

## **Encouraging a positive culture around social media through the concept of 'Brand Me'**

There are many windows through which an individual may be viewed when applying for a placement or graduate position, (CV, interviews, Facebook, Twitter, Blog, LinkedIn) and the digital landscape has created new opportunities for communication and personal self-expression, however, in some instances the lines may become easily blurred between personal and professional use and may lead to a conflict of interest. Encouraging the student to be a 'professional digital citizen' in managing their 'digital footprint' and raising the student awareness of 'brand-me' in the transition from school leaver to graduate career planning is a challenge for many universities. Personal branding and developing 'brand-me' may be viewed as others perceptions of the person and the intangible values individuals contribute through their reputations, expertise and experience, their relationship with others, how they speak, how they behave, their 'habitus', which collectively send signals that come together to create an image to shape and exude a personal brand. How social media may contribute to personal branding or 'brand me' was investigated through a study based on a survey of almost 400 students and using supportive online materials. These resources will be showcased in the presentation. Results confirmed that the concept of personal branding, and the creation and destruction of personal brand equity of both oneself and others, has salience with the students and is useful in altering their behaviour and encouraging them to use social media in a more responsible, perhaps more professional, manner and in shaping their 'brand-me' throughout their journey from student to graduate.

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