Chapter 3

Finding Your Way Around

*T*he Facebook evolution has been a bumpy road. Two major upgrades in the past two years were met with a tremendous outpouring of opinion and debate. The most recent upgrade, which went live in March 2009, resulted in the company capitulating to member demands, giving users greater control over the ability to filter the flow of stories.

The company's much anticipated upgrade also moved the News Feed stories — a dynamically updated, real-time view of your friends' social activities on Facebook— to the Home page. Stories often include links that lead you to a photo album, a video, a Facebook Group that you can join (see Chapter 7), or a Facebook Page for your business (see Chapter 4) that you can connect to. This continuous stream of news keeps you informed of your friend's activities and draws comparisons to Twitter, another fast rising social network. Dubbed by many as the *twitterization* effect, the design underscores the potential of the social graph stream. No one knows where this stream leads, but one thing is for sure, the Facebook News Feed is the heart and soul of the beast that is Facebook.

The Home Page

The Facebook top and bottom navigational toolbars offer an iconic design with easy access to the site's core functionality. The Home link takes prominent, top-left positioning. Figure 3-1 shows a glimpse of a Facebook Home page as of this writing. Home is where you land after signing in to Facebook,

and you can easily arrive there from anywhere in Facebook by clicking the Home link on the top navigation bar. The Home page features a three-column format, which we describe in the following sections.
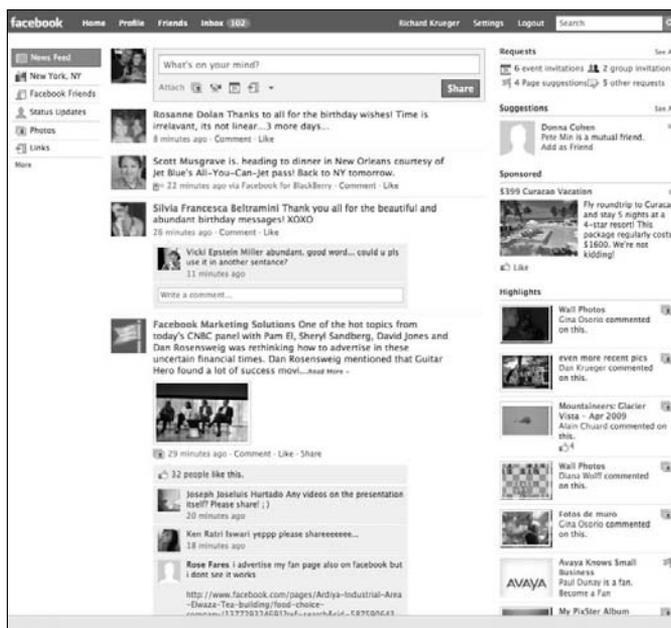
Figure 3-1:
A typical Facebook member's Home page.

TIP

Facebook often changes its Web site without prior notice. Some of the features in this chapter might appear slightly different from what we describe at the time we published this book. Please note that we strive to be as current and accurate as possible.

The center column

The What's on your mind? box (known as the Publisher in Facebook) takes a top-center position, and is where you can update your status by posting messages, photos, notes, links, and more. These posts also show on your profile (on the Wall tab) and on your friends' News Feeds.

Below this status update feature, your News Feed shows real-time posts from your friends. You can control how much information you want to receive and exactly whose activities you see in your News Feed. To the right of every news story, you can click the Hide link to stop viewing that friend's feeds. (For more information on generating News Feed stories, see Chapter 6).

News Feed

Facebook uses the News Feed to deliver news and information as it relates to you and your friends' activities. News Feed stories are selected based on Facebook's proprietary algorithm that takes into consideration a member's actions on the site, the privacy settings of everyone involved, your interactions, and your account and applications settings. Facebook weighs all these elements in deciding which stories to publish for each member. The key is relevancy, which Facebook's News Feed algorithm is very good at delivering.

News Feed stories represent only part of the content created across your social graph (see Figure 3-2). You will not see stories by friends whose privacy settings restrict you from seeing their actions. Likewise, your privacy rules dictate what actions of yours Facebook publishes as news stories on your friend's Home page. Facebook gives you plenty of control over your News Feed stories — from what you receive to what is published about you.

Facebook allows you to prevent certain types of stories from being published about you. To find out more about your Privacy Settings for your News Feed, see "Managing Your Settings," later in this chapter.

REMEMBER

News Feed stories do not display any actions or content that your friends normally are not allowed to see. For example, if you post a photo album and only allow specific lists to view that photo album and a certain subset of your friends are not included in that list, they will not receive a News Feed story about this action.

**Figure 3-2:** News Feed displays stories in real time; more recent stories appear at the top.
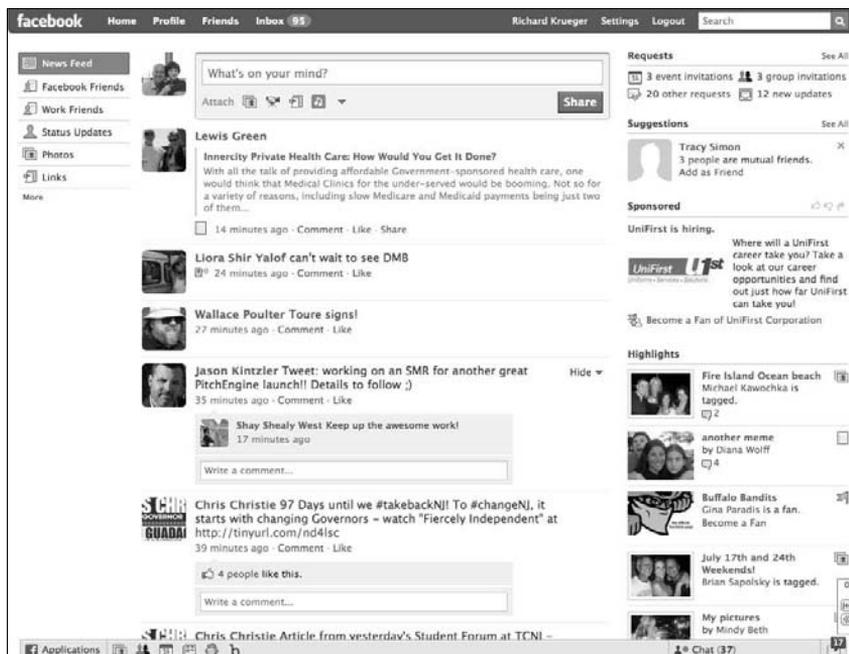
Status updates

The What's on your mind? box is where you can share your content, whether it be text, photos, video, notes, music, and a whole lot more. (See Figure 3-3.) The question "What's on your mind?" is displayed inside the status update box and you can address the question directly by sharing text messages up to 160 characters that appear in your friends' (or, for business Pages, *fans*) News Feeds. (See Chapter 6).

To update your status and post your message, click in the What's on your mind? box at the top of your screen. Type the text that you want to share (and/or attach a photo, video, or Web link), and then click the blue Share button.

Figure 3-3:
Personal profiles and Pages offer the ability to send status updates.
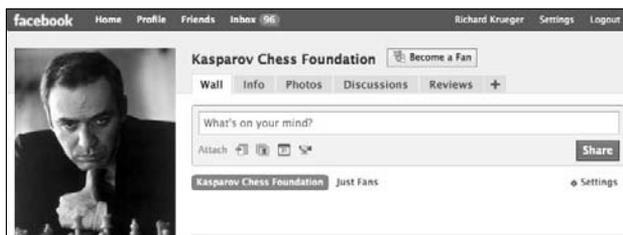
For both your personal profile and your Page, you have to be extra careful when sharing with others. Whether it be a message, a photo, a link, or videos, if your friends (or fans for Pages) find your updates boring and irrelevant, they'll hide you from appearing in their News Feeds. An inappropriate update could result in a drop in fans. So, it's always good to follow some basic rules when posting updates on behalf of your personal or professional use.

Following are a few status updates do's and don'ts that can help keep your fans engaged:

Status updates do's

Always remember when updating your status to keep your content fresh.

Make an effort to post updates on a regular and ongoing basis.

Post relevant statements and questions to your fan base to encourage participation.

Be up front with your posts, which speaks to a company's willingness to be open and transparent with fans.

Include URLs to drive traffic to appropriate information and resources.

If you want to include a link, use a URL shortening service, such as TinyURL.com or bit.ly, to condense the length of a URL. Bit.ly (`http://bit.ly`) can even provide stats on how many people actually click through to the page.

Status updates don'ts

Never make the following mistakes that can make your Page feel like a distraction.

Don't make updates that are irrelevant to your audience.

Don't send an over abundance of updates. It no doubt turns off your fan base and dilutes any newsworthy updates.

Don't be too personal. Your Page's sole purpose is to promote your business, not to update fans on your personal life.

Don't use a hard-sell approach in your updates. Over-aggressive marketing may result in fan revolt.

Don't use updates to broadcast frivolous, mundane, or inconsequential information.

The left column

The left column provides a set of filters that allow you to limit information in your News Feed by using lists. You can also display only application-related stories, stories with photos, stories about Facebook business Pages that interest you, and so on. Facebook is giving its users a lot of control in determining what types of stories they want to receive and by whom.

The right column

The right column displays information regarding any outstanding requests (event invitations, friend requests, group invitations, and even news updates). It also displays suggestions for friends, based on an advanced algorithm that infers connections between members. If you click the photo or *see friends* link, you're taken to a page of 20 or so profile pictures of suggested friends. When looking to expand your friends network, this is a good feature to explore.

REMEMBER

We recommend that you only friend, or accept a friend request from, people you know or folks who are at least friends of friends.

The Highlights section provides an added stream of updated news stories, albeit in an abbreviated format. Typically, there's an emphasis on recently updated videos and photos within this section. Farther down the column are Events, which includes friends' birthdays, and then Connect with Friends, which includes the Invite Friends to Join Facebook link and the Friend Finder search page link.

The Top Navigation Toolbar

Facebook conveniently places its most important functions in a toolbar at the top of your screen. The top navigation features primary links, which include: Home, Profile, Friends, Inbox, your name, Settings, and Logout. (For information on the Home page, see "The Home Page" section earlier in this chapter.) The Facebook Search box is at the end of the toolbar and is the quickest way to find people, Pages, Groups, Events, and so on. In this section, we introduce you to each of these key features and what they can do for you.

Profile

Next to the Home link, the Profile link shows you the screen that others see when they visit your personal profile. It displays the most recent News Feed update at the top of the screen right next to your name. Just below are the recently updated Facebook feature called tabs that display Wall, Info, Photos, and more. These tabs help organize your content and allow for easier viewing of your profile information.

It's important to spend some time completing your personal profile, even from a business perspective, as business and personal often blur on Facebook. Plus, Facebook allows profiles to be indexed by the major search engines, so more and more, your Profile is becoming your public face on the Web.

And since creating a Facebook Page (see Chapter 4) starts with your personal profile, take this opportunity to really position your business. Try to make your profile something that is remarkable to the reader. Do you do something really well, better than anyone? Do you make the best deep dish pizza in all of Greenwich? Why not position yourself as an expert on the topic with which you most want your business to be associated?

Wall

The Wall is the central focus of your profile and features continuously updated information (see Figure 3-4). Facebook's Wall allows you to post messages, links to other Web pages, photos, or videos via the What's on your mind? box beneath your tabs. When you make Wall posts, News Feed stories are generated and published on your Wall and in your friends' News Feeds.

When visitors see these stories, often they take other actions, such as visiting a photo album or installing a particular application. The viral nature of Facebook News Feeds serves to promote the post, causing more people to take interest in the posted action.

From your friends' status updates to updates from business Pages for which you are the admin or fan, to your friends' interactions, such as uploading a photo, every story that is being generated by you, about you, or by your friends, appears on your Wall. You can also filter the stream of stories by displaying only stories generated by you, stories about you generated by your friends, or both.

Likewise, you can view your friends' activities by visiting their Wall. It's no coincidence that the Wall is the first page you see when you visit a friend's profile and vice-versa. It represents a member's social interactions — what you do on Facebook, and increasingly, what you do when you're not on Facebook, thanks to Facebook Connect, which extends many of the Facebook features to external Web sites. (Read more about Facebook Connect in Chapter 15.)


Figure 3-4: The Wall tab found on your personal profile page shows all of your recent activity, as well as that of your friends.
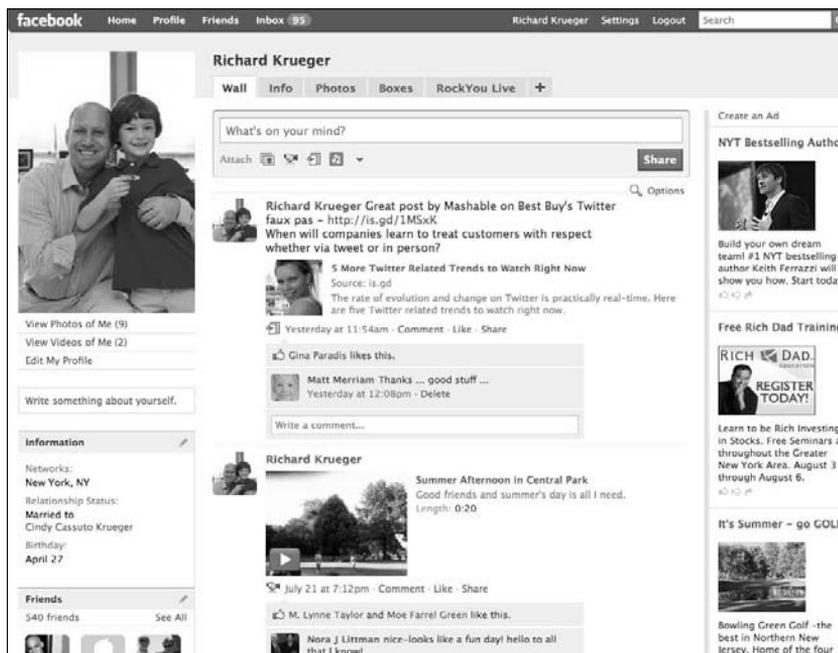
Info

Clicking the Info tab from within a profile takes you to personal information that can help identify you. This is information that won't likely change that often, such as your primary network, sex, birthday, hometown, relationship status, political views, and so on, as well as contact information, interests, and education and work histories. The more information you provide about yourself during registration or while editing your profile, the more information that will display. (See Figure 3-5.)

The Info tab is also a great resource when business prospecting. If you identify someone with whom you want to do business with, you can find out a lot about them from the information detailed within their Info section.

In the left column are your profile picture, brief information about you, your friends, and recent links to friends' photo albums.

Figure 3-5:
The Info tab on a personal profile shows a member's basic information, contact information, and associated Facebook Groups and Pages.
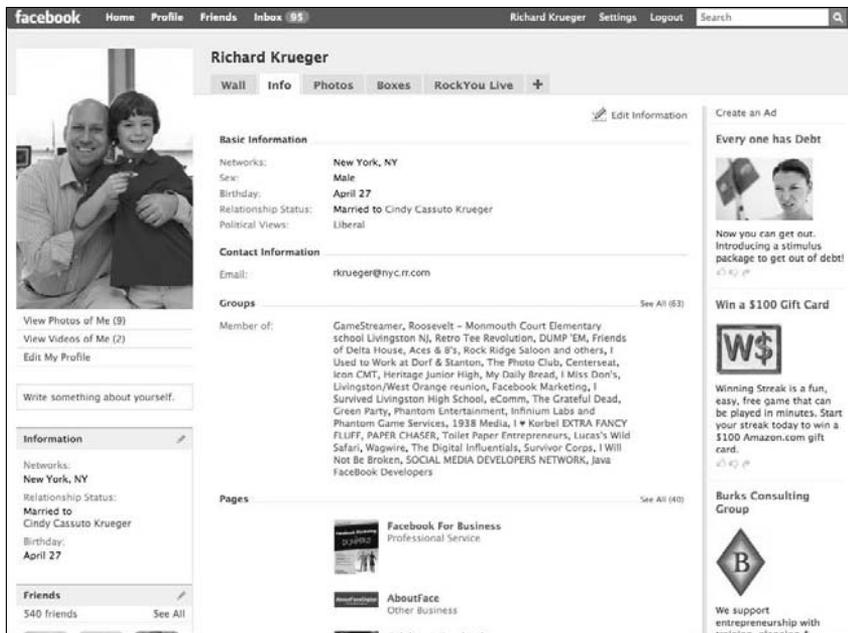
Photos

Next to the Info tab, the Photos tab displays all the photos posted by you, the photos posted of you by others (if any), and any photo albums that you've created. Facebook is home to more than 12 billion photos, making it the largest

photo site in the world by a good distance. According to Internet traffic measurement firm comScore, nearly 70 percent of the Facebook monthly visitors either view or upload photos (See Figure 3-6). For more detailed information on adding photos and videos to your Facebook Page, see Chapter 6.
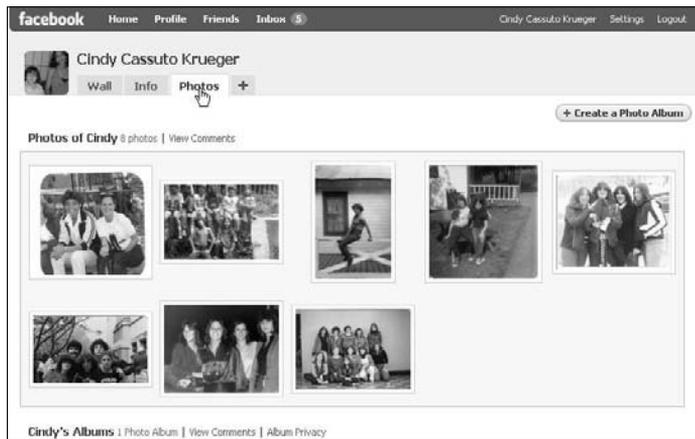

Figure 3-6:
The Photos tab shows pictures featuring or shared by a member.

Friends

Connecting with old and new friends is a major part of the Facebook experience. Facebook makes it easy to find friends. Pointing to the Friends link, which is next to the Profile link in the top navigation toolbar, Facebook displays a pop-up menu that shows the Recently Added, All Friends, Invite Friends, and Find Friends links. Or, you can simply click Friends to be taken to the All Friends page. (See Figure 3-7.)

REMEMBER

Increasing your number of friends (or fans to your Page) enhances your network, giving you a large audience from which to connect. Reach out and friend/fan someone and add value to your network and your brand.

You can control what information is available to your friends, including your contact information. You don't have to share your telephone number or e-mail address with friends. You can choose not to include the information during registration or, if you already have information posted, you can visit your personal profile, click Edit My Profile just below your profile picture in the left column, and delete the information that you do not wish to share. (See Chapter 2 to learn more about Facebook friends.)
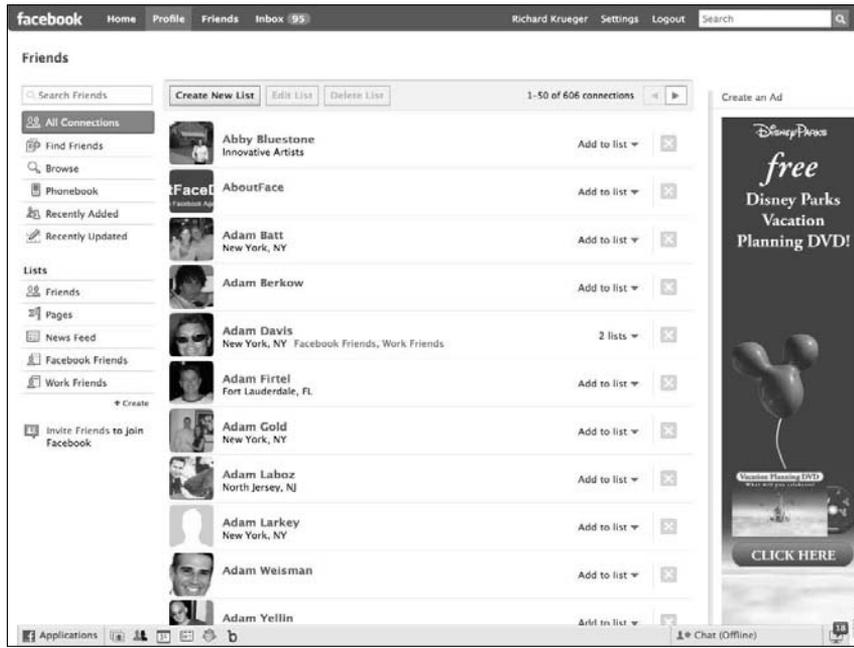
Figure 3-7:
A Facebook member's main Friends page.

Inbox

Facebook has an internal e-mail system that offers a secure option for communicating with other Facebook members, regardless of whether they're a friend or fan. You can also send an e-mail from your Facebook Inbox to an external e-mail address, simply by typing that e-mail address into the To field.

Mail sent internally via Facebook has a much greater open rate than traditional e-mail. While Facebook does not allow members to spam, or send mass e-mails, to other members, by using the Facebook Inbox for communicating with your business contacts, it stands a greater chance of being read. (See Figure 3-8.)

REMEMBER

Your messages are only available to you and there is never a News Feed story associated with your Inbox actions. So, e–mail away without fear that your actions are being published as a news story.

To read your mail, choose Inbox➪View Message Inbox. A list of four tabs are displayed: Inbox, Sent Messages, Notifications, and Updates.

Figure 3-8:
The Facebook Inbox allows members to message one another in a private, secure environment.

TIP
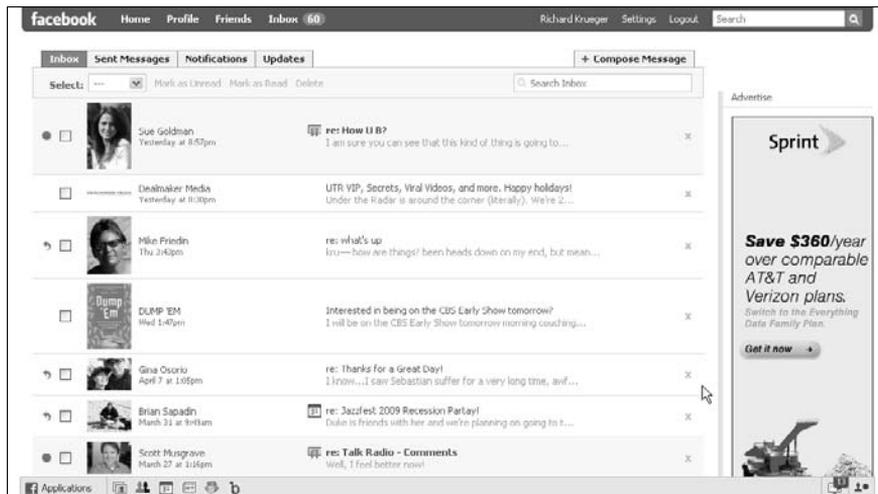
Hovering your cursor on the Inbox link displays a pop-up menu with the View Message Inbox link and the Compose New Message link. You can also compose a message to a member from the right side of any search results screen.

To send a message, just follow these easy steps:

1. **Choose Compose New Message in the pop-up menu, or click the Compose Message tab at the top right of your Inbox.**

2. **Type the recipient's name.**

   A message box appears.

3. **Type a subject and body to the message, and click the Send button.**

   The recipients are notified the next time they log in to Facebook, and via their regular e-mail address, if their settings permit.

REMEMBER

A message can be sent to a maximum of 20 Facebook friends and non-Facebook members. To send to non-members, enter their regular e-mail address. If you're sending to a member who's not a Facebook friend, you can only send to their internal Facebook e-mail, not an outside email address.

The Inbox also features tabs at the top for organizing your e-mails. These include:

- ✔ **Sent Messages:** By clicking Sent Messages, you're presented with all the Facebook e-mails you've sent.

- ✔ **Notifications:** Provides a stream of News Feed stories focused on notifications, such as birthdays, events, and other social actions triggered by you and your friends' interactions on Facebook. You can filter notifications by those you've received and those sent by the result of your actions. (See Figure 3-9.)

  Facebook also alerts you when you receive a new notification with a red notification alert appearing on the bottom right of the chat menu.

- ✔ **Updates:** Offers a News Feed with the latest updates that are generated by the Pages that you're a fan of, Groups that you belong to, as well as applications that you've added. Updates are an ideal way to stay informed about your competitors, customers, and leads. To control which updates you receive, click the Edits Updates Settings on the bottom right side of the Updates page.

You have complete control over what information is published. See the "Settings" section, later in this chapter.

Figure 3-9:
You can find recent Facebook notifications on the Inbox link's Notifications tab.
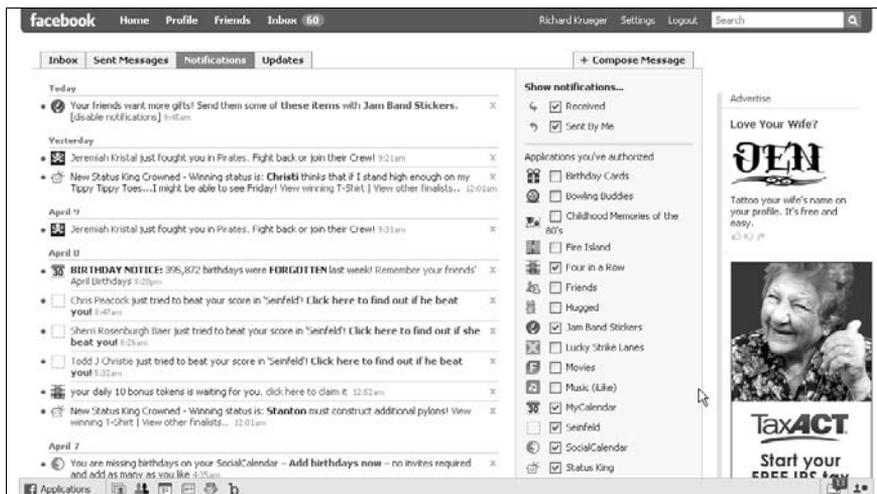
RSS Feeds are an integral tool for today's business professionals, providing a streamlined method for receiving a constant stream of information. To create an RSS Feed for your Facebook Notifications, go to your Inbox and click the Notifications tab. On the screen that appears, you see the Subscribe to Notifications section in the right column. By clicking the Your Notifications link, an RSS Feed automatically generates that you can cut and paste directly into your RSS Reader. You're updated RSS Feed now alerts you to all your Facebook notifications as they happen.

Your name

Your name displays as a link on the top navigation bar on the right side. If you click your name, it takes you to your personal profile. It's of paramount importance that your profile projects your voice, whether you're marketing yourself or a business. Your personal settings can help filter your persona from the public's view. As personal and professional worlds often collide, it's best to create some walls of separation between the two.

Settings

The Settings link is next to your name, and is where you can set all your privacy and account preferences. When you hover your cursor on Settings, a pop-up menu appears with the following options:

- ✔ **Account Settings:** You can change key information associated with your account, such as how you want your name to display to changing your contact, password, networks, notifications, mobile, and language settings. You can also enter or change credit card information if you choose to send gifts or purchase ads, and deactivate your account if you desire. Keep in mind, the account information you choose to show represents you, so choose your networks wisely and simplify the stream of notifications you receive and publish for others to see. (See Figure 3-10.)

- ✔ **Privacy Settings:** All your privacy settings, grouped by Profile, Search, News Feed and Wall, and Applications, are controlled here. Facebook allows a wide-range of choice when it comes to setting your privacy settings. From allowing everyone to view your profile to customizing access to just a few friends, you can choose what and with whom to share. (See Figure 3-11.)

TIP

To control who can access your personal profile from the Privacy Settings options, click the Profile link. From the Profile drop-down menu, choose either Everyone, My Networks, Friends of Friends, Only Friends, or Customized to select from your list of friends specifically.

✔ **Application Settings:** You can edit your application settings, including what information an application publishes on your profile, your News Feed, and your Wall, as well as who can see it (see Figure 3-12). You can add the application to your bookmarks, allow the application to access your data, and set additional permissions depending on the application. (See Chapter 12 for more information about Facebook applications.)

Figure 3-10: The basic Account Settings information.
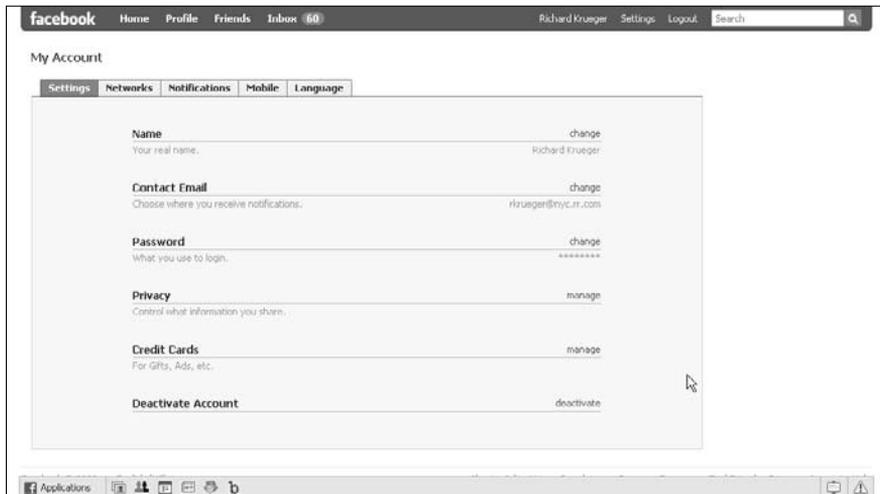
Figure 3-11: All your Facebook privacy settings can be adjusted.
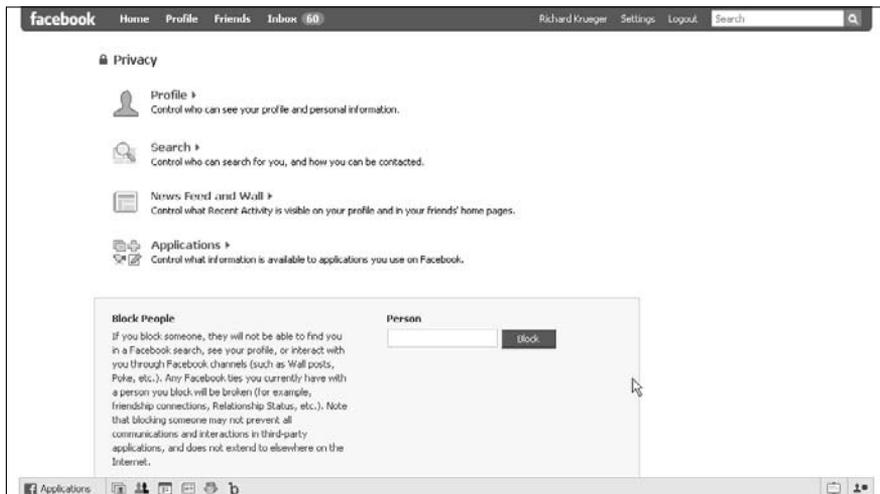
Figure 3-12:
Control
the stream
of stories
regarding
your
interactions
with
applications.
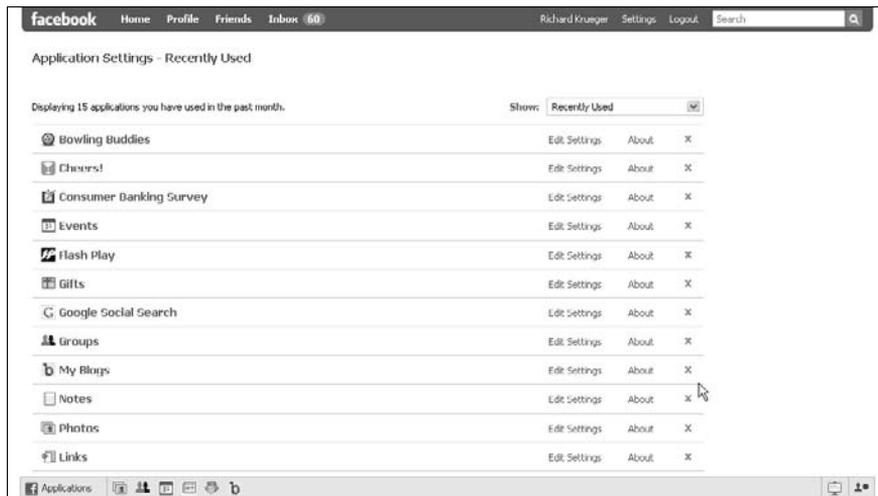
Log out

The last link on the right of the top navigation bar, Logout, is how you sign off from your Facebook account. Clicking Logout redirects the page to the Facebook welcome screen, where you can log in again by entering your e-mail address and password and then clicking the Login button.

It's important to log out at the end of your session so you don't compromise your account access.

Search box

The search box on the top navigation bar allows you to search for names of people, companies, groups, and applications from a single text box. Simply type your search term and click the magnifying lens icon to the right of the search box.

Facebook lets you narrow your search results, choosing filters for People (names), Pages (companies, non-profits, public figures, and so on), Groups, Events, or general Web search results provided by the Microsoft Live.com. You can also join a Group, become a fan of a Page, or add someone as a friend from the search results. (See Figure 3-13.)
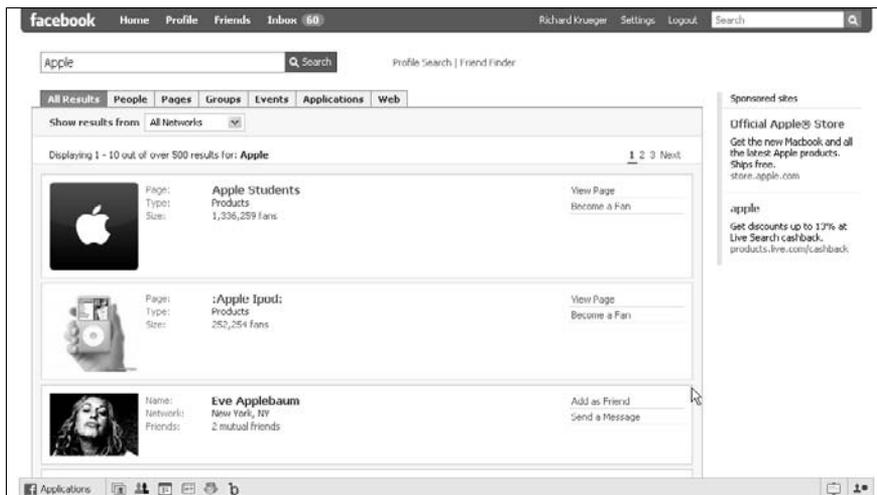
For our example, if you're looking for the Facebook Page about World Chess Champion Garry Kasparov's Foundation, you can search for any part of the name to find the Page listed in the results. You can enter 'Kasparov', as well as 'Chess' or 'Foundation' and it shows up in the results. If you are interested in chess, you might be interested in finding related Groups. You can search for 'educational games', or 'board games' to yield some Groups that may be of interest to you. Searching for 'chess' brings results from all over Facebook.

1. **At the top right of your screen, click in the Search box.**

2. **Type a name or title that interests you.**

3. **Click either the image or the name of the Group that you want to visit.**

   In the search results, be sure to note the number of members, the type of Group, and any recent activity, so that you have some indication of how active the Group is before you visit or join.

The Bottom Navigation

The bottom navigation provides convenient access to some of the most powerful features within Facebook. The Applications menu and bookmark icons are on the left and the Chat functions and Notifications are located on the bottom right side.

✔ **Applications:** On the far left side of your screen is the Applications menu, which, when clicked, displays your bookmarked applications. It provides easy access to your Groups, Pages, Events, Links, Notes, Gifts,

and more (see Figure 3-14). Facebook Gifts is a real marketplace where members can purchase virtual items to send to other members. (For information on adding Facebook applications, see Chapter 12.)

✔ **Bookmark icons:** To the right of the Applications menu is a list of six icons. Bookmark icons make it easy to access an app at any time by simply clicking the link. Some common icons that Facebook displays include: Photos, Video, Groups, Events, Notes, and Links. These icons change depending on how often you use different applications.

- *Photos*: Takes you to the Photos page. You can view photo albums recently posted by your friends and create a photo album by clicking the Create a Photo Album button. (See Chapter 4.)

- *Video*: Takes you to the Video page where you can view your own and friends' recent video streams. You can also show just your videos, or videos in which you're tagged, via the two tabs on top of the page. (See Chapter 6.)

- *Groups*: Lets you view Groups that your friends have recently joined and Groups you're in. You can also search for groups by using the Search for Groups search box, and create a new group by clicking the Create a New Group button. (See Chapter 7.)

- *Events*: Lets you view your upcoming events, as well as friends' events, past events, and birthdays via the tabs on the Events page. You can also search for events by using the Search for Events search box, and create a new event by clicking the Create an Event button. (See Chapter 8.)

Figure 3-14:
Find bookmarked and recently used applications via the bottom navigation.
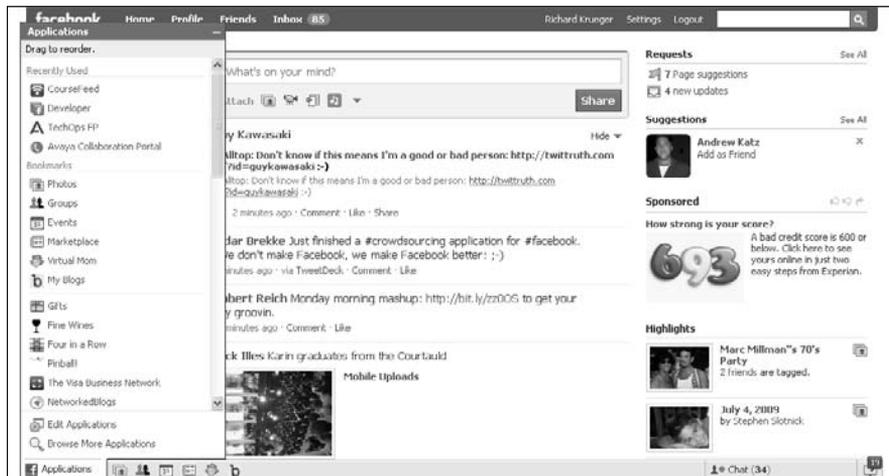
- *Notes:* Facebook Notes is a powerful blogging tool that provides Facebook members with a forum to write whatever they choose via the Share box, allowing friends to comment. Similar to tagging a photo, Facebook members mentioned in a note may also be tagged and receive a notification. (See Chapter 6.)

- *Links:* Clicking the posted note icon takes you to the My Friends' Links page where you can view your friends' recently posted links. You post links via the Post a Link text box on the top right of the page. You can sort friends' links by using the drop-down menu to the right or show your own links by clicking My Links near the top of the page. You can even create an RSS feed of your friends' links by clicking My Friends' Links in the Subscribe to Links section in the right column.

✔ **Chat:** Facebook has an internal chat system that allows for instant messaging between friends. This is a great feature for reaching out to your friends in real-time, as opposed to the Inbox e-mail system, or writing on someone's Wall. (See Figure 3-15.)

The Chat feature allows you to change your online/offline status, displays your friends' most recent status update, pop out chat as a separate window, and show News Feed stories in Chat. If your status is set to Online, you see a green dot by the person icon on the bottom navigation bar and the word *Chat.* If your status is set to Offline, the dot appears grey.
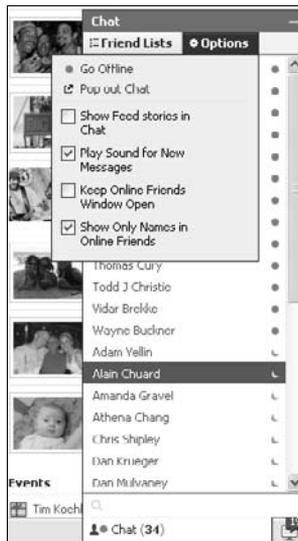
Figure 3-15:
Facebook
shows the
chat status
of you and
your friends.