

# Making sense of the future



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23<sup>rd</sup> November 2006  
The Future of Social Networks

# Today's journey

- Ecademy as a Case Study
- How we run our Social Network
- Why are social networks emerging?
- Lessons we have learnt
- Online behaviour
- The opportunity for the Brands
- The opportunity for you as an individual – how you should use the Social Networks



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# Ecademy

- Started in 1998
- Connecting business people (entrepreneurs and SMEs)
- Purpose: To increase Emotional and Financial Wealth across the Globe
- Demographics –
  - 65% aged between 35-54
  - Mature Professionals
  - Home owners
  - Positive and constructive contributors
- 186 Countries
- 107,000 members (6,000 in November 06)
- Subscription based business model



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# About Ecademy as a Case Study

- **Started** as E business 1998
  - 2001 bubble burst
- **Evolved** – 2000 had become entrepreneurs and general business
- **Ethos**
- Found they wanted friendship and support, not just sales!
  - Positive constructive communication
  - Know what we stand for 'The wine bar' or the 'pub'
    - Club Creation, allows for leadership in interest groups
- **Values**
  - Relationship first business second
  - Winning by sharing
- **Our Goal** - A Friend in Every City
- **Our management style**
  - Penny the Heart, Thomas the Brain, Glenn the nervous system
  - The importance of teams and understanding of 'being in your flame' mentoring, supporting and collaborating

# Demand High Quality Service - Web 2.0

- Friendship, support, culture, warmth, belonging, accidental discovery and a place to be themselves both personally and professionally
- Personal Profile indexed hourly by Google
- Their Network fully managed like a CRM system
- Email Messaging
- Clubs (Public and Private)
- Meetings, Diary and Events (up to 500 a month)
- Blogs, Polls, Jobs & News
- Marketplace to buy and sell
- Extremely Sophisticated Site Search
- Fully integrated with Microsoft Outlook
- Fully integrated with Skype
- Fully integrated with their RSS news feed
- Instant online support and online training toolbar
- ... and now Podcasting, Vodcasting, Video-Conferencing, Payment Collection at Club Level, Financial incentives to recommend site ...

# Social Networks are here!



## #1 Europe is Catching Up to the US European Social Networking/Community Sites are Emerging

General	 UK >4m	 France 3.7m	 Pan-European >1m	 Pan-European/ US >200k	 UK Thousands	 Ireland/UK NA
General/ Specialists	 France / Women 2.4m	 UK / Photo >1m	 UK / Music >200k	 UK NA	 UK / Photo NA	
Business	 UK ~1m	 UK NA	 UK NA	 UK NA		
Youth	 Pan-European >5.4m	 Northern Europe >1.2m	 Scandinavian ~1m			
Mobile	 France 8.5m	 France 5.9m	 France NA	 France NA	 France NA	
Dating	 Germany ~3.3m	 Germany >1.5m	 Pan-European / France >0.5m			
Gaming	 NA >27m	 UK >15m	 UK >9m	 UK >5m	 UK >100k	

Note: User numbers provided where available

European Intern



## The reason we are seeing Social Networks emerge

- Isolation – the need for friendship
- Opinions, sharing and caring – the need for information
- Global Human Consciousness
- The technology – Web 2.0
- Where else can the brands turn to -

# How we run our Social Network

- **Traditional Roles**
  - Founder – ambassador, maintain the ethos, speaking, sharing
  - Chairman and thought leader, speaking, BlackStar
  - CEO – runs the business
  - CTO - runs the site
  - Commercial Director – the Brands and Associate Program
  - Global Director – Territory Leaders across the world
  - Support - answer queries - reactive
- **New Roles**
  - **Mentors** – represent the community
  - **Buddies** – welcome new members
  - **Best Practice Team** – peer to peer complaints
  - **Policy Director** – to protect the values
- **Our Business Beliefs**
  - Subscription model – members feed us not advertising
  - Heart, Brain and Nervous System – we are all in our flame
  - We are all very much IN the network – available and responsible

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# Lessons we have learnt

- Ethics and Values are critical, rules of the game and expectations
- Don't plan just play - adapt
- The community (our customers) know best
- Allow evolution to take place
- Listen ALL the time
- Web 2.0, **filter** so it is useful!!
- Tools vs. Community – BIG difference
- Guiding and teaching – HOW to NETWORK
- Passion and Purpose
- EVERYONE sharing the same purpose – globally

# Online Behaviour – our responsibilities

- Protection of reputation is critical – to be ‘Goggled’
- Libel – Global Internet Law
- Child like attitude to bullying and intimidation and cliques
- Consequences of action – not understood so taught
- Owner responsibility
- Teaching and Monitoring Best Practice
- System to manage upsets and conflict – arbitration and advice
- Subscription is critical – THEY are who they say they are
  - No fake accounts
  - Total authenticity and trust

# Opportunities for the Brands

- This is not another media opportunity to broadcast
- This is a cause sharing the passion and purpose
- A place to learn and listen
- Opportunity for loyalty - stickiness
- Cannot own the customer, only the brand
  - Eg -Pedigree
- Will brands eventually have their own Social Networks?

OR

- Learn to use others?
- Will they have a Social Network Director?



# Trends and opportunities

- The Trends

- Information Overload – Over stimulation, can't keep up
- Various new media making it harder and harder to keep in touch and maintain dialogue with consumers
- Internet has liberated consumers to do as they wish
- Customers growing increasingly sceptical of organizations
- Organizations and institutions disengage from customers through automation and process improvement

- The Opportunity

- Dialogue through online community
- Online Community based around some kind of unique service, topic, cause, belief, segment or purpose
- Organizations evolve to being “Community Corporations”

# Social Networks *versus* Corporations

Social Networks	Corporations
New World	Old World
Engage and discuss	Broadcast
Relationship driven	Transaction driven
Purpose driven	Income Driven
Who you are	What your provide
Listen and learn	Tell
Passion and purpose	Task related
Talent	Skill based
Friendship	Elevator Pitch
Random	Targeted
Heart	Brain
Character/reputation	Brand Image
Trust	Fear
Transparent	Closed
Contribution to others	Share Price for shareholders

# The opportunity for you...

- What is your brand?
- What is your purpose
- What do you represent?
- Who are you? Not what are you?
- What is your contribution?
- What is your reputation?
- Where are you on Google?
- What do people read about you?
- Do you have a network?
- Our kids on BeBo, after hols, clubs – they have a brand a reputation and a network ?
- **Do you?**



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# A Friend in Every City – our purpose

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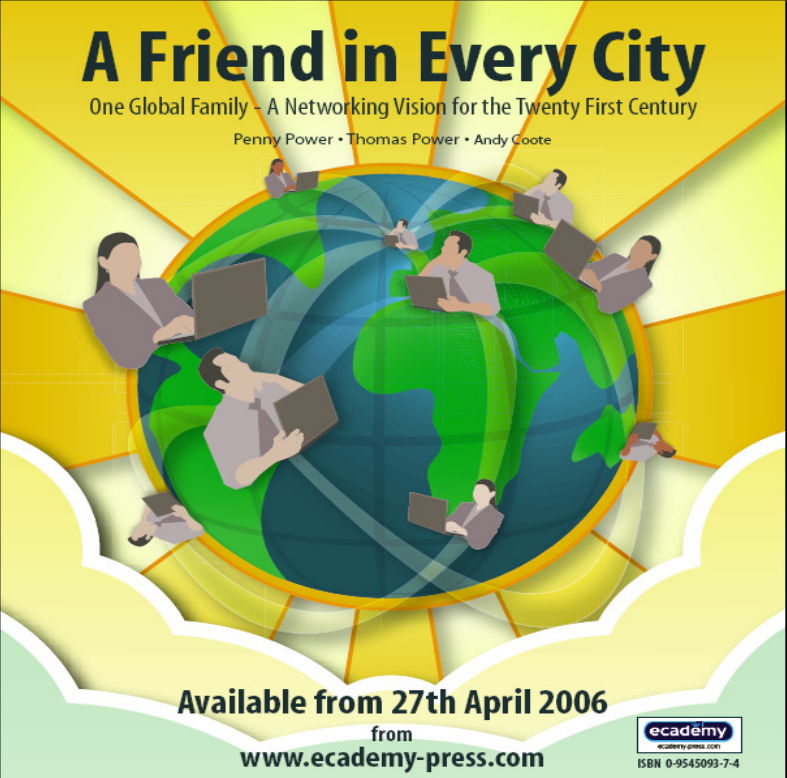
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Available from 27th April 2006  
from  
[www.ecademy-press.com](http://www.ecademy-press.com)

**ecademy**  
ecademy-press.com  
ISBN 0-9545093-7-4

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