

Mark Zuckerberg

The geek who changed the world

Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook in 2004, aged 19. Today he is the second youngest billionaire* in the world.

Thanks to the success of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg has a personal fortune of around 14 billion* dollars. But the 27-year-old businessman has a very modest lifestyle. He wears jeans, T-shirts and trainers*, works constantly and is studying* Chinese.

Zuckerberg was a computer prodigy from a young age: his friends did illustrations which he transformed into computer games. He also showed a special talent for Latin, Ancient Greek and fencing*.

He left New York in 2002 to go to Harvard, an elite American university, to study psychology and computer science. He was shy* and people thought he was a geek. He started to develop social* network sites for fun.

Zuckerberg hacked* into Harvard's computer system on 20 October 2003. He copied private photos of university students* to create a site called Facemash. On the site, students could see photos and vote for the people they found most attractive. The site had 450 visitors in four hours, but Harvard shut* it down ... and Mark Zuckerberg was almost expelled*!

He was not discouraged. Zuckerberg understood the demand for a website to share* personal information with friends. So in 2004, he launched* Facebook from his university bedroom. Within 24 hours, 1,200 Harvard students had signed* up. After one month, more than half*

of the student population at Harvard had a Facebook profile.

Facebook soon arrived at other universities. Zuckerberg left Harvard without graduating* - he wanted to spend time developing his site. In just seven years, Facebook changed the world.

With 800 million users, Facebook is now the biggest website on the planet. Zuckerberg wants to keep Facebook users on the site for longer by sharing music, films and personal information in the Timeline*.

Zuckerberg has had problems with his site. Three Harvard students accused him of copying their ideas to create Facebook, and won* a lawsuit* against him in 2008. Zuckerberg, a private person, has also been criticized for Facebook's principles: making private information public ...

The young billionaire* doesn't care* about this, though. He also says that he didn't just want to make money. "The thing I really care about is the mission, making the world open," he says.

Facebook for your phone has helped Zuckerberg complete his mission... and made even more money for his company. But like Microsoft's Bill Gates, Zuckerberg promises to give half of his money to charity. With everything he does, Mark Zuckerberg continues to change the world ... ■

Did you know?

In 2006, the website Yahoo tried to buy Facebook, but Zuckerberg refused. He became known as the "kid who refused a billion* dollars".

"I started the site when I was 19. I didn't know much about business."

Passport

Name: Mark Elliot Zuckerberg
Date of birth: 14 May 1984
Place of birth: New York, USA
Job: Creator and Chief Executive Officer of Facebook
Family: Three sisters, Randi, Donna and Arielle

Did you know?

At American universities, at the start of the year, students* receive a book with photos of all the new students: a "facebook". That's where the name comes from.

Help!

billion: milliard
billionaire: milliardaire
care about: se préoccuper de
expelled: exclu
fencing: escrime
graduate: obtenir un diplôme
hack into: pirater
half: la moitié
launch: lancer
lawsuit: procès
share: partager

shut down: fermer
shy: timide
sign up: s'inscrire
social network: réseau social
student: étudiant
study: étudier
timeline: frise chronologique
trainers: baskets
won (p) win (inf): gagner

YOU DON'T GET TO 500 MILLION FRIENDS WITHOUT MAKING A FEW ENEMIES

The Social Network
 If you want to see the story of how Facebook was created, watch the 2010 film *The Social Network*. Mark Zuckerberg is played by Jesse Eisenberg and Justin Timberlake plays Facebook's first president Sean Parker.

Portrait: Elisabeth Blanchet. Other images: DR.