

# Middle School Career and Technical Education Learning-in-Place Activity

## Wonderopolis Wonder of the Day #2387

### Who Invented Social Media?



Directions: Read the passage below and complete assignments on the back.

Have You Ever Wondered...?

- Who invented social media?
- Which social media site is the biggest?
- How does social media affect us?

Do you watch stories on Instagram? Do you tweet about your thoughts? Many people share blog posts on Tumblr or play with filters on Snapchat. Others find friends on Facebook. Social media sites are everywhere today. Have you ever WONDERed how social media started?

What pops into your head when you hear “social media”? Many people’s minds immediately go to Facebook. Facebook is a social media giant, but it wasn’t the first one. The first social media site was Six Degrees, made by Andrew Weinreich in 1997. Six Degrees was pretty popular with users until 2003. That’s when Tom Anderson made MySpace. This new site let users make profiles that played their favorite music. They could even design their own backgrounds. MySpace quickly became the most used social media site in the world.

Then, Facebook changed everything. Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook when he was a sophomore at Harvard in 2004. It went public in 2006, and people flocked to the site. Over the years, Facebook did a lot to stay on top. It watched its competitors and added their most popular traits to its own site. Facebook added hashtags to keep up with Twitter. Later, it added stories to compete with Snapchat. Today, Facebook is the world’s biggest social media site. It has 2.32 billion monthly users.

When Instagram went live in 2010, Facebook knew it had a tough competitor. Instagram is a much more visual place than Facebook. This quickly made it attractive to younger users. On Instagram, users can add filters to their photos and watch each others' daily stories. When Facebook bought Instagram in 2011, it further cemented its place in the social media world. In 2018, Instagram had one billion users. Many think the site will one day be bigger than Facebook.

In Wonderopolis, we use social media pretty often! We tweet out Wonders of the Day and talk with our friends on Facebook. We even follow WONDERful classrooms on Instagram! However, we also know to limit the time we spend on social media. Some studies have found that social media users are less happy and more anxious than others. Social media has also been blamed for spreading misinformation. It’s a great tool for staying connected, but should be used carefully.

It’s always important to stay safe online. This is especially true on social media, where you may encounter people you don’t know. There are plenty of ways to stay safe. First, never share your passwords with others. Second, don’t talk to strangers. Even if someone says they know your friends or family, don’t talk to people you don’t know. Finally, don’t give out your personal information. Sharing things like your phone number or address can put you in danger.

#### WONDER WORDS

Connect  
Users

Profiles  
Unique

Personal  
Social

Visual  
Privacy

Anxious

**Reflect on the following questions. Explain your answers to these questions in a one paragraph reflection. All three questions can be answered within the same paragraph.**

1. People have always enjoyed connecting with friends and family. Today, we use our most powerful tool — the Internet — to do so. What do you use the most to connect with friends and family?
2. What do you think is the most popular social media site? Why?
3. What will be the next big social media site?

### **Try It Out**

1. Find an adult friend or family member and interview them. Ask them about their most preferred social media site. Ask them to explain why they selected that particular site?
2. It's always important to stay safe online. List three (3) ways in which students can stay safe while on social media.

### **Match the word to its definition:**

Privacy	Join together so as to provide access and communication
Visual	The state of being away from other people
Profiles	(plural) a brief written description that provides information about someone or something
Anxious	Feeling worried, nervous, or afraid about something uncertain
Connect	Relating to or using sight

### **What Have You Learned?**

#### **1. This Wonder was mostly about...**

- a. why everyone should have a social media account.
- b. the history of social media and how we can use social media responsibly.
- c. why Instagram is better than Facebook.
- d. Six Degrees, the first social media website.

#### **2. Which of these is NOT a way to stay safe online?**

- a. Don't share your passwords with anyone
- b. Don't talk to strangers
- c. Only talk to strangers who say they know your friends or family
- d. Don't share personal information like your phone number or address

#### **3. Who created Facebook?**

- a. Andrew Weinreich
- b. Tom Anderson
- c. Bill Gates
- d. Mark Zuckerberg