

Assess *Your* Communication

EMPLOYER SURVEILLANCE IN THE COMMUNICATION AGE

Social networking once meant going to a social function such as a cocktail party, conference, or business luncheon. In the Communication Age, social networking is achieved through websites such as Myspace, Facebook, or LinkedIn. Many individuals use these sites to meet new friends, make connections, and upload personal information. On social networking websites (SNWs) that focus more on business connections, such as LinkedIn, individuals upload job qualifications and application information. These SNWs are now being used as reference checks by human resource personnel. For this reason, SNW users, particularly university students and other soon-to-be job applicants, should ask the following questions to assess their communication via SNWs:

- Am I loading information that I want the world to see?
- Is this really a picture that shows me in the best light?
- What impression would another person have of me if he or she went through my site?

Although SNWs are a great way to be connected with friends, family, and friends-to-be, they can present problems when potential employers begin to search through them for information concerning job applicants. Many potential employees would be mortified to learn that employers could potentially read the personal information posted on Myspace, Facebook, LinkedIn, or other SNWs. Searches on SNWs allow employers to look into what is done "after hours," socially or privately, by the applicant.

Source: Roberts and Roach (2009).