



# *Why Google's Launching 'Me' and Facebook's Real Future*

## *Two Web Giants Square Off Over a Future of Hyper-Personalized Experiences*

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If you're not familiar with the semantic web, the vision is that soon the web will deliver a personalized experience that not only is extraordinarily relevant to you but might also anticipate your desires before you even know them. How would it do this? By using the wealth of knowledge available via your social profile and other digital sources.

This evolution of the web isn't possible, of course, unless some centralized group with some form of open platform can share your social profile -- and even, potentially, your location -- with any other digital property. It is the inevitable future of our digital world and those who control it will dominate the next phase of the internet.

Facebook's Open Graph offers far more than the ability to "like pages." It's Facebook's play to power the semantic web.

### **Deep personalization**

Facebook's Open Graph can allow for deep personalization of any Open Graph-enabled content -- content that reacts to your age, your gender, your friends, your personal preferences and even the things you "like." The only thing required to fully achieve hyper-relevance would be understanding your location -- but a soon-to-be-released update to the Open Graph API will allow developers to integrate location-based services into any website or mobile application.

For example, imagine integrating Open Graph into Google's search results and then think about what type of search results you might get back if you searched for "Caribbean vacation" and it knew that you were married, had two kids, lived in New York, were 34, had "liked" a Windsurfing Brand or a sport team, and were currently posting a search from your home address in the evening.

Facebook's big mistake when rolling out the Open Graph was trying to hide what I believe is their true intention. They could have avoided the whole privacy debacle if they had asked consumers if they wanted to share some of their details with Open Graph "to allow for a new type of web experience that was truly personalized to their desires." Many people would be willing to give up some of their privacy if they understood the upside. And those who didn't could have been given the chance to opt out. They might be able to avoid the subject with consumers, but do they really believe their competition doesn't see exactly what they're doing?



## Google's challenge

Until early this week, I was wondering how Google would maintain their dominance in search if the key to the semantic web was effectively powered by social networks. I just couldn't imagine Google wanting to leverage Facebook's Open Graph to influence their search results and then Kevin Rose from Digg leaked that Google would be releasing their own social network called "Me." I think Google's true reasons for re-approaching social networks is because they recognize it's a necessary component to achieving the next generation of search technology. And Orkut just didn't get them there.

As fascinating as it's going to be to watch these two heavyweights duke it out to dominate our digital lives for the next 10 years, when I look at their past histories with privacy issues I can't help but ask: **should we be more scared than excited?**



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