



Net Burn: The year is 2018: for Students Parents/Caregivers

Dean Myers is 18 years old; he is just about to be interviewed. This will be his fourth job interview in the last 6 months, and he hopes this time he will be successful.

Over the past 6 months he has applied to join the Police, applied for a temporary position at his local sports club, applied for a junior position at a local law office and today he is sitting with three other young people waiting to be interviewed for a position as a teacher's assistant at the school he used to attend.



In the interview room Ronald Campbell the Principal is looking at the information he has available on Dean Myers. He is up next and he is having a quick look at his application. His academic ability is very good, his CV very professional and it is quite clear he is a bright young person; the problem is, however, his over exposure on the Internet.

Well, actually he doesn't really care about this stuff; however the Education Services



Committee has directed him to research the background of all potential applicants for this school and to use the Internet to vet and filter all applicants. When Ronald Campbell typed into Google the following details taken from Deans CV

(Dean Myers + Compton Terrace + Kings Norton + New Zealand)

he was shocked at what Google returned. None of it was illegal; however it showed a side to Dean that no CV would ever show, not unless the applicant didn't want the job. He felt sad and frustrated because way back in 2008 people were talking about these problems. People were even suffering from Net Burn back then but nobody had really listened or seemed to accept that it could be a major problem. As a result young people were massively disadvantaged through no real fault of their own.

Next we will look at what Google returned on Mary Smith

This is what the Headmaster found:

142 Images of Dean Myers

27 images of Dean drinking with friends in night clubs and various other locations. One of the images showed Dean vomiting into the gutter. Another image showed Dean drunk on holiday in Hawaii with his ex girlfriend. The rest were images of him at polytech and school with his friends going all the way back to 2010.

57 Text postings

Various text submissions posted on the Internet from Face Book, Twitter, Bebo and various Blog Sites which were very popular around 2012. 14 text postings had obscene language in them including derogatory comments about teachers at his local school.

15 Submissions posted by other people

11 Images posted by his friends. 4 showed Dean in what appeared to be his friend's bedroom drinking beer and just larking about.



Ronald Campbell had seen enough; he couldn't possibly consider him for the position. He placed the Internet profile of Dean Myers in the drawer and waited for him to enter.

The End



Fortunately the above is a fictitious account of a job application set in the future. The example simply demonstrates what happens when we over expose our lives on the Internet. Today employers use the Internet to harvest information on potential employees. It is easy to see how the wrong online identity can harm young people's future potential.

Net-Burn: The year is 2018: Continued

Just imagine, as an adult, if all the things that we have said or done that we regretted in our lives were to become forever available to anybody that had an interest in us. How might access to that information hurt us today, not just for employment reasons, but for psychological reasons? If Dean Myers was a real person how might that repeated failure and eventual realization of why he is constantly failing at interview affect him emotionally. Remember, anything posted to the Internet is there forever.

Protecting a child's identity today involves thinking about how we as adults use the Internet - often children simply follow our examples. Imagine 30 years from now and think about all of the images that you know of today that exist on the Internet that perhaps show your children. When *they* look back as adults with their own family they will in, most cases have no recollection of anybody asking them "can I take a picture of you and post it on the Internet forever".

And really why should they? We as adults and parents generally do a good job of protecting our young ones. The problem today is that this new technology called the Internet is presenting problems that we did not and could not conceive of.

We do not suggest that people should not take pictures of loved ones. On the contrary, it is a great way to record our lives. We just need to slow down and think before we post these images in every location that we can *just because we can*.

Net Burn defined

Net Burn is the painful effect of over- exposure in cyber space of a person's personal life. It occurs when a young person uses the Internet, without concern for negative impacts, to record large amounts of their personal life, by posting images and other content to Blog Sites, Social Networks, Chatrooms or any environment that stores digital content via or on the Internet. The result is a large digital footprint that has a negative impact emotionally on the person and the opportunities generally available to them.

To learn more about online safety with John Parsons view his TV and Radio interviews here

www.simulate2educate.co.nz/tv-and-radio