

# **Social Networking in Latin Class: A How-To Guide**

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## **Abstract**

Social networking is not a new concept. People form groups (like CAMWS, ACL, and APA) to talk about things in common. With the Internet, these common-interest groups proliferate online, enabling people worldwide to converse on topics pertinent to their groups. The most recent online phenomenon, social networking, allows people to engage in dialogue while adding content like audio, video, digital images, and documents, and at the same time permits members of these online communities to comment and give feedback on this content. Latin teachers at any level can take advantage of blogging and file-sharing offered by social networking sites like Ning and Facebook to create dynamic, educational environments in which students can interact with each other, as well as the instructor, in pursuit of understanding the Latin discussed in class. Young people already feel that they have ownership of Web 2.0 platforms. Teachers can further empower their students to learn Latin via these platforms by creating classroom social networks. These platforms are both free and easy to use. This paper illustrates how to create a private social network for a sample AP Vergil class using the Ning social network creation tool.

## **Keywords**

Latin, Ning, Social Networking, Classroom 2.0, Web 2.0, eLearning, Classics

## **Introduction**

The most important thing a Latin teacher can do for his or her students is engage them with the subject and turn them into lifelong learners of Latin specifically and of Classics in general. With contemporary students, sneaking in saucy Catullus poems on the sly, assigning the fun bits of Suetonius on occasion for extra credit, and talking about Roman latrines and Flavian hairstyles sparks curiosity and fires the imagination. All too often, though, the dialogue remains in the classroom, and often the exploration of cultural threads stops before it can build a head of steam, or the meaning of what Vergil wrote gets lost in translation because of the outrageous pacing of the Advanced Placement syllabus. So how do you maintain student interest in Latin and Classics outside of class, engaging them in the material on their own time, and keep following threads of class- or reading-generated discussions without feeling rushed, giving some time to the students so they can explore these discussion topics?

The answer lies within new Internet technology, namely those tools classed under the general heading of “Web 2.0”. These tools include blogs (online diaries/journals), wikis (publicly edited spaces for shared information), and social networks (groups of individuals with shared interests). Many Classicists over the age of 30 (I count myself in this number) grew up with (or adapted to) the Internet as a one-way conduit of information. The Internet was a way to

provide data quickly from one person/group to another. Content-providers sat on one side of the Internet, and information consumers were on the other side. With the advent in the past few years of Web 2.0 technologies, we have entered an age of information sharing. Everyone has an opinion or knows something, and there is a genuine, democratic feel to the new Internet in that it encourages debate and collaboration, basically peer review in real-time.

With Web 1.0, we had static websites that provided information to curious people. With Web 2.0, we have dynamic websites that encourage comments from the public. While there is still an attitude among many scholars that this dialogue can lead to false information or bad data, we can choose to take control of the dialogue and provide accurate information and good data borne out of experience and research.

With Web 1.0, we had (and still have) two-dimensional user groups where members communicate(d) via email discussion lists. The best example of this for *Teaching Classical Languages* readers is the Latinteach list. Members send email to the main list address and then other members can choose to respond. While lists like these are beneficial, the dialogue is often not in real-time (like an organic conversation), and fails to take advantage of the new things offered by Web 2.0 tools.

With Web 2.0, we see the evolution of the email discussion list/special interest group into something that is three-dimensional: social networking sites. Readers of *Teaching Classical Languages* might already have heard of (or be current members of) MySpace or Facebook, massive websites where people can sign up for free and network or reconnect with friends, colleagues, classmates, and others who share similar interests. On Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)), there are millions of members including teachers and students and Classics-related groups on everything from reception studies to teacher fan clubs.

Social networks allow members to upload images, documents, audio and video; create and comment on blog entries; participate in discussions; share website links; and more. Students already feel that they have ownership of social networks like Facebook. As teachers who are looking for ways to connect with students on their own terms, using the technology that students are comfortable with is a step in the right direction. By creating a social networking environment as part of the class experience, students can contribute to their Latin classes by feeling that they are part-owners in the courses that they take. If the students feel that they have ownership of some of the content within the context of their Latin classes, they will spend more time on Latin, and will often find creative and thoughtful ways of having fun with a subject that can, for many students, be difficult or even soulless.

Teachers now have the ability to create their own Web 2.0 sites for their classes. High school Latin teacher Bob Patrick uses a blog for his AP Latin classes. Distance-learning Classics educator Laura Gibbs uses private social networks for her online courses.

For an actively used Classics-themed Ning social network with audio, video, discussions, a blog, and digital images, visit <http://eclassics.ning.com>, created by this author to help teachers help themselves understand how to use classroom technology in support of learning ancient languages. At the time of publication, the site had over 900 members from nearly 50 countries.

**eLatin eGreek eLearn**  
More wired than a Roman internet café

**Main Invite My Page Members Photos Videos Forum Events Groups Blogs Manage**

Students and teachers of Latin, ancient Greek, and Classical literature can exchange ideas on the role of technology in the Classics classroom here. Share your stories and ideas, Titus-like triumphs, or Trojan-like defeats with colleagues world-wide.

**Members** Edit

11 members

**Groups** Edit

**Help! I need a job!**  
11 members

**Conversational Latin**  
16 members

**Videos** Edit

**The Archimedes Palimpsest**  
Added by [Andrew Reinhard](#)

**Thrasymachus - Θρασυμαχος XIV**  
Added by [Andrew Reinhard](#)

**Wizard of Oz Latin Project**  
Added by [Andrew Reinhard](#)

[Add to Facebook](#) [View All](#)

**Report from the AP Latin meetings in Chicago, Nov. 3, 2008** Edit

As posted on the Latinteach list, 3 Nov. 2008 by Mary Pendergraft in response to the query about how the Chicago AP meetings went:

I can report the most important thing I learned: that the college and university faculty who participated to a person expressed their commitment to support Latin education for high school students and to support the hard-working professionals who do that teaching.

Invitations were sent to the classics departments of the institutions who each year receive the largest numbers of Latin AP score reports. Fifty institutions sent representatives, and they came from across the country: Washington to Florida, Maine to California; from large universities and small colleges.

Participants were asked to think about the future of the AP Latin course, and specifically (1) about important skills and (2) about a curriculum that would give students an opportunity to learn those skills. With surprising and encouraging consistency, people wanted a curriculum that introduces students to important works of literature in

London-based scholar Evan Millner has developed a number of Web 2.0 sites for Latin, most notably Schola (Ning-created), Latinum, and Imaginum Vocabularium.

Schola (<http://schola.ning.com/>) is an all-Latin language, informal social network where anyone with a yen to practice their Latin composition is free to do so. Members are invited to comment, add corrections, and help each other with the Latin they create.

Latinum (<http://latinum.mypodcast.com/>) is an extensive site containing hundreds of lessons in spoken Classical Latin, presented as MP3 audio, based on a free introductory Latin textbook in PDF format. In addition, Latinum provides vocabulary drills and a wide range of Classical and other readings.

Imaginum Vocabularium (<http://imaginumvocabulariumlatinum.blogspot.com/>) is an image-based blog to help with vocabulary learning via visuals--an online pictiory.

Classroom 2.0 (<http://www.classroom20.com/>) is a Ning-created social network dedicated to teachers in any subject who are interested in using technology to help teach. With over 10,000 members, help is readily available, and is a sign that this kind of technology is already present and growing in support of all levels of education.

Teachers now have the ability to create their own Web 2.0 sites for their classes. Distance-learning Classics educator Laura Gibbs uses social networks, blogs, and wikis for her online courses (<http://www.mythfolklore.net/>). High school Latin teacher Bob Patrick uses blogs (<http://www.carminacatulli.blogspot.com/> and <http://latinatironibus.blogspot.com/>) and, more recently, private social networks for his AP Latin classes, too, created on Ning.com.

Educators are beginning to leverage Web 2.0 technologies into their classes with good results. The balance of this article will show *Teaching Classical Languages* readers how easy it is to both create and manage a classroom social network in support of AP Vergil, step-by-step. No programming skill is required; pre-made artistic “themes” are available to those teachers who don’t have the time to fuss with graphic design, and the creation of content is quick and easy requiring a few minutes a day to post news, homework assignments, and reminders. The students are responsible for the rest.

## Creating Your Latin Class Network with Ning

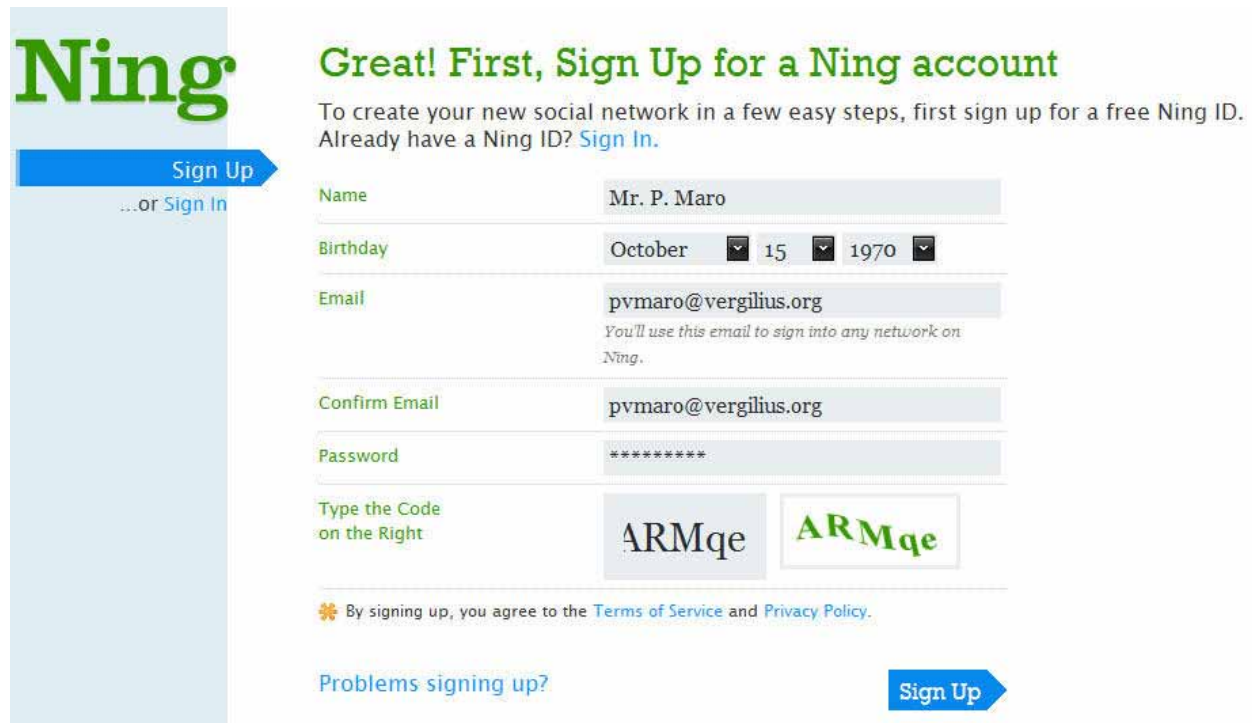
“Ning” is a social network creation tool. This means that you can create your own Facebook-style groups online for free for any/all of your Latin classes. It takes about thirty minutes to set up a basic site, and then it's up to both you and your students to create content on a day-to-day basis. This content can include class assignments, uploading multimedia, posting news about tests and quizzes, commenting on the blog, and more. Go to [ning.com](http://ning.com) to get started.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar at <http://www.ning.com/>. The page features the Ning logo in green, a search bar for popular networks, and navigation links for Sign In, Popular Social Networks, and Help. The main heading reads "Create Your Own Social Network for Anything". Below this, there are two input fields: "Name Your Social Network" with the text "Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class" and a subtext "For example, Paris Cyclists"; and "Pick a Web Address" with the text "MaroVergil" and ".ning.com" next to it, with a subtext "At least 6 letters. For example, pariscyclists.ning.com". A blue "CREATE" button is visible to the right of the address field.



Ning-created sites do require their creators and members to have a unique Ning ID (a username and password) in order to log in. If you don't have a Ning ID, both you and your students will need to get one. Membership is free and does not ask for any personal information. The only requirement is that you have an e-mail address (any e-mail address will do, be it one for your school, or simply a gmail.com or mac.com account, among others). At the time of publication, the site had over 1,100 members from nearly 50 countries.



The screenshot shows the Ning sign-up interface. On the left is a vertical blue sidebar with the 'Ning' logo at the top and a 'Sign Up' button. The main content area has a green heading 'Great! First, Sign Up for a Ning account'. Below this is a sub-header 'To create your new social network in a few easy steps, first sign up for a free Ning ID. Already have a Ning ID? [Sign In.](#)'. The form fields are: 'Name' (Mr. P. Maro), 'Birthday' (October 15, 1970), 'Email' (pvmaro@vergilius.org) with a note 'You'll use this email to sign into any network on Ning.', 'Confirm Email' (pvmaro@vergilius.org), 'Password' (masked with asterisks), and a CAPTCHA 'Type the Code on the Right' showing 'ARMqe'. At the bottom, there is a checkbox 'By signing up, you agree to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy.](#)' and a 'Sign Up' button.

**Ning**

**Sign Up**

**Great! First, Sign Up for a Ning account**

To create your new social network in a few easy steps, first sign up for a free Ning ID. Already have a Ning ID? [Sign In.](#)

**Name** Mr. P. Maro

**Birthday** October 15 1970

**Email** pvmaro@vergilius.org  
You'll use this email to sign into any network on Ning.

**Confirm Email** pvmaro@vergilius.org

**Password** \*\*\*\*\*

**Type the Code on the Right** ARMqe

☐ By signing up, you agree to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy.](#)

[Problems signing up?](#) **Sign Up**

### Create your Classroom Network

Ning asks that you describe the purpose of this network; this brief description is what appears in the top-left corner of the site once the network is launched. You should also make the network private so that only you and your students can access it. As an instructor and manager of the site, it is up to you to invite your students in. You can lock the network down so that only you have the power to invite people to the site. If other people stumble upon your network, they will be prompted to log in to get to the homepage. Without the proper login credentials, they will only be able to see the name of your network, but will be blocked from all class data, membership, media, and other content.

**Ning**

About Your Network

Features  
Appearance  
Launch!

## Describe Your New Social Network

Next

Give everyone a reason to join your new social network. Want to make your network private or use a language other than English? Do that here too.

**Network Name** Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class

**Privacy**

- ☒ **Public** - Anybody can see or join it
- ☐ **Private** - Only invited people can join and see it

**Tagline** Arma virumque cano...  
*Appears in the header of your network*

**Description** Welcome to the classroom network for students of Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class, first period, fall 2008. Blog, discussions, class projects, and assignments can be found here.

**Keywords** Vergil, Virgil, Advanced Placement, Maro  
*Separate each keyword with a comma*

**Language** English (U.S.)

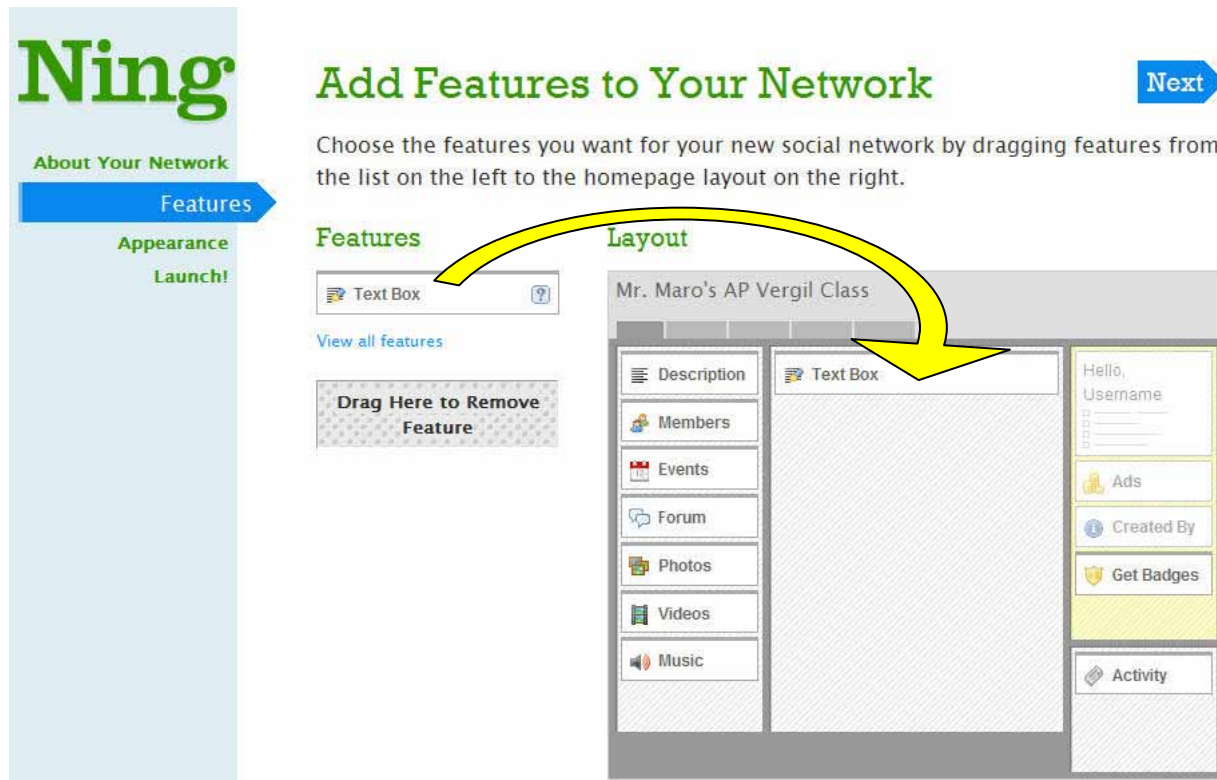
Educators are beginning to leverage Web 2.0 technologies into their classes with good results. Bob Patrick teaches at Parkview High School in Lilburn, Georgia, where he has used private, classroom blogs with his AP Latin Literature and AP Vergil students, specifically for practicing essay writing for the AP exams. He graded these online essays with the AP essay rubrics.

After speaking with Web 2.0 maven and teacher Laura Gibbs of the University of Oklahoma, Patrick decided to give Ning-created social networking sites a try in his classes. As Patrick succinctly puts it, he likes Nings because they “combine elements of a website, a blog, a discussion group, a calendar, email, chat groups, and social networking all in one easy-to-set-up place”. Patrick did have to contact Ning.com to request all advertising to be removed from the site which Ning did at no charge because he was educating students who were younger than college-age.

Patrick keeps his classroom Nings private, just for his own use and that of his students. He did give his students some training on how to use the site, and then jumped right in posting the syllabus online, using the Events calendar for assignments, creating student blogs on Vergil. Students are encouraged to comment on the blogs as part of their quiz grades. An added bonus to using Nings is that Patrick’s classes are nearly paper-free.

“I’m happier. The students are happier. Mother Earth is happier. It’s a trifecta of happiness,” Patrick said.

Now the fun begins! Drag-and-drop the features you want to use for your class from the left-hand panel into the pane on the right. Each feature is discussed in greater detail below, but this main screen shows you most of the elements you can add to your network. You do not need to add all of the elements at once. Ning sites allow you to modify them over time based on the needs of both you and your class.



Briefly, here is what you can add to your site at this stage:

- **Description:** This is the brief description about this classroom network that you entered at the very beginning of this process.
- **Members:** See a list of all members, plus thumbnail-sized representations of them, uploaded by both you and your students.
- **Events:** Browse a list of upcoming events, be those tests, quizzes, class trips, and more.
- **Forum:** The discussion forum allows both you and your students to dialogue on a specific point, whether it's about the death of Dido or about the Latin grammar, vocabulary, and syntax Vergil used to describe it.
- **Photos:** Upload and view digital images pertinent to your class.
- **Videos:** Upload and view digital video. Many students opt to produce movies for their end-of-year projects. They can upload those videos here.
- **Music:** Upload and listen to MP3 audio. Record yourself reading Latin and post the files here; have your students do the same.
- **Text Box:** Free-text, typically used for breaking news.
- **Activity:** Automatically added by Ning, you can monitor who is doing what on the classroom site.

Once you have selected the features that you would like to have on your network, choose your theme (i.e. collection of design elements collected under a label like “Winter” or “Martini”) and color scheme and fonts (use your school colors for example, or accept the Ning defaults). In this example, the “Notepad” theme is used.

**Ning**

About Your Network  
Features  
**Appearance**  
Launch!

## Customize Appearance

Next

Make your new social network stand out from the crowd by choosing a theme and customizing it below.

### First, choose a theme

Flourish Melon Area 51 Ezra Ocean Graph

Winter Floral Newsroom Martini Office Notepad

Cheesecake Baby Active Gothic Tagged Tagged Blue

### Now, make it uniquely yours

Theme Settings Advanced

**Header, Footer & Sides**

Network Name

Header Background To fill the header use an image 955 pixels wide

Add a Logo **NONE** This image replaces the network name

### Notepad

Network Name

Main My Page Members

Page Title

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nunc scelerisque blandit dolor. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus.



After selecting your theme, you can view the initial appearance of your classroom network. You will note the appearance of Google Ads on the right side of the screen. When your network is first created, these ads will make little sense; however, after the site has matured a week or two and you have added classroom content, the ads will change focus to display advertising topical to Classics and education. If you do not care for the advertising, Ning charges \$20.00/month to remove the ads. It is the Google Ads revenue that keeps these social networking sites free on Ning. This is why Ning charges a monthly fee if you choose to opt out of the ads.

The screenshot shows a Ning classroom network page for 'Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class'. The page has a yellow background with a pencil graphic in the top right corner. The header includes the class name and the Latin phrase 'Arma virumque cano...'. Below the header is a navigation bar with links: Main, Invite, My Page, Members, Events, Forum, Photos, Videos, and Manage. The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a 'Members' section with a photo of Andrew Reinhard and links to 'Invite More' and 'View All'. Below this are sections for 'Events', 'Forum', 'Photos', 'Videos', and 'Music', each with an 'Add' button and an 'Edit' button. In the center, there is a 'Welcome to your new social network, Andrew Reinhard!' message with a list of actions: 'Invite friends', 'Add photos', 'Add a video', 'Start a discussion', and 'Make it unique'. Below this is a 'Your Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class Box' section with an 'Edit' button and instructions on how to use it. On the right, there is a 'Hello, Andrew Reinhard!' message with links to 'Sign Out', 'My Friends - Invite More', 'Inbox', and 'My Settings'. Below this is a 'Quick Add...' dropdown menu. At the bottom right, there are several Google Ads, including 'Pimp Your Page', 'Create Membership Website', 'High School Film Camps', and '10 Rules to Flat Stomach'.

Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class

Arma virumque cano...

Main Invite My Page Members Events Forum Photos Videos Manage

Welcome to the classroom network for students of Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class, first period, fall 2008.

Members Edit

Andrew Reinhard

Online

Invite More View All

Events Edit

Create Event

Forum Edit

Start a Discussion

Photos Edit

Add Photos

Videos Edit

Add Videos

Music Edit

Add Music

Welcome to your new social network, Andrew Reinhard!

Here are a few things you can do right now..

Invite friends Add photos Add a video Start a discussion Make it unique

Your Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class Box Edit

Click 'Edit' to add text, HTML, videos, photos, or any third-party widgets to this box. This box won't show up for other people until you update its content.

Hello, Andrew Reinhard!

Sign Out

My Friends - Invite More

Inbox

My Settings

Quick Add..

Ads by Google

**Pimp Your Page**  
Custom Layouts & Backgrounds to choose - Download Them Now!  
webfetti.smileycentral.com

**Create Membership Website**  
Nonprofit member website software Easy, secure, reliable. Free Trial!  
WildApricot.com

**High School Film Camps**  
Enroll in Film & Acting Camps in NY, LA, Paris, Italy or London!  
www.NYFA.com/

**10 Rules to Flat Stomach**  
Drop 9 lbs of Stomach Fat every 11 Days by Obeying these 10 Rules.  
FatLoss4idiots.com





### Add Events

It's now time to add some content. The "Add Event" feature lets you schedule things like quizzes and tests, or more fun stuff like Saturnalia parties or a birthday party for Rome. Students can choose to RSVP to these events in order to acknowledge them. The events are posted with date(s), start/end time(s), and location(s), along with an image topical to the event.

## Create New Event


Step 1: Create an Event    Step 2: Invite members

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<b>Event Information</b>	<b>Privacy</b>
Name <input type="text" value="Week One Test"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Public: Anyone can see and RSVP
Event Image <input type="button" value="NEW"/>  Add a photo or image as part of your event display	<input type="radio"/> Private: Only invited people can RSVP
Description <div><b>B</b> <b>I</b> <u>U</u> <b>S</b>   </div> <div>Our first test is coming up! Please be prepared to be quizzed on the Aeneid, Book I....</div>	<input type="checkbox"/> Disable RSVP
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hide Guest List
Event Type <input type="text" value="Test"/> Example: Fundraiser, "Birthday Party"	
Start Time <input type="text" value="Sep"/> <input type="text" value="19"/> <input type="text" value="2008"/> <input type="text" value="9"/> : <input type="text" value="00"/> <input type="text" value="AM"/>	
End Time <a href="#">Add End Time</a>	
Location <input type="text" value="Classroom"/> Add a general location such as "The Fillmore" so your event will show up in area results	
Street <input type="text"/>	
City/Town <input type="text"/>	
Website or Map <input type="text" value="http://"/> Add the web address for the venue or link to a <a href="#">Google Map</a>	
Phone <input type="text"/>	
Organized By <input type="text" value="Mr. Maro"/> If you want the host to be someone other than you	

Send invitations to your students to remind them of upcoming events, too. When invitations are sent, invitees receive an email notification and do not have to visit the site to learn of the event. Student emails are held in the “Manage Members” area which is accessible by the site’s administrator only. Students are responsible for entering their correct email addresses. When creating the invitation list online, the teacher may choose to copy/paste the email addresses directly from an Excel file produced by the site, or can enter these addresses by hand.

## Invite to 'Aeneid, Book I test'



Time: **September 19, 2008 at 9am**  
Location: **Classroom**

The test for the Aeneid, Book I, is coming up!  
[Skip →](#)

▼ **Enter Email Addresses**

**Send To**

mike@school.com,betty@school.com, etc.....

Separate multiple addresses with commas

**Your Message** (Optional)

**Send Invitations**

► **Invite Friends**

Invite Your Friends to 'Aeneid, Book I test'

► **Import from Web Address Book**

Yahoo Mail, Hotmail, GMail or AOL Mail

► **Import from Address Book Application**

Microsoft Outlook, Apple Address Book, .CSV, etc.

### Add News and Notes

Many Ning networks contain news and notes at the top of the homepage. You can use the free-text box (top of your network) to add assignments and class news, too. Update the news daily or weekly to keep your students coming back to the site. When they are logged on, they will then have the opportunity to participate in online discussions on classroom topics, they can comment on blog posts by the instructor or by other students, and can upload and comment on multimedia pertinent to the class. These options are discussed in more detail below.

The screenshot shows a Ning network homepage with a yellow background. At the top is a navigation bar with links: Main, Invite, My Page, Members, Events, Forum, Photos, Videos, and Manage. Below this, a welcome message reads: "Welcome to the classroom network for students of Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class, first period, fall 2008." To the right of the welcome message is a text box titled "Assignment for AP Vergil, Week One" containing the text: "Salvete, omnes, Please read Aeneid, Book I, Lines 1-11, for Friday. Mr. Maro". Below the welcome message is a "Members" section with a photo of Andrew Reinhard, his name, and a status "Online". To the right of the members section is a "Events" section with a title "Aeneid, Book I Test", a date "September 19, 2008 at 9am - Classroom", and a description "The test for Book I is coming up! Organized by Mr. Maro | Type: Test". At the bottom right are "Save" and "Cancel" buttons.

Main Invite My Page Members Events Forum Photos Videos Manage

Welcome to the classroom network for students of Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class, first period, fall 2008.

Assignment for AP Vergil, Week One

Salvete, omnes,

Please read Aeneid, Book I, Lines 1-11, for Friday.

Mr. Maro

Members Edit

Andrew Reinhard Online

Invite More View All

Events Edit

Aeneid, Book I Test

September 19, 2008 at 9am - Classroom

The test for Book I is coming up!

Organized by Mr. Maro | Type: Test

Add a widget to this textbox

Save Cancel



**Add a Forum for After-Class Discussions**

If your school has a mandatory writing component for every class, consider using Ning's Forum/Discussion feature to encourage your students to write about class-themed topics. Not only can the students earn writing credit through this online activity, but they can also engage each other in specific points of Latin grammar, translation, and the like, as well as themes with the content of the Latin read for class.

Each topic receives its own space on the Ning site to keep it separate from other topics. Each new topic may also be tagged by its author into a variety of categories such as “poetry” or “grammar” or “Book VI”. Clicking on a tag like “Book VI” will call up all of the discussions relating to Book VI of the *Aeneid*.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Start a New Discussion" on a yellow background. At the top, there are three links: "Forum Home", "My Discussions", and "Manage Forum". The form has several sections: "Discussion Title:" with a text box containing "In the beginning..."; "Post:" with a rich text editor containing the text "Why do you think Vergil begins the Aeneid the way that he does? Please respond here by Friday." and a toolbar with icons for bold, italic, underline, link, unlink, and image; "Tags:" with a text box containing "Aeneid, Book I" and a help icon; "Attach File(s):" with three empty text boxes and "Browse..." buttons; and a red "Start Discussion" button at the bottom right.

Forum Home   My Discussions   Manage Forum

## Start a New Discussion

Discussion Title:

Post: 

**B** *I* U

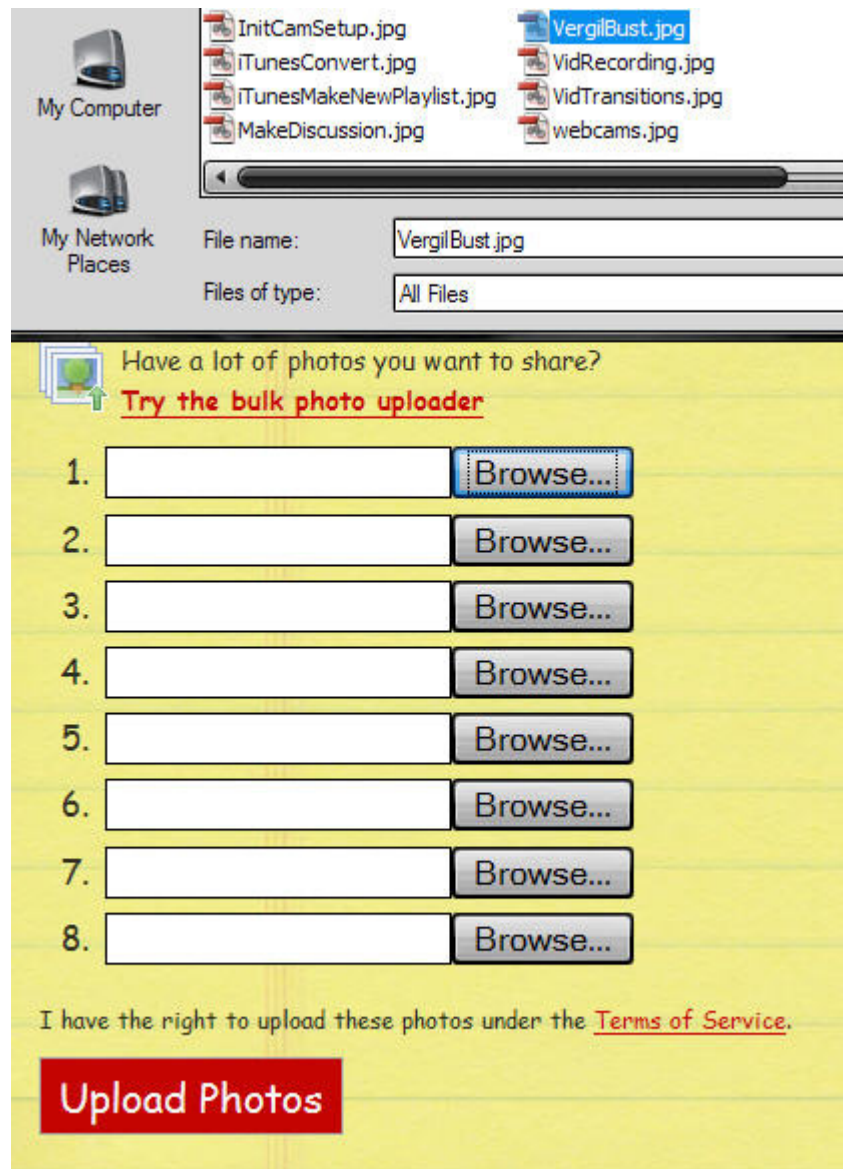
Why do you think Vergil begins the Aeneid the way that he does? Please respond here by Friday.

Tags:

Attach File(s):

**Add Digital Images**

Arguably the most fun you can have with social networks is with sharing multimedia (images, audio, video, and documents). Both you and your students can add digital images to the classroom network at will. Click on the “Add Photos” button to get to this window:



The image shows a screenshot of a web application interface for uploading photos. At the top, there is a file explorer window showing a list of files. The files listed are: InitCamSetup.jpg, iTunesConvert.jpg, iTunesMakeNewPlaylist.jpg, MakeDiscussion.jpg, VergilBust.jpg (highlighted), VidRecording.jpg, VidTransitions.jpg, and webcams.jpg. Below the file list, there is a search bar with the text "VergilBust.jpg" and a dropdown menu showing "All Files".

Below the file explorer, there is a yellow background section with the text "Have a lot of photos you want to share? Try the bulk photo uploader". This section contains eight numbered rows, each with a text input field and a "Browse..." button. The first row is highlighted in blue.

At the bottom of the yellow section, there is a red button labeled "Upload Photos". Above the button, there is a link to the "Terms of Service".

Browse for photos that you (or your students) have taken, or have downloaded online. These photos could be anything from scans of papyrus manuscripts to class trip photos to images of Vergil and more.

After selecting one or more photos to upload, add metadata (keywords and descriptive tags) about each digital image you post. Even though a lot of your images will be from the Internet and used in class under the “fair-use” license, don’t forget to cite your sources:

## Edit Photo Information

Add a title, description, and other information to the photos you just uploaded.  
Everything is optional; if you don't want to add anything, just click "Skip this step" on the right.

[Skip this step »](#)

  
[Rotate Photo](#)

**Title**

**Description**

**Who can view this photo?**

☒ Anyone

☐ Just My Friends

☐ Just Me

**Location**

[Map It](#)

**Tags:**

 [?](#)

[Save Changes](#) [Cancel](#)

### Add Digital Videos

You can add your own videos to your network, too. Many Latin classes have an end-of-year class project component, and increasing numbers of students are choosing to produce digital videos in Latin (whether with spoken Latin or with Latin subtitles).

Click the “Add Videos” button to get to the window below. Ning will convert even large videos (up to 100MB) to something any computer can manage, importing the videos into the site. The 100MB filesize allows you to upload high-quality videos that are brief (e.g. five minutes of full-screen, crystal-clear video vs. an hour of fuzzy video shown in a 2” x 3” box). Ning converts the videos for you to a proprietary online format, shrinking the filesize down without compromising quality.

The screenshot shows the Ning website for 'Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class'. The page has a yellow background and includes navigation links like 'Main', 'Invite', 'My Page', 'Members', and 'Events'. The 'Videos' section is active, showing 'Videos Home', 'My Videos', and 'My Favorites'. The 'Add Videos' section is prominent, with a sub-header 'Upload a Video From Your Computer'. Below this, there is a text input field, a 'Browse...' button, and a link to 'Try the bulk video uploader'. A red 'Add Video' button is also visible. To the right, there is a section for adding photos or videos from a phone. At the bottom, there is a section for adding videos from YouTube or Google, with the YouTube and Google logos. A Windows file explorer window is overlaid on the right side of the page, showing the 'Desktop' and 'My Documents' folders. The 'SillyVergilFinal.wmv' file is selected in the file list. The file name field shows 'SillyVergilFinal.wmv' and the file type is set to 'All Files'.

Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class

Arma virumque cano...

Main Invite My Page Members Events

Videos Home My Videos My Favorites

## Add Videos

Upload a Video From Your Computer

Have a lot of videos you want to share?  
[Try the bulk video uploader](#)

**Browse...**

I have the right to upload this video under the [Terms of Service](#).

**Add Video**

**How it works**  
Files must be 100MB or smaller. We support .mov, .mpg, .avi, .3gp and .wmv file formats.

Add photos or videos to Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class directly from your phone by sending them to an email address.

[More Information](#)

...from YouTube or Google

**YouTube** **Google**

Grab the HTML 'embed' code from any popular video site and add that video to this social network.

[Add Video](#)



Add metadata about your video to let others know what it is about, including a title, brief description, and tags. For any media that you upload, you can choose to tag these files with keywords for quick retrieval during searches run through the site. For example, tagging a video as being from Book I of the *Aeneid* will allow that video to be returned during a search for all videos featuring content from Book I.

## Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class

Arma virumque cano...

[Main](#) [Invite](#) [My Page](#) [Members](#) [Events](#) [Forum](#) [Photos](#) [Videos](#) [Manage](#)

[Videos Home](#) [My Videos](#) [My Favorites](#) [+ Add Videos](#)

### Edit Video Information

Add a title, description, and other information to the video you just uploaded.

[« Cancel and return to video](#)

Your video is being converted

Votre vidéo est en cours de conversion

Su video está en el proceso de la conversión

لکم الفیدیو فی التی تحول

您的视频正在转换中

SillyVergilFinal.wmv

**Title:**

**Who can view this video?**

☒ Anyone

☐ Just My Friends

☐ Just Me

**Description**

**Location**

[Map It](#)

**Tags:**  
 ?

[Save Changes](#) [Cancel](#)

### Add Digital Audio


Even though Ning classes all audio as “music”, your digital audio can be much more than that. Record your own oral interpretation of Latin, and encourage your students to practice reading their Latin aloud. Posting these audio files allows you as a teacher to listen to how your students are pronouncing the Latin, and also allows the other students to listen. You can leave comments underneath individual audio files with notes on pronunciation, or to give encouragement or praise. These comments can be seen by all members. To leave an individual comment for a student, use the site’s internal email feature to send a personal message.


Click the “Add Music” button to get to the window above where you can add your MP3 files. Add metadata about the audio you are uploading (give credit where credit is due!).

## Edit Song Information

Add a title, description, and other information to the songs you just uploaded.  
Everything is optional; if you don't want to add anything, just click "Skip this step" on the right.

[Skip this step »](#)

 **APVergilPres.mp3**

Song Title  Artwork  

Artist

Album

☒ Allow people to put this song on their pages

[► More...](#)

[Done](#)

3.

4.

I have the right to upload these songs under the [Terms of Service](#).

[Upload Songs](#)

**How it works**  
You can upload up to 100 MP3s! Each MP3 file may be up to 20MB in size, but smaller files will upload more quickly.

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## Add other Features

When you first created your classroom social network, you had a few options of features to add (Forum, Audio, Video, Free Text, etc.). Click on the “Manage” heading on your homepage and then choose “Features” to select other fun options for your network (like Blogs and Groups).

# Add Features to Your Network

Choose the features you want for your social network by dragging features from the list on the left to the homepage layout on the right. Want to change the light gray boxes in the right column? [Check out our premium services!](#)

### Features

Text Box ?

Notes ?

RSS ?

Gadgets (Beta) ?

Drag Here to Remove Feature

### Layout

Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class

Description

Members

Events

Forum

Photos

Videos

Music

Text Box

Blog

Groups

Hello, Username:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ads

Created By

Get Badges

Activity

Save Features

### Add Groups

You can create an endless number of sub-groups for your Ning network. For your Latin classes, you might create Groups for your students to use when working together on class projects. Your students can use the Groups page to discuss projects and record the work that has been done on them so far. You might create groups for students collaborating on translation projects, or even groups for different levels of Latin that meet during the same class period in the same classroom (e.g. a Latin I group, a Latin IV group, and a Latin V group that all meet in Room 101 from 1:40 – 2:30).

For student project groups (like the one pictured below), the students actually create a group-related webpage within the main site that they can make their own. It is up to the group members to decide whether to allow anyone in, or to grant access to other students on an invitation-only basis. Students within a group can upload files to the group's page, as well as works in progress, and can document what they are doing for the benefit of other group members.

## Create New Group

Step 1: Set up your group's information    Step 2: Invite members

### Group Information

Name

Small Group No. 1

Image

NONE

Description

Mike, Betty, and Carlos class project group homepage.

Group Address

smallgroupno1

This sets the URL of your group:  
http://maroapvergil.ning.com  
/group/groupwebaddress

Website

http://

If your group has another website, add it here

Location

If your group is based somewhere, add your town or city

### Features

Choose the features you want on your group page.

☒ Comments

☒ Discussion Forum

☒ Text Box

☐ RSS Reader

### Privacy

Choose who can join this group. Privacy can't be changed after the group is created.

☐ Anyone

☒ Only Invited People

### Messages

☒ Allow members to send messages to the entire group

Create Group    Cancel



**Add a Classroom Blog**

Add the “Blog” feature from the Manage menu and create your own classroom blog to supplement the other activities on the Latin class network. Granted, you might opt to create a Latin class blog to cover day-to-day discussions of the literature being read in class. An advantage of a Ning-created Latin classroom network is the fact that the blog can be included among all of the other content in the site as another place to write and discuss grammar and content from the assigned readings (or even extra readings).

For classroom use, instructors might opt to keep the topics listed above as fodder for the forums, instead leaving the blogging to the students. When a student joins a Ning social network, s/he receives his/her own home page which includes space for a personal blog. It is here that students can write about their classroom experiences, make notes about an author they are reading or passage they are translating, or anything else related to the class. A teacher might be inspired to cast students as different characters from the *Aeneid* and have them blog in the voice of that character each week.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> It would be easy to adapt Laurie Churchill’s suggestions for keeping a weekly Latin language journal to the blog or forum (95-97).

## Ning's Manage Menu

As the classroom network's creator and administrator, you have several options to control security, access, and content. Your network's Manage menu, available to only you at the top of any page on the site, allows you to fully customize your network. These features are briefly described in the picture below.

The screenshot shows the 'Manage' menu for a Ning network titled 'Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class'. The network's tagline is 'Arma virumque cano...'. A navigation bar at the top includes links for Main, Invite, My Page, Members, Events, Forum, Groups, Photos, Videos, and Manage (highlighted in red). The 'Manage' section is titled 'Manage' and contains two main categories: 'Network Settings' and 'Promote Your Network'. Under 'Network Settings', there are nine options: Network Information (edit name, description, etc.), Members (manage members, administrators, etc.), Appearance (adjust colors, images, etc.), Features (customize social network features), Privacy & Content Control (choose who can see, join, etc.), Profile Questions (edit questions members answer), Flickr Importing (import photos from Flickr), Latest Activity (add messages, choose what's displayed), and Language Editor (customize text, messages, or create new language). Under 'Promote Your Network', there are three options: Broadcast Message (send message to all members), Facebook Promotion (allow Facebook users to put network's widgets on their profile pages), and Badges & Widgets (customize look of network's widgets and badges).

**Mr. Maro's AP Vergil Class**  
Arma virumque cano...

Main Invite My Page Members Events Forum Groups Photos Videos **Manage**

### Manage

Network Settings

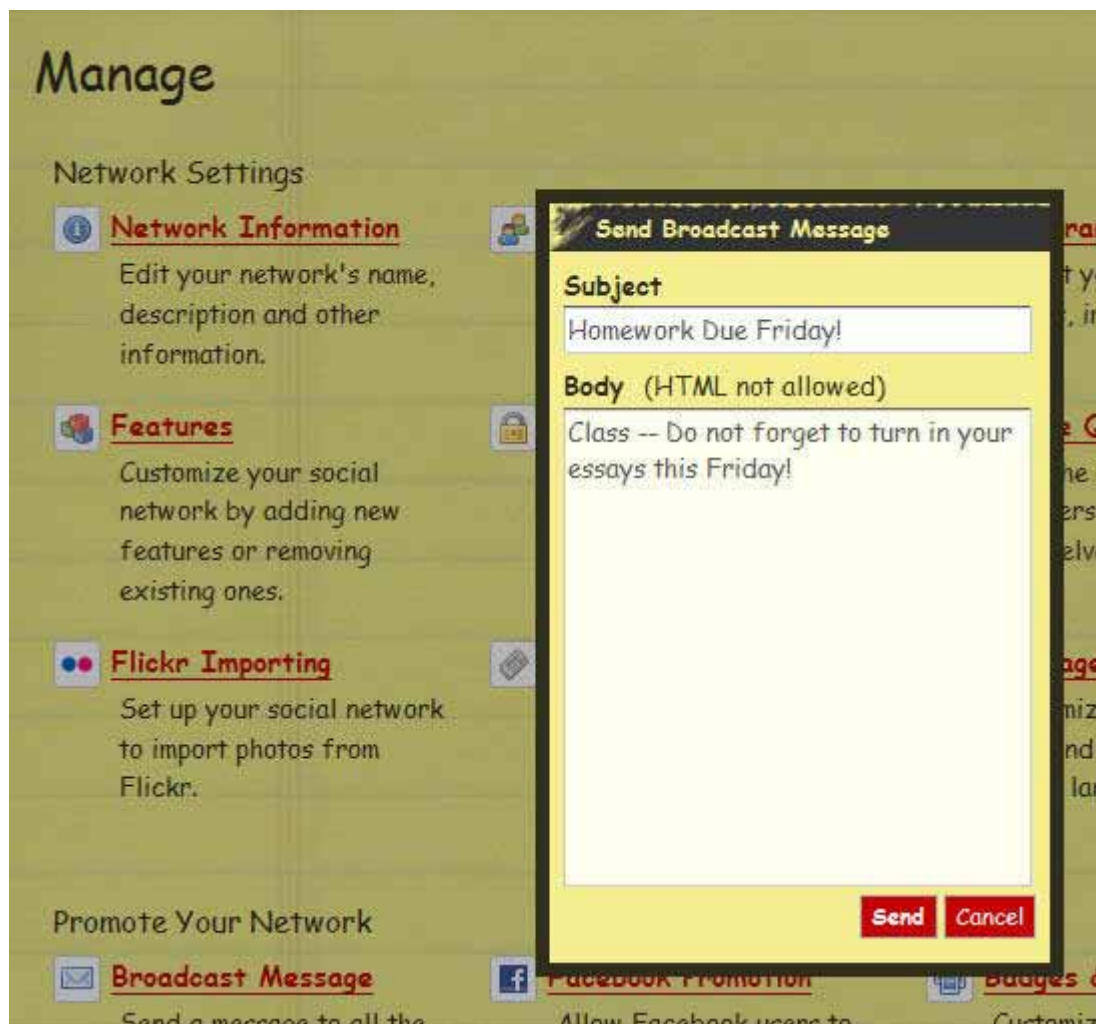
- Network Information**  
Edit your network's name, description and other information.
- Members**  
Manage members, Administrators, invited people and banned people.
- Appearance**  
Adjust your network's colors, images and overall style.
- Features**  
Customize your social network by adding new features or removing existing ones.
- Privacy & Content Control**  
Choose who can see, join and contribute to your network.
- Profile Questions**  
Edit the questions that members answer about themselves.
- Flickr Importing**  
Set up your social network to import photos from Flickr.
- Latest Activity**  
Add messages and choose what's displayed in your network's activity feed.
- Language Editor**  
Customize your network's text and messages or create a new language.

Promote Your Network

- Broadcast Message**  
Send a message to all the members of this network.
- Facebook Promotion**  
Allow Facebook users to put your network's widgets on their profile pages.
- Badges & Widgets**  
Customize the look of your network's widgets and badges.

### Broadcast Messages

Do you need to make a class-wide announcement after-hours? Use the Manage menu's "Broadcast Message" feature to reach all of your students at once at any time. When the message has been successfully sent, Ning will give you a confirmation. Broadcast messages get sent as emails to the network's membership and do not require a student to be logged in in order to get the message.



***Widgets***

Tiny software programs called “widgets” for PC users and “gadgets” for Mac users allow one to post a calendar or a clock or a “phrase of the day” among other things. If you build a widget and post it on your classroom Ning site, you as the creator of that widget (and administrator of your site) can allow Facebook users to upload and share these small software applications. Permission from the site administrator is required as s/he is, in effect, a gatekeeper to the site’s content, especially if it is private. If you so choose, you can upload your own widgets to your own Facebook profile and share them in that way rather than linking your site publicly to Facebook.

**Making Your Latin Classroom Social Network(s) Successful**

Most websites (and specifically blogs and other Web 2.0 creatures) die because of the lack of fresh content. In order for your classroom site to become truly useful, it is up to you as the instructor to both prime the pump with some content prior to the first day of class, and then make the site a clear, strong component of what is expected from your students as part of their daily routine: check the site, contribute to discussions, create or comment on content. With some encouragement, students will find this to be fun as they use a social networking tool to facilitate their Latin learning.

**Conclusion**

Your students are already on social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace; and many teachers have already created profiles as well to connect with friends and colleagues. Harnessing the obvious communicative power of sites like these is extraordinarily quick and easy via the network-creation tool, Ning. About a month before school starts, think about which classes would benefit the most from a dedicated classroom website, think about what you would like to do with a site like this, and don't forget to run the idea by your school administrator and IT department. Some schools do forbid access to social networking sites as a rule, but exceptions might be made for private, classroom-based sites on a case-by-case basis. It doesn't hurt to ask, and if enough interest is shown by faculty from many subjects, it may be easier to get the administration to effect a policy change.

The social networks you create empower your students to use the technological tools that they are familiar with in order to learn old languages in new ways. Teachers who opt to use Web 2.0 tools as part of the class experience do require their students to post content to the site. If teachers place homework assignments and news online, students will be obligated to visit the site anyway. As many courses have writing requirements set by the state, district, or school, you can use online discussions and blogging to fulfill that requirement. And once students learn that they can upload videos and fun pictures that they find, and can actively participate in discussions, they may forget that site participation is required and will instead spend time there on their own because it is fun and allows them to express themselves.

The Web 2.0/social networking sites themselves do not replace classroom lecture and the reading and study required for mastering Latin, but they do lend themselves to having fun with the subject while at the same time giving the students a place to review and to write. One of the questions I am frequently asked by teachers is, “why use this instead of [my course management system]?” For teachers, continue to manage your grades and the like through software packages



like Moodle or Blackboard. But if you give students a choice of using Blackboard or a social networking site for their classes, the course management software will lose.

With Web 2.0, we are realizing the teacher-student/student-teacher paradigm as described by Paolo Freire in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. By encouraging dialogue with your students on the works of Latin authors, you improve class participation and introduce other, Classically-grounded disciplines like rhetoric and philosophy into the mix, turning your Latin students into contemporary thinkers, and more eloquent writers and speakers.

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