

Managing Your Online Reputation

Have you ever been afraid of what your Tinder date might discover about you online prior to a first ever meeting? What about future or current employers and colleagues? In today's world, it's almost impossible for anyone to avoid leaving any trace of a digital footprint. Most of us have at least one form of social or networking media, where you may have posted a few pictures or messages with little thought on possible consequences. As is the case with anything, there are clear positive and negative issues with an online presence, and conscious management of your digital footprint should be highly considered.

Positive Aspects Of Online Media

We often hear only of the negative when it comes to the impact of social and digital media. However, if used right, it can benefit you and your communities. Here are just a few advantages of online media:

- *Improved Connectivity:* Digitization breaks down barriers of time and location so that anyone is just a few clicks away from seeing and connecting with an unbelievable amount of information and people.
- *Building Businesses and Networking:* Online media, whether intentional or not, is essentially advertisement. People are learning more about you, your business, and what you and/or your business might prioritize most.
- *Education, Noble Causes, and Community Building:* If you are passionate about a subject or cause, sharing it on your digital platforms helps build awareness, while providing open forums for those with similar interests.

Negative Aspects Of Online Media

Naturally, where there are positives, there are also negatives. Below are some of the downsides of online media:

- *Reduced Productivity:* Unless your job is all about online media, and sometimes even if it is, it can be a distraction professionally and personally.
- *Mood Changer:* Have you ever heard Theodore Roosevelt's quote, "Comparison is the thief of joy"? It's easy to get caught up in the comparison game even without online media. If you let this get to you, the effects can be felt in all areas of your life.
- *Reduced Privacy and Professionalism:* Nothing shared online is ever completely private. Information can often be found even after you think it's gone and anything you share is, unfortunately, open to judgment.

Tips For Managing Your Online Reputation

- *Research Yourself:* Start by finding what's already out there. You can't always control every mention of your name but knowing and tracking your individual content is a good start.

- *Update Privacy Settings:* We can't and may not want to spend hours deleting any embarrassing posts. The easiest way to manage much of this is to beef up the privacy settings on all platforms possible.
- *Follow This Cardinal Rule:* Don't post anything online that you wouldn't want your mother, or boss, to see. Most experts in this field warn users of the following mistakes: unprofessional photos, inappropriate content, posting without regards to grammar and spelling, too frequent of posts, and inconsiderate postings on touchy topics like religion or politics.
- *Build and Utilize Accordingly:* Control your online narrative by focusing on being proactive instead of suppressing your past. Algorithms follow what the people want, which is up-to-date information. The more professional and recent content you have, the better.
- *Be Yourself:* It's a cliché for a reason. Online media is inherently personal, no matter how professional it can get or is meant to be. Try to find that balance between your personality and professionalism. Of course, not everyone will agree with what you do or believe in. So, whatever you choose to post, and without forgetting the cardinal rule, be sure that it's in alignment with the part of you that you want the world to see.

Benefits of Managing Your Online Reputation

Depending on how you choose to use online media, your branding and messaging can have valuable or adverse effects on how others view you, your company and your associated communities. Managing our online reputation through mindful, honest and intentional posting has many advantages, including a couple of the most important - trust and profitability, both professionally and personally. These days, more and more people are turning to digital feedback regarding people and organizations they might connect with. A solid online reputation means that more people will trust you with their time, business and attention.

Further reading:

<https://socialnetworking.procon.org/>

<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/positive-negative-impact-digital-media-business-20910.html>

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20180104-is-social-media-bad-for-you-the-evidence-and-the-unknowns>

[Stradtman, L. R. \(2012\). *Online Reputation Management For Dummies*](#)

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