**The Good, The Bad and the Scary: How Your Digital Profile Impacts Your Job Search**

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The **W**eb still continues to be, in most minds, the **W**ild **W**est (the WWW, if you will). Constantly changing, filled with danger and opportunity, you never know where the next shot will be fired and who will be the next sheriff in town. So, with that in mind, let's take a look at the WWW's impact on your job search -- Spaghetti Western-style: **The Good, The Bad and the Scary.**

**HE GOOD: Getting Information and Access Is Easier Than Ever.**

A lot has been said about companies using social media to identify and screen potential employees, particularly the newly minted set. But now, the proverbial mouse is in the other hand, according to a [recent survey](http://www.foxbusiness.com/personal-finance/2011/04/13/college-students-using-social-media-job-search/)-- nearly 28 percent of college students plan to seek employment using LinkedIn. Slightly more than seven percent plan to use Facebook, a platform formerly seen as primarily social.

It's that blurring of the lines that is actually putting the soon-to-graduate set in the driver's seat; instead of waiting around for that recruiter to reach out, they're using digital tools to identify and, ideally, land their ultimate gig. For them, the wealth of online information helps them cull through options to identify companies that align with their values and goals. All is fair game, and a strong digital presence is one way for employers to attract the best and brightest to their ranks.

**THE BAD: The Internet never forgets.**

Another [survey](http://socialbarrel.com/shrm-employers-use-social-media-to-find-candidates/6342/) -- this one from the[Society of Human Resource Management](http://www.shrm.org/Pages/default.aspx)-- shows that more companies are recruiting via social networking. Not surprising that almost 100 percent of recruiters use LinkedIn. What might be news is that Facebook is the next most utilized Social Media site (58%), followed by Twitter (42%).

In addition to being careful about what you post, it's a good practice to give pause before giving access. In other words, think twice about to whom and to which sites you give access to your Facebook profile. You are who you "hang" out with -- one and offline; make sure you know the friends who have access to your profiles and that everyone you are connected to is carefully considering what they post to your wall or the photos you're tagged in.

**THE SCARY: Like it or Not, Everyone is A "Public Figure"**

For all intents and purposes, Google is your first resume. In [*Be Your Own Best Publicist*](http://www.amazon.com/Your-Own-Best-Publicist-Techniques/dp/1601631480/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1304085443&sr=8-1), my co-author [Jessica Kleiman](http://blogs.forbes.com/people/jessicakleiman/) and I caution that everything you say (or post) can and will be used against you. Run a red light? Cameras are there to catch it. [Fall in a fountain](http://www.youtube.com/v/OWtDpGM36J8?fs=1&hl=en_US) accidentally? Someone is filming on a flip cam and uploading to YouTube before you dry off. In this day and age, when walking on the street can inadvertently turn you into an overnight celebrity, everything -- did I say "everything"? -- is on the record and [privacy has basically gone out the window](http://www.npr.org/2011/04/27/135623137/privacy-2-0-the-garbo-economy). (Told you it was scary.)

Unfortunately, unlike the of-the-moment celebrity or sports star, that white hot spotlight doesn't translate into a lucrative endorsement deal or the ability to borrow that $1 million pair of [Harry Winston](http://www.harrywinston.com/) earrings for your company's [annual awards ceremony](http://www.amazon.com/Office-Official-Dundie-Interchangeable-Placards/dp/B0011457CA).

So remember, [your digital profile is your lasting legacy](http://beyourownbestpublicist.com/2011/01/19/on-your-permanent-record-the-importance-of-managing-your-digital-legacy/). Pay attention to your posts, your posse and your privacy settings to stay on the right track. [Giddy up](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/giddyup) - and good luck!