

# Best to Be Smart About Social Media

Social media gets a lot of well-deserved criticism. It's presented as a service, but with the vast majority of social media platforms, you and your information are the products being sold.

Even worse than selling your information to advertisers, it opens its back door to government spies so they can come in, snoop around, steal your data, and watch everything you do. Definitely not the behavior of someone who's on your side.

When they say "your privacy matters" they are lying. They may as well be saying "your life matters" while dumping plutonium into your drinking water.

You might insist "If you're doing nothing wrong, what do you have to hide?" but this puts the burden on you to prove your innocence and that's not how it works. Your privacy matters more than government interests. Your butler can't be allowed to spy on you, not even "for your own good" or to further the butler's agenda.

Recently we've also seen how social media manipulates opinions by what it allows you to see; promoting its own biased views as news, and any opposing views as "fake news" to be suppressed and banned.

Yet social media isn't all bad. It deserves a little praise, at least on a couple of things.

Social media helps people reconnect with those they once knew, and stay in touch with friends they no longer live near. In today's highly mobile society this is a valuable human service.

Another small thing I really appreciate is when it helps find lost pets so they and their owners can be reunited.

I appreciate how it helps people advertise yard sales, services, and social events. This is the free market in action. And it helps people organize.

Social media users frequently shut government and its laws out of the loop. To a point. You'll still usually be prohibited, for example, from the perfectly ethical act of using these platforms to sell a gun to someone who wants to buy it. And if your group is planning something the politicians have made up rules against, regardless of whether it's actually wrong, someone may report you to the political authorities. Yet there are still ways around almost all these barriers.

It's not necessary to shun social media; just be smart. Don't offer too much unnecessary

information that the bad guys can use against you, but take advantage of the opportunities it presents. Opportunities beyond any the world has ever seen.