How to Commit Internet Suicide and Disappear from the Web Forever

Sick of horribly embarrassing things showing up when potential employers Google your name? Tired of everyone knowing you live in a garden level dungeon apartment? Perhaps you just don't like the fact the internet makes you easy to find. Thankfully, it's not that hard to delete yourself entirely. Here's how to do it. For mildly famous (or infamous) individuals, disappearing is essentially impossible, but for the average person it's surprisingly easy. It just depends on much info is already out there.

Chances are the first results that pop up on a Google search of your name are your social network profiles. This likely includes things like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, and anywhere else you're using your real name. So, the first step to commit internet suicide is to remove these profiles. If you just want to remove search results, you can set your profiles to private, skip this step, and move on to step two. This isn't a perfect solution, but if you want to keep your social networks it will at least pull the results off the search engines. Here's how to delete your accounts on the big social networks:

**Facebook:** To delete your Facebook profile, head to this link while you're logged in, click the "Delete My Account" button, and you're done. The process might take up to 14 days before your profile is completely gone. Doing it this way deletes all of your data, and it cannot be reactivated. Some messages might still show up, but anything you've been tagged in will have your name removed (although the pictures themselves will remain). If you want those pictures removed completely, report that you didn't give permission for that photo under the intellectual property tag on Facebook, or contact your friend directly and ask them to remove it.

**Twitter:** To delete your Twitter account, head to your account settings page, and click "Deactivate my account" at the bottom. Your account gets deleted completely, but it will take a few weeks before results stop showing up in searches.

**LinkedIn:** To delete your LinkedIn account, head to your settings page, click the "Account" icon, then the "close your account" link.

**Google+** Google+ is a bit tricky because it's tied to your entire Google account. If you want to go ahead and close everything including email, calendars, and whatever else, sign into your primary Google Account homepage, and choose "Close account and delete all services and info associated with it." This will get rid of everything from Gmail to Google Checkout. If you only need to ditch the Google+ account, follow this link and
select "Delete Google+ content." This will remove your profile from Google+, but retain any other Google services you have.

You'll want to follow the above steps for any other social networks you use, forum accounts you have, or other sites you registered under your real name. If you have trouble remembering all your accounts, Account Killer has a huge list that includes direct links to deleting your profile from over 500 different sites. Your Google search for your name in the first step should also provide a guide to places you used your real name to create an account.

Step 2: Remove Unwanted Search Results

Once you get rid of your social profiles, content is likely still floating around the web that you need to get rid of. They might be images, articles, or even employer websites. The first thing to do is figure out where you're showing up online in search results. Search Google and make a note (or bookmark) where you name shows up on web sites.

You essentially have one course of action to remove this content: contact the source directly. Email the web site hosting the content and politely ask them to remove it (or at least remove your name). A quick email works well for places like former employers who still haven't removed you from the employees list, family members who post pictures of you on their personal blogs, or even on donation pages for causes you've supported. In due time it will drop from search results.

After that, you can appeal to the search engines directly to remove the edited pages right away. You can do so through Google, Google Images, or Bing by filling out a simple form and requesting the URL to be indexed again. This doesn't always work, but it's worth a shot. You'll have a better chance if someone is publishing libelous content about you, breaking a copyright of any kind, or if a page is displaying confidential information about you. If you cannot get everything off of your Google search results, you might also consider burying personal data as far as possible. To do this while maintaining your vow to delete yourself from the internet forever, create profiles on popular social sites like Twitter, Google+, or Facebook as well as landing pages like About.Me with just your name and no other details. You can also set up your own website filled with lots of keywords about your name but no actual information (or just create a 410 error page and leave it at that). It's not as good as deleting content completely, but at least internet sleuths will only be lead to a blank page with no information on you.
Step 3: Remove Any Usernames Attached to an Email Address with Your Name

Any good internet sleuth will be able to link together your usernames on forums, web sites, and elsewhere with your email address. Subsequently, they'll eventually trace that back to your name.

The process to remove this data is dependent on the forums and sites you use. If you can, unlink your primary email address with your username whenever possible. If you're dealing with forums, ask the moderators to delete any posts that identify you personally. Essentially, cut any ties between your email address or name with your username. If you use the same username for every site, consider coming up with new names for every site.

Step 4: Stay Off Search Engines Without Going Offline by Remaining Anonymous

From here on out you'll have to remain vigilant in not releasing your information publicly. That means no social networks with your real name, and a yearly audit of the background check websites to ensure they don't have any new information on you. Chances are you still want to use the internet, right? In that case, you'll need to set up a few things to ensure your data stays locked down. That means creating a fake identity.

To do so, you can create an email address on a service like Gmail or Outlook with a pseudonym. Fake Name Generator is a great way to come up with a new identity complete with birthdate, and everything else.

You can also use a temporary email address for all your communications, and then use your new pseudonym and fake email address to sign up for any services you need. To keep your cell phone records private, you might also consider using Google Voice instead of going through a carrier since you can make up your Google Account name.

As for the rest of your browsing, we've shown you plenty of ways to keep your browsing anonymous before. This won't have an effect on any online searches for your name, but it will at least keep advertisers off your back. When it boils down to it, the internet is forever and truly resourceful people will always be able to find you. But if you take the steps outlined above, you'll at least thwart amateur internet sleuths and regain a touch of privacy.
**Discussion notes**

Due at beginning of class. Your professor will assess the completeness of your notes while you do a warmup activity. **Completeness means:** well thought answers that are relevant to the question being asked; **moderate in length** (neither too short to fully express yourself clearly and give a valuable contribution to the answer nor too long so as to ramble incoherently and go off-task), **neatly written in your own words**, and **not deviating from the answer box** which guides space and frames your answer. (1 point per answer x 5 questions = 5 points possible.)

**Q1:** Think on a portion of the article’s title. “Commit Internet Suicide…” Why was such provocative language selected? They could have just titled it “How to disappear from the web”. Regarding suicide from the Internet, what does it entail and why is it relevant in today’s society?

**Q2:** People in some social circles have began using the expression, “I’ll Facebook you later.” Or, “Did you see what I posted on Facebook?” Why is language like this dangerous to communication? Do you personally feel there are any problems with it? Have you ever told a friend this, or been told this?
Q3: Select one of the tips from the article. Which one do you find the most useful/relevant for your current life? Explain why you would consider actually doing what the advice suggests.

Q4: There have been smart phone apps that require people to solve a puzzle or math equation before it will be unlocked for use, even if they enter their standard password. This was in response to the phenomenon of people drunk texting, drunk Googling, or drunk Facebooking. Those individuals would often regret their behavior in the morning. Have you ever done something on the Internet that you regret? Do you know anyone who has? What was the result of the action?

Q5: Do you believe that future employers actually use the Internet to search out information on prospective employees? Say your opinion and support it relevantly.