

Creating an Online Image!

Beyond “Managing” your Online Profile:
Creating Your Online Image

Scott Grizzard

<http://www.scottgrizzard.com/>



Why Bother?

- Job seekers now know that employers look online, and know employers will disqualify candidates based on what they see on social networking sites.
- Old way of Hiring
 - Referral? → Resume → Interview → Background Check?
 - Many job seekers are under the impression that the “Google Search” is simply part of the Background Check
 - This leads them to think, “the online stuff can only hurt me”, and they scrub at their profile until there is nothing left that is “embarrassing.”
- Some companies are like this, but most SMB's **are Not!**
- **Think Like Employer!**

Costs for Employer

- Resumes don't tell you much
 - They are used as “filtering process”.
 - People lie on resumes, and employers know it.
- Interviews are Expensive
 - Time
 - Potential Legal Expense
- Background Checks require Disclosure
- **Google is Cheap!**

How it Really Is Now

- Much “looser”, especially for SMB's
 - *If* you don't have a referral, your resume is first filtered by a gatekeeper, and then “passed on” if you qualify.
 - Resume → Google! → Interview → Background Check
 - *If* you are referred to a “non decision maker”, either same process, (see above), with a boost... or...
 - The person will Google You!, and send an email to decision maker
 - If you are referred to a decision maker, that person
 - *may* send you an email asking for resume,
 - *may* send you an email asking to “meet for coffee” (bring resume)
 - ***will* Google you!**

Your Online Profile is the **First Impression you control**

- Resumes are “scanned” to make sure you meet the job requirements.
- You have no direct control about how you are referenced
- There is very little information about you on your resume
- You can use your Online Profile to distinguish you as an **Expert!** And make people *Want* to hire **You!**
- You can use your Online Profile to mitigate “bad things”
 - You can blog about past mistakes
 - You can make people *want* to hire *you*, so “less flattering” information is “dismissed”
- You can control the “order” by which a potential employer reads about you online.
- You can make employers go to *your* page first.

Steps to Build a Positive Online Profile

1. Decide what your Online Profile should Say about you.
2. Scrub the “Bad” Stuff
3. Understand Google
4. Set up *Your* Domain
5. Set up *Your* Website
 - a) Create your “network of pages”
6. Add Content
 - a) Create Social Network Profiles
 - b) Start Blogging
 - c) Post messages on boards and email lists
7. Bring it all Together

What should your Profile Say?

- Do **not** answer “what my employers want to see.”
 - Don't lie about yourself online:
 - It is impossible to maintain
 - If you think you need to give a *wrong* impression to employers, you want to work for someone else. Be yourself.
- It should say, “**I am an expert**”
 - If you are not, fix that.
- It should say, “*I can write*”
 - If you can not, fix that.
- It should say, “This is who I am”
 - But, I am appropriate
 - If you don't like who you are...
- Your online profile should say **what you want it to say!**

Scrubbing the Bad Stuff

- You cannot get it all!
 - There are several sites that keep historical records of web pages.
- But...
 - Look at all of your online profiles, and erase embarrassing content.
 - Email webmasters/content holders that have bad/embarrassing stuff about you, and ask them to delete it.
 - Google Yourself (more on this later)
 - Change your profile permissions to hide information
 - Change your **usernames!** to something unrelated to your name.
 - Link “bad pages” to Page Rank Killers (look it up)
- Change the base url's of the sites with “bad information”.
 - So you cannot easily find it on the way-back webs.
 - Many social networks allow you to do this.
- **Never** use your real name or typical username on a site you don't want your employers to see!
 - And image search is coming, so use different thumbnails for sites you don't want associated with “you”.
- If it is *really* bad, change your name (at least the spelling). **Extreme Measure**
- **Bury the Bad Stuff with Good Stuff!!!!**

Own the Google Search!

- Understand how employers Google!
 - FirstName LastName (Middle too if you have a common name)
 - FirstName LastName City
 - FirstName LastName Profession
 - FirstName LastName Company
- Set up Google Alerts for **all** of these
- Google Yourself
 - The first two pages of **you** are the pages you want to control.
 - To do this, you need some understanding of how Google works.

How Google Works

- When you search Google, there is a complicated, secret formula that determines what is first, including
 - Where the search terms are on the site.
 - In the URL is strongest
 - In the Title is next
 - In the keywords
 - In the text
 - How often the site is updated.
 - Page Rank
 - Determined most strongly by external links *into* the site.
 - And the “rank” of the sites those links come from.
- *Your* site should be **Number 1!** – Own your site!

Setting Up Your Site – The Domain

- Due to Google's Ranking, you want to Own Your Name Domain.
 - If you can get it, you want FirstLast.com
 - Grab .net, .info, .org if you can.
 - If they are all taken, you need to get *all* of the “big searches”
 - NameLocation.com, NameProfession.com, etc.
- Head over to HostMonster.com (or the Hosting Company you choose) and click “sign up now”.
 - Since we are going to set up a website, we want to buy it on our web host.
 - HostMonster will give you the domain name for free if you sign up for hosting.
 - I recommend them as good hosts.

Set Up Your Site – Your Site

- Now that you have a domain, and have signed up for hosting, it is time to set up your site.
 - Create an email account too.
- You want a blog
 - Remember, you want to be “expert”
 - You want the pages to change.
- Set up Wordpress
 - On Hostmoster, go to Cpanel, click on Wordpress under Software/Services, click Wordpress again, click “Install”
 - Keep the installation at *your root*, click “advanced options”, and enter your name (with no space) as admin name, and input a password.
 - Read and accept terms and conditions, and click “complete”

Create your Network of Sites

- With WordPress installed, go to all of your *current* online profiles, and enter the url of your site in the “homepage” field.
- Create New online profiles you want others to see.
 - Professional social networks!
 - Professional Forums
 - Google Profile
- Now, from your new site, add the profiles you *want* people to see to your home page
 - In WordPress, the easiest place to do this is in the “Links” section of the admin page. Then add the links as a widget under “appearance”
 - If you need help, look at the documentation on HostMonster or WordPress.
- From now on, when you comment on someone else's blog, put *your url* under your name at the bottom:
 - i.e.

- Scott Grizzard

scott@scottgrizzard.com

<http://www.scottgrizzard.com/>

Add Content

- Update your current social network profiles, and add new ones.
 - Especially *professional* sites!
- Blog
 - You are an Expert, so do Expert things:
 - If you are a programmer, make and post Open Source software.
 - Write “How-to” guides for simple things
 - like creating an online profile
 - setting up simple servers
- Help people on Online Mailing Lists
 - Especially those that have “online archives” - don't forget your url.
- Post to Professional Forums
 - And answer questions.
 - Don't forget the url.

Blogging Content Tips

- Rule Number One – write about stuff **you are interested in!**
 - Keeps you blogging
 - Makes it more likely to get a job in that “interesting” field
 - Might bring you an unsolicited job offer
 - These are the best you can have, I have received one.
 - Watch for scams
- Stay away from “Cocktail Party No-No's”
 - Politics, sex, and religion
 - Unless that is where you are an expert.
- Be “Narrowly Broad”
 - Have diverse interests with common themes.
 - Be a “Broad Expert in a Narrow Field”
 - Look at your life for common themes.

Blogging Content Tips (cont.)

- Controversial Issues in **Your Field**
 - **Be Decisively Ambiguous!**
 - Not “on the fence”, on both or either side *emphatically*, depending on the circumstance.
 - The answer is, “It depends”
 - Show that you understand **both** sides of the argument.
 - And pick a little of both
 - Exception: If you have a *truly original thought* on an issue, **write it, and only it!**
 - **Original thoughts are so rare, they *immediately* convey “expert”**
 - **Do not Dilute and Original Thought... that's what future posts are for.**
 - Do **not** take on a controversial topic when angry.
 - Do **not** take on a controversial topic *outside your expertise*.
 - Take on *at least one* controversial topic *within your field*.

Blogging Content Tips (cont.)

- Help People for Free
 - Do “How-to” guides for your field
 - Post “Source Code”!!!
- Do Product Reviews, and Lots of Them
 - They show you are up to date
 - They draw many hits and links (page rank)
 - Sometimes, you get free stuff...
 - When you do them
 - Say something nice
 - Say something, “not-so-nice”
 - Suggest improvements
 - Be Honest! (and actually use the product)
 - Talk about “value for price”
 - Do them for an audience of your peers, or “nearly your peers”
- Do “Book Reviews”, and see above.

Bringing it All Together

- Put your Web Page on your Resume
 - That way, your employer sees it first
- Add your site's url to your email signature.
- If you have two Resumes, you may need “two blogs”
 - For example, I am both an economist and IT Guy
- If you have an active Personal Blog, set up a Professional Blog too.
 - See scottgrizzard.net
- Learn to Write, and make improving your writing a life-long goal!

Bringing it All Together (cont.)

- Make it Look Good!
 - Go get a professional picture made
 - Learn WordPress
 - Consider having a Professional do some visual Improvements.
- **Never** try to “game Google” (also known as “search engine optimization”)
 - Some optimization (name in url, descriptive pages, etc.) are good and easy,
 - But, after doing the basic stuff, your time and money is better spent adding new content
 - Google is several billion dollars more resourceful than you, and what works today will hurt you tomorrow

Conclusions

- Employers are searching for you online
 - **Embrace It!**
- Be an “Expert”
 - Start a blog
 - Post to Professional Forums
 - Post to Email Lists
- When Blogging
 - Be an Expert!
 - Be Helpful
- Do not fear the Online – Make it Yours!