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the privacy protection of its users. And that begs the question, why are some accounting firms, companies, non-profits and government agencies so hell-bent on forcing their customers to join a social network that exposes them to fraud, privacy invasions and computer viruses?

I collapsed my Facebook page last year when the first problems with privacy cropped up. The issue is not whether Facebook and other public venues are useful and inexpensive — they are. But the problem with Facebook and many other such services is that they have no sustainable business model. That is, you use them for free, but the hidden cost is that they are selling your personal data to make ends meet.

In the background, every scrap of information you post becomes fodder for the machines that slice and dice your data in order to feed the insatiable demand for more ways to cram more advertising down your throat. Every word you post, every photo, every friend, every scrap of data and even who you choose as “friends” is sold, analyzed, used and abused. That is their business model.

Worse yet, whenever possible your link to Facebook is hacked, viruses are inserted on your hard drive, you are subjected to services you never asked for, you are spammed by companies you never heard of, or your identity is stolen. What a wonderful reward for signing up for a service — especially a service you trust, such as your accounting firm.

The problem is that when you set up shop on Facebook, and invite your clients to use this as a means to learn more about your services, ask questions, etc. — you expose them to massive risk. The fact is that in order to access your information — unlike a web page, which can be accessed by anyone at any time — your customers and prospects are required to sign up for Facebook, divulge their personal information and risk the vagaries of privacy invasion and the Bookface virus.

There is an incredible array of services that will give you a web site that avoids this.

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