

Ning

www.ning.com

An easy to set up and easy to use community blog

what is it?

By now, everyone has heard of blogs and Facebook. But what happens when you want to put together a group blog or social network of your own? Ning is the answer. This free service allows you to set up public or private community blogs. Each member has their own profile, can keep their own blog, post to the group blog, add pictures, comments and more. Further, like social networking sites, Ning enables you to set up discussions and chats with other members.

Easy to use, Ning has become a popular site for coordinating and sharing information from professional organizations and hobby groups to family sites and event coordination. Focused on the development and coordination of social networks, Ning is a perfect tool to help people get together on a topic.

educational use?

What happens when the semester ends? How do you help develop a cohort of students? Ning provides an answer. By giving students a safe place to meet and share ideas, a Ning allows groups of students and faculty to continue to connect outside of class.

Likewise, faculty coordinating research or publishing work with colleagues might find Ning's publishing platform a perfect solution for staying in touch.

pros & cons?

As a free tool, it's hard not to like Ning. Still, there are tools missing from Ning that you might find in a site like Facebook.

what's it cost?

Ning is free to use however you can pay to add premium services such as more storage or bandwidth and to run your site without Ning-controlled ads.

alternatives?

The idea of creating community-based social networking Web sites has driven a lot of development in the past few years. Microsoft SharePoint remains a popular enterprise solution. Other alternatives are sites like Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>), Collaber (<http://www.collaber.com>), and DeskAway (<http://www.deskaway.com>).

resources?

7 things you should know about Ning
<http://educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7036.pdf>

How to create your own social network on ning
http://webtrends.about.com/od/ning/ss/create_ning.htm