

Ferndale Career Center Teaches about Timeline

(Crystal A. Proxmire, 01/15/2012)

Social Media is an important tool for job seekers and entrepreneurs, but it can be intimidating as websites seem to be constantly changing. That's why the Ferndale Career Center offers classes on social media and other skills to help those looking for work keep up to speed and stand out in the crowd.

On Jan 6, 2012, the Ferndale Career Center held a class about Facebook's new Timeline, a significant change to the popular social networking site. While the changes do pose some privacy concerns that everyone should be aware of, it also has some great features and is less complicated than some might think. This is especially true for those who take advantage of classes like this at the FCC.

Heather Coleman-Voss and Ron Marshall are the Center's social media experts. Marshall was not available for this particular class, but Teri Williams of [The Bliss Network](#) stepped in to assist Coleman-Voss with the class. The ladies walked nearly 30 participants through the process of activating their Timelines, and gave tips about how to make it work for them.

There are a couple of different ways to activate the Timeline feature. A simple way to do it is to log into Facebook, go to the "help" menu and type "timeline." That takes a Facebook user to an introductory video and more information.

"One thing you'll notice right away are the new cover photos," Coleman-Voss said. "They have already done studies about this and the visual impact of this cover photo is strong." She noted that the cover photo is public no matter what the other privacy settings might be.

Another obvious feature is that on person's wall there are now two columns for the information feed. There is also a new feature that lets users search a person's history by year and

month.

“Previously, a person had to scroll for hours to find an old post. Now it’s easy to look up posts from the past,” she said. It’s a convenient feature, but it also can be problematic for those who posted things in the past they may not want the general public to see in the present.

☒ Once the Timeline feature is activated, the user has one week to review their page and delete inappropriate postings and change their privacy settings.

“Every snarky remark is still there,” Coleman-Voss said. “Every night out at the bar is there. Or every time you said ‘I’m bored,’ or ‘I’m sick.’ They may have been okay at the time, but do you really need to keep showing that to people who view your page? It might be a good idea to clean it up a little, to get rid of the clutter.” She also said that recently someone had been arrested for poaching after posting a picture of a deer they had killed even though it wasn’t hunting season. “There are consequences to things you post and you should always think twice before you post. Posting is publishing.”

To find out how private a post is, hover over the icon of the world next to that specific post. A post may be “private,” “friends only,” or “friends of friends.” To change the setting, hover over the circle to the right of the planet and select the option you would like.

“We find more and more employers are going online to find out more information about potential candidates. The people doing the hiring to look to find the ideal candidate. Some people may have a hard time when looking for employment because of the things they post.”

HR Managers are NOT permitted to look up this information. An FTC approved company called “Social Intelligence” www.socialintel.com helps HR professionals by withholding

information they are not legally able to obtain and showcasing the rest of the users social media history.

Williams added that she understands the benefits of checking out a potential employee's Facebook page. "It tells a lot about what a person may be like to work with. If a person complains a lot or has problems with others, it may be a good warning for the company." 

Other faux faux include: complaining about employers or sharing inappropriate information about bosses or former bosses, airing personal drama, and keeping your page completely private. "If someone goes to your page and it's completely private it might make them wonder what you have to hide," Coleman-Voss said. "With the new privacy setting Facebook makes it easy to have some information private and some that just your friends can see, so there is no need to hide completely."

She said that some people may be leery of posting making family photos and identifying information public, which is understandable. But that for those who are comfortable with it, having a blend of posts that include some candid photos can show the world what a likable person you are, and give personality to your page.

Once the Timeline has been examined, cleaned up, and published, it's time to make it work into your personal branding plan. How do you make Facebook pages like yours work for you?

 Whether you are a job seeker or an entrepreneur, improving your Facebook presence can help you attract the right kinds of opportunities. Some things to consider are: Adding people as friends that you meet in real life or interact with on other people's pages, writing recommendations for the pages of businesses or groups that you like, posting stories that are relevant in your field, joining groups where you might meet

like-minded folks to network with, and carefully considering the mix of content that you post on your wall.

Voss and Williams gave examples from their own pages and others they admired. One business page they looked at was for [Tri Pups](#), a home remodeling and construction business that is locally-owned and thrives on word-of-mouth referrals and networking. "What I really like is how there is a mix of pictures. It's not just 'here's this project we did.'" They've got work photos but they also include posts about their employees and pictures of them just having fun and enjoying themselves. It gives a real personal feel to the page." Ideally this kind of positive interaction will help job seekers and business owners appear first in the minds of those who could potentially use their service.

Over-posting can be an amateurish problem. Coleman-Voss stresses that Facebook should be about interaction, not just bombarding people with advertising. "People are savvy about who they will follow in their feeds and who they will block. Pay attention to the kind of feedback you're getting and try to do what makes followers respond in a positive way."

The Timeline Class was just one of many career-skills development classes offered by the Career Center. Classes can be taken by anyone looking for work or considering their own business. In addition to the classes, The Ferndale Career Center offers many services for job seekers and employers, including personal career advisors, a job developer who matches job seekers to specific, often private job  opportunities, a youth program and a complete resource room for job seekers. The Ferndale Career Center is a MI Works! Agency, proud to be a part of the Ferndale Public School District. For more information go to www.ferndaleschools.org/fcc and ferndalecareercenter.wordpress.com. Or follow them on [Facebook](#).

Here are some previous FCC stories you might enjoy:
<http://oaklandcounty115.com/2011/12/26/self-enhancement-day-at-the-ferndale-career-center/>,
<http://oaklandcounty115.com/2011/09/23/career-center-can-help-you-adjust-to-social-media-changes/>,
http://oaklandcounty115.com/2011/10/05/help_felons_find_jobs/

