



Andrew Garfield as Eduardo Saverin and Jesse Eisenberg as Mark Zuckerberg

# Two Oscar chances

## **The Social Network (rated M)**

**T**he *Social Network* has already gathered many awards and is considered by many critics to be the film of the year. If you are not aware what it is about then you are probably not connected to the internet, and are not involved with on-line social networking. With Facebook you allow 'friends', 'friends of friends' (or the whole world) to interact with you by a form of instant messaging, sharing information, photos and basically keeping in touch 24 hours a day, in nearly any country or area in the world. A growing trend with teenagers with internet-enabled phones and mobile Facebook is the tendency to have less sleep as one needs to continually respond to comments on Facebook.

Facebook developed from a website Facemash based at Harvard University in 2003, becoming The Facebook in 2004, and moving quickly to the open Facebook site in 2006. Since the early 'open' phase there has been phenomenal growth reaching 500 million members in March 2010. A point that illustrates the influence of the network was *Time* magazine's naming as Person of the Year for 2010, the key developer and public face of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg (born in 1984). There are now an estimated 600 million members (January 2011). You need to be over 13 years of age and are required to use your real life details (though this is of course reliant on people being honest in their details).

Of course not all members are active or spending substantial time on Facebook, but given it is the number 1

website now (more than Google), it is a social phenomenon in a league of its own. In Australia about 1/3 of people are members, and yes I include myself, though I am far from an active user, and my Facebook photo is when I was a much cuter three year old.

I certainly don't think *The Social Network* is the best film for the last year, as there are some melodramatic and almost amateurish unconvincing scenes, though there are also some very perceptive social comments. I believe one of the reasons for its popularity is that it has touched a nerve in contemporary Western society, and has certainly encouraged wide-ranging social discussion about the nature of friendship and communication and the impact of the new social media. Political and wider social usage is clearly very important as people have analysed the role and influence of Facebook in the last US presidential election and in other countries such as Iran where it has been used by opposition elements.

This film helps one to understand the depth of this social revolution, a network born in seemingly "nerdy computer land", but nurtured in the partying and hedonistic environment of university life, which has seemingly little regard for privacy and gentlemanly conduct. There is also consideration of the legal dimensions which have arisen (and continue with the latest lawsuit) with questions about who contributed to Facebook's birth and development, and continuing questions about privacy arrangements and access, though the responsibility for the latter is clearly placed with individuals.

Essentially I see this film as a drama about human relationships, and what can go wrong. Here is the irony, as the film is a personal face-to-face encounter, and often displays a one-to-one context where you see real emotions and responses. This is intriguing given the lack of social skills that Mark Zuckerberg is shown to have, and the base for Facebook that allows one to show what one wants to show (unless of course someone else is showing something about you). There is a certain amount of public arrogance associated with the portrayal of Zuckerberg, which in itself points toward the clear orientation of Facebook—allowing everyone to have 15 seconds (actually probably less) of fame.

Now, I know you are wondering, yes, ACC does have a Facebook page. You can share news and become a "fan" or as it is now known "like" our page, though of course you have to be a Facebook member first. Fortunately we have some members who are more active Facebookers than myself and help to keep this part going and provide a clear and consistent message of the ministry and love shown by Jesus Christ through the confessing movement.

## **The King's Speech (rated M)**

**G**iven the number of people going to view this film, I thought it would be helpful to make a quick comment. It is a wonderful period setting and illustrates the excellence in historical drama we have almost taken for granted nowadays. For people like myself who grew up in a US-International era in Australia it is an eye-opener to the (last) years of the British Empire before the second world war and the tremendous social change that developed post 1945. For older viewers there will no doubt be elements of nostalgia, and for some people memory of the events such as the abdication of King Edward VIII. There is much debate about some historical elements and the political philosophy of King George VI, who is expertly played by Colin Firth, but this is beside the focus of the film that is about a relationship between two men of very different experiences as the Australian speech therapist Lionel Logue, played by

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