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# Letting Someone Else Dig for the Dirt: Hiring Vendors to Assist in Social Media Searches

In [our post on May 10](#) covering best practices for using social media in the recruiting process, we shared guidelines for using social media in screening applicants as part of the hiring process. Among other tips, we suggested that each organization designate an employee or group of employees who would conduct the Internet search for additional information about the applicant's work qualifications, interests and negative work history or behavior. That employee would cull through the publically-available information and then share only the relevant data with the hiring managers. We also noted that the employer could engage a third party service provider to perform the work.

One prominent vendor, [Social Intelligence](#), searches social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter for negative information about candidates. The company is particularly keen to locate racist remarks or activities, sexually explicit photos or video, potentially violent tendencies, and demonstrations of illegal activity.

The US Federal Trade Commission has [dropped its investigation into Social Intelligence's business practices](#). The FTC found no evidence that Social Intelligence violated the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the federal law that regulates third-party investigations.

Thus, despite blog criticisms of Social Intelligence's activities as "scary" and "creepy," employers may decide that third-party social media searches are preferable to asking HR employees to scour the net in search of disqualifying behavior.

NOTE: Foster Pepper does not endorse Social Intelligence or any other vendor. Employers should carefully investigate before engaging any third party to assist in the hiring process.

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