

Social media and your future

“Let it work for you rather than against you”

One are the days where your potential employer's first impression of you happens during a formal interview. These days, hiring managers conduct identity research of potential candidates via their social media profile. That's the new first impression. Is your social media presence ready? What measures have you taken to protect your online privacy? What does this change entail for your future job hunt?

Known as social hiring or social media recruitment, surveys have shown that up to 80 percent of employers these days use social media in their recruitment process. It could mean hiring via LinkedIn, posting job opportunities in a tweet or a Facebook update, and using social media to conduct research of potential candidates.

Almost every undergrad has a Facebook profile, which leads to a social media or online presence. That means, your personal life is constantly up for scrutiny. So instead of leaving your personal presence to chance, it's time to take control of your online branding.

While increasing your profile privacy is a great start to a professional future, many forget that constant changes in Facebook's features mean these settings can often be reset without one noticing. Furthermore, your potential employer might have access to your information via a mutual friend. Therefore, always watch what you upload onto social media sites such as Twitter, Blogs, Instagram and Pinterest. Big brother is watching you.

Have you ever walked past an unattended library computer that has been logged onto a social networking site? Could you imagine a prankster changing your account information while you were away? Always remember to log out of emails and other social media sites while using public

computers and lock your personal devices with a password.

On the upside, social media is a great way to build a professional presence. As many companies have corporate social media accounts, why not be proactive in following and interacting with your dream companies? By the time you are ready to work for them, they will be familiar with your name, which that might give you a head start.

Curating and writing original content is also a great way of showing your potential employer both knowledge and passion within your chosen field. Want a job in web design? Create your own webpage. Love to be a travel journalist? Start a travel blog.

Finding a dream job has never been who you are but who you know, so it's time to make the right connection on social media, today. For example, LinkedIn is a great way to connect professionally with recruiters and twitter allows you to search for existing conversations via #hashtags. You never know if your next online banter might be with your future boss.

If you see yourself as a social media guru, why not go further and start a job campaign? Alex Warren, a public relations student from the United Kingdom started an "Adopt a Student campaign" with a budget of £6 and ended up with invitations from over 25 organisations. Closer to home, we had Tom Crowie with his "Tom Wants a Job" campaign, where he accepted a job as Crikey's junior reporter on his 38th day of blogging.

While it can be petrifying to know your future manager will be googling your name before your first interview, social media can connect you to a wide network of recruiters, showcase your talents that may work wonders for your new career. So are you going to let the new age of social media work for or against you? 

Jeszlene Zhou



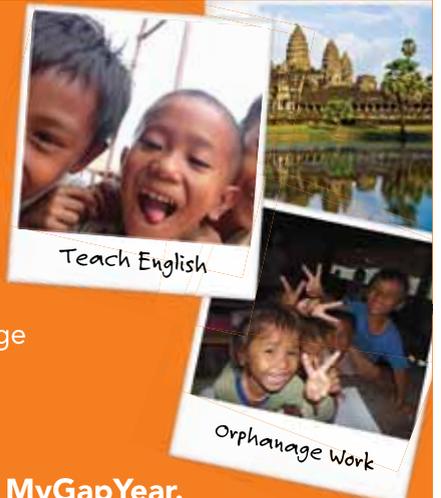
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