

## **Harrington & Reed's D. Christopher Jenkins Cautions Jobseekers Using Online Social Websites.**

*Career Expert and Weekly Columnist D. Christopher Jenkins Helps Users of Online Social Networking Websites Understand the Perils of Thoughtless Internet Profiles. This Column Ran in The Las Vegas Review-Journal in January, 2008*

**June 20, 2008** - [PRLog](#) -- You can easily get burned by being careless with Internet technologies. The latest online capabilities can be liabilities versus assets if used thoughtlessly or unwisely. I see many young candidates in particular make mistakes in this area which prevent them from landing the plum positions they crave.

A hiring manager in the Action Sports Division of a major international sports management firm told me she often interviews graduating seniors from Sports Business MBA programs at leading universities. Many of these recent grads have targeted her firm as their dream employer. The company can have its pick of thousands of candidates, because the idea of being in the business of sports is very exciting and appealing to today's young people who've grown up watching ESPN and worshipping prominent sports figures.

One young woman had handled the first interview pretty well, and her resume was sound. However, as with most companies employing recent graduates, the firm went online to MySpace and Facebook to gain more insight into the young woman's persona. What they found was over 200 photos of her in revealing outfits, usually with a cigarette in one hand and a beer in the other, smashed at one party after another, often with an equally inebriated guy hanging onto her or groping her in some fashion. She was immediately dropped from consideration.

Increasingly, employers are checking these online sites, which most young people use to show the world what party animals they are. The recent phenomenon of these online photo galleries and comment boards give college kids the ego rush of feeling like worldwide "celebrities" of sorts, but the perception can be very negative when viewed, not by fellow students and friends, but by corporate employers who expect some degree of professionalism in those they hire. Such photos can seriously undermine a job search. Why not just print out a few pages of yourself at a party "mooning" the camera and staple them to your resume? The net effect is about the same.

Even if you post relatively wholesome photos of yourself, family, etc., online, there is nothing to prevent others from posting comments about you which you cannot control. "Yeah, Trisha is a great gal, but what you don't see in the family shot above is her half-brother Alex who is always getting busted for drugs. Last time I saw the dude, his nostrils looked like two peppermint lifesavers." Not exactly the kind of endorsement that gets you the nod over other qualified candidates.

The best advice is once you are out of college or grad school and pursuing a serious new career, take down all of your MySpace, Facebook, or similar accounts. Even if you code them as "Private", company experts can often get at them. If it's out there on the web, someone will ultimately see it. Be smart - get rid of them altogether, and start using "party" as a noun again. It's time to get on with your life. In the case of the sports management company above, they want to hire representatives who can maintain professionalism and control while their celebrity snowboarders and motocross clients are getting wasted right in front of them. Having photos of yourself in even worse condition than the clients, doesn't help your chances of getting hired to help keep those bad boys in check.

Another common mistake is the goofy email address. Just yesterday, I received a resume with BootyShaker@yahoo.com as a woman's contact email address for employers. Who could take her

seriously? By all means, if you are job hunting and your email address is anything offbeat, vulgar, or complicated, go to Google right now and set up a new gmail address using some straightforward derivation of your name. Donna.Jones@gmail.com sounds infinitely more professional than “DonnaWanna@yahoo.com”. It is also surprising how many candidates list no email address at all on their resume. Are they trying to make it difficult for interested employers to contact them? Both of these mistakes are commonly committed by the unthinking candidate.

I have come to the conclusion that most candidates are “unthinking”. There can be no other explanation for some of the careless mistakes and omissions on most resumes. Your resume is a critically important component of your personal marketing plan. It should be meticulously crafted and reviewed to ensure that it is absolutely as accurate and effective as possible. After all, if you can’t even type up one or two pages in an error-free and engaging format, how can you handle a considerably more complex project for my firm without making costly mistakes? The one implies the other.

Lastly, don’t list menial jobs you’ve held. For the graduate student, it is a far superior tactic to mention the findings of a study you performed on “Branding initiatives undertaken by insurance firms in sponsoring action sports events” than to fill space on your skimpy resume by listing your summer position as a “car wash attendant”. The former shows a clear interest in the industry and serves as a relevant conversation starter, while the latter only wastes ink and hurts your chances.

The business world demands excellence. Be determined to “show” rather than “say” how savvy and thorough you are by making online information technology work for you, not against you.

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