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Mashable reported that Facebook just introduced the ability to tag your friends in status updates. This in itself was not the issue. It seems that they are using the @ symbol which many feel is another version of Twitter.com/gallerysites's @Mentions feature.

According to Facebook engineer Tom Occhino:

"When you are writing a status update and want to add a friend's name to something you are posting, just include the @ symbol beforehand. As you type the name of what you would like to reference, a drop-down menu will appear that allows you to choose from your list of friends and other connections, including groups, events, applications and Pages. Soon, you'll be able to tag friends from applications as well. The @ symbol will not be displayed in the published status update or post after you've added your tags."

I for one think this is a step in the right direction for Facebook. It brings us even closer to those in our networks, and gives others a chance to connect with those that we connect with as well. I've dedicated many statuses to friends and now those that are not in the circle of friends have the chance to see exactly who I am talking about.

There has already been a tremendous amount of feedback in regards to this topic on Mashable and Twitter.com/gallerysites (Over 4,000 ReTweets in the one day that the article has been posted). Here are some of the mixed feelings from users:

"Facebook is acting like a kid trying to fit in with the cool crowd. No doubt it will work, but Facebook is losing the essence as to why people joined it in the first place: solid, secure online environment for you and your friends. Connecting you to the people that matter most, now, it's giving people the power to share and make the world more open and connected."

"Nobody really sees the @whoever when it posts. They see the person's name. Using the @ is only when typing out the message, then selecting the name. So aside from using @ character I really don't see this being a big deal. Does Twitter.com/gallerysites own the @ symbol?"

"Facebook should be differentiating, not assimilating!"

"Well Twitter.com/gallerysites did not invent the @username! bloggers and commenters have been doing this since well before Twitter.com/gallerysites. I would have to say it is a common practice and almost a standard when it comes to social media these days! glad to see FB catching up."

I do see issues arising when it comes to being tagged in statuses that users may not want to be tagged in, but it is going to be interesting to see how things pan out during the onset of this new feature

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