Facebook - For Good And For Bad

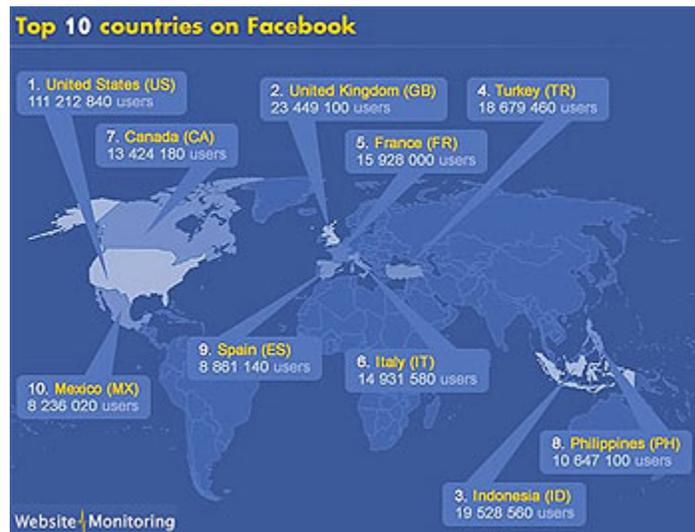(http://www.lamblion.us/2010/07/facebook-for-good-and-for-bad.html)

By Nathan Jones

Are you on Facebook? Statistically, chances are "of course" is the most likely answer you'll be giving.

Boasting over 400 million active users, Facebook is THE social network phenomenon whose usership dwarfs the entire population of the United States (309,745,204 people as of this writing according to the U.S. Census Bureau). More than likely, you're one of the million-fold masses.

DigitalBuzzBlog's "Facebook: Facts & Figures For 2010" shows that this modern marvel of communication and social connectivity has created a new era in which mankind communicates. From its humble beginnings cobbled together by students in a Harvard dorm in February of 2004, Facebook has amassed some staggeringly high statistics for 2010.

Top 10 countries on Facebook

1. United States (US) 111 212 840 users
2. United Kingdom (GB) 23 449 100 users
4. Turkey (TR) 18 679 460 users
7. Canada (CA) 13 424 180 users
5. France (FR) 15 928 000 users
9. Spain (ES) 8 861 140 users
6. Italy (IT) 14 931 580 users
10. Mexico (MX) 8 236 020 users
8. Philippines (PH) 10 647 100 users
3. Indonesia (ID) 19 528 560 users

Website Monitoring

People:

- 35 million users update their status each day
- 55 minutes spent on per day per user
- 20 million people become fans of pages each day
- 130 friends average per user
- 13 groups the average user is a member of
- 25 comments the average user writes each month
- 3.5 million events created each month
- Texas Hold'em Poker is the favorite game

Site:

- 60 million status updates per day
- 3 billion photos added each month
- 5 billion pieced of content shared each week
- 3 million active pages

Businesses:

- 1.5 million local business have pages

Technology:

- 500,000 active applications
- 70 translations available translated by 300,000 users
- 100 million users connect via mobile

Facebook's blend of technology, people and connectivity means power, and not just the power over private information. The real power behind Facebook is the ability to extend one's ideological reach over a wider mass of people. This can be a power for good or for bad.

For Bad

The best example of bad is the "Kill a Jew" Facebook Group. Started by a user named "Alex Cookson" and adorned with a big swastika as it's profile image, this person created an event called "Kill a Jew Day." As reported by *The Jerusalem Post* on July 5, 2010, the "Web site urged users to violence 'anywhere you see a Jew' between July 4 and July 22.'" Cookson wrote, "You know the drill guys." One user even commented, "Can't wait to rape the dead baby Jews." Another user posted images of corpses piled on one another, while a third posted quotes by Adolf Hitler.


This is the fourth anti-Semetic site taken down by Facebook within just a few days. Facebook spokesman Andrew Noyes commented, "Unfortunately ignorant people exist and we absolutely feel a social responsibility to silence them on Facebook if their statements turn to direct hate. That's why we have policies that prohibit hateful content and we have built a robust reporting infrastructure and an expansive team to review reports and remove content quickly."

Nevertheless, the damage was done. David Appletree, founder of the Jewish Internet Defense website (JIDF), reported that such efforts in online anti-Semitism "has already helped spur violent incidents, such as the 2007 assault on Holocaust author Elie Wiesel in San Francisco by a Holocaust denier, and the gun attack on the Holocaust Museum in Washington by a white supremacist armed with a rifle, which claimed the life of a security guard."

For Good

That same power to connect ideas to people which man can use for evil, can be used for good as well, and for God.

Take the Christ in Prophecy Facebook Group. With almost 1,900 people engaged in sharing the blessed hope of Jesus Christ's soon return, discussing Bible prophecy, sharing prayer requests, witnessing to visitors, and hashing out the tough doctrines and issues — this group has connected people from all over the planet who never would have met otherwise. It gives believers in Christ Christian connectivity and unites the brethren in our common love of the Lord. It's also a safe environment, moderated by a godly man who's earned the title "Son of Thunder."
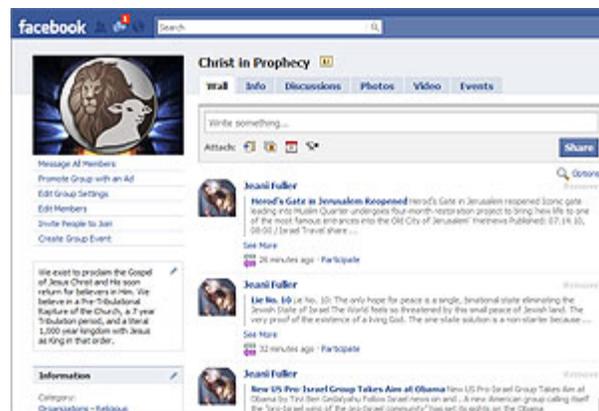
For a Time

Should Facebook, as the JIDF has recommended, implement IP bans on people involved in such material, as well as call upon law enforcement to get involved, Facebook be subpoenaed, and the IP's of the people threatening and inciting violence should be obtained so that legal action can be immediately pursued? Or, should Facebook instead implement a passive filter that detects keywords which could prevent such "hate" pages from being loaded in the first place?

And, how should Facebook describe "hate"? From the Bible, Christians know that we are to hate evil and love good (Amos 5:15; Rom. 12:9), and so know that anti-Semitism is very

evil. We are even told that anti-Semitism's growth will play a huge end time role ([Zech. 12:2-3](#); [13:8-9](#); [Rev. 12:13-17](#)).

But, what of those who get it all upside down and hate good? Again, what is meant for good can also serve evil. What if the words "pro-life" and "Christian" and "Jesus" are found offensive (and they are to a growing and evil vocal group), and end up being censured?

Long before Spiderman's Uncle Ben said "with great power comes great responsibility," Jesus pointed out in [Luke 12:48](#), *"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."* Believers in Christ have been given much with Facebook, and we should use this far-reaching phenomenon for good while being good is allowed in these darkening times.