

Face it: 'Book' no secret to employers

By Jacqueline Palank
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At least one Washington intern is glad she did not post unprofessional information about herself on the social-networking Web site Facebook: A potential employer asked a past intern to look up her profile.

Started in February 2004 as a Web site for college students to list their interests, communicate with friends and meet people, Facebook now boasts more than 8 million registered members from universities, high schools and workplaces across the country.

As the popularity of Facebook, MySpace and other social-networking Web sites grows, employers are signing up and logging in to perform background checks on job and internship candidates, or asking employees who are members to do so.

"The Internet's fair game," said the intern, an upcoming junior at Barnard College who asked not to be named because she didn't want to identify the D.C. nonprofit think tank that looked up her posting. She turned down the position offered, she said, but not because of the employer's actions.

The intern said she created her Facebook profile fully aware of the Internet's public nature.

"There were no pictures of me drunk on the floor in the bathroom," she said. "I feel it's like checking a reference. You just want to make sure you look good."

A poll released last week found that 26.9 percent of employers check the backgrounds of job applicants by using Google and social-networking Web sites. The National Association of Colleges and Employers surveyed 254 organizations in the services, manufacturing and government-nonprofit sectors.

Of the employers who said they use Web sites, 41.2 percent reported occasional use, 35.3 percent said their use was infrequent and 7.4 percent called it standard practice.

MySpace replaced Yahoo and Google as the top U.S. Web site last week and garnered 80 percent of all visits to social-networking Web sites, Reuters news agency reported Tuesday, citing figures from Internet tracking firm Hitwise. Facebook received the second-highest number of visits to social-networking sites, a distant 7.6 percent.

Though employers often deny using search engines or looking up profiles, "they do it all day long," said Tim DeMello, founder and chief executive of Ziggs, a Boston company that creates free online professional profiles and, for a fee, uses search terms to place the profiles at the top of 20 search engines' results. He said the average Ziggs profile receives 28 clicks a month.

"Whether you like it or not, employers can sit down in the quiet confines of their office, go on the Web and get information on someone," Mr. DeMello said.

Mr. DeMello, who uses search engines and social-networking sites to check on job applicants, said recent college graduates are more likely to be found through social-networking sites than search engines. He said such sites demonstrate the level of the job applicant's judgment and give employers insight into their personality.

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Face It has more than enough detail to satisfy any fan, from her New Jersey childhood, her early days in New York, and the rise and fall and rise of her iconic band, presented in a forthright, almost laconic style not unlike her controlled performance in the "Heart of Glass" video. On the other hand, there's also an impressionistic element to her presentation "one chapter entitled "Close Calls" is a litany of near-death experiences, from birth to car crashes, told outside of the context of the rest of the book. Taken together, the multiple personalities of Face It gives readers the experience... No ability to look up word in dictionary or enlarge photos. Looks like this book was scanned and slammed as a kindle version. One may do it with the intention to maintain a secret or to save his or her face, to derive some benefit or to avoid a punishment, to get out of an awkward situation or to help another person and what not. Many people are fond of exaggerating some facts or lying for fun. There are different types of lies from white lies to perjury. It is possible to distinguish a lie by facial expression, movements, tone of voice and other methods. Some people are sure that lies can be detected through both verbal and nonverbal means. Scientists say that lying takes longer than telling the truth. This knowledge is especially helpful for police, security experts, businessmen, politicians and employers. But one should remember that there is no absolutely reliable sign of lying. Palank, J. 2006. Face it: "Book" no secret to employers; social sites used as background check. Washington Times , July 17: A1. Retrieved from Palis, C. 2012. Psychological Bulletin , 124: 262-274. Slovensky, R., & Ross, W. H. 2012. Should human resource managers use social media information to screen job applicants? Managerial and Legal Issues in the USA , 14: 55-59. Society for Human Resources Management.