

Better business is linked up

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LinkedIn is perhaps one of the most well-known of the online social networks and is commonly used by professionals hoping to make new and fruitful contacts with other professionals in their field and the organizations and businesses associated with them. Research published in the *International Journal of Social Media and Interactive Learning Environments*, suggests that LinkedIn users are well acquainted with and fairly happy with the technological performance of the network, but have mixed responses to its social benefits and raise concerns regarding privacy and professional authentication.

According to Eng Li Yap and Qiyun Wang of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, the proliferation of [online social networks](#) has allowed communication and conversation to be carried out on an unprecedented scale across the globe. LinkedIn has almost 400 million members although fewer than 100 million are known to be active users. Nevertheless, 100 million individuals is a large network and one that has mutual benefits for those who are active. The team suggests, however, that theirs is the first examination of the network from the perspective of [professional development](#) taking into account social, technological and pedagogical affordances.

A better understanding of LinkedIn, its facilities and how its members use the service should enable researchers, educators, policymakers and professional group administrators to improve the way in which they and the members they represent use the service. On the basis of their case study, the team reports that, "The quantitative and qualitative findings of this study revealed that adults are receptive to using

LinkedIn for sharing and learning knowledge, ideas and meeting other professionals. However, they also found that some users had negative experiences: "There are some uncontrollable negative aspects such as meeting unpleasant people, unsolicited invitation from strangers and unwanted advertisements."

Nevertheless, the team concludes, "LinkedIn may have excellent potential as a professional development tool. The findings from this study indicate that adults are receptive to incorporating LinkedIn for their professional development."

More information: Yap, E.L. and Wang, Q. (2015) 'A case study of using LinkedIn for professional development', *Int. J. Social Media and Interactive Learning Environments*, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp.230-247.

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