



# CAREER DOCTOR

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## Dear Career Doctor

I am a second year lawyer at a top tier firm in Melbourne. Many of my friends have moved overseas and I find it really useful to keep in contact with them using Web 2.0 technology, and I have both Facebook and LinkedIn accounts.

Recently, our firm issued an instruction to all its employees encouraging us to be wary of how we promote ourselves using this technology.

Personally, I do not think it is any of their business and I should be able to do whatever I want in my spare time. As it is, I work such long hours and outside my work life, I believe I should be able to determine this part of my life.

### Next Generation

## Dear Next Generation

You are right in believing that outside work hours the way you choose to lead your life is your decision, but at the same time, you need to take certain steps to ensure that any decisions you make or things you choose to do in your leisure time, do not have a negative impact on your working life and career.

Most people these days have a Facebook, MySpace or LinkedIn account and communicate with their friends, family and colleagues on a daily basis via this technology. You might be surprised to know that firms and corporations are aware of the power of these sites and similarly, are increasingly using Web 2.0 to learn about you for both recruitment and retention purposes. This is probably why your firm has issued the instruction about the way in which you use this technology to raise your awareness about how this may affect your career prospects and progression.

Without a doubt, while you are accessing information about your friends and family, or even other firms and corporations, current or potential employers are accessing yours. So as a current employee of your firm or a solicitor potentially seeking a new role, you need to make a decision about what you want your current or future employers or even your clients and colleagues to know about you. Yes, it is important to be able to maintain a life outside the work environment in a way in which you want to do so, and your social activities are not relevant to your ability to perform your job, however, those activities

may very well be a consideration for firms and organisations, particularly where client relationships and networking are important aspects in acquiring new work.

Next time you are uploading photos on Facebook, for example, remember your current or future employer or even client can view these photos and comments regarding your "not so professional night out" which could result in more than just a hangover – it could potentially affect your career prospects or reputation in the working environment.

In addition to all of this, you should be considering your privacy and security. Many people provide copious amounts of personal information on their account profiles, for example address, birthday, education, work history, friends, places travelled, books read. This information is in the public domain and can be accessed and used for all sorts of purposes (including purposes other than originally intended e.g. identity fraud), so you need to be wary about what information strangers can access and then piece together about your background.

Fortunately there are steps you can take to protect yourself while using Web 2.0 technology. It is strongly recommended that you:

- restrict access to your Web 2.0 accounts to "friends" and invitees only;
- limit the information you put on your page;
- monitor the photographs and videos on your page and who can access them; and
- limit the applications/programs you upload and be cautious of unnecessary or irrelevant information you are asked to provide.

I agree with you – these sites are a fantastic way of keeping in touch with people or learning about them and organisations. We just need to be smart about how we use them.

### Career Doctor

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