

Your Digital Footprint

Did you know that the first thing a hiring manager, HR department, or recruiter does when they receive your resume is to Google your name? What comes up is their first impression of you — make sure it's positive!

When used correctly on sites like LinkedIn or a business blog, your digital footprint enhances your resume and allows others to see — for themselves — your writing and other skill sets. However, used incorrectly, your digital footprint can do damage to your online reputation.

What steps should I take?

Also called “reputation management,” here are some steps you should take before sending out resumes to ensure your digital footprint represents your very best public image:

Research

1. Google your name — with and without using a middle name, middle initial and quotes. For example:
 - Jane Doe
 - “Jane Doe”
 - Jane A Doe
 - “Jane A Doe”
 - Jane Ann Doe
 - “Jane Ann Doe”
- Note:** Those with a “Junior” or “3rd” in their name must be especially careful to include that information — you must be sure searches find YOU, not a relative.*
2. Go at least 5 pages deep in the results to see what comes up for each of these names and click on the results.
 - Would you hire you? If not, think about how to clean up your social media presence.

- Be sure you use the exact same name denotation for your resume that you've searched on.

***Note:** See if anyone else has your name in any of its forms. Is this person you? If not, you may want to add to the search phrase, for example: [“Jane A Doe” + Connecticut] to narrow it down until you can find YOU in the searches.*

Action Steps

1. Address possible issues in your cover letter. If you find someone else with your name and they are not an upstanding citizen, be sure you know this. I've known of situations where criminals have the exact same name as some of my best students — make sure you know this ahead of time. If you find someone with your same name whose reputation would have a detrimental impact on your job search you can address this in your cover letter to explain the situation. This ensures you don't get knocked out of the race before it even begins.
1. Clean up your social media presence. If upon searching, you find negative posts you wrote years ago, or said something you regret, you can take steps with each of the social media channels to fix, close, or change your settings to clean up your reputation. This is the “reputation management” part. Each social media

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platform has its own way of doing this so go the FAQ section of each to find out how best to handle this across platforms.

3. Create Google Alerts. For each name version search performed during research stage, create a Google alert by [clicking here](#), then filling in the search box with each iteration of your name. It will look like this:



- a. Google will ask you for an email account (use your personal account), and will send you links to verify your alerts.
- b. Log into your email, click on each alert verification to activate them.

So, what does this do?

These alerts will notify you whenever someone clicks on a link with your name in it. You will not know WHO clicked, but only that someone did.

How do these steps help?

If you're sending out resumes but not getting any notifications, that's bad. That means that upon reading your resume, there is no interest on the company's part to take your job search to the next step. If you are getting notifications, that's good! That means your resume is having a positive impact on a hiring manager, HR department, or recruiter and your phone should be ringing in response. (As an aside, be sure your outgoing message is professional!)

What else can I do?

Keep active on LinkedIn! Over time this will rise above other SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages) and make the very best digital impression on those who can hire you.

Good Luck!