

Facebook wrestling with information controls

When we put information on a social website, should we have a say in how much of that gets sent out to the rest of the Internet? That's the question that users and employees of social giant Facebook have been wrestling with since, well, ever. The site has met with a lot of criticism lately over how users choose what information goes out to their friends, to other users and to the Internet at large.

Since it became a multi-million dollar company, Facebook has had something of a tenuous relationship with its users. The site wants to keep adding more gadgets and gizmos to the website and they have caught on in a big way. Unfortunately, they have also added the other trappings of large companies like ads, and sending users information to ad agencies so that they can tailor the ads to each user.

That's where they raise eyebrows among users and the media. People join Facebook and these other social networking sites because they want to share information and because they want information shared with them. However, what they want is to share with people — not with advertising agencies — which is the distinction that Facebook doesn't seem to get. That's why there's a backlash every time Facebook or one of the others alters its privacy agreements.

It seems to happen a lot when a website goes from a small one- or two-person-run site to a big company. A corporate mentality tells them to make money at all costs and the users — the people who made the site popular enough to go this far — are forgotten. Well, not forgotten, just treated like a means to more money.

Facebook isn't the only site with privacy concerns. Google in particular has been a constant privacy worry. Everyone hears the rumors that Google sends information on what you're searching for to the government. Whether that's true or not, just recently Google Buzz — a Twitter/Facebook clone — got slammed for giving personal information to third parties without users' permission and without even informing them. Google changed their privacy policy as soon as it became public. Several days ago, Facebook amended their privacy settings yet again, but technology pundits have called it a mixed bag: still not great, but better.

Technology and information sharing will only continue to grow, and as it does, we as users need to be actively concerned for our privacy. Services like Facebook can be a lot of fun, but there is the potential for them to be very harmful to ordinary people if the companies running them try too hard to make a profit. They need to remember that without their users, they're nothing.

— Kevin Bottrell

45th reunion celebrated

The ONLY complaint regarding the entire Memorial Weekend was the wind. As it is wont to do in western Kansas, it blew incessantly. A kind friend said, "My, your hair sure looks nice considering all this wind." To which I replied, "Honey, I've got so much hairspray on; if you see this hair move, you better take cover."

-ob-

My high school graduating class held our 45th reunion Saturday. We celebrated with a luncheon and an afternoon of looking at pictures and reminiscing. It caused me to have a flashback to our fifth reunion. Back in 1970 we didn't have much to say to each other besides: "Are you out of college, yet?: Are you married?" and "Do you have any kids?"

Conversation was not a problem this time. The problem was getting people to stop talking long enough to conduct the little program the planning committee had put together.

One of the highlights of our reunion was the display of a "friendship quilt" made by the mother of one of our classmates when we graduated. In fact, that quilt came into my possession in a "round-about" way. You see, that classmate was Jim's ex-wife. And, somewhere in the disposition of belongings, the quilt was stored with his things. Remember my spring project of going through boxes in our basement? Well, in one box was The Quilt. I knew immediately what it was because I remember embroidering my name on a block during our senior year. In fact, my signature looks much the same today. (My handwriting analyst friend might have fun with that).

Anyway, Jim made an easel for it and mounted it to a board. Our class picture

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



was taken in front of it and it was decided that The Quilt is now class property. I will keep it and protect it and bring it out again in another five years at our 50th reunion.

Part of the program I prepared was statistics regarding our class. Sounds exciting, doesn't it? I shared that 56 percent of our class had been divorced. 11 percent had died; 33 percent had married other alumni from our school; 15 percent live in Colorado; 35 percent live in Kansas; and 11 percent live in Decatur County.

Following the program Jim whispered in my ear, "There's one statistic you forgot."

"What's that?" I asked.

"What's the percentage of two out of your class of 55 graduates? That's the percentage that's been married to Jim Plotts. And, you can't put that in the paper."

But, as you can see, I'm going to try.

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While doing my chores this weekend, I learned a new lesson: Never go into a chicken's domain wearing open-toed sandals and bright red polish on your toenails. Evidently, the old hens thought my toes were little red bugs because they chased me all over the pen peck, peck, pecking at my toes. I barely escaped with my life. Perhaps a bit dramatic, but scary, nonetheless.



Kids' choices aren't always mom's choices

Whenever two mothers get together, they begin to talk about their children.

Well, complain, explain and commiserate is more like it.

At my age and that of most of my friends, we talk about our children's relationship and career choices.

The complaints go like this:

"Why couldn't he/she have gone to a nice, close junior college like their brother/sister. It would be so much cheaper and closer."

"You wouldn't believe the terrible manners of his/her girlfriend/boyfriend/group of friends. And they stay out to all hours. They're never home"

"Johnny/Mary is capable of getting a much better job. They're so smart. They could go back to school and be a lawyer/doctor/engineer."

The bottom line is the kids don't spend enough time at home and they didn't make the choices that Mom thought they should.

They never do.

We all think our child should be the next president. We just don't want them to be a politician.

So it wasn't surprising that while the guys were out in the back yard with a beer, May and I were in the kitchen with our second glass of wine and deep into a psy-

Open Season Cynthia Haynes



chological discussion of our children.

Hers are a little younger than mine. They are just testing their wings. Graduating and looking at careers. Mine are mostly settled with good jobs and happy marriages. They just live too far away.

So between sips, she gave me her take on success.

I liked it and the next day, I called and asked her to repeat it for this column and all mothers, who like me, are worried about their adult or almost-adult offspring.

She has three criteria to measure success, she said.

1. Are you happy with the choices you've made?

If you're a long-haul trucker, don't complain because you're never home. If you're a merchant, don't complain about the buying public. If you're in school, are you happy with your studies and your life and will you be able to finish and do what

you want to do?

2. Can you fulfill the obligations you have undertaken?

If you are a parent, can you raise and educate your children? If you own a home, can you pay for its upkeep and taxes? If you join a club, can you donate some of your time and energy to its goals?

3. You are not a burden on society or your parents.

Can you stand on your own two feet and support yourself and your dependents?

If you can answer yes to all three, she said, you're a success whether you are a dishwasher at the restaurant or a congressman.

There is one other thing, she said, which she hasn't quite figured out how to incorporate into her formula, but which is still important.

4. Do you give back to your community?

Do you offer your time and talents to others?

I looked over her list and decided that all three of my children are successes and they all give back.

But, darn it, they still live too far away.

Smartly, safely and fairly

Insight

John Schlageck

company through the Certificate of Public Convenience will allow them to build, operate and maintain the transmission line not for 50 or 100 years, but forever," McReynolds emphasizes.

As part of this process, ITC Great Plains must negotiate with landowners and provide compensation for easement rights. Also available in this process is eminent domain — the power to force the sale of land at fair market value. This avenue of securing access for transmission line expansion with eminent domain has been granted to ITC by state regulators.

"We just want to ensure this power is not abused," McReynolds says.

In addition to compensation, three other major areas of concern weigh on the minds of those living in the region of this proposed power line. They include intrusive land use, safety and legal liability.

High voltage electric transmission lines have a substantial footprint. They require rights-of-way with a width of 150 feet or more and structures can reach 100 feet into the sky.

The impact on the properties these lines cross, and the impact on cultural and economic interests in this region cannot be ignored.

Transmission lines may result in increased risks to human health from electromagnetic fields. Because of this, transmission lines should not be permitted in close proximity to communities, residences and workplaces, as proposed by ITC Great Plains, especially when there are other reasonable and potentially less harmful alternatives.

"I have been approached by young farm couples with children who are worried about the effects of these lines," McReynolds says. "We'd like to see reasonable setback requirements imposed."

Property owners could also be hit in their pocketbooks when ITC Great Plains seeks condemnation of their land to create new easements along the selected route.

Some property owners may face reductions in land values with the installation of large transmission towers and substations in and near their rural homes or farmland. In other cases, landowners may be deprived of their right to use irrigation to grow crops and be forced to return to dry-land farming.

Landowners worry they will not be offered fair compensation for the use of their property. Some are already being paid \$4,000 to \$15,000 annually for wind development and anywhere from \$5,000 to \$6,000 per year for cell phone towers.

"ITC Great Plains is offering a one-time payment that pales in comparison to these other markets," McReynolds says.

The burden and responsibility rests on ITC Great Plains to do the right thing and provide comparably fair compensation for the right to build electric transmission lines on Kansas land. And when ITC Great Plains moves into our Kansas communities, state regulators must ensure intrusive land use, safety, legal liability and fair compensation are addressed.

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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

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