



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 16, 2010

Facebook Founder Named Time's "Person of the Year"

Twenty-six-year-old Mark Zuckerberg, founder of the social networking website Facebook, has been selected as Time magazine's Person of the Year for 2010. Facebook, which began in 2003 as a small insider website at Harvard University where Zuckerberg was a student, has exploded over the past two years to become arguably the Internet's most used address, with nearly 600 million individuals having Facebook accounts and projections for a billion members by 2012.



Time's Lev Grossman wrote that the magazine's editors selected Zuckerberg for "connecting more than half a billion people and mapping the social relations among them; for creating a new system of exchanging information; and for changing how we all live our lives..."

The online social phenomenon was initially used mainly by high school and college students to connect with friends, but has since been co-opted by Fortune 500 companies, government bureaucracies, educational institutions, and nearly every other private and public concern. Noted Grossman, "One out of every dozen people on the planet has a Facebook account. They speak 75 languages and collectively lavish more than 700 billion minutes on Facebook every month. Last month the site accounted for 1 out of 4 American page views. Its membership is currently growing at a rate of about 700,000 people a day." The Associated Press noted that one of the most recent additions to the Facebook community is Queen Elizabeth II.

With the nearly out-of-control success that Facebook has enjoyed, it is natural that Zuckerberg would face his share of analysis, criticism, and outright attacks. In the past year he has been vilified mercilessly in the media and blogosphere for the way his creation has compromised the privacy of its members. Additionally, Hollywood got into the act with a blockbuster movie, entitled [The Social Network](#), that portrays Zuckerberg as an angry and manipulative young man who stole the idea from others.

Whatever the truth of Facebook's creation, Grossman told the hosts of CNN's *American Morning* that he personally found Zuckerman a "good and wonderful person" who is already looking for ways to give away his rapidly accumulating wealth. "He's a very charming man ... he's not the person in the movie," said Grossman, adding, "He's a very warm individual."

Zuckerberg is the second youngest individual selected for the honor, following 25-year-old aviation legend Charles Lindbergh, who became *Time's* first "Man of the Year" in 1927.

Each year *Time* names a "Person of the Year" as the individual who has most impacted society and the



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news — either in a negative or positive way — over the previous year. Last year Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke received the distinction, and the 2008 recipient was, of course, Barack Obama, who had just been elected the first black U.S. President. Other recent recipients include Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, rock musician and humanitarian Bono, and President George W. Bush. Another creator of a website phenomenon, Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos, was named *Time's* Person of the Year in 1999.

On his own [Facebook](#) page, Zuckerberg said that he considered the *Time* distinction "a real honor and recognition of how our little team is building something that hundreds of millions of people want to use to make the world more open and connected. I'm happy to be a part of that."

Zuckerberg wasn't the choice of *Time's* own readers. A poll by the magazine revealed that subscribers had preferred naming WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange for Person of the Year, but were overruled by the editors, who chose the Tea Party movement (yes, a whole movement) as the runner-up to Zuckerberg. Similarly, the editors went with a whole group when it selected the American Soldier as Person of the Year in 2003.

One of the magazine's most notorious past selections was Adolph Hitler, who received the *Time* distinction in 1938, followed the next year by Josef Stalin, who was also named Man of the Year in 1942.



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