

KEEP CLOSE EYE YOUR ON NET WORTH

Do not be undone by your cyber self, writes Melanie Burgess

SOCIAL media is not a new phenomenon and there are many high-profile instances of rogue posts costing workers their jobs, yet Australians continue to ignore warnings about their digital footprints.

Research from McAfee reveals almost one in 10 (8 per cent) have posted negative content about their current workplace.

Meanwhile, one in five (19 per cent) believe they could lose their job over their social media content, and almost a quarter (23 per cent) know someone who has had career or job prospects negatively affected by social media content.

Despite this, 25 per cent only delete posts after a crisis and 28 per cent cannot remember the last time they checked their privacy settings.

McAfee chief human resource officer Chantelle Lynch says they run full social media background checks when hiring as profiles can provide valuable insight into whether a candidate will fit a company's culture.

"An employee is a reflection and extension of the company they work for, so it's important to ensure they aren't posting content that might be offensive or inappropriate," Lynch says.

The research reveals two-thirds of Australians (67 per cent) are embarrassed by their social media profiles.

The most common causes are content depicting drunken behaviour, comments that can be perceived as offensive, embarrassing outfits,

wardrobe malfunctions, and being in their underwear.

McAfee online consumer safety expert Alex Merton-McCann says it is always best to think twice before posting something online.

"It happens to the best of us, with even high-profile celebrities and public figures having old social media posts come back to bite them," she says. "What is particularly concerning is the number of people who haven't deleted old social media accounts that they aren't using or checking."

One in 10 Australians (11 per cent) admit they have no idea how to change their privacy settings on social media and many do not know how to close down inactive accounts (16 per cent), or do not know the passwords or no longer have access to the email addresses they used to set them up (34 per cent).

"Give your social media accounts a 'digital health check' on a regular basis," Merton-McCann says. "Not only will you reduce the chances that this content will be used against you, but it will stop cyber criminals with more malicious intentions."

Career expert and Change Meridian founder Michelle Gibbings says people have "somewhere between seven to 15 seconds to make a first impression face-to-face".

"As much of our lives now play out on social media, the same holds true ... it shapes how people see you and how they assess character and reputation," she says.

Gibbings highlights the importance of workers managing their personal brands - including through social media.

"In a digital world there is no separation between a personal brand and your professional brand," she says.



TAKE CARE ONLINE: Michelle Gibbings, founder of Change Meridian, says workers are getting caught out by their social media profiles.