Quick Tips: The Potential Perils of Social Networking Sites

BASIC TIPS:

- The Internet is a public space. Nothing is completely private. Play it safe. If you can't show it to your parents and family members, then don't broadcast it to the world.

- Think twice before you post a revealing or disparaging photo of yourself on a social networking site. Share photos with friends through limited access websites, or better yet, just send them via email.

- Keep your profile on social networking sites private. Make sure to check your own profile frequently to make sure friends have not "tagged" your site with photos you would not want others to see. Consider blocking comments, since you have no control over what people post.

- Watch what you say. A lewd or derogatory comment in a blog or comment section can be just as damaging as a compromising photo. This includes dirty jokes, bad language, or a drinking reference.

- Read through your profiles and blogs and delete postings that could damage your reputation. If you've made comments on other people's blogs, check those too. And if you have friends who blog about you, it's a good idea to see what they are saying.

- Look up any old videos you may have posted on YouTube or other video upload sites, and take down any that might be offensive.

- Google yourself. See what the public might be reading about you. If there is something you don't want "out there," email the webmaster of the site to remove it.

- Change your email address if you have one that seems juvenile or raunchy. Make sure your instant messenger screen names are professional as well.

- In addition to a personal website, consider creating a professional website featuring your resume, portfolio, and academic background. You can also blog about career interests. Make sure not to link it to anything inappropriate.