Managing Your Social Media Presence

If you would like more information or have questions about this document, feel free to speak with a Career Advancement counselor. You can make an appointment by calling 773-702-7040.

Social media tools are not necessarily "good" or "bad." Like any tool, they can be beneficial or detrimental depending on how you use them. As social media tools become more prevalent and are adapted for professional purposes, it behooves you to become familiar with both their advantages and possible pitfalls.

Social media is being utilized in nearly every facet of professional and personal interactions. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, You Tube, and news feeds have made it easy for people to connect online. The upside of this is that it's easy to build and expand your network, which can help you in your job search.

Your Social Media Activity Can Impact Your Job Prospects

The problem, however, is that a lot of what is posted online can be easily found by colleagues, supervisors and prospective employers. You may have posted a photo or a status update – something you only ever meant to be viewed by personal friends – and people you've never met can view those postings and judge you for them.

According to Careerbuilder.com, 34% of employers have rejected prospective candidates based on something they found on Facebook. To avoid missing out on an employment opportunity, here are a few social media dos and don'ts to keep in mind.

Do Use Social Media to Your Advantage

If you haven't already, consider setting up a LinkedIn profile. See a Career Advancement counselor and check the website to learn more about setting up a profile. As a professionally-focused site, LinkedIn can help you build and expand your network, advertise yourself to potential employers, and stay informed on the latest issues and trends in your industry by joining professional groups.

A lot of companies and organizations now have a Twitter account. Consider "following" them so you can learn more about them and even get a heads up when jobs are posted.

If you're a MA or PhD student, follow the Career Advancement Graduate Services Team on Twitter (www.twitter.com/UChiCareer AdvancementGrads) to get information on career-related programs, events, articles, and job leads specifically for individuals with advanced degrees.

Do Clean Up Your On-Line Presence

Many employers conduct a basic internet search on their job candidates to learn more about them. Make sure that what they find is positive and reflects well on you. Google yourself to see what pops up in your search. If there are distasteful images or comments that you've posted or friends have attributed to you - take them down and ask your friends to remove any pictures or comments that you wouldn't want a prospective employer to see.

If you have dabbled with many different forms of social networking sites but are no longer active, make sure to go back to all those sites to remove all the contents and disable your account. You might have created a Myspace or Friendster page many years ago that isn't complete nor an accurate portrayal of who you are today.

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Update any professional networking sites like LinkedIn to make sure your contact and current employment information is up to date and accurate. The last thing you want is to list an e-mail that is no longer functioning or for an employer to see a 3 year unexplained gap in employment. Also, get rid of friends or random people you might have added on your LinkedIn network who aren't really there to help you with your career development. LinkedIn isn't for personal socializing, so if you're linked with people who make personal comments, ask them to stop or just delete them and add them on your Facebook account.

Don't Overexpose Yourself

Limit the number of social media sites on which you're active. If you're on over a dozen different types of social media, your employer might think you're a social media junkie: When will you ever get your work done? Are you easily distracted? Do you lack discretion? Don't let someone form the wrong opinion of you before they've even had a chance to meet you.

Having too much of an online presence could also mean you're not cultivating your interpersonal skills, which are highly valued in the workplace. No matter where you work, you need to be able to interact with people offline as well as with people who aren't as familiar with social media as you are. Employers want to hire people they can trust to converse with clients, coworkers and senior-level staff or board members.

Do Guard Your Privacy

Be selective about the people you invite and accept on your networks. Keep your personal and professional networks separate. It's great to be friendly with people at work, but don't be Facebook friends with them. The last thing you want to happen is for a co-worker or supervisor to read a negative comment that you write on your "wall" after a bad day on the job.

Be vigilant about maintaining your privacy online. Make sure you secure your privacy settings on Facebook and other social media sites so that only trusted friends can see your pictures, your wall and updates.

Do Be Discrete

If you maintain an online blog, remember that strangers can access your page just by conducting an internet search. Whether your blog is hosted by Blogger, Wordpress, LiveJournal, or Blogspot among many others, make sure you don't leak any confidential materials, information or stories from your workplace. Even if you think you've done a careful job of maintaining anonymity and concealing the identity of other people, the cost is too high to take the risk.

With the advent of Twitter and enhancements to other social media outlets, it's easy for people to cite or re-post something they find online with their own comments/spin attached to the post. You can't control what other people say about your own posts, so be careful about what you put online.

Do Mind Your "Netiquette"

Just like you would in personal interactions, remember to mind your manners online. Don't use informal greetings like "Hey!" or "Hi there" when contacting someone you know in a professional context.

Be careful about contacting people online when you're not personal friends with them. If there's someone you'd like to be introduced to, don't "friend" or "poke" them on Facebook. They are probably trying to keep their personal and professional contacts separate and may view friend requests as unprofessional.

Instead, see if someone you know personally can provide an introduction, either in person or online. If this isn't possible, send the person a brief, professionally-worded message on LinkedIn or other professional-focused site conveying why you are making contact. If the person doesn't respond within two weeks, send a gentle and brief follow up message. If you still receive no response, let it go (and don't take it personally). Some people simply prefer not to connect with people online; they'd rather their initial connections take place in person. Other people simply don't have time to respond to all the online messages they receive.

Career Advancement Services and Resources

See a Career Advancement Counselor

All students are encouraged to see a Career Advancement counselor at some point in their university career. Counselors are able to offer assistance with job application materials, including resumes and cover letters. Staff is also able to help discuss broader plans like graduate or professional school. Students are encouraged to make an appointment and can either call 773-702-7040 or do so online.

Walk-In Appointments
Throughout the year, Career Advancement counselors make themselves available for short, walk-in appointments. The hours vary from quarter to quarter but the website is always up-to-date with current hours. Students looking for brief assistance are encouraged to use these appointments as a way to quickly move forward in their search.

Career Advancement Programs and Resources

Career Advancement offers programs throughout the year designed to educate students about career options in a variety of fields, as well as build crucial job search skills (informational interviewing, networking, etc.). View the Career Advancement event calendar online to learn more. Be sure to browse our Career Resource Library as well as our website for additional resources.

Chicago Career Connection (CCC)

Accessible via the Career Advancement website, this online tool – specifically for University of Chicago students and alumni – lists full- and part-time jobs and internships, in Chicago, nationally, and even internationally. Jobs and internships listed are in business, government and nonprofits.

UChicago Careers In...

These series of University of Chicago programs helps undergraduate students learn about and prepare for careers in the arts, business, communications, education, health professions, journalism, law, non-profit/public service, science and technology, and social work. Some programs are selective and others are open to all students. To learn more about this great University of Chicago offering, visit the UChicago Careers In... section of the Career Advancement website.

Email Listhosts

Join the Consulting Career Advancement email list to get regular updates on career-related programs and job postings. You might also join the general business management listhost. Sign up via Chicago Career Connection (accessible via the Career Advancement website) and edit your profile to start receiving these emails.

Employer Information Sessions

Employers looking to hire students in consulting come to campus each year to host information sessions. This is a great way to learn about particular companies and network. View the Career Advancement event calendar online to learn more and see the schedule.

Researching Organizations

Know who the dominant players within the sector are as well as all the companies that are going to participate in on-campus recruiting. You can obtain first-hand accounts of the company's culture and philosophy by talking to University of Chicago alumni who are working at the firm (see networking and informational interviewing above). A good understanding of the work environment will go a long way in answering "fit" questions during the interview process and will help you differentiate the firms to enable you to pick those that best fit your personality.

Networking and Informational Interviewing

Whether you just want to learn more about a career in consulting or you're ready to apply for jobs, conducting informational interviews and networking with individuals already working in that field is a crucial part of the process. Career Advancement counselors can show you how to use the online alumni directory to identify University of Chicago alumni in this field; how to set up and prepare for an informational interview; and how to network effectively. Make an appointment by calling 773-702-7040.

Practice Your Interviewing

Practice Interviewers: Career Advancement has practice interviewers on staff to conduct mock behavioral and case interviews. To schedule a practice interview call 773-702-7040.

Career Advancement Super Interview Walk-In Days:
Career Advancement holds "Super Interview Walk-In Days" for undergraduate and graduate students at the beginning of fall and winter quarters. Students interested in participating in a short, walk-in appointment style interview should attend. These days will be listed on the Career Advancement calendar online.

On-Campus Recruiting (OCR)

Every year employers come to campus to recruit University of Chicago students. In order to participate in OCR, you must be activated in Chicago Career Connection, which will allow you to view OCR-specific job postings. To become activated in CCC and to learn more about OCR, speak with a Career Advancement counselor.

Selected Online Resources

Here are a few on-line articles and sites that might help you identify some other social media do's and don'ts:

- *CareerRealism*: http://www.careerealism.com/rules-of-intimacy-for-social-media/
- *Mashable*: http://mashable.com/2010/07/06/clean-social-media-identity/
- *Emily Post on Social Media Etiquette*: http://www.emilypost.com/blogs
- *"Are You Practicing Proper Social Networking Etiquette?"* (Forbes.com article): http://www.forbes.com/2009/10/09/social-networking-etiquette-entrepreneurs-management-wharton.html
- *"The Art of Making Online Friends"* (Wall Street Journal article): http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123128017588258741.html