

Social Media & Your Job Search

What employers can see online might surprise you - here's how to make sure it works for you, not against you.

Whether you like it or not, employers Google people. Recruiters check Facebook. Hiring managers look at Instagram. It takes less than two minutes and it happens more than you think - especially for roles where you'll be representing a company or working with their customers.

This doesn't mean you can't have a personal life online. It just means being smart about what's public and what isn't.

The Reality Check

- 73% of employers admit to checking candidates' social media before hiring.
- Posts, photos, comments and shares from years ago can still show up in a search.
- Even if you're not tagged by name, profile photos and mutual connections can give you away.
- It's not just about what you post - comments you leave on other people's posts count too.

Things That Can Cost You the Job

Employers are most put off by:

- ☐ Photos of heavy drinking, drug use, or anything illegal
- ☐ Aggressive, offensive, or discriminatory comments - including "jokes"
- ☐ Badmouthing a previous employer, boss, or colleague
- ☐ Anything that contradicts what you've said in your CV or interview (e.g. claiming you left a job for one reason, but your posts tell a different story)
- ☐ Overly political or controversial content that could make you difficult to work with
- ☐ Posts complaining about work, customers, or colleagues - even from old jobs
- ☐ Public posts that show poor judgement or unprofessional behaviour

The Quick Clean-Up Checklist

Set aside 30 minutes and go through each platform:

Facebook

- ☐ Google your own name and see what comes up
- ☐ Check your profile photo and cover photo - are they appropriate?
- ☐ Review your About section - remove anything you wouldn't want an employer to see
- ☐ Go through your recent posts and photos - untag or delete anything questionable
- ☐ Check posts you've been tagged in by others - untag yourself if needed
- ☐ Review your privacy settings - set posts to Friends only, not Public
- ☐ Check your comments on other people's posts - delete anything that doesn't reflect well on you

Instagram

- ☐ Consider switching to a private account while job hunting
- ☐ Review your grid - remove or archive anything you wouldn't want a future boss to see
- ☐ Check your story highlights - these stay up and are often public even on private accounts
- ☐ Look at comments you've left on public posts

TikTok

- ☐ Switch to a private account, or review what's public
- ☐ Remove or archive videos that show anything you'd regret an employer seeing
- ☐ Check your likes - on some settings these are visible to others

X / Twitter

- ☐ Review recent tweets and replies - delete anything aggressive, offensive, or embarrassing
- ☐ Be especially careful with political opinions and heated arguments in reply threads
- ☐ Consider making your account private while actively job hunting

Snapchat & WhatsApp

- ☐ Less likely to be searched, but screenshots shared to other platforms can still surface
- ☐ Be mindful of group chats - things shared in "private" groups do leak

Now Make It Work for You

Cleaning up your social media accounts is only half the job. Once you've removed anything that could hurt you, think about what a recruiter or employer would see if they searched your name today.

- LinkedIn is the one platform where being active actually helps - see our LinkedIn Profile Checklist
- If your Facebook or Instagram is clean and professional, you can leave it public - it humanises you
- Sharing industry-relevant content, completing courses, or posting about work achievements builds a positive online presence over time
- If you have a common name, make sure your LinkedIn is easy to find so employers land there first rather than someone else's profile

The Simple Rule of Thumb

If you wouldn't want your mum, your boss, or a judge to see it - take it down. You don't need a perfectly curated online presence. You just need to make sure nothing out there is actively working against you.

Privacy Settings Quick Reference

Platform	Where to find Privacy Settings	Recommended Setting While Job Hunting
Facebook	Settings → Privacy	Posts: Friends only Profile visible to: Friends
Instagram	Settings → Account Privacy	Private account, or review public posts
TikTok	Settings → Privacy	Private account
X / Twitter	Settings → Privacy & Safety	Protected posts (private) or review timeline
LinkedIn	Settings → Visibility	Public profile — this one you WANT employers to find