

Associations – is Facebook a Friend or a Foe?

It was a little odd to see Mark Zuckerberg apologize for their data hiccup last month. Most of us can see through the thin veil of PR deflection and understand that data is really what Facebook is selling now and into the future. If you really wanted to understand Facebook's security controls over your personal data, you would have to manage this through more than 22 pages of different and confusing controls which are only accessible by a browser – not your mobile device.

Anyone who makes controlling your identify that difficult, has an ulterior motive. Although, intuitively we know what that motive is, we don't worry about it because it is somewhat invisible.

But we should.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning are hyper verticalizing the mass amount of data that is presented to each of us every day – and platforms like Facebook are filtering and prioritizing the content on our behalf. This sounds good in theory, but when a corporation like Facebook is doing the filtering based on advertising and their own future goals - it is *coerced* filtering – designed to drive revenue to Facebook.

You may want to parlay the Facebook scandal to remind your members that social media does have a cost.

Let's face it, members are now questioning more than ever the value that they are receiving from their association. Many are turning to social media groups to satisfy their needs for education and networking.

So why do I need to be a member of an association when I can get what I need for free?

That is the big question that you have to answer to your members. The reality is that social media is giving away free group membership to individuals in order to get their data. Sophisticated algorithms and artificial intelligence is creating association's biggest competitor where social media will know your member better that you do.

It may be prudent to remind your members that you do not sell or rent their data. It may also be prudent to think about how you can keep your content on your own digital platforms so that only your members can access the value. And, it may also be prudent that you will give them the straight goods on information and education that will help them (not what a machine thinks they should know).

If you are posting all your content on social media, why would a member pay you for that content?

Control your destiny. Use social media ONLY for interest and awareness, not as a platform to serve members the “actual content”. Leverage social media to drive member prospects to your site rather than drive them away to the social media platform. When a visitor is on your site, you serve up content in a controlled, branded and meaningful way. Leaving content delivery to social media platforms like Facebook creates a user experience that Facebook controls – not you.

Do you really want that for your members?

P.S. Although Facebook is in the news – stay tuned to see the same reports for Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

About the Author and Association TV®



Dan Stevens is President of WorkerBee.TV and the father of Association TV®.



Association TV® by WorkerBee.TV is a strategy, platform and best practice that allows an association to strategically leverage the power of video and audio to enhance member value, achieve association goals and drive non-dues revenue. Inform, Educate and Inspire your members while growing your revenues with Association TV®

