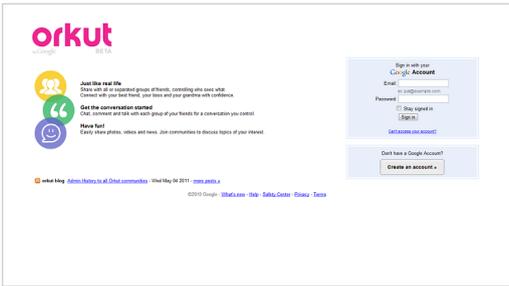


# Orkut

## Orkut

	
	
Orkut homepage as of April 2011	
<b>URL</b>	orkut.com <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Commercial?</b>	Yes
<b>Type of site</b>	Social network service
<b>Registration</b>	Required
<b>Available language(s)</b>	Multilingual (48)
<b>Owner</b>	Google Inc.
<b>Created by</b>	Orkut Büyükkökten
<b>Launched</b>	4 february
<b>Alexa rank</b>	▲ 93 (May 2011) <sup>[2]</sup>

**Orkut** is a social networking website that is owned and operated by Google Inc. <sup>[3]</sup> The service is designed to help users meet new friends and maintain existing relationships. The website is named after its creator, Google employee Orkut Büyükkökten. Although Orkut is less popular in the United States than competitors Facebook and MySpace, it is one of the most visited websites in India and Brazil. <sup>[4]</sup> As of April 2010, 48.0% of Orkut's users are from Brazil, followed by India with 39.2% and United States with 2.2%. <sup>[5]</sup>

Originally hosted in California, in August 2008 Google announced that Orkut would be fully managed and operated in Brazil, by Google Brazil, in the city of Belo Horizonte. This was decided due to the large Brazilian user base and growth of legal issues. <sup>[6] [7] [8] [9]</sup>

As of March 2011, Alexa traffic ranked Orkut 102nd in the world; the website currently has more than 100 million active users worldwide. Anyone 18 years old or older can join Orkut. <sup>[2] [3] [10]</sup>

## History of Orkut

In 2003, Google offered to purchase the social network Friendster, but the offer was declined by that company. Google then internally commissioned Orkut Büyükkökten to work on a competing independent project. The result was Orkut. The product launched on January 24, 2004.<sup>[11]</sup> The community membership was originally by invitation only:

"Orkut is unique and fun, because it's an organically growing network of trusted friends. That way we will all have at least one person to vouch for them. If you know someone who is a member of Orkut, that person can invite you to join as well. If you don't know an Orkut member, wait a bit and most likely you soon will. We look forward to having you as part of the Orkut community."

During the first year, the United States had the largest user base. By word of mouth various Brazilians began adopting and inviting more friends, in a viral process driven by the blogosphere. Soon after, Brazil surpassed the U.S. in the number of users and Orkut started becoming heavily popular in Brazil. Americans then started leaving the service and switching to other similar sites such as MySpace and Friendster. This phenomenon was covered by the English blogosphere with some criticism towards Brazilians<sup>[12] [13] [14]</sup> because they tended to communicate (not only among themselves) using their native language, Portuguese, and not English.

From that time, Orkut growth was driven by Brazilian users, first being opened to everyone by register and becoming one of the most popular websites in Brazil. The creator Orkut Büyükkökten visited Brazil in 2007,<sup>[15]</sup> in an attempt to understand the success in that country. In 2007 Orkut began attracting a large number of Indians who were seemingly not intimidated by the number of Brazilians on the site. Orkut also has a simplified site for mobile users. "m.Orkut.com". In 2008, a new feature was introduced for users having slow internet connections to access Orkut using the "View Orkut in lighter version" setting.

Over the years, Orkut has also found great popularity in Estonia as witnessed by a survey conducted by the independent research center GfK Custom Research Baltic which showed how Orkut is the most used social network platform in that country.<sup>[16]</sup>

## Features

<b>Traffic on Orkut by country</b>		
<b>Traffic of Orkut on March 31, 2004</b>		
	United States	51.36%
	Japan	7.74%
	Brazil	5.16%
	Netherlands	4.10%
	United Kingdom	3.72%
	Other	27.92%
<b>Traffic of Orkut on May 29, 2011<sup>[5]</sup></b>		
	Brazil	55.2%
	India	35.4%
	Japan	1.9%
	United States	1.5%
	Pakistan	0.6%

	Other	4.8%
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An Orkut user can also add videos to their profile from either YouTube or Google Video with the additional option of creating either restricted or unrestricted polls for polling a community of users. There is an option to integrate GTalk (An instant messenger from Google) with Orkut enabling chatting and file sharing. Currently GTalk has been integrated in Orkut – users can directly chat from their Orkut page. Similar to Facebook, users may also use a "like" button to share interests with friends.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Themes

A new feature in Orkut is Changing Themes. Users can change their interface from a wide range of colorful themes in library. Themes are currently only available in India, Brazil and Pakistan.

## Other miscellaneous features

Each member can become a fan of any of the friends in their list and can also evaluate whether their friend is "Trustworthy", "Cool", "Sexy" on a scale of 1 to 3 (marked by icons) and this is aggregated in terms of a percentage. Unlike Facebook, where a member can view profile details of people only on their network, Orkut allows anyone to visit anyone's profile, unless a potential visitor is on your "Ignore List" (this feature has been recently changed so that users can choose between showing their profile to all networks or specified ones). Importantly, each member can also customize their profile preferences and can restrict information that appear on their profile from their friends and/or others (not on the friends list). Another feature is that any member can add any other member on Orkut to his/her "Crush List" and both of them will be informed only when both parties have added each other to their "Crush List".

When a user logs in, they see the people in their friends list in the order of their logging in to the site, the first person being the latest one to do so. Orkut's competitors are other social networking sites including MySpace and Facebook. Ning is a more direct competitor, as they allow creation of social networks which are similar to Orkut's communities.

## Redesigns

### First redesign

On August 25, 2007, Orkut announced a redesign. The new UI contains round corners and soft colors including small logotype at upper left corner. The redesign has been announced on the official Orkut Blog. By August 30, 2007, most users on Orkut could see changes on their profile pages as per the new redesign. On August 31, 2007, Orkut announced its new features including improvements to the way you view your friends, 9 rather than 8 of your friends displayed on your homepage and profile page and basic links to your friends' content right under their profile picture as you browse through their different pages. It also announced the initial release of Orkut in 6 new languages:: Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu. Profile editing can take place by clicking the settings button under the user profile photo (or alternatively, clicking the blue settings link at the top of any page).

On September 4, 2007, Orkut announced another new feature. user would be able to see an "Updates from your friends" box on the homepage, where it's possible to get real-time updates when friends make changes to their profiles, photos and videos. Moreover, in case someone wants to keep some things on their profile private, Orkut has added an easy opt-out button on the settings page. Scraps were also HTML-enabled letting users post videos or pictures. On November 8, 2007, Orkut greeted its Indian users Happy Diwali by allowing them to change their Orkut look to a Diwali-flavored reddish theme. On April Fools' Day 2008, Orkut temporarily changed its name on its webpage to yogurt, apparently as a prank. On June 2, 2008, Orkut has launched its theming engine with a small set of default themes.[16] Photo tagging also was available.

On October 27, 2009, Orkut released their 2nd redesigned version.[17] It was available to very few users at first (the chosen ones as they called[18]). These users were able to send invites to their Orkut friends to join this new version. The new version uses Google Web Toolkit (GWT) and thus makes extensive use of AJAX in the user interface. However, the users of the new version of Orkut can switch back to the older version by clicking the "Older Version" link near the top right corner of the page. Features

Google stated the new Orkut is faster, simpler and more customizable. More particular features includes video chat, promotions and easy navigation. Design

The look is completely new, leaving all traces of past designs. User interface and workflow are also drastically changed. As part of "more customizable", Orkut added many different colours for your profile. The Themes were removed and an orkut badge is visible for those who haven't changed to the new orkut. The new logo also has the word "My" in it, as in My Orkut. Mouse over to logo scrolls out list of 4 most frequently used links. Vertical scroll bars have been added in the friend and community list in the home page to allow viewing all friends/communities from the home page itself. In the home page, the recent visitor's list now displays six most recent visitor's profile image as small clickable icons. Hovering the mouse over these pictures display the visitor's profile name as a tooltip. Orkut allows users to sign in with their Google Mail, or Gmail, credentials. As described on <http://orkutlogin.me>, to login to Orkut always type the URL <http://www.orkut.com/> instead of clicking any links to open it. This is the safest way to open Orkut.

## International

Orkut is available in 48 languages and has been localized for many countries.

### Languages

- Bengali
- Catalan
- Chinese (Simplified)
- Chinese (Traditional)
- Czech
- Danish
- Dutch
- English (Unstated)
- English (United Kingdom)
- Esperanto
- Estonian
- Faroese
- Filipino
- Finnish
- French
- German
- Greek
- Guarani
- Hausa
- Hawaiian
- Hebrew
- Hindi
- Italian
- Japanese
- Javanese
- Kannada
- Kazakh
- Kinyarwanda
- Kirundi
- Goa
- Korean
- Kurdish
- Kyrgyz
- Laothian
- Latin
- Latvian
- Lingala
- Lithuanian
- Luganda
- Malayalam
- Marathi
- Portuguese (Brazil)
- Portuguese (Portugal)
- Russian
- Swedish
- Telugu
- Tamil
- Turkish
- Oriya

## Controversy

### Fake profiles

As with any online social networking community, a number of fake and cloned profiles exist on Orkut.<sup>[18]</sup> Due to the large number of users and the deactivation of the jail system, the profiles were often left unremoved or, when removed, recreated easily. These profiles are normally created to have fun with other fakes and creating "Fake Families" and sometimes for trolling or spamming.

### Invisible profiles

In 2005, invisible profiles, communities and topics started to appear in Orkut. This could be achieved by using HTML escaping codes and 1x1 pixel photos to fool the engine behind the site.<sup>[19]</sup> This hole was later fixed, and currently there is a lower limit on profile image dimensions.

It is still possible to create invisible topics in communities.

### Flooders

In August 2005 a freeware program was made in Delphi called *Floodtudo* ("tudo" in Portuguese means "everything". This was developed by a Brazilian) specifically for flooding Orkut. It quickly spread through the users and was easily downloadable. The most common Floodtudo versions were 1.2, 1.5, 2.0 and 2.2. As this program was massively used by thousands of spammers, a big spam wave struck Orkut in September and October 2005.

During 2007–2008, Another most commonly used Scrap Flooder "Carbon Copy Scraper" & "Blind Carbon Copy Scraper" (commonly called CCS & BCCS) was javascript based (popular versions 2.4, 3.3, and 5.1), available on almost every famous Orkut community. The main idea behind this was to let profile holders send the same scrap to all their friends at a once, but it was misused by spammers.

As the flooding of Orkut came out of control, the developers implemented features to stop it by

- not allowing 2 or more verbatim topics or scrapbook entries to be submitted
- forcing the user to wait before posting another topic or scrapbook entry
- requiring captchas, whenever a scrap entry is hyperlinked.

Community moderators were given the ability to ban users outright instead of relying on the developers to remove them.

### Electronic spam

Recently, Orkut implemented an automated system to prevent spam. Orkut users can't send too many friend requests or scraps within a short time interval. If anyone does so, the user will temporarily be disabled from that feature for 24 hours to 1 week, depending on the users activity.

### The Frandshippers

Between 2006 and 2007, Orkut was troubled with stalkers which were called "frandshippers", these were mostly male users looking for female friends who would often keep trying to convince people to accept their friend requests, eventually fake profiles of frandshippers were made to annoy people on purpose, some even to humour them.<sup>[20]</sup>

## Hate groups

There has recently been controversy revolving around the use of Orkut by various hate groups. Several hate communities focusing on racism, Nazism and white supremacy have been deleted due to guideline violation.

In 2005, various cases of racism were brought to police attention and reported on in the Brazilian media.<sup>[21]</sup> In 2006, a judicial measure was opened by the Brazil federal justice denouncing a 20-year-old student accused of racism against those of Black African ancestry and spreading defamatory content on Orkut.<sup>[22]</sup> Brazilian Federal Justice subpoenaed Google on March 2006 to explain the crimes that had occurred in Orkut.<sup>[23]</sup>

Anti-national, and anti-ethnic hate groups have also been spotted. Recently an Indian court has issued notices to Google on some of the groups. The Mumbai Police are seeking a ban on Orkut post objections raised by political groups. Groups denigrating various political leaders and celebrities have also emerged. Also in a reported case of 2005, racist groups have been reported. They were anti-Tamil groups.

Orkut has a Report Abuse feature available for all communities. Orkut communities can be reported if they contain hate/violence content. Any Orkut user (even those who are not the members of such a community) can report the abuse. The reasons for reporting abuse can be nudity or sexual content, theft of identity or personal information, child abuse, promoting illegal activities, any kind of personal attacks against any individual and a few others.

## State censorship

### In Iran

Orkut was very popular in Iran, but the website is now blocked by the government. According to official reports, this is due to national security issues, and Islamic ethical issues about dating and match-making. To get around this block, sites such as *Orkutproxy.com* (now defunct) were made for Iranian users. Other websites such as Yahoo! Groups and Google Groups have communities dedicated to receiving updates on the newest location of Iran's Orkut proxy. At one time it was possible to bypass governmental blockage of Orkut, but the site has closed its HTTPS pages on all anonymous proxies. Now it is almost impossible for ordinary users to visit this site inside Iran.<sup>[24]</sup>

Many other sites have been published in Iran since Orkut's blockage, using the same social-networking model – examples include MyPardis, Cloob and Bahaneh.<sup>[25]</sup>

### In the United Arab Emirates

In August 2006, the United Arab Emirates followed the footsteps of Iran in blocking the site. This block was subsequently removed in October 2006. On July 3, 2007, Gulf News revisited the issue, publishing complaints from members of the public against Orkut communities like "Dubai Sex", and officially bringing the complaints to the attention of the state telecom monopoly Etisalat.<sup>[26]</sup> By July 4, 2007, Etisalat had placed a renewed ban on the site,<sup>[27]</sup> which remains in effect despite Google's promise to negotiate the ban with the UAE.<sup>[28]</sup>

### In Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is another country that has blocked access to Orkut, while Bahrain's information ministry is also under pressure to follow suit.<sup>[29]</sup>

## Privacy

Earlier in Orkut it was possible for anybody to view anyone's pictures, videos as well as scraps, but people started misusing the photos and videos and placing them on the Internet with fake details. Many of them were vulgar, especially pictures of women. Moreover, the scraps could be easily read.

Currently privacy covers such features as scraps (separate read and write access), videos, photo albums, testimonials, and applications.

In December 2008, 2009 Orkut developers introduced another privacy update that allow users to restrict viewing of their albums to certain number of friends, as well as selected e-mail contacts. The user can limit visibility of her/his profile to a certain region or group of regions (known as a "network"); in this case outside of these regions no user information is available.

## Security and safety

In December 2007, hundreds of thousands of users accounts were affected, using XSS vulnerability and a worm. A user's account was affected when the user simply read a particular scrap containing an embed which caused the user to automatically become a part of a community on the site, without approval. The affected user's account was then used to send this scrap to everyone present in the user's friend list thereby creating a sort of a huge wave.

### MW.Orc worm

On June 19, 2006 FaceTime Security Labs' security researchers Christopher Boyd and Wayne Porter discovered a worm, dubbed MW.Orc.<sup>[30]</sup> The worm steals users' banking details, usernames and passwords by propagating through Orkut. The attack was triggered as users launched an executable file disguised as a JPEG file. The initial executable file that causes the infection installs two additional files on the user's computer. These files then e-mail banking details and passwords to the worm's anonymous creator when infected users click on the "My Computer" icon. The infection spreads automatically by posting a URL in another user's Orkut Scrapbook, a guestbook where visitors can leave comments visible on the user's page. This link lures visitors with a message in Portuguese, falsely claiming to offer additional photos. The message text that carries an infection link can vary from case to case. In addition to stealing personal information, the malware can also enable a remote user to control the PC and make it part of a botnet, a network of infected PCs. The botnet in this case uses an infected PC's bandwidth to distribute large, pirated movie files, potentially slowing down an end-user's connection speed.

The initial executable file (Minhasfotos.exe) creates two additional files when activated, winlogon\_.jpg and wzip32.exe (located in the System32 Folder). When the user clicks the "My Computer" icon, a mail is sent containing their personal data. In addition, they may be added to an XDCC Botnet (used for file sharing), and the infection link may be sent to other users that they know in the Orkut network. The infection can be spread manually, but also has the ability to send "back dated" infection links to people in the "friends list" of the infected user. According to statements made by Google, as noted in Facetime's Greynets Blog, the company had implemented a temporary fix for the dangerous worm.<sup>[30]</sup>

### HTTPS Not Obvious

In and around April 17, 2007 users began reporting that secure (https) access to the Orkut login server was no longer available. In fact, Google had changed the main login page to http delivery to improve efficiency, but the actual login remained secure using https in an iframe.<sup>[31]</sup> This information had not been well-published by Google, and did not give the users the reassurance of seeing the "secure connection" padlock in the browser. On July 17, 2007, a revised login page, which is delivered via https, addressed these issues.

## Session Management and Authentication

On June 22, 2007 Susam Pal and Vipul Agarwal published a security advisory on Orkut vulnerabilities related to authentication issues.<sup>[32]</sup> The vulnerabilities are considered very dangerous in cybercafes, or in the case of man-in-the-middle attack as they can lead to session hijacking and misuse of legitimate accounts.<sup>[33]</sup> The vulnerabilities are not known to be fixed yet and therefore pose threat to the Orkut users.

A week later, on June 29, 2007 Susam Pal published another security advisory which described how the Orkut authentication issue can be exploited to hijack Google and Gmail sessions and misuse the compromised account of a legitimate user under certain conditions.

Joseph Hick performed an experiment on the basis of the advisories published by Susam Pal, to find out how long a session remains alive even after a user logs out.<sup>[34]</sup> His experiment confirmed that the sessions remain alive for 14 days after the user has logged out. It implies that a hijacked session can be used for 14 days by the hijacker because logging out does not kill the session.<sup>[35]</sup>

## W32/KutWormer

On December 19, 2007, a worm written in Javascript started to cause havoc. Created by a Brazilian user called "Rodrigo Lacerda", it automatically made the user join the virus related community and infect all friends' scrapbooks with copies of itself, the worm infected over 700,000 Orkut users. The worm is spreading through Orkut's recently introduced tool that allows users to write messages that contain HTML code. The ability to add Flash/Javascript content to Orkut scraps was only recently introduced.<sup>[36]</sup> <sup>[37]</sup>

## W32/Scrapkut worm

On March 3, 2008 W32/Scrapkut.worm was found. The worm attempts to spread itself by sending Orkut users scraps that contains the link to the worm itself. Aliases are Downloader.Banload.ONK (GRISoft)

- TR/Dldr.Orkut.A (Avira)
- Trojan-Downloader.Win32.Banload.auf (IKARUS)
- Trojan.DL.Win32.Banload.dzm (Rising)
- W32.Scrapkut (Symantec)

## Bom sabado Worm

On September 25, 2010 Bom sabado worm was found. The word "Bom sabado" is a portmanteau of "Bom sábad", which means "Good Saturday" in Portuguese. This worm attempts to spread itself by sending scraps and adding users to a Bomsabado group on Orkut.<sup>[38]</sup>

## Other attacks

### Private album crack

In December 2007, a Brazilian cracker named "Rodrigo Lacerda" published a script that allowed users to scrape other people's private photos. The exploit consisted of generating album photo urls, due to their simple structure.

This crack made Orkut team implement new secure album/photos implementation.

## Legal issues

### India

On October 10, 2010 Manager, Manu Rekhi,<sup>[39]</sup> on the Orkut internal blog. There has also been some media outcry against Orkut after a couple of youngsters were apparently lured by fake profiles on the site and later murdered.<sup>[40]</sup>

On November 24, Bombay High Court asked the state government to file its reply in connection with a petition demanding a ban on social networking site, Orkut, for hosting an anti-Shivaji Web community.<sup>[41]</sup>

Recently, the Pune rural police cracked a rave party filled with narcotics.<sup>[42]</sup> The accused have been charged under anti-narcotic laws, the (Indian) Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropics Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS). Besides the NDPS, according to some media reports, the police were deliberating on the issue of charging the accused under the (Indian) Information Technology Act, 2000 perhaps because Orkut was believed to be a mode of communication for these kind of drug abuses.<sup>[43]</sup>

The Cyber police in India have entered into an agreement with Orkut to have a facility to catch and prosecute those misusing Orkut since complaints are rising.<sup>[44]</sup>

### Brazil

On August 22, 2006, Brazilian Federal Judge José Marcos Lunardelli ordered Google to release by September 28 Orkut user's information of a list of about two dozen Brazilian nationals, believed to be using Orkut to sell drugs and to be involved in child pornography. The judge ordered Google to pay \$23,000 per day in fines until the information is turned over to the Brazilian government. According to the Brazilian government, the information would also be used to identify individuals who are spreading child pornography<sup>[45]</sup> and hate speech. As of September 27, 2006 Google has stated that it will not release the information, on the grounds that the requested information is on Google servers in the U.S. and not Google servers in Brazil, and is therefore not subject to Brazilian laws.<sup>[46]</sup>

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## External links

- Official website (<http://http://www.orkut.com/>) ( Mobile (<http://http://m.orkut.com>))
  - Official blog (<http://en.blog.Orkut.com/>)
  - Orkut Coders – A community in Orkut by group of computer programmers and designers (<http://www.orkut.com/Main#Community?cmm=30477598>)
  - ‘The potential for marketers to exploit the emerging trend of online social networking groups’ (<http://www.foolonahill.com/mbasns.html>)
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  - Orkut Login (<http://www.orkutlogin.me>)
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