base this perception not only on how you present yourself during the application process and interview but also on images or information they find about you on the Internet. Employers are not likely to hire anyone they believe will harm their company’s reputation or image. When posting anything on the Internet, you should consider what kind of impact the image or information could have to your career and future.

Can an employer or a university withdraw their offer?

Many employers and universities include a moral clause in their contracts that gives them the ability to withdraw their offers. If objectionable information is discovered, the university or employer has the legal right to withdraw its offer. If an offer is withdrawn, you would have no legal recourse because you agreed to the terms and conditions of the contract.

Office of the Attorney for Students

The purpose of the Office of the Attorney for Students is to provide specified legal services with a focus on legal advising, counseling and education to currently enrolled students at Texas State University-San Marcos.

Students can receive advice in the following areas:

- landlord/tenant law – apartment leases, rental property and tenant rights
- criminal law – any legal matter that could result in criminal charges
- family law – marriage, divorce and child custody and support
- contract law – contractual obligations
- employment law – employee rights and responsibilities
- consumer protection law – service or repair performance
- notary public service – notarized acknowledgment of signatures

To make an appointment, please call 512.245.2370. Please note that the Office of the Attorney for Students does not counsel on matters involving The Texas State University System or disputes between Texas State students.

Disclaimer: The information found in this brochure is intended for informational and educational purposes only. If you need specific legal advice, please consult an attorney.

Texas State’s Career Services office provides assistance to undergraduates, graduate students and alumni who seek help in formulating and implementing career plans. Their office is located in the LBJ Student Center, Room 5-7.1. Contact Career Services by calling 512.245.2645 or by visiting www.careerservices.txstate.edu.

Are you interested in building a professional online persona? Try these sites:

- www.linkedin.com
- www.ysn.com
- www.squidoo.com
- kickstart.yahoo.com

This information is available in alternate format upon request from the Office of Disability Services.
With the number of online social networking sites growing every year, it is important to consider your online identity as a part of your professional image. Even though sites such as MySpace and Facebook place you just one click away from connecting with buddies and classmates, they also place you one Google search away from prospective employers.

There is a growing trend in the number of employers who conduct online research on prospective employees. This screening also includes the use of social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Friendster, etc. Like it or not, these sites are public ones. Your personal information can be found on them, and it could prevent you from landing your dream job.

What are MySpace and Facebook?
MySpace, Facebook and similar Web sites are online social gathering spaces where you can post text and photographs describing your life, personality, opinions and more. Many college students use these sites to make new friends or to keep in touch with old ones. Unfortunately, some students use these sites to post information that they believe is funny, such as their sexual conquests, drug use or violent acts. Other students also choose to post nude photographs of themselves.

What risks are associated with these sites?
MySpace, Facebook and sites like them were once considered the private domain of young adults, but they have become popular among the general population. Most of the material posted on these sites is visible to anyone who visits. The risk in posting personal information, such as blogs or photographs, is that employers look at these items when deciding whether to accept a candidate for a position.

Are other risks involved?
Information can be leaked, accidentally or intentionally, and criminals do visit social networking sites seeking information about potential victims. Even if you post only public information, such as a work telephone number or address, a person who wants to find you will probably be able to do so. For your own protection, you should not share personal information, such as a home address or telephone number, on social networking Web sites.

What can be learned about me on the web?
In general, any content containing your name can be found on the Web. If you have written any articles or opinion letters that have been published and are available online or have a personal blog, an employer may be able to find these materials when searching the Internet for your name. While the First Amendment does grant you freedom of speech, employers also have the right to read what you have written and to form an opinion about you based on that information. Employers may not share your views about politics, morals or values. If they find articles, opinion letters or blogs that reveal your attitudes toward certain subjects, you may or may not receive an interview or job offer.

Don’t privacy settings protect me?
No system is perfect. Even if you use the Web site’s privacy settings, it is possible for a potential employer or university recruiter to find your information. In addition, many employers have learned to get around privacy settings with relative ease. For example, the company you apply to for a job may have recently hired graduates from your university. These employees may have retained access to their university e-mail accounts and could easily access the university’s Facebook group. Some companies employ interns who are students at your university; these students could access Facebook. Finally, many employment contracts require you to sign a waiver clause, giving employers the right to access your private records.

Privacy in a post 9/11 world
The best rule is to err on the side of caution; you never know who is or could be viewing your page. If you do not have a Facebook or MySpace page, refuse to create one. If you already have an account, you may want to consider deleting it. If you decide to create an account or keep an existing one, you should consider the following:

1. Keep the information in your online profile as neutral as possible.
2. Emphasize and focus on academic activities and professional information, not personal details.
3. It’s fine to mention hobbies and interests but don’t get too personal.
4. If you include a photo, choose something fairly conservative and flattering.
5. If you wouldn’t put it in your résumé, don’t put it on the Web.
6. Use any and all privacy settings that are available to you.

Remember, your online identity is a part of your professional image. At Texas State Career Services, we can assist you in building a polished professional image so that you can obtain the career you want.

What does an employer look for in a new hire?
Obtaining your first job is one of the most difficult tasks you will face after graduation. Because employers typically receive résumés and applications from many candidates, they use certain techniques to screen them. Employers consider grades, achievements and work experience when reviewing applications, but they may also use the Internet to perform background checks.

What could be considered objectionable?
Some of the following could be considered objectionable: nude photographs, images of violence or stories about sexual escapades, drug use, excessive drinking or violent acts. This list is not comprehensive. What is considered objectionable will differ from one employer to another.

What can an employer use against me?
Employers cannot discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or other bases found in federal or state law; however, they can discriminate against you if they find you to be immature or objectionable for some other reason. Employers