



Point of View

Have you Googled Yourself Lately?

Be aware of what a Google search of your name reveals about you. It could help you or hurt you, but either way be prepared for the consequences.

Sure, we've all done it. Googled an old flame or a long lost friend. But who knew a Google search could impact your ability to land a job? Unfortunately, while you might be a perfectly qualified candidate, an Internet search uncovering something embarrassing about you could ruin your chances of being hired.

Regardless of whether you have a "colorful" past or not, here's some advice for all job seekers. First, if you haven't typed in your own name and hit the 'Search' button, you really should. Many career experts recommend searching for your name on its own, and also in quotation marks.

Also, make sure all the dates and job titles listed on your resume match up with your Web presence. And if you keep a blog or personal Web site, be cautious about what's in it. Even if it doesn't directly affect your job search, you may not want a potential employer to be privy to personal aspects of your life.

The Up Side to "Googling"

Job seekers can work the online medium to their advantage, creatively using blogs, Web pages and Web portfolios to enhance the visibility of their accomplishments or talents.

And let's not ignore the enormous benefits it offers in the job search process. Use it to learn more about the company you're considering. If you're looking to score big during an interview, it can't hurt to do a little searching yourself for your potential supervisor's interests, hobbies or job history to see what you might have in common. Then, weave it into your conversation.

The Down Side to "Googling"

For some job seekers, checking their online identity may mean unearthing dirt from their past that hasn't escaped the attention of one of the world's most powerful search engines.

What can you do if you discover something damaging about yourself on Google? The bad news is if your indiscretion is a matter of public record, there isn't much you can do about it. In some cases, however, it might be worth contacting the owner of the site and asking them to remove the information. You can also try contacting Google directly.

If you can't have the information removed, the good news is you can at least be prepared to answer any questions a potential employer or recruiter may have during an interview. Be sure to develop an answer that directly addresses the issue, but then quickly transitions to a new subject. The bottom line is—be aware of what a Google search reveals about you, if anything, and be prepared to deal with it.