

# Friendster evolves to escape Facebook's shadow

April 28 2011, By SEAN YOONG , Associated Press

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(AP) -- Faded social networking site Friendster will soon delete nearly a decade's worth of user photos, blog entries and other data in a revamp to set it apart from Facebook, a company official said Thursday.

The overhaul is meant to help Friendster regain a semblance of online relevance after being outmuscled by [Facebook](#), which boasts about 600 million active users. Friendster has accumulated at least 115 million registered members since 2002, but only about 40 million currently have valid emails and fewer still are active users.

Friendster emailed its members over the past week to inform them to save their pictures, profile information, messages and blog posts on other sites by May 31, said Nor Badron, a company spokesman based in Singapore.

"This is an evolution of the site to push the boundaries of our business," Nor told The Associated Press. "It's not about direct competition with Facebook. Whoever wants to compete with Facebook would be crazy."

It is the biggest change to Friendster since Malaysian tycoon Vincent Tan's online payment systems company MOL Global purchased the site in late 2009. Tan's businesses include retail franchises in Southeast Asia such as Starbucks and 7-Eleven.

In June, Friendster will launch services that are not provided by Facebook, focusing on a new platform for [social interaction](#) in gaming,

music, entertainment and online shopping, Nor said.

Friendster members can have a different social networking experience by cultivating unique online identities that are different from their real-life ones, Nor said. They can connect with people whom they don't personally know and share music with them or play online games together.

"We realize there's no need to have photo albums or the duplication of [status updates](#) on both Facebook and Friendster, so this is something totally different, a whole new ball game," Nor said. "It's about something you don't do on Facebook that you can do on Friendster."

Nor declined to say how much Friendster is investing in the changes or give details about its financial targets.

The biggest number of Friendster users are now in the Philippines, the United States, Malaysia, Indonesia and Britain.

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