

Internet Professionalism

The use of the internet to maintain and submit information carries a great deal of responsibility for preservice and practicing teachers. Through postings on blogs, MySpace.com, Facebook.com, and other similar websites educators must consider how the information will be viewed and interpreted by prospective employers, students, parents, administrators and colleagues. If you choose to post information on the web, you run the risk that the information will be viewed by the public. Consider the following before making the decision to submit information to the web.

- Prospective employers as well as parents may Google for candidate's names. First impressions and judging of one's character may be based on their finding.
- Students look to their teachers as role models, expecting them to make proper choices and demonstrate appropriate behaviors.

Please read and consider the points made in the following article taken from <http://www.collegegrad.com/press/myspace.shtml> and use this as a guide to your professional conduct using the internet.

MySpace Is Public Space When It Comes To Job Search

Entry Level Job Seekers - It's Time To Reconsider the Web

MILWAUKEE, WI--July 26, 2006--In a recent survey, CollegeGrad.com, the #1 Entry Level Job site, found that 47% of college grad job seekers who use social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook have either already changed or plan to change the content of their pages as a result of their job search.

"There is a growing trend in the number of employers who are Googling candidates to research for additional information," said Brian Krueger, President of CollegeGrad.com. "This trend has now spilled over to the use of Internet social networking sites, such as MySpace and Facebook, for screening potential candidates."

MySpace has become the most popular social networking site in the world, with more than 95 million members. It accounts for 80% of all visits to online social networking sites, according to Wikipedia. Facebook has the largest number of registered users among college-focused networking sites, also according to Wikipedia.

Are social networking sites private or public? It depends on who you ask.

"It violates the privacy of the applicants," said Shantice Bates, a Mass Communication Major from Virginia Commonwealth University. "A person's MySpace or Facebook pages really have nothing to do with their work personality."

Yet the information is still in the public domain. Is it truly private? "The thought of an employer reviewing your information can be a very scary thought to a candidate, especially in the case of a college student or recent grad," commented Krueger. "But as long as the information is posted publicly, it is available to others and could potentially be a liability to you in your job search. It could keep you from getting the job. Or, worse yet, from even getting the interview in the first place—and usually you wouldn't even know why."

So what about the employee who was asked to change the content of her MySpace page as a condition of her continued employment? Sound a little invasive?

Steven Jungman, Division Director of ChaseSource, LP explained that a client of theirs conducted an Internet search for a current project, using the code name of the project as the keyword. Surprisingly, a project team member's MySpace page was found in the search results. Not only had she listed her role in the project as her current work experience, but also included on the site were some very revealing photographs of her in addition to other very personal information. She was required to remove mention of the employer and the project as a condition of her continued employment.

"My professional recommendation is that individuals realize that the World Wide Web is exactly that, and personal information is a key click away," said Jungman. "Common sense should prevail when someone posts something on the web that they would not put on a resume."

Krueger recommends, "Entry level job seekers who use MySpace and Facebook should update their pages to reflect their job search image. If you don't want information seen by employers, don't publish it publicly."

Those who have followed the prevailing advice and cleaned up their personal Web pages have been rewarded, sometimes using the Internet to their networking advantage. Consider Catherine Germann, a 2005 Information Technology graduate from Rochester Institute of Technology. While she was in the midst of her job search, she was contacted out of the blue by a recruiter. He had seen Germann's resume on a job board and promptly Googled her name, finding her personal website, her live journal and noticed that they had a mutual friend. Germann had already cleaned up her personal pages and adjusted the privacy settings to project a more professional image. Her site helped her in a positive way to build a potential job connection.

"I always advise my friends to clean up their pages, even if they aren't using their name," said Germann. "There are plenty of ways to figure out who someone is even if they are hiding behind a nondescript screen name."

Krueger advises college grad job seekers to beware of the image they project. "College grad job seekers should avoid anything that might cause a recruiter to say 'Yikes!' when they found you on the Web," said Krueger. "Like it or not, MySpace and Facebook are public sites. Instead of posting information and photos from that all night party, job seekers can stand out from the crowd by using these sites as an opportunity to generate a positive first impression. If you wouldn't put it in your resume, don't put it on the Web."

Following are the overall survey results:

Have you changed your content at MySpace or Facebook because of your job search?

- No - 39.9%
- Yes - 25.9%
- No, but I plan to - 9.4%
- I don't use either MySpace or Facebook - 24.8%

The survey was conducted nationally using an online poll placed on the CollegeGrad.com home page during June 2006. The results are based on more than 1600 respondents.