

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is very popular, and very useful.

People especially like to use Facebook to stay in touch with friends and family, and Twitter to share news and opinions. They also share videos on YouTube, hobbies on Pinterest, professional updates on LinkedIn, pictures on Instagram and Flickr, and many other things on many other social websites. If you would like to know more about these services, a good place to start is the Goodwill Community Foundation's Learn Free - Social Media training at gcflernfree.org/topics/socialmedia.

Social media can be helpful for gathering employment leads, and for passing some of them along as favors to others who may also be in the job market. You can also share your successes and discouragements, and support others as they share theirs.

But be very careful about what you post. Above all, remember that everything you post on the internet will be out there forever, and you can't do much to control it. It could potentially be viewed anytime by anyone, including people you want to get hired by, people who you work with (or for), people who may be considering you for a raise or promotion, people who are among your employer's partners or customers — maybe even someday by your grandchildren.

Employers know all about social media, and they often check the posts of people they hire, or are thinking about hiring.

Always think at least twice before you post anything that involves:

- Illegal activity
- Alcohol or drug use, even if it's legal
- Sexual activity or sexually oriented remarks
- Irresponsible behavior of any kind
- Racist, sexist, or other discriminatory remarks
- Criticism, complaints, or gossip about other people

It's a free country, and you are free to post whatever you want within the safeguards set by law against libel, slander, threats, and other harmful behavior. But others are also free to respond to your posts in ways that may be unwelcome to you or your employer.

If you can delete any posts that you regret, do so at the start of your job search. They are still out there, but will probably be harder to find. Also, pay attention to the privacy filters that are available on most social media.

Here's a final tip: If you have internet access at your new job, remember to wait until you get home to check Facebook.

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