

Starting Points : Social Media

Introduction

It is likely that you already use social media tools such as Facebook or Twitter for personal, social reasons. Did you know that if used effectively, social media can also dramatically enhance your employability? However, be aware that careless use of social media could also significantly damage your chances in the job market.

How can social media enhance your employability?

Research	Find out about employers and practitioners in your area, keep up to date with news from particular companies, and in your industry
Promote yourself	Create a professional profile online, outlining your key skills, giving evidence of your achievements, and showing what you are looking for
Find vacancies	Employers are increasingly using LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to promote vacancies
Make connections	Follow or link with people working in your area, make contact, ask them questions. Social media allows you to follow employees and individuals, giving greater insight than can be gained from a company website

Which social media tools should I be using?

The main social media tools are LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.

LinkedIn: "Facebook for professionals" - effectively an online CV, but much more. Creating a LinkedIn account will help ensure that a professional profile appears in any google search of you by potential employers. Use to:

- use the "Alumni" tool to find out what previous graduates from your course have gone on to do - gain ideas and inspiration
- make connections, develop your network
- identify the key skills that employees in your sector need to develop
- research companies via their LinkedIn groups, pages, and LinkedIn members
- demonstrate your interest in a sector by joining and participating in discussion groups

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Twitter: A carefully-worded profile can attract followers, including potential employers.
Use to:

- follow employers, practitioners and commentators in your area of interest
- keep up-to-date with news and events in your sector
- raise your profile and demonstrate your interest by joining in with conversations
- draw attention to your activity on other platforms, for instance when you have posted on your blog, or added to your e-portfolio

Facebook: Use your settings carefully to ensure that potential employers can only see what you want them to see. Think about setting up a professional page for interacting with employers and promoting yourself. Use to:

- "like" relevant companies' Facebook pages and receive updates from them
- join groups relevant to your job search, post comments and participate in discussions
- post content relevant to your career and your job search

Other social media tools

Other social media tools you might use to promote yourself and your work include:

- **Pinterest** - visual pinboard, good for showcasing your work, for research and collection of resources
- **Bloggng** sites such as **WordPress** - good for establishing your online identity and demonstrating interests and skills, including written communication skills
- For the creative sector, possible additional tools include **Dribbble**, **Behance**, and **Art Rules**

Think about your digital footprint

How comfortable are you with what others can see if they google your name? Employers will check up on the social media profiles of prospective candidates. You may wish to clean yours up - see "[Managing your Digital Footprint](https://students.shu.ac.uk/lits/it/documents/pdf/Digital_Footprint.pdf)" for further information (https://students.shu.ac.uk/lits/it/documents/pdf/Digital_Footprint.pdf). Many professions have guidelines on the use of social media, for instance nursing and social work. These guidelines emphasise the need to behave professionally online in just the same way as you would in any other sphere. Not doing so could cost you not only your job but membership of your profession.

Further support

Further advice on social media, including support with developing your LinkedIn profile, is available from the Careers and Employment team (0114 225 3752).

For further careers planning resources, go to careerscentral.shu.ac.uk. This information is available in alternative formats on request.

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