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## LinkedIn a no-nonsense business networking site

By *STEPHANIE ROMINE*

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If you have a job and use e-mail, you've likely received an invitation to join someone's network on LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>).

If you've ignored the invites, think again. Career coaches, marketing experts and those on the prowl for a new job say it's the hottest way to network.

And it's much different than MySpace or Facebook.

You won't find albums full of pictures from last weekend's girls' night out, bands trying to add you as a friend or requests to become a zombie.

LinkedIn is sleek, streamlined and, for an online networking site, downright private.

Founded in 2003, LinkedIn now boasts 20 million members who have posted their professional profiles, résumés and business contacts to the site.

Think of it like the game "Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon" meets an old-school Rolodex online.

Michelle Beckham-Corbin of Anderson Township, Ohio, is a big fan of LinkedIn. She learned about the site during a continuing education program last year at Xavier University in Cincinnati. Through the Web site, she found Brian Siegel, a fellow graduate of Xavier's MBA program. He's writing a leadership textbook with her former college professor, Arthur Shriberg.

She found a link to Siegel's blog, sent him a message and soon the two started talking. Now, Beckham-Corbin, who has 69 contacts on LinkedIn, is contributing an essay to the textbook.

"It's like an adult Facebook or MySpace," Siegel said.

When you sign up, you create a profile, which is like a condensed résumé. Former colleagues, clients and partners can search for you, and you can ask contacts to join LinkedIn and connect to you.

You can view your contacts' networks, but you can't add someone to your network without their consent. And you have to confirm how you know someone before they're added to your network.