Getting “scroogled”

I am sure you have probably seen Microsoft’s ad campaign against Google, where the company claims you are getting “scroogled” by Google. It is clever, and has some basis in reality. If you haven’t, one of the ads is for Outlook.com, which is being presented as an alternative to Gmail. The ad implies that Google is reading your “private” email to be able to target advertising to you.

I am not sure Microsoft is the correct alternative to Google, but I think they are on to something with the term “scroogled.” Google, which is ubiquitous, is desperately trying to get more people on its (useless in my opinion) Google Plus platform. To force you to join, they are now killing the extremely useful Google Reader.

I have been using Google Reader for years, and often advise attendees to my blogging workshops that they should set up a reader. I also think readers are the only way to keep up with blogs, since you may follow dozens (if not hundreds). Readers give you one place to see what is new. If you only follow one or two blogs, then getting email updates works.

Alternatives to Google Reader: Get one ASAP!

In any case, Google Reader will be gone as of July 1. Luckily, there are some alternatives out there. Here are some reviews and compilations for you to check out:

CNET: 5 Worthy Alternatives

Silicon Angle: 6 Alternatives to the Dying Google Reader

Lifehacker: Google Reader is Shutting Down; Here Are the Best Alternatives

Don’t get “scroogled!”

The lesson I draw from this is that any free service is free to let you down in the end. Many individuals and organizations put all their eggs in the proverbial free basket, and will suffer the consequences when organizations like Google and Facebook change the rules of the road whenever they like. My advice is to make sure you own your own website or blog (don’t depend on Blogger or WordPress.com), have your own email (which you can usually get when you have your own domain and web hosting) and have alternatives to the free behemoths, which after all have their own agenda to push and ultimately, don’t care about your needs and wants.

What are your thoughts? Do you feel that Google is treating you fairly?