

Social Media Savvy and The Graduate School Application Process

by Hilary Flanagan

Published November 13, 2012

From: <http://www.gradschools.com/get-informed/applying-graduate-school/applying/social-media-savvy-and-graduate-school-application>

Social media savvy may help you conduct a thorough graduate program search. There is a lot of information about using social media strategies to enhance the job search, and many of those same ideas can be applied to the graduate school application process.

If you do not have a presence on any social media sites, do you need to get one? Not necessarily, but, if you already have an online presence, you will want to take time to clean up your online image, and utilize social media sites as a powerful tool to gain insight into the schools of your choice.

Current Social Media Use:

Take a look at your current social media presence. Whether you are on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, or any other site, you should spend some time looking at your profile page from the perspective of a graduate school admissions representative. What kind of a person are they going to see if they look you up online?



Hopefully, if you have created an account on any platform, you have made sure to familiarize yourself with the security and access policies of the site. Think about who has access to your information. You may want to increase your security levels. Be smart about the information you are sharing.

You may be wondering if turning off a particular site, or deleting your profile is your best option. It is certainly an option, but even erasing your entire profile does not guarantee anonymity. The best advice is to never put anything up on a social media site you would not want your prospective faculty, employers, and peers to see. Of course, if you do have something unflattering on a social media site it cannot hurt you to remove it.

Strategies for Effective Search Techniques Using Social Media:

One student wanted desperately to work for a rental car company. He changed his profile picture in Facebook to a picture of him wearing their company colors washing a

car. Maybe you could change your profile picture to a shot of you sporting a sweatshirt of your graduate school of choice, or make sure your YouTube videos are of you making a formal presentation in your field of interest.

You can research your graduate school program through social media by finding their formal school and program pages as well as pages of groups for current students, faculty, and alumni. See what they are saying about the program and the institution. What kind of research are they doing? What roles do they have in their current organizations? Where are they working and for whom?

You can definitely find out some great information from the university's formal pages. They may provide great insight to use when interviewing and composing your graduation essay.

The information you gather on individuals or through groups for students, faculty, and alumni may be just as helpful. Not only can you see the types of experiences they are having, but they will possibly be sharing some insight you never could get from a formally sanctioned page or site.

Just as you are researching the schools, their program, and their people through social media, applications committees are probably doing the same thing to you. Participating in professional exchanges and registering to attend events is something selections committees may want to see. Plus, they can check out what kinds of experience, research, and training you have from the information you provide online. Check out the articles on site specific strategies and be ready to embrace using social media tools for your graduate school search.

Applying to gradschool is a process, and we at GradSchools.com can help.
[You can read about writing your application essay by clicking here.](#)

Hilary Flanagan, M.Ed., GCDF, is a higher education career services expert, author, triathlete, certified career coach and certified etiquette consultant who is currently Director of the Center for Career Services at Notre Dame University