
Social Media Guide

INTRODUCTION

Social media networks provide powerful tools through which employers and peers can connect with one another and conduct industry and organizational research. As of 2012, 41 percent of graduates used social media in their career search and each Fortune 500 company used social media to support its recruiting efforts. This guide provides basic information on utilizing social media in your career search. You are also encouraged to attend Career Development Office (CDO) workshops on using social media to support your career goals and to schedule an advising appointment with a career counselor if you have further questions on leveraging these valuable tools.

Overview of Social Media Tools

There are a variety of social media platforms, including blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn (most career relevant), to support your career development. Keep the following points in mind when using social media in your job search:

1. Social media is a tool. While almost all major companies use social media in their hiring, a **strong resume** and **good interviewing skills** are still essential. Social media can help your industry research, but it is a means and not an end. You still need to have a direction and a strategy in your job search.
2. Be careful about what you post and what is posted about you. Online information creates a data trail that is available to the public. Make sure you have appropriate privacy settings, and search yourself via Google to discern your online image. In addition to subscriber sites, there are a number of **free sites** that offer online image management.
3. Social media is active and has to be maintained. Set aside an hour a week to review and update all of your social media accounts.
4. You have about 30 seconds to make a good impression, therefore, your profile has to be concise and organized. There is a lot of information on social media sites. Make sure you communicate essential points efficiently.

Step One: Creating an Online Profile

It is important to determine the key personal and professional attributes you are striving to promote when creating your social media profiles.

Skills

Review the profiles of professionals working in industries, organizations, and positions of interest to you to identify key phrases and industry terminology to highlight in your profile. To publicize these skills and accomplishments on LinkedIn, use the following tools:

- Select “edit” on your profile and then find the “skills” section. Click on the pencil, type in a skill, and LinkedIn will provide a list of matching skills.
- Visit an employer’s LinkedIn page and navigate to the “insights” tab for a list of skills that pertain to that company.
- Ask friends and close colleagues to endorse your skills. (Tip: Endorsing your first connections’ skills may in turn encourage these individuals to endorse your skills as well!)

To strengthen your brand:

- Request—and offer to provide, recommendations from and for supervisors and colleagues on LinkedIn.
- Create a value statement using key words that capture who you are, your accomplishments, and your goals.
 - Use [Google’s keyword tool](#) to view the popularity of different keywords.
 - Use [Google trends](#) to compare keywords for maximum effectiveness.

Develop a Consistent Profile Across Social Media Tools

It is important that your profile represents you consistently across social media tools. Keep the following tips in mind:

- Use the same value statement and keywords across profiles.
- Update all your social media profiles regularly, and keep your postings professional and relevant.
- Do not post an incomplete profile. Prior to developing your profile, identify the information required in the profile. Then draft your value statement, key skills, and personal summary so that you can easily cut and paste this information online.
- Share papers, presentations, and other content via blogs and other file-sharing sites to strengthen your brand’s image.

Step Two: Expand Your Connections

Your social network is only as powerful as your connections. Use the following tools to develop a comprehensive network composed of peers, industry experts, and personal/professional contacts.

- [LinkedIn Groups](#) are a great way to connect with individuals with shared interests and or affiliations.
- Use status updates on Facebook and LinkedIn to maintain your relationships by remaining aware of new developments in others’ personal and professional lives.
- Retweeting and asking questions on content posted by professionals in careers of interest to you is a great way forge initial connections.

Once established, connections can be used in a variety of ways, including:

- Requesting informational interviews.
- Researching the skills and experiences highlighted on professionals’ profiles. Compare and contrast this information to your existing skills to identify your strengths and areas for development in relation to specific position types. Additionally, use similar vernacular and key words on your profile, job application materials, and in interviews.
- Request introductions through first-degree connections to second and third-degree connections.
- Stay up-to-date with your connections’ and groups’ activities to keep informed on future job openings.

Step Three: Researching Employers

As a prospective employee, you are expected to have a deep knowledge of your target organizations. Connecting with organizations and professionals in areas of interest to you is a great approach to developing your understanding of position types, additional employers, and sought after qualifications in these areas. Keep the following tips in mind when using social media to conduct industry research:

- Review LinkedIn's company pages to view organizations' job postings, product information, news, and insights.
- Twitter offers real-time job postings and company news. Companies often have more than one Twitter account; follow the branch or person of interest to you for specific news and information.
- Following a company's page on Facebook provides insights to their preferred connection approaches. You might also approach professional contacts affiliated with or following organizations of interest for informational interviews.
- Follow a company's posts to identify exciting projects or news. Conveying this information in networking situations and formal interviews will demonstrate your engagement in the organization.

LINKEDIN

- Social media site dedicated to professional development and connections
- Two new members per second; 175 million users globally (as of 2012)
- Every Fortune 500 company has an organizational profile
- 85 of Fortune 100 companies use LinkedIn's corporate hiring solutions; two million companies have LinkedIn pages

Terminology

First-Degree Connections: Persons with whom you have a direct connection. (Use these connections to gain access to secondary and tertiary profiles.)

Fun Fact

A profile with 150 connections has access to roughly 3 million, third-degree connections!

Introductions: An "Introduction" enables you to leverage your first-degree connections to connect with new contacts. To request an introduction, click on "Get Introduced Through a Connection" on the person's profile with whom you are hoping to connect. You will then receive a listing of your first-degree connections who can make an introduction on your behalf.

Summary, Headline, and Updates: A strong social media profile provides a cohesive and concise summary of your skills, interests, accomplishments and education. Keep the following tips in mind when developing your profile:

- Length: Your summary should be a concise paragraph (no more than 30 seconds to read) that provides a unique and personal picture of who you are as a professional
- Content: First, your statement should explain what you offer to the potential employer. Second, your headline should act as a hyper-condensed snapshot of your summary. You may also import your resume into LinkedIn to synchronize your profile and resume.

Recommendation: At least three recommendations are needed for a "complete" LinkedIn profile. A good recommendation provides objective support to the claims in your profile and gives a snapshot of your ability to work with others. Recommendations should be requested from connections who can provide an accurate and positive picture of who you are.

Groups: A LinkedIn group provides a space for discussion, posing questions, sharing content, and networking pertaining to a particular area. Open groups do not have joining stipulations, whereas closed groups require membership. Joining the [Harris School's group](#) is a great way to start!

Questions and Answers: Q&A forums provide opportunities to direct questions to professionals in different fields without having to join a particular group. Go to the “more” tab at the top of the page and click “answers” to ask and answer questions. Answering questions will increase your credibility and connect you with people working in your target fields.

Applications: Using applications on LinkedIn adds character to your profile. LinkedIn supports a range of applications that can be used to demonstrate creativity in your work, promote your blog, share your interests, and more. Applications should further enhance your professional brand while highlighting your unique attributes. A particularly helpful application in publicizing content is the box.net application, which can be used to share papers, spreadsheets, and other documents.

Key Tips to Keep in Mind:

1. Remember, you only have 10 seconds to catch someone’s eye. Create a strong first impression with a professional profile photo, informative headline, and profile summary.
2. Begin establishing connections with classmates and friends; as your network grows, reach out to alumni and professionals through groups and second/third-degree connections.
3. Expedite the connection process by importing connections from your email account. Simply go to the “contacts” tab in the top toolbar, select, “add contacts,” sign in to your email via the tool, and send connection invitations to your contacts with existing LinkedIn profiles!

TWITTER

- 300 million accounts
- Open-network, social media site leveraging short text-based communication

Overview

Unlike Facebook and LinkedIn, Twitter is an open network. (You can follow any non-private user without requiring him/her to follow you in return) Other networks are particularly useful for following industry leaders or executives with whom you do not have a personal connections to stay abreast of conversations in specific industries.

- [Follow the Harris School on Twitter](#) for updates about events, alumni activity and more!

Using Twitter in Your Job Search:

Twitter can also be used as a direct tool in your job search.

- Search twitter for [your city] jobs to find profiles listing jobs in your desired location, or alternatively [your career] jobs. Following these accounts gives you real-time job information.
- To organize your search, create a list of twitter accounts sharing common themes.
- Searching by hashtags (#) allows you to filter for jobs or communicate via your tweets that you are seeking a particular job via the hashtag #jobs.

FACEBOOK

- Social media site based on personal connections with family and friends
- More than 800 million users

Overview

Although Facebook is organized primarily around casual, personal connections, Facebook can also serve as a very effective tool to expand your professional connections and conduct industry research. There are a number of third-party applications you can employ to leverage Facebook as a focused job search tool.

- **BranchOut** allows you to view companies in your network and personal connections who can initiate an introduction on your behalf.
- **Simply Hired** offers integration with your Facebook profile, illustrating organizations in which you currently work or held previous positions

IMPORTANT: Keep Your Profile Private! Go to “privacy settings” and assign all categories to “friends only” to limit employer access to your photos, posts, and status updates.

BLOGS

- Tools to develop and promote long-term, in-depth content
- 120 million readers
- Can be shared on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn

Overview:

Blog sites, such as **Wordpress** or **Blogger**, offer you a way to develop and demonstrate a deeper understanding of a specific topic. Blogs are most effective when structured around a focused theme. You can then link your blog to other social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.

REMEMBER: Once information is posted online, it is forever traceable. Manage your digital footprint—clean up the past and develop your future brand. Think before you tweet!