

## 10 Ways to Manage Your Social Media Footprint

In working with hundreds of thousands of college and graduate school applicants each year, Kaplan Test Prep seeks to help students put their best foot forward during every part of the admissions process...even in areas that they didn't know play a role in the admissions process. Informed by insights from our annual surveys of college, business school, graduate school, law school and medical school admissions officers, which found that what you post online can hurt (and sometimes help) your admissions chances, we provide the following tips on what you can do to manage your online profile.

1. **Check your digital trail and keep it clean.** In Kaplan's [2012 survey of college admissions officers\\*](#), 26% said they have visited applicants' social networking pages, while 27% Googled them to learn more – and 35% said what they found negatively impacted their admissions chances. Search yourself on Google, Yahoo and other search engines, and clean up anything that doesn't put you in a positive light.
2. **Limit your profile searchability.** Facebook's default settings allow anyone to find your profile online. You can disable this so that search engines won't link to your profile. Go to Account - Privacy Settings - Apps and Websites - Public Search (Edit Settings) and uncheck "Enable Public Search".
3. **Keep your profile photo appropriate.** Be aware that even if you set your privacy settings so you're searchable but only friends can see your posts and pictures, your name and profile photo are still visible. If so, make sure your photo is what you want to present if someone pulls up your profile.
4. **Control who can contact you on Facebook.** By default, anyone on Facebook can send you a message. You can change this setting to "friends of friends," so only people who have a mutual friend can contact you. Click Account - Privacy Settings - How You Connect.
5. **Remove your past posts from public view.** A recently added privacy setting, "Limit The Audience For Past Posts" will change content that may previously have been publicly posted to be only viewable by Friends in your network.
6. **Take control of tagging on your profile.** Facebook's default settings allow friends to tag you in their photos, profile posts, and even check you into places – which can be public without your knowledge. Change these settings so only friends can see these posts. Go to "How Tags Work" under Privacy settings and opt out.
7. **Filter your Friends network.** In Kaplan's survey, some college admissions officers said they only visited an applicant's Facebook profile when tipped off anonymously.
8. **Make your Twitter account permission-only.** If you have a Twitter account, by default, anybody can view your tweets and follow you. To protect your privacy and tweets, go to Settings - Accounts – and then check "Protect my tweets."
9. **Or, change your Twitter name.** If you want to make your Twitter account public but not associated with your name, change your name by clicking on "Settings" on the drop down menu at the top right corner of your profile page (click on the upside-down triangle). Go to the "Accounts" tab and the first listing is "Name". You can create a different name for yourself.
10. **Be smart and think about everything you post online before you do it.** The Internet has a LONG memory. After all your hard work, the last thing you want to keep you out of your top school or program choices is an inappropriate Facebook photo or offensive tweet.