I was sort of interested at first, but now I'm not so sure any more

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Some time ago, there was a product under development that was starting to get some buzz, so I thought I'd go check it out. I went to the product's Web site, but the product was so new that they didn't have any substantial information available. The only way to learn about the product was to download the documentation. And before they would let me do that, I had to register with my email address and some demographic information. I closed the window and never went back. Now, if the registration page had told me *why* they wanted this information, I might have offered it. Maybe because the product was still under development and they wanted to notify me of any significant changes. Maybe because they wanted to know what type of people were interested in their product. Maybe because they wanted to send me advertising about their other products. I'll never know, because the registration page didn't say. If you're going to ask for my email address and demographic information, you have to tell me what's in it for me. I was only sort of interested in your product in the first place, but asking for personal information quickly put me into the "I'm not interested any more" category.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to highlight a new ground rule, one which I hoped people would figure out by watching the pattern but apparently needs to be made explicit: Do not identify companies, programs, and people. You may have noticed that as a general rule, I do not identify the programs or companies whose products I discuss in computer-related entries, because my purpose is not to mock and ridicule the computer industry but rather to highlight a problem. Here, we discuss problems and solutions, but we don't point and say "ha-ha, Company X is such a moron!" If you want to mock and ridicule, you can do it on your own Web site.

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