



Top social networking sites in India

December 2008 vs. December 2007

Total India - Age 15+, Home/Work locations*

	Total unique visitors		
	2007	2008	% Change
Internet: Total audience	26,240	32,099	22
Social networking	12,795	19,369	51
Orkut.com	7,123	12,869	81
Facebook.com	1,619	4,044	150
Bharatstudent.com	1,736	3,269	88
hi5.com	714	2,012	182
ibibo.com	1,970	990	-50
MySpace sites	352	741	110
LinkedIn.com	293	513	75
PerfSpot.com	2,106	433	-79
BIGADDA.com	515	385	-25
Fropper.com	256	248	-3

Source: comScore World Metric. * Excludes visits from public computers such as internet cafes and access from mobile phones or PDAs.



...er... of this growth has... in the last few months... of the December 2007-December 2008 period. For instance, user base of career networking portal Apparcircle.com has doubled, and that of techtribe.com, another such...

Unlike standard job boards and newspaper classifieds that stop with letting people know of free job opportunities, social networking gateways provide a platform for people to come together, exchange ideas and get support, says Rahul Kulkarni of Google India, which owns Orkut. "What is unique is that unlike standard job portals, they are not posting resumes and competing against each other. They are there to help each other and extend emotional support."

Such networking helps to connect with the right people and thus

Yogesh Bansal, founder and CEO of Apparcircle.com, says knowledge of the industry, and even the firm, plays a critical role in a country like India, where culture and interpersonal relationships carry great significance. "Here, companies see if their prospective employees can adapt to their culture," he says, adding that social networking with people who matter could come handy in such cases.

The sites are a savior to not just those who have lost jobs, but even to the 'passive job seekers', who have jobs yet fear retrenchment. They have registered themselves on the networking sites to keep track of industry developments and job openings.

The trend is despite the innate reluctance of Indians to network, often cited as a reason for low internet penetration in India (according to comScore, only 5 per cent of the total population are internet users). The pace at which social networking is growing here is forcing a change in conventional notions that Indians are mere hardworkers and not good at networking. "The fact that people in tier 1 and tier 2 cities visit cyber cafes and don't hesitate to write messages in broken English conveys a lot. They are transcending cultural boundaries to express themselves and build relationships," says Kulkarni.

Ashish Kashyap, CEO of ibibo.com, a leading portal that thrives on self-marketing, agrees with Kulkarni. For him, social media is a platform that aids smooth expression of thoughts and, hence, is truly interactive. "Other forms of digital media are one-sided," he says.

So not just its brick and mortar roads, India's share of virtual space would also henceforth be clogged, as recession gains deeper roots in