

# Facebook tops one list of 'slow and inaccessible' social networks

by [Caroline McCarthy](#)

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On Thursday, Web site-monitoring firm WatchMouse released the results of a study about the performance of 104 social-media sites--social networks, blogging communities, bookmarking sites, and the like--and boldly deemed them to be overall "slow and inaccessible."

WatchMouse used its "Site Performance Index" (SPI) methodology to track the reliability and load time of the sites in question; this figure is computed by calculating the time needed to call up a site's home page and applying a penalty for each failed request. Lower is better: an SPI of 500 is considered good, whereas the Utrecht, Netherlands-based WatchMouse considers over 1,500 to be indicative of "a seriously negative user experience."

According to the study, social networks in general are not particularly reliable: 51 of the 104 sites surveyed came up with SPIs of 1,500 or more, and only six small social networks were awarded with SPIs under 500 ([Faceparty](#), [Tagged](#), [ASmallWorld](#), [Flirtomatic](#), [Rumble](#), and [StudiVZ](#)). At the top of WatchMouse's blacklist was [Facebook](#), which it assigned a whopping 6,629 SPI. That was the worst ranking out of any of the sites surveyed--even microblogging service [Twitter](#), whose frequent downtime has become [a punchline of sorts](#). (WatchMouse assigned an SPI of 1,467 to Twitter.)

Facebook has not yet issued a response to the study.

Many of the other poorly-performing social media sites aren't exactly

household names, like Searchles (SPI 5,856) and RateItAll (SPI 3,370). Music-based social networks tended to come in with disconcerting indexes, perhaps because of the amount of streaming media hosted on many of them--[Last.fm](#), acquired by CBS Interactive last year, had an SPI of 1,837; the fast-growing [Buzznet](#) was assigned an 1,868; and [Mog](#) had an index of 1,911.

But according to WatchMouse, many of the highest-profile social networks didn't perform all that badly. MySpace, which had a famous outage in the summer of 2006 when [a heat wave crashed its servers](#), clocked in a rather respectable index of 923. Business network [LinkedIn](#) came in with a 1,006. The youth-oriented [Bebo](#) achieved a score of 912. And Google's [Orkut](#), third-string in the U.S. but dominant in countries like Brazil and India, had an enviable index of 564.

WatchMouse is only one company, however, and every study's methodology has limitations--just look at the [controversy over traffic monitoring statistics](#). The SPI is based on home page load time and reliability rather than individual pages on a social network--it's monitoring, for example, Myspace.com rather than Myspace.com/whinyemoband. Other performance monitoring firms would likely show different results on a similar study. We've contacted a few for comment.



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