

How much information are you requiring?

Yesterday on Twitter, someone posted about an event that sounded intriguing. I went to check out the link provided for details, thinking I would find time, place and cost, but instead I found a sign-up form. The form asked for: name, gender, date of birth, time zone, location, religious views, email and a password. I kid you not. Or, you could sign up using your Facebook login.

How much of this information are you requiring? **The information you require can be construed as a barrier to entry.** You put up figurative barriers, at differing “heights” to reduce the amount of people that can access your offering.

Now, some people have absolutely no problem handing over any information that is asked of them. I used to know a woman who would even give out her social security number and her mother’s maiden name just to be on an email list. And then there are people like me, who guard their personal information zealously and will only give up the minimum for a good reason. For example, if the doctor’s office wants to know if I have had a surgery or take any medication. But why would I give an organization putting together an EVENT my birth date and religious affiliation?

This problem extends to the growing number of websites that require you to sign up with your Facebook account. Again, some people consider their Facebook profile public. And some—like me—don’t. Facebook has already compiled a good amount of personal information about you: where you live, where you are from, who your friends are, what your likes and dislikes are, your age and if you provided them with this info: where you went to school, your religion, your marital status and on and on.

You should consider exactly what information you require, and furthermore, you should tell people what you plan to do with that information. What exactly are you going to do to safeguard the privacy of that information?

Again, some people are pretty lax about privacy. But there is a continuum, and if your goal is to get more people (not fewer) to sign up, then you will have to consider that some people are not so comfortable handing over this information.

What are your thoughts? On a personal level, do you give any information requested, or do you fudge it? Do you sign in using your Facebook?

On an organizational level, how much information are you requiring and is all of it necessary?