

## Keeping tabs: Web site redefines 'social networking'

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Greg Theisen, president and chief executive officer of Kindle Innovations, a Stamford-based developer of Web applications and services, has created TabUp.com, a free social networking Web site where users can create profiles to keep up on their children's activities, post to-do lists, share photos and more. (Chris Preovolos/Staff photo)

Myspace.com, Facebook or LinkedIn are leaders in the genre of networking sites, but some may be looking for another kind of connection. Kindle Innovations, a Stamford-based developer of Web applications and services, thinks it has the answer.

Kindle Innovations has initiated a soft launch of TabUp.com, a free Web site which resembles a social networking site yet its mission is a more personalized functionality. Users can create profiles, called "tabs" where there can keep up on their children's activities, post to-do lists, share photos and more.

The site also provides a forum where groups or organizations with multiple members can engage in dialogue with each other, as opposed to exchanging e-mails.

"I don't think you think Myspace or Facebook when you think about local community. We saw a value in a collaboration for existing groups to debate issues short term or long term or to facilitate a cause," said Greg Theisen, president and chief executive officer of Kindle Innovations.

TabUp.com is up for users to try but will be officially launched in mid-September. Theisen said that the company has been encouraging word-of-mouth promotion and is exploring search engine optimization for the site as well. Though very new, the site has attracted about 200 users.

Theisen suggested that TabUp.com can be the online place where neighbors can discuss things like having their road fixed or where family members spread across the country can discuss care for aging parents.

The company believes that charitable organizations, arts and sports organizations will be equally interested in the using its site.

"A book club might not be looking to find members - they're happy with their current membership. They might meet once a month, but need a way to facilitate communication," said Theisen, a Scarsdale, N.Y. resident, who has more than 20 years of experience in technology management.

TabUp doesn't produce an "exposed" feeling that users get with other social networking sites, he said. Users can create as many as 24 tabs, and they have the option of making them totally private.

"You can keep separate tabs for various aspects of your life. Maybe you don't want to know the church group to know that you're in the yoga a group," he said.

Privacy is an issue for people using these types of sites, said Mark Pruner, president of Web Counsel LLC in Stamford.

"There's milieu that goes along with Facebook. There's a loss of privacy in the social gossip Facebook offers. What this does is it takes Facebook down to a personal level. They're not forcing people into a Myspace community," Pruner said. "This is a private group for individuals. It's a competitor to a Myspace, but it lets you create it and you define what services you use with the tools that they have." The TabUp concept is a good one, Pruner said, yet he suggested that Kindle Innovations should be careful not to "dilute its message" by offering too much.

"The biggest issue is that it does so many things. It's difficult to understand what the benefits are. This is classic example of something hard to describe, but it's easier to understand once you try it. I like this concept. It lets me mix and match what I want to do," Pruner said.

Theisen believes that TabUp.com has a good platform and that users will dictate its success. He hopes to add TabUp features for use on mobile phones and Black Berry- type devices through a subscription fee.

"We see Kindle as an incubator for other businesses to launch ideas online with us. There are people with ideas, but don't have the technical wherewithal to do it," Theisen said.

Though TabUp.com is self-funded at the moment, Kindle Innovations hopes to secure advertising on the site by the start of next year. The company has nine employees in Stamford.

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