

# 'Anti-social network' aims to be Facebook killer app

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Facebook makes you despair? Social networking makes you want to end it all? You may be ready for online ritual suicide with the aid of a new website ([www.seppukoo.com](http://www.seppukoo.com)) that helps you kill your virtual identity.

Facebook makes you despair? Social networking makes you want to end it all? You may be ready for online ritual suicide with the aid of a new website that helps you kill your virtual identity.

"Impress your friends, disconnect yourself," is the slogan on [www.seppukoo.com](http://www.seppukoo.com), a site that aims to subvert [Facebook](#) by offering its millions of users a glorious end and a memorial page to match.

"Rather than fall into the hands of their enemies, ancient Japanese samurai preferred to die with honour, voluntarily plunging a sword into the abdomen and moving it left to right in a slicing motion," the site

notes.

This form of ritual suicide was known as "seppuku."

"As the seppuku restores the samurai's honour as a warrior, seppukoo.com deals with the liberation of the digital body," the site says.

Today the enemy is not other bands of noble warriors but corporate media who use viral marketing to make huge profits by connecting people across the globe.

"Seppukoo playfully attempts to subvert this mechanism by disconnecting people from each other and transforming the individual suicide experience into an exciting 'social' experience."

The site, which uses its own viral marketing strategy to lure in disgruntled social networkers, is part of a protest wave that sees Facebook as a potentially dangerous entity beholden to corporate interests. Related article: Facebook privacy

It offers ritual suicide for Facebook users in five easy steps.

Willing victims must first log in to seppukoo.com by typing in the same information they use to go on to their Facebook profile.

They then choose one of several memorial RIP page templates before writing their last words, which the site promises to send to all their Facebook friends when they have taken the final step.

Once the user has made that fatal final click, his or her Facebook profile is deactivated.

But in what might be seen as a bit of a cheat, virtual life goes on after the

ritual suicide.

It comes in the form of testimonials friends can write on the memorial page or by rising in the seppukoo ranks by scoring points with every former Facebook friend who follows your lead and commits hara-kari.

The top scorer in that game is currently a blonde woman who uses the name Simona Lodi and who passed into the post-Facebook world on November 5.

But seppukoo.com has some way to go before it attracts anything near the more than 300 million users Facebook currently boasts. On Wednesday it pulled in only half a dozen Facebookers ready to end it all.

Its owners -- whose website says are an "imaginary art-group from Italy" -- told AFP by email that over 15,000 people had done the deed and over 350,000 Facebook users had received an invite to follow suit.

Facebook did not immediately reply when contacted by AFP to ask if it saw seppukoo.com as a threat and if it planned any action to block it.

To reinforce the tongue-in-cheek approach of seppukoo.com, the group's art director -- who uses the name Guy McMusker -- replied when asked if he was a Facebook user: "Of course. We're not Luddites. We're incoherent."

The group is called "Linking The Invisible" and its website says it is made up of media artists Clemente Pestelli and Gionatan Quintini whose work explores "the invisible links between the infosphere, neural synapsis, and real life."

Seppukoo admits that it is in reality a [social networking](#) group but seeks to distinguish itself from Facebook by noting that it will store no data

and its server will not sell data to any third party.

"If you've trusted a merciless company (Facebook) until now, we hope you can also trust an imaginary artist group," it says. McMusker said the site was not set up with a view to making money.

The RIP memorial page it offers Facebook dissidents could easily be mistaken for a real memorial for a real deceased person. But McMusker rejected suggestions it was in bad taste and said that no-one was likely to be upset.

"Just take it easy," he wrote.

In the real world, suicide is obviously a one-way trip. But in the virtual world even a would-be subversive site like seppukoo.com cannot prevent your resurrection.

If you realise that leaving Facebook was a mistake, all you have to do is log back on again and your profile is instantly restored.

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