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## **SELF-PROMOTION ON THE INTERNET**

**Summary:** In this article we would like to examine the extent for using social media by employees in the area of their self-promoting and in their search of a job. Over 150 respondents completed an online form containing the question about their professional profile on social media and about their skills in self-promotion in this mean of communication. Four research problems were defined. Collected responses were analyzed and results presented. The growing role of social media during an employment process can be confirmed.

**Keywords:** intelligent organization, potential, self-promotion on the Internet, social media, human resource management.

### **Introduction**

The significance of social media has been growing during the last few years among researchers and practitioners. The use of social media by different kind of organization is largely described in literature as a channel of communication in marketing and promotion. They have primarily focused on defining the social media and investigating their impact on society [Agresta, Bonin, 2011; Berthon et al., 2012]. Likewise, they have described the theoretical foundations of research on social media [Okazaki, Taylor, 2013]. Lately we have been able to observe some research about using social media in hiring process [Jennings, 2014; www1]. This interest can be important for changing organizations, especially

these, which provide to transform themselves into intelligent organizations. One of the main characteristics in the intelligent organizations is the idea of constant learning and endless adapting to their environment. In this situation they need employees with a large range of skills and with a potential to learn new things. Taking it into consideration the applicants who are in hiring process can make their self-promotion using social media.

In this article we would like to examine the extent of using social media by employees in our society. We focused on the area of employee's self-promotion during the search for a job. In our investigation we defined four research problems: 1) Is our society experienced in using social media? 2) Is our society experienced in using professional social networks in order to self-promote in hiring process? 3) Does our society have any skills to self-promoting? 4) Does Internet dominate the real world in the process of job searching?

This paper begins by describing social media and recruitment process in the context of intelligent organization needs. This part makes background for our investigation. Next, we relate to data collection procedure and research results. We end with a discussion and conclusions.

## **1. Social media and recruitment process in the context of intelligent organization's needs**

According to Bratianu and his co-operators "intelligent organizations are the ones which developed the capability to continuously adapt to changing and unpredictable environments." [Bratianu et al., 2006]. Intelligent organization is often named learning organization. In this context it is defined as "this one skilled in acquiring, creating, transferring, and retaining knowledge – as well as transforming that knowledge into improved performance or innovative products and service" [Bock, 1998]. By Senge [Senge, 1994, p. 49] learning in organization means ongoing study and practice to achieve mastery of the way of self-improvements. The activity of this kind of organizations is based on the knowledge management [Dalkir, 2005, pp. 4-6]. Its most valuable asset is intellectual employees' capital, which consists of their knowledge, experience, intelligence, creativity, cultural value and attitudes. The intelligent organization has ability to develop its intellectual capital and grasp the employees' tacit knowledge. Thus, it can convert its knowledge into value. It is also able to reconfigure itself anew with its environment, because it has a form of an adhocracy, meaning that its people are not encouraged to obey, but to cooperate and create [Bratianu et al., 2006]. This attitude of intelligent organization enables to adopt to changing situation and influence on its environmental milieu [Kordel et al., 2010].

Considering the notion and characteristic of intelligent organization, we can observe the huge role of people – especially in the context of their knowledge, experiences, creativity and potential to learn new skills. According to Fernández-Aráo, potential to learn new skills should be the most important feature in the process of hiring in contemporary companies [Fernández-Aráo, 2014]. He describes four historical eras of talent spotting (Table 1) and emphasizes that nowadays not only a set of skills but also the potential to learn new things is the most important factor in hiring process.

**Table 1.** The eras of talent spotting

The era of talent spotting	Specification
The first era	Accent on physical attributes. Important factor in hiring process: brawn and strength.
The second era Through much of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century	Emphasis on intelligence (especially: verbal, analytical mathematical and logical cleverness), experience and past performance. Important factor in hiring process: skills and experiences suitable to the job.
The third era Since 1980s	Driven by competency movement. Important factor in hiring process: set of competencies suitable to the job.
The fourth era Since 21 <sup>st</sup> century	Shift to potential. Important factor in hiring process: set of competencies suitable to the job and potential to learn new things.

Source: Own work based on Fernández-Aráo [2014], Żukowska [2014].

This point of view is confirmed by some investigation. According to LinkedIn's annual report [www3] competition among companies in the area of hiring the most talented employees is the main obstacle to attract the best talent to organization. Likewise by Jobvite's research [www2], recruiters expect competition in the area of talent. The reason of this situation on market labor is looked for in scarcity of top talent [Fernández-Aráo, 2014, p. 6]. This scarcity is caused by the globalization and demographics. Globalization compels the organization to reach beyond their home markets and compete for employees who enable growth on emerging markets. The impact of demographics on hiring pools results of shrinking the percentage of people in the age of thirty for rising senior executives (35 to 44 year old).

In the war for talent recruiters plan to increase their investment in social recruiting due to a fast proliferation of social media in our society. Besides of showcasing employer brand and updating job offers depending on vacancies available [Palonka, Porębska-Miąc, 2014], social media enable recruiters to find quality hires by targeting talent. They also permit to evaluate applicants by reviewing their social profiles. Jobvite indicates that the most likely applicants could be hired through LinkedIn. They show that also Facebook, Twitter and own blogs are treated as a serious source of information about candidates (Fig. 1).

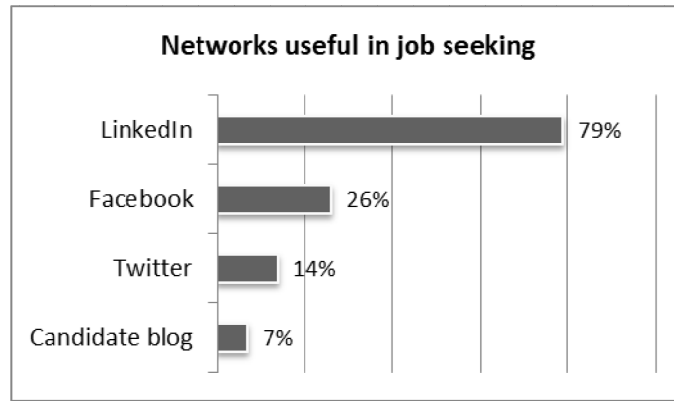


Fig. 1. Networks useful in job seeking

Source: [www2].

Before making a hiring decision, recruiters review social profile of applicants in the context of professional experience. By LinkedIn’s report [www3] social professional networks are the top source of quality hires (Fig. 2). This fact mirrors the increasing candidates and recruiters adoption of social professional networks.

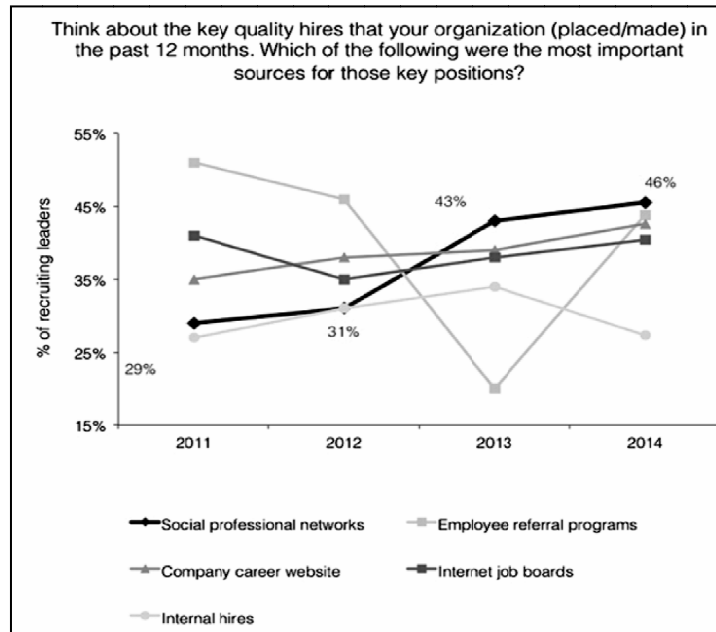


Fig. 2. Social professionals networks as a key quality hires

Source: [www3].

Therefore, besides virtual CV examples of designed works should be presented on social profile. In this way specific hard skills of candidate are shown and could be evaluate. Based on professional social profile, recruiters analyze also the length of professional tenure and industry-related posts. Hereby they search for mutual connection between potential candidate and other employers or employees. The most popular tactics used by recruiters on social networks are shown on Figure 3.

<b>LinkedIn</b>	Search for candidates	95%
	Contact candidates	95%
	Keep tabs on potential candidates	93%
	Vet candidates pre-interview	93%
	Post jobs	92%
<b>Facebook</b>	Showcase employer brand	59%
	Generate employee referrals	51%
	Post jobs	48%
	Vet candidates pre-interview	32%
	Vet candidates post-interview	35%
<b>Twitter</b>	Showcase employer brand	44%
	Generate employee referrals	39%
	Post jobs	32%
	Search for candidates	17%
	Post jobs	18%

**Fig. 3.** Tactics used by recruiters on social networks

Source: [www2].

These investigations indicate that some of the recruiters reconsider potential candidates by characteristics related to their personality traits and manners. Some of those reconsiderations could be negative (Fig. 4).

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
<b>Profanity</b>	5%	22%	<b>63%</b>
<b>Spelling/grammar</b>	3%	24%	<b>66%</b>
<b>Illegal drug references</b>	2%	7%	<b>83%</b>
<b>Sexual post</b>	1%	17%	<b>70%</b>
<b>Volunteering/ donation to charity</b>	<b>65%</b>	25%	2%
<b>Political affiliation</b>	2%	<b>69%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Alcohol</b>	2%	42%	<b>44%</b>
<b>Guns</b>	2%	32%	<b>51%</b>

**Fig. 4.** Characteristics reconsidered by recruiters

Source: [www2].

## 2. The data collection procedure

In order to examine the scope of using social media by the employees in the area of their self-promoting and in their search for a job an online survey was conducted. It contained 4 queries referring to socio-demographic data of respondents and 6 closed questions about tenure and having own profile on social networks. We asked respondents about their knowledge of professional social networks and about having or plan having profile on them. In this way we could investigate (in the context of hiring process) the awareness of the most important professional social networks. Moreover, the online form contained the questions about skills in the area of self-promoting as making film or writing blog. It also included the question about the best way to find employment. All responses were measured on nominal scales.

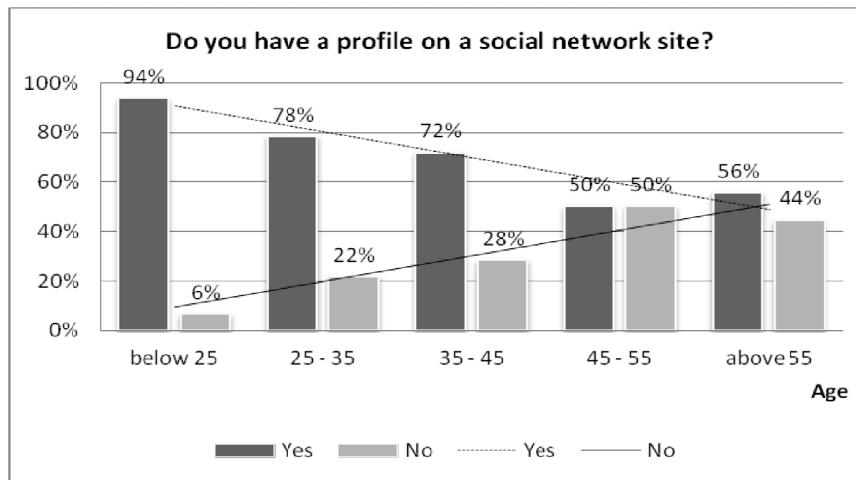
The invitation to survey was distributed by e-mail. The population of this study was chosen from mid-level entrepreneurs of Upper Silesia region, students preparing to enter on a labour market and university staff who used social media. It was aimed considerable diversity of sample surveys (purposive sampling). Such sample was chosen due to their sufficient knowledge of the labor market as its participants. To analyze obtained in surveys data MS Excel was employed. Basic statistical analysis was conducted.

## 3. Findings

The survey was returned by 174 respondents (152 completed it which is 87% – 22 were incomplete and had to be deleted) in April and May 2015. Among the respondents there were 47% women and 53% men. 50% of the participants were not older than 31 over 86% of the respondents were not older than 45 and 6% were over 55. 26% completed secondary education, 74% had higher education – (16% of them had Ph.D.). Almost 20% of the respondents were not employed, 30% have been employed for less than 5 years, 7% – more than 5 but less than 10 years, 20% – from 10 to 15 years, 8% – from 15 to 20 years, 5% – from 20 to 25 years, and 10% – over 25 years.

***Experiences in using social networks.*** 79% of respondents admitted having own profile on social network site. However, the answers were significantly dependent on age of the respondents as can be seen in the Figure 5. Younger respondents had more often own profiles.

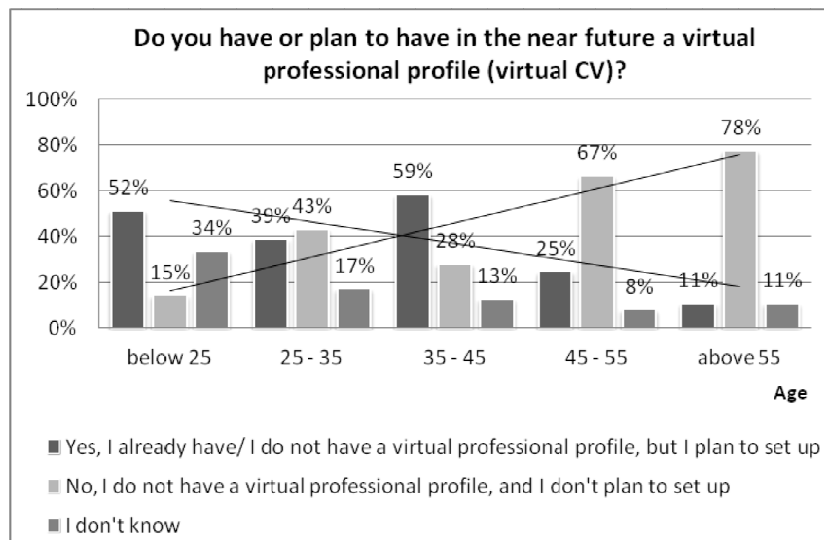
The situation was similar with the number of the respondents claiming to have or plan to have in the near future own virtual professional profile.



**Fig. 5.** Dependence between the age and the percentage of social media users

Source: Own calculations.

Generally, almost 28% of the respondents admitted to have own virtual professional profile, and 20% declared an intension to set it up. Almost 31% stated that they did not have and didn't plan to have own virtual CV, and nearly 22% were undecided. The older respondents were the lowest their interest on having a virtual CV was – which was shown in the Figure 6.



**Fig. 6.** Dependence between an age and the percentage of the owners of professional profiles

Source: Own calculations.

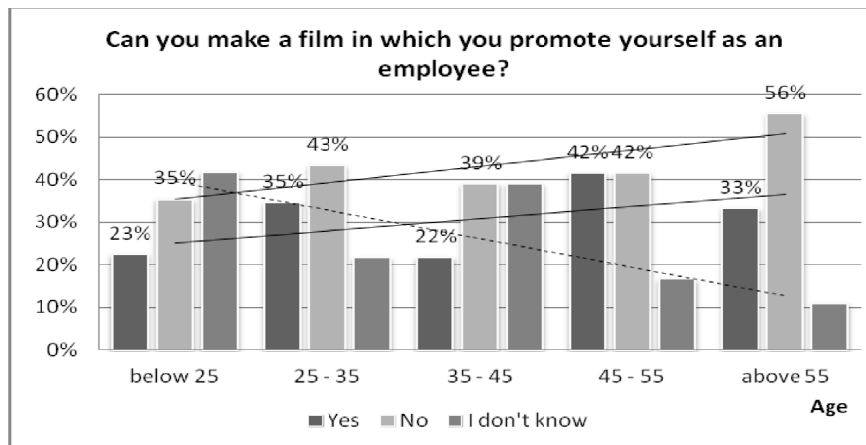
In conclusion the respondents were asked to indicate social network specializing in professional business contacts. The knowledge of this kind of networks was confirmed by 41% of participants among whom the most popular websites were LinkedIn, and GoldenLine (Fig. 7).



**Fig. 7.** The most popular platforms to professional contacts

Source: Own calculations.

**Skills to self-promoting.** Only 7% of the respondents admitted to have own blog or own microblog. The respondents were also asked if they were able to make a self-promoting film in order to become employed. Only one out of four participants admitted he could, 39% denied such ability, while 34% was unsure. The dependence between answers and the age of respondents is presented in the Figure 8.

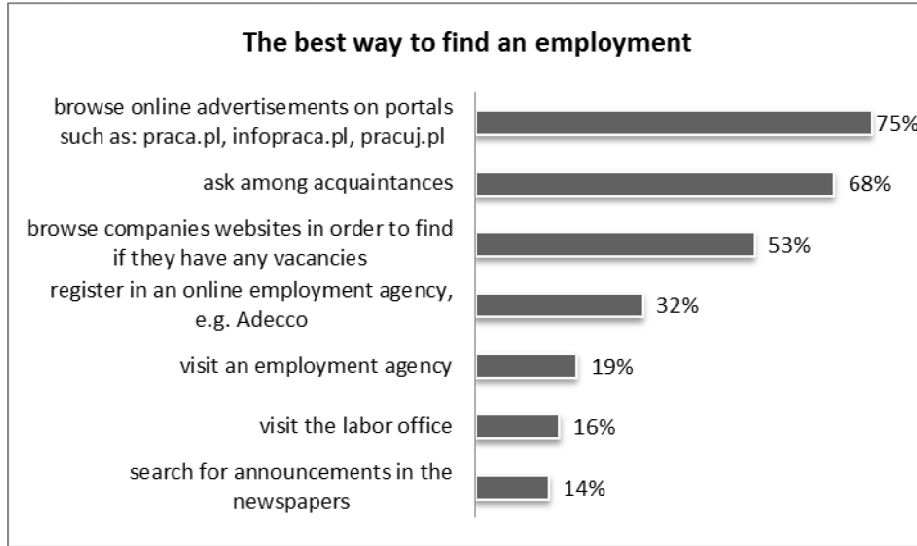


**Fig. 8.** The ability to make a self-promoting film according to the age

Source: Own calculations.



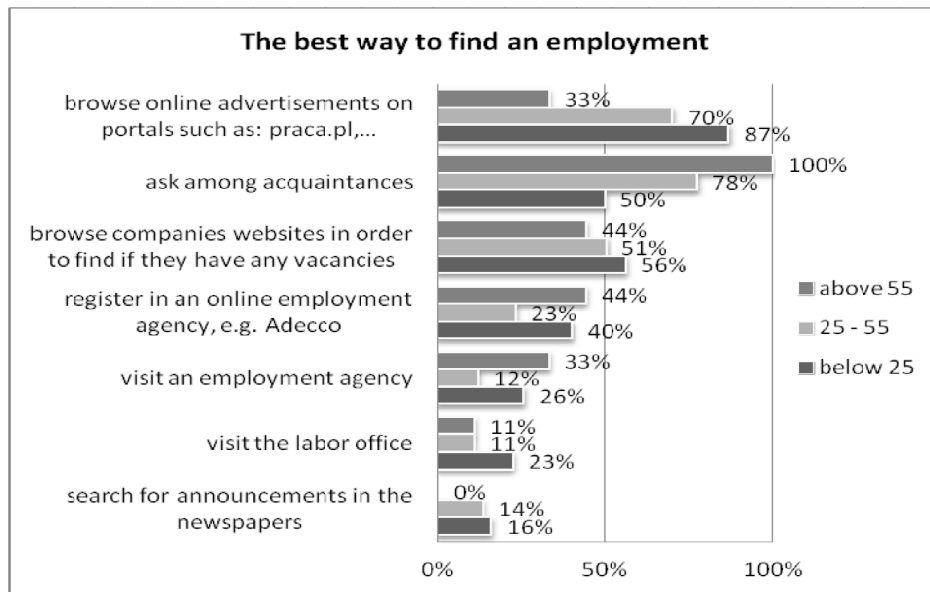
**Internet domination in the process of looking for the job.** Subsequently, the respondents were to indicate the best way of looking for an employment. Participants were invited to give no more than 3 suggestions (Fig. 9).



**Fig. 9.** Indicated answers about ways to find an employment

Source: Own calculations.

Three out of four respondents agreed that the best way would be to browse online advertisements on portals such as: praca.pl, infopraca.pl, pracuj.pl, but also 68% indicated asking among acquaintances. However, the score was generated by respondents aged under 25 (87%). Their second selection was to browse companies' websites in order to find if they have any vacancies. In this case, we could doubtlessly confirm, that the Internet dominates the real world in the process of job searching. The most popular answer among people between the ages of 25 and was asking among acquaintances (78%). Their second choice was to browse online advertisements on professional portals (70%). On the third place was to browse companies' websites (indicated by 51%). Every person older than 55 indicated that they asked among acquaintances for searching job. Registering in an online employment agency and browsing companies' websites (44%) were the second choices. Visiting professional portals was chosen by every third participant (Fig. 10).



**Fig. 10.** Indicated answers about ways to find an employment depending on the age

Source: Own calculations.

#### 4. Discussion

The high percentage of respondents having their own profile (79%) confirmed experiences of using social media in our research sample. However, this mean of communication was more popular among young people. The professional networks were less popular. Only 41% knew these kind of social networks. LinkedIn and GoldenLine were the most popular of them, which confirmed the global trends shown in 2014 Social Recruiting Survey. Tenure profiles on professional networks also depended on the age. The skills of self-promoting in our research sample weren't big. Only 25% participants admitted that they were able to make a self-promoting film in order to become employed. Likewise, only 7% participants had own blog. Such results indicate that our society – compared to global trends – still have to work in this area. However, responses given by our research sample confirmed the domination of Internet in the process of searching a job. The results exhibited that the ways affiliated with the Internet were the most often ones indicated by participants. It confirmed the global trends presented in reports of Jobvite and LinkedIn. The second most pointed was in survey was this one which uses relationships with our acquaintances in real world. As we know, relationships with our acquaintances in real

world are regarded as the best way to find a job. A high percentage of answers indicating the Internet as the best way of finding employment emphasized its high impact on our life also in the context of recruitment process.

We cannot generalize the results to entire population because our research was not representative to our overall society. Despite this, we could spot similar tendency as this one described in general trends investigated by LinkedIn or Jobvite. What is more, the tendency of using social media in the area of self-promoting in hiring process seems to evolve rapidly while the younger generation enter the labor market. This means that the society has to develop its skills to self-promoting – which, according to our research, can be realized by the young generation.

## **Conclusion**

Social networking websites are becoming an indispensable part of our life. A lot of businesses use them as tools to enhance a better relation with their employees and customers and also as a platform to hiring process. The social media have huge influence on these organisations, which would like to transform into intelligent organizations. There is a great opportunity for employees to promote themselves by the Internet. Moreover, one of the direct benefits of increased collaboration among workers, due to enterprise social networking sites, is the management of the knowledge organizational. For a learning organisation, the management of knowledge and effective transfer of skills through knowledge sharing are very desirable attributes.

This research paper describes the role of Internet in self-promotion of employees, especially in searching for job by them. Social recruiting is a trend that is newly associated with growing social networking websites. According Jobvite's research, recruiters, before making a hiring decision, browse social profile of applicants in the context of professional experience and skills. It is therefore very important to have a good, sophisticated, specialized profile on social networking websites such as: LinkedIn, GoldenLine, Facebook.

In research section we tried to answer on following questions: Is our society experienced in using social media, especially in the area of self-promoting in the hiring process? Does our society have any skills to self-promoting? Does Internet dominate the real world in the process of job searching?

Because our research was not representative to overall population we cannot generalize the results to whole society. We can only treat them as tendencies, which require deeper investigations. However, our results confirmed global

trends indicated by LinkedIn and Jobvite. The results of our study showed that almost 80% of respondents have own profile on social network site. What's more, the answers were clearly dependent on an age of respondents. Younger respondents more often had their profiles. Similar results appeared with the number of respondents claiming to have or plan to have in the near future own virtual professional profile. Generally, 28% of respondents admitted to have own virtual professional profile, and 20% declared an intension to create it. Almost 31% of respondents did not have and didn't plan to have own virtual CV. Only 25% participants admitted that they were able to make a self-promoting film in order to become employed. 39% denied that ability, while 34% was unsure. The results generate hypothesis that the society has to develop its skills to self-promoting – which, according to our research, might be realised by the young generation. 75% respondents agreed that the best way to find employment was checking online advertisements on portals such as: praca.pl, infopraca.pl, pracuj.pl. Their second selection was to browse company's websites in order to find any vacancies. Therefore, it is likely that the Internet has dominated the real world in the process of job searching.

Social networking on websites is a social and technological innovation that cannot be ignored anymore. The preponderance and ubiquity of online social networks in recent years has caused changes in hiring process. Therefore, it is very important for employee's awareness to use social media in the area of their self-promoting and in their search of a job.

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### AUTOPROMOCJA W INTERNECIE

**Streszczenie:** W artykule zaprezentowano wyniki badań dotyczące zasięgu mediów społecznościowych w kwestiach autopromocji i poszukiwania pracy. Zdefiniowane problemy badawcze dotyczyły odpowiedzi na pytania, czy społeczeństwo jest doświadczone w korzystaniu z mediów społecznościowych i czy wykorzystuje je w procesie promocji siebie jako pracownika oraz w procesie poszukiwania pracy. Ponadto zbadano, czy nasze społeczeństwo posiada umiejętności w zakresie promowania siebie w mediach społecznościowych oraz czy Internet dominuje nad klasycznymi sposobami poszukiwania pracy dostępnymi w świecie rzeczywistym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** organizacja inteligentna, potencjał pracownika, autopromocja w Internecie, media społecznościowe, zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi.