

BUILDING YOUR CAREER — SOCIAL NETWORKING

A common trend for today's employers is to seek out a candidate's personal information on search engines such as Google as well as their social networking profile on sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace and more. You should be aware that what you do online now, including how and what you share on various social networks, can impact your future career path. As you work to become job ready and to join the workforce, consider the following tips.

Your online character is different from your professional character, so why not use a different email address? Most email service providers allow you to create more than one email address, so you may want to create a professional email address to use only for job searching and a personal email address for social networking. Using a nickname as well as a personal email address can help prevent employers from finding your online personal profiles.

Google yourself! Make sure there are no surprises which may hinder your success in a job search. Personal blogs, photographs and references to inappropriate behavior will make an employer think twice about considering your job application.

Check your privacy settings. Make sure your privacy settings are set to "My friends only" and not public. This should include settings that control who can view posts, photos and comments other people may make on your profile.

Keep your profile picture in good taste. It and other photos on your profile may be viewable to others whether your profile is set to private or not. Keep in mind that even if you have set your photos to private and viewable only by friends, it is possible for photos in which you are tagged and that are uploaded via another person's profile may be viewable based on that person's privacy settings, not yours.

Monitor interactions and clean up your profile. Make sure your settings limit who can view posted comments or photos to only your friends and/or that your review and approval are required before such items can appear on your profile. Review your profile to make sure it is appropriate, deleting crass or tasteless comments, photos and videos.

Think before you tweet. Be careful what you tweet because you never know who might read it. Just do a Twitter search for "I hate my job" to see how easily what you post can be viewed. Keep in mind that potential employers, bosses, hiring managers, etc. use Twitter and other social networks too, and tweets can also show up in a Google search.