Stop reading. Instead, Google yourself. What do you see?

Drunk photos? Inappropriate posts? Complaints about your current employer/boss/teacher? More than ever, employers and recruiters use social media sites to determine if a candidate is an appropriate fit for their position. With Google at their fingertips, employers can learn your movie tastes, your friends’ drinking and eating habits, and any sarcastic comments you have made about a boss, all of which may give them the impression you are too immature for the position. It may be unfair but it is a reality. A Google search is now one more test you have to pass in the application and selection process.

Before resume writing, networking and the job search, the career development process starts with cleaning up your online imagine. Here’s how:

**Facebook:** With each new release on Facebook, privacy settings change. Always check your privacy settings. Use the “view as” button to see how others see your profile. Make sure you profile picture is mild (no alcohol, shirtless photos). Hide your tagged photos and wall from public view. Turn off the public search function in the Facebook privacy setting so your Facebook profile doesn’t appear in a Google search. If you’re still concerned, use a fake name for your Facebook profile so employers will not be able to find you.

**Linkedin:** Building a LinkedIn profile gives you two things: a positive, professional online presence and access to a large network of professional people and organizations. A LinkedIn profile is basically an online resume. It will also show up in a Google search so it is beneficial to have one even if you don’t have much experience. Make sure all of your LinkedIn information, especially dates and titles, matches your resume. It is best to create a robust LinkedIn profile; starting one and then not finishing it does not look good to employers. Employers often use LinkedIn to check for resume inaccuracies. This is a great place to link an online e-portfolio as well.

**Twitter:** Twitter is an excellent tool to publicly promote yourself and search for jobs. As Twitter’s popularity increases, it’s important to remember that most Twitter settings are public and searchable. Avoid complaining and posts about controversial topics such as politics and religion. Post articles about subjects you are passionate about to show off your knowledge in a particular subject. Follow and retweet content from employers and companies you admire in hopes you might get noticed (employers recruit from Twitter!). Add your blog or website to your Twitter profile to show off your work.

Don’t let a sloppy online presence ruin your hard work of writing resumes and cover letters. Follow the tips above and you’ll look sharp in the next Google search. Think of how many hours you have spent in
class studying; it is vital to spend quite a few hours preparing for your career search as well. You have all the best tips, now get started!

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For any additional comments or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact representatives of the Task Force: