LinkedIn Profile FAQs

Q: What should I do if I prefer not to upload a profile photo?

A: It's totally ok to not use a profile photo. Having a profile photo does significantly increase the likelihood that someone will view your profile, but there are lots of reasons why one may not want to upload one. One way you can signal a personal brand without using a headshot is to create a personal logo and upload that instead. It can be as simple as your name. If you know a little bit about graphic design, you can design something more complex. If you have photography or visual art skills, perhaps you can upload a photo you took or image of an artwork you created that you think best represents who you are professionally.

Q: What should I do if I want to keep some of my details private or make them only visible to certain people?

A: The privacy settings for your LinkedIn profile are located in the drop down menu titled "Me" at the top right of the page when you're logged in. There, you can see what information is visible to your connections, other LinkedIn members, and everyone else. The settings there allow you to control who sees your information, including your profile photo. If you need help with privacy settings and security, LinkedIn Help (www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin) has easy to use guides under the "Manage Your Account" section. Visit privacy.linkedin.com for more information about privacy on LinkedIn.

Q: I have a significant gap in my employment or education history. How should I deal with this on my LinkedIn profile?

A: These days, having gaps in employment and education on a resume is becoming more and more common. Whatever the reason for having had a gap, you don't have to lie about it or ignore it. Depending on your circumstances, sometimes a gap can be explained as "a sabbatical" or a period when you were freelancing. Wherever possible, demonstrate ways in which you were active in the community, having significant learning experiences, or developing new skills during the gap period.

Q: What should I do if I don't have regular access to a smartphone or computer?

A: If you have a library card, you can use public computers at any Toronto Public Library branch, or borrow a laptop for up to two hours at a time at the Fairview, Fork York, Jane/Sheppard, Mount Dennis, Scarborough Civic Centre, St. Lawrence, or Toronto Reference Library branches. Just make sure you always log out of your profile and never save passwords to browsers on public computers. Firefox, Internet Explorer, Google, and Safari all have browsing options that don't record your history – consider turning on private browsing or incognito modes. And, of course, don't leave any personal files on a public computer. For information about library services, visit www.torontopubliclibrary.ca.

Many employment agencies provide free access to computers and wifi for their clients.

There are also a few programs around the region that might be able to help you get connected on your own. TELUS and the Children's Aid Foundation provide eligible youth with access to a free two-year data plan and smartphone. Rogers has a special low-cost internet plan for people living in rent-subsidized non-profit housing. You can find more information about these options at about.rogers.com/community-2/connected-for-success/ and www.cafdn.org/for-youth/telus-mobility-good/.

Q: I'm at the beginning of my career. I don't have much of a professional network or lots of contacts. How do I build out my online network?

A: It's 100% ok to start with family, friends, and connections you make through volunteering or other activities! Also, make a habit of adding people you meet at networking events. Not sure where to start networking? Check out the events organized by netWORKS (www.unitedwaygt.org/networks).