

Establishing Net-Cred — Why It Matters by Andy Greider

IT USED TO BE that when you wanted to know more about someone or something, you went to the Yellow Pages or the encyclopedia or asked someone you found to be knowledgeable. Over the past few years, and especially since the coming of the search engines, and the advent of Google as a verb, the world of finding information has changed a great deal. It has become faster, more efficient and yet, less accurate, due to the morass of information available. Finding a needle in the haystack has become easier – but is it the right needle or the right haystack?

We began using the Internet to search for things. Next we began to search the Internet as if it were a huge dictionary or encyclopedia, seeking coveted knowledge. Now, we are seeing people using the Internet to find other people – to find out how to connect with or contact them, to learn a little more about them – and to quietly assess their “net cred.” (That’s like steet cred, but now on the information super highway.) As such, the Internet has become a prime resource for individual promotion, for establishing worth and for raising yourself to expert or at least, findable status. Holding an upper hand online can be as critical as the difference between getting the next job, appointment, and promotion or as seemingly minor as reconnecting with old friends.

However, if you don’t search well, it also says a lot about you – that you haven’t been found worthy by the search engines, or by the massively expansive world of the Internet. It says that you are not recognizable – at all, or as the person you are – a real universal issue for people with common names. It says that you are lacking in Net-Cred. So what can you do to position most effectively online? How do you take control of the information people find about you when you are searched? You will be searched, believe that.

Let’s face it, who uses the white or yellow pages anymore to find resources or people? How do you search for people these days? Have you ever “googled” your business associates - or yourself even? This search for online relevance is one way in which the Internet is changing the surface of the business world. From Baby Boomers down through Millennial’s, people are searching your information. If you don’t know what your “web presence” is now, then it is imperative that you find out. If there is no information about you on the first three pages of the search, then expect your clients or prospective employers to infer that you have not done enough in your life thus far to earn a web presence. (You’d surely want them to know otherwise, right?) The other issue is

– what if they find someone with the same name who is not really you? How can you control that? You can find out about when your name and company name are searched and posted through RSS feeds from the major engines.

Admittedly, people that we meet, do business with or seek a job from are increasingly using the web engines to find out more about us. We certainly need to take control of our image, or as we call it – “personal brand”. Learn to “love the Search” like I did.



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