



How to Use Social Media Wisely

Social media are playing an increasingly prominent role in the college admissions process, and it's not just the applicants being scrutinized. Recognizing how popular social media are with high school students, most college admissions offices are now on Facebook themselves, and many are also Tweeting, blogging and posting YouTube videos for the benefit of prospective students. Following a school on social media can provide valuable insights into its culture and priorities. Since many admissions offices keep track of who follows them there, it can also work to your advantage at schools where demonstrated interest figures into admissions decisions.

Certainly, as you approach the application season, you should clean up your own profile on social media. Start by Googling yourself to make sure there's nothing you don't want admissions officers, financial aid officers or coaches to see. Delete any embarrassing tweets from your Twitter account, and make sure your handle isn't anything inappropriate. Revisit the privacy settings on your Facebook account, and remove any embarrassing "likes." You might even want to consider shutting down your Facebook or Twitter account entirely and starting over.

Finally, consider using social media to showcase your talents or accomplishments. Numerous students have done so successfully by creating websites to market businesses they've developed selling merchandise over the web or hiring themselves out as entertainers at parties. They've also created websites with PayPal links to raise money for causes with which they've become involved. The Internet presents wonderful opportunities for teenagers to demonstrate entrepreneurship and make a significant impact on a community.