



BEST FACE FORWARD: TIPS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET SUCCESSFULLY

Millennials hear a lot about how not to represent themselves online, but it's also import to actively take positive steps to strengthen your presence in the digital world. Aside from your resume, your public social media presence – your “online self” – is often your first opportunity to make an impression with an employer. Most employers now use social media in some capacity to recruit and /or evaluate candidates for jobs. The good news is that it's entirely possible to be a social butterfly without deleting all your accounts and cocooning yourself away from your friends. The following guidelines help explain how.

General Guidelines

Increasingly, the online world is the real world. The same strategies you're already using to navigate your career search also apply online. Here are a few examples of this overlap:

Look in the mirror: Google yourself! If you don't like what you see, your potential employers won't either. Try to remove or modify unflattering content, but, just as importantly, aim to create new content that will paint you in a better light.

Be active: Nobody is looking to hire the Invisible Man. Use the opportunities you have to put yourself out there.

Speak credibly and maturely: If you wouldn't be comfortable discussing it in the breakroom at work, do you really want it on your social media profile? Get in the habit of carrying yourself like a professional all the time. Eventually, you won't have to consciously modify your behaviour.

Network: Learn as much as you can, and try to meet people who can help you. Follow the social media accounts of impressive and influential people in your field, join groups, and engage in discussions when you have something to say.

Here are a few platform-specific strategies:

Email

- We recommend you use your University of Windsor student or alumni account when emailing professional contacts. If you prefer not to, ensure that your address includes some variation of your full name and a recognizable, professional-sounding domain. Whom would you rather hire: jane.smith@gmail.com or janie_gurrrl@aol.com? Note that Gmail is fine, but emails from domains like Hotmail and Yahoo! often end up in spam folders.

Consult our Jobseeker's Guide to Composing Professional Emails for further information on this topic.

LinkedIn

- Do you have a LinkedIn account yet? This social network for professionals has become so important to the career-building process that we've created a dedicated LinkedIn guide. Please read our 13 Ways to Use LinkedIn to Your Advantage to get started.

Facebook

- Like companies and organizations in your field. Many companies relay important information, publicize events, and even post job openings on Facebook. Participate in discussion threads by commenting on posts when appropriate. Here, and everywhere on Facebook, speak in full, mechanically correct sentences and carry yourself professionally.
- Familiarize yourself with Facebook's privacy settings by clicking on the “lock” icon in the upper right of your screen. Facebook does a good job of explaining the options available to you in plain English, but keep in mind that they change frequently. It's a good idea to monitor your settings every so often to ensure that you're still doing what you need to protect yourself.
- **Remember:** If a photo of you in an unflattering state or situation appears of Facebook, even if you have a private profile and are not tagged in the photo, that information is out there. It's not likely, but it could end up in front of the wrong pair of eyes. As you approach life after university, it's entirely fair to request that a friend removes a photo for professional reasons. Also, even if your account is only open to your friends, potentially hundreds of people will see every photo or link you like or on which you comment.



Twitter

- Maintaining an active Twitter profile with periodic tweets about the latest news in your field reflects positively on you. Follow people in your field, or in the field in which you want to work. Twitter is an excellent way to learn what your professional role models are reading and discussing.
- Keep a close eye on companies that interest you. Monitoring their Twitter feeds is an excellent way to learn more about them than what you can glean from a corporate website. If you manage to eventually score an interview, you'll be able to demonstrate your genuine interest. Even better, some companies tweet job postings.
- There are benefits to leaving your account public. Consider using your real name, or a variant of it, as your handle. This will make you easier to identify by potential employers.
- Remember, members of the public can see the list of accounts you follow, even if you don't retweet or favourite their posts. If you have interests potential employers may not empathize with, consider a second (private) recreational account.

Blogging

- A well-run blog suggests engagement and initiative and demonstrates your communication skills and ability to organize information. Popular services include Wordpress, Blogger, and Tumblr. For a more full-featured web presence, Squarespace (squarespace.com) is one affordable, easy-to-use paid service.
- Consider purchasing a domain name. For between \$10 and \$20 a year, you can hold the rights to and take advantage of yourname.com. A personal domain is an excellent way to establish a "landing" for yourself online and direct traffic to your various online accounts.
- Use your blog to develop and demonstrate a unique, authoritative voice. Discuss your area(s) of interest, and take the opportunity to foreground your industry expertise. Network across the "blogosphere" by joining groups and linking to and commenting on other blogs you enjoy. Note that if you can't post at least weekly – and ideally more often – you might not be in a position to take advantage of blogging.

Instagram

- As a visual-based network, Instagram is not (yet?) used very often as a recruiting tool. That said, many corporations do have accounts. If you aim to work in a traditionally conservative field, consider setting your account to private. This should go without saying, but avoid posting any risqué or illegal activity, regardless.

Snapchat and Periscope

- Our best advice when it comes to these emerging platforms is simple: it's never safe to assume that anything is temporary on the internet.

Further reading:

- Facebook Privacy Basics (Facebook)
- How to Separate the Personal and Professional on Social Media (Harvard Business Review)

Co-op, Career and Employment Services: www.uwindsor.ca/cces | mySuccess: success.uwindsor.ca



@CCES_UWindsor



facebook.com/CCESUWindsor

CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES OFFERS A VARIETY OF RESOURCES TO HELP YOU LAUNCH YOUR CAREER:

Job searching • Career planning • Work experience • Career preparation workshops • Personal appointments • Resume critiques
Mock interviews • Interest testing and assessments • Job fair and networking opportunities • Volunteer Internship Program (VIP)



**University
of Windsor**
www.uwindsor.ca