# **How Students Can Stay Smart Online When Applying to College**

This year's Kaplan survey of college admissions officers was released last month, and its findings, that more college admissions officers are looking students up online, have sent many students and families into a panic.



<u>Kaplan's 2013 survey</u> found that 29% of admissions officers surveyed have Googled an applicant, up from 27% last year, and 31% visited an applicant's Facebook or other social media profile, up from 26% in 2012.

Social media is a big part of everyday life, especially if you're a teen, and sometimes students have to learn hard lessons about how their online presence affects other aspects of their lives. While most college admissions officers may not look you up online, there's a chance some might, and it's better to be safe and smart than sorry.

Here are some tips for students to stay smart online:

#### Bump up your privacy settings.

Social media sites are considered "public," but that doesn't mean everyone has to see what you're posting. Limit your Facebook posts so only friends can see them, and make your Twitter profile private. This is a good social media practice no matter what your age because it not only protects what you post, but also keeps strangers with bad intentions from accessing any personal information.

## Avoid using foul language or making nasty comments about others.

This should go without saying, but sometimes students need a reminder. Foul language or offensive and rude posts reflect on your character, and if someone who doesn't know you that well sees it, they will assume you are not the nicest person and maybe not a good fit for Dream U. Schools keep track of their mentions online, so don't end up like one student who Tweeted rude comments about people on her college tour.

## **Use the Parents, Grandparent Test**

Before you post a status, photo, tweet, or any other content on social media ask yourself: "Would I want my parents and grandparents to see this?" If the answer is no, then definitely don't post.

#### Highlight your interests and accomplishments.

Being smart online doesn't mean that you have to hide from everyone who might be looking. While you should avoid posting negative content or things that might reflect poorly on you, you should also highlight positive things. Post videos of your piano recitals, share links to your blog, and post photos from your community service events. If admissions officers are looking you up, it's to learn more about you, not to necessarily catch you behaving badly. By Ivywise