Today you are falling behind in the race for open jobs if you are not plugged into social-networking sites. Facebook, for example, has exploded with more than 400 million active users, each of whom averages 130 friends. That is a large number of people who could help with your job hunt. LinkedIn, with more than 70 million members, offers a more professional networking platform for you to post your resume and connect with former and current co-workers. And many other sites, including Twitter, can also help you find employment. Wherever you surf, here are tips to expand your contacts and utilize social-networking:

- **Build your professional brand.** You should create an online presence that represents you best. If you are active on Facebook or other sites for personal use, consider creating separate accounts specifically for your professional efforts.

- **Make sure all your profiles are complete,** highlighting your skills and including keywords and phrases recruiters might search for.

- **Connect in meaningful ways with “warm” contacts:**
  - Career services staff, faculty, and UAB contacts
  - Parents & other relatives
  - Friends, peers and co-workers
  - Internship supervisors & colleagues
  - LinkedIn groups
  - Former bosses
  - Connections from volunteering
  - Professional association members
  - Alumni
  Facebook suggests people you may know through your existing contacts, and LinkedIn shows you first-, second- and third-degree connections.

- **Advertise your professional intentions.** Let your networks know the companies for which you would like to work and send out tweets with status updates.

- **Research prospective employers.** Use social-media to research companies and jobs that interest you. Join targeted LinkedIn groups and attend events. Check out a company’s web site and social-networking sites for company pages and employees.

- **59% of employers use some type of on-line technology to screen candidates**
- **37% of employers use search engines to screen applicants**
- **20% of employers check social networking sites for applicant screening**