What You Say Online Could Hurt Your College Applications

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You should always watch what you say online, but that's particularly true for students applying for college.

"About 25% of colleges now Facebook or Google students as a part of their holistic admissions process," says Ben Corpus, dean of admissions and vice president for student affairs and enrollment management at Baruch College.

Experts warn students to avoid writing or sharing anything online they wouldn't want an admissions officer to see and take into consideration when evaluating their application.

Kristen Janousek, a senior at Saint Francis Prep in Queens, N.Y., says she has made some changes to her online profiles in hopes to improve her chances of getting in to her top choices.

"I changed my names, I did everything private and I've just been making sure not to post anything inappropriate or that would cause a problem," she says.

Another high school senior, Anna Glinski, has been paying better attention to what she shares on her Twitter account. "I don't post anything on twitter that I wouldn't want the colleges to see," said Glinski.

Robyn Armon, director of guidance at Saint Francis Prep High School, tells her students that making the right first impression goes beyond social media, and that even contact information is an important part of the application process.

"The first thing I say is please have a college-appropriate email address; I have students who come with an email address "hot Italian mama." Armon says.

Although Baruch College does not monitor social media sites during its admissions process yet, Corpus says the number of colleges that do is on the rise, so students need to think and act responsibly online.

"They need to take a look at their website and say, 'if I can't show this to my mother, father, uncle, aunt that sure as heck is a sign that there's probably something that I should be thoughtful about in terms of taking it down,'" he says.

Although most social media sites give privacy options for users, there are always work arounds and students at St. Francis Prep are playing it safe.

"You never know what someone can take, and they can manipulate it however they want, they can misinterpret it…and you don't want that for anything in your life," says Saint Francis Prep senior Angelica Lopez.