

Despite the fact that social media and social networking seem to be interchangeable terms they both do have their own identities. Social Media is defined as the platform and tools used to share content. Social networking is more about building and maintaining relationships. The goals of each differ when you look at communication styles. With social media there is a more one-to-many communications. While social networking is more of a one on one or many-to-many communications. Examples of social media platforms are YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. They are based on one video or post reaching followers following a one-to-many style. They have features to promote content, like shares, thumbs up, and likes or loves. Social networking examples are more like LinkedIn, Meetup, and Goodreads. These types of apps are more about communication where people contribute and interact with each other on a more individualized basis to each member of the discussion or posts. The highlight features like friend requests, private messaging, and ability to have closed and opened groups for each member to contribute. The comparisons are easy to make, with all of these being apps where people spend time online and are used in mass. The contrast comes down to social media is content driven while social networking is connection driven at their core.

Please note: Lego Mindstorms are defunct as of 2022. The use of <https://web.archive.org/> was helpful to garner information. Some of the social networking features are from [lego.com](https://www.lego.com) as a whole website vs. Lego Mindstorms

Lego is a privately held company that is based in Billund, Denmark. It was founded in 1932 by the Kristiansen Family. It is estimated to be worth 13 billion dollars as of 2023 and is currently being guided by the fourth generation of the Kristiansen family. It is a worldwide brand and has a price range of \$5 to over \$1000 per set.

When it comes to social media following few can claim the numbers that Lego reaches on 1 to many formats. For example, Lego has a staggering 10.3 million followers on Instagram and over 17.6 million followers on YouTube alone! When it comes to social networking, they have a number of successful apps and campaigns. Although the Lego Mindstorms Community is now defunct through Lego, they have introduced Lego Life. Lego Life is an app that is kid friendly, fully moderated, and claims to be safe by design. This app is considered a great place for younger Lego loving fans to communicate. Regrettably the feature of sharing short form videos is missing. In today's social networking landscape apps like TikTok and Instagram Reels have carved out a new way to network online. These

semi-new networking trends seem to have stayed power and have become a full-time job for some creators. Without this feature, it is easy to see how difficult it might be to see some smart animation chips in action, as only so much can be conveyed in a still picture.

Another featured option for networking is through official competitions where innovative builders are able to showcase their ideas and also learn new things from each other. Unfortunately, these are more limited in number and take place all over the world. For some children travelling to take part in one of these competitions remains a dream. Many are not able to travel outside of their local area. It would be an idea to have fans vote on locations for competitions or for the locations to change every year more than the current schedule reflects to reach everyone who would like to compete.

Lego currently still has a downloadable app, Lego Life to teach people to use the last sets of Mindstorm, EV3's blocks and even newer designed programable blocks. This app is set up to work with 2 types of coding languages. The first learnable language is Scratch. Scratch is a simple drag and drop building block style. You drag blocks to build chains in programming, possibly without knowledge of syntax or what the block necessarily accomplishes. The other is based on Python, a programming language that is very popular now. Python would require knowledge of the syntax and a basic understanding of what each line of programming means. To help young and old minds alike to learn more about programming, Lego Life has over 50 activities to teach kids or adults how to be proficient in each language. It also has boards for everyone to be able to communicate and help each other in a fully moderated way.

The use of the above apps and the defunct Mindstorms Community offers amazing value to Lego. The first and irreplaceable contribution is the ability to have real-life builders test the product. When having a networking app that allows users to not only identify any issues the blocks are having with each other it also opens the door to suggested work arounds to help others overcome the glitch. This offers undeterminable value to Lego by not only giving free testing but ideas on how to improve the next generation of the product. Another benefit is that sometimes the work around or ideas builders see online require more products to make their imaginations come alive. If you need another smart block or a tiny cap to finish off a smooth look, a purchase is made and increases Legos bottom line. Additionally, builders will share their building plans with others looking to create, which lessens the responsibility on Lego to keep creating new guides to enrich the builders into using their products. Lego also is doing an amazing job currently of pulling in different brands that have large following into buildable sets. For example, they are currently paired up with Nintendo and the Harry Potter book and movie franchise. These communities are now finding their way back to Lego or discovering them. This cross branding is increasing sales

by already established social networks and groups sharing about releases, items they have built and where to locate possible hard to find sets. By tapping brands with large followings, they are garnering more sales and free promotion. The last benefit of social networking in a participatory journalism way is the educational outreach Lego offers. By offering workshops, discounts and easy to use apps for educators, Lego is not only helping teach STEM and robotics in schools but also creating a sharing experience between educators and students. This sharing experience goes beyond the initial classroom and what the students want to purchase at home. It can also lead to other schools in the area starting off a new program as the educators share their experiences. The more educators that share ideas with other STEM or robotic teachers the more the benefits of the product spread, which again leads to additional sales for Lego.

Resources:

<https://keyhole.co/blog/lego-social-media-strategy/>

<https://www.lego.com/en-us/themes/mindstorms/downloads>

<https://www.lego.com/aboutus>

<https://www.lego.com/en-us/themes/mindstorms/downloads>

<https://www.lego.com/en-us/themes/mindstorms/app>

<https://www.lego.com/en-us/themes/mindstorms/app>

https://www.lego.com/en-us/apps/play-app?icmp=LP-SHH-Tall-Mindstorms_App_HB_Tall_Share_Your_Genius-TH-MD-LWW41KDB3K