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## What Google says can make or break your career

By: Jennifer Kavur On: 05 Feb 2009 For: ComputerWorld Canada **COMPUTERWORLD**

Social media experts, an IT staffing firm and pros at Microsoft, IBM and Dell reveal ways to boost – or bust – your reputation



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Maintaining a professional online image is critical in today's job market, but Web 2.0 isn't making it easy.

"The first thing that anybody does right now, if they are going to have a meeting or interview a candidate for a job, is Google them," said Michael O'Connor Clarke, vice-president at **Thornley Fallis Communications**. "It's an instinctive reaction now."

Google search results are particularly important for the IT workforce. "Let's say you're an IT person...I'm going to expect that you're going to have a pretty well-established online footprint," said Clarke.

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People are looking for transparency, said John Carson, social media consultant at **Echo Communications**. "If they want to hire you, especially contract or freelance IT workers, they want to make sure you've got the credentials and you haven't hidden behind your company's glory," he said.

Online reputation can make or break someone's chances of landing a coveted position, especially IT professionals who are evaluated on their tech savvy, said Dave Willmer, executive director of **Robert Half Technology**, which recently released its own **tips for managing your online imprint**.

And the current economic environment is making hiring managers even more cautious about who they bring into their firms, added Willmer. "Any information that raises a red flag can quickly take candidates out of consideration for a job," he said.

But keeping your reputation in check is difficult in the days of Web 2.0. A lot of people separate their private life and professional life, but on the Internet there is no separation, said Igor Abramovitch, branch manager for Robert Half Technology in Toronto.

"We live our private lives in public now online," said Clarke. "It's absolutely essential that people are sensible and prudent in how they choose to report what

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