

Creating a Positive Online Presence

Extracted and adapted from Georgia Tech's Mentor Jackets website (<http://www.gtmentorjackets.com/>)

Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest (and every other online community) can be excellent tools for networking, finding resources, and promoting personal or professional interests - but only if used intelligently and intentionally. Everyone has heard about the need to be careful with their online activity and personal content, but successful online networking requires more than just keeping tacky pictures off your wall. Use this document to avoid the common social networking mistakes and then leverage your positive online presence as a personal branding tool. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to review this together and take action accordingly.

Clean It Up, Employers Are Looking!

- [A survey conducted by CareerBuilder.com](#) revealed that many companies are using social media to make decisions for hiring and firing employees.
- If you're not sure what steps to take to clean up your online presence, use this [Checklist from TheLadders.net](#) to help you get started. Make sure to check all websites where you have ever had a profile.
- See this "infographic" from [mindflash.com](#) for a quick reference on [How Companies Are Using Social Media to Hire/Fire Employees](#).

Leverage Social Media for Personal and Professional Branding

Once all of your social networking profiles are squeaky clean, move beyond un-tagging and build yourself an online brand. Using LinkedIn effectively requires regular attention and consistent activity. See below for tips and steps to achieving an active and positive online presence. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to work through these steps together.

- **Perfect Your Profile On LinkedIn:** Take time to create a complete and robust profile. Include all of the major components of your resume, taking time to highlight the skills that set you apart from other individuals. If you're still in school, discuss your awards, research, and major personal and academic accomplishments where appropriate. Simply including your contact information and professional field of interest is not enough to help you stand out among the 100 million people on LinkedIn.
- **Publish Your Work:** If you have created presentations, written blog articles, or posted work online make certain to post that information on your profile. LinkedIn has several features that will allow you to exhibit your areas of expertise, and allow your connections to get to know you.
- **Join A Group:** Search for LinkedIn groups you identify with. These can be directly related to your profession, companies you've worked for, schools you've attended, and areas of interest. Keep in mind you can request to join many groups just in order to learn more about those fields, or to connect with people related to the groups' main purpose.



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- **Join The Conversation:** Once you've joined a few groups, try to be active in them. Make thoughtful and intentional responses to questions and conversation threads. Ask your fellow group members thoughtful and intelligent questions, and publicly thank them for their responses.
- **Accentuate the Positive:** Whenever possible, keep your language and commentary positive. Avoid harsh criticism of companies, people, and organizations. Your comments and discussions should be viewed as reasonable, logical, professional, polite, and open minded.
- **Recommendations are Reciprocal:** Seek out professors, supervisors, and other colleagues who will recommend the work you've done with them. A good recommendation will speak volumes to potential employers and researchers. Additionally, offer to recommend the good work that your co-workers and class mates have completed with you in the past.
- **Keep Your Connections Up to Date:** Each connection you have can lead to additional connections through mutual friends and opportunities to meet others. Follow up with the people you meet in person by sending them a personalized message on LinkedIn and asking to connect.