



INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

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Introduction

Social theorists have established that better connected people do better in life, but an individual's social networking was limited by many factors, living area, ethnic background, low income. They all represent barriers for social development and can lead to marginalization.

Over the past decades, we have witnessed technology reshape our lives, soon after online media and social networks drastically changed the way we network, communicate and find information.

The multidimensional impact that social networks have had over our lives has created new habits and introduced innovative ways to incorporate ICT as a tool in our activities. Thanks to their reactivity and wide reach out, people have been using social networks as a tool to promptly and effectively address community, business or individual needs. Spreading news about natural disasters, community engagement and initiating debates, are just a few examples of their versatility and usability.

The emerging online social networks have also proven effective and helped individuals to get in touch with recruiters, gather information about the companies they want to work for, and build a network of influences before they even get the chance to gain work experience. Companies that have seen the importance of a good online presence for their business seem to be benefiting from the use of social networks, and in the meantime these networks have created jobs that not long ago didn't exist. More and more companies are linking their social media strategy with finding new talent. Throughout the region we have witnessed an increased use of social networks in general, employers are beginning to take profit of the audience they have build in social networks to advertise vacancies.

Online networking has been positively linked to building and reinforcing social capital (V. Benson et al., 2014) by providing simple means of knowledge management, helping in building social capital, and establishing an online presence.

But how can a young person use social networks for their professional benefit, which are the issues for attention in order to best present oneself and keep track of ones opportunities for employment? And can youth use more effectively Internet and social networks to find work?

This chronicle focuses on the influence of online media in youth employment, it shows the current internet usage across Western Balkans and Turkey, popularity of social networks and further on it explains issues for attention, and it gives insight about the use of social networks as a tool to improve youth employability and increase youth participation in the job market.

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Overview of Internet use in the region

Internet penetration in the Western Balkan Countries has reached comparable levels to developed countries, with a penetration rate that spans between 50-80 percent.

Recent statistics of internet penetration and usage for each of the countries are shown here below:

KOSOVO

Internet penetration in the Kosovo is 76,6% with 1 424 149 internet users as of December 2013. Whereas according to the report issued by the Kosovo Association of Information and Communication Technology (STIKK), internet penetration on households is 84.8%.

According to STIKK, the main services that are used in Kosovo are Facebook, Skype and Youtube. In 2013, approximately 73.3% of Internet users were using facebook- meaning that 43.6% of Kosovo's total population uses the facebook service. There are no recent reports, but indications are that this social network has had a significant increase on subscribers from Kosovo.

SERBIA

According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia 62.8% of households have an Internet connection. While in urban areas of the Republic of Serbia the number of households with Internet connection amounted to 67.8% (cf. 63.8% in 2013), in rural areas there were 51,1% (cf. 42.5% in 2013) of households with Internet connection. Accordint to Internet World Stats, there are 3,600,000 Facebook users as of Nov 15/15 in Serbia, reaching a 50.6% penetration rate.

MACEDONIA

According to Internet world stats there are 1,280,132 Internet users as of Dec.31, 2013, in Macedonia, reaching a penetration of 61.9%. Macedonian State Statistical Office reports a 68.3% internet penetration rate, based on households.

Facebook is the most popular social media network in Macedonia, with 962,780 users, according to Internet World Stats, making up a 46.5% penetration rate.

MONTENEGRO

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Statistics show that there are 369,220 Internet users (as of Dec.31, 2013, IWS), reaching a 59.4 % penetration. Internet World Stats counted 306,260 Facebook users (as of Dec 31/12) or else a 49.2% penetration rate for the social network.

ALBANIA

According to Internet World Stats, in Albania there are 1,815,145 Internet users as of Dec/13, reaching a 60.1 % Internet penetration rate. The same resource counts 1,097,800 Facebook users on Dec 31/12, or else a 37.9% penetration rate.

TURKEY

In Turkey as of Dec/14, there were 46,282,850 Internet users, according to IWS that makes a 59.6% Internet penetration rate.

The same resource counts 32,131,260 Facebook subscribers as of Dec 31/12, or else a 41.4% penetration rate.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

IWS counted 2,628,846 Internet users in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as of Dec 31, 2013, reaching to a 68.7% Internet penetration rate.

Until Dec 31/12, there were 1,345,020 Facebook subscribers that make a 35.2% penetration rate for the social network.

Facebook remains, not only the most popular social network in the region, but also one of the most popular internet services among users.

According to a survey on youth Internet use habits, the main reason most (97.6%) of young people use Internet to participate in social networks (SEE Youth and Media, 2013). Among most popular services in the region remain Facebook and Youtube, followed by other, somewhat less popular social media (instagram, blogs, twitter and linkedin, etc.).

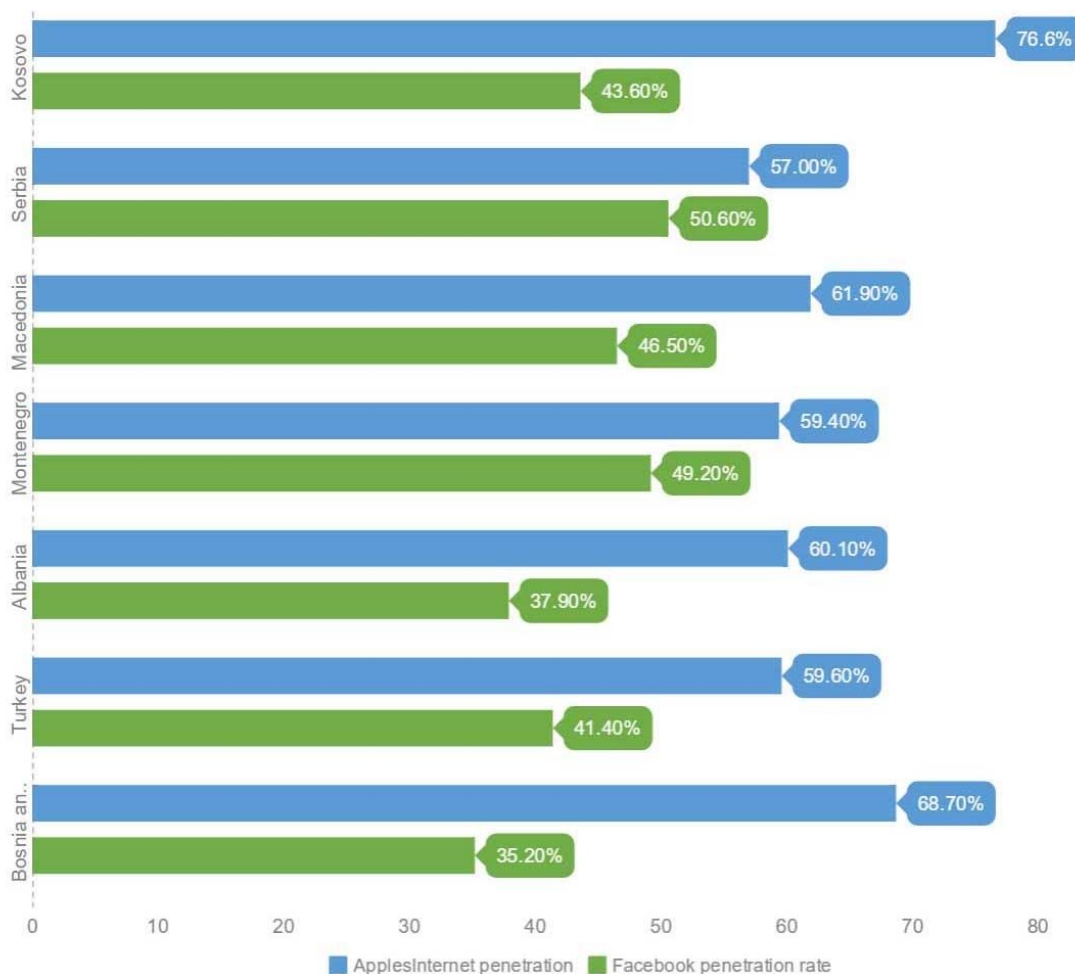
The largest user group of these services is youth population, under the age of 30.

The same study finds that Internet was dominantly indicated as useful media in terms of youth's entertainment and information. Actually, 79.1 % of surveyed youth believe that Internet is most useful for entertainment purposes and 94.6% of them believe it is most useful for information purposes. Single exception from this trend was noted in Turkey, where only 27.3% of

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youth find Internet to be the most useful media for information purposes. Youth in this country more frequently use the television for information purposes. Youth find social media (52%) and Internet (42.3) to be the most useful media for communication purposes. These two media appear as the most frequently indicated answers also in terms of activism and mobilization, membership in various groups, promotion, recruitment and expression. 92.6% of youth believe that Internet and social media are the most useful media for membership in groups, while 80.8% of them consider the Internet as the most useful media for self-promotion. Portion of youth indicated that television is the most useful media for self-promotion purposes. 26.5% of youth in Montenegro and 22.3% of youth in Albania reported that television is the most useful media for self-promotion.

Again, the Internet and social media were indicated as the most useful media for recruitment (81%) and self-expression (86.1%).



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Social recruiting

How social networks are becoming a tool for recruiters and HR.

As social networks are shifting away from their initial concept of leisure, individuals are learning to take profit of this new channel of communication and information. Spreading news, building audiences, raising awareness and building communities of peers are just some of the examples of popular use. Businesses have been leveraging social media to target their market and amplify their brand, being a cost free and widely spread medium. Many companies now rely on social recruiting, and use social networks to target their ideal hire.

Social networks can help individuals overcome geographical barriers and level the playfield by providing youngsters equal access to job market information, as well as networking and employment opportunities.

For a company, social networks are providing an effective communication platform at low costs. Users are connecting with companies and popular profiles of the industry as a means to follow trends, stay in touch with the industry and keep trace of opportunities that might improve their employability.

The ways of searching for a job have been evolving quickly over the recent years; individuals no longer rely on job vacancy announcements in newspapers or published announcements in traditional media outlets. Recruitment services imply costs that are often unbearable for youth, in particular for marginalized groups. All over the world recruitment staff and services are embracing social media ("Recruiting with Social Media: Social Media's Impact on Recruitment and HR." Raj Anand, 2010).

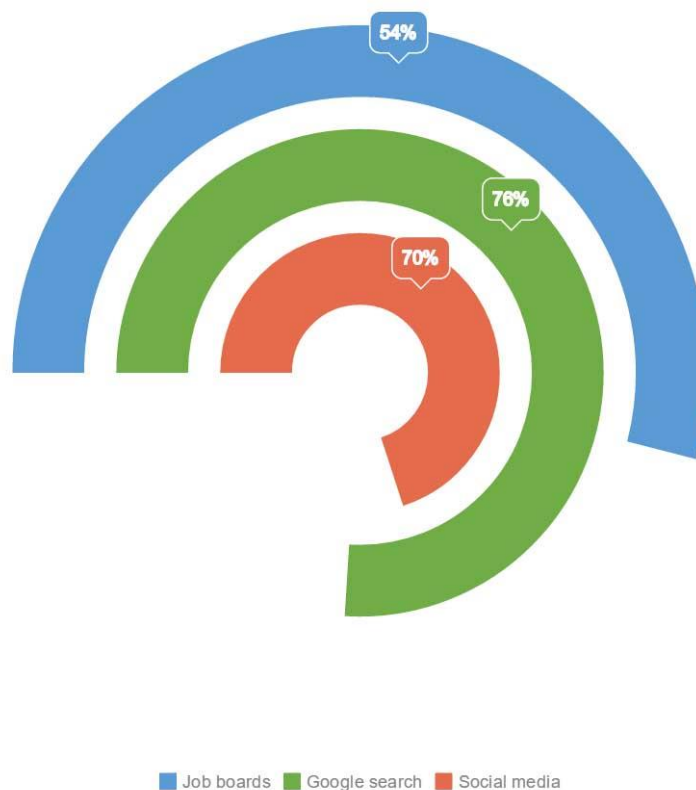
A single resume is no longer near to being the only point of reference when we are looking for employment, whether as an employee or employer. Recruiters have adopted social networking platforms in the process making connections more efficient and cost free.

Social recruiting is now the norm, says Jobvite survey 2014, according to which 93% of recruiters use or plan to use social to support their recruiting efforts. The same report reveals that, much like marketers, recruiters showcase their employer brand and engage with candidates across many platforms.

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According to Careerbuilder's employee behavior study (2015) the online tools are highly used by candidates to land a job; in Germany 76% of candidates said that they use Google search, compared to 54% using job boards, whereas 70% of candidates are using social media.

Online tools candidates use to land a job



In Italy almost half (49%) of recruiters and of candidates (47%) said that they have been using social media for job placement, 49% of candidates said that after being remembered, they will use social media to land a job. (Adecco, 2015).

Business representatives reported that they regularly post job ads in their social networks, benefiting from the audience they have build to recruit new talent.

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Impact of traditional media vs internet in youth employability

In Kosovo, before the introduction of job portals, newspapers were the most reliable medium in the country, for job postings. The situation was not much different throughout the region but little research was done on the topic and exact statistics are limited.

There is a case for the role of traditional media (TV, radio and print) in raising awareness on the issue of youth employability but the real impact is strictly related to the quality of the content and the audience reach and versatility of individual outlets.

In Kosovo, and the region in general, television remains the main source of information, with internet portals speedily picking up. Print press, especially daily newspapers are shifting their activity on the internet and increasingly using it to reach their audience, specifically the younger one. Radio is almost exclusively used for entertainment purposes, besides rapid decline in audience.

The media scene is therefore characterized by strong TV broadcasters, print press shifting to internet and music radios. Kosovo has a rather popular public service broadcaster, the Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK) while the popularity of other similar services in the region varies from almost insignificant such as the case of Albania, to rather influential one in Croatia. When it comes to audience share however, privately-owned TV channels lead across the region and the nature of content is much less directed towards information and education and focuses on entertainment. The public service broadcasters aim to maintain the ratio which favors information and education to entertainment but they all have limited capabilities for producing their own content as the financing is difficult to regulate so it can ensure good quality original content. Namely, they all rely in principle on license fee, state funding and advertising to a small part. Unless there is significant improvement in the way license fee is collected, or in fact re-introduced a in the case of Kosovo, current budgets have it difficult to support quality programs related to youth employment and issues faced by disadvantaged groups.

Socio-economic issues are not popular with the audience, at least not in the current format. In Kosovo's case, the four most popular TV stations, including the public RTK have each a weekly magazine on economy, in some cases supported by donors who focus on economic development. Social issues are mainly handled as part of news bulletins, short segments appearing commonly at the end of a bulletin. There is a recent trend in developing reality TV shows which present job competitions, but the main purpose of such programs is to entertain and they do very little in raising awareness on the pressing issues or deliberate the dynamic of job market.

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In conclusion, the role of traditional media on the employment and employability issues is minor, even less than their potential. There is little prospect of improvement as the trends are showing increasing competition in a limited advertising market. It is therefore safe to assume that socio-economic issues, however politically important, will find it ever more difficult to find their way to the audience of traditional media outlets. Donor community might have a way to mitigate this through financing sector-specific shows but the difficulty of attracting audience remains, and especially targeting the important part of that audience.

On the other hand, the increased use of internet as a source of information and the popularity of social networking sites, often transformed into what is widely accepted as social media, has opened new possibilities.

A recent research in Kosovo (EYE Kosovo, 2015) showed that the introduction of online job portals has affected newspapers, most of which reported drops in the revenues from the job ads.

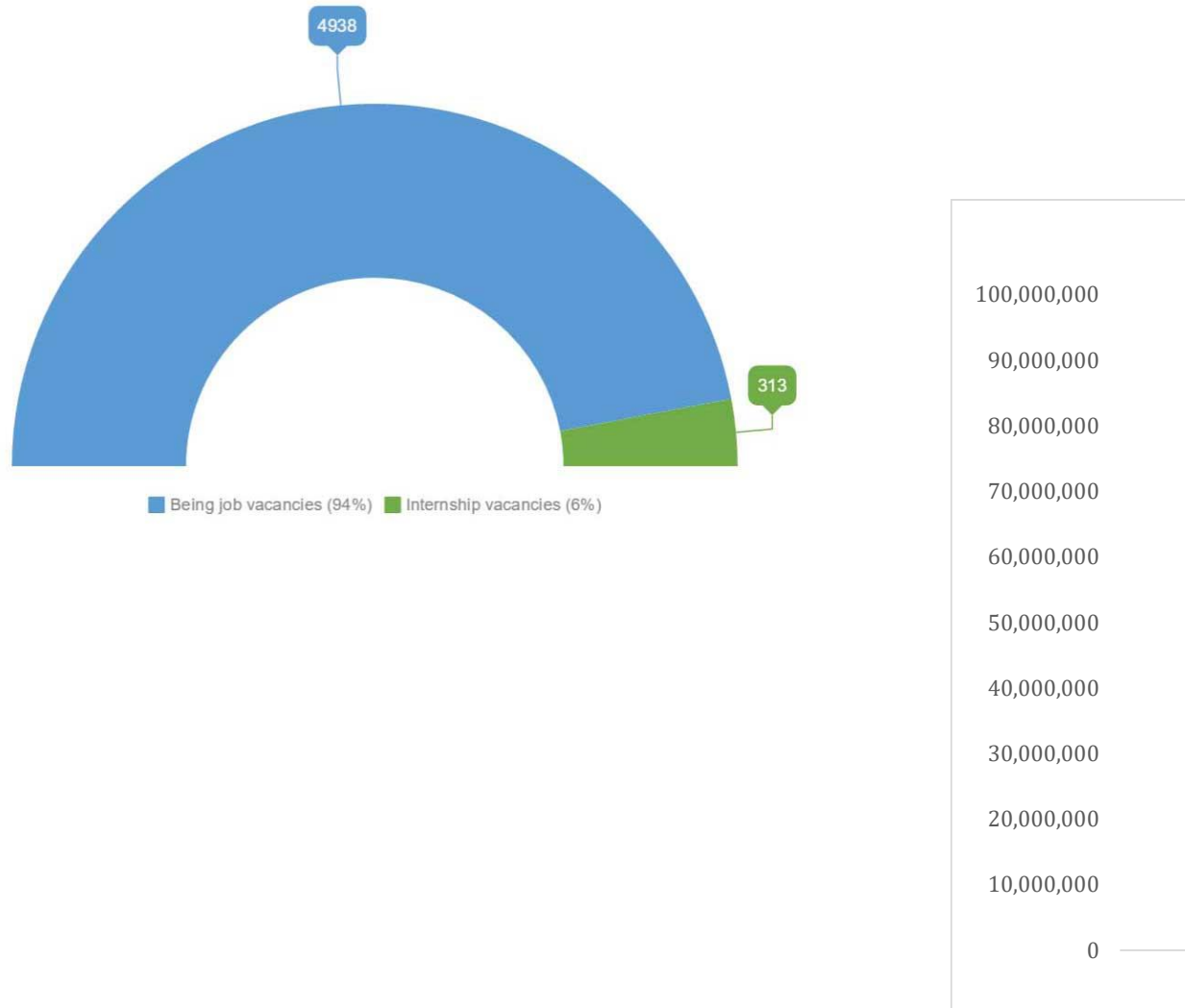
The main criteria employers in Kosovo use to choose an online job portal as a recruitment channel are reach, quality of candidates and price for the service (EYE).

Three attributes that social media provide with minimum costs, proving effective and easily integrated in the recruiting process. A study in eight Kosovo portals during the period of September and October, showed that a total of 1233 ads were posted, 1205 of them being job ads and 28 internship ads; representing a total of 5251 vacancies, 4938 being job vacancies and 313 internships. (EYE Kosovo, 2015)

EYE has been supporting and monitoring the performance of Job matching services, and according to them there is a 20% increase of enterprises that are using online job portals, compared to the same period of 2014. While the number of unique visitors to these portals, has almost tripled (from 383,604 to 895,65618).

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Vacancies during September and October in Kosovo



Although there is no statistical information on the incorporation of social networks in the recruitment process, our research (YOU SEE, 2015) revealed that companies are incorporating

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social networks to their recruitment process driven by their needs to reach out to a broader and targeted audience.

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Social media: building and exploiting connections for career management

“Talent is universal; opportunity is not!”

Despite the available workforce and the high unemployment in the region, still many businesses report difficulties when it comes to recruiting new talent. Our research on the factors that influence youth employability (YOU SEE, 2015) showed that establishing communication and remaining updated with the job market were among the most concerning issues both for companies and for candidates. When faced with a large number of applications, recruiters look for as many differences as possible in order to distinguish the right candidate, a task which is not trivial and often implies extra costs. A motive that drives companies to rely in personal recommendations and their own network of social acquaintances. The increased use of internet services can be effective in overcoming this state of unequal opportunity.

For both recruiters and candidates, social networks are enabling a state of equity, giving every individual the chance to stand out and be recruited based on their skill and qualification, rather than on personal recommendations.

With the appropriate information, candidates with similar profiles can profit from the use of social networks to market their profiles and to increase their chances of getting hired, by making their digital footprint work for them.

From following the companies you want to work for, to building a network of influential contacts, and watching over your digital reputation, these are all good practices that can improve your employability and can raise the chances for your profile to stand out from the crowd. This implies that regardless of the limitations you might be facing due to ethnical background, place of living or economic welfare, a powerful tool has been

Although research on the social recruiting is still scarce, one survey shows that more than a quarter of recruiters in Italy (27%) said that they dismissed a candidate’s application based on their social network profile. (Adecco, 2015) Which

“According to the 2012 annual technology market survey conducted by Eurocom Worldwide, “Almost one in five technology industry executives say that a candidate’s social media profile has caused them not to hire that person.” Previous Eurocom Worldwide surveys had found almost

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40% of the survey respondents from technology companies review job candidate's profiles on social media sites."

New tools of the trade

As the use of technology increased, many services of online resumes and online job matching services were also introduced. These employment specific services such as LinkedIn, Headhunter, monster, Glassdoor, Solaborate, etc. can help both job seekers and employers reach their target.

In addition, there is also a growing trend of general-purpose social networks, like Facebook or twitter, increasingly being used for employment.

While for employers these services provide a tool to reach out to a broader audience, rendering it easier to find and recruit new talent, for job seekers these services provide information on current trends and allow them to connect with a company or even the most influential actors in one particular industry.

For jobseekers and recruiters, there are a multitude of professional social networking sites

"It's generally recommended to have an engaging presence on one platform than multiple inactive communities on various platforms." Raj Anand in his book

Recruiting through social media

"For lower skilled profiles many recruiters are now using Facebook job posts and direct contact to their online network of acquaintances" says Marinela Tane a recruiter from Oracle Romania.

Depending on the region and country use habits of internet services, recruiters are also adapting tools and websites to be target specific.

In Kosovo all JMSs and job portals are using social media to promote their job ads.

On the other side, groups and communities of peers are being build on social networks, with the purpose of sharing information, asking for advice and help as well as to post job openings for that specific group. These groups provide a cost free communication medium through which any recruiter can reach out to a specific target. Examples of such groups and recruitment through job

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postings have proven quite effective, in particular for reaching out to individuals outside a said geographical area and individuals with specific qualifications.

LINKEDIN

Launched in 2003, LinkedIn counts 400 million subscribers, being the most popular professional network worldwide. LinkedIn is a social network designed to act as your online resume as well as a Job Matching Service (JMS).

Anyone can set up a basic profile free of charge, and stay in touch with information regarding an industry, connect to friends, colleagues and influential individuals. Your profile there will serve as an online e resume visible to others, including recruiters. LinkedIn allows you to showcase your skills, which can be endorsed by your network members to complete and support your professional profile. Many companies and Job Matching Service providers now allow you to apply for a job using only LinkedIn.

When searching for a job or recruiting, this social network offers additional services upon payment, that can accelerate the entire process, both for businesses and for job seekers.

FACEBOOK

Although its initial concept was not to be a recruiting website, Facebook remains one of the most popular networks and by far the network with most frequent users with 1,550 million subscribers (2015). Facebook's versatility allows its users to take advantage of their profile and make it work to suit their needs.

Many social media experts advise users to be careful with what they post on their social network profiles. Job seekers go are encouraged to go one step further and use their Facebook profile to promote their profile and increase their employability by networking with members of the community or company they wish to work for, being cautious of their privacy settings and posting professional content.

Top 10 Job boards on Facebook <http://www.cio.com/article/2948753/social-networking/top-10-job-boards-on-facebook.html>

For Kosovans looking for work, means for online employment are now matching professional networks as a main source of information. Personal networks, social and family connections are

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still the main resource for job seeking, but it could very well be a Kosovo-specific issue as the public sector has been the largest employer in the last few years. The trend could very well dissipate since most of the institutions are now well established and staffed. Leaving connections aside, for the purpose of this research, group made of 54 respondents, mainly 18-27 year-old students, unemployed or other potential jobseekers were asked in the course of various activities about the ways through which they were looking for jobs, and an overwhelming majority of 67% said that the internet was the first thing where they expect to find such information. When asked about the specific sources on the internet, social media ranked lower than other sources, at 31%. The trend however is on the rise, because the promotion of private business on social media is on the rise and the representatives of businesses who participated in the focus group discussion for a related study have all agreed that the use of social media for communication is now as important as any other mean. The case for social media replacing the practices and habits created in the last 15 years in Kosovo could be made, especially with the public sector hiring less, business community getting stronger and the ever-younger workforce. Never the less, more research is needed on the subject, with broader audience to give a clear statistical picture of the situation.

Social media for job search

There has been a significant change in the way jobs are searched, from newspaper browsing to searching through online job boards, the youth has now the capability of using the wide area of social networks to connect and to attract the potential employers. The search does however go both ways and it also equips the employers with a powerful tool of pre-selecting the candidates even before the past-initial contact is made. The first impressions are no longer made in person, or even on the CV attached with the application. The so-called digital footprint, the information that an individual leaves on the internet for anyone to access, has now become the virtual handshake. It is therefore important, for an individual who is on job search, especially for those with little to no connections with their employer, to make sure that the digital footprint they leave matches to the information they wish to convey to the potential employer.

Guidelines for making use of social media for employment:

<http://www.yourcareersource.com/SocialMediaforJobSeekers.php>

Guidelines for improving one's digital footprint.

How to create a positive digital footprint?

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- Ego-surf, check the impression you're creating by Googling yourself
- Untag yourself in less flattering or any inappropriate photos
- Delete social media posts which may negatively impact your job seeking goals
- Use privacy settings cautiously, hide the negative while highlighting the positive
- Create professional online profiles showcasing your skill and experience, keep them up-to-date.
- Get involved in professional forums, join the discussion.
- Always use appropriate respectful netiquette and check your grammar and spelling.

Blog your way to employment?

Blogging is a very easy way to showcase your knowledge, skills and interests; it can help individuals build a professional reputation for them while it provides a medium through which you can support and add value to your professional qualifications on your CV.

“Having a credible online presence will come in very handy in today’s digital age, so blogging about issues that are meaningful to you, or just things you’re interested in, will help build up a knowledgeable online persona for you that you can reference on your CV and use to wow employers with your enthusiasm for a particular subject.” Oxford Royale Academy

Companies that have been using social recruiting

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/sylviaivorhausersmith/2013/07/09/three-companies-nailing-social-mobile-for-hr/>

Further read: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/clarebettelley/2014/10/06/executives-arent-always-right-why-social-media-recruiting-has-a-place-in-every-industry/>

an example of a successful social media strategy for recruitment, involving candidates on the process!