



Protesters and Technology

If you are like me your head has been spinning the last few months with the dizzying pace of change in the Middle East. Technology (cell phones and the Internet) and Facebook have played an important role in organizing the protesters so they all know where and when to meet. The Internet has also allowed the rest of the world to have an inside view of what is going on. Governments have tried to shut down the Internet to prevent news from reaching the outside world. But geeks (people who love technology) being geeks there is always a way around any government shutdown. At one point when Mubarak shut down the Internet Google setup a phone number that protesters could call and leave short messages. Those messages were then translated and posted on Twitter so we could all still get news about what was happening. Read more: <http://goo.gl/lrcUo>



[Egyptian Names His Baby "Facebook"](#)

I was asked how the Egyptian government could shut down the Internet. Apparently all it took was a few calls to the Egyptian Internet Service Providers to order them to shutdown. Could our government ever do that to us? Read more at: <http://goo.gl/EPeVW>

Stay Safe On Facebook

If you have been sitting on the sidelines about Facebook, with all this news about Facebook, you may be reconsidering if you should join in. If you do decide to open a Facebook account, or if you already have one, there are some simple things you can do to minimize who can get access to your information and help protect you from data miners.

Here is what I suggest to lock down your Facebook (FB) account:

1. Decide upfront who you want to be "friends" with. In Facebook you "accept" friend requests or you send out your own requests. Make the circle as small as possible. I decided to be friends only with my family. Sorry clients and old classmates, I've decided to use FB only for communication with my family. Resist the temptation to "accept" every friend request you receive. If it is too late and you have a larger friend list than you want (too many silly posts to read) you can always "unfriend" someone: <http://goo.gl/BKX3V>



If you don't want to be "unfriended" yourself, read this:
<http://goo.gl/ijxQh>

2. Make sure you have turned on "https://" browsing (notice the "s" for secure after the http). FB insists on not making safe and secure settings the default settings, so it is always up to each and everyone of us to constantly monitor our FB settings and turn on these features as they become available. Read more about https at: <http://goo.gl/dZU9k>
3. Tighten up your FB Privacy Settings. Once again FB leaves everything you do open for everyone to see. You will want to limit who can see what you do on FB. Here is a good step-by-step for limiting access to your activity: <http://read.bi/gBSEe0>
4. Stay away from the "Sponsored" ads on the right-hand side of Facebook pages. Stay suspicious of advertisements on the right-hand side. They often use titillating titles like "See who has been searching for you". Clicking on these ads often gives permission for these strangers to access your profile and friend list.

Think of Facebook as just one more Internet tool at our disposal. For now it is the popular kid on the block. AOL was popular back in the 1990's. Now look at them.

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