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Council does about-face on Facebook

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Richard Tardif
The Eastern Door

The popular social media site Facebook, now more than 750 million strong, has lost the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake as one of its users because of a sudden change in privacy policies. On September 7, Facebook, without notice, changed its privacy policy and removed any option of one-way user control of posts, bouncing the MCK off the social site.

"Now anyone can post," said Neil McComber, director of MCK communications. "It is simply no longer feasible for the MCK to be an official user of the popular social site because we would need to hire someone to moderate posts from outside."

Prior to the changes in the Facebook policy, an automated system had been used to post information through e-mail and third-party services, which allowed MCK Communications to monitor sent items, while blocking the possibility of anyone posting comments on the site. The one way posting eliminated hiring additional staff to moderate incoming comments, a job that could essentially be staffed by one employee, possibly someone working from home. This is not an option for the MCK, says McComber.

Another reason for turning away is that Communications has limited access to Facebook. "We are not permitted to post from the workplace because of possible network threats ('viruses') that could infect the MCK network," said McComber.

The latest Facebook privacy changes have created a landslide of controversy among its users, particular

"I think Facebook is trying to make a one size fits all page, but this automatically opts everyone into the same thing, endangering users," said Terry Cutler, a Certified Ethical Hacker and Chief Technology Officer of Digital Locksmiths, a Montreal Based Internet Security firm.

It also creates more opportunity for hackers, he says, so a good policy is to have a security policy system like the one being utilized by the MCK.

"So many people are sending links hoping you click on them and this downloads malicious software to the end user computer," said Cutler, who in the past has offered Internet security lectures in Kahnawake. "Now, that computer can be used to commit crime inside the company and bypass all of the security that is in place," he said.

The MCK has not excluded returning to Facebook, but such a move would depend on a reversal of its new policy. In the meantime, the MCK's security policy remains constant but community members can express their opinions at communications@mck.ca.

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