

READING

Be aware of your online image

A

Discuss these questions in pairs.

- 1 What social-networking sites do you a) know, and b) use?
- 2 Why do you use them?

B

Scan the article below quickly and answer these questions.

- 1 What percentage of employers research candidates online?
- 2 Which social-networking sites are mentioned?
- 3 Who do Peter Cullen and Farhan Yasin work for?

by Andy Bloxham

Jobseekers have been warned that their Facebook profile could damage their employment prospects after a study found that seven in 10 employers now research candidates online.

According to new figures released by Microsoft, checks on Facebook and Twitter are now as important in the job-selection process as a CV or interview.

The survey, which questioned human-resource managers at the top 100 companies in the UK, the US, Germany and France, found that 70 per cent admitted to rejecting a candidate because of their online behaviour.

But HR bosses also said that a strong image online could actually help job hunters to land their dream job. Peter Cullen, of Microsoft, said: "Your online reputation is not something to be scared of, it's something to be proactively managed. These days, it's essential that web users cultivate the kind of online reputation that they would want an employer to see."

Facebook *faux pas* include drunken photographs, bad language and messages complaining about work.

Farhan Yasin, of online recruitment network Careerbuilder.co.uk, said: "Social networking is a great way to make connections with job opportunities and promote your personal brand across the Internet. People really need to make sure they are using this resource to their advantage, by conveying a professional image."

But Mr Yasin cautioned job seekers to be aware of their online image even after landing the perfect job, after their own research found that 28 per cent of employers had fired staff for content found on their social-networking profile. He added, "A huge number of employers have taken action against staff for writing negative comments about the company or another employee on their social-networking page."



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C Read the article again and choose the best headline (a, b or c).

- a) Complaining about your job could lose you your job
- b) Facebook profile 'could damage job prospects'
- c) Ambition is key to a successful career

D According to the article, how can social-networking sites make or break your career?

E In pairs, write a short list of things you should *not* do on your social-networking pages. You can include your own ideas.

F Should staff be allowed to use social-networking sites during the working day? Discuss.