



## Professional networking as a tool

By Jennifer Kahnweiler, Monday, July 9, 2007, 08:28 AM  
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I was sitting down to write this blog and decided to reactivate my LinkedIn account. LinkedIn is a professional networking site used mainly for acquiring and maintaining business connections. Since I tried it a few years ago, this site has enhanced its features. You can, for instance, download your personal address book and reach many more possible contacts. Also, there is a section, called "Linked In Answers" which allows you to pose questions to the online community.

It can be a tool to find jobs, business opportunities and people. Time will tell if there is payoff. Users have shared that they like having access to a wider circle of potential connections. Others enjoy the ease of awakening old relationships with friends and former coworkers.

In this day and age of overload, I think it makes sense to use technology to supplement our networking strategies with approaches that reach wider audiences.

I do wonder, though, if these sites are just a fad that prevent us from getting important work done. Are they are a distraction? What are the real payoffs? It seems like one must discipline themselves not to get carried away on surfing these sites (for e.g., two hours after submitting my info I still hadn't written my blog entry! I already find myself checking to see who has responded and reading their profiles. Not exactly a high priority on my to do list.)

Have you found any wins or losses from using LinkedIn or other professional networking sites? Are you convinced there is a payoff?