

## MANAGING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA FOOTPRINT

At a time when social media is prevalent, it is important to know how to create and maintain your online persona in a way that reflects you both as an individual as well as a professional.

According to a survey published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers in 2009, 70% of U.S. recruiters and HR professionals say they have rejected candidates based on information they found online from sites such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and personal blogs. [1]

- ✓ Do a Google search of your name—type in your full name and any nicknames you have.
- ✓ Take action to remove any information you believe is inappropriate or can be damaging.
- ✓ Set privacy settings on sites such as Facebook and Twitter.
- ✓ Regularly monitor your social media sites and remove any content that could be considered inappropriate. Check out the [infographic](#) featured at the Youtern.com link listed below for some ways to manage the pros and cons of being active online. [2]
- ✓ Be mindful of what pictures and content you post— The internet is **permanent**. Think about how your posts and pictures could be interpreted and the ramifications that can occur in the long run.

### **BENEFITS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA:**

- You can build a positive online presence that highlights your skills, experience and interests. You can also control information that is publicly available with certain online sites.
- An online profile that includes your CV or resume on a professional networking site such as LinkedIn can increase your range of contacts.
- Professional networking sites can give you access to potential employers. [3]

### **10 TIPS TO FOLLOW REGARDING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA FOOTPRINT:**

1. Don't overshare. You've probably heard that you should avoid talking about politics or religion in the workplace. The same holds true for social media sites. Any strong opinions or thoughts that lean one way over another could potentially rub somebody the wrong way and smear your online reputation.
2. Don't look guilty by association. Even if your profiles are set to private, you can't control what your friends say or post about you. Also, if your friends post about drinking and drugs, you could be linked to that behavior through association. Consider deleting any friends or acquaintance that may say or do inappropriate things online.
3. Stop sharing unsuitable content. Avoid posting inappropriate media to any photo or video sharing website such as YouTube. Even if your username is different on these sites, it is possible to trace it back to a specific email address. This rule of thumb goes for sharing content with your friends too because unfortunately you can't control what they do with your content.
4. Stay offline when under the influence. If you've just spent the night out partying with friends, it's best to stay away from social media all together. Sometimes referred to as "drunk Facebooking," posting inappropriate comments or pictures while intoxicated may damage your online persona. Also, avoid posting anything that proves you have broken your school's honor code policy (like a status or picture of you drinking in your dorm room if you are underage or located on a dry campus).
5. Stop complaining. Don't update your Facebook status only when you have something bad to say. Be sure to post positive statuses so that you don't appear to be angry and a complainer. Also, avoid speaking poorly about school, jobs (either current or previous), employers, classmates, coworkers, or professors.
6. Be consistent. Make sure your information listed on your profiles, such as jobs and education, are consistent to what you have listed on your resume or CV. You do not want to get caught lying.
7. Separate social networking from job networking. Avoid using sites that you use for social networking, such as Facebook and Twitter, for job networking. It is best to network with professionals on sites such as LinkedIn.
8. Consider a name change. It is a good idea to follow the trend of changing your Facebook name by using your middle name as your last name. This also helps to keep social networking separate from professional networking.
9. Build positive content. Experts agree that the best way to neutralize negative content is by generating positive information that will rank high on search engines like Google. Sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter all rank high in Google searches.
10. Use Google/Profiles. The search engine's latest tool allows users to create a personal profile to literally control what people see about them. Visit [www.google.com/profiles](http://www.google.com/profiles) for more information. [4]

*\*These tips listed above are to be used as a guide when creating your professional persona and when navigating the ever-growing and changing social media world.*

Information adapted from the following sites:

<https://www.princeton.edu/career/undergrads/interviewing/developing-contacts/where/using-social-media-for-ne/> [1]  
<http://www.youtern.com/thesavvyintern/index.php/2012/01/10/managing-your-e-reputation-facts-and-myths-infographic/> [2]  
<http://www.open.ac.uk/careers/digital-footprint.php> [3]  
<http://www.safetyweb.com/online-reputation-guide-for-college-students> [4]  
<http://comerecommended.com/2011/01/how-to-manage-your-brand-online/>  
<http://www.usatodayeducate.com/staging/index.php/blog/why-you-should-use-linkedin-before-graduation>  
<http://pinterest.com/princetoncareer/social-media-you/>