

Digital Lee

Computer and technology consulting
with a **personal** touch

COMPUTER AND TECHNOLOGY CONSULTING WITH A *PERSONAL* TOUCH

July 2009 Newsletter

1. Face the facts
2. Our private lives might not be so private
3. About me and this newsletter

#####

1. Face the facts

I read an astounding statistic the other day: over 200 million people have an account on the social networking website Facebook.com. That's one fifth of all Internet users. Wow. It's not just teens, tweens, college students and recent grads any more. All types of Netizens are members. And to think, all these people are voluntarily posting information about themselves, their family and friends. They're sharing information about what movie they saw last weekend, their favorite bands, and what music they have in their iPods (I say 'they' because I do not have a Facebook account).

Facebook is the trend du jour. But they apparently are trying to prevent their possibly inevitable demise demonstrated by MySpace.com – being overtaken by the next hottest thing before they can turn the corner in to a profitable company (it just so happens that Facebook *was* the next hottest thing that bumped off MySpace). Facebook is choc full of very useful and valuable pieces of information – to advertisers that is. But the same people who are willing to tell the entire Facebook community how their date went last night, are the same ones who have risen up in protest when Facebook has tried to monetize their information goldmine.

But Facebook continues to persist in their mission, and other technology players have taken note. So much so, that Facebook was in negotiations with Google to accept a several hundred million dollar investment. But in the end, Microsoft was the one who forked over \$240 million for a paltry 1.6% ownership in the adolescent company run by a 25 year old college drop out (although I think it'd be only fair to say that he dropped out of Harvard).

If Facebook is going to be successful in getting over the wave that so commonly drowns Internet fads, they'll have to hurry. Not only are they being chased by the next biggest thing, whatever it may be, they may run out of cash. Aside from never having made a profit, one insider estimates they've spent \$300 million in the past year. Whatever happens, it'll be without monetizing information about me.

Related reading:

http://www.wired.com/techbiz/it/magazine/17-07/ff_facebookwall?currentPage=all

http://news.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/hi/technology/newsid_8133000/8133313.stm

#####

2. Our private lives might not be so private

If the first article in this newsletter surprised you, hold on your hat for this one: Corporate America is now using social networking websites like Facebook and MySpace as part of standard business operations. One way in which they're doing this is by including them in their marketing plans. But what may even be more interesting, is that some companies may be combing these website to research potential employees.

While it is currently illegal to ask a job applicant what their age and race are, these morsels of data are often easily found on an active account holder's profile page. A hiring manager might also get a sense of how loyal the person would be as an employee, and what their personal interests are. Do they go out to bars every weekend? Do they reveal details about their romantic life? Do they trash their current employer online? All of these things might be otherwise unknown. However, the question of whether or not it is ethical to include these considerations in a hiring decision is the subject of much debate.

There are some clear boundaries in this type of research, such as tricking or convincing a person to make otherwise private details public in their profile. But from what I gather, it seems like the people that keep their profile private are the minority.

While we wait for our culture and laws catch up with technology, it might be best for those who are socially networking to consider carefully what they publish about themselves on the Internet. One never knows if it could come back to bite you. As the wise saying goes, the Internet never forgets.

Related reading:

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2009/jun/19/catching-potential-social-networks/>

#####

3. About me and this newsletter

Lee Abrams is an IT professional in the Philadelphia area, and has over 8 years experience helping computer users and bringing valuable services to small businesses. My customers have come to rely on my experience, integrity and speedy service in a variety of situations, including computer, network and server installation

and repairs (Windows and Apple OS X computers), website design and maintenance, consulting and coaching, PC disinfection and clean-up, and general technology services.

I write this newsletter as a value-added service to my clients as a way to help keep computer users abreast of the rapidly changing landscape. Please feel free to pass this on to anyone who you may feel this will be useful, but unaltered please.

I would never lead you astray, so every website link in this newsletter has been visited by me and has been verified to be non-malicious at the time of writing.

Please note that all content within this correspondence does not carry any warranty or guarantee, neither written nor implied.

If you would like to read past newsletters, please visit
<http://www.digitallee.net/archives.html>

#####

I hate spam; everyone hates spam. I hope you don't consider this email spam. I respect your privacy and your wishes, so if you wish to not receive this newsletter any more, please click the link below to unsubscribe. I promise you won't receive any more.

Computer and technology consulting
with a personal touch
www.DigitalLee.net