries); Public Broadcasting Service, Orkut, Facebook and Hi5 (South and Central America) (55% of Brazilian users networks prefer Orkut); Friendster, Multiply, Orkut, Xiaonei and Cyworld (Asia), Last.fm, LinkedIn, XING, MyAnimeList.

By the number of users the leaders are MySpace (255 000 000), Facebook (171 000 000), Windows Live Spaces (120 000 000), Habbo Hotel (121 000 000 ), Friendster (Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, 90 000 000), Hi5 (80 000 000), Tagged.com (70 000 000), and some Chinese social network.

Russian-speaking are V Kontakte.ru, Moikrug.ru, My.mail.ru, Odnoklassniki.ru, and LiveJournal.ru, Professional.ru, Profeo.ua, Persona-pr.livejournal.com, Lit.hiblogger.net.

Social network analysis views social relationships in terms of network theory consisting of nodes and ties. Nodes are the individual actors within the networks, and ties are the relationships between the actors. The resulting graph-based structures are often very complex. There can be many kinds of ties between the nodes. Research in a number of academic fields has shown that social networks operate on many levels, from families up to the level of nations, and play a critical

role in determining the way problems are solved, organizations are run, and the degree to which individuals succeed in achieving their goals.

In its simplest form, a social network is a map of all of the relevant nodes between all the nodes being studied. The network can also be used to measure social capital -- the value that an individual gets from the social network. These concepts are often displayed in a social network diagram, where nodes are the points and ties are the lines.

What do virtual worlds, Twitter, LinkedIn, chat rooms, Plaxo, flicker, and digg along with all of the other online social networks have to do with a company's public relations efforts?

For now is plenty. For the future is more than plenty. Public relations professionals can use all or some of these networks to expand news coverage of a company or organization, network with other public relations professionals and keep up-to-date with the news from other companies with national, state and local news.

Virtual worlds and social networks open the doors for connecting with public relations people from all walks of business, non-profit, entertainment and political platforms from any and all countries around the world.

Blogging is the new back door to media interviews. Reporters monitor blogs for breaking stories and events to expand into print or television which makes this media a good source to get contacted for an interview.

Who are the bloggers or blog readers? According to technorati.com, 50 percent of bloggers are between the ages of 18 to 34, two-thirds are male and 70 percent have college degrees. Pew Internet & American Life Project reports that 27 percent of Internet users read blogs.

For advertisers social networks provide unique opportunities for direct contact with consumers. Every day, millions of users talk about the companies, their products and services by sharing their opinions and impressions. As a result, a separately-taken party of a network community can spoil (or vice versa), the reputation of a company with multi-million turnover.

Online social networking can be highly time consumer. Nonetheless, using the Internet to do professional networking is becoming the standard and for the immediate future must do activity for public relations.