

Terms of Use

I received an email from a friend the other day and he wanted me to visit this site he found that was a great site to connect all one's acquaintances or buddies together. The site is called LinkedIn.com. I was not completely sure what the site had to offer or what I was able to do with it. I talked more to my friend and he was very convincing that it was the best option for me to keep track of my contacts. I learned more about the site and found that after I connected myself to a friend, I had access to view all of his friends or contacts. I did not know what I was allowed to do with the information I had at my finger tips and I asked my friend if he knew. He was busy and suggested I look at the Terms of Use page. I have never really bothered to look at those pages, but now was a good time. A Terms of Use page is the created contractual agreement between a site or company and anyone who accesses and or uses the service they provide. (Reference) This fascinated me and I wanted to learn more about what was included in these agreements.

Almost every page I went to had their own version of the Terms of Use agreement. I thought it was one document that every site or company had that made it legally viable. According to Wikipedia, terms of use agreements let the users know specifically what can and cannot be done to the site with or without the creator's permission. This made sense that the agreement would be contingent on what the site actually offered. Some business sites are all

informational based and other sites have products and services offered. The LinkedIn.com site agreement states: *LinkedIn is an online service offered to enable professionals find and connect with other professionals more effectively (the "LinkedIn Service")*. This describes the service they are offering and the rest of the agreement states their terms and agreements users must abide by if they wish to continue using the site.

Common elements in agreements such as these often include (AllBusiness):

- Limited Right to Use
- Indemnification
- Disclaimers
- Forum Selection
- Remedies
- Statute of Limitations
- Acceptance of the Agreement

These topics are not all-inclusive. Others could include: Membership Eligibility, Termination (account status), Monitoring and Enforcement, and many more. Topics again are based on what the site has to offer. Sites giving more informational based services will often include disclaimers if they are not the sole creators of the content. If false or inaccurate accusations are created and posted on a website, disclaimers often will protect the company from legal action taking place from the wrongfully accused. Product based companies will be sure to include in their agreements more of the product based topics such as: Price Matching, Bundle Specials, Shipping Methods, Return policies and others. (Newegg.com) Again, all topics are related to the products and services offered by that company.

Intellectual property is all-inclusive of what the site is offering. Whenever a user opts-in to view or use services on this site, the Terms of Use agreement is there to protect the site creators' content. If somehow the company has to take legal action against someone who has improperly used the services,

the Terms and Services agreement will often be used by the court to see if in fact a breach of their terms has been had. As such, it has been advised that these documents are as detailed as possible. If such items are not written in the agreement, action cannot be taken against a proposed perpetrator.

In conclusion, when a site, new or old, offers a service or product, a terms and services agreement is created to protect the intellectual property of the owners. These terms are setup for the safety of the owners as well as for the information purpose to the users on how the sites content is usable. LinkedIn.com allows its users to publically use the provide access to contacts across the web for reasoning of getting in touch with professionals that otherwise would not have been an easy possibility. It protects its information services with its self created Terms of Service agreement that all who use its site and services are bound by its terms. As such, all should read this and know what they have agreed to before continuing their use of the site.

Reference.com. Terms of Use. 14 June 2008

<<http://www.reference.com/search?q=Terms%20of%20Use>>

LinkedIn.com User Agreement. 14 June 2008.

<http://www.linkedin.com/static?key=user_agreement&trk=fr_useragre>

AllBusiness.com. Terms of Use Agreements for Websites. 13 June 2008

<<http://www.allbusiness.com/technology/internet-web-site-agreements/624-1.html>>

Newegg.com. Policy Agreement. 14 June 2008 <<http://www.newegg.com/Info/PolicyAgreement.aspx>>

Wikipedia.com. Terms of Use. 14 June 2008 < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terms_of_use >