



ON B2.

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OU women's soccer wins their fourth game in a row against Western Illinois.



Special Report: Your online life



Left: Oakland University students put a photo of their use of a beer bong on their Facebook profiles. Such profiles are generally accessible to anyone on the Internet and anyone with a Facebook account, including future employers, parents and professors.

Below: Another OU student put a photo of her drinking a beer in her Facebook profile.

NOTE: The faces of the students in the photos both to the left and below have been altered.

The young woman in the photograph appears frightened, as a leering man holds a large knife across her throat.

The woman is not about to die. She is not starring in a slasher movie, or a porn flick. She is a former soccer star here at Oakland University who staged the picture and posted it on her Facebook page, a social networking Web site where anyone can post photographs and personal information.

A quick search through Facebook profiles of OU student athletes found numerous instances of illegal or questionable conduct. Women athletes brag about getting kicked out of camp for smoking dope. Hockey players don their jerseys while standing behind a stack of beer cans. One male soccer player's Facebook page shows pictures of what appears to be naked men together in a shower stall. Another athlete posted a picture of a child sitting on top of a beer keg. The boy isn't the only one underage. Many of the athletes shown with alcohol are apparently underage, too—according to their own Facebook profiles.

The questionable photographs and profiles were posted by OU students who participate in men's hockey, golf, soccer, baseball, lacrosse and track, and

women's track, soccer, cross-country and tennis. In some cases, the profiles are posted by students who participate in sports clubs at OU. Club teams are not sponsored by OU as varsity sports, although in some cases they do receive university funding.

OU isn't the only university where athletes, and other students, are facing questions about their Facebook profiles. Recently, The Detroit News published a story targeting both Facebook and Myspace profiles of student athletes from the University of Michigan and Michigan State University. Investigative reporter Joanne Gerstner, an Oakland University Journalism graduate, found many profiles containing profane language, crude sexual remarks and boasts, racial slurs, pictures of underage drinking and violence.

While Oakland's athletes do not share the same name recognition as those athletes at U-M and MSU, they are still in the public eye more than the average student. "This is an issue that has cropped up in recent years and has drawn national attention,"

Please see **FACEBOOK/A2**



Check it out

- Look at who else is Facebooking — A2
- Some recent Web site lawsuits have made news around the country — A2
- Speakers came to campus last week to talk about the dangers of online behavior — A3

Employers may peek at online profiles

Finding a job after college may become even more difficult for students who post embarrassing information in their online profiles at Web sites such as Facebook and MySpace. The fast-growing networks allow employers to often see another side of their applicants—a view that frequently includes substance abuse, inappropriate behavior, sexual habits and other activities typically frowned upon in the workplace.

Robert Thomas, director of Oakland University Career Services, estimates that 20 percent of employers check Facebook profiles of students who have applied for jobs. Those employers may make hiring decisions based upon what they find online, Thomas said. Photos of students drinking or partying are likely

to scare away employers. "Students are taking a big risk when putting embarrassing photos on those Web sites," Thomas said.

Some students remain indifferent on whether or not their future employers find incriminating evidence in their Facebook profiles. "I could care less," said junior business major Jayson Miller. "If a company is going to pass me over not because I'm unqualified, but because of things I did as a kid, I probably wouldn't be happy there anyway."

However, he agrees the Web site is great for social networking. In fact, Career Services has a profile to keep in contact with students and inform them of upcoming events or opportunities in their career field.

Some employers disagree with

using MySpace to learn more about their employees or interviewees. John Carlisle, an editor at C & G Newspapers in Warren, has hired OU interns and graduates in the past and said he has would not peruse MySpace for additional information about potential hires or current employees. "I'd prefer not to dig into people's personal lives as a condition of employment," he said. "The resume and work history are pretty much all that are relevant to a job search."

Although Carlisle doesn't have a MySpace account, he has browsed the site many times. "I suppose if I stumbled upon a profile and it

Please see **JOBS/A2**

What do you think?

- Should employers look at their future employees' online profiles in order to gage their personalities?
- Would knowing that a future employer was looking at your profile change what you put online?
- Tell us what you think. Send us an e-mail to editor@oakpostonline.com with your thoughts.

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■ Can you guess who on-campus is dressing up as these figures for Halloween? Check out the answers on A2.

FACEBOOK

Cont. from A1

said Sports Information Director Phil Hess. "It was something we talked about at our national convention over the summer."

Football coaches at U-M and MSU reportedly ordered their players to immediately remove their online profiles and stop using the Web sites.

Oakland's athletic department currently has no restrictions on what the athletes may or may not post on Facebook and Myspace, Hess said. For now, Interim Athletic Director Tracy Huth is allowing the coaches to set their own guidelines. If further action is required, Hess said the athletic department will take the necessary steps.

Athletes are not the only ones that should be watching their online actions. Other groups such as the OU Student Congress, The Oakland Post, WXOU radio station and Greek organizations across campus report they are aware of the issue and how it may reflect on them. However, an informal survey shows few policies in effect for any student organizations at the moment.

The Post recently told newspaper employees to take down any inappropriate material including any questionable groups or photos. Editors are revising their code of ethics to include a policy that deals with online networking sites.

Some groups have conduct policies that seem to preclude some of the questionable photos found on Facebook. For example, the OU "Images" Dance Team is prohibited from using alcohol while dressed in their OU dance costumes, according to one of the dancers.

Conversely, WXOU Radio does not plan to create any sort of policy regarding actions taken by station employees and volunteers. "I currently have no plans of implementing such policies. What a student wishes to publish about him or herself is his or her business," said WXOU Coordinator Christine Cronauer.

Most groups indicated they do not plan to take action, but instead educate students as to future consequences they could face. For example, OUSC has no rules regarding online profiles. Student Body President Madalyn Miller said she plans to speak with legislators about what is appropriate online. Miller said legislators are aware of the negative publicity they can draw from sites like Facebook.

According to Greek Advisor Cressie Smith, there is no policy regarding social networking sites. "I encourage (and educate) all students, including sororities and fraternities to only put items up on Facebook that they want

the world to see... I cannot regulate what they do, but rather guide them to make good decisions," Smith said.

A brave new online world

Over the past few years, social networking Web sites such as Facebook and Myspace have become increasingly popular with college students. But with increased popularity comes increased scrutiny.

For students, joining groups on the popular Web site is just another part of networking online with others who have common interests and beliefs. But do students stop to think joining one of these online groups could affect their real-life?

"I started a group called 'F--- Censorship, the OU chapter' a while ago, and I am not leaving it," said Justin Howland, a senior journalism major who is also residence assistant in Hill Hall on campus. His RA job restricts his Facebook activity. "They told us we can't have our profile pictures that have alcohol in them, that was in the interview... they make it clear that we are supposed to set an example," said Howland.

There are thousands of groups in the OU network. There is a group for just about everything one could imagine, from favorite television shows to student organizations. While most groups are light-hearted, others take a more rebellious tone, such as one that calls for firing Men's Basketball Coach Greg Kampe.

Another group is the "Future Teachers Drinking Club." The group is designed for those majoring in education at OU. The description of the group includes mention of "awful classes, and the prospect of future unemployment."

"I am going into teaching, and I came across that group and I thought it was kind of funny," said Matt Thomas, a junior elementary education major.

Others fear the fun could come back to haunt them. "People in this group don't care about their image," said Rachel Stimpson, a junior elementary education major. "Being that they want to be teachers, they aren't very good role models."

Facebook has a new feature called the News Feed. While it is fun for those who like to gossip, it isn't fun for those who want a private life. As soon as you log in, a News Feed lies before you giving you information from the latest break-up to new pictures posted, accompanied with the time and date it was done.

Many groups are taking advantage of the increasing popularity of these sites. The entertainment industry uses Facebook and Myspace as marketing tools. This past summer, the film "The Covenant" ran ads promoting their Myspace account. Their

page included exclusive songs from the soundtrack, Instant Messenger icons and trailers. Another example is the Fox network. On Fox's Myspace account viewers can see entire broadcasts of their favorite shows.

Politicians are also drumming up volunteer groups for their campaigns by using Facebook, which launched a voter registration drive to encourage young people to vote.

The Michigan candidates for governor, Jennifer Granholm and Dick DeVos, have taken advantage of this network. Both candidates have a Facebook profile in order to reach out to the young adults of the population.

Both profiles concentrate mainly on the race for governor, but there is some personal information shared.

Granholm's profile is much more impersonal than DeVos', who includes his address, telephone number and birthday. The governor only displays her marital status and does not include any other personal information.

Both candidate's activities and interests are out of the ordinary. Granholm includes activities such as "governing the state of Michigan and spending time with family." DeVos lists "bringing jobs to Michigan, running for governor, and spending time with family" as some of his activities.

Since these profiles are mostly viewed by college students, Granholm and DeVos have focused on college issues in order to attract young adults. Granholm's "about me" section describes everything she plans to do for Michigan college students if she is reelected. DeVos joined various groups, including Students for DeVos and Elect Dick DeVos. He also includes many links to other Web sites and labels them as "students click here."

Facebook users cannot add the candidates as a friend. However, any person with a profile can choose to support the candidate of their choice, which will be displayed on the Facebook user's profile.

Faculty on Facebook

Many faculty members know about Facebook and can easily access the Web site or create an account, giving them the ability to find personal information about their students.

Laura Dinsmoor, a computer science and engineering professor at Oakland University said that she has heard of Facebook, but has never tried to access the site. She said she would not search for students who attend her classes because she believes that privacy needs to be respected when it comes to teacher-student relationships.

Spanish Professor Holly Walker-Cote does not have a Facebook account, despite the fact that many of her friends do. "It's the Devil,"

she said. For her, it's also matter of privacy. "Students should not know about my personal life and I don't need to know about theirs."

Scott Burke, an OU communication instructor and video resource coordinator and producer, posted his profile as a way of communicating with students. "I try to keep up with what's going on," said Burke. "I will try to have students find me before I find them; it just makes more sense. If I know them, I will add them (to the online group). I don't need to add someone I don't know."

Students often do add people they don't know to their online groups. This may be based on personality traits or mere physical looks. This is where the problem lies. Approving a friend request from someone you don't know is a bad decision. "I think lots of things have the potential to be dangerous," said Burke. "Facebook, like any other tool, can certainly be (both) dangerous and useful. Students contact me through Facebook for grades, and other school-related reasons. It comes in handy. It's another way for students to access me," Burke added.

Matt Kelly, peer leader for COM 101, agrees. "I look up some of them just to see what kind of dynamic we have in our class and things like that," stated Kelly. "Facebook is a good resource if used responsibly."

Some faculty have bad experiences, even if they don't use Facebook. OU journalism instructor Fred Girard recently learned that a student posted an unauthorized Facebook profile of Girard that contained a large amount of personal information. "I'm offended at it. It wasn't with my permission. I addressed a class at U of M. The student who invited me asked to interview me for a profile of me to give to the other students," said Girard. Instead, the student created a Facebook profile for Girard, which detailed him, his personal interests and also provided a picture. "I'm an investigative reporter. My picture is never in the paper. I thought it was an invasion of my privacy. She started a profile of me with all this info and a picture too."

The student who made the profile had the authority to create a password and access the account at all times. Whether she actively used the profile or not, she had the privilege of answering messages from present or future students who believed they were talking to the real Fred Girard. "I'm not really worried about kids being dumb. I'm worried about predators using this info. And it's already happened, as we all know. But it has no affect on me. I'm a very private person. In the 21st century, if Facebook is an outlet for kids that's fine, (but) that's not me," said Girard.

COM 101 instructor Julie Wojciehowski said she tries to inform

students of the repercussions for carelessness on the Internet. Despite all of the security and privacy settings, many profiles are adorned with photos of underage students who are drinking and undressing. These pictures often end up on Facebook or Myspace the following morning.

"I personally don't think that some of what students put up is in their best interest, but we try to educate them because we can't make their decisions for them," said Wojciehowski. "It's a public domain. Whatever a student posts, they should be aware that it's public knowledge to not only their friends, but professors, family and perspective job employers."

Myspace.com

If anything, Myspace may be more controversial than Facebook. While Facebook started as a social networking site exclusively for college, Myspace is open to anyone who has access to the Internet—including anyone 14-years-old and older.

Oakland University senior communications major, Anna Kuprianiak, likes Myspace, but thinks there should be limitations or privacy options based on age. "I'm 21-years-old, so people from ages 18 to 26, or whatever ages I select, should be the only people that can view my page," Kuprianiak said.

Certain privacy options have been made available on both sites for safety purposes, and many users have taken advantage of limiting their profiles to be seen by only friends. Others, however, promote their businesses, music, art, and simply their individuality with the help of Myspace and prefer to keep their profiles open to anyone interested in checking them out.

A recent OU graduate who goes by the Myspace display name "Hand up my skirt" thinks that using the site's privacy setting is "silly and pretentious." While he agrees that it might be smart to utilize the privacy options while searching for a job, he feels that it is "petty" for a corporation to pass judgment on potential employees based on their Myspace profiles.

"I have references to suicide and anarchic literature throughout my page," said the student, who declined to reveal his name. "Any company performing a background search would be very disappointed in my life — via Myspace." The OU graduate said his profile, which isn't even registered under his real name, does not in any way reflect his lifestyle and was ultimately set up in jest. He recently landed a job with a Fortune 500 company in New York City.

—Contributing Reporters Terra Donnelly, Jesi Foltz, Heather Holm, Amanda Kiefer, Jillian Messana and Brittany Ochinsky contributed to this report.

JOBS

Cont. from A1

detailed out-of-control behavior or an admission that the person loved plagiarism, that could have an impact," he said. "But again, I stay away from digging into people's personal lives."

Holly Buege, manager and part-owner of Mr. B's Food and Spirits in Rochester, said she believes it's unfair to look up potential employees on Myspace to see if they are right for a position at her restaurant. "I think it's an invasion of privacy," she said.

Buege doesn't have an account on Myspace.com or any other social networking site, but said she has visited the site in the past. "I guess it'd be different if the positions I needed filled were bus drivers or bible school

teachers," she said. "Then I'd probably consider checking Myspace. But if one of my 19- or 25-year-old servers has a goofy Myspace, I'm not going to fire her over it."

Recent Western Michigan University graduate Ryan Miller is in the job-hunting process and has his Myspace profile set on private. "I set my profile to private in fear of a corporation performing a Myspace sweep to reduce their number of prospective employees by simply glancing at pictures or reading biographies," he said.

Miller, who set up his profile to keep in-touch with old friends, said he doesn't think doing a search on Myspace is an invasion of privacy but utilized the privacy setting anyway. "Employers do not need to know the ins-and-outs of my life," he said.

For some OU students, the consideration of being sought out on

Myspace extends further than potential employers. Undergraduate Lauren Jeziorski said that her Myspace profile contains things that she probably wouldn't want some people to see. "It's not that I have anything on my Myspace that's too risqué or weird," she said. "But I just think it's got an overall non-professional feel and it probably wouldn't put my best foot forward to a professor or possible employer."

"I'm surprised employers and professors are doing it," said OU junior elementary education major, Ben Spedoske. "It's not fair. You can't judge someone's professional work by their personal lives," he said. "You can't just not hire somebody because they drink outside of work."

—Contributing Reporters Amanda Adwell, Kaylee Hawkins, Tara Hasouri and Erin McClary contributed to this report.

Legal implications

Online networking sites such as Facebook and Myspace often provide personal information such as phone numbers, locations, photographs and class schedules. The Web sites allow users around the world to create and display profiles, and often to read the profiles of anyone else on the networks.

So what happens when these personal Web sites get out of hand? In Texas, a teacher sued two of her students for libel after creating a false Myspace.com profile in her name claiming she was a lesbian.

Myspace.com is being sued for \$30 million for failing to protect minors from sexual predators after a 14-year-old girl was molested by a man she met on the Web site. The 19-year-old man charged in the case is also suing Myspace.com because he claims the girl he assaulted misrepresented her age on the site. In San Antonio, a series of threatening messages left by students against San Antonio Warren High School were left on the Web site, causing many of the students not to show up for school.

Since the Myspace.com's birth in July of 2003 it has grown to 54 million users. A recent USA Today article reported that membership to the Web site is growing by 5 million users per month. Approximately 19 percent of the users on Myspace.com are under the age of 17. It affords little in the way of security for the user, with the only requirements for membership being that you are over the age of 14 and have a valid e-mail address.

— Contributing Reporter Katelyn Frost

FROM A1

Pirate



Anne Simopoulos
Senior
Sophomore
Pre-Med

Phantom of the Opera



Rich Luzenski
Senior
Communication

Janet Jackson



Tia Jenkins
Senior
Communication

Cat



Brittany Franklin
Dual enrolled
in High School
and at OU