

Need a New Year's Resolution? Try Cleaning Up and Managing Your Online Reputation



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In the internet age where almost nothing is more than a few clicks away, your online presence can make or break you. Now more than ever, it is crucial to consider how you want to be portrayed on the internet, and to take control of your reputation. As we move into 2020, everyone should takes steps to ensure that their online reputation is clean.

Discover your “brand”

Figuring out your personal “brand” is the crucial first step towards cementing a cohesive presence and reputation.

Start by asking yourself: What do I want my online persona to look like? What am I trying to achieve?

Think about who might be searching you, and how you want to come across to them. Is it an employer? That potential date

that you met at the gym? A college admissions counselor? Your grandmother? Each of these possibilities presents a different persona you may want to emphasize. Consider which is best suited for you, and rework your online reputation to match.

Check yourself before you wreck yourself

In a survey conducted by Domain.me, 24 percent of all Americans and 50 percent of American millennials have been adversely affected by information available about themselves online. Additionally, according to the findings, 42 percent of Americans admit to having judged someone else based on information they have found online.

It's important to take extra precautions if you're on any dating apps or websites – your virtual first impression matters! Just like you should be searching your dates as a safety precaution, they will be searching you. After doing your due diligence make sure you're reflecting what you want them to see. This goes for any online interaction or transaction; selling, buying, or communicating, your online reputation determines whether or not people can trust you.

When cleaning up your online reputation or working to establish your brand, Googling yourself is a great place to start. It's also a good way to find things you may not expect to find about yourself. Be sure to check each image and website that pertains to you, and figure out what you do and don't want to be online anymore. Try variations of your name, your family members' and any social network username you have used in the past.

Chances are, during this process you will find something you didn't realize existed – so make sure you find it before someone else does. You should be the top expert on your online reputation and presence.

Tailor your social media

You may stalk your social media channels often, or you may forget you even have them. Either way, you should do a deep-dive to ensure nothing slipped through the cracks.

Different social media channels allow for different methods of self-stalking. For example, Facebook has a “View As” option that lets users view their own profiles from a non-friend’s point of view. Sometimes your privacy settings are not what you think they are, and this feature lets you see what others see when they search your name. Twitter is more black and white, allowing you to make your profile private to non-followers.

Instagram, on the other hand, has many more features that allow for personalized privacy. With this platform you need to decide if you want to be private or public, and carefully consider who you allow to follow you. If your boss *insists* on following you, you should think about what to do with that post from your Vegas trip where you called in sick. You should also pay mind to the settings of your stories, and block followers who you may not want to see them. Although they disappear after 24 hours, they can stay in people’s minds forever.

Our number one tip for a good online reputation? Be proactive. Think carefully about who you want to be perceived as, and how you want to do it. Keep that persona in mind when moving forward with what you put online. We often overlook the role that our online reputations play in our offline reputations and in an increasingly digital world, most of your first impressions are formed behind a screen. Personally and professionally, it’s important to be mindful of how we are perceived. In 2020, be sure to prioritize putting your best foot forward – before it’s too late.