

Your online persona is a collection of building blocks--check-ins, likes, comments, reviews, follows, photos, and blogs--that you add to every day.

For many years, we have been building our online personas. We use various websites and social media channels everyday to connect with others, to learn and share information with our communities, and to complete daily tasks from banking to food delivery.

Each time we use the internet for professional or personal reasons, we are unwittingly creating data points that accumulate together to build our online persona. In fact, Facebook predicts that "1.7 MB of data will be created every second for every person on Earth," by this year.¹

We no longer need to wonder what is contributing to our online persona but rather *what does it say about us and who is viewing this information?*

The world was already moving online. But it's now happening even faster.

The amount of time we spend online, both personally and professionally, has been increasing over the years. In light of the current global pandemic, with more people working and spending time at home, this already increasing trend has been accelerated. Previously, people often used the internet to look up a person who they had recently met, and learn more about them. In a survey of students and business professionals in 2018, our team found that over 90% of respondents confirmed they looked at least one person up online for whom they had met in the last two months.²

Today, this order is often reversed. New York Times best selling author Lindsey Pollak writes, "As a professional today, your online image is essential. It's just as likely that a potential client will "meet" you through a Google search as at a professional conference. Or, if you're job hunting, that a recruiter will view your credentials on the LinkedIn® app as on a paper resume." She continues, "The trick is to find the right mix of URL and IRL."³ In our current global situation, we are meeting less people in person and often rely on the internet to discover and learn about others as a first impression. Therefore, it matters more than ever what our online persona says about ourselves.



Digital footprints are impacting access to commercial opportunities.

Whether you are selling a new contract to a prospective client, maintaining an existing relationship with a company, or helping others secure offers from employers, the perception that others have of your team members or candidates is vitally important. Employers and potential clients are scraping the web to uncover the credibility and reputation of those they will be working with and have an increasing number of tools at their disposal to do so. 70% of employers are using social media to research job candidates and 48% are using social media to check up on current employees.⁴ This diligence is also taking place as suppliers work with contractors, freelancers, and hire professional services firms including consultants, bankers, and law firms.

In addition to using Google, Facebook, and Twitter to search individuals, companies now have access to tools that are specifically designed to quickly and efficiently search the entire web to report on individuals. For instance, software companies such as Fama “helps identify problematic behavior among potential hires and current employees by analyzing publicly available online information” and Good Egg offers companies software to provide web and social media screening which “involve ongoing employee monitoring (or re-screening) services to help you mitigate risk, measure productivity, and monitor employee behavior post-hire.”

Over the years, we have used online accounts and social media across multiple life stages, of which some may no longer align with our current attitude or perspective. It is important to make sure that this outdated content does not become the persona that employers and clients uncover. Ultimately, why should an individual's online legacy from the 2000's stop them from thriving today?

Our personal and professional personas are blurred online.

In real life, we can distinguish the person we reflect to others at work versus the person we are in our personal time. Online, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to draw this distinction. Although we create profiles and use platforms for an array of personal reasons, our professional contacts can uncover these profiles and make judgements about the person we are with just a few clicks.

According to Harvard Business Review, Gen Y workers have an average of 16 coworkers as friends on Facebook.⁵ Not only is this distinction becoming more blurred, HR professionals are also intentionally leveraging personal channels to better understand professional behavior.



DeeAnn Sims, founder of Dark Horse PR states, “Because we tend to view our personal social media accounts as being 'personal,' there's a good chance that by viewing someone's profile, you'll get a glimpse into their personality beyond the resume.”⁶

Reviewing your online persona is time consuming and complex.

You and your team have been building your online personas for more than 10 years. In fact, some of the pieces that contribute to your persona may be from profiles that you might not even recall creating. Not only is it difficult and time consuming to track down all the information about you or that you have created online, it is difficult to identify what you need to fix. Our team has discovered that 86.5% of respondents want to delete some or all of the data that exists about them on the web. However, we also found that people spend up to two days finding old accounts, reviewing personal profiles and updating privacy settings. While over 60% of people have tried to delete their data, less than one quarter report success in doing so.⁷ Managing old content and privacy settings on accounts and profiles is hard for even the most tenured users.

Let yourself.online become your digital guardian.

As your digital guardian, we will ensure that the online personas of your team best reflects their credibility and professionalism and their online personal privacy is safeguarded. This will reduce the risk that content created in the past could cause negative perceptions or damage to your organization's reputation and brand.

Using AI image and text analysis, yourself.online scans and analyzes hundreds of sites across the web and then presents results in an easy-to-use, action-oriented dashboard. Consumers can easily review and change their previously posted content, manage their privacy settings and ensure that the information they are sharing is what they want to share.

yourself.online is your reliable, trusted partner in improving your team's online presence.

- We keep access to consumer data for the minimum amount of time needed and provide complete transparency for what we will use your data for. Read more about how we protect our user's privacy [here](#).
- We have agreements with data sources including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- Our founders are two ex-Googlers and our team is comprised of experts in the space, experienced in online data, social media management and advanced technology.

Are you ready to take control and be sure it's yourself.online?

Notes and Sources:

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