



Protect Your Practice Toolkit

How to easily establish online content to counteract
& protect yourself from online attacks

Brought to you by the
State Bar Association of North Dakota
(SBAND)



Table of Contents

- Purpose and How to Use This Toolkit.....2
- I. Establish Your Online Presence Now.....3
 - The Benefits of Having a Current Online Presence
 - Options for Creating Your Online Presence
- II. Monitor Your Online Presence.....5
 - How to Set Up Gmail
 - How to Set Up Google Alerts
 - How to Set Up iGoogle/Google Reader
- III. Establish an Online Presence with Social Media.....10
 - How to Set Up Facebook
 - Completing Your Profile
 - Adding Friends
 - More Information
 - How to Set Up Twitter
 - How to Set Up LinkedIn
 - Tips on How to Use Social Media Effectively
- IV. Develop Online Content.....21
 - How to Set Up a Wordpress Blog
 - How to Set Up a Web Hosted Wordpress Blog
 - How to Set Up and Maintaining a Website
- V. Perform Last Ditch Efforts..... 24
 - How to Research Web Hosts and Take Off Defamed Material
 - Tips to Prevent Illegal Use of Domain Names Relating to You
 - Tips on Responding Directly to Negative Postings



Purpose

When someone takes offense or is opposed to a court ruling, laws or specific lawyers, emotions run high and the propensity to distribute malicious information is present. In today's era of mass communication and online messaging, distributing malicious messages is easy through websites and blogs. The malicious (and often incorrect) information about your character, style, ruling, etc. can be very harmful to your image, your practice or various organizations you are associated with. To counteract these types of online attacks and avoid damaging online content, we've developed this toolkit to educate you on how to establish your own positive online content.

The purpose of this toolkit is to educate members of the State Bar Association of North Dakota (SBAND), their affiliated organizations, and all members of the judiciary field of North Dakota on how to counteract online attacks.

How to use this toolkit

Use the entire toolkit, or pick and choose parts that you think would work best for your situation, to help guide you through repairing, or establishing, your online image. The toolkit has specific step-by-step instructions on creating online content, which can be a proactive measure to establish an online presence before an attack or a reactive measure to drive negative information down in search engine rankings and present alternative information. You can also refer to this toolkit to counteract negative information distributed about you when under an online attack.

For More Information

This toolkit was created for the State Bar Association of North Dakota (SBAND) by Agency MABU. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact either SBAND or Agency MABU.

State Bar Association of North Dakota

504 North Washington Street
Bismarck, ND 58501-3482
(701) 255-1404
(800) 472-2685 (in state only)
info@SBAND.org

Agency MABU

1003 Gateway Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58503
(701) 250-0728
(800) 568-9346
info@agencymabu.com



I. Establish an Online Presence Now

The best way to counteract negative information is to establish a strong positive online presence. Establishing a strong, positive online presence before negative online attacks occur will limit the effectiveness of attackers, as well as destroy their credibility. There are many options for developing positive online content such as social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), blogs and websites.

A. The Benefits of Having a Current Online Presence

- You control the information you want to share, allowing the most current and accurate information to be available to the online public.
- Search Engine Visibility is an important factor because of the way the public uses the internet today. The more online content that you can make available, the greater your visibility will be in search engines. If you have accurate, relevant online content, it will be received well and rank well in search engines.
- Direct contact with an attentive audience.

B. Options for Creating Your Online Presence

There are a variety of options for developing online content such as social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), blogs and websites. Each have particular benefits but the best strategy is to employ as many of these as possible, bolstering your online presence across multiple channels and audience.

One of the best (and free) methods to have an online presence and establish positive, correct and current information about you and your organization or practice is social media. Websites are also great but include the costs of hosting and maintenance.

- Social networks: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are among the most popular social networking sites available. They are a free and an easy way to create and maintain an online presence. (See “Establish an Online Presence with Social Media” on page 11 of this toolkit).
 - Facebook allows you to create a complete profile.
 - Twitter sends out 140 character updates (much like a Facebook status update).
 - LinkedIn is a professional career network used for establishing contacts and posting resume information on your profile.
- Blogs: Much like an online journal, a blog is a site you can update frequently with news, thoughts, event information, etc. Blogs are nice because they are quick and easy to use and post current information. (See “How to Set Up a Wordpress Blog” in the “Develop Online Content” section of this toolkit).
 - Wordpress.com and Blogspot.com are recommended blog sites that are easy to use and customize.



- Websites: For a more stable online location that requires minimal updates (e.g. bios, mission statements, about us, contact information, etc.), a website is the way to go. This provides a constant online presence as long as hosting costs and other fees are maintained.





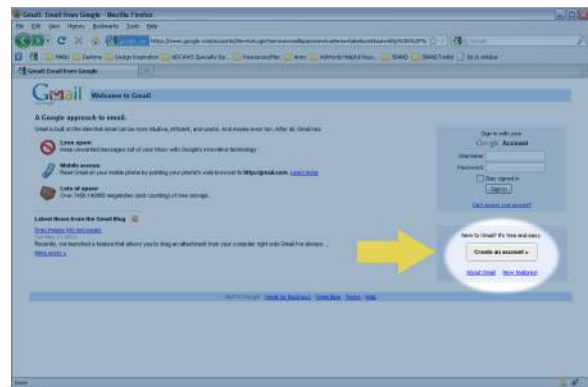
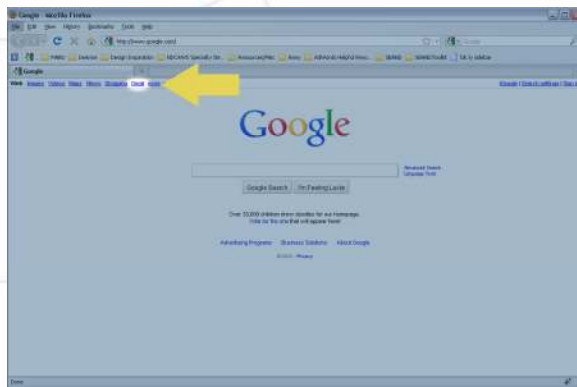
II. Monitor Your Online Presence

When you have social media profiles, blogs, and other content posted online, it's a smart idea to monitor what else is being said about you and/or your company. Fortunately, there are tools available to do exactly that. Google has nearly perfected the art of monitoring and analyzing online content. They've also streamlined the process so it's easy to understand and use.

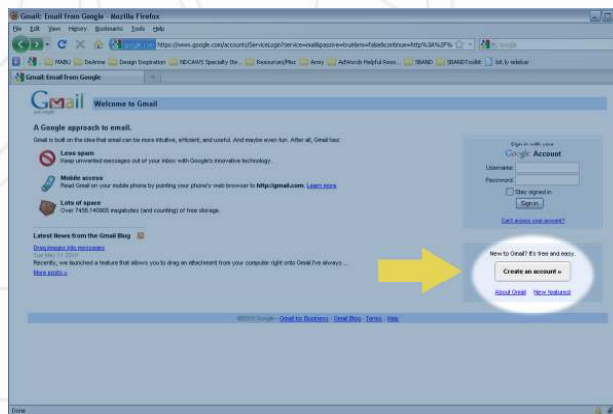
A. Create Your Gmail Account

(If you already have a Gmail account, skip to "How to Set Up Google Alerts.") The first thing you will need in order to utilize these powerful tools is a Google email (or Gmail) account. To create your Gmail account you can either:

- 1) go to www.google.com, click "Gmail" and "Create an Account"



- 2) or go directly to Gmail at www.gmail.com and click "Create an Account".



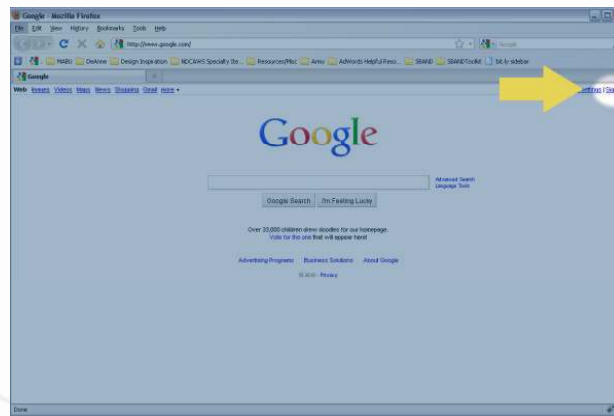
Follow the instructions provided, fill in your information, choose an email address, submit the information, and your account is created.



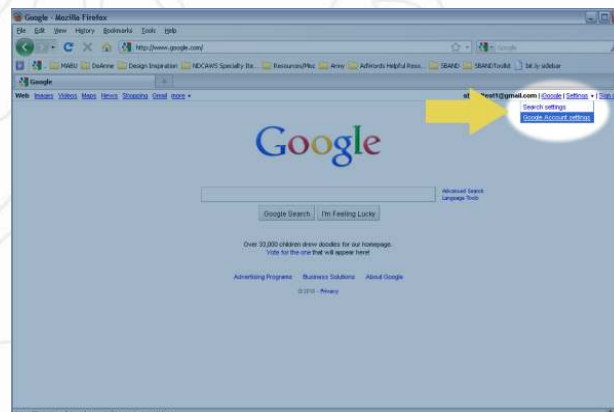
B. How to Set Up Google Alerts

- Prior to signing up for Google Alerts, create a keyword list of search terms you wish to monitor. When entering keywords, it is not necessary to include proper capitalization. This list could include:
 - Your name, staff member's names, the name of your practice or organization.
 - Topics of local interest or specialty (e.g. lawyers in north dakota, nd law, etc.)
 - All other terms useful for monitoring online content about you.

- 1) "Sign In" on the Google homepage at www.google.com with your Gmail account information.

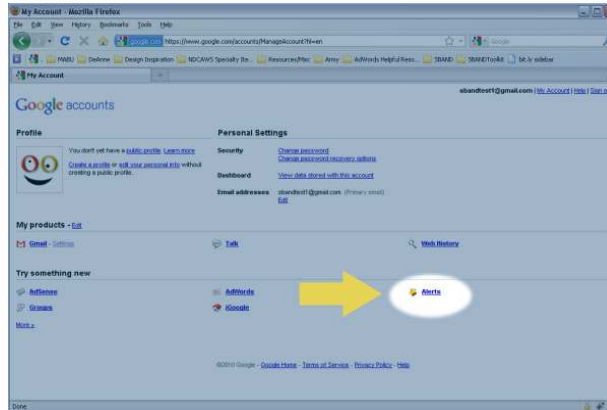


- 2) Once logged in, go to the "Settings" dropdown menu and select "Google Account Settings".

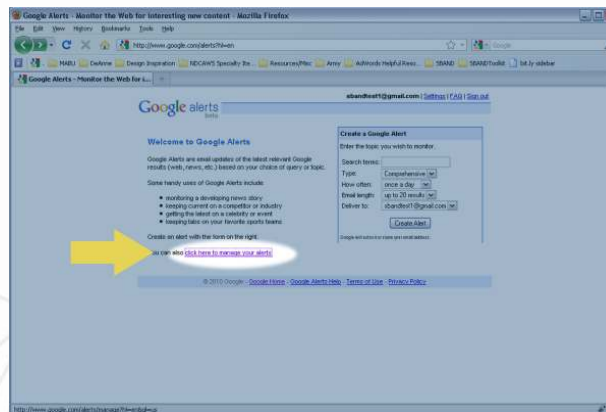




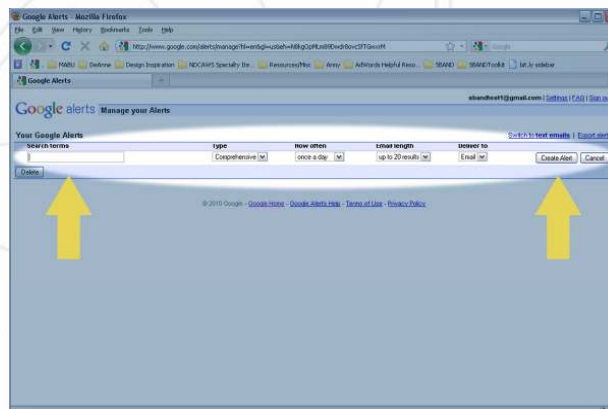
- 3) On the Google Account Settings page, select the bell icon labeled “Alerts”.



- 4) On the Google Alerts page, click the link “click here to manage your alerts”. The Manage Your Alerts page should be blank, click “try ‘creating one’” to get started.



- 5) Enter one keyword from your list at a time in the first field, change the keyword settings as you wish (choose “feed” as your “deliver to” option), then click “Create Alert”. Continue adding all terms from your keyword list. Keywords can be added, deleted and modified later as needed.



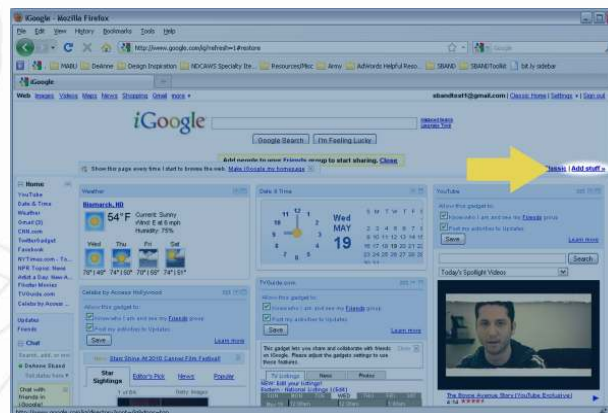


- To manage your keywords at a later date, go to "Google Account Settings" and find the bell icon labeled "Alerts" under "My Products" and click "Manage".

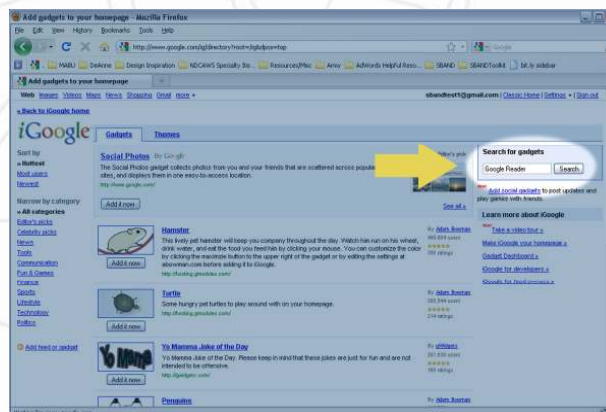
C. How to Set Up iGoogle/Google Reader

iGoogle is a customizable homepage that you can add gadgets based on your interests and preferences. The gadget we want to add is "Google Reader" (an RSS feed subscriber which allows you to be notified when your Google Alerts keywords appear in new content).

- On the Google homepage, click "iGoogle" in the upper right corner of the page (this switches regular Google to iGoogle).
- Like Google Alerts, sign in to Google with your Gmail account information.
- Upon first entering iGoogle, a blue box at the top of the screen makes it easy to select your homepage gadgets based on topics, themes and more. Feel free to pick what you like from that box. These can also be modified later as needed.
- Adding the "Google Reader" gadget
 - To add gadgets, click "Add Stuff" at the upper right side of the homepage.

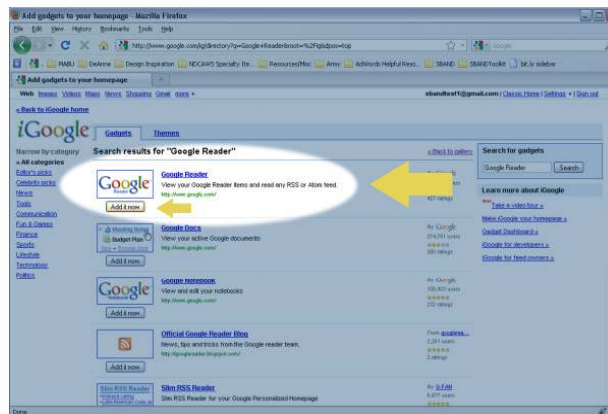


- Type in "Google Reader" in the search for gadgets box and click "Search".





- When the search results come up, Google Reader should be at the top. Click “Add It Now” which will turn the box yellow. You can then click “Back to iGoogle home” on the upper left side of the page.



- Google Reader will import links to content that is relevant to your Google Alerts keywords you added in the previous section “How to Set Up Google Alerts.”
- You will want to monitor and check the Google Reader gadget once a week to see what content is being created about you, your practice or organization. This will help you to monitor any negative content that may be created so you can combat it.
- Now you’re all set to monitor your online presence. Feel free to customize your iGoogle as much as you like. These options make it easy for iGoogle to provide just the information you need.



III. Establish an Online Presence with Social Media

Social media is free and easy to use and is proven to be a great solution for creating an online presence because search engines account for popularity and social media is easily the most popular internet activity. Search engines, such as Google, often rank social media profiles at the top of search results. The primary benefit of social media is the instantaneous delivery of a message to a wide audience.

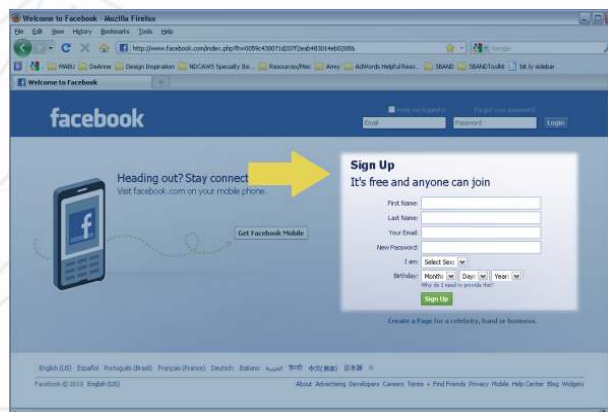
We suggest that you establish personal accounts via social media before creating accounts for your organization. (See the Tips about each account for information on business or organization profiles.)

All you need to get started is an email account (such as your new Gmail account). For simplicity, it's best to use the same email account when setting up your social media profiles. Continue below for detailed instructions on how to set up Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts.

A. How to Set Up Facebook Accounts

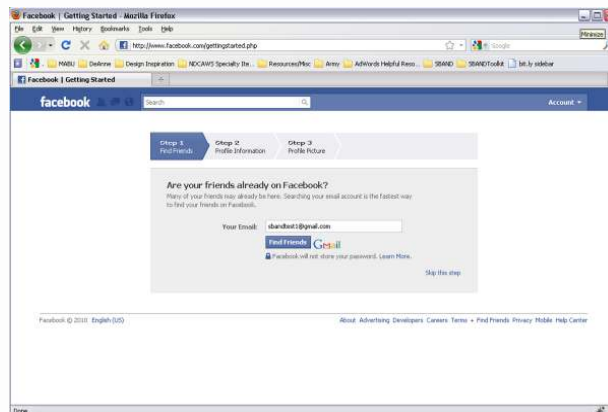
Facebook is a social network that allows you to create a personal profile with all sorts of information. Like all social media sites, you choose what you want to post on your profile and you can choose what privacy settings are best for you.

- 1) To start, go to www.facebook.com
- 2) Fill in with your information and a secure password on the Facebook login page then click "Sign Up".

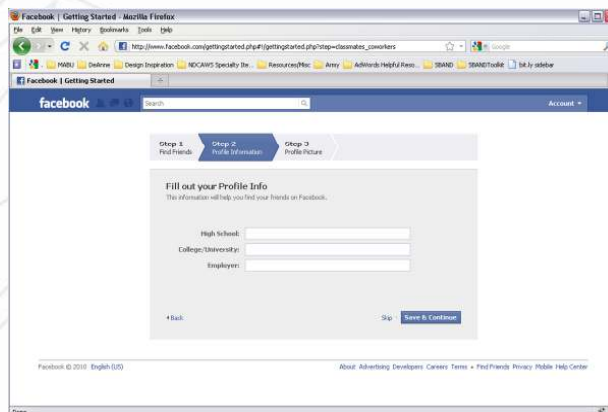




- 3) This brings you to the “Step 1: Find Friends” page which allows you to search for and add friends to your Facebook network. You can even search for and add friends from your Gmail account contact list.



- Searching for friends is also easy to do later. Friend searching and adding is reviewed in the “Adding Friends” section of this toolkit.
- 4) “Step 2: Profile Information” allows you to begin building your personal Facebook profile. Fields include High School, College and Employer.
- You can add more information to your profile later (See “Completing your profile” section of this toolkit).



- 5) “Step 3: Profile Picture” asks you to upload a profile picture. Use a professional photo or headshot to appear alongside your personal profile.



1) Completing Your Profile

Completing your profile is an important step when creating your account. You will want to add as much information to your profile as possible because friends are more likely to look at your profile and interact with you when content is readily available. Nobody wants to be friends with a blank profile and inactive user.

As a new user, Facebook displays a Welcome homepage that shows a number of steps to easily enhance and complete your profile. Just follow and complete each step as Facebook instructs.

- Upload a Photo (If you haven't already).
- Fill Out Your Profile Information (Complete your information more thoroughly).
- Activate Your Mobile Phone (Optional but not necessary to begin with).
- Find People You Know (Search for people you know by name or email address. Also reviewed in the "Adding Friends" section of this toolkit).
- Control What Information You Share (Privacy settings that you can adjust).



- A normal Facebook homepage appears after the steps above are completed. The Facebook homepage typically includes a News Feed, Online Friends (a chat service located along the bottom of your screen), Birthdays and Events.



2) Adding Friends

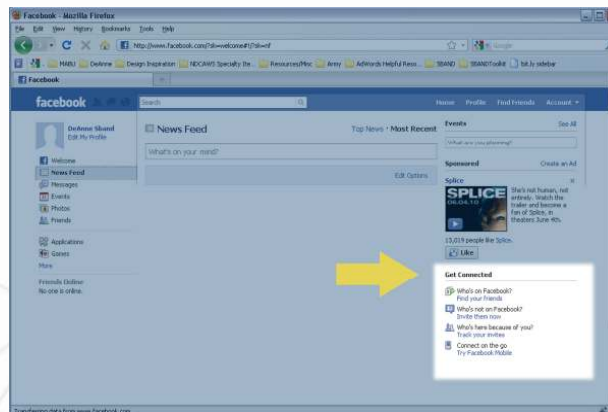
The advantage of adding friends to your profile is that within social media sites your profile is ranked according to friend count and how active your profile is. By having more friends you have greater visibility in search results plus more people will have access to your current and positive information.

Add friends and people you know by:

- Searching for their name in the top left search field.
- Or using the “Get Connected” tools located in the right column of the page.

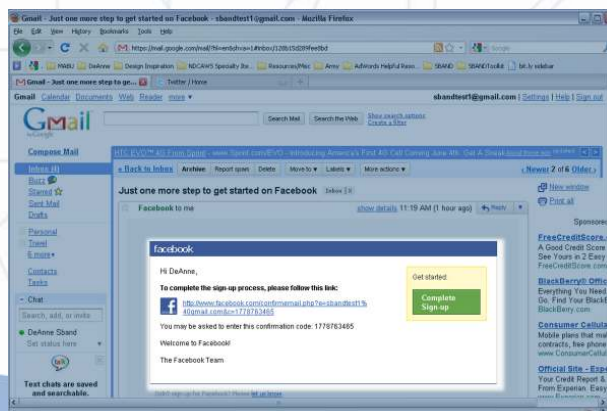
These tools include:

- **Who's on Facebook?** Click the “Find your friends” link.
- **Who's not on Facebook?** Click the “Invite them now” link.
- **Who's here because of you?** Click the “Track your invites” link.
- **Connect on the go.** Click the “Try Facebook Mobile” link for more information.



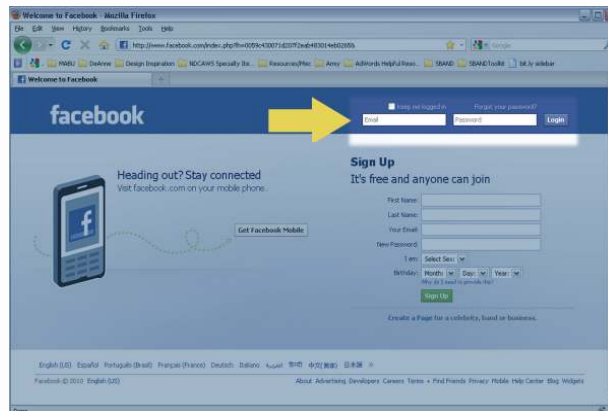
- Facebook also sends a confirmation email to you so you can fully access all the Facebook features (without confirming your account you will be limited to basic features). To confirm, open the email from Facebook with the subject line as “Just one more step to get started on Facebook”

- Click “Complete Sign Up” and you’re redirected to a Facebook log-in page. Log in with your email and Facebook password and you are good to go.





- 4) After your Facebook account has been set up, log in anytime by going to www.facebook.com and signing in with your email address and Facebook password at the upper right side of the page.



B. Facebook Tips

- Be aware that what you post to any social network site is stored online **forever**. Use caution when posting updates, comments, or sending emails and becoming a fan of certain pages.
- Be active with your profile and check in on it at least once a week to update your Status, add information to your profile, add friends, and post interesting information and links to your page.
- Do not create a Facebook Fan page for yourself. You're attackers are more likely to ridicule you by pointing out the fact that you are aiming for local fame and establishing yourself as a celebrity.
- You can, however, create a Fan page for your practice, business, or organization.
 - i) To do so you need a Gmail account for your business. You will also need to create a Facebook account profile strictly for the business page (Follow the steps listed previously about setting up a Facebook account. The exception here is that there is no need to add friends or include any information in this profile.)
 - (1) Sign in on Facebook with your business account information.
 - (2) On the Facebook log-in page there is a link (located under the "Sign Up" button) for creating a Fan page for a business, celebrity, etc. Click the "Create a Page" link and continue with the easy to follow instructions.



C. How to Set Up Twitter Accounts

Twitter is a network of profiles that include 140-character posts called “Tweets” that are quick news updates. Twitter also allows you to “follow” other Twitter users by searching and clicking “Follow” at the top of their profile. In order for others to follow your Tweets, you can let your friends know you have a Twitter account and request that they follow your profile too.

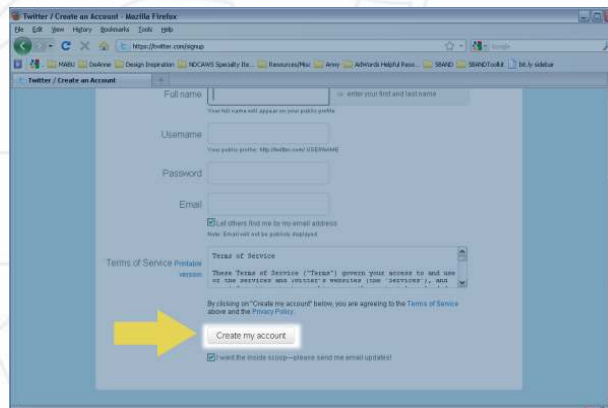
When you are on Twitter and a fellow user Tweets something you’d like to Tweet as well, you can “Retweet” their post by clicking the “Retweet” icon that appears under the post when you hover over it with your mouse.

You can also create your own username and url for your Twitter account. After you’ve created your profile, go to the “Settings” page and fill in a username (your name or organization name works well) and click “Save”. Underneath the username field displays your public profile url featuring your username (e.g. www.twitter.com/username). When letting your friends know about your Twitter page you can send them your public profile url.

1. To sign up, go to www.twitter.com and click “Get Started Now” on the right side of the page.



2. Fill in your information and secure password on the next page and click “Create My Account”.





3. Twitter has a few set-up steps that you can complete or skip by clicking “Next Step”.
4. You’ll then be directed to your Twitter homepage. At the top a yellow Confirmation reminder box appears.



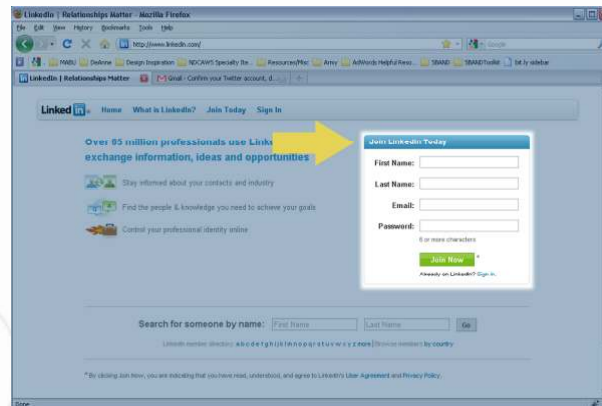
5. Go to your email account, log in and open the newest email from Twitter with the subject line “Confirm your Twitter account”. Click the confirmation link and you will be redirected to Twitter where you can sign in with your username and password. This step must be completed for your account to be activated.
6. As a new user, your Twitter page will be pretty bare. Twitter helps you out with reminders and steps to fully take advantage of your Twitter account, including:
 - “What to do now:”
 - Tell us what **you’re** doing in the box above.
 - Note that your tweets will be available publicly. You can make your tweets private on your [account page](#).
 - [Find some friends](#) and follow what **they’re** doing .
 - [Turn on your mobile phone](#) to update your friends on the go.
7. After you complete the above steps, you will start to follow others posts (Tweets) and your friends will follow yours. Your homepage will populate with your Tweets, your friends’ Tweets, and a list of Followers.
8. Continue posting Tweets and building your network on a consistent basis to ensure that your profile can be found by Google and other search engines.



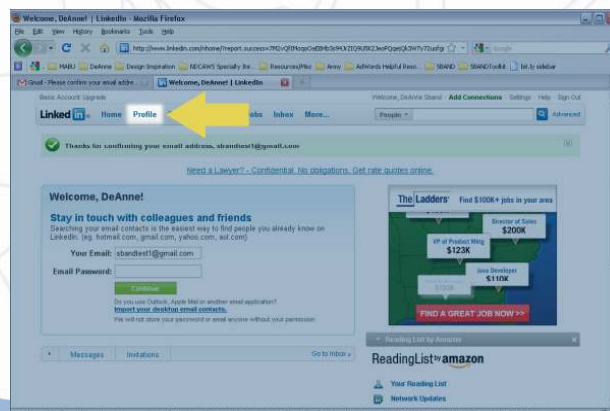
D. How to Set Up LinkedIn Accounts

LinkedIn is a strictly professional network used to create a resume-like profile of pertinent career and education information.

1. To create your profile, go to www.linkedin.com, provide your information in the "Join LinkedIn Today" box, and click "Join Now".



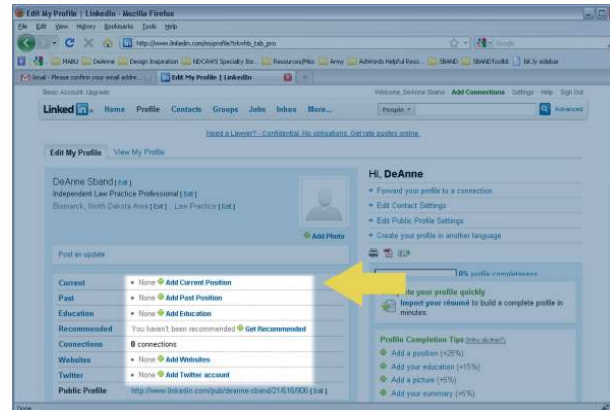
2. Start the sign up process by filling in your professional information and click "Continue".
3. The next step includes searching your email contacts for current LinkedIn users you may know. Continue with the directions on the page.
 - Your contacts and friends are your "Connections" on LinkedIn. You can find and request to make these Connections and other users can also request to be connected with you.
4. Next, you will be prompted to confirm your email address by clicking "Go to Gmail now".
 - Log in to Gmail and open the confirmation email from LinkedIn with the subject "Please confirm your email address".
 - Follow the directions in the email or click the link "Click here" to confirm.
 - You are redirected back to LinkedIn.
5. You are then prompted to sign in with your username and password and are directed to your LinkedIn homepage.
6. To complete your profile, click "Profile" at the top navigation bar. There are various hints and suggestions on your new profile page that show you how to complete your profile.



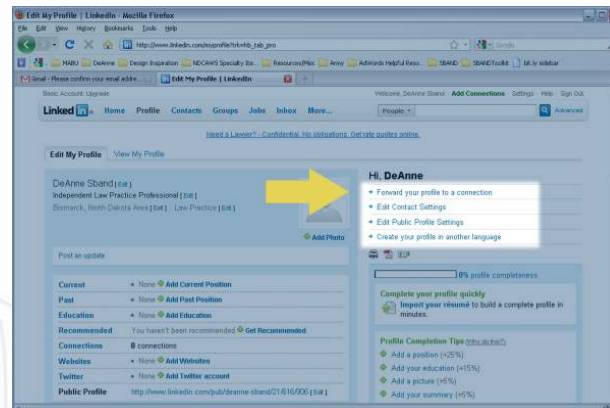
State Bar Association of North Dakota



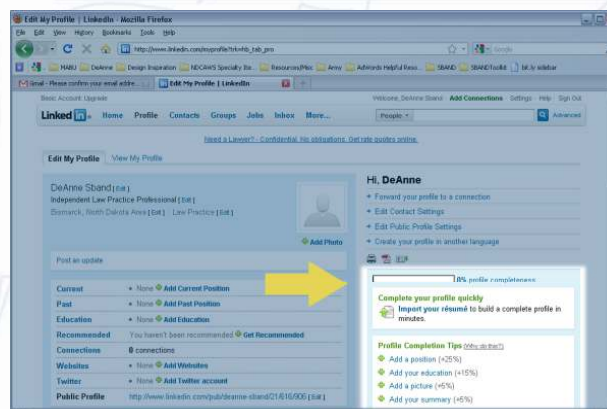
- The green “Add” icon suggests adding more information to make your profile more complete.



- The right column lists suggestions of what you need to do to enhance your profile.



- Your new profile page also has a profile completion log that keeps track of your progress and reminds you of what to do to completely finish setting up your profile.





- Having a completed profile helps to rank your profile higher on search engine results such as Google.
- The right column also has a resume upload tool that you can use to upload your current resume.
- Continue building your profile and network by adding more information and requesting and receiving recommendations and connections on a consistent basis.

E. *Tips on How to Use Social Media Effectively*

General:

- The best way to combat online attacks is to be the better person and not start online bickering wars. These posts are **public** and can be seen by anybody on the internet. If they are negative or show you in a bad light, it could lead to more malicious comments and reflect poorly on your character.
- When using social media sites, refrain from making sarcastic, snide or inappropriate comments. Always remember that these posts are **public** and can be seen by anybody on the internet.
- Post a variety of topics. Use the method of thirds—a third of the time post personal things, a third for business/professional events and news, and a third for items that you find interesting.
- Write personal posts in “your voice,” or casual tone. Write professional posts in a more formal and professional tone.
- Don’t take comments personally because, most often, the commenter is upset by an outcome or issue rather than a personal trait.
- Your social media image transfers to real life, you are still interacting with real people.

Personal:

- iGoogle – homepage to track and manage your online networks.
 - Customize your iGoogle homepage as you like by adding, moving or deleting Gadgets.
 - Your Google Reader will notify you of sites where your keywords are showcased. Refer to the “How to Set Up Google Alerts” and “How to Set Up iGoogle” sections on pages 6-9 for more information on Google Reader.



- Facebook - personal profile for the public to view.
 - Be aware that what you post to any social network site is stored online **forever**. Use caution when posting updates, comments, or sending emails and becoming a fan of certain pages.
 - Be active with your profile and check in on it at least once a week to update your Status, add information to your profile, add friends, and post interesting information and links to your page.
 - Do not create a Facebook Fan page for yourself. You're attackers are more likely to ridicule you by pointing out the fact that you are aiming for local fame and establishing yourself as a celebrity.
 - You can, however, create a Fan page for your practice, business, or organization.
 - To do so you need a Gmail account for your business.
 - You will also need to create a Facebook account profile strictly for the business page (Follow the steps listed in the "How to Set Up a Facebook Account" section of this toolkit.) The exception here is that there is no need to add friends or include any information in this profile.
 1. Sign in on Facebook with your business account information.
 2. On the Facebook log-in page there is a link (located under the "Sign Up" button) for creating a Fan page for a business, celebrity, etc. Click the "Create a Page" link and continue with the easy to follow instructions.
- Twitter – sends quick 140 character updates called "Tweets".
 - Best for quick updates on what you are doing, what you think, or what your plans are. Much like a Facebook status update.
 - Retweet items posted by friends that are of interest to you.
 - Tweet at least 2-3 times a week.
- LinkedIn - your professional profile.
 - Keep items on this network strictly professional.
 - Similar to an online resume.
 - Create a network of professional contacts in your field.



IV. Develop Online Content

Developing online content is important to keep news and information up-to-date and helps you establish a following and community of friends online. Blogs are the wave of online content publishing and most are free and very easy to update and navigate. Better yet, blogs rank high in search engine results, such as Google.

A variety of blog platforms are available to you including as Wordpress, Blogspot, and Tumblr. Below are instructions for Wordpress, a very professional and reliable blog platform that you can use with your Gmail account.

A. How to Set Up a Wordpress Blog

Before you start, brainstorm what you want your blog to be about. It can be personal, professional or both. Having variety is good, but having too many topics and unrelated items appears sloppy and unorganized. Decide now what your blog will focus on.

- 1.) Visit wordpress.com and click "Sign up now."
- 2.) For our purposes, use your name as your username (e.g. username: janeblogg if your name were Jane Blogg), fill out the sign up information and select "Gimme a blog!". Note: Your username will appear within your blog url. In this case, the url will be <http://janeblogg.wordpress.com>.
- 3.) The next page asks you to double check your blog domain, title, language, and privacy setting. Correct as needed and click "Sign Up."
- 4.) You will need to confirm your account by logging into your Gmail account.
 - a. Open the confirmation email from Wordpress. Follow the directions in the email and click the link to confirm.
- 5.) You are redirected back to Wordpress where you log in with your username and password and are directed to your homepage called the Dashboard. This is your communication and monitoring hub.
- 6.) Wordpress displays a default theme and a sample blog called "Hello World." To select your theme:
 - a. Click "Appearance" located in the left column of options.
 - b. Browse and click "Activate" on the theme you like.
 - c. To view your new theme, click "Visit Site" on the yellow bar located across the top of the page.
- 7.) You will now create a post for your blog. Click "My Dashboard" at the top of the page to go back to your Dashboard.
- 8.) To manage and post a new blog entry, click "Posts." This brings you to the page that lists all your posts. Delete the "Hello World" sample blog by hovering over the post. When the options appear, click "Trash" to delete.
 - a. Click "Add New".
 - b. Enter the blog title and enter the body content of the post.



- c. Create and select a category in the right column to keep your posts organized.
 - i. These categories can include "Personal", "Professional" or your practice's name.
- d. Add links, photos, video, etc. to your post to enhance your content. Just click the appropriate icon. A pop-up box will appear for you to "Select Files" and upload.
- e. When your post is complete, click "Publish".
- f. Remember that any post you create can be edited by visiting the "Posts" page.

You can browse and change your theme and add posts to get familiar with the Wordpress platform so it becomes easier to use every time.

B. How to Set Up a Web Hosted Wordpress Blog

If you prefer to set up a blog with a specific url or domain to act as a mini-website, work with a web hosting company such as Go Daddy (Godaddy.com) or Network Solutions (Networksolutions.com). These companies offer web hosting packages designed for Wordpress that include a new domain name, customizable themes, and other plugins that make the most of your blog.

A general knowledge of web hosting language and processes can be helpful in setting up a more permanent web hosted blog site.

When selecting a web hosting company, do your research. Choose the company you feel best suits your needs, is reliable and professional, and provides support. If your web host company fails, your site will disappear and you'll need to recreate the site from scratch.

Network Solutions and GoDaddy both offer hosting services at reasonable rates and include domain names and various payment options. Web hosting sites like these are easy to use. Simply go to the site, find their Wordpress web hosting package, select your payment plan or time options, and add to the cart.

C. How to Set Up and Maintain a Website

Setting up a website can be a simple or complex process depending upon various web development factors such as budget, time, professional assistance, content management systems, and more. The best option is to hire a professional website designer/developer or agency that specializes in web development. If hiring is outside of your budget, it's best to use a web host that offers pre-designed site templates that can be used for free or a small fee. If aesthetics or brand incorporation isn't a top priority for you, many of these sites, such as Network Solutions and GoDaddy, offer decent templates that have a variety of colors and designs to choose from.



D. The Benefits of Having a Website

- You have an online presence 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Having this constant online presence allows new clients to find information about you and your practice whenever they choose.
- You can provide information about your organization such as its mission, vision, contact info, services, areas of interest or specialty, etc.
- A website often conveys a sense of professionalism and reliability to visitors. Without some type of web presence, you may be viewed as an amateur.
- Websites can be a powerful marketing tool to help build your service and brand awareness. You can easily provide information and a complete scope of work to prospective clients.
- A website often offers the same information as traditional media at a decreased cost to you. With websites, you can offer content that clients can view and download as they wish.
- Many services have streamlined website maintenance with easy-to-use content management systems, allowing you to update your info quickly and easily
- Potential clients can find and contact you quickly and easily online.



V. *Perform Last Ditch Efforts*

While this toolkit has provided many ways to prevent or battle negative online attacks, sometimes it's next to impossible to move negative items from the top Google search spot. In some cases, you can find contact information for the attackers and ask if they would be willing to reason with you and remove the malicious information.

However, when there is a particularly difficult situation that cannot be resolved informally, there are more formal steps that can be taken to stop or delete this information. Oftentimes, web hosting companies have legal requirements to obtain information about the online attacker. In certain instances, libel and defamation lawsuits may be the only way to remove the negative content and subpoenas may be the only way to obtain the attackers contact information. It's up to you whether or not you pursue these proceedings and choose to invest time and effort to remove the malicious content.

The following pages list tips to find contact information for the online attacker, prevent illegal use of domain names relating to you, and how to respond directly to negative postings.

A. **How to Research Web Hosts and Take off Defamed Material**

1. To start, look through the attacker's site for contact information or a contact form. You can send a polite email to the attacker requesting that they remove the negative information.
 - If you've chosen to take legal action, you may want to let this person know that you are ready and willing to take the appropriate steps to find out who they are in order to get the malicious content removed.
 - Be aware that informing them of such information is completely your decision. It could backlash and be more ammunition in their arsenal leading to more online attacks.
 - However, this may be all that it takes to convince the attacker to stop. They may not want to be involved in court proceedings or have the funds to pay for legal representation in such proceedings.
2. If this doesn't work, proceed with finding the registrar of the defamation site.
 - Use a registrar identifying site such as Whois.com (www.whois.com) and search the Whois database to find out who created and owns the site.
 - Go to whois.com, find and click the "Whois lookup" link (located at the bottom of the page under "Domains") and fill in the domain of the attacking site. Fill in the security key and click "Search."
 - A few items can appear in the search results:
 - The first may be the registrar's direct name, registration information and email information. Email the registrar and ask them to remove the malicious information.



- Another result may be information about the hosting company the site is registered with (such as GoDaddy or Network Solutions) and will provide instructions and information about accessing the information you are looking for by going directly to the hosting site and performing another whois search on their database.
- Yet another result may tell you that the registrar used a third party private registration service to hide their identity.
 - Continuing from this point will require going to the third party registration service's site and finding their protocol for distributing registrar information for libel and defamation cases.
 - If a third party service was used, the whois lookup will provide domain name servers (near the end of the whois information page) that you can use to perform another whois search (at www.whois.com) to find the hosting provider. The hosting provider's site should list contact information. Continue with contacting them and explaining the situation and request what should be done to remove the material.
 - An example is the GoDaddy private registration site Domains By Proxy, they provide information about how to find and direct questions straight to the hosting provider. If that fails, you can fill out a legal claim form and they'll work with you from that point on.
 - No matter how deeply you delve, be prepared to get no response from your emails and requests. In this case, you'll need to find an expert in the website development field and continue researching the specific legal steps to file a libel or defamation of character claim with the hosting provider and/or registrar.

B. Tips to Prevent Illegal Use of Domain Names Relating to You

- Buy domains with your name in both hyphenated and unhyphenated formats (e.g. yourname.com and your-name.com) Also buy the .com, .net. and/or .org domains.
- Make Search Engine Optimization (SEO) a priority to get positive information ranked higher in search engine results.
- If your name is currently being used illegally, use a service such as Snapnames.com, Enom.com or Pool.com to immediately claim the domain name through a bidding process when it expires.



C. Tips on Responding Directly to Negative Postings

- Keep a public relations frame of mind when dealing with negative comments and respect the right to freedom of speech.
- Respond in a timely manner, but **do not** respond when you are angry or upset. This usually results in an online argument that shows you in a negative light and may prove the attacker is correct in the claims against you. Instead, take an hour or two away from the computer, come back and type up a draft of your response, set it aside for a bit and edit your response for clarity or politeness before you post.
- Be polite but also straightforward, honest and real.
- Respond to each comment uniquely. Nobody wants to read an automatic or standard response; they want a reply from **you**.
- Keep your tone formal but also show you are human. We all make mistakes and apologizing may be all it takes.
- Encourage positive comments from other people who are on the same network in order to counteract the negative comments.
- Respond to the issue the person presents and not the person making the comment.
- In any response, make sure that you have done the research to back it up.
- If a comment is confusing, don't be afraid to ask for clarification. Nothing could be worse than a response that doesn't pertain to the original comment.
- Don't market you or your practice in your responses. Your attacker will detest these boastful claims which will add fuel to their anger.
- In certain cases, you don't **need** to respond. If you and your practice has a good, reliable history, more often than not, those satisfied and happy clients in your social media network will come to your rescue and set these negative comments straight.
- Let natural discussion amongst your networks occur and let the good experiences be shown. Do what you can to ensure positive comments outweigh the bad ones.

