

What is LinkedIn? Who should use it?

Overview

LinkedIn is a professional networking and social media platform designed to be a digital representation of real-life networks. LinkedIn is based on the idea of “seven degrees of separation”, and your degrees of connections are indicated clearly:

1st degree: your connections (“friends”)

2nd degree: you are connected via one mutual person

3rd degree: you are connected via two degrees of connection

At a minimum, I (Megan) believe that every professional, regardless of their field, should have an active and updated LinkedIn profile. Many recruiters use LinkedIn to learn more about candidates, so it's important that your profile is consistent with what you put on your resume or CV. On your profile should be:

- Updated headline and CURRENT photo of yourself (no more than 2-3 years old)
- Updated education
- Updated experiences (work, internships, volunteering, etc.) and a short description

Building Your Connections

LinkedIn works best when you have a robust network of people that you're connected to. Invite people you know to connect, regardless of the connection: faculty, staff, colleagues, classmates, family friends, etc. Adding connections is a great thing to do immediately during/after a conference, or when you meet people in another professional setting like a workshop.

It's good professional etiquette to [add a note along with your connection request](#). Don't know what to say in the 300 characters allotted for a note? [Read this blog post for inspiration!](#)

Other Notes

- Unlike other social media platforms, people can see on LinkedIn when you've looked at their profile! Use this power wisely. Similarly, people in your network can see posts that you've liked and comments you've made.
- You can customize your LinkedIn profile URL ([instructions here](#))
- Want to be more active on LinkedIn than just having a basic profile? Here are ways to increase your visibility:
 - o “Like” and comment on other people's posts
 - o Regularly write your own posts, or more formal articles to share with your network
 - o Join groups (alumni, affinity, etc.) → DU alumni network group [HERE](#)

Learn more about LinkedIn and networking: <https://career.du.edu/channels/networking/>

What about a website and Twitter?

Thinking about having an online academic presence? Here are several practical guides: Sara Mojarad's "[A Beginner's Guide to Joining Academic Twitter](#)" and Berkeley's Townsend Center's "[Personal Academic Webpages: How-To's and Tips for a Better Site.](#)"

And here are thoughts about what function these tools serve and whether you need them:

From Joanna Howard

Pros:

Having some sort of web presence is often recommended by editors, mostly to offload some of the marketing labor onto the author. For small presses, this makes sense because time and money earmarked for publicity is tiny, and as authors we can support both the press and our work by trying to make our work visible. For mid-sized or large presses, this might be less about distribution of labor and more about linking your work to other writers on the press, to put your work in conversation with theirs, and gain their audiences. Also, if someone is searching for your book, there will be a few more channels to help it appear on search engines, because social media sites maintain searchable links to their users in order to attract other users to their platform, so in this way, it becomes a 'free' way to create hits on a search engine.

Cons:

The reality of social media as a promotional tool is that the majority of 'influence' is created by professional publicists, marketers, or the design industry and tech industry. Search Engine optimization specialists can build pathways that increase the likelihood of your name or book coming up in web searches. Publicists have existing channels to ensure that their clients get mentioned on prominent blogs/tweets/Instagram, magazines have relationships with publicists to run excerpts and name people to 'must-read' lists. Many of these lists of 'most anticipated' and 'advanced praise' and even some Twitter battles are part of a marketing package that operates invisibly. If your attempts to promote your work on Twitter or Instagram don't seem to make you as popular as other authors, it might simply be because they have a publicist or their press has a tech team to work on visibility. Eg. Artsy is a tech start-up that just works to sell art and promote artists, often by manipulating Instagram. They employ hundreds of people working to get client works shared and re-shared, to curate the 'persona' of an artist through social media platforms, and even to purchase followers (a totally common practice in both high art and literary publishing).

From Adam Rovner

Here are some reasons to have a website below. I built mine with a little bit of help from a friend using Wix, which seemed to me at the time (2014) to offer the best deal and easiest interface. I'm sure other options have come online since.

Having a web presence means people can find you. I get emails every month or so from some reader or interested individual who finds me online. Sometimes these contacts have led to speaking gigs. In fact, I'm doing one this Saturday (31st) virtually for the historic Jewish synagogue of Hobart, Tasmania. The president reached out to me a couple months ago asking if I'd be willing to do this after he saw my site. Sometimes these gigs are paid, sometimes unpaid, like the Hobart one.

Another reason to have a web presence is so that you can refer people to your site. Sometimes someone will email me through my DU account--I also have a form via my website to contact me--and ask me something like 'do you have any pictures of the area in Angola where they wanted to settle European Jews?' and then I can direct them to my site rather than emailing them photos. I have had no hate mail sent via my site yet. I have had hate mail through DU though.

I also like having the site because it allows me to post multimedia content there that obviously can't go into a book. So I have some video and film clips of me talking for all my potential fans/stalkers. So far, I have none. And the site can serve as a repository for other photos, and since the domain is my name, I will use it for my next book too.

I do have a Twitter handle but have never tweeted anything, and yet I have something like 150 followers. I think Twitter is a debased form of communication, and though every once in awhile I think of something that would make a great tweet, I keep it to myself on the theory that the world needs less, not more, idle chatter.

From Lindsay Turner

1. Some things that social media can be good for: helping people find your work, making connections with people interested in your work or in whose work you are interested, promoting or supporting or uplifting other people whose work you love. Learning what other people are reading or finding out about events. Cute animals.
2. Some things that social media can be bad for: mental health. Take breaks or flee when you need to! Don't obsess or dramatize. Social media can bring out the worst in people: whatever you post, don't be mean.
3. Speaking as a scholar, translator, and poet, most of all I want to say that you do not need a flashy web or social media presence. You can be successful with one or without one. Whatever it may look like, social media does not lead to jobs or publications. (Search committees don't even look at social media or web presences: that's what applications are for.) What counts is your work; all the Twitter followers in the world or the fanciest website imaginable etc. mean nothing if the writing or research isn't there.