

WHAT JOB SEEKERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

by PARNEET GOSAL on JULY 23, 2011

<http://seedwalker.com/2011/07/what-job-seekers-need-to-know-about-social-background-checks/>

We all know someone who has been (in)advertently indiscreet on Facebook or Twitter. At some point, we may even have left a random acrimonious comment on a blog or written a negative online product review using inappropriate language. But did you know that this could haunt your job prospects for the next seven years or longer? And that thanks to companies like Social Intelligence, companies are now doing much more than a background check or a cursory search on Google or LinkedIn? If you're one of the 25 million unemployed Americans looking for a full-time job or among the 33% of employed Americans unhappy with their current jobs, this post is for you.

[Social Intelligence](#) searches the web for all traces of a prospective employee's life over the past seven years across bigger social networks like Facebook and Twitter, comments on blogs including smaller Tumblr blogs, Yahoo user groups, e-commerce sites, Craigslist, and photo and video sharing sites such as YouTube and Flickr. The good news is that this brings a person's accomplishments such as professional blogs, to light. It also ensures that federal and state protected class personal information such as religion, race or marital status is not shared with employers.

The bad news is that this often unearths youthful indiscretions – committed by you or one of your friends. Did a friend tag you toting an uzi in that photo on Facebook? This may have seemed funny at the time but the context will be lost to future employers. Max Drucker, the CEO of Social Intelligence, discloses that the company looks for the following types of content, with 5-10% of background checks flagging at least one of these four types. Offenders tend to be young, white-collar employees.

- Racially insensitive remarks
- Sexually explicit material
- Flagrant display of weaponry
- Other examples of illegal activity

So if you plan on applying for a job sometime in the next seven years, play it safe by always keeping an eye on your privacy settings and explicitly asking friends not to tag you. And good luck with your job search!