

Using the Internet to advance your career

By [Carolyn Holgate](#)

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With social networks increasingly being used for recommendations and to source skills, it's vital for you as a young professional to build an online profile and network to seek out opportunities. You'll also find that a strong online presence will not only aid you in your search for opportunities, but facilitate opportunities finding you.

10 tips for young professionals on how to use the Internet

1. Use a good profile picture

They say a picture's worth a thousand words. A clean, professional head and shoulders shot creates an important first impression and is far more suitable than a picture taken at a social event. Once you've got a great picture of yourself, use it on every platform you interact on to create continuity and recognition, and to assist people in finding you.

2. Create an online CV and summary of yourself

Sites like LinkedIn are increasingly being used by businesses to find skill sets, and by business people to research the credentials of people with whom they have meetings. Another example is [Google Profiles](#) which offers you a single mechanism via which to present yourself across all Google products.

Your profile on these sites acts as an online CV, so make sure it's complete and up to date. It also helps to have a short bio in place to act as an executive summary, highlighting your key strengths, skill-sets and experience and drawing people into your more detailed profile.

3. Recommendations and references

LinkedIn and similar business networking sites also have a recommendation tool, adding further credibility to your profile. You may also want to include references in your online profiles on other social networking sites so that people can find out more information about you.

4. Get connected on networking platforms

As a young professional, it's important to network on platforms that provide value in your quest to advance your career. Focus on broadening your network, and making connections that will add to your credibility in the eyes of people looking at your information. To get started, connect with existing colleagues and associates and keep up to date by connecting with new contacts you've met.

Holgate recommends young professionals consider all the major social networking sites (Google +, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, SlideShare among others) as well as LinkedIn and other relevant local business networking sites like [MyGenius](#).

5. Move online networking into meeting people

Many local business networking sites have physical meetings and events which you can attend. People with similar interests also group together at events like the [27 Dinners](#) where speakers talk on trends within the market and like-minded people network with each other. Get out there and meet people face-to-face. It's a great way to equip yourself as well as look for an opportunity.

6. Build your own destination

If you have the time, effort and commitment needed to keep it relevant and up-to-date, launch your own blog or website. You can launch your website with MWEB's uncapped hosting or create a blog on platforms like [Blogger](#) and [Tumblr](#). A blog or website offers you the perfect environment to showcase thought leadership pieces and examples of your work (for instance if you're an architect you can have drawings and photos of your work).

7. Position yourself as an expert

Building your own brand is very important because it's a tool to sell yourself, to position your skills and give people the opportunity to get to know more about you and what you can offer.

If you believe you add value, this is your opportunity to show people through the high-level information you share on social networking platforms. It's about creating an online persona. So for example, sharing content on social media platforms from *Time Magazine* and *The Wall Street Journal* leaves a very different impression to talking about a party you went to on the weekend.

8. Knowledge is power

Of course the best way to make an impression is to enrich yourself and equip yourself for the kinds of opportunities you want to pursue. Referencing the latest piece of research in an important meeting can give you the upper hand.

Select sites that provide relevant and interesting information and be sure to stay connected to more general interest sites such as [Reuters](#). Newsletter subscriptions are also a good way to scan information in your own time; companies such as [McKinsey](#) have regular newsletters tackling a broad range of topics.

Twitter is also an excellent way to stay up to date on a broad range of topics, following the likes of [The Economist](#) or publishers specific to your industry. It is often the quickest way to access interesting and relevant information.

9. Don't let your online self go

One of the worst things you can do in an online context is place information online and then not keep it updated. Having an outdated CV or profile on LinkedIn or a website which looks out of date simply creates a bad impression.

The things that you say online are also important. When you use social media platforms and forums, maintain a level of maturity and professionalism at all times.

10. List on, and stay connected to credible jobs sites

It's always good to have the feelers out for new jobs in the market. By doing so you can identify opportunities you may wish to pursue. It's an also important yardstick of what kind of salary you can receive in the job market.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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