

Clean up your Digital Dirt

Clean up your Digital Dirt is most useful for:

- Ensuring that your digital profile is consistent with the online image you want to create
- 93% of employers are likely to look at a candidate's social profile
- 42% of employers have reconsidered a candidate based on content viewed in a social profile
- Finding personal info that you'd rather not share in the workplace, controversial associations, opinions, memberships, or religious or political discussions, embarrassing evidence of unprofessional behavior, Information about your credentials that contradicts data on your résumé or business marketing materials

Directions:

1. First, check to see if anything unusual pops up on the major search engines, particularly Google and Bing. Try several variations of your name inside quotation marks, such as "Mortimer Snerd," "Mortimer S. Snerd," "Mort Snerd" and the like. You can also search for your phone numbers and email addresses. Be careful not to put out a public correction that brings *more* attention to the dirt than it would otherwise get.
2. Second, check your blogs, social media and discussion groups to see if there is anything that could give a potential employer cause to pause. If there is, see if it can be deleted, corrected or withdrawn. Check your Facebook and Google+ photos, if you share them, and go through your Facebook timeline.
3. Third, check your public records. Employers will check here when hiring. Many town, county and state agencies keep track records. Sometimes they make a mistake, too, that needs correcting. If you've ever been in court or filed a legal action, it's probably online somewhere. There's not much you can do to change these records other than correcting inaccurate info.

Things to think about:

- How do your social profiles portray you? Do you think it is an accurate representation of who you are?
- Would you want an employer to see what is readily available online?
- Did you see anything that surprised you? Anything that was inaccurate? Anything that was positive?
- How can you increase the positive things that are found in your digital profile?
 - Do you have a LinkedIn?
 - Do you have a blog?
 - Have you written any articles?

If you would like to talk to someone about this activity or need additional resources, **Career Services** is available to all students! Check out our website to make an appointment or to see upcoming events and workshops:

<http://www.careers.vcu.edu>

(Sources: <http://andybrandt531.com/2013/05/digital-dirt/> and <http://web.jobvite.com/rs/jobvite/images/2014%20Job%20Seeker%20Survey.pdf>)