

Statement of context for The Removal of Student Information from the Western's Publications Websites in Cases Where Harm Can Be Shown.

It has become common practice to do an internet search of prospective employees and in a fiercely competitive job market the first page of Google can be the determiner of whether or not a candidate is called to interview. A poor internet reputation can make employment in a more conservative field next to impossible. The Western Washington University's publications are large, high traffic sites. If a student is quoted, interviewed, or featured in a publication, this will likely be the first result of an internet search.

This can help a student's reputation but it can also harm it. The damage done, as late as 2010, was localized. The archives would drop links after roughly a year as new content was produced. The archive has been upgraded and articles from as early as 2006 can be had at the touch of a button. This means that any shortsighted comment made by a freshman to our publications will haunt them well into the working world.

It has been pointed out that the redaction of true statements does not happen in "real world" publications. By design, student life is not "real life". It is more of a petri dish or practice run. Part of the collegiate experience is trying new things and, often, making mistakes. As an institution we should have a policy of mercy for these students.