



Using Public Facing Social Media Information for Vetting in the Nuclear Industry

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INS International
Nuclear Security
Reducing Risk of Nuclear Terrorism

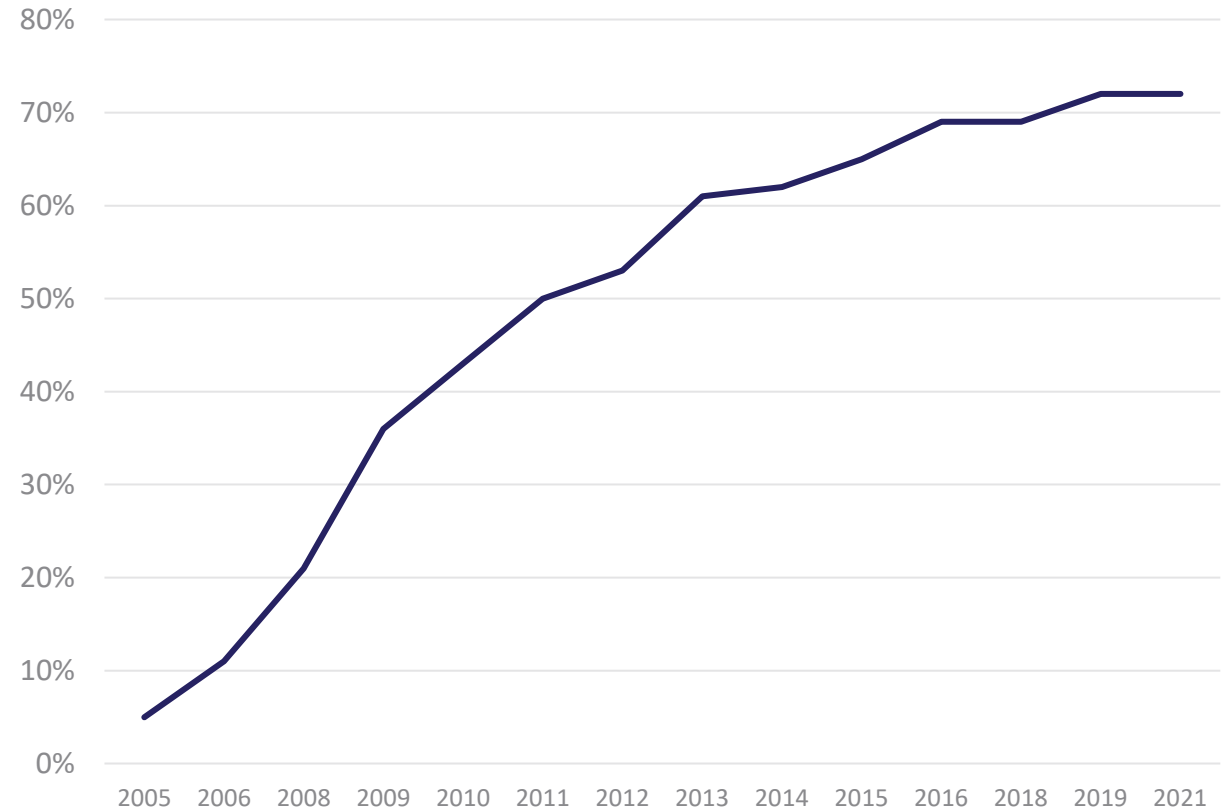
Presentation Overview

- Social media types and history
- Statistics on social media use for employee vetting
- Behavior relevant to trustworthiness and reliability on social media
- Case-examples
- Best-practice recommendations

Social Media Types and History

- Brief history of social media
- Major platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, etc.
- Types of content: text, images, videos, and more

% of U.S. adults who say they use at least one social media site



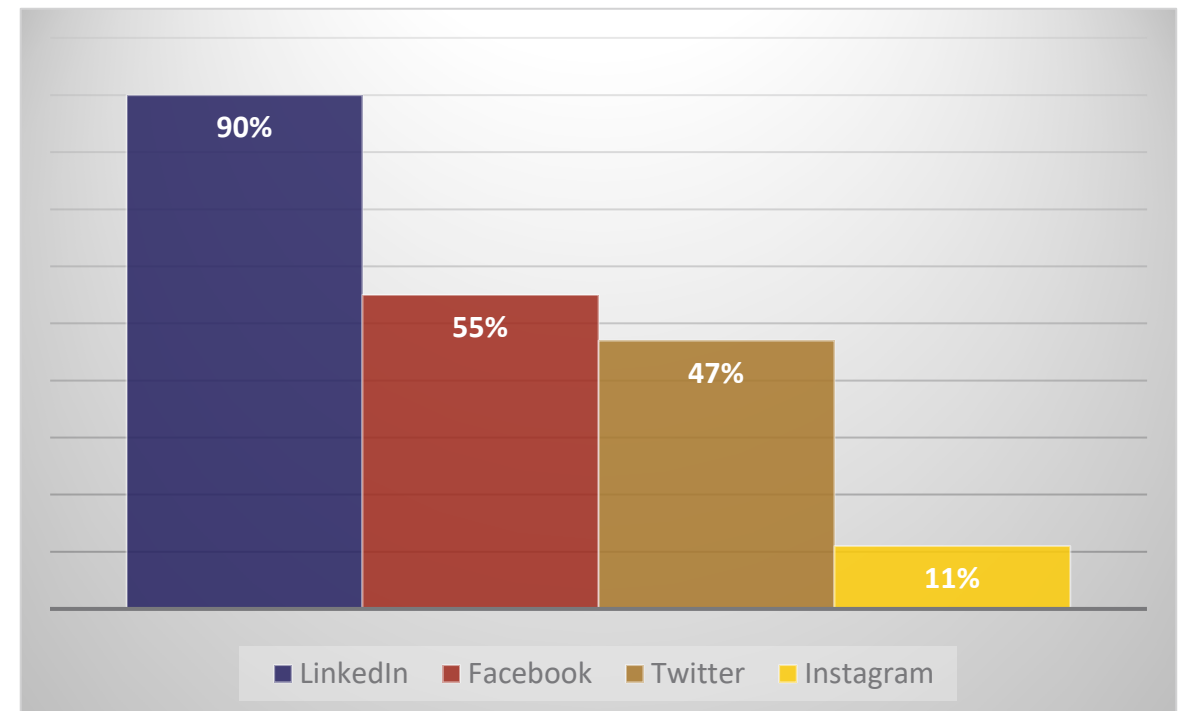
Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted 2005-2021. PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Statistics on Social Media Use for Employee Vetting

HR Use of Social Media for Screening

- 92% use social networking sites to research job candidates during hiring process
- 54% have rejected applicants because of what they found
- 48% check up on current employees on social media
- 34% have reprimanded or fired an employee based on content found online

Top Social Media Platforms used for Screening



Sources: <https://www.zippia.com/advice/social-media-recruitment-statistics/>

<https://press.careerbuilder.com/2018-08-09-More-Than-Half-of-Employers-Have-Found-Content-on-Social-Media-That-Caused-Them-NOT-to-Hire-a-Candidate-According-to-Recent-CareerBuilder-Survey>

Potential Benefits for Social Media Vetting

Cost-effective method:

Social media screening can be less expensive compared to traditional background checks.

Rapid results:

Allows quick access to a candidate's profile, personality, and interests.

Expanded information:

Provides insights into an applicant's communication skills, creativity, and professionalism.

Cultural fit:

Assesses whether a candidate aligns with company values and culture.

Online presence:

Verifies the consistency of a candidate's online identity and their professional brand.

Networking potential:

Shows an applicant's ability to connect with others in their industry.

Potential Drawbacks for Social Media Vetting

Privacy concerns:

Raises ethical questions about the invasion of personal privacy.

Incomplete picture:

Limited social media presence may not accurately reflect a candidate's abilities.

Bias risks:

Unconscious biases may be triggered by non-job-related information.

Legal issues:

Risk of discrimination lawsuits if screening criteria are not job-related.

Time-consuming:

Screening multiple candidates on social media can be time-consuming for HR staff.

False information:

Candidates may present themselves inaccurately or dishonestly on social media platforms.

Current Practice Guidelines

Security Executive Agent Directive-5 (SEAD-5) Collection, use, and retention of publicly available social media information in personnel security background investigations and adjudications https://www.dni.gov/files/NCSC/documents/Regulations/SEAD_5.pdf

Focus is on identifying information that may be relevant to determining an applicant's trustworthiness, reliability, and suitability for access to classified information or eligibility for a sensitive position <https://www.dni.gov/files/NCSC/documents/Regulations/SEAD-4-Adjudicative-Guidelines-U.pdf>

Social Media Content: Relevance to Trustworthiness, Reliability, & Suitability

YES

- Illegal activities, including drug use, trafficking, or other criminal behavior.
- Connections or affiliations with terrorist organizations, foreign intelligence entities, or other groups that could pose a risk to national security.
- Evidence of unauthorized disclosure of classified or sensitive information.
- Signs of financial irresponsibility or untrustworthiness, which could make an applicant susceptible to blackmail or bribery.
- Discriminatory behavior or hate speech based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or other protected classes.
- Patterns of dishonesty, deception, or lack of integrity.
- Any other behavior or information that could call into question an applicant's judgment, trustworthiness, or reliability.

NO

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or spiritual beliefs
- Age
- Gender or gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Marital or family status
- Pregnancy or parental status
- Disability or medical conditions
- National origin or citizenship
- Political affiliations or opinions
- Union membership or labor activities
- Genetic information
- Military or veteran status
- Social or economic class
- Physical appearance or attractiveness

Examples: Cases of Questionable Content & Later Misconduct in Previously Vetted Individuals

1. Nidal Hassan

- Questionable Content: Expressed sympathy for Islamic extremism and communicated with known terrorists
- Criminal Activity: Carried out the 2009 Fort Hood shooting

2. Edward Snowden

- Questionable Content: Shared concerns about government surveillance and privacy rights
- Criminal Activity: Leaked classified information from the NSA

3. Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning

- Questionable Content: Discussed struggles with emotional stability as well as concerns about U.S. military actions
- Criminal Activity: Leaked classified information to WikiLeaks

4. Reality Winner*

- Questionable Content: Shared political opinions and disdain for the U.S. government
- Criminal Activity: Leaked classified information from the NSA

5. Brandon Russell*

- Questionable Content: Posted content supporting neo-Nazism and white supremacy
- Criminal Activity: Founded the neo-Nazi group "Atomwaffen Division" and possessed explosives and radioactive materials. Served 5 years in federal prison. Soon after release, arrested again for plot to destroy 5 power stations surrounding Baltimore.

6. Ashli Babbitt*

- Questionable Content: Publicly posted conspiracy theories and aligned with far-right extremist groups
- Criminal Activity: Participated in the January 6, 2021, Capitol riot

7. Meredith Miller* **

- Questionable Content: Posted threat to detonate a nuclear reactor on the University of Utah campus
- Criminal Activity: Was arrested and charged with one count of threat of terrorism, a second-degree felony

*SEAD 5 was published prior to their criminal activity and questionable social media posts

**Individual was detected and arrested as a result of social media post

Best-Practice Recommendations: Policy and Procedure Development



Develop a clear and consistent policy for social media screening that complies with federal, state, and local laws.



Limit social media screening to publicly available information.



Ensure that the vetting procedure is reviewed regularly for efficacy and updated as needed to reflect best practices.



Combine social media vetting with more traditional methods as a means of enhancing suitability assessment rather than using as a standalone.

Best-Practice Recommendations: Training and Education



Train HR personnel and hiring managers on anti-discrimination laws and privacy concerns related to social media vetting.



Ensure that the process is consistently applied to all individuals so fairness is maintained.

Best-Practice Recommendations: Third-Party Involvement and Verification



Consider using a third-party vendor to conduct social media checks, ensuring that they are compliant with all legal requirements.



Verify all information being used to make employment decisions from reliable collateral sources.

Best-Practice Recommendations: Documentation and Transparency



Document the reasons for any adverse employment decisions based on information found on social media to demonstrate a legitimate, non-discriminatory rationale.



Maintain full transparency with the program so all employees are aware of what is being monitored and how it is being used to make decisions.



Respect privacy settings so no information that employees expect to remain private is being used for vetting.

Best-Practice Recommendations: Relevance and Fairness in Decision-Making



Ensure that all information gathered is relevant to trustworthiness, reliability, and suitability for employment in a position of trust.



Consider the fact that personal and professional behaviors can be maintained separately and that private behavior does not necessarily indicate how someone will act.

Q&A - Discussion