
Previewing Google Friend Connect: Website owners can make any site social

(Monday, 12 May 2008) - Written by Google

Easily insert social features to make "any app, any site, any friends" a reality

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MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. (May 12, 2008) – Tonight at Campfire One at the Googleplex (<http://code.google.com/campfire/>), Google Inc. (NASDAQ: GOOG) will announce a preview release of Google Friend Connect, a service that helps website owners grow traffic by enabling any site on the web to easily provide social features for its visitors.

Websites that are not social networks may still want to be social -- and now they can be, easily. With Google Friend Connect (see <http://www.google.com/friendconnect> following this evening's Campfire One), any website owner can add a snippet of code to his or her site and get social features up and running immediately without programming -- picking and choosing from built-in functionality like user registration, invitations, members gallery, message posting, and reviews, as well as third-party applications built by the OpenSocial developer community.

Visitors to any site using Google Friend Connect will be able to see, invite, and interact with new friends, or, using secure authorization APIs, with existing friends from social sites on the web, including Facebook, Google Talk, hi5, orkut, Plaxo, and more.

To illustrate, independent musician Ingrid Michaelson has added music features from iLike with Google Friend Connect and is now able to run the iLike OpenSocial application on her official website (www.ingridmichaelson.com). As a result, starting tonight, fans who visit Ingrid's site can connect with their friends without having to leave the site. Visitors will be able to see comments by friends from their social networks, add music to their profiles, see who is attending concerts, and enjoy other features of the iLike application, all at Ingrid's website. With Google Friend Connect, people will be able to enjoy their favorite features with their friends on any website across the web.

"We want to bring ourselves to every eyeball, not bring every eyeball to us," said Hadi Partovi, President of iLike. "Friend Connect is a significant opportunity for iLike, artists, and fans. The iLike Artist Dashboard™ will be the first content-management system that allows artists not only to post their songs, concerts, and videos to every leading social network from one dashboard, but also to simultaneously manage the content on their own websites."

Google Friend Connect has been developed to lower two barriers to the spread of social features across the web. First, many website owners want to add features that enable their visitors to do things with their friends, but the technology and resource hurdles have been too high. Second, people are tiring of needing to create new logins and profiles and recreate their friends lists wherever they go on the web. Google Friend Connect offers a solution to both these issues.

"Google Friend Connect is about helping the 'long tail' of sites become more social," said David Glazer, a director of engineering at Google. "Many sites aren't explicitly social and don't necessarily want to be social networks, but they still benefit from letting their visitors interact with each other. That used to be hard. Fortunately, there's an emerging wave of social standards -- OpenID, OAuth, OpenSocial, and the data access APIs published by Facebook, Google, MySpace, and others. Google Friend Connect builds on these standards to let people easily connect with their friends, wherever they are on the web, making 'any app, any site, any friends' a reality."

For Site Owners: Traffic and User Engagement

Without requiring coding experience, Google Friend Connect gives site owners a way to attract and engage more people by giving visitors a way to connect with friends on their websites.

- * Drive traffic: people who discover interesting sites can bring their friends with them, and can opt-in to publish their activities on those sites back into their social network, attracting even more visitors.

- * Increase engagement: access to friends and OpenSocial applications provides more interesting content and richer social experiences.

- * Less work: any site can have social components without hiring a programming team or becoming a social network.

Google Friend Connect is in a preview release, available tonight after Campfire One on a handful of whitelisted websites. All site owners interested in learning more about Google Friend Connect and signing up for the wait list can visit <http://www.google.com/friendconnect/> starting tonight. In the weeks ahead we will be turning on more sites, adding more social applications, and integrating feedback from site owners and developers.

Google I/O

Learn more about Google Friend Connect, OpenSocial, and other social initiatives at Google I/O, a two-day developer gathering about building the next generation of web applications. It takes place May 28-29 at Moscone West, San Francisco. Register now for Google I/O at <http://code.google.com/events/io/>.

Conference Call Information

Google will host a conference call to discuss this announcement. The conference call will be held on Monday, May 12, 2008 at 9:30 a.m. Pacific Time (12:30 p.m. Eastern Time). To access the conference call, please dial +1 (800) 776-0087 within the United States and +1 (913) 312-1509 from international locations. Replays of both calls will be available until midnight Eastern Time, May 19, 2008 at +1 (888) 203-1112 domestically and +1 (719) 457-0820 internationally. The confirmation code for the replay of the call is 7571843.

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