Probably about 5 months ago I had a conversation with someone at Facebook about licensing their API.

The beauty of Facebook, as opposed to Myspace and other social networks is that the people on there are for the most part who they say they are, and Facebook does their best to dismiss those who aren't. This simple differentiation makes the membership base of Facebook far more valuable than any other social network.

When you go to my Facebook profile, you get the real me. Thats not to say I answer every profile question. I don't. I'm not going to disclose everything about myself. However, the data that is available about me is the most comprehensive, self maintained database record about me on the internet or probably anywhere. Access to that information times the however many tens of millions of Facebook active users is worth a lot of money.

So with this in mind, I talked to one of their VCs that I know, who referred me to someone at Facebook and we had a great conversation. I asked about licensing the API for use outside the Facebook.com domain. They were definitely open to it. All I needed to do was put together a proposal for what I wanted to do with it. Despite the thousands of ideas I have about how the most comprehensive database of self maintained user information could be used, I just didnt have the piss and vinegar in me to attack this problem with the amount of energy it would take.

So I called a buddy at Yahoo and suggested that they license the Facebook API. I happen to think that far better search and ad serving solutions can be developed around a combination of user published information and user activity It just seems to me that if Facebook were to give me an option of publishing a laundry list of relevant information about myself to external Facebook API applications, such as search and ad serving networks that those applications would serve me better results.

Think "What is my search mood today: Information, entertainment, purchasing, bored…" as a precursor to an actual search. The options that would enable smarter use of the web are endless. Not everyone would avail themselves of what I call Personal Database Publishing to enhance the internet experience, but I believe enough would.

Of course any application can currently ask for this information and many do. But I dont want to have to publish and maintain a database for every application I want to use or happen to use. Nor do I want to have to maintain multiple social network accounts to make this information available. I recognize that this is the exact problem that Google wants to solve with their OpenSocial. But they are too late … If Facebook opens their API up further and allows for its use outside the Facebook.com domain.

So back to Yahoo and the Facebook API. I thought that if you put the 2 together, enabling Yahoo to access the Facebook database of users within the current API constraints, Yahoo search and ad serving would improve considerably. Expand the Facebook database with an opt in option to add further personal data that could be used FROM WITHIN THE YAHOO WEBSITE, the results for Yahoo could be extraordinary. A Yahoo searchbox within Facebook , or a search from a Yahoo site that recognizes you are the owner of a Facebook profile and customizes the results according to information culled from your profile would be incredibly powerful

I don't know if anything can or would come of my little referral. Maybe now with MicroSoft buying into Facebook, they can get a free crack at the Facebook API and Facebook profile owners who also use MicroSoft Live can get better search and ad results. Who knows.

What I do know is this. As long as Facebook keeps expanding the power of my profile, there is no reason for me or anyone else to create another profile anywhere else, including any of the Google OpenSocial alliance members. If all the value of my Facebook profile remains stopped at the edge of the facebook domain, I might have to give Google OpenSocial a try.