

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2007

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# 10 Background-Screening Trends To Track in 2008

**J**ason Morris, chief operating officer and president of employeescreenIQ ([www.employeescreen.com](http://www.employeescreen.com)), identifies 10 key background-screening trends to watch for in 2008:

- **Privacy, data protection.** Privacy issues will continue to dominate the news and industry dialogue, Morris says. The issue will continue to be a hot topic on Capitol Hill.
- **Verification of right-to-work.** The government is discussing mandating electronic verification of the I-9 form, the form used to verify citizenship and right-to-work in the United States. Currently employees fill out the form, show documentation that proves identity and are then eligible to work. The new system, the SAVE Program (Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements), is electronic and allows instant confirmation. Morris says employeescreenIQ believes it is likely this new system will be mandated for use by all employers by the end of this year. The system has already been mandated for use in Colorado.
- **International screening.** While not a new facet of the industry, Morris says that international background screening continues to gain in importance as U.S. companies open offices globally and/or recruit overseas candidates to work in the United States.
- **Blogs and social networking sites.** These web sites continue to be an extremely hot topic, according to Morris. He says the question continues to be "how should they be used in the hiring process?"
- **Credit reports.** The questions in this area continue to be: Should an applicant's credit history factor into his or her background check? If so, what determines hireable or non-hirable credit?
- **Balancing rights.** The question here will be finding ways to balance comprehensive background reports with consumers' rights so as to avoid creating

a class of people with records who cannot get jobs.

- **Universities.** Following the April 2007 shootings at Virginia Tech, the topic of screening students, faculty and staff has been raised and will continue to be discussed as educational institutions look to avoid future catastrophic events. Universities are beginning to see the value in screening staff and even screening new students, Morris said.
- **Applicant tracking systems.** The prevalence of applicant tracking and HR information systems will continue to increase, especially among mid-sized companies, allowing HR departments to consolidate work, he says.
- **Industry growth.** Before Sept. 11, only the largest companies did back-



ground checks. Today, nearly all large- and mid-sized companies are using them. Over the next year, he predicts, this practice will continue to trickle into the small-business arena.

- **Disputing records.** As employers look for more information during the hiring process, they and their background-screening agents must continue to protect consumers by providing avenues for them to dispute background reports, Morris notes.

## Graduate's Major Top Priority for Employers

**A** student's academic major was the No. 1 priority for 42 percent of employers who were asked about top hiring considerations, according to CollegeGrad.com.

Asked to rank criteria in order of importance when hiring new college graduates, employers listed:

1. The student's major (42 percent.)
2. The student's interviewing skills (25 percent.)
3. The student's internship/experience (16 percent.)
4. Other miscellaneous qualifications (10 percent.)
5. The student's computer skills (3 percent.)
6. The student's personal appearance (2 percent.)
7. The student's grade point average (1 percent.)
8. The college the student graduated from (1 percent.)

The information was gathered while compiling the list of more than 500 Top Entry Level Employers for 2007. The full survey is available at [www.collegegrad.com/surveys/topemployers/](http://www.collegegrad.com/surveys/topemployers/).