What Your Social Media Reputation Says to Employers

It used to be that job candidates were judged on their resume, cover letter and references prior to the in-person interview. Now with social media, job candidates are being fully examined before even stepping foot into a human resources department.

For graduates looking to "clean up" their act and get hired, here are four tips from online and career experts on how to create a more positive online reputation.

1. **Google Yourself**
   Students should start the process by typing their name in every major search engine to see what is associated with their name. Sound simple, yet surveys show that more than two-thirds of recent grads only Google themselves once a year despite the fact that more than one-fourth of respondents have found a search result about themselves that they wish they could delete.

2. **Don't Rely on Privacy Settings**
   While it is important to understand privacy settings for individual social networking sites, using good judgment is paramount in trying to conceal certain posts and pictures.

3. **Remove Every Potentially Inappropriate Post and Picture**
   While 90% of those responding to surveys claim to be cautious about their online posts, 35% have posted comments containing profanity, more than 30% have posted comments or pictures about alcohol and 7% have posted content about illegal behavior.

4. **Keep Language and Grammar in Mind**
   While graduates should refrain from posting about polarizing or controversial topics such as religious or political discussions while on the job hunt, post that show critical thinking and persuasion skills can be in a candidate's favor as long as they are done well. Think of your Facebook comments and tweets as miniature writing samples…are you spelling things wrong and making grammatical errors? Or are you putting forth compelling arguments and insightful information. The latter is what an employer will want to see.