

When you search Google for yourself, what comes up? If your academic program provides you with a profile, then perhaps that is the first hit—but what else? Student reviews on *RateYourProfessors*? An old *Flickr* account? Your *Facebook* profile? What would an employer, colleague, or student assume about you, based on what they can find by searching your name?

Many options are available for you to take control of your online presence and build a unique, professional brand, with little financial investment or web design skill. Curating your online presence lets you market yourself professionally, raises your profile among applicants for jobs, makes your expertise available to different audiences, and comes in handy when networking. Below are some resources to get you started.

GETTING STARTED

What are your goals for building your online presence? You might want an online “business card” to show basic information, or a website to display interests, experiences, and accomplishments. If your aim is to network in your field, then an online community may suit your needs.

Chaim Shapiro, Assistant Director of the Touro College Office of Career Services, has suggestions for using social media professionally:

- [“Top 5 Career Related Social Media Activities”](#)
- [“Top 5 Career Killing Social Media Mistakes”](#)

Kelli Marshall of Depaul University has advice specific to academics:

- [“How to Maintain Your Digital Identity as an Academic”](#) (via *Vitae*)

DEVELOP YOUR BRAND

What makes you unique? How will you set your skills and strengths apart from someone else’s? What is the reputation you want across the web? *PwC* has a free online guide to help you create your personal brand: <http://www.pwc.com/us/en/careers/campus/programs-events/personal-brand.html>

PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL NETWORKS

Millions of people network through [LinkedIn](#). If you have not signed up for LinkedIn, consider doing so. Check the UCS calendar for upcoming LinkedIn workshops: <https://careers.unc.edu/calendar>.

Stacy Konkiel explains how academics and researchers can make the most out of a LinkedIn profile:

- [“7 Tips to Supercharge Your Academic LinkedIn Profile”](#) (via *Impactstory Blog*)

Millions connect through research/scholarly communities. These offer simple profiles, allow for sharing documents, and let users track the impact of their research papers.

- [Academia.edu](#) (open to all academics and researchers)
- [Google Scholar Citations](#) (automatically connects to your published work, citations)

BUILD YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

- [Mendeley](#) (web, desktop, and mobile platforms, and allows for file management and sharing)
- [ResearchGate](#) (similar to Academia.edu, but specifically for scientists)

NAMEPLATES / WEB-BASED BUSINESS CARDS

Elegant, customizable single-page profiles, many of which are free, allow users to share a brief biography and can be linked to a blog, full website, or multiple social media accounts.

- [About.me](#)
- [Flavors.me](#)
- [Pixelhub](#)

PROFESSIONAL WEBSITES

Professional websites offer versatility. You can display content across multiple pages, including photographs, audio/video, and text. Many include blogging capabilities. Diverse layouts and themes are available, often free (with premium choices, too), and most platforms have drag-and-drop building tools. Skilled users may create a whole site from scratch. Knowledge of site design is not essential for a top-notch website, and tutorials can be found easily on [Lynda.com](#), [YouTube](#), and [Udemy](#). "[WordPress DIY: Freelance/Independent Website](#)" is a helpful video tutorial available from [Lynda.com](#).

A sample of website providers includes:

- [Google Sites](#) (<https://sites.google.com>)
- [Weebly](#) (<https://www.weebly.com>)
- [Wix](#) (<http://www.wix.com>)
- [WordPress](#) (<https://wordpress.com>)

UNC-Chapel Hill provides webhosting to anyone with an ONYEN. You can create a WordPress website through [Web.UNC](#), and your website will be hosted and supported by [ITS Digital Services](#). When ready to leave the University, you can export your web content to another WordPress site/webhost.

If you plan to build a website, then take into consideration

- The domain name, or URL, for your site; domain names are available through [GoDaddy](#), [Domain.com](#), and [Google](#), among others (and, try to buy your name as a domain name)
- Whether you want a free website, or can afford premium support and web tools
- The type of profile photo you will feature (e.g., "personality" photo, a professional headshot)

You can change site content as your needs and interests develop. As a graduate student, a starting point could be your CV or resume. Highlight skills, experiences, and accomplishments alongside a brief biography.

OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

Businesses, academic and research institutions, and individuals are just as likely to be found on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), [Snapchat](#), and [Facebook](#). Any of these, as well as other, social media tools can be part of your online presence. Because each trades in its own communication niche (e.g., photos, less than 140 characters, short videos), one or more may suit different, but complementary, aspects of your brand.