

## Appropriate Internet/Social Media Perception

As technology is becoming more and more advanced in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many people turn to the Internet for information about possible new friends, people associated with a certain business, and/or potential employees. Not many people think that the company they are interviewing at for a job is going to hit the Internet and learn about all aspects of their social life. Additionally, people do not think their association with an organization or other individual will be of interest and a spotlight on the Internet. Especially with social media sites such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook where pictures are posted about the social event you went to or statuses that advertise your daily activities, it's very easy to learn information about others. This is why it's important, not only for your own media perception, but for the perception of other individuals or organizations you're associated with to keep a professional online image.

### What to do:

**Google yourself!** Search all Internet web browsers such as Google or Yahoo with your name, your name in quotes, your name in conjunction with risk words such as "criminal" and e-mail address. What shows up?

**Privacy settings are just settings.** Don't rely on privacy settings to keep everything secure and out of the reach. Make sure to monitor what you are posting and keep it appropriate.

**Watch your language/grammar!** Using inappropriate language or posts can create a negative appearance. Try to post statuses that involve critical thinking.

### Things to Avoid:

- If you don't want professional organizations or other individuals to be able to find you online, try altering your name or temporarily deactivating your social media accounts.
- When posting a profile picture, avoid unprofessional pictures.
- Posting statuses or tweets that exhibit poor work behavior, criticize your current employer, or indicate unflattering personality characteristics can put you in a negative light.

### Social Media Mistakes when Representing Special Olympics:

- Reference illegal drugs, guns or alcohol; making sexual or discriminatory posts
- Posts with poor spelling and grammar
- Indicating your political affiliation
- Having an unprofessional username
- Posts indicating poor communication skills or lying about qualifications



This isn't saying that the use of social media should be prohibited. It's still okay and fun to use social media! However, make sure you are keeping in mind professionals, friends, and organizations have access to your Internet identity and make assumptions about your personality and characteristics based on the image you put forth. Along with the pictures of you and your friends attending a local concert, highlight all the volunteer activities that you do and the donations that you make to charity. Social media is a great way to keep connected with friends and can also be a location where you can highlight all the wonderful characteristics you have.

