Facebook is dead, long live Facebook!

Gone are the days of logging into your Facebook account every two hours to see which high school classmates have accepted your friend requests. So what if you haven't spoken to them for ten years, you're still allowed to scour their profile page for signs of weirdness and unhappiness, right?

Facebook profiles everywhere are collapsing under the hefty weight of vampire attacks, super wall spam and which "insert cute item" are you quizzes. Ironically, these applications which helped to propel Facebook to its high acclaim are dragging it down as information overload sets in and you start to wonder, do I really have time to plant a flower in someone's garden?

So what can we expect next from the social networking virtual world? This is a question my clients ask me every day. And I answer them like this. Blogs are no longer pseudo newspapers with communication flowing one-way from the writer to the audience. Users want to get involved, give their opinion and discuss topics. Internet users have discovered that they have a voice, they want to use it and more importantly, they want to be part of a community with other people interested in the same things as them. This is why audiences are getting bored of generalist social networks such as Facebook and MySpace and moving into smaller social networks to find people who share their particular interests such as redbubble.com. If these people can't find an existing community to join, they are starting up their own with the help of sites like Ning.com.

As Marketers and Advertisers, we need to acknowledge that with so many social networks popping up, we will have to follow our audience if we want to continue to have dialogue with them. This dialogue may be across many integrated social networks. This could potentially be a huge technical challenge, however a standard is being created for the social web as the major players sign up for Open Social technology and dataportability.org.

Data portability is about sharing data across networks. This will allow social network sites and application developers to work together to create services that will work right across the web. These applications are starting to rollout, a great example being bigsight.org. This site uses your Facebook profile data to pre-populate a new account, which means that the sign up process can be completed in less than thirty seconds. Therefore bringing your extinct Facebook account back to life and transforming it into a passport to the web. This is only the tip of the iceberg for data portability, which is shaping up to be a powerful tool for climbing the walls of the individual social networks.

Open Social technology is akin with data portability, however its open API has more of an emphasis on applications. This will make it possible for Marketers to build an application once and then propagate it across many sites. Let's hope this doesn't mean that vampires are going to be attacking both your Facebook and LinkedIn accounts!

Whatever the future of social media is, data's going to be as portable as your laptop, as personal as your address book and as synched as your iTunes library.

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About Codegent
Codegent is a digital agency that fuses creative ideas with solid technology to produce outstanding results.

We're a full service digital agency because we think the internet is an endlessly fascinating place for brands to create and refine the way they communicate with their customers and stakeholders. For us, these possibilities are what gets us up in the morning.