

# Social Not Working



## Orkut

**FOUNDER:** Orkut Buyukkokten  
**LAUNCHED:** January 2004

**PRESENT STATUS:** **Shut in September 2014**

Started by Buyukkokten, a Turkish engineer at Google, Orkut was the result of the search giant's failure to buy Friendster. Orkut, while not much of a success in the US, proved big in Brazil and India, its two key markets. But in September 2010, **Facebook, which debuted two weeks after Orkut's launch, went past Orkut in terms of number of users in India**, and a year later, did the same in Brazil. Orkut had 19 million users in India and 34 million in Brazil, when it lost the top spot to Facebook. Google finally shut Orkut on September 30, 2014



## MySpace

**FOUNDER:** Chris DeWolfe, Tom Anderson  
**LAUNCHED:** August 2003  
**PRESENT STATUS:** **Active**

It may be hard to imagine how big MySpace was. In 2006, it beat Yahoo and Google to become the largest website in the US by page views. Rupert Murdoch's News Corp had bought it the previous year for \$580 million. Its valuation shot up to a staggering \$12 billion in 2007, when it had 300 million users. But it was all **downhill for the site from there as Facebook closed the gap with MySpace and became the largest social networking site**. News Corp sold MySpace in June 2011 for just \$35 million

Orkut is having a rebirth in India. Well, sort of. Hello, an app-only social media network founded in August 2016 by Orkut's eponymous creator, was recently made available in India. The app might get many Indians reminiscing about the good old days before Facebook took over, when Orkut was the default way to connect with friends online. *ET Magazine* shines a light on Orkut and other social media sites which either failed to keep going or did not quite deliver on their initial promise

**:: G Seetharaman**

## Classmates

**FOUNDER:** Randy Conrads  
**LAUNCHED:** December 2005  
**PRESENT STATUS:** **Active**

Founded as a way to get in touch with your friends from school and college, Classmates still remains just that, with access to decades-old yearbooks from schools across the US. The website was **bought by United Online in 2004 for a \$100 million and in 2015 was sold for a third of that price**



## Hi5

**FOUNDER:** Ramu Yalamanchi  
**LAUNCHED:** June 2004  
**PRESENT STATUS:** **Active**

Among the most popular social networking sites for a few years after its launch, Hi5 was second only to MySpace in 2007. It was **sold to another social network, Tagged, in 2011** and they were both bought by social discovery platform MeetMe for \$60 million earlier this year



## Friendster

**FOUNDER:** Jonathan Abrams, Peter Chin  
**LAUNCHED:** March 2002

**PRESENT STATUS:** **Shifted to online gaming in 2011 and shut down in June 2015**  
Within a year of its launch, Friendster had three million users but soon had to contend with the likes of MySpace and Facebook. It was **sold to a Malaysian internet company in 2009 reportedly for \$100 million**.

At the time of the sale, Friendster had around 75 million users in Asia. Friendster turned into an online gaming platform in 2011 and was disabled four years later



## Google+

**LAUNCHED:** June 2011  
**PRESENT STATUS:** **Active**

Smarting from its failed attempts in social networking through Orkut and Buzz, Google decided to take Facebook head-on with Google+. Integrated into Gmail, Google+ tried a slightly different approach to social networking than Facebook, offering users the option of categorising their friends into "circles". But **users were not too kicked about it and it has remained a mere afterthought in social media**, despite a redesign in late 2015



## SixDegrees

**FOUNDER:** Andrew Weinreich  
**LAUNCHED:** January 1997  
**PRESENT STATUS:** **Shut down in 2001**

Among the first social networking sites along with Classmates, SixDegrees had a user base of 3.5 million at its peak but the **limitations of internet connectivity meant it was an idea ahead of its time. It was sold to YouthStream Media Networks for \$125 million** in 1999 and shut down two years later