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Online Social Networks: A Survey of a Global Phenomenon

by

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Online Social Networks: a Survey of a Global Phenomenon

Abstract

Online social networks became a global phenomenon with enormous social as well as economic impact within a few years. Along the most popular online social network, Facebook, counts currently more than 850 million users worldwide. Consequently, online social networks attract a great deal of attention among practitioners as well as researchers. The goal of this article is to provide an overview of online social networks in order to contribute to a better understanding of this worldwide phenomenon. In this context, we address for example the following questions: What are the major functionalities and characteristics of online social networks? What are the users' motives for using them and how did online social networks emerge and develop over time? What is the impact and value of online social networks from a business perspective and what are corresponding challenges and risks?

Keywords: Online Social Network, Structural Characteristics, Business Value

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