

2010 NALP ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE
E-NETWORKING PART 2: PUTTING YOUR BEST E-FOOTPRINT FORWARD



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How to Protect & Maintain Your Online Reputation

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- **Check Your Online Reputation Regularly**
 - Search your name on various search engines *e.g.* Google.com, Yahoo.com, Bing.com, pipl.com, 123people.com, technorati.com.
 - Search all variations of your name, including maiden name and typing your full name in “quotes” to ensure accurate hits.
 - Determine source of unwanted content and delete.
 - If there is false information about you on the Internet, alert a potential employer prior to their processing of your background check/e-diligence.
- **Determine the Purpose of Your Social Media Tool(s)**
 - Is this tool for personal or professional use?
 - If it is for personal use, consider your privacy settings and how a potential employer might gain access to and use this information.
 - If it is for professional use, consider why you are using it (*e.g.* marketing, branding, networking, information gathering, etc.) and make the necessary adjustments to make it more effective for that purpose.
- **Establish a Positive Professional Online Identity**
 - A few top search results of positive information can dilute or drown out evidence of “youthful indiscretion.”¹
 - Use a LinkedIn profile, blog or similar tool to present yourself as a professional and highlight your strengths, achievements and interests that relate to your field or career of interest.
 - LinkedIn has a high SEO (search engine optimization) which places your LinkedIn profile close to the top, if not at the top, of a Google search, allowing you to control the information seen.
 - Join online groups and add valuable content to their discussions to raise your profile.
 - Post evidence of your connections with other professionals.
- **Choose Your “Friends” Wisely**
 - Are you blurring the line of professionalism by sharing access to your personal social media tools? Would you want an employer or supervisor to see your status updates?
 - Consider the professional and legal implications of “friending” co-workers, supervisors, direct reports, students, etc.
 - “Unfriend” people you do not know. You can also “Disconnect” with people on LinkedIn.

¹ Managing Your Online Identity, The University of Iowa College of Law, August 2009

How to Protect & Maintain Your Online Reputation (continued)

- **Lock Down Privacy Settings**
 - Make personal sites private and professional sites public.
 - Restrict abilities of other's to post information on your social media site(s).
 - Establish notification alerts whenever information is posted by others to your account.
 - You can do this via Google Alerts – google.com/alerts; Yahoo Alerts – alerts.yahoo.com or via RSS feed subscriptions to search results.
 - Delete inappropriate content others post.
- **Think Before You Post**
 - Does the image you believe you are projecting match others' perceptions?²
 - Is this personal or professional information?
 - Are you using your work computer? Know your organization's Internet policy and how it affects you.
 - Consider your audience (and unintended audience).
 - Consider confidentiality, material conflicts of interest, ethics, liability, defamation and copyright infringement issues.
 - Who will see this information? Would your 80 year old grandmother be offended?
 - Would you want your boss to see this?
 - What if this is the only post a potential employer will see and you would be judged on this alone?
 - Limit what can be construed as "bad" if taken out of context.²
 - Remember nothing is ever really anonymous online. Thus, be mindful of your tone/message.
 - Add value to your industry, field or interests through appropriate, thoughtful comments.
 - If you feel any information is questionable, don't post it.
- **A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words**
 - What do your pictures say about you? What are the intended and unintended messages?
 - Delete any questionable pictures of you in your and other's accounts.
 - Establish notification alerts to view pictures of you as they are posted.
 - As good practice, "untag" any photos of yourself which are questionable or unflattering.
- **Be Accountable**
 - Be prepared to be accountable and explain anything you have said or done online.²
- **Enjoy It**
 - Social media tools can be an excellent, interactive and enjoyable way to set yourself apart, strengthen your reputation and build your network.
 - Be creative and have fun! One of the benefits of these tools is their dynamic and "outside the box" nature. Use those elements to your advantage.

² Managing Your Online Identity, The University of Iowa College of Law, August 2009