Teaching Jobseekers to Reduce the Mismatch between Their Online Social Footprint and Employers’ Perception

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At least 75% of employers check jobseekers’ online profiles before calling them for an interview (https://hbr.org/2012/04/your-future-employer-is-watchi). Jobseekers often broadcast information about themselves and social activities from their mobile devices impulsively, not realizing it may influence prospective employers’ perception of them. We introduce a tool to support jobseekers match their online social identity to the employers’ expectations by reducing the mismatch between the attributes (qualities) displayed by the jobseeker and those expected by employers.

We assume jobseekers’ online self-presentation behaviors depend on a) the company or job targeted; b) their existing footprint; c) their willingness to change; and d) perceived agency over their online footprint (El Ouirdi et al, 2015; Van Dijck, 2013; Rosenberg and Egbert, 2011). Therefore, our tool aims to help jobseekers understand employers’ expectations, their current footprint and ways in which they can manage it following a six step process through which users:

1. Identify their own attributes and ‘requirements’ for the targeted job description;
2. Rate their attributes according to the importance they perceive these have for the targeted job;
3. Conduct an online search on themselves to become aware of their online image;
4. Identify the personality traits they display online and rate them against the attributes perceived important for the targeted job;
5. Examine visualizations of the match and mismatch between the attributes they ‘display’ on their online profile and the ones required for the targeted job;
6. Access tips on how to reshape their online image. Jobseekers can clean their current footprint, but also adopt new mobile practices that allow them to communicate elements relevant prospective employer’s expectations (connections, events visited, locations, topics of interest), thereby increasing the perceived match.

These two aspects of reshaping one’s image will be investigated through empirical studies. A pilot implementation of the tool in the careers’ advisory service of a university will be conducted. This will involve a series of workshops to introduce the tool and support its usage. Qualitative data will be collected via pre and post intervention interviews with participants to see how they make use of their mobility and devices to shape their image, and other relevant stakeholders such as career advisors to assess the efficiency of the changes undertaken by users. Quantitative data will be collected automatically through data logging to capture real behavior and changes.

**References**


Van Dijck, J. (2013). ‘You have one identity’: performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn. *Media, Culture & Society, 35*(2), 199-215