Social media has revolutionised communication methods in the world of work. A recent survey showed that nearly 90% of graduate employers use social media for recruiting. It also provides a platform for graduates to build an online career presence and search for jobs. Social Media can widely expand your network and enable you to make more personal connections with potential employers. It’s never been more important to showcase yourself professionally and develop your personal brand online.

The three main ways you can use social media are as follows:

- Careers research
- Seeking opportunities
- Marketing yourself

**LinkedIn**
LinkedIn is arguably the most useful professional resource available to job hunters. LinkedIn is a great way of networking with potential employers and showcasing an online version of your CV. You can start using LinkedIn as a student and begin building your network of contacts.

Here are 10 steps to help you get started:

1. **Sign up!** There are 40 million students and new graduates on LinkedIn and numbers are growing year on year. Employers are increasingly looking for evidence of a LinkedIn profile to show that you are actively networking with people in your chosen field and that you are familiar with using social media, so don’t miss out on this opportunity to promote yourself!

   Here are some resources from LinkedIn about building a student profile and how it can benefit you: [university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students.html](university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students.html)

2. **Choose a professional-looking photo**
LinkedIn is a professional networking resource so make sure your photo reflects this and makes a good first impression on prospective employers. Don’t leave the photo out as it makes your profile look incomplete and this is one of the first things people see. Profiles with a photo get an average of 14x more views.

3. **Complete your profile fully**
This is an online version of your CV so set aside some time to complete the profile as fully as possible. A couple of hours is probably ideal to fill in all the sections with up-to-date information. Bear in mind that an online profile may be seen by anyone so it needs to be punchy, concise and cover the main highlights of your career and work experience so far really clearly.

   If you’re struggling to think of what to put in sections like ‘Experience’ then remember your part-time job, any work experience or internships you have undertaken, or perhaps some volunteering you have done. On a student profile it is important to show that you have made the most of university life so also don’t forget societies, clubs and any other extra-curricular activities.
4. **Be searchable** One of the key ways LinkedIn is used is by searching – finding people and being found. As a result it is important that your profile is searchable so three of the most important things to include are at the very top - your name, your photo and the headline. Don’t just put ‘student’ as your headline as people can’t tell anything about you from this. What career do you want to pursue? What experience do you have and what can you offer? You can use words like ‘seeking’ or ‘looking for’ to explain that you are a student looking to develop your career in a particular field.

5. **Get some connections** – LinkedIn is about networking so once your profile is up and running take some time to grow your network. Think about connections from your course such as your lecturers, people in the Careers Service, your peers and contacts from your part-time work or work experience. You can also contact people you don’t know who work in fields you are interested in – it’s all part of growing your contacts. Customise your invitation to connect by explaining briefly who you are and why you would like to connect with them, it will make them much more likely to say yes!

6. **Join groups** – this can be another good way to show your interest in a particular career, and to boost your network. Lots of the LinkedIn groups have active discussions which will help you keep up to date with the latest professional issues too. Consider contributing to discussions where relevant as well, although think carefully about what you want to say and how you want to say it. Just like Twitter, your comments will follow you!

7. **Follow companies** – If you want to work in a particular sector or for particular companies then follow their pages. Some companies start their social media recruitment before sending out job adverts, so it might mean you hear about job opportunities first. It will also demonstrate your interest and enable you to stay up to date with that company and its activities.

8. **Use the skills section and provide evidence where you can** – you can list up to 50 skills so this can be a great section to showcase your ability and to include keywords that will come up in searches. You can even get endorsements from your network as evidence of your skills. Also think about other evidence you can provide that is relevant to the jobs you are applying for – for example, linking to a website you have set up, your (professional) Twitter profile, a PowerPoint presentation you delivered, or to details of an event you have organised.

9. **Keep your profile updated** – don’t let your profile start to look tired or out of date. Keep adding new projects, job titles, skills and achievements as they happen and keep taking the time to connect with new people you meet and grow your network.

10. **Check your privacy and announcement settings** – as with all online information, make sure that you are happy with the privacy settings for your profile and also, particularly for LinkedIn, check the announcements and alerts settings. Unless these are altered they can start alerting all your connections every time you change something and this can be a little irritating for your network! [help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/78/kw/activity+feed](http://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/78/kw/activity+feed)

**Twitter**

There is a strong argument that having an active presence of Twitter is essential in industries such as the media and marketing. Twitter makes it acceptable to follow people you don’t know opening up a whole number of networking opportunities. These are our Twitter Tips:

- **Your professional bio:** try to summarise the kind of job you are looking for or what skills you have.
- **Follow:** Most major employers are active on Twitter and more importantly so are their graduate recruitment teams. Make sure you follow relevant accounts to get the latest job and events information.
- **Hashtags:** Use appropriate hashtags for your tweets. You can explore hashtags such as #ukjobs for the latest vacancies. You can also hashtag specific industries.
- **Be active:** you need to tweet most days to get noticed!
- **Engage:** retweet things of interest, comments and ask questions. This will all help raise your profile.
- **Be creative:** Don’t just retweet what others are saying, try to create your own meaningful content.
Facebook
One of the most likely places an employer will find information about you is your Facebook profile. You can also take proactive job hunting steps through Facebook. ‘Like’ companies that you are interested in and involve yourself in their online communities by commenting and asking questions. It doesn’t have to be just companies you engage with – there will be interest groups on Facebook in the career area of your choice. If you don’t want an employer to see your Facebook profile then make sure you update your privacy settings.

Blogs
Blogs are another good way to show case your personal brand online. It is a chance to write about your experiences such as traveling or undertaking an internship.

idealisticareers.org/how-blogging-can-help-you-find-your-dream-job/

Top tips
- Search for yourself online, what will an employer see about you? Add in additional search terms if your name is quite common. And don’t forget to do an image search - check where you are being tagged in your friends photos!
- Clean up your online presence. Remove or make private anything you don’t want an employer to see.
- Sell your profiles – join in debates and discussions on LinkedIn, link to potential employers, make interesting and engaging comments and show off your potential.

Remember:
69% of employers have rejected a candidate because of what they found out online
68% of employers have specifically recruited people because of what they see online

“Opportunities are tied to people and people like to work with others that share common interests that they can trust.”

Olivia Gamber, Talent Manager

Networking tips

“Build your online network”

“Look for opportunities”

“Be positive and realistic”

“Start now!”

Contact information
Careers and Employability Service
Got an enquiry? Visit the Student Services Hub
Telephone: 01786 466022
Email: careers@stir.ac.uk

stir.ac.uk/careers

This publication can be made available in different formats. Please contact the Careers and Employability Service for further information: careers@stir.ac.uk

Updated August 17 All URLs are provided in good faith.