

Ning

A guide for tutors

What is Ning?

www.ning.com was launched in October 2004. It is primarily a platform on to which you can create a social network. You can use the tools provided or you can search for or create your own applications to add to your social network.

Ning provides you with the freedom to build your own social network and to add or remove tools to suit the needs of your network.

This guide will support you in the technical use of Ning but will also highlight how different tools can be used in your learning and teaching and where you can find further research and support in the pedagogical uses of online tools and applications.

Getting Started

In this section you will learn how to:

- Create your own social network
- Add some basic features
- Choose the layout and colour scheme of your network

Go to <http://www.ning.com>

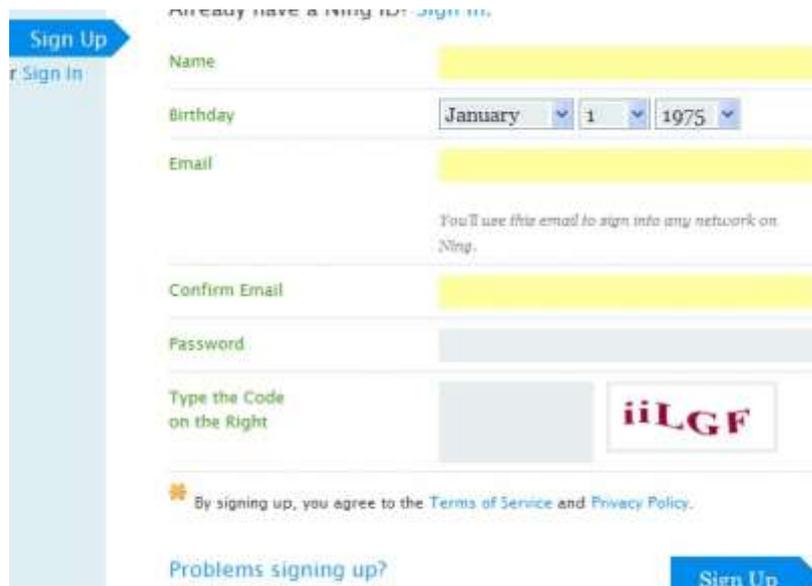
This screen will appear across the top of the page.

To create your network think of a name. For the purposes of this guide our network will be called careers guidance. Enter this into the 'Name Your Social Network' field and again in the 'Pick a Web Address' field and click on 'create'.



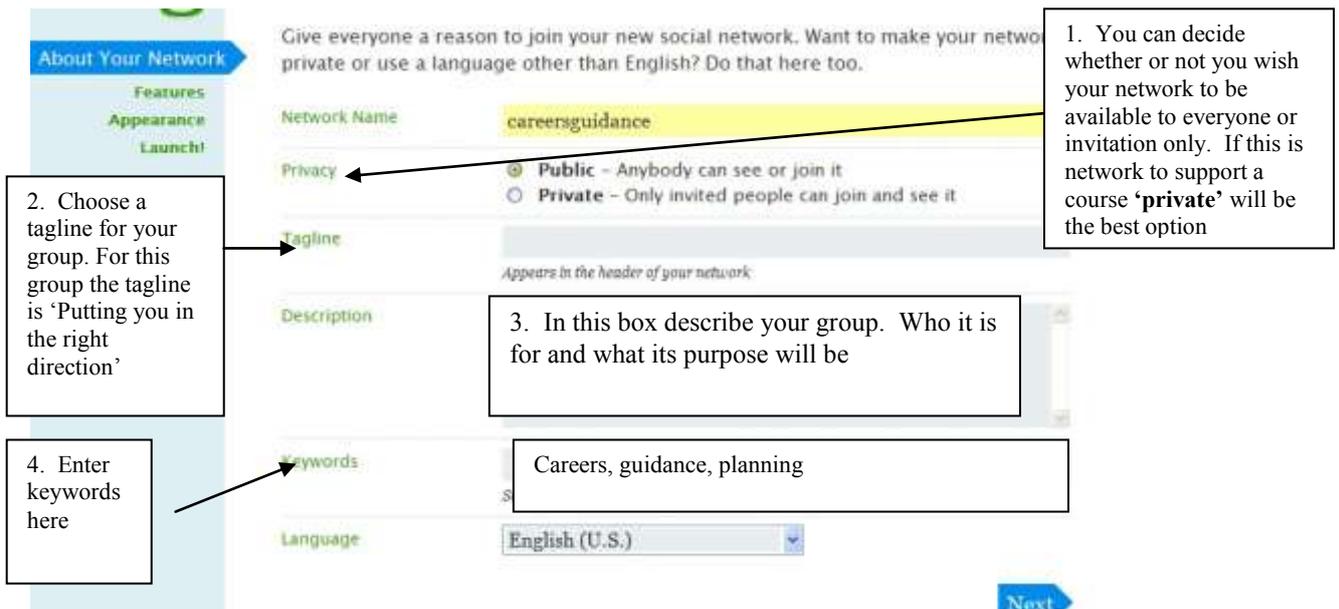
The screenshot shows a light blue form titled "Create Your Own Social Network for Anything". It has two main input fields: "Name Your Social Network" and "Pick a Web Address". Below the first field is a small example: "For example, Paris Cyclists". Below the second field is another example: "For example, pariscyclists.ning.com". To the right of the second field is a blue arrow button labeled "CREATE".

The 'sign up' page will then appear. Complete your details, think of a password and click on 'sign up'



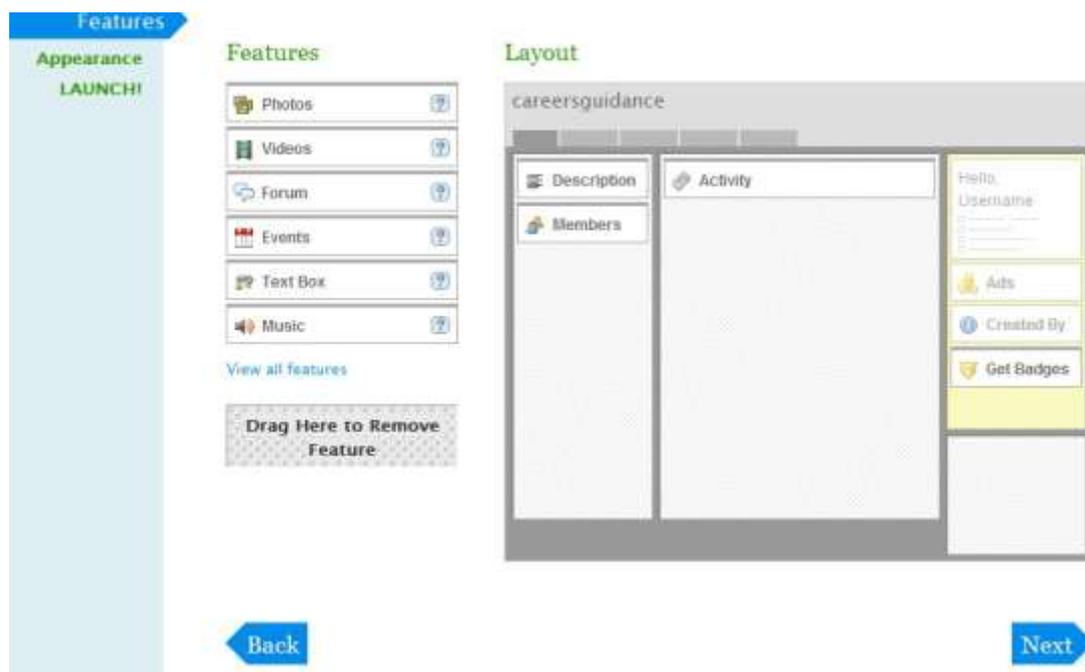
The screenshot shows the "Sign Up" page. On the left is a vertical sidebar with a blue arrow button labeled "Sign Up" and a link "r. Sign In". The main form area has a header "Already have a Ning net? Sign in." and several input fields: "Name", "Birthday" (with dropdowns for month, day, and year), "Email", "Confirm Email", and "Password". Below the password field is a CAPTCHA area with the text "Type the Code on the Right" and a box containing the code "iiLGF". At the bottom, there is a checkbox with a star icon and the text "By signing up, you agree to the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy." and a blue arrow button labeled "Sign Up".

After you click on 'Sign Up' this page will appear:



Choose your language and click on 'Next'

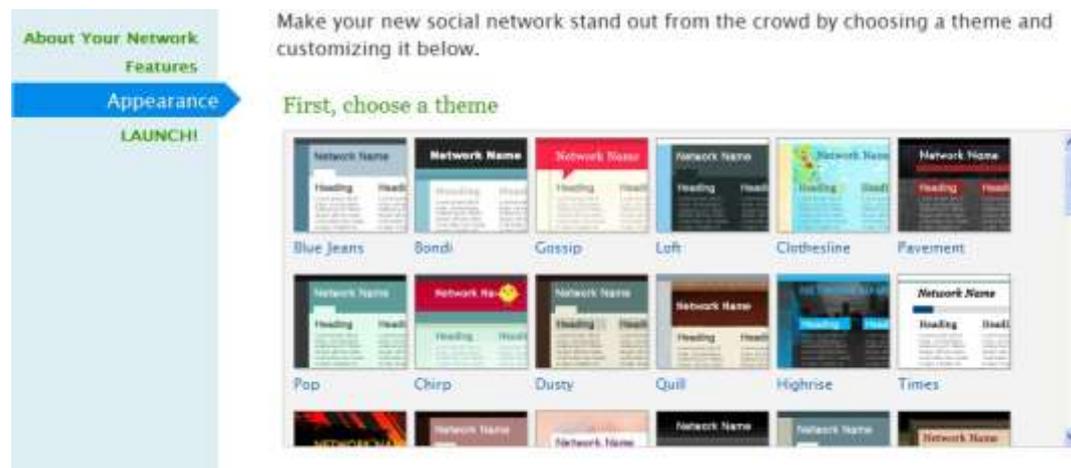
The Features page will then appear



This page illustrates the flexibility of NING. Primarily the ability to add and remove features you wish to suit the purpose and learning and teaching outcomes you wish to promote.

Click on 'Next' leaving the features as they have been provided (we will go over this later on in the guide)

The appearance page will then appear. From this page you can change the appearance of your network by choosing the templates which are available or by inserting your own logos and style sheets.



Choose a style then click on ‘Next’

Create your new Master Key...

Your Master Key is separate and unique from your email address and password. You'll use your new Master Key for any network you create or administrate.

Choose Your Master Key

Must be at least 4 characters in length.

Confirm Your Master Key

Go!

You will then be asked to create a ‘Master Key’. This is unique to you as you are now the administrator of the site. Only administrators have the power to change the site appearance, site features and invite people to join. Click on ‘Go’ and your network is now created.

Maintaining your Network

In this section you will learn how to:

- Invite members to your network
- Control who can access and view your network
- Set limits to your members activities
- Set network questions for new members to complete

Once you have created your network and chosen the features you wish to use to support the learning aims of your group you will need to invite people and maintain your area.

To invite people to your network click on **'Members'** along the top menu



From the next page click on **'Invite More People'** from the area just below the menu



Enter the email addresses of the people you wish to invite into the area provided, add a message if you wish and send.

Invite to 'careersguidance'

▼ Enter E-mail Addresses

Send To

Separate multiple addresses with commas

Your Message (Optional)

Send Invitations

You can go back to the main area by clicking the 'Main' tab at the top of the page.

Main Invite My Page Members Events Forum Photos Videos Manage

Access and Privacy

You can change who can access the site by setting privacy and control limitations

Click on '**Manage**' found on the right hand side of the menu tab bar.
This page will then appear offering you a choice of management options.

Click on '**Privacy & Feature Controls**' in the middle of the page

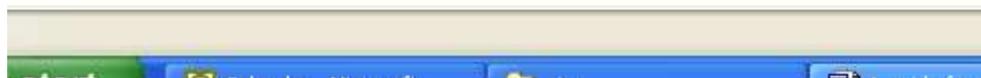
Your Members


Profile
Questions


Members


Privacy &
Feature
Controls

Resources



From this menu can you make decisions about who can access your network and individual groups.

- 1 By checking **public** your network will be available to everyone to join and will be visible to anyone looking or searching through the networks.
- 2 By checking **private** and **invitation only** you control who can join your network. The only way to access or view the network is to be a member.
- 3 You can also control the feature controls.

You can give permission for members to form their own groups within the network, allow members to create events to advertise to others and invite people to, you can also decide to approve new members but if you have invited people you should already know who they are – this function is useful if your group is not private and gives you control over who joins.

If you click on approve videos and pictures before they are uploaded you control over the pictures and videos that are published on the site. You may also want to allow members to be able to adjust and modify their own pages.

4. Once you are happy with the controls in place click on ‘Save Settings’

The screenshot shows the 'Privacy & Content Control' settings page. It is divided into three main sections: Network Privacy, Feature Controls, and Invitations. Callout 1 points to the 'Public' radio button under Network Privacy. Callout 2 points to the 'Private' radio button and the 'Only Invited People' option. Callout 3 points to the 'Feature Controls' section, specifically the 'Allow members to adjust their My Page layout' checkbox. Callout 4 points to the 'Save Settings' button at the bottom left.

1 Privacy & Content Control

2 Network Privacy

Public
This network is **visible to everyone**.
Anyone can sign up to become a member. Visitors can...

- See everything
- See just the main page

Private
This network is **visible to members only**.
Who can sign up to become a member?

- Anyone
- Only Invited People

3 Feature Controls

- Allow members to create groups
- Allow members to create events
- Enable Music Player download links
- Approve new members before they can join
- Approve photos and videos before they appear
- Allow members to change their My Page theme
- Allow members to adjust their My Page layout

4 Invitations

Share this link with people you want to join this network:

Asking Questions

When people join your network you can, as part of the joining process ask them specific questions which will be available for all members of the network to see. To do this click on the manage tab again and then click on **'Profile Questions'**



In this page you can ask your network members questions about themselves when they join

Profile Questions

What questions would you like your members to answer when they join your network?

Default Questions

You can choose to keep these questions, or write your own questions below.

- Gender
- City and State
- Country

Custom Questions

To re-order the questions, click on a question and drag it to where you want it to appear. If you select 'required', members will have to answer the question to join; if you select 'private', the answer will only be visible to you and other administrators.

Question Title	<input type="text"/>
Answer Type	<input type="text" value="One Line Answer"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Required? <input type="checkbox"/>
	Private
	Remove Add Another Question

Save Settings

When you have completed the section click on **'save settings'**

Adding Features

In this section you will learn:

What the features available in Ning do

How to add these features to your network

How to decide which features you need

How to use the features once they have been added

Now that you have set up your network, set up your privacy settings and invited members you need to think about the purpose of your network.

Do you wish members to communicate with each other? Do you want this communication to be organised around specific subjects? Do you want to add content such as pictures, videos and podcasts? Do you want members to be able to add pictures and content?

Ning allows you to customise your network and add features which encourage and enhance the learning outcomes of your course or community.

You may want to add some features but not others.

To add a feature to your network click on the 'manage' tab and from the manage menu select '**Features**'



The '**Features**' page will display the features you already using in your network and the features you can add to your network.

To add a feature simply click on the feature you require a drag it across to the layout area. To remove a feature simply do the reverse and drag the feature from the box to the features area. But which does each feature do and how can you use it in 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
- Music
- Groups
- Notes
- Blog
- RSS
- Gadgets (Beta)

Drag Here to Remove Feature

Layout

careersguidance

Description, Activity, Members, Photos, Videos, Events, Forum

Hello, Username, Ads, Created By, Get Badges

Save Features

Features available

Text box

Adding the text box simply allows you to add text to an area of the network. You can describe the purpose of the network, add links to other websites, provide instructions, or if linked to a course outline the overall purpose of the community. You can add community rules and outline acceptable behaviour here .

Music

If you add the music player you can add music or podcasts to your community. You can do this by actually uploading music/podcasts to the site or by linking to recorded content elsewhere. Podcasts provide a good alternative to text and research has shown that podcasts do not replace physical lectures but can be a useful revision tool for students.

Groups

You can add a group feature to your group. This will enable you set up sub groups to your network. For example in the careers guidance community I may want to add specific occupational areas to the wider guidance area i.e. medical and health, hairdressing, construction. As with the main area if you set up a group you are in control over who joins the area. Members of your network can also set up their own groups if you have given them permission.

Blog

Blogs can be used as personal diaries which can shared with other people online.

RSS Adding an RSS feed to your network area will enable your community member to be able to view up to date news from other websites and blogs. This is useful if the subject of your network requires members to be up to date with news items or activities in other peoples' blogs.

Forum This acts like a message board. You can post a question to your network and invite others to respond. You can also refer from this area to the other materials available, such as videos and podcasts and also add website links to materials or information housed elsewhere.

Videos The video feature enables you to add videos or presentations to your network. Like audio you can add these directly into your network, although you will be limited to size or you can embed materials from other sites such as 'google videos' or 'youtube'

Photos By adding the photo feature to the network you can upload photographs to the network. These can be general photographs of group members, events etc or learning materials to enhance the teaching process.

Notes This is a useful feature to add to your own page. It enables you to make notes, add pictures and make them private. This feature is predominately useful for supporting your own learning.

Forum

The forum feature is an important tool if you want to:

- Share information with students such as assignment titles or powerpoint presentations
- Pose a question or outline an issue you wish students to respond to

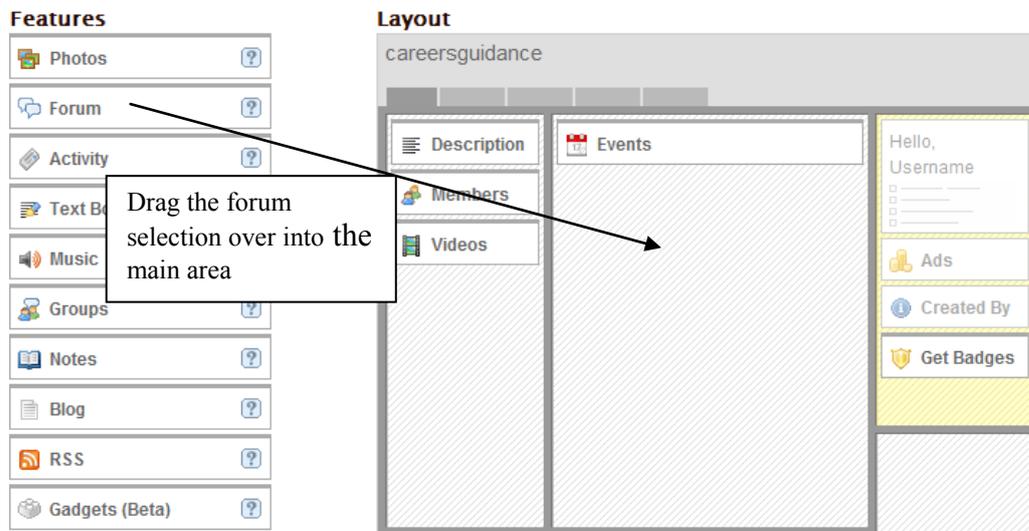
To add the forum feature click on **Manage**



Then Choose **features** from the main management page



Drag over the Forum using the mouse into the main area and position it where you would like it to go.



By clicking back onto **'Main'** you will see what the forum section looks like on your main page.



Click on 'Start a Discussion'



As this is your first post you will need to decide how you want to organise your forum.

Do you want students to be able to start their own discussions?
Do you want your forums to be threaded discussion?

You can make these changes to in the manage forum section. Click on **'Manage Forum'**

Forum Home My Discussions Manage Forum

Manage Forum

Discussion Style

The replies on Forum discussion pages are:

- Flat:** replies are shown in chronological order
- Threaded:** replies are indented below the post or reply they respond to

Main Forum Page Style

On the main Forum page, show:

- Categories
- Latest Discussions by Time
- Latest Discussions by Category

Categories

Category Title: Sample Title

Allow members to start discussions in this category
 Only I can start discussions in this category
 Allow members to reply

Description: [Empty text area]

Once you have made these decisions click on **'Save Changes'** at the bottom left hand side of the page.

Go back to **'Main'** and click on start new discussion.

Start a New Discussion

1 Add the subject of your discussion

Discussion Title: [Text box]

Post: [Rich text editor with B, I, U, S, G, G icons]

Tags: [Text box]

Attach File(s): [Text box] [Browse...]
[Text box] [Browse...]
[Text box] [Browse...]

[Start Discussion]

2 Pose your question or add instructions here

3 If you wish add keyword to act as tags which make sit easier for searching

4 Attach any documents, spreadsheets, pictures, powerpoint presentations required to accompany your post from your computer by clicking on 'browse'

Arrows pointing from the numbered callouts to the corresponding form fields: from 1 to Discussion Title, from 2 to Post, from 3 to Tags, and from 4 to the Attach File(s) section.

Click on **'Start Discussion'** to begin your forum.

Go back to 'Main and you will see your forum post-students can now add responses or ask questions. When a reply is posted you will be sent an email informing you.

Text Box

The text box enables you to add free text, links etc to your network. You can use the text box on your page to explain the reason for the network, set out guidelines of behaviour etc. To add the text box follow the same path you did for adding a forum- **Manage – Features then drag the text box over to the network layout area making sure it is at the top above all the other features. Click on 'Save Features'**

The image shows a user interface for managing network features. On the left, a 'Features' panel lists various options: Photos, Activity, Text Box, Music, Groups, Notes, Blog, RSS, and Gadgets (Beta). Each feature has a small icon and a help icon. Below this list is a button that says 'Drag Here to Remove Feature'. On the right, a 'Layout' area for a network named 'careersguidance' shows a grid of features. The 'Text Box' feature is positioned at the top of the grid, above 'Members', 'Videos', 'Events', and 'Forum'. To the right of the grid is a sidebar with a user greeting 'Hello, Username', a search bar, and buttons for 'Ads', 'Created By', and 'Get Badges'. At the bottom right of the layout area is a 'Save Features' button.

This will take you back to your network area and at the top of the area you will see the text box

careersguidance

Putting you in the right direction

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

A group to assist students in career decision making and planning

Your careersguidance Box

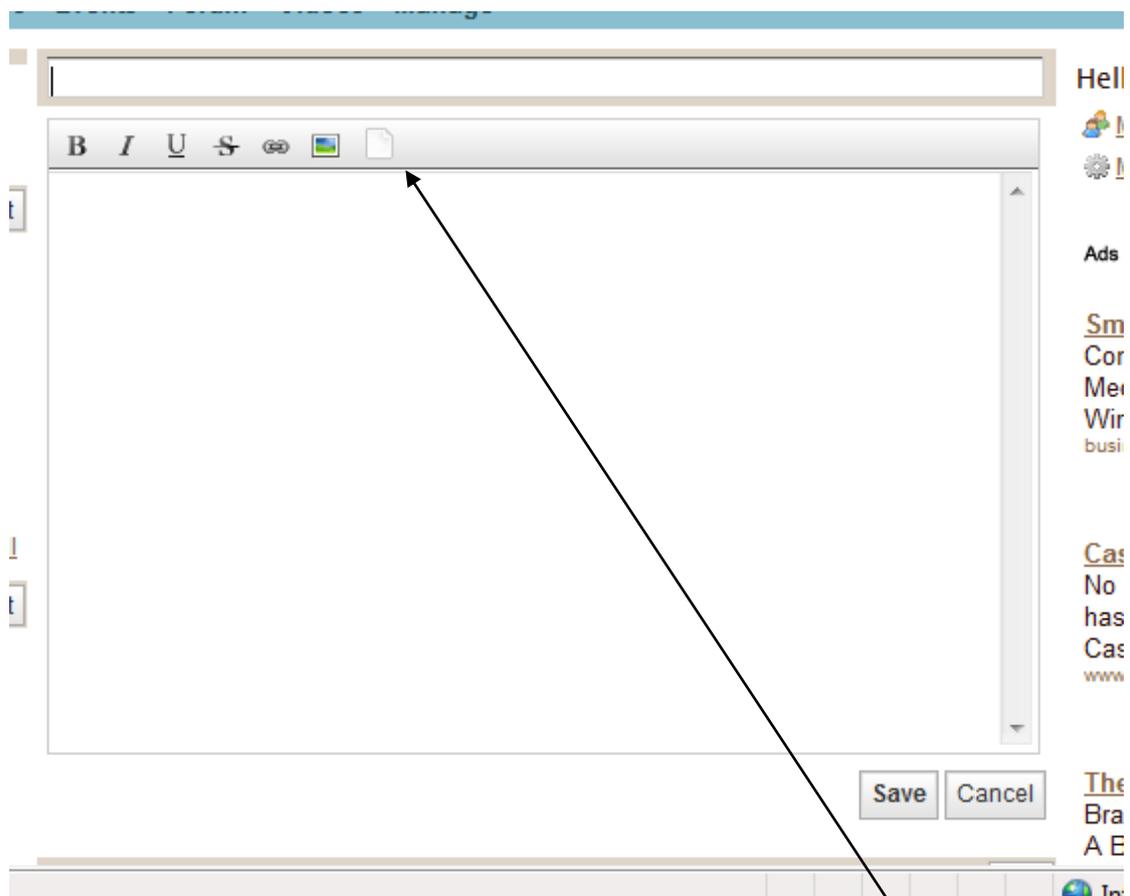
[Edit](#)

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.

Members

[Edit](#)

To add text the box click on **'Edit'** in the top right hand side of the box



Provide a title and add text to your box. Once you've completed this click on **Save**. You can update the contents of this box at anytime by using the 'Edit' button. You can add word documents and files to the text box by clicking on the 'file' icon

Blog

Why should you use a blog?

To add a blog to your network follow the instructions above Manage-Features and drag over the blog feature to your network and click save changes

When you have added the blog feature click on **'add post'**



Fill in the post title and make your entry.

Post Title

Entry

B I U S   

Further down the page you can choose the privacy settings for the entry and the date and time stamp.

Tags:

What date would you like for your post?

Now

Choose a date and time (if you choose a future date, your post will publish at that time)

Date: June 27 2008 Time: 12 00 PM GMT/BST

Privacy & Comments

Who can view this post?

Everyone Just My Friends Just Me

Who can comment on this post?

Everyone Just My Friends Just Me

Comment Moderation

You are not currently moderating blog comments. ([Change](#))

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4 You can save your entry as a draft-which means it wont be published and you can go back to edit it later.

3. You can also moderate your posts by clicking on (change)

4. You can preview your post and then publish it to the people you have selected in stage 2

Adding Groups

To add a group to your network network follow the instructions above Manage-Features and drag over the group feature to your network and click save changes. Back on the 'Main' page click on 'Create a Group' which will appear in the section of the page to which you added the feature.

Create New Group

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

Group Information

Name:

Image:

Description:

Group Web Address:
This sets the URL of your group:
http://careersguidance.ning.com
/group/groupwebaddress

Website:
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

Add information about your group and upload a picture

Decide which features you wish your group to have

Decide which privacy levels you would like.

Click on 'Create Group'

Inviting People to Groups

You can invite individual people to join groups within your network.

Select the group whose membership you wish to control.

On the right hand-side of the screen you will see the following

[+ Invite More People](#)

Click on 'Invite More People'

From this page you can invite people to join the group. People you invite will have access to the network i.e. 'Careers Guidance' and only the group 'Health and Social Care'

Invite to 'Health and Social Care'



▼ Enter E-mail Addresses

Send To

Separate multiple addresses with commas

Your Message (Optional)

Send Invitations

In the Admin options box on the right-hand side of the page

Admin Options

-  [Feature on Main](#)
-  [Edit This Group's Info](#)
-  [Manage Group Members](#)
-  [Delete Group](#)

Send Messages to Group

you can decide the level of access and who has the right to invite people to join the group in the same way it is controlled for the network by clicking on **'Edit This Group's Info'** and by clicking on **'Manage Members'** you can assign someone administrator privileges or ban them from the group.