

# Poke-poke



## status update

*Congratulations Facebook, you rock.*

According to Hitwise, Facebook has become the most visited website in the United States. Its market share of visits was up 185% over the same time last year. Just to compare, Google was up around nine percent.

I was going to Google what that meant, but it just seemed cruel.

I believe it means that we are spending more time poking people we wouldn't waste the time of day to chat with than we are looking up important stuff like sports stats or interesting uses for peanut butter (which, incidentally, include lubricant, pet pill disguiser and paper label remover. Really. I Googled it).

We've all Googled ourselves from time to time, many of us using a computer.

But facebook it, Facebook is taking over the world.

As you read this, I am on Facebook. Go ahead... go friend me... I'll be there. It's where I live now.

Facebook tempts us with the egotistical promise that someone somewhere on the planet, really, really wants to know every single errant thought that crosses our

minds. AND they want to see photos. AND they want to know what we think about their thoughts. AND photos.

Capitalized conjunctions aside, Facebook is the perfect place to cut and paste the creative work of others into our electronic personas instead of actually doing something creative or original ourselves, thus saving time that we can then use to do more poking and less talking. How am I today? Just check out the stolen lyric from someone else's song I have posted as my "status update." Apparently today I am a little Olivia Newton John (pre-Grease).

It's a disease.

I must comment on your new cat photo, or I will die.

Oops, hang on a sec... gotta return a poke. Back now. LMAO. Freakin' funny cats.

Like you, I joined initially to see what all the fuss was about. In its original days, Facebookers were less concerned about security so you could scan a stranger's profile, check out their friends, and even their friends' friends. It was a voyeuristic orgy of peekage. Not that any of us did that sort of thing, of course.

Once the lurking was curtailed, the search was on for co-workers and family members as we embarked on a wildly competitive jag to snag as many friends as possible.

In those early days, getting a Friends request was a giddy high.

Oooooh... someone wants to be my friend!!! INSTANT ADD.



BY MARK LA POINTE

Now, of course, we are more discerning of the company we keep. Do I know them? Will they clutter my page with application drivels and invites to lame events? Or worse, will they not be interested in *my* brilliant application newsfeed and *my* "oh so important" event?

After the friends came the games... sorry "applications". Now when I'm too tired to poke, I can find out what kind of dog I am, or what country song tells my story... or, God help me, play Farmville (along with over 83 million other monthly users).

(By the way, my answers are dachshund and Goodbye Earl. Also, I have never been too tired to poke. I know it happens to men my age but, knock on wood, I still can.)

And let's not forget the frustration of the endless program updates. I just figure out where everything is so I can steer the U.S.S Facebook without having to rely on Mr. Sulu, when BAM... my life is chaos again, and instead of checking my notifications I am driving straight into the sun while Yeoman Rand looks intensely into the soft focus camera. In its present incarnation, I still can't find the damn "Sign out" tab.

It has only taken a few years for a simple social networking tool to become the world's biggest scrapbook. Our need to share has even pushed into the formerly sacred. Have you seen the video of the couple that interrupted their "I dos" to update their Facebook status from "single" to "married? I think I actually threw up a little that time.

Remember first, second and third base? (No, not baseball.) It has been re-faced.

Now there's "Face-base": that magical part of love when you change your status from "Single" to "In a relationship". I assume it happens after you've rounded the bases a few times.

It's soooooo cute. In the same way it's cute when your neighbours' kids spray-paint "BUTT FACE" on your garage door.

FB is a giant black hole of time and effort, sucking in everything around it without mercy, while only giving back invitations to play Mafia Wars.

Fan Pages are big business now, as entertainers and retailers and people with causes can use FB to continue to shamelessly hump their agendas and doo-dads.

Sadly, I am now turning into the Facebook equivalent of a cranky old man. I hate it when my friends don't use actual photos of themselves as their profile pics. Since I never actually see them face-to-face anymore, without those photos I have no idea what they look like. During the Winter Olympics I assumed all my friends had become hockey sweaters or red Leafs.

Also, I am protective of my Wall. Lame status updates now equal instant "Hide" for you. "I love my dog", while accurate, is your one-way ticket to GONE-ville. I may even un-friend you for that juicy contribution.

I would moan on a little longer, but in the time it has taken me to write this I have missed 16 crucial status updates (Trevor and Aaron are now friends), three pokes (which still make me giggle like a nine-year-old who thinks "pianist" is dirty), and two page suggestions (Join if you think RUSH deserves induction into the R and R hall of fame... which I do). So, I am hitting the "sign out" tab (which I just found, thank you very much).

*Mark La Pointe is a freelance writer and voice actor for [www.Killervoicovers.ca](http://www.Killervoicovers.ca), or at least he would be if he would stop fooling around on Facebook. He may be reached by e-mail at [markannouncer@yahoo.ca](mailto:markannouncer@yahoo.ca).*



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