

Professional vs. Personal: Separating Your Social Accounts

Choosing to separate your social networking accounts is a smart way to keep your personal and professional life from encountering any problems. While perception is everything, it is important to remember that while social networking gives people lots of freedom, sometimes individuals can get carried away and post information that is harmful or offensive that could possibly wreck their chances of getting a job. As employers continue to comb through profiles of potential employees, it is important for college-aged students to be especially vigilant about their online activity.

Keep in mind, that if you are going to create a personal social media account, you should:

- Use the highest privacy settings possible to prevent unapproved friends or web surfers from viewing your profile unless you are 100% confident the material is appropriate for all individuals and employers.
- Monitor the activity of friends and family who might upload pictures that may be detrimental to your personal brand.
- Remember that these settings can always be removed or altered, but continue to use discretion when posting any type of content.

If you are going to create a professional social media account, you should:

- Create positive discussions and connect with other college students and industry professionals to leverage your brand.
- Remain professional in all dialogue or content that is produced.
- Be creative and captivating; there is a lot of competition for “eyes” and people want to be engaged.

Whether you decide to separate your social networking accounts or not, you should take the time to reflect on the following important tips:

- Nothing you write is truly private on the Internet. Take caution in what you create, upload, or post.
- Make sure all of your content is fully secured and protected by privacy controls.
- Do not give anyone your password.
- Stay committed to developing a competent and professional appearance.
- Use good judgment.
- It takes lots of time and energy to build a strong brand – and only one mistake to mess it all up.

Prepared by Shippensburg University's Career Development Center (Updated 7/2012)