



SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUR CAREER

Adapted from this great resource: “Creating an Online Persona” by E. Chandlee Bryan, 2010
Online networking through social media has changed the scope of what and how candidates and employers are communicating. This handout covers how to build your online presence through LinkedIn, Blogging, and Twitter, offers general netiquette tips, and outlines how to manage your online reputation.

Building Your Online Presence: LinkedIn, Blogging, And Twitter

A strong online presence that showcases your command of social media may strengthen your candidacy. As with any form of communication, the best way to start is to watch how other people do it, and ask questions. As early as 2006, a survey conducted by ExecuNet revealed that 77% of recruiters conducted internet searches on candidates. For many candidates, the search was a “game changer”: 35% of recruiters reported rescinding offers based on what they found online.

Influence Your Online Presence:

- **Social networking sites:** e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Plaxo, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter.
- **Social bookmarking:** Share insights, initiate and participate in discussions, and “DIGG” important topics. Sites for social bookmarking include Delicious, DIGG, ShareThis, and StumbleUpon.
- **Blogs:** You can comment on other people’s postings, write your own as a “guest” or host your own through sites including Blogger, TypePad, or WordPress. Twitter is a popular micro-blogging site.
- **Electronic portfolio/personal website:** While there’s no guarantee employers will look at your personal website or portfolio, you can create a site to showcase your skills and provide samples of your work.

Developing an online presence is a process—not a transaction. As such, you may find it’s easiest to start with tools that are easy to use and highly visible. One such tool is LinkedIn, which has been called the “Facebook” of the business world.

Getting Started With Your LinkedIn Profile

Think of your LinkedIn profile as an interactive business card. It’s a summary of your professional experience, interests, and capabilities that is designed to attract the attention of important people who are searching for you online — recruiters, networking contacts, and grad school admissions officers. A strong profile is a key differentiator in the job market. So let’s get started [Learn how to build a professional student LinkedIn profile](#), [network professionally online](#), and [conduct essential employer research](#).



Things To Consider About Your LinkedIn Profile

- Be sure to fill out your profile accurately and completely.
- Not sure what to say? Start with an advance people search. See how other people present their skills, interest and experience and write your own using best practices from others.
- Once you have a strong profile, expand your connections, join groups, and browse questions and answers. You can even explore job listings.
- Continue learning more by following [LinkedIn on Twitter](#) or read the [LinkedIn official blog](#).

Getting Started With Blogging

Before you start your own blog, consider making insightful comments on other people's blogs. Some bloggers will say you need to write every day; if your goal is not to be a professional blogger, I would aim to go weekly or biweekly instead. Chris Brogan is a well-known social media strategist who has e-books on online presence and the web 2.0 job search available on his site. Here he provides [10 Blogging Tips](#) and additional advice [If You Intend to Blog Seriously](#) (Chris Brogan).

Penelope Trunk is the "Brazen Careerist" and writes about the intersection between work and life. She has a team of millennial bloggers who blog with her. Here are her [Easiest Instructions for How to Start a Blog](#) (Penelope Trunk).

Getting Started With Twitter

Twitter is a searchable public forum; don't share any information you wouldn't want your friends or perspective employers to see. As with Facebook, employers actively monitor "how they're talked about" and how current and potential employees represent themselves online. You can create a pseudonym but most people use their own names and include a short bio.

The trick on Twitter is to offer a unique perspective but not to bore your followers with incessant "tweets" (posts) about the same exact topic all the time. The best way to [get started on Twitter](#) is to create an account, add your bio and start posting short messages of your own. Once you have at least five messages, you can "find" and "follow" other. Most users are alerted when they have new followers, and will then evaluate your content to decide if they should be "following you" back.

General Netiquette Tips

Don't Flame Out. If you disagree with someone, always do so respectfully. "Flames" and profanity can help you strike out in the job search.

"Do as the Romans do." If you are trying your hand at a new technology application or platform, watch how seasoned users of the technology use it before actively using it yourself.

Consider everything you write as a mini-writing sample. Present yourself well, employers may be reading! Good spelling and grammar can assist with a hiring decision. Show you have what it takes.



Sound bites are in; strive to be brief, concise, and specific. Conventional wisdom maintains that employers spend 30 seconds or less on a resume. With social media, expect a quicker pass.

Online Reputation Management

Even when you're among friends on Facebook with privacy settings locked, the information you post and share online has all the confidentiality of a postcard. Assume anything you post, or are tagged in, is visible to the world-at-large, and may be viewed in the job search process.

Don't assume you are safe. Here are five strategies you can use to manage your online reputation:

Know what's out there. Establish a baseline knowledge of what information is available about you online—as well as others who share your name. A great way to get started is to use the [Reach Branding Online ID Calculator](#)

Monitor Your Digital Dirt. Set up an "Ego Search": Establish a [Google News Alert](#) on your name so that you receive results of any mention of you that hits the Internet. Untag yourself in non-flattering Facebook photos and be mindful of status updates. You can even begin with Googling yourself and making sure that the first few hits are A-ok! Hint: even try googling your name and state "John Smith Vermont" to see more exact postings.

Research how other people you know with similar interests present themselves online. Aim to have content on the web be "professional" not "confessional."

Have a conversation with your employer about their comfort level with your online presence, find out company policies about using social media, and be conscientious. Maintain privacy and don't go on the record with information they would not want shared.

Be aware that personal information can "float." Try to keep any mention of your professional interests relatively consistent. It's okay to go on the record saying, "I'm exploring possibilities in which I could combine my knowledge," and it's less okay to say, "I'll do anything as long as I can live in Burlington."

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