



You are going to read a passage about social networks. For questions 1 – 8 choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

## Social networks

It is difficult for us to imagine a world without Twitter and Facebook. But the social networks were launched no earlier than eight years ago. Yet, people have been using digital media for networking, socializing and information gathering for over 30 years.

It started in August, 1973 in Berkeley, California, with the BBS, short for Bulletin Board System. The BBSes were online meeting places which allowed users to communicate with a central system where they could download files or games (often including pirated software) and post messages to other users. They were, in many ways, precursors to the Internet. They were used by hobbyists who didn't use their real names, which they only revealed to real-life friends.

Online services, like Prodigy and CompuServe, were the first large scale corporate attempts to bring an interactive, "social" online experience to the masses. They were the first to offer something few had ever experienced: true interaction over the Internet. You could send a message to your friends via "e-mail" or join one of thousands of discussion forums about any important subject.

Online services acquired popularity and, in comparison to BBS, they catered to a more home-user kind of public. They offered a safe, moderated environment for social networking and discussions. But the true precursor to today's social networking sites was AOL (America Online). This was, in many ways, the "Internet before the Internet", and its member-created communities were its most important and fascinating feature.

Starting from 1994, private Internet service providers (ISPs) began to appear in the United States. This gave millions of home users the chance to enjoy unlimited online experiences. Usenet was the first centre for discussions. By the late 90s, Internet forums started acquiring great popularity

and began replacing Usenet and BBSes as the primary nexus for topical discussions.

The first networking website was SixDegrees, founded in 1997, which allowed people to create profiles and connect with friends, family members and acquaintances. This interactive, social web application style became known as "Web 2.0". It was one of the first manifestations of social networking websites in the format we see today. Launched just a year later, in 2003, LinkedIn took a decidedly more serious approach to the social networking phenomenon. Helping people with job searching and building your career, LinkedIn was, and still is, a networking resource for business people who want to connect with other professionals. In fact, LinkedIn contacts are referred to as "connections". Today, over 175 million people use this network to exchange information, ideas and opportunities.

MySpace, another social network, introduced in 2003 and headquartered in Beverly Hills, California, is still very popular in the US. It offers its users music, music videos, and a funky, feature-filled environment.

Yet, the world's most valuable social network is Facebook. Founded by Mark Zuckerberg together with his college roommates, Facebook was launched in 2004. It was initially limited to Harvard students, but then it was expanded to other colleges in the Boston area and gradually to other universities and ultimately to the whole world. In eight years it has become the most popular and widely used social network in the world with over one billion users. After registering, you can create a personal profile, add other users as friends and exchange messages. Not only, it is the place to go to share photos and catch up with friends. You can also discuss the day's news, interact with consumer brands, and colleges and universities.

- 1 The use of social networks dates back
  - A to the 70s.
  - B to the 80s.
  - C to the 90s.
  - D to the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
  
- 2 The BBS, short for Bulletin Board System, was used by
  - A professionals who were working in a firm.
  - B people who wanted to download files or games.
  - C people who didn't want to use their own names because they were criminals.
  - D people who wanted to communicate with their friends.
  
- 3 Online services were
  - A more popular than BBS.
  - B more expensive than BBS.
  - C more exclusive than BBS.
  - D more specific than BBS.
  
- 4 What replaced BBSes in the late 90s?
  - A MySpace.
  - B Facebook.
  - C LinkedIn.
  - D SixDegrees.
  
- 5 LinkedIn helps people
  - A to communicate with colleagues of the same company all over the world.
  - B to catch up with friends and relatives.
  - C to download files and games.
  - D to connect with other professionals.
  
- 6 MySpace was launched
  - A a long time before Facebook.
  - B before LinkedIn.
  - C at the same time as LinkedIn.
  - D after LinkedIn.
  
- 7 Facebook was initially created for
  - A a group of friends.
  - B students.
  - C students and teachers.
  - D everybody.
  
- 8 Which of these social networks took the most serious approach to social networking?
  - A MySpace.
  - B Twitter.
  - C Facebook.
  - D LinkedIn.

### TIP

You don't need to understand every word of the text to answer the questions. So don't waste time on trying to understand expressions you don't know.