

Kyle Stine
Cultural History of the Internet

Friendster Annotated Bibliography

Boyd, Danah, and Jeffrey Heer. 2006. "Profiles as Conversation: Networked Identity Performance on Friendster." In *Proceedings of the 39th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* 3, 1–10, <https://doi-org.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/10.1109/HICSS.2006.394>.

In what has to be among the earliest scholarly articles on social networking, Boyd and Heer discuss how the profile has become a means of constructing identity online and building social connections. The key idea is the shift from thinking about profiles as static representations of someone's character to an understanding of the dynamic role that profiles play in how users present themselves online. The insight is almost so obvious that it could easily be missed: people learn how to construct their identities online by constructing profiles, reading the profiles of others, and adjusting their self-presentations in dynamic interaction with others.

Chafkin, Max. 2007. "How to Kill a Great Idea!" *Inc.*, June 1, 2007. <https://www.inc.com/magazine/20070601/features-how-to-kill-a-great-idea.html>.

In an account similar to the *New York Times* story by Rivlin in 2005, Chafkin outlines the failures at Friendster that led to its becoming a social-media also-ran. The article lays out in great detail the company decisions and engineering challenges that set Friendster up to fail. By 2007, the dominance of Facebook is beginning to become apparent, and the relationship between that new social-media giant and Friendster is much clearer.

Fiegerman, Seth. 2014. "Friendster Founder Tells His Side of the Story, 10 Years After Facebook." *Mashable*, February 3, 2014. <https://mashable.com/2014/02/03/jonathan-abrams-friendster-facebook/>.

In this article, Fiegerman interviews Friendster founder Jonathan Abrams, who is off on a new venture with Nuzzle, a social news aggregator. Some of the more interesting parts of the interview are when Abrams recounts his relationship with Mark Zuckerberg and the never-fully-explored thought of buying out Facebook shortly after its emergence. The article is a trove of possible quotations to fill out the final project.

Friendster. 2015. "Friendster Is Taking a Break." June 14, 2015. Accessed November 2, 2020. <http://www.friendster.com/index.html>.

The current Friendster homepage announces that the site's attempted shift to serve the gaming community has not gone as well as hoped and that the site is shut down effective June 14, 2015.

Garcia, David, Pavlin Mavrodiev, and Frank Schweitzer. 2013. "Social Resilience in Online Communities: The Autopsy of Friendster." In *Proceedings of the First ACM Conference on Online Social Networks*, 39–50. <https://doi-org.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/10.1145/2512938.2512946>.

In this later article from 2013, the authors compare Friendster to several other social-media sites—Livejournal, Facebook, Orkut, and Myspace—to map trends in what causes social-media sites to decline. The authors propose a definition of *resilience* as a network's ability to withstand moments of large user exit, quantifying this in terms of a cost-benefit analysis for a user to stay as others are leaving. Friendster is the chosen case study for considering the decline of networks.

Lerner, Leah. n.d. "How Friendster Works." *HowStuffWorks*. <https://computer.howstuffworks.com/internet/social-networking/networks/friendster.htm>.

Lerner offers a nice rundown of how Friendster worked, complete with website images and sample profiles. This will be important for getting a sense of how this now defunct social network once worked.

Marwick, Alice E. 2005. "'I'm a Lot More Interesting than a Friendster Profile': Identity Presentation, Authenticity and Power in Social Networking Services." *Association of Internet Researchers* 6, 1–26. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1884356.

Martin, Adam. 2011. "Friendster to Thankfully Erase All Your Old Photos." *Atlantic*, April 26 2011. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/04/friendster-thankfully-erase-your-old-photos/350020/>.

Rivlin, Gary. 2005. "Friendster, Love and Money." *New York Times*, January 24, 2005. <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/24/technology/friendster-love-and-money.html>.

This article from the early years of social networking, when Facebook was first entering the scene (though not mentioned in this article), documents the upheaval at Friendster as MySpace was gaining traction and users. As concerned investor Mark J. Pincus put it, "I think Friendster really missed their big opportunity." The article offers a nice perspective on the business side of the first social network sites, how important it was to get there first and reap the rewards of network effects. It is also interesting to note that MySpace is unequivocally seen as the up-and-coming, innovative social media force, with over five times as many users as Friendster.

Row, Heath. 2004. "What the Heck Is Social Networking?" *Fast Company*, March 16, 2004. <https://www.fastcompany.com/664657/what-heck-social-networking>.

Doesn't the title say it all? Social networking is such a new and insufficiently understood phenomenon that tech writers have to take time out to answer some preliminary questions. Row...