

# 10 ONLINE TOOLS TO ENHANCE OUR CLIENTS' CAREER PROSPECTS



**RUTH WINDEN,  
CERTIFIED SOCIAL  
MEDIA CAREER  
STRATEGIST  
(CSMCS)**

I haven't got time!" "I am too old." "I can't see the point!" These are common reactions when I discuss online career and job search strategies with clients. They all lead busy lives and have too much to do as it is. So why do I challenge them to build a stronger online presence?

1. **Social proof:** Online is the first place where people look for information about people. We want to know who people are, what they do - and whether they really are who they say they are.
2. **Getting found by recruiters:** According to a recent survey of 7000 UK recruiters by oilandgaspeople.com, 71% used social media successfully to recruit staff or contractors.
3. **Opening new doors:** It used to be all about who you know. Then it was about who knows you. Now it is about who is aware of you, likes and trusts you, and recommends you .
4. **Raising visibility and widening networks:** Engaging in sector-specific discussion groups is a convenient way to showcase one's expertise online, where talent shows and influencers, decision-makers and recruiters congregate.
5. **Changing job requirements:** Sophisticated usage of online tools is increasingly expected within mainstream job roles, not just in jobs for social media specialists. For example, any journalist is expected to be well versed on Twitter, as it has become a preferred tool for communicating news.
6. **Heightened expectations:** As social media usage grows, expectations of how well professionals apply themselves online will grow too. Over time, managing an online presence will be a requirement, not a 'nice to have'.

I understand my clients' reservations to become active online. Yet I believe that what people see (or don't see) when they Google our names, does matter. Not engaging sufficiently online, or engaging in a detrimental manner, can cost our clients dearly. Online tools can greatly enhance their visibility and reputation - if they are seen in the right places, in the right way, by the right people.

Below are my favourite tools to build an online presence - fast. I graded them according to their levels of complexity and the time required to maintain them: \* = low maintenance; \*\* = medium maintenance; \*\*\* = high / ongoing maintenance.

1. **About.me** (\*) – a searchable directory of one page profiles, which form a personal landing page and hub for links to online activities. Users upload a photo, a short biography to design their page and share links to their social media profiles or personal websites. This free resource has become a popular online starting place: it's simple yet attractive, easy to personalise, set up and maintain.
2. **Vizify.com** (\*) – similar to about.me; but more detailed information can be included. With modern graphics, users build their profiles through a selection of personal and professional information, from career highlights, education, to quotes and short Twitter videos. The basic version is free, with a paid version giving access to more pages with video, audio and a personal domain name.
3. **Vizibility.com** (\*\*) – a tool to get a Quick Response / QR code; then to curate and verify one's information on Google. It lets users link their top five achievements to their QR code and thereby steer Google searches towards their best online results. Latest developments include a personal 'vizCard' for sharing on mobiles. Ideal for influencing what people see first about users when they click the QR code and for those with a common name. Requires ongoing maintenance to keep the top five results relevant and up-to-date.
4. **Online Comments** (\*)  
Many people leave comments online without ever thinking that they become part of their online trace and reputation. Yet if used strategically, online comments can quickly raise visibility and create a positive online trail. Quality comments on established industry blogs, in popular interest groups, or on highly visible web portals can make you stand out. The more traffic a site has, the more visibility comments get. Good places to start are Quora.com or Yahoo answers (popular portals to ask/answer questions); top industry blogs (search on alltop.com or Google for 'blog + TOPIC'); relevant industry publications or communities of interest (for instance, the Professionals Community on the Guardian website).
5. **Online reviews** (\*)  
Use the power and reach of sites like YouTube, Amazon or Goodreads.com and contribute informative reviews of appropriate products; books; services or videos. The high search engine rankings mean that users' names and reviews will also appear higher in Google searches. This strategy works well for clients who want

to establish credibility as experts, industry or thought leaders.

6. **Sharing Presentations Online** (\*/\*\*)

Slideshare.com and Prezie.com are both platforms to upload or create presentations online. (Slideshare presentations can also be pulled into LinkedIn profiles, as a 'Rich Media' feature). Anyone can follow user accounts to read, download and share presentations on social media. This is another excellent approach for clients who want to showcase their expertise and knowledge in a certain field. Two stars for the higher maintenance needed if users continually add new presentations.

7. **Your own blog** (\*\*\*)

Creating a personal blog for a specific topic or niche can be an effective way to get online traction, especially if blog posts are well written and shared via social media. Yet to succeed, a blog requires discipline, tenacity and determination to keep it up-to-date. Writing guest blog posts is an excellent and less onerous alternative, as posts can be more sporadic.

8. **Visual CVs** (\*)

It remains to be seen whether visual CVs will become more common, let alone popular, in the UK. For clients working in creative industries, this type of online CV is worth considering. Resumup.com is easy to set up and draws in information from LinkedIn.

9. **Reputation Management** (\*\*)

For those who want to be fully in charge of their online reputation, BrandYourself.com is a tool to influence which content about users comes up high in Google searches. It also helps push any 'digital dirt', i.e. unflattering information, lower down in the search results. The basic version is free, easy to navigate and with clear instructions. Two stars for maintenance,

as users need to keep online results and evaluations current.

10. **The Big Six Social Media Platforms** (\*\*\*)

Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Pinterest, Google + and YouTube are such high ranking platforms, they are all excellent tools for building an online profile. Each one has its own ethos, community of users and purpose, so users need to think carefully which ones serve them best and then choose accordingly. For instance, LinkedIn is a must for professionals, Facebook is ideal for graduates to engage with employers and graduate recruiters; Pinterest is great for anyone in the creative industries. Three stars for maintenance, as all sites require continuous attention to achieve an engaging and powerful presence.

What next? Familiarise yourself with the tools first that sound interesting and relevant to your client base, then help your clients choose appropriate ones. There is no 'perfect' choice of tools – it all depends on your clients' needs, their career plans, previous experience with online tools and what is expected in their industry and role, or at their level. If they are unconvinced, ask your clients to Google their names once a week and monitor what shows up (or what doesn't). Maybe this will convince them to consider becoming more active online, with the tools described above.

What are your favourite tools to build an online presence? Why not share them in our CDI LinkedIn group or via @theCDI on Twitter?

**Reference**

Secondary source: [www.hrreview.co.uk/hr-news/recruitment/64-of-recruiters-have-rejected-an-applicant-after-viewing-their-social-media-profile/49617](http://www.hrreview.co.uk/hr-news/recruitment/64-of-recruiters-have-rejected-an-applicant-after-viewing-their-social-media-profile/49617)

Ruth Winden works with forward-thinking organisations and professionals to innovate their career management practices. In 2012 she became the very first UK-based Social Media Career Strategist, one of only 34 worldwide. Ruth serves as a member on the CDI's Professional Standards Committee, representing the Talent Management Community, and as the PSC's Secretary. Why not join the conversation with Ruth on twitter @RuthWinden?

