

'Talent Analytics' Tracks Employees' Digital Footprint

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A refresher course in case there's anyone out there who isn't utterly convinced of this yet.

If you're using your employer's hardware or software, what you do on it is not private. The employer owns it and can track your activities.

No big deal, you say? Well, it might be if you're launching a secret job hunt. Some employers have robust abilities to monitor what you're doing online.

It's not just that they know whether you're playing Candy Crush or scrolling through Facebook when you're supposed to be working. It's that there's a growing information technology field of "talent analytics."

Using sophisticated algorithms, analysts are capturing data that do far more than tell that you're visiting job boards and LinkedIn several times a day. They can figure out that you're likely to begin doing so based on aggregated click patterns of others in your similar field or status.

In certain companies and industries, employers want to know, almost before you do, that you're thinking of leaving the company. In those places, which work hard to get and keep top talent, they care about losing a valued staff member.

And even if you're not the must-keep star performer, it costs employers time and money to replace you. If you're meeting expectations, they'd probably rather keep you.

So, to figure out if they want to keep you, it's increasingly common for workplaces that monitor employee Internet use to track for productivity, something that's been more difficult to measure in many white-collar, desk-bound jobs.

Obviously, frequent visits to non-work sites are red flags. Many employers use systems that watch for inappropriate emails, tweets or Internet posts. Tracking your time online is a modern equivalent of counting widget production on the factory line.

Furthermore, while what you say on your own time and on your own equipment may be legal and true, that doesn't mean a current or prospective employer won't find it and use it against you if it's deemed contrary to the organization's best interests.

Employees and job hunters should aim for a digital footprint that's clear of apparent biases or anything that an employer might not want to characterize employees.

What might that be? You really don't know. You don't know who's digging into your online history. You don't know what their biases are. You don't know exactly what they're looking for. But you do want to look employable.

That means cleansing as best you can any drinking, smoking or crazy carousing pictures and erasing comments that might be controversial. Of course, you can't control it all. Retweets, other people's videos of you and other online trails can live on and on.

Again, is there anyone who still needs to be reminded?

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<http://www.govtech.com/data/Talent-Analytics-Tracks-Employees-Digital-Footprint.html>