Mind Pad Notes d'idées

Canada's student written, edited, and published psychology newsletter.

Le bulletin rédigé, édité et publié par les étudiants de la Société canadienne de la psychologie.

SPRING 2013

CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE PSYCHOLOGIE

Notes d'idées

Le bulletin rédigé, édité et publié par les étudiants de la Société canadienne de la psychologie.

Mind Pad has two mandated goals:

1. It aims to provide a professional newsletter that is written and reviewed by students of psychology who are affiliates of the Canadian Psychological Association. The content of the newsletter should be of interest to all who are practicing and studying psychology, but the primary audience of the newsletter is students of psychology.
2. It aims to offer studying psychology researchers and writers an opportunity to experience a formal submission process, including submission, review, and resubmission from the points of view of both submitter and reviewer/editor.

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Le mandat de *Notes d'idées* a deux objectifs :

1. Fournir un bulletin professionnel rédigé et évalué par les étudiants en psychologie qui sont membres affiliés de la Société canadienne de psychologie. Le contenu devrait être d'intérêt à tous les praticiens et étudiants en psychologie, mais les étudiants en psychologie sont les lecteurs cibles.
2. Fournir aux étudiants en psychologie l'opportunité de connaitre le processus formel de soumission y compris la soumission, la révision, et la resoumission du point de vue d'auteur et d'évaluateur/redacteur.

Notes d'idées est une revue étudiante de la Société canadienne de psychologie (SCP). La SCP réserve les droits d'auteur. Les opinions exprimées sont strictement celles des auteurs et ne reflètent pas nécessairement les opinions de la Société canadienne de psychologie, ses représentants, directeurs, ou employés. Notes d'idées paraît deux fois par année et n'est publié qu'en format électronique. Le bulletin est disponible aux membres de la SCP et au public.

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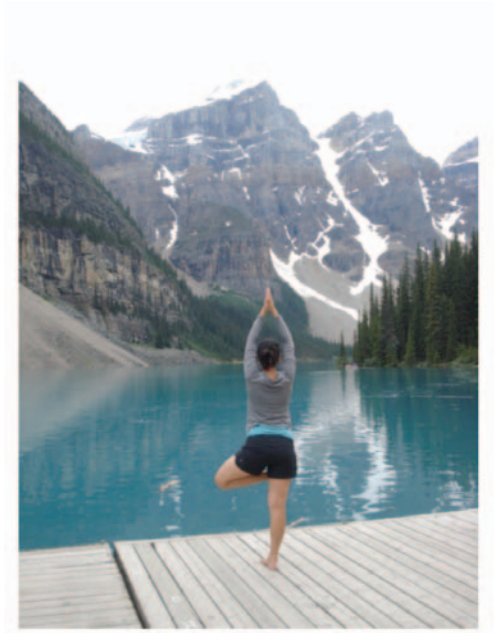
A *word from the editor...*

by Rana Pishva M.Sc., Editor-in-Chief
Queen's University

A Profile Picture is Worth a Thousand Intentions

"*Profile Pic!*" says my friend as she returns my camera.

Excited, I scroll through the pictures where I am standing in a strong yogic "tree pose" with the beautiful Moraine Lake in the background. In the picture, my fingers are reaching to the sky and I stand tall on my right leg, with my back to the camera. As I place the camera in its case, I can already imagine all the "likes" and comments that would appear under my picture once I upload it onto a social media site. I walk away from the scene without taking a second look at one of Canada's most beautiful sceneries.



This picture reflects a number of intentions: I wanted to show off my yoga skills and remember the breath-taking scenery of Moraine Lake. The picture would become an anchor of one the best trips of my life. The picture was also an attempt to exemplify my "hoped-for-possible self", which unfortunately, came at a cost.

The "hoped-for-possible self" is a socially desirable representation of what a person would like to be, or become, given the appropriate conditions. The intention is infinite when selecting a profile picture: one might want to present as adventurous (e.g., a picture of you rock climbing), mysterious (e.g., your shadow on the beach at sunset), outgoing (e.g., you at the lab Christmas party, holding your fifth glass of eggnog), or caring (e.g. playing with your new nephew). Social networking sites amplify the public process of identity construction and identity announcement. Clicking the "Like" icon, or adding a supportive comment such as "you look incredible!" are examples of identity placement – the act of endorsing another person's identity announcement. When profile pictures are carefully selected and supported by others, an online hoped-for-possible self is born. In the online universe, identities that aren't necessarily true in the "real-world" are actualized with the click of a button.

In my opinion, the picture is ideal for my online profile as it reflects my love of travel and yoga. Yet, I continue to wonder whether the picture or any other of my profile pictures truly represent who I am. I doubt whether a single picture can really encompass

an individual's personality, likes, dislikes, strengths, and weaknesses. Undoubtedly, the opportunity we have to represent ourselves in various realms (i.e., the internet and the 'real-world') comes with its set of downfalls.

Most importantly, I realized that maintaining an online identity has bled into my everyday life. Living a dual life - online and in the 'real-world' - has taken me away from living in the moment, because capturing snippets of my experiences into pictures becomes more important than the experience itself. Looking back at the picture of me in the tree pose in front of Moraine Lake, I cannot help but wonder what I would have seen if I had taken another moment to indulge in the surroundings. Instead, I have a static picture to remind me of an infinite number of moments, and many friends "Liking" it.

In this *MindPad* issue, we explore the relationship between Psychology, the Media, and Social Networking. Cyberpsychology is a relatively new field of study that explores an ever-growing aspect of the human experience: the Internet. I hope that you enjoy our contribution to it.

I would like to thank the editorial panel, and Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Lisa Votta-Bleeker. This issue would not have been possible without the support of CPA student section's executive committee, as well as Tyler Stacey-Holmes, Manager of Association Development & Membership.

I want to give a special thank you to Dr. Angela Birth, who has been our senior advisor since our inaugural year. Dr. Birt has helped us with reviewing articles and provided invaluable feedback. Thank you for being part of our journey. Next year, Dr. Dorothy Cotton C.Psych. will take over as our Senior Advisor – we are happy to have her on board!

Finally, this issue will be my last as the Editor-in-Chief of *MindPad*. It has been my honour to serve as the first Editor-in-Chief, and sharing bits and pieces of my life as a graduate student in these editorials. I will continue to discuss my experiences as a graduate student in my blog "Average: Chronicles of a PhD", which can be accessed at http://averagechronicles.wordpress.com/.

I am proudly passing the torch to Justin Feeney (jfeeney3@uwo.ca), current Chair of the Student section. I do not doubt that Justin will have a lot of tell you.

As always, do not hesitate to email your comments and questions at rana.pishva@queensu.ca and visit our website, (www.cpa.ca/students/mindpad) for more information, news, and updates.

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Zhao, S. Grasmuck, S., & Martin, J. (2008). Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Computers in Human Behavior, 24*(5), 1816-1836.

Un mot de la rédactrice en chef...

par Rana Pishva M.Sc., rédactrice en chef
Université Queen's

Une photo de profil cache mille intentions

« *Bonne photo pour ton profil!* » me lance mon amie en me rendant mon appareil photo.

Curieuse, je fais défiler les photos jusqu'à celle où je suis debout dans la posture de « l'arbre » de yoga, le magnifique lac Moraine en arrière-plan. Dans cette photo, mes mains pointent vers le ciel et je me tiens debout bien droite, sur ma jambe droite, le dos tourné à l'objectif. En remettant l'appareil dans son étui, je peux déjà imaginer tous les « j'aime » et les commentaires que je recevrai sous ma photo lorsque je l'aurai téléchargée sur un site de média social. Je me suis éloignée de la scène sans jeter un autre regard sur l'un des paysages les plus majestueux du Canada.

Cette photo sous-tend un bon nombre d'intentions : je voulais montrer mes compétences en yoga et me souvenir du paysage à couper le souffle du lac Moraine. La photo deviendrait le point de référence de l'un des plus beaux voyages de ma vie. La photo était aussi une tentative d'illustrer mon « moi en devenir possible », ce qui a malheureusement un coût.

Le « moi en devenir possible » est une représentation désirable d'un point de vue social de ce qu'une personne aimerait être ou devenir, dans les conditions appropriées. L'intention est infinie en choisissant une photo de profil : on pourrait se représenter comme aventureuse (p. ex. une photo d'une escalade de rocher), mystérieuse (p. ex. un ombrage de soi sur une plage à la tombée du jour), sociable (p. ex. au party de Noël du laboratoire, tenant son cinquième verre de lait de poule), ou bienveillante (p. ex. au jeu avec son nouveau neveu). Les sites de réseautage sociaux amplifient le processus public de construction de l'identité et d'annonce de l'identité. En cliquant sur l'icône « J'aime » ou en ajoutant un commentaire d'appui comme « tu as vraiment l'air très bien! » sont des exemples de placement d'identité – l'acte de donner l'aval à l'annonce de l'identité d'une autre personne. Lorsque les photos de profil sont sélectionnées attentivement et corroborées par d'autres, un soi en devenir espéré en ligne est né. Dans l'univers en ligne, des identités qui ne sont pas nécessairement vraies dans la « vraie vie » sont actualisées avec le clic d'un bouton.

À mon avis, la photo est idéale pour mon profil en ligne parce qu'elle reflète ma passion pour le voyage et le yoga. Tout de même, je continue à me demander si la photo ou toute autre photo de mon profil me représente vraiment. Je doute qu'une seule photo puisse vraiment saisir toutes les facettes de la personnalité, les choses qu'on aime, les choses qu'on n'aime pas, les forces et les faiblesses de la personne. Il n'y a pas de doute, l'occasion que nous avons de nous représenter dans divers contextes (p. ex. Internet et la « vraie vie ») comporte son lot d'inconvénients.

De façon encore plus importante, j'ai constaté que le maintien d'une identité en ligne a transpiré dans ma vie quotidienne. Une vie double - en ligne et dans la « vraie vie » - m'a amené à vivre un peu moins dans l'instant présent, parce que de saisir des petits bouts de mes expériences en images en vient à prendre plus d'importance que l'expérience proprement dite. En regardant de nouveau ma photo en posture de l'arbre devant le lac Moraine, je ne peux que me demander ce que j'aurais vu si j'avais plutôt pris ce moment pour prendre toute la mesure de l'endroit où je me trouvais. Plutôt, j'ai pris une photo statique de moi-même pour me rappeler un nombre infini de moments, que de nombreux amis « aiment ».

Dans le présent numéro de *Notes d'idées*, nous explorons la relation entre la psychologie, les médias et le réseautage social. La cyberpsychologie est un domaine d'études relativement nouveau qui examine un aspect toujours grandissant de l'expérience humaine : Internet. J'espère que vous apprécierez la contribution que nous y faisons.

Je tiens à remercier le comité rédactionnel, et l'adjointe à la chef de la direction de la SCP, Dre Lisa Votta-Bleeker. Ce numéro n'aurait pas été possible sans le soutien du comité exécutif de la Section des étudiants de la SCP, ainsi que de Tyler Stacey-Holmes, gestionnaire du développement de l'association et de l'adhésion.

Je tiens à remercier tout particulièrement Dre Angela Birth, qui a été notre conseillère principale depuis notre année d'inauguration. Dre Birth nous a aidés à réviser les articles et à nous fournir une rétroaction inestimable. Je vous remercie d'avoir pris part à notre parcours. L'an prochain, Dre Dorothy Cotton, psy.a, assumera à sa place le rôle de conseillère principale – nous sommes heureux de l'avoir à bord!

Pour conclure, ce numéro sera mon dernier à titre de rédactrice en chef de *Notes d'idées*. Ce fut un honneur pour moi de jouer le rôle de première rédactrice en chef et de partager les petits riens de ma vie en tant qu'étudiante diplômée dans ces rubriques. Je continuerai de discuter de mes expériences en tant qu'étudiante diplômée sur mon blog « Average: Chronicles of a PhD », auquel vous pouvez accéder à l'adresse http://averagechronicles.wordpress.com/.

Je suis fière de passer le flambeau à Justin Feeney (jfeeney3@uwo.ca), président actuel de la Section des étudiants. Je ne doute pas que Justin aura de nombreuses choses à vous dire.

Comme toujours, n'hésitez pas à me faire parvenir par courriel vos commentaires et vos questions à l'adresse rana.pishva@queensu.ca et de visiter notre site Web (www.cpa.ca/students/mindpad) pour plus d'information, des nouvelles et des mises à jour.

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What do online social networking sites bring us? : Discussion of online and offline identity, loneliness, and difference between digital communication and real-life social interaction

Baixue Wang
University of Windsor

Abstract
There have been many debates about the pros and cons of online social networking. This article discusses the origin, spread, and influences of online social networking. The first part focuses on how people interact with each other online through their online identities (avatars), how people cultivate their online identities, and the reflection of differences between online and offline identities through personal experiences. The second part addresses the reasons why lonely and isolated individuals are more vulnerable to Internet addiction, why too much dependence on Internet can lead to increased loneliness, and the differences between online communication and real-life social interactions. This article sheds light on understanding people's online and offline behaviours and how technologies change the form of social interactions.

Résumé
Il y a eu de nombreux débats au sujet des avantages et des inconvénients du réseautage social en ligne. Cet article décrit l'origine, le rayonnement et les influences du réseautage social en ligne. La première partie met l'accent sur la manière dont les personnes interagissent entre eux en ligne par leurs identités virtuelles (avatars), la manière dont les personnes cultivent leurs identités en ligne et une réflexion sur les différences entre les identités en ligne et hors ligne par le biais d'expériences personnelles. La seconde partie se penche sur les raisons pour lesquelles les personnes solitaires et isolées sont plus vulnérables à la cyberdépendance, les raisons pour lesquelles une trop grande dépendance à Internet peut conduire à une solitude accrue et les différences entre la communication en ligne et les interactions sociales dans la vraie vie. Cet article jette un éclairage sur la compréhension des comportements en ligne et hors ligne des personnes et la manière dont les technologies changent la forme des interactions sociales.

Online social networking sites have gained significant popularity in subsequent years, such as Facebook and MySpace. Most of the social networking sites contain the following elements: personal profiles, posted pictures and statuses, interest groups, and friend lists. Social networks are "simultaneously real, like natures, narrated, like discourse and collective like society" (Bruno, 1993, p. 6). Online social networking sites combine people's social life with technology, provide a virtual platform for information transmission and opinion sharing, and their primary function is to promote online communication and social connection. This article explores the history of social networking sites, online and offline identity, avatars people create in video games and on social networking pages, how we look at each other online, and the paradox of connection and loneliness related to online social networking sites that impact people's lives. The exploration provokes understanding of people's online and offline behaviours, why online social networking sites became so popular among people, especially the young, and whether online interactions can serve the same role as real life social interactions in fulfilling human emotional needs and benefiting psychological well-being.

Online users represent themselves largely through avatars, which are digital characters created by a specific person and their behaviours are manipulated by him or her (Bailenson & Blascovich, 2004). Avatars

can be understood as a form of online identity. Online identities on social networking pages, or virtual characters we create in video games, can be either similar to or totally different from people's offline identities. An identity is a way people understand who and what they are (Schouten, 1991). In online social networking pages, people create their online avatars through identity performances such as "profile management, friending, becoming a fan ("liking" fan pages), tagging, being tagged, updating statuses, and having responses given by others to one's own status updates" (Salih, 2002). We look at and identify others online mainly through these identity performances, and, at the same time, are consistently being "watched" by others (Bauman, 1966). People gather on social networking sites to socialize, obtain recent information about an individual or a group, or learn about a person's likes and dislikes by exploring his or her profile (Bauman, 1996). Tyler (1994) found, "the subject can never reconcile the split between itself and its mirror image, the eye which sees and the eye which is seen, the I who speaks and the I who is spoken, the subject of desire and the subject of demand, who must pass through the defiles of the other's signifiers" (pp.212-248). This means one's identity is a combination of self-desire and other's evaluation, we identify ourselves both through our own intentions and what others view about us. For instance, one may need to suppress his or her beliefs because of the fear of violating social rules. One may behave in different ways when meeting people with different socio-economic status. People behave in a more causal way when interacting with close friends, but in a more formal way when working in the workplace. Likewise, online identity reflects some characters of the individual and is partly based on others' opinions. The individual can cultivate his or her online identity through activities shown in online social networking websites. For example, if one wants to be considered "cool" or "rebel", he or she may add many "liking" fan pages such as rock music in her personal profile; and if one is an environmentalist, he or she may "post" and "tweet" information about animal protection and environmental-friendly lifestyles and join online groups. This is done because information is shown in public and can influence other people's opinion about him or her. It can also be understood as a form of identity experimentation, because the online identity is more fluid and can be manipulated. This may be why people spend plenty of time online cultivating their online identities — it is a virtual place where people can present themselves in various ways and influence others' opinions towards themselves.

An individual's identity is composed of some combination of "now selves"— images of the self as it is perceived by an individual at the time of observation, and the "possible selves"— images of the self that have not yet been realized but that are hoped for or feared (Markus & Nurius, 1986, pp. 954-969). Online social networks create a virtual world in which people can develop alternative identities and fulfill their "possible selves." For example, a girl in grade six or seven can enter a public chatroom and pretend to be a woman around her 20s because most of the identities online are anonymous. She may be very excited because online chatrooms provide her with a new identity ¾ a woman in her 20s. It is normal for every girl to dream of being a lady. As such, chatrooms can be considered something like a time machine as she can go to the future and no longer be considered a child. This activity fulfills her wish of "possible selves." However, because of the "gap" between online and offline identities, the excitement is quickly reduced. After all, pretending to be an adult is hard for a child. Many studies find that pretending to be someone online is very popular among teenagers. According to Valkenburg's study (2008), more than half of the adolescents who use the Internet had experience of pretending to be someone else in emails, instant messaging (IM), or chat lines. One of the reasons may be that forming identity and developing a coherent sense of self is of greater importance during adolescence than any other developmental stages (Erikson, 1994), and online social networking sites provide a good place for experimenting identities and fulfilling possible selves. Another reason is that creating "alternative" identities can bring adolescents the thrilling feeling of escape from the confines of the body (Turkle, 1995), because in the offline adult world they are commonly treated as less knowledgeable, less serious and less competent than adults (Leung, 2011). However, in the online virtual world they can be equal to adults and have more power and control over their lives than in the real world. In a word, online social network page provides people an opportunity to present themselves online, let others know better about themselves, and for some of them, online identity can serve as "possible selves". The excitement of achieving possible selves and identity experimentation may help explain why online social networking is especially popular among teenagers.

Furthermore, I think social networking sites have created a paradox of connection and loneliness. On the one hand, it helps people keep in touch with

friends, broadens social circles and gain social support. As Marshall Mcluhan (1962) explained in his work, the world is more like a "global village" connected by the Internet. The Internet helps shorten the physical distance between people and connect the people all around the world. Online social networking sites and virtual chat are also essential ways for people to gain social support. Social support can be seen as a source from which people receive care and compassion, material or behavioral assistance, guidance and advice, as long as evaluations. Social support plays an important role in reducing an individual's stress level, regulating an individual's mood, and providing individuals with sufficient support. A study done by Leimeister, Schweizer, and Kracmar (2008) found that virtual communities and relationships helped meet patient's social needs and offered emotional support; further, the information passed by virtual communities was of great importance in helping patients cope with illness.

Nevertheless, too much reliance on online social interaction can increase people's loneliness. Loneliness is a sense of deprivation in one's social relationships (Murphy & Kupshik, 1992). According to Moore and Schultz's study (1983), lonely adolescents with little social support in real life are less confident of their performances in face-to-face interactions and prefer communicating with people online to gain emotional support and build caring companionships. From one side, interacting with others online, making friends, and sharing interests may be a good way for lonely adolescents to gain the emotional and social support that they cannot get in real life in order to fulfill their psychological needs. Previous research also found lonely individuals preferred online interaction to face-to-face interaction more than non-lonely individuals, and this may due to the fluidity of online identities and anonymity in online interaction (Leung, 2011). Lonely individuals can build online identities that are difficult to achieve in real life; they also perceive online communication as the "Prozac of social communication" (Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2000, p.20), which makes them feel "safe" and brings less stress than face-to-face communication (Caplan, 2003; Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2000). However, Kim (2009) found that the strong and excessive Internet use of lonely individuals could lead to negative life outcomes, such as harming others, and therefore, isolate them from healthy social activities and increase their loneliness. The findings suggest, even though online virtual communication temporarily fulfills individuals' social needs, it cannot teach people social skills, such as how to act and communicate with others in offline social occasions. Man is a social animal who needs to communicate with others. Isolation from other people may have several long-term effects on individuals, such as decreasing communication ability, and increasing depression, social-anxiety and inappropriate social behaviours. Moreover, too much dependence on online social interaction and the avoidance of offline social interaction can disturb one's normal daily social activities and relationships with others. The individual who keeps texting, messaging online, refuses to talk with or maintain a relationship with one's parents or peers, risks damaging existing relationships, and causing more family conflict, bullying, and isolation (Leung, 2011). Inadequate family warmth and lack of friends are associated with increased loneliness and more severe individual addiction to the Internet (Caplan, 2003).

In addition, the quality and context of online communication or virtual talk are quite different from real life social interactions and may not fulfill the emotional needs of human beings. According to Harris and Sherblom (2005), synchronicity, media richness and social presence available through the medium are three key factors that shape the interactions that occur. Synchronicity can be defined as the ability of interactions to occur in real time (Harris & Sherblom, 2005). Media richness can be understood as the number of details the medium carries about the members of the group. Face-to-face communication is very high in media richness (e.g. words, voice, and gestures), whereas telephone conversation is not as rich (e.g. words and voice), and text-based conversation is very lean on detail (i.e. only words). Social presence requires the medium to form emotional connections between members (McArthur, 2009). Those three factors can be understood as qualitative elements that measure the quality of an interaction. Regarding these three elements, the quality of online social interactions is challenged. Online social interactions often occur with delay, lack media richness (most are text-based), and seldom build emotional connections between the conversation members. Additional information (e.g., eye contact, body language, and facial expression) also plays an important role in interpersonal communication. It helps people express their emotions and show concern towards others more authentically and fully. For example, smiling as a form of non-verbal communication can be a way of showing friendliness and has positive effects on others (Ekman, Davidson, & Friesen, 1990; Ekman & Friesen, 1982; Ekman, Friesen, & Ancoli, 1980). This

non-verbal information is essential in building a friendly and harmonious conversation environment. However, online conversation lacks these elements. Online interaction cannot provide as much emotional response, intimacy, and compassion as in face-to-face communication. For example, if one goes out with friends, one can enjoy the care and intimacy through eye-to-eye contact, gestures and feeling of being needed. This largely fulfills one's emotional needs and decreases loneliness.

In conclusion, the development of the Internet and social networking sites has facilitated social interactions, provided places for self-presentations and kept people in touch with their friends. However, it has also brought some problems, such as the split between online and offline identities, loneliness and low-quality social interactions. In the future, with the development of new technology, the ways for people to interact and communicate with each other will become more and more diverse. Whether digital communications can replace face-to-face conversations, meet people's emotional needs, and benefit people's psychological well-being is still in question.

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What Impact do Modern Technologies have on Potential and Present Sufferers when Encouraging Abnormal Eating Behaviours?

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Abstract
There is concern surrounding the prevalence of pro-eating disorder websites and their harmful nature. This article discusses the negative effects that may be experienced by viewers and incorporates study results pertaining to internet behaviour, identity, socialization, treatment and recovery from eating disorders, and the effects of exposure to mass media. The findings from these sources indicate that the concern within the global community is warranted, as they support the premise of negative effects on potential and current sufferers. Further research is necessary to address the implications of these effects on those who are vulnerable to developing an eating disorder.

Résumé
Il y a une préoccupation entourant la prévalence des sites Web sur les troubles proboulimiques et leur nature visible. Cet article décrit des effets négatifs que les usagers pourraient éprouver et intègre les résultats d'études relativement au comportement, à l'identité, à la socialisation, au traitement et à l'habilitation des troubles de l'alimentation et les effets de l'exposition aux médias sociaux. Les conclusions de ces sources indiquent que les préoccupations au sein de la communauté mondiale sont justifiées, étant donné qu'elles appuient la prémisse d'effets négatifs sur les victimes potentielles et actuelles. Il faut davantage de recherche pour se pencher sur les conséquences de ces effets sur ceux qui sont vulnérables à développer un trouble de l'alimentation.

As the internet continues to grow and develop, its contents also become more variant and original – sometimes to the point of controversy. Of particular concern is the phenomenon of pro-anorexia and pro-bulimia websites that encourage eating disorders and exist on social networking websites, blogs, and websites that are independently created (Morris, 2009). There is apprehension surrounding the manner of involvement in these online communities as it consists of documenting one's current and ideal weight and the amount of calories ingested in daily food journals (Fading Beauty, 2008; Pro Ana, n.d.). As a result of this disapproval, the effects of viewing these websites have been studied. They consist of encouraging the further development of present disorders and increasing eating-related thoughts and behaviours while developing a lowered self-esteem for members in general (Harper, Sperry, & Thompson, 2008). There is also a lowered probability that those living with anorexia will seek treatment, resulting in a higher prevalence rate of health complications (Brown, Mehler, & Hill Harris, 2000). This article addresses these effects by critically analyzing research findings from numerous perspectives. The validity of the negative attention they are receiving is explored in order to develop a deeper understanding of their implications.

Pro-eating disorder websites have become increasingly pervasive as the internet has grown; most notable is the 470% increase in prevalence rate between the years of 2006-2007 (Morris, 2009). One in three female Internet users between the ages of 6 and 15 (n=1500) has reportedly searched the Internet for weight-loss advise, and 35.5% of patients with eating disorders have visited pro-anorexia websites (Morris, 2009). Overtime the negative effects of these websites have become more clear (Davis, 2008): the results of a study conducted at Stanford University and the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital suggest that pro-anorexia websites hinder the success of recovery (Goodstein, 2007). Hospitalization was also found to

be three times more common for website members than non-users (Goodstein, 2007). The authors found that 40% of patients living with an eating disorder are also members of pro-anorexia websites, 61% of which have learned new techniques for weight-loss and purging through these websites (Goodstein, 2007). Another study found that 35% of those living with anorexia who visit pro-anorexia websites also visit pro-recovery websites; however pro-anorexia websites are much more abundant than pro-recovery websites with a 5:1 ratio (Wilson, Peebles, Hardy, & Litt, 2006). The demographics of pro-anorexia website viewers has been gathered from the information provided by the members on their profiles. Though caution must be taken in assuming the validity of the members' reports, they show that the cohort group most often visiting these websites are girls and young women. This causes concern because it is at these stages in life when the basis for self-conception is formed and when individuals are most sensitive to social comparison. Though weight-related concerns are common for this age group, eating disorders are a psychiatric disorder and cannot be developed by the majority of the population. Individuals with strong feelings of isolation, lack of control, and being misunderstood are most susceptible (Dias, 2003). This is especially true when the disorder presents with comorbid depression, an anxiety disorder, and/or obsessive-compulsive disorder, though these are not essential to its development (Lock, Le Grange, Agras, & Dare, 2001). These websites have the ability to exploit these characteristics in an individual by playing on their vulnerabilities and then justifying the illness as a lifestyle.

Denying that anorexia is an illness acts as a large contributor to sustaining the disorder, and usually appears once the disorder has become severe. These websites promote denial right from the beginning, making interventions and initial diagnosis much more difficult (Kolodny, 2004). By hiding their illness from people offline and employing tips and tricks to appear healthy, the recovery process is slowed down because friends and family are less likely to notice changes in their behaviour and appearance (Rodham, Rodham, Rodham, & Poyer, 2008). To complicate matters, pro-anorexia websites assure the individual with an eating disorder that anyone offering aid actually has bad intentions in mind and should not be trusted. This may also be a result of group polarization where, once a group identity is established, members feel pressure to conform and then begin to compare their views with those of others (Mulveen et al., 2006). Group identity is established through the "Thinspiration" (My Friend, Ana/Thinspiration, n.d.) that is readily available to members and consists of images, tips, quotations, message boards, and more. The members are encouraged to recite 'Ana's Creed', which belittles the individual with statements such as, "I believe that I am the most vile, worthless, and useless person ever to have existed on the planet, and that I am totally unworthy of anyone's time and attention" (Uca, 2004; Pro Ana Lifestyle, 2007). Members repeatedly state, "It's a lifestyle, not a disease!" (Uca, 2004; Pro Ana Lifestyle, 2007) and "it's not deprivation; it's liberation!" (Fading Beauty, 2008), and argue strongly that anorexia nervosa is a form of self-expression. When we look to those active in body modification for acceptance of this perspective, activists are quick to refute it and voice that starving one's self is unhealthy (Modify, n.d.). Despite this, those living with anorexia view side effects like the loss of hair and growth of lanugo hair as positive changes and as an indication of progress towards obtaining their goal (DeMello, 2007). Members speak proudly of these developments on the forums and group polarization can be applied here as well: individuals who are not experiencing these side effects may progress further into their illness to achieve the same results as their fellow members (Mulveen et al., 2006).

Those living with anorexia are also less likely to seek recovery due to the anonymity offered by the Internet because it provides them with an added tool to keep their illness hidden from those close to them in their daily lives (Rodham et al., 2008). Online, individuals feel as though they are able to reveal as much about themselves as they desire (Joinson, 2003) since they do not face any social consequences in a place where social norms do not exist (Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimons, 2002). This occurrence is detrimental for a number of reasons, particularly concerning the physical health complication that are likely to arise: the resulting imbalance of potassium (K+) in the body may account for heart arrhythmias, kidney damage, and renal failure if the imbalance lasts for an extended period. Those who sustain an eating disorder for a prolonged amount of time begin to suffer from the effects of malnutrition. For this reason they are prone to develop illnesses that result from having a lowered immune system, reduced body fat, and vitamin and mineral deficiencies (Brown et al., 2000). Anaemia and osteoporosis tend to be prominent as a result of decreased iron, B12, and calcium intake (Brown et al., 2000). It can be inferred that these websites pose an immense health

and safety risk to their members who struggle with anorexia and cannot be recognized as morally sound.

Unfortunately, the individuals involved in these websites are oblivious to the negative impact: those members who are currently suffering from anorexia nervosa exhibit an ambivalent attitude toward their illness (Fox, Ward, & O'Rourke, 2005). This ambivalence can be seen through the coexistence of the determination to progress deeper into (or maintain) the disorder and the understanding that the behaviour is damaging and unhealthy (Fox et al., 2005). Despite their understanding of the potential medical complications, these members strongly reject being depicted as sick or as having a disease (Fox et al., 2005). They also deny the theory that their starvation is for beauty or thinness, and indicate that their eating disorder is the result of harmful past experiences and the attempt to achieve control (Fox et al., 2005). These individuals turn to pro-anorexia websites as a coping strategy to deal with the negative stigma associated with the disorder (Dias, 2003). The websites also compensate for society's perceived lack of understanding that contributes to their feelings of dealing with the eating disorder alone (Dias, 2003). Pro-anorexia websites offer their members social acceptance, reversing the effects of the hostility they may feel in the real world. The websites also have a non-judgemental social network established within them, in that individuals can confide in the other members who claim to understand, care, and actively listen (Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005). For these reasons, some people believe that the extinction of these websites would be disadvantageous, as the fear of intimacy that stems from the isolation associated with the illness can make these websites a refuge for sufferers who otherwise might not have social support (Motz, 2008). The aforementioned study whose findings indicated that pro-anorexia websites hinder recovery contradicts this belief. It is evident that this temporary retreat from reality (Brotsky & Giles, 2007) presents a false sense of community (Kolodny, 2004) that pushes sufferers further away from exploring treatment options. This has the contrary effect of isolating them from reality while they live out their online lives and become increasingly oblivious to the seriousness of their behaviours (Clarke, 2008).

Other media has been scrutinized for instilling unhealthy ideals into the minds of their viewers as well. For example, fashion magazines were found to be a strong force in instilling the idea of obtaining the perfect body in the minds of their readers (Field et al., 1999). The effects seen from pro-eating disorder websites has been contrasted with research findings from fashion media studies to gage their severity. In one of these studies, women who view pro-anorexia websites were compared with women who view fashion or home decorating websites. Findings indicated that viewers of pro-anorexia websites demonstrated an increased level of negative effects, including lower self-esteem and lower appearance self-efficacy, than those who viewed fashion websites (Bardone-Cone et al., 2007). Women who viewed pro-anorexia websites were also more likely to exercise, question their weight, view themselves as being overweight, and compare their image with that of others more often (Bardone-Cone et al., 2007). Two other studies found negative effects consistent with these results when they compared the viewing of pro-eating disorder websites to the viewing of neutral websites. One study compared pro-eating disorder websites with professional websites and found that the pro-eating disorder websites demonstrated greater negative consequences in terms of body image and eating-related thoughts and behaviours (Harper et al., 2008). The second study found that these results were consistent among the viewers of pro-anorexia websites regardless of whether or not they were realistically overweight and whether or not they had an existing eating disorder (Bardone-Cone et al., 2007). These study results make it clear that the negative effects of viewing fashion media are exacerbated in individuals who view pro-anorexia websites.

Despite the detrimental effects of pro-anorexia websites, the right to free speech allows people to voice their opinions online regarding anorexia (Motz, 2008) and so an internet patrol group cannot be organized to manage their expansion. However, many pro-anorexia websites have been shut down by online databases such as Facebook, Daily Motion, LiveJournal, and Myspace, and are no longer recognized by certain search engines. This is in accordance with the databases' Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. This acts to disenable the movement by creating barriers to actively seek out these websites while protecting other users from harmful or distressing material (Morris, 2009). Unfortunately, these efforts go generally unnoticed: as websites are being deleted, numbers of others are being created (Morris, 2009). The large amount of website-building software that is freely available allows individuals to recreate pro-anorexia websites whenever formerly existing sites are demolished, making it nearly impossible to end this online movement. The rationale for wanting these websites prohibited is understandable: self-destruc-

tive information and viewpoints are easily accessible to vulnerable individuals and can trigger or encourage the progress of an eating disorder. This is seen through their promotion of anorexia as a lifestyle and outstanding achievement, and by providing an environment for social comparison/competition surrounding calorie restriction (Rich, 2006). Despite the modernity of the relevant research, it shows that these websites have detrimental effects on their viewers and that those currently living with anorexia are especially susceptible to their messages. However, it is not yet clear if those effects are directly related to the development of an eating disorder. Further research in this area is needed in order to be able to assess the effects of pro-anorexia websites in their entirety. Until then, the current information regarding the effects on present sufferers can be used where best suited: as initial intake information prior to treatment, in understanding and studying the patient's perspective of their disorder, and in future sociological studies where internet identities are studied.

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Prospective Employers are Watching You: Social Networking and Your Next Job

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ABSTRACT

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) such as Facebook and Twitter increasingly influence how we choose to interact with others. Organizations have chosen to be a part of this interaction, often by using SNSs as part of their selection systems. Although only limited research has investigated the validity of such usage, employers continue to believe that SNSs can be used to draw important inferences about an applicant's character. Unfortunately, some employers have breached applicants' privacy by requesting their username and password for their SNS account(s) in an effort to attain SNS information. The current article discusses the potential advantages and disadvantages of using SNS information for selection, and offers practical suggestions on what prospective job applicants should do with their SNS account(s) when they enter the job market.

RÉSUMÉ

Les sites de réseautage sociaux (SRS) comme Facebook et Twitter ont de plus en plus d'influence sur la manière dont nous choisissons d'interagir avec les autres. Les organisations ont choisi de faire partie de cette interaction, souvent en utilisant les SRS dans le cadre de leurs systèmes de sélection des candidats. Même s'il n'y a eu que peu de recherche sur la validité de cette utilisation, les employeurs continuent de croire que les SRS peuvent être utilisés pour dégager des inférences importantes au sujet du caractère d'un candidat. Malheureusement, certains employeurs ont violé la vie privée des candidats en demandant leur nom d'utilisateur et leur mot de passe pour leurs comptes de SRS dans un effort pour obtenir de l'information du SRS. L'article actuel décrit les avantages et les désavantages possibles d'utiliser les renseignements dans les SRS pour la sélection des candidats et offre des suggestions pratiques sur ce que les candidats à un poste devraient faire avec leurs comptes de SRS lorsqu'ils arrivent sur le marché du travail.

Since the advent of the first social networking site (SNS; e.g., Facebook and Twitter) in the early 2000's, social media has had a major influence on how we choose to interact with others. However, individual users are not the only ones making use of SNSs. Organizations have also been taking advantage of SNSs as cost-effective human resource tools. For instance, the Employers Resource Council (ERC) surveyed organizations in Northeast Ohio to see how SNSs were being used (ERC Survey Briefing, 2009). Forty-nine percent of organizations used SNSs for networking and relationship building, 35% for branding/marketing, 35% for external communication, 31% for reaching new customers, 27% for recruiting, 22% for sales, etc. These percentages indicate that organizations have been interested in making use of SNSs for multiple purposes. However, the authors did not specifically mention one important purpose of SNSs that has recently gained popularity: personnel selection (Grasz, 2009). The purpose of the current article is to discuss the potential advantages and disadvantages of using SNS information for selection, and to offer practical suggestions on what prospective job applicants should do with their SNS account(s) when they enter the job market.

The use of SNSs for selection may lead to major benefits, which may explain their popularization as a selection tool. For example, their use incurs relatively little cost, and they offer an abundance of unique information about job candidates. This allows even small organizations the opportunity to attempt to verify information contained in résumés, reference letters, interviews, and other selection information sources typically drawn from applicants. Previously, advanced background checks were unavailable to small organizations due to their substantial costs. Now, those making hiring decisions may have access to "detailed information that would allow them to draw conclusions or make inferences about the applicant's character or personality that might not be as easily or economically obtained through traditional

means" (Brown & Vaughn, 2011, p. 220). For example, interviews are expensive to conduct. Instead of (or in addition to) asking applicants about their hobbies and interests in an interview, an employer can easily find their hobbies and interests listed on their SNS profile pages. Also, because there is a near-unlimited amount of space to describe this information on SNSs, more of this information may be available than in résumés or curricula vitae, which are often limited by space restrictions.

From an organizational standpoint, the use of SNSs for personnel selection is not without its drawbacks. There has been an increasing concern that some of the information (e.g., protected group status, political affiliations) used from SNSs may not be work-related (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Grasz, 2009; SHRM, 2011). This raises two concerns. The first is that making hiring decisions using non-work-related information may violate laws or regulations that protect applicants from discrimination. For example, SNSs may reveal protected applicant characteristics (e.g., age, race, sex, marital status, religious affiliation), which could warrant a Canadian Human Rights Commission complaint if this information were collected (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2007). Recently, human resource professionals reported an increase in their legal concerns about discovering information about protected applicant characteristics from SNSs (SHRM, 2011).

The second issue is that the validity of using SNSs for hiring decisions is unknown, as there has been little research on the topic. If SNS information proves to be unable to predict job performance, then organizations using SNSs for selection might make poor hiring decisions. Ultimately, organizations may find it difficult to defend their hiring decisions in legal cases whereby qualified applicants are denied using an unproven measure (Kluemper & Rosen, 2009; Kluemper, Rosen, & Mossholder, 2012), especially when this issue is compounded by access to protected information such as race or age. As a result, the percentage of organizations using SNS information for selection has recently dropped despite the increasing popularity of these sites (SHRM, 2011).

Another validity concern is the potential for people to distort their information on SNSs. Researchers are already showing that people use SNSs to convey desired impressions to others (Cunningham, 2013), and this would likely only be enhanced when applicants become more aware that employers might view their SNS activities. As the use of SNSs becomes more widespread in the hiring process, job seekers are likely to become more aware of their SNS activities, removing negative information and placing an extra emphasis on positive traits. In this regard, we can learn from faking in personality assessment, where research reveals applicants consistently receive more favourable personality scores than do job incumbents or the general population (Birkeland, Manson, Kisamore, Brannick, & Smith, 2006). Moreover, applicant faking has been shown to impact hiring decisions (Christiansen, Goffin, Johnston, & Rothstein, 1994) and decrease the ability of personality measures to predict job performance (Peterson, Griffith, & Converse, 2009; Peterson, Griffith, Isaacson, O'Connell, & Mangos, 2011). More problematic is that research shows that faking increases dramatically once used in the workplace, as job incumbents coach new entrants on how to beat the system (Landers, Sackett, & Tuzinski, 2011), and it seems probable that this would apply to SNSs. Subsequently, even if SNSs were to have some initial prediction of job performance, this may decrease fairly quickly once companies begin using it.

Regardless, some organizations employ aggressive methods to collect SNS information for selection. For instance, a new controversial trend has been documented in the popular press, whereby potential employers request the SNS login information of applicants (McFarland, 2012; McGuigge, 2012). Asking for a job candidate's login information is more prevalent among public agencies, (e.g., law enforcement, 911 dispatchers, security; McFarland, 2012). However, other organizations also ask for login information, ask the candidate to add a human resource manager to their account, or ask the candidate to log into their SNS account during an interview (McFarland, 2012). Whereas the request of SNS login information is typically a violation of the SNSs' terms of service (O'Dell, 2012) and has been condemned as a privacy violation by law professionals (McGuigge, 2012), there are currently no laws in place in Canada or the U.S. to deal with such a situation (although there is some new legislation in progress in the U.S.; McFarland, 2012). As a result, applicants are left in an awkward position when SNS login information is requested. Even knowing that these requests are a privacy breach, what would you do if an organization requested access to your SNS pages, or even worse yet, your login information? Would you grant access so that you appear to be a "team player," or would you walk away? The answers to these questions all re-

TABLE 1

Suggestions for Modifying your Social Networking Site(s)

WHAT TO DO	WHAT TO AVOID
Try to demonstrate that you have a good knowledge of the SNS features available. This will show employers that you have a good grasp of technology.	Remove inappropriate comments or photos posted by others.
Be aware of the number of status changes you make. Some jobs (e.g., marketing) might encourage frequent SNS use, and a higher number might be seen as a positive.	Try to reduce the frequency with which you post while at work or during business hours. Even if your organization is okay with you posting, it may be perceived negatively by prospective employers as a sign of poor work ethic.
With your posts and photo uploads, try to show your personality and interests. For example, if you're family-oriented, demonstrate this with photos of your family. This will make it easier for employers to judge your fit with their organizations.	Avoid posting any radical political positions. In general, it may be best to avoid showing any strong or extreme political or religious affiliations, even if there is nothing objectively wrong about holding these positions.
Use content on your SNS profile to show your interests in books, TV shows, movies, music, and hobbies. Employers can also use this information to judge your fit with their organizations.	Avoid frequently complaining in status updates and absolutely avoid criticism of employers, co-workers, or clients. Also, avoid venting about work-related frustrations. You will appear negative and potentially neurotic to prospective employers.
Try to demonstrate positive communication skills by making sure your posts are comprehensible and by showing that you have a versatile vocabulary.	Avoid poor grammar and spelling. This demonstrates weak communication skills.
Create congruence between your SNS and your résumé (e.g., education, achievements, experience).	Do not mention looking for other employment if currently employed.
If applicable (e.g., LinkedIn), try to have other people post good references about your previous job performance. This may be applicable to Facebook and Twitter as well through informal posts.	Remove and avoid adding unfamiliar and questionable contacts. Although boosting the number of friends may increase perception of social skills, employers may make judgments based on the friends that you keep and gain access to your profile through these accounts. For example, your associate from high school that makes public posts about marijuana use may reflect negatively on you and (s)he may even share undesirable information about you.
Try to provide evidence of your qualifications. For example, post your awards and accolades. Also, update your SNS information regularly to highlight your latest accomplishments.	Avoid posting any references to sex, alcohol, or drug use. This includes references to your own usage or those of others you know. Do not have any provocative/inappropriate information (photographs, comments, etc.). This includes not posting racy or suggestive song lyrics.
Try to be creative and interesting with your posts to demonstrate that you are creative and intelligent. Appropriate, humorous quotes, photos, pictures, and posts are a great way to showcase your creativity.	Do not disclose personal information that you are not comfortable with being made public or being made available to an employer. For example, job applicants may not want their marital status or birth date (i.e., age) available or their current employers to know that they are seeking employment.
Use your SNS to demonstrate that you employ discretion, even when friends and colleagues try to encourage you to divulge information online.	Never share confidential or sensitive information from employer(s), past or present.
Cross link your SNSs. For example, link your Facebook with you Twitter account by adding your Twitter to your profile page.	Avoid poor grammar and spelling. This demonstrates poor communication skills.
Create a professional group to establish relationships with other professionals such as potential references, recruiters, and leaders.	Remove and avoid any inappropriate activity, this includes: — references to alcohol, narcotics, and sex — unprofessional language (swearing) and discriminatory comments (racist, sexist language, or homophobic language) — references to illegal activities or misconduct (even violations of university rules) — association to groups that are linked to any of the above
Make use of available privacy settings. This might include making some posts only available to close friends and family, or making positive information openly available to search engines. Sites such as Facebook give you some control over what information is shared and with whom.	As a general rule, do not post any information that you would not want your parents to see. You will not be compromising your ability to show your personality, your interests, and, in general, your life through your SNS(s).
Google your name often to help monitor what information has been made public.	

late to your own personal moral and financial motivations.

This dilemma leaves job applicants with a practical problem: what should they do with their SNS accounts when they enter the job market? This issue is of considerable importance to students who are entering the professional job market for the first time and who may be more likely to have detrimental postings on their SNSs. The obvious question is why not just delete your account? In McGuigge (2012), social networking expert Amber MacArthur argues that privacy does not exist on SNSs. Some would even argue that the lack of privacy necessitates deleting your SNS account. Removing or deactivating accounts would remove any potentially damaging SNS information. Another common solution is to change your real name to a pseudonym that would be unknown to your employer and to effectively try to conceal your personal information from prospective or current employers.

However, there are some limitations to deleting or masking your SNS account(s). The first is that employers might think it unusual that you do not have SNS account(s) given their immense popularity and employers may become suspicious that you are concealing pertinent information. The second is that masking accounts might give job applicants a false sense of security and lead to unfiltered pages that, if found, could be detrimental. For example, an employer might be able find you by e-mail address, telephone number, an association to a university or group, or an association to fellow alumni or to former colleagues. Effectively, hiding your online identity creates a dangerous 'cat and mouse' game with companies that attempt to find your online identity. Moreover, if given the job, your pseudonym will likely become apparent if you start adding your colleagues. The third and most important consideration is that trying to hide your identity is a defensive approach that overlooks the many benefits of a strong professional online identity. Removing or hiding SNS account(s) assumes that employers will only use SNS information to find potential applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements and will remove them from the hiring pool (known as "screening"; see Catano, Wiesner, Hackett, & Methot, 2010, for more information on screening procedures). However, we argue that there are many benefits to maintaining a professional online identity. For the remainder of this paper, we discuss these benefits and provide practical tips to make the most of SNSs.

The first benefit is that employers may use SNS information to discover positive traits or qualities that may help you secure employment. For example, employers might be able to assess your communication skills, your teamwork skills, your ability to impact your peers, your personality (e.g., Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability), or your relevant experience based on your past accomplishments. In other words, you can use your SNS to showcase your positive qualities that might otherwise be difficult to reveal in an interview or resume (McGuigge, 2012). Therefore, rather than deleting your account, we would recommend that you "clean up your act" and use your SNS accounts to make yourself appear more attractive to potential employers. Rather than viewing SNSs as potential liabilities, turn them into assets.

A second major benefit of maintaining an active LinkedIn or Facebook account is that if made public, these results are often easily accessible from search engine results. Cross-referencing real accomplishments with SNSs is a great way to bolster your online identity that may help you get the job and may actually assist employers in verifying those accomplishments. Moreover, although this is a new area of research, it seems intuitive that employers are likely to be impressed when a simple search of an applicant's name yields numerous accomplishments and positive hits in search engine results. It is important to note that deleting or masking accounts will minimize your online presence, including both positive and negative information.

We have prepared a list of simple and practical tips that you can use to bolster your SNSs and improve their appeal to prospective employers. Please see Table 1. This list was compiled from scholarly articles and from news articles (see references marked with an asterisk). Although a number of these suggestions rely on common sense, we urge you to go through your SNS accounts while looking at the list. A quick assessment of how one's SNS information is being portrayed does not necessarily coincide with how it is actually being portrayed. That is why it is important to go through one's SNS account and carefully review the information contained within. From our personal experience, upon careful review of their SNS information, individuals are often shocked about what and how much content they have made publicly available.

In sum, applicants are faced with two major choices in advance of a job search: to delete or hide their accounts from prospective employers, or to turn their SNSs into positive tools that highlight their pos-

itive qualities and bolster their online identity. We advocate for the second approach and have provided a list of practical tips that applicants can follow to make the most of their SNS accounts. Until legal guidelines are imposed concerning the use of SNS information in selection and more is known about the validity of SNSs in selection decisions, we believe that applicants should take a proactive approach and make the most of these tools. However, if applicants are unwilling to adhere to a professional standard when using and posting information on SNSs, measures such as deleting your account might be a better choice than letting potential employers find negative information.

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