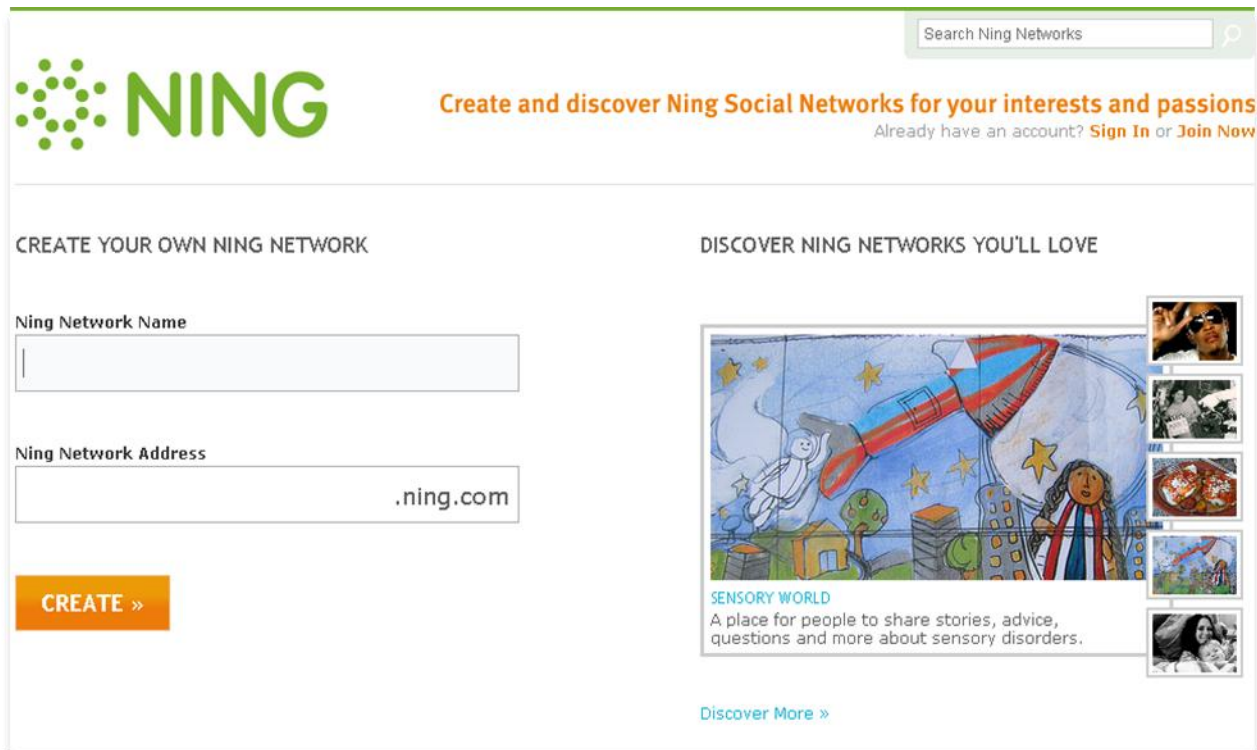


The Ning Experience

A Brief Tutorial



The screenshot shows the Ning website interface. At the top left is the Ning logo, consisting of a green cluster of dots followed by the word "NING" in green. To the right of the logo is a search bar with the text "Search Ning Networks" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the logo and search bar is a navigation bar with the text "Create and discover Ning Social Networks for your interests and passions" and "Already have an account? [Sign In](#) or [Join Now](#)".

The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled "CREATE YOUR OWN NING NETWORK" and contains two input fields: "Ning Network Name" and "Ning Network Address". The "Ning Network Address" field has ".ning.com" pre-filled. Below these fields is an orange button with the text "CREATE »".

The right column is titled "DISCOVER NING NETWORKS YOU'LL LOVE" and features a large illustration of a rocket ship launching from a city. Below the illustration is a network card for "SENSORY WORLD" with the description "A place for people to share stories, advice, questions and more about sensory disorders." To the right of the main illustration is a vertical stack of five smaller network preview images.



At the bottom of the right column is a link that says "Discover More »".

Debra Lowe
April, 2010

The Ning Experience

Getting Started

Even if you're intimidated by social networks, they may be easier to create than previously thought. Here are step by step instructions for setting up your own social networking site at ning.com for education, personal use, or whatever you'd like.

1. **Get an account.** Go to "ning.com" and join the network. You will need your name, email address, and password. A birthdate is also required. Once you have done these things, you're in!
2. **Get set up.** You will then be prompted to select a category. Don't let the circles distract you; if you can't find what you're looking for, just pick "networking" or skip that step all together. Most people reading this will be selecting "education." If nothing works, or you get tired of selecting things, just click "CREATE A NING NETWORK" at the top (in orange)

3. **Get an ID.** You will then be prompted to pick a network name and a web address. For example, a site name might be "Modern Media" and "modernmedia.ning.com" could be the address. You can then select whether it is public or private, get a tagline, description and add keywords. Everything is prompted, and it's easy.
4. **Decide on a layout.** You will then be shown a screen with rectangles that you can drag and drop. You decide what is shown at the top, left, bottom, right, and center of your page. Several things are added to start you out, and you can add or remove other features. Play with the layout until you like what you see. When you're done, you have a choice:

5. **Make it look good.** It is recommended to choose "NEXT" because you can then customize your site's appearance. There are fifty-two basic looks to choose from, but these can be changed with options down below. Use arrow keys to find the look you'd like. If you want to customize it further, colors may be selected below. All options gives you more colors to select, and if you're comfortable with editing style sheets (CSS) then you can use the advanced option. You're now ready to launch.
6. **You're online!** You can now invite people to join the network, add photos, blog entries, events, videos, and many more things to your Ning site. Start playing, and enjoy!

The Ning Experience

Finding Your Way Around

Once you have created your page, take a look around. You will notice many features on the front page, such as members and activities, and several tabs near the top. Here's how you and your guests will be getting around your site.

Main Invite My Page Events Connect Tools Media

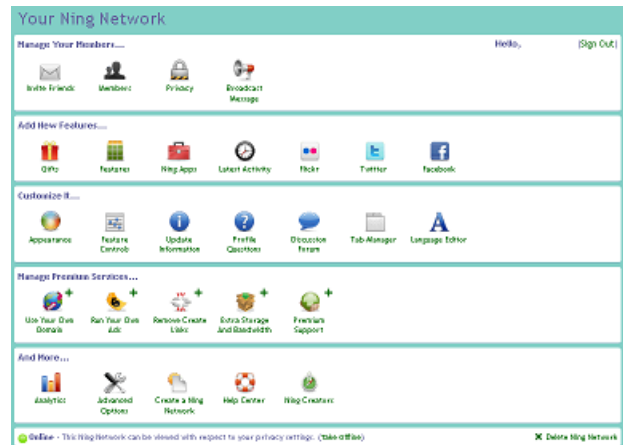
- **Main Page.** This is what guests first see when they come to your site. Before joining, the site shows pictures of members, activity and other unprotected information, and has a sign-up section. When someone has become a member of the network, there are more options, including an inbox, and the ability to add more features, such as blog posts and information.
- **Invite.** This is only available for registered guests. It allows you to use your web-based mail to contact other interested parties.
- **My Page.** This could be considered your personal page. You can add a status, share information on Twitter or Facebook, and add or view information. This is unavailable for unregistered guests, and they are prompted to sign up.
- **Events.** Events are shown to the public if this feature is enabled. Calendars may be shown with dates highlighted. A short message, a picture, and important information is present.
- **Connect.** This area has selections of Members, Forum, and Groups. "Members" shows a complete list of the people in the group. There are links to send the person a comment, if the individual has that enabled. Forums are discussions which are occurring, and can be grouped by category by the administrator. Groups may be added, which would be very useful if working with large numbers, or people that fall into natural divisions. In a school setting, groups may be by class, subject, age, interest, or other factors.
- **Tools.** This includes links to Google Docs, Blogs, and NewsShare. Powerpoints may be uploaded here, and there is a link to Google docs. This is described as "a professional way to introduce yourself and your work," and may be an useful feature. Blogs show the entries which have been posted to the site, and can be visible to the public, or only people who have joined. NewsShare allows people to submit news to the network and valuable links.
- **Media.** This includes photos, videos, and notes that have been uploaded.
- **Manage.** This is only available to people who have administrative privileges. This is detailed on the following page.

The Ning Experience

Managing Your Network

Once you have your site, you are in charge of your network. You can add many more options once the site has been created. While you are logged in, select “Manage” in the tabs at the top to add more features. Here are a few things to consider:

- **Top row:** Invites, Members, Privacy, and Broadcast. Here you can view info about your members (including emails), set administrative privileges, suspend members, create roles, or export member data. You have the power!!!
- **Features:** Edit your page with the “Features” button. This lets you add or move features selected in step #4 above. You can select “Ning Apps” to add the ability to sell, add music, social giving, and video streaming to your site. With Twitter, Flickr, and Facebook, you can get your Ning site and your other networks to communicate.
- **Customize:** If you don’t like the look of your site, appearance is where to change to a different theme. Feature Controls gives you the power to approve blog posts, photos, videos, comments, and events through this feature. Select your security settings. You can fix your information, ask questions of new recruits, and change how discussions look.
- **Premium.** Don’t worry about this unless you’re willing to pay. You can buy a domain name, make ads, and increase storage, etc.
- **More:** here’s info, a help center, and some additional tools.



Basically, everything you need to control how the network is used can be found under “Manage.” I would recommend only giving administrative privileges to one or two people, and if desired, limited control to others. It should be noted that email addresses are private to users, but public to administrators.

These are the basics for managing a Ning network. Experiment, play, and find ways to really make it your own. Perhaps you may find a unique use for this valuable and free tool.