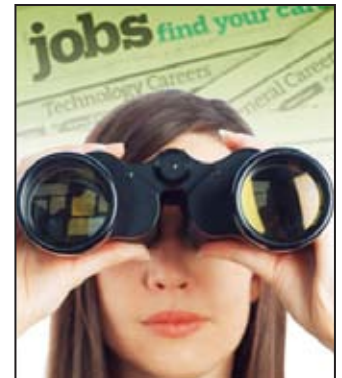


JOB SEARCH

Checklist: Sweep Your Web Trail

Follow these steps to review your online profile and make sure it is spotless before it is seen by recruiters and potential employers.



Social Networks

If you use any of the major social networks, start your Web cleanup there.

LinkedIn

- Updated: Check for accurate and updated information
- Keywords: Insert keywords that will be important to the new job you seek. Make sure they are presented prominently and frequently to attract recruiters searching the Web.
- "Contact Me": Check the "Contact Me" option. Many recruiters search LinkedIn only for candidates willing to be contacted.

Facebook

- Updated: Check for accurate and updated information. Complete your work history.
- Keywords: Insert keywords that will be important to the new job you seek.
- Search: Go to the "Privacy Settings" section. If you want to be found by recruiters on Facebook and are comfortable with what they will find, set search visibility to "Everyone on Facebook." If you want to reserve Facebook for your personal life, limit it accordingly.

- Public Search: Also in the privacy settings, check "Public Search Listing" which will create a public search listing for anyone searching on a search engine outside of Facebook.
- Friend Lists: Set separate networks for private and professional contacts. Add new contacts to the appropriate network.
- Photos: On the Privacy Settings page, change the "Photos Tagged of You" setting to "Only Me" and "None of my Networks" so that you can untag yourself in any embarrassing photos or ask friends to delete them.
- Facebook Applications: Check to see which applications are visible on your profile page and which publicize information about you. Alter settings to limit who sees what information.
- Wall Posts: Alter privacy settings to limit who can write on your Facebook Wall and who can read posts to your Wall.

Job Boards

- Updated: Check **TheLadders** and any job boards that feature your resume to ensure information is current. Outdated information can be harmful. Either update old profiles or delete them.
- Keywords: Insert keywords that will be important to the new job you seek
- Contacts: Make sure you have search and "contact me" features enabled. Many sites, including TheLadders, offer features to remain confidential. Ensure they are set to display and search only the information you want public.

Online Profiles

1. **Profile Check:** There are other social network sites, such as **MySpace**, on which you may have a profile. Check to make sure they're accurate and updated or deleted.
2. **Rapleaf:** If you can't remember which sites you've joined, Rapleaf can associate your various email accounts and reveal all the sites you have profiles on to check the content. Make sure none are embarrassing or outdated.

Google

1. **Google Search:** Search your own name on Google. This is something a potential employer will do, and it's a good idea to check to see what they will see.
 - a. Don't settle for the first 10 results. Check multiple pages of search results.
 - b. Search on terms associated with your name (i.e. Your name + past employers, partners).
 - c. Check the referring pages themselves for inaccurate or embarrassing information.
2. **Google Alerts:** Establish Google Alerts for your name and any of the terms you would check in Step 1. As Google finds new information with those terms posted on the Web, you will receive an e-mail or RSS feed.

Search Engines

- PeekYou** and **Yasni:** These targeted search engines will scour Web sites for your name. Of course, the relevancy of the results will vary depending on how common your name is!

Photos and Video

1. **Flickr:** Yahoo's photo-storage and social-network Web site is open and searchable. Search friends' pictures and "tags" of your name to find pictures of yourself. You must contact the owner of the photo to remove a tag or delete a photo.
2. **YouTube:** Google's video-storage and social-network Web site is similarly open and will appear in search-engine results. Search friends' pictures videos and "tags" of your name to find footage of yourself. As with Flickr, you must contact the owner of the photo to remove a tag or delete a photo.
3. **Facebook:** Facebook is fast becoming one of the largest storage and sharing sites for photos and videos, but it allows more control than Flickr and YouTube. Follow the steps above in the above Facebook section to fix any problematic issues.
4. **Additional photo and video sites:** There are many other sites to store and search photos and video, such as **Kodak Gallery**, **Snapfish**, **MySpace**, **Hulu**, **Photobucket** and **Yahoo!Video**. Review Google search results; for a deeper clean, ask your friends which sites they use and ensure they're presentable.

Blogs

1. **Industry Blogs:** Check blogs associated with your industry for references to you.
2. **Google Blog Search:** Google Blog Search will search sites it identifies as blogs.
3. **Backtype:** Similar to Google Blog Search, but it will search for your name in comments left on blog sites, which are not always indexed by Google.
4. **Clean up:** You can ask a blogger to remove unfavorable information or images, but in case they are un-cooperative, be prepared to defend yourself.

Twitter

This fast-growing, fast-moving social-network technology can spread word about you quickly, for better or worse. Stay ahead of the curve.

- Twitter Search:** Search your own name to see what people are saying about you on Twitter. Even if you are a frequent Twitter user, your name may appear in conversations you missed.

Clean up

In case you've found unfavorable information on the Web about yourself, your company or anything associated with you, do your best to clean it up.

- Fix it:** If you have the ability to edit the Web site, do so. Sites like Wikipedia will allow you to do edit Web pages, but keep in mind most changes are tracked and can be changed back.
- Ask:** Contact that former employer to correct the "About Us" page that still lists you as "Managing Director" or that friend who's posted embarrassing photos of you.
- Defend:** If you can't edit or delete the information, be prepared to defend it in an interview. This is especially true of negative stories in the press, which can be corrected if proven inaccurate but will rarely be removed.



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Career Advice from TheLadders

- Can You Facebook Your Way to a New Job? (PDF)
- Around the Web: Job-Hunting Tools
- Can You Facebook Your Way to a New Job?
- Social Netiquette: Mind Your Manners

What did you think of this package?

Got a story of your own to tell? Have ideas for future coverage? Please write Editor-in-Chief Matthew Rothenberg at matthewr@theladders.com.