10 Simple Steps You Can Take Today To Start Managing Your Online Reputation

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1. **Set up an alert.** Google provides a free tool that allows you to automatically receive an email any time that your name (or other keyword of your choosing) appears in new online content. Visit www.google.com/alerts

2. **Draw your lines.** Think carefully about what you are comfortable sharing online, and how controversial you are willing to be. Be sure to consider the way that others may view that content and the potential consequences of that content being online. Take time up front to decide what is right for you before you continue creating online content.

3. **Take your online inventory.** You have to know what's out there about you before you can start fixing it. Google yourself. Then use Yahoo! and Bing to search for yourself, too. (Google isn't the only search engine people use).

4. **Ask a friend to take your online inventory.** We all have blind spots. Find someone—if you can, someone who doesn't even know you—and ask them to do an online search of your name. Then ask them what their impressions are. Since they have a different context, they may view certain pieces of content more or less positively than you.

5. **Clean up the content you control.** Go through all the content on your Facebook account, your blog, your Twitter stream, and wherever else you have a presence that you control and remove content that you no longer feel is appropriate to share.

6. **Ask others to clean up content they control.** If others have posted things about you that you would prefer aren't online, ask them to remove that content. If you aren't sure who owns the site or how to contact them, who.godaddy.com is a good place to start.

7. **Claim your name.** Be sure that you own your name as a .com, and that you have registered your name as a screen name on all of the most popular sites, especially Twitter.

8. **Update your privacy settings.** Know what is public and private on the various sites you use. On Facebook, unfriend people you don't know, and organize everyone else into lists so that you can choose to share certain content with only certain groups.

9. **Create new, positive content.** Create public profiles on sites—such as LinkedIn, Google+, among others—that allow you to do so. Create a webpage about yourself. Also ask friends to post positive content about you on their websites. The more positive content there is about you online, the better.

10. **Crosslink positive content.** You can increase the likelihood of that positive content showing up high in search results for your name simply by crosslinking. For example, if you have a blog, be sure to include a link to your Twitter account and LinkedIn profile.

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