

ACTIVITY: SET UP AND MAINTAIN A PROFESSIONAL PROFILE ON GOOGLE+

Assignment Prompt and Context

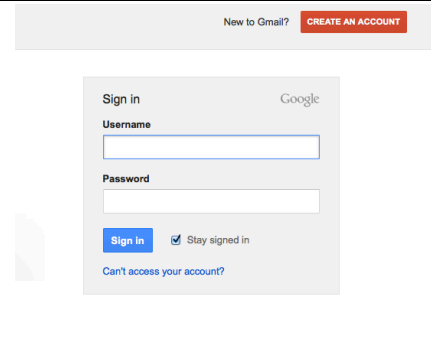
A large part of this online course will include communicating with your instructor and your peers digitally. The University Writing Program has recommended using Google Plus for this class because of its ease of use and variety of features; plus, it is free to use!

In order to fully participate in this class, you will need to create a Google account and establish an online profile. **I strongly recommend you create a NEW account**, even if you are already a Google user, so that you can start from the ground up in building a purely professional online presence.

Please read through the first two sections of this activity to help you build your new Google account. In the third section, you will find a series of step-by-step instructions with questions to consider. Go through the steps and answer the questions in a separate document: you will upload the answers to these questions to Sakai to receive credit for completing the activity.

Part I: Create a New Google Account

1. Go to the Google accounts page:
accounts.google.com
2. Locate the “New to Google” box in the top right corner
3. Fill in the information



New to Gmail? **CREATE AN ACCOUNT**

Sign in Google

Username

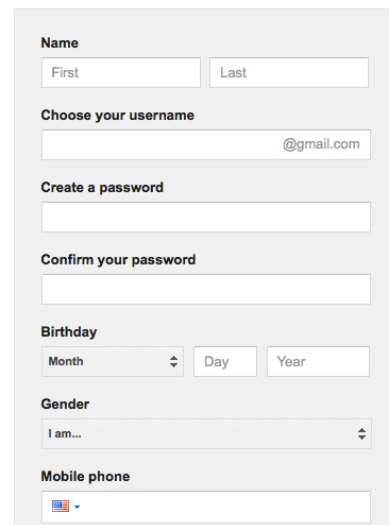
Password

Sign in Stay signed in

[Can't access your account?](#)



- Stop and think carefully about the user name you select. Ideally, it would be something simple, straightforward and easily identifiable to you, like your first name and last name: (John.Smith@gmail.com). If you have a common name, Google may suggest alternatives: beware of email addresses with too many numbers in them, which can lead to typos or confusion. Try reversing your names (Smith.John@gmail.com), adding a middle initial (John.A.Smith), or adding a professional association (John.SmithUF).



Name

First Last

Choose your username

@gmail.com

Create a password

Confirm your password

Birthday

Month Day Year

Gender

I am...

Mobile phone



- Avoid using informal nicknames, inside jokes, names that are not immediately identifiable to you, (JohnnyDemApples, KittyKatz, BigPimpin2013). These might be fine

for your personal correspondence with your friends, but think about how a potential employer will feel about typing this email address into their computer. This email address could potentially end up on the header of your resume, your business cards, and your job applications and could stay there for years. Aim for boring, basic and professional.

4. Once you have filled in all your information, agreed to the terms of service and proved you are not a computer by filling in those funky letters, click "Next Step"
5. You are now the proud owner of a Google account. You will now be able to customize your profile, add photos and begin to craft your professional persona online. Google will allow you to work on this profile before you publish it, so no one will see your work in progress!
6. Go on to the next portion of the activity before continuing to build your profile!

The screenshot shows the Google+ profile creation page for a user named 'Joe Black'. The page is titled 'Keep your image fresh' and includes a sidebar with two steps: '1 Add people' and '2 Be awesome'. The main content area features a profile picture placeholder, a name field containing 'Joe Black', and a 'SNAP A PHOTO' button. Below this are three sections for adding information: 'Where do you work?' with fields for 'Employer' and 'Job title'; 'Where did you go to school?' with fields for 'School name' and 'Year'; and 'Where do you live?' with a field for 'Enter a city or a country'. A large red arrow points from the 'SNAP A PHOTO' button to the right. On the right side, there is a larger profile picture placeholder and a list of location options: 'I work at...', 'I went to...', and 'I live in...'. The top right corner shows the email address 'meetjoebblack172@gmail.com'.

Part II: Thinking About Your Professional Profile

1. Now that you have a fresh, clean online profile, it is time to think rhetorically about what belongs in your professional online profile versus what belongs in your personal social networks. It is likely that you already have a presence on sites like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or Google+. While these sites are designed for social networking and ideally, for you to communicate with friends, these sites can also lead to trouble when it comes to our professional lives.
 - A 2009 Career Builder survey showed that 45% of employers use social media to background check potential employees during the hiring process. According to those employers, potential employees were removed from consideration for the following reasons:
 - ⇒ Candidate posted provocative or inappropriate photographs or information - 53%
 - ⇒ Candidate posted content about them drinking or using drugs - 44%
 - ⇒ Candidate bad-mouthed their previous employer, co-workers or clients – 35%
 - ⇒ Candidate showed poor communication skills - 29%
 - ⇒ Candidate made discriminatory comments – 26%
 - ⇒ Candidate lied about qualifications – 24%
 - ⇒ Candidate shared confidential information from previous employer – 20%
 - Source:
<http://www.careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?id=pr519&sd=8/19/2009&ed=12/31/2009>
2. While there is a lot of advice out there on how to clean up your social networking sites and use privacy settings to hide information you might not want professional contacts to see, one of the most proactive things you can do is to create an online social network that you have intentionally designed to be your professional image online, and then make that network the easiest to find.
 - (For more on cleaning up Facebook and using privacy settings, see these articles: (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324880504578300312528424302.html> , <http://infospace.ischool.syr.edu/2013/04/04/college-students-clean-up-your-act-on-social-media/>)
3. As you start to build your Google profile, think carefully about the face you want to present. How is the audience different than your regular day-to-day Facebook or Twitter profile? What information might you add to this profile that you left out of your more social profiles, and vice versa? Think carefully about these issues of audience, then answer the questions in part 3 as you work through your Google+ profile.

Part III: Answer Questions and Build Your Profile

- 1) The first thing Google will prompt you to add is a photo.
 - a) What kind of photos would be appropriate as your cover photo?
 - b) How many photos do you think you should add to your profile overall? Why?
 - c) What kind of photos should you avoid adding to your professional profile? Why?
 - d) Brainstorm at least 3 types of photos that would be useful for you to have in your professional profile. If you don't have these photos already, you may want to find a friend to take some for you. Think outside of the standard head shot: what events, clubs, groups, locations or activities can you use to promote your professional image and show off your professional personality?

- 2) The next information Google will ask you for is your work information. We will cover this section in more detail when we go over job application materials in a few weeks, but for now, use this space to brainstorm and list all the places you have worked, either as an intern or in a paid position. Above all TELL THE TRUTH: do not exaggerate or stretch the truth about positions you have held. It is ok if this is blank for now.
 - a) How might listing previous job information online be useful in a professional setting?
 - b) What kind of language should you use to describe your positions? Are there industry key words that you should include?
 - c) How might you present information about a job that ended badly (you were fired, you quit, you didn't get along well with your boss)?

- 3) The next information prompt will be for where you go to school. Again, this may be as simple as listing UF, or as complicated as listing two or three colleges you have attended. Get the dates as exact as possible and be as specific as possible about degree information. It is important here as it was in the previous section to be honest.
 - a) Google will give you space for more information below the basic headings. What might be useful information to include here?
 - b) How much information do you need to provide? What kind of information might be considered "over-sharing"?

When you have added all of this basic information, click "Next Step."

- 4) Google will now ask you to find people you may know, either through Google, Yahoo, Hotmail or another account. Again, stop and think carefully about WHO you want to add to this account. **You can skip this step and continue editing your profile, which will leave your profile UNPUBLISHED.** I would recommend completing your profile, THEN adding people to it. When you are ready to add people, think carefully about these questions.
 - a) What types of people should you add to your Google+ account?
 - b) What criteria will you use to decide if you should or shouldn't add someone to your Google+ account?
 - c) What kinds of people might you want to avoid adding to your Google+ account? Why?

- d) How might you use the Google Circles feature (limiting access to certain people), to maintain the professional level of this account?
 - e) Are there people that you might add to a professional account that you wouldn't add to a personal one? Give at least one example.
- 5) Google will also ask you if you want to follow public posts and professional organizations. Posts from these online accounts will appear on your profile page. Think carefully about the kinds of accounts that your professional self should be following! Are there professional engineering organizations that you should follow? Any UF organizations that you are a part of with a Google+ account? Do you really want to follow a cartoon television show, or a comic who has nothing to do with your industry?
- a) Brainstorm 3-5 organizations or people that you think would be appropriate to follow on Google+. Search and add them to your circles.
- 6) Lastly (of the things I am going to ask you to look at), there is a space for you to add links. Some people use this space to link to other social networking sites: is this a good idea for you? Others use this space to link to blogs or online communities that they contribute to on a regular basis: is this a good idea for you? Finally, if there are a number of sites that you reference often, or think might be helpful for someone to know about you, this might be a good space for that. Consider links to your degree program's home page, the website for organizations or clubs that you belong to (if they are professionally relevant), or even articles about you published in the school paper!
- a) Brainstorm 2-4 links that you think would be useful for a potential employer to have access to. Add them to your profile.

TIP: Remember, the idea is to make this an ideal place for an employer to find all the most relevant and important information about your professional life. The more appropriate information you can provide, the less likely they will continue to search for your less-than-professional alter-egos (especially if you have locked those accounts down in terms of privacy settings!) You may want to take a second to look at the privacy settings, but once you feel your profile is set and ready, you may want to consider making it as public as possible: that way, it will be the first thing that pops up when a future employer Googles you!

- 7) Once your profile is complete, post an initial welcome post!
- 8) Add me, your instructor (rfitzufl@gmail.com) to your circles and I will add you to our class Google group and put you in touch with the rest of your classmates!
- 9) We will be using Google Hangouts, Google Drive and Google Docs in this class. If you are unfamiliar with these products, Google has some excellent instructional videos and tutorials. Take a few minutes to watch them and familiarize yourself with them.
- 10) Continue to add and update your profile throughout the semester. By the end, you should have a profile ready for the professional job market! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask!