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[more than 10 million users](#) in its first two weeks, has given Facebook haters — or people like me who are suffering Facebook fatigue — a new space in which to park their social graphs. And much has been written about the [appeal of starting one's social network from scratch](#). (Full disclosure: The Washington Post Co.'s chairman and chief executive, Donald E. Graham, is a member of Facebook's board of directors. And my brother works as a programmer for Google. He has not worked on Google+.)

Users like me who put up high privacy walls in Facebook early on may be eager to delete the content on those pages and have a more public social-media presence. After all, people change. The posts I made on Facebook in 2008 don't speak for me in 2011. Do yours? I'm talking to those of you who didn't get the only-post-what-you-want-the-world-to-see memo until after four years of late-night, college rants on Facebook. (Thankfully, I was just finishing up when Mark Zuckerberg was kicking out Facebook's building blocks in Harvard dorm room.)

Reporters reflexively seek out the Facebook profiles of their subjects. Whenever information is made publicly available, including photos, is a potential treasure trove of data that could land on the desk of The Washington Post. The [lead graph](#) on a Post investigative piece about the identity of the Gay Girl in Damascus author is a Facebook photo. And,

in the wake of the [News of the World hacking scandal](#), concerns about personal privacy are front and center. What if News of the World staff only hacked into Facebook pages? Would the outcry be as loud? Should it be?

Oh, and if you haven't heard, [LulzSec is out of retirement](#). The hacking cohort released a statement to the FBI on Thursday, saying governments, corporations and "lobby conglomerates" were its preferred targets. But what if that focus changes?

Our willingness to accept those risks speaks to something new and truly fundamental. A [2010 study](#) led by neuroeconomist Paul Zak found that using social media produced the same chemical in the brain, the generosity and trust-inducing hormone oxytocin, that is produced when mothers first see their babies. The challenge of quitting Facebook has engaged us for a while. After Facebook changed its privacy settings in May last year, which led to the creation of "Quit Facebook Day," [a number of pieces](#) were written about why it's so hard. With Google+ — a viable alternative — the question is back. This time I decided to actually give it a try.

I even had a game plan: As I was mounting the courage to quit, I asked Google+ users

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whether they had quit Facebook and why. The few responses I received were worth noting. In one case, a user did not want to leave behind friends and family members who were loath to leave Facebook. Another person said Google still had bugs to work out, making a complete abandonment of Facebook impractical. A third user said that Google+ didn't offer all of the ways he wanted or needed to connect to friends, making a presence on Facebook necessary to maintain those connections. My question and the associated comments are public, by the way — something I couldn't have done on Facebook given my privacy settings.

It took me two weeks to commit — even though I had threatened to leave Facebook in a week. Deleting a Facebook page is quite a process. First, the site does everything it can to add to your anxiety over quitting, asking if you merely want to “deactivate” your page. Deactivation allows Facebook to hold on to your data in case you should ever return. Then it asks why you are leaving. Click on the radio button that says you have privacy concerns, and a reminder pops up that you shouldn't worry because Facebook ensures your information is private. Then, you have the opportunity to delete your account, which I chose to do. You're then told that you have 14 days before Facebook will completely wipe your data. Log in once — just once — and you're back. It's as if you never left.

Two weeks after my emphatic Wall post announcement, I carried through on my threat — as painful as it was.

I didn't get very far. Before I quit my Facebook profile, I quickly created a new, more public Facebook profile. Why, you ask? I needed a presence on the platform to manage a Facebook page for the Post.

Facebook: 2, Me: 0.

Kolawole is the editor for The Post's Innovations section, including the Ideas@Innovations blog.

Tell us your story: Have you quit Facebook? Do you want to? If you want to but can't, what's keeping you there? And, for you non-social media users, why haven't you jumped in? Join the conversation at www.washingtonpost.com/innovations.

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