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[Facebook: The Divorce Court Smoking Gun?](#)

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Letting the people in your life know about a divorce is now easier than ever; with the click of a mouse, someone's status on Facebook can go from "married" to "single" and broadcast the break-up to everyone they know. Though the online airing of dirty relationship laundry is nothing new for the younger crowd, [demographics are shifting](#), and even for those in their 40's and beyond, divorces have suddenly become startlingly public.

However, with the dissolution of a marriage so often tied to heated court battles, online social networking sites have also become an increasingly common source of evidence. Divorce attorneys can find a huge amount of relevant information about the opposing side online: mentions of affairs, lavish purchases, or incriminating photographs. In some circumstances, online postings might even be used to show someone as an unfit parent in custody proceedings.

In essence, websites like Facebook can be [evidentiary goldmines](#). One lawyer brought up a case where a mother assured the court that she had quit drinking – only to be caught in a lie when her MySpace page turned up dated photographs of her doing just that. And "cyber sleuths" know [just how easy](#) it can be to prove adultery in the digital age.

Though the ethical implications of accessing, for example, "friends-only" information on social networking sites is still under some debate, it is generally understood that information is only legally private when there is a "reasonable expectation" of privacy – which is arguably not the case even with high privacy settings. Not only can your own friends view your page, but anyone that they allow to view it; even Facebook warns in its privacy policy that anything disclosed may potentially become publicly available.

Of course, smart divorce attorneys today know not only how to find incriminating information, but also how to advise their clients to avoid these pitfalls. Maybe when we post information online, the first thing we should be asking is: would I want a judge to read this?

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