



Employers are increasingly using Internet searches to determine applicant suitability. It's up to you to be savvy about how to make a positive impression. When it comes to determining who you really are, hiring authorities want to answer five key questions:

1. **Do you show up?** If all that's available online is your number in the white pages or your tax records, employers may wonder, "Did this person purge everything about him/herself?" or worse, "Is this person too boring and unaccomplished to have any presence on the Web?"
2. **Is it too easy to find everything?** Most people can master Facebook privacy settings, but if everything is out there, employers may be concerned about whether you're reckless or clueless.
3. **Is your online presence a glitzy commercial?** Some hiring managers may find self-aggrandizing or exaggerated descriptions on LinkedIn profiles off-putting (i.e., "dynamic thought leader").
4. **What is the company you keep?** "Collecting" connections on LinkedIn and Twitter may seem suspicious; why are there hundreds or thousands of "loose ties" to individuals in widely disparate disciplines? Try to maintain a cohesive community of connections linked by discipline, industry, organization, or geography.
5. **Are you too visible?** Visibility is good. Overexposure is bad. Ranting letters to the editor, random and vitriolic blog entries, constant and middle-of-the-night Facebook entries or Twitter comments, and too many pictures of cars or cats on Pinterest may make employers wonder how smartly you use your time.

You have the power to shape the way others see you online, so it's wise to be proactive:

- Google yourself to see what others might find.
- Ask a couple colleagues to describe the person they uncover when they search for your name.
- Start editing or reworking your online content to craft the image you want to project.