

Social work and the role of social media best practices



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What is social media?

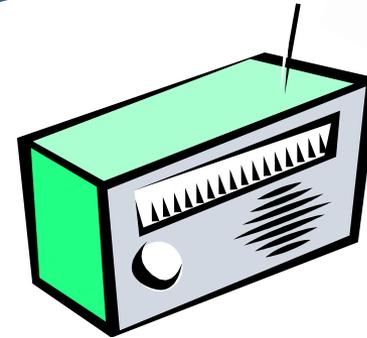
- Media is an instrument used for communication:



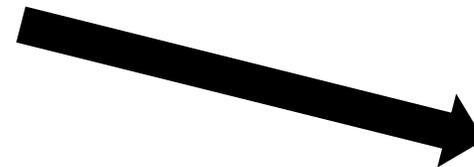
- Like a newspaper or



- A radio,



- So, social media would be a social instrument of communication



What social media can you identify?



Social media concept

- Kubey (1998) opined that media education has yet to obtain popular support. He postulated that far more parents, for example, will say that they want their children to be computer literate than will say they want their children to be media literate. Parents believe that computer expertise can equal a leg up in the job market.
- Joint (2011) has wondered aloud if the new technology is making us stupid. Writing in the journal “ANTAEUS” he asked the question as the title of his research: If Google makes you stupid, what should librarians do about it?
- Social media as a concept is so new that it has not taken root in the lexicon of the code of ethics of Social Work organizations.
- Yet, the point cannot be overstated that cutting edge Social Work practice of the future will of necessity involve and include extensive use of social media and web based activities.

Antaeus mythical giant



The Future

- This paper will examine the benefits, utility and challenges of social media and web based activities for Social Work instructions and practice.
- This paper will also identify critical benefits as well pitfalls that both pedagogues and practitioners can employ and be aware of in the effort to improve instructional quality, practice interface and addressing the intersection between both

Why social workers must get on the social media bandwagon or should we?

- According to the website promoting the work of the IFSW (<http://ifsw.org/what-we-do/>), “the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) is a global organization striving for social justice, human rights and social development through the promotion of social work, **best practice models** and the facilitation of international cooperation.”
- Part of the search is to find best practice model

What are we looking for?

- As social work educators and practitioners search for innovative ways to meet the mandate of promoting best practice models, it is important to examine the critical role that social media can play in accomplishing such goals.
- It has been pointed out that social media offer easy ways to communicate, collaborate and share resources.
- As Social Work educators and practitioners explore opportunities for both instructional practice opportunities, it is important to be cognizant of the reality that platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube can be used to find and provide critical information for course development as well as for conducting meaningful sessions with clients.

What some are saying

- Veil, Buehner and Palenchar (2007) make the argument that Social media is at its core human communication, possessing characteristics of participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness.
- They highlighted the fact that new media (the description applied to social media) is used in times of crisis to share and reshare information reaching millions of people without the intervening presence of journalists.
- The authors also point out that news from sources known as social media are tremendously influential
- and even perceived as more trustworthy than mainstream media in some instances. Technology allows private individuals to become sources of information online “sharing opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives with others” (Marken, 2007, p. 10).

What is going on

- More people have access to a mobile phone than a computer and it's worth remembering that many service users are comfortable using social media tools on their phones.
- Some local authorities already use text messaging to remind young people of upcoming appointments.
- Twitter is widely accessible from virtually anywhere and is used to share news, events and discussions.
- A fascinating experiment was undertaken by Sedgemoor Citizens Advice Bureau where they tweeted every enquiry they processed over seven days showing the scale and the scope of the advice they provided.

The wave of the future

- Another social media innovation that looks highly promising for those in children's services is being developed by the Safeguarding 2.0 project -- which is developing new ways for child protection practitioners to communicate using Facebook-style modern, human and intuitive technology, centered around a family.
- The tools allow information to be distributed quickly across networks and will act as an early warning system to enable earlier intervention.
- The tool will be subject to rigorous security and confidentiality requirements from each of the partner agencies before it goes live.

How media literate are social workers?

- Christ and Potter (1998) talk about the ways that media are penetrating the cultures of the world and they make the argument that media literacy is critical for navigating the pathway.
- The work of Joshua Meyrowitz is cited in discussing the idea of “multiple literacies”. According to Christ and Potter, Meyrowitz (1985, 1993, 1996) share his point of view “that media literacy is a complex construct that needs to be conceptualized as a number of literacies, and that students need to be able to perform a range of analyses to be considered literate.” (p. 6)

Social media (New media)

- Veil, Buehner and Palenchar (2011) make the argument in citing the work of (Mayfield, 2006) that at its core social media is human communication, possessing characteristics of participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness
- If all this is true then it must be what instructors want to do working with students and definitely what practitioners want to accomplish with clients.
- They argue that social media which they described at the time as “New media” allows private individuals to become sources of information online ‘sharing opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives with others.

This is the future:

- Veil, Buehner and Palenchar (citing Solis, 2009, p. 24) mentioned a recent survey, in which 92% of communication practitioners surveyed believe that blogs and social media now influence mainstream news coverage.
- This is the future:
 - “You can't stop the future
 - You can't rewind the past
 - The only way to learn the secret ...is to press play.”
 - — [Jay Asher, *Thirteen Reasons Why*](#)

Some of the research

- Behzadan and Kamat (2012) make the point that recent figures show that today's digital native students who are highly engaged with the technology around them are more likely to choose scientific and engineering fields that are more flexible and have already embraced the use of latest technologies.
- This point might seem in conflict with the discussion about social work faculty and practitioners using social media to enhance practice and policy engagement. But the critical point is that students who are comfortable with the digital platform are more likely to embrace technology.
- So, rather than being fearful of and running away from the technology the profession should embrace it as more students are comfortable with it.
- Behzadan and Kamat further highlighted that recent findings indicated that when properly implemented, computer technology has a significant effect on student achievement, stimulated increased instructor–student interaction, encouraged cooperative learning, collaboration, problem-solving, and student inquiry skills.

Research and social media

- Yingxia, Ajjan, and Hong, (2013) in their research found that the higher the perceived risk of using social media utilization, the less likely faculty will use the technology to support in-class instructions frequently.
- They also found that social media use has a positive effect on student's learning outcomes and their satisfaction.
- The proposed model provides educators with a depiction of how social media educational use delivers higher performance in the classroom

Study regarding twitter

- Gleeson (2012) in discussing twitter said: “The use of Twitter to facilitate communication, and to inform and mobilize masses of people in situations of social unrest, has been the topic of recent scholarly attention.” (p.967).
- The utility of social media has attracted the attention of researchers (DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfeld, & Fiore, 2011; Gruzd, Wellman, & Takhteyev, 2011) from many fields of study, including sociology, political science, communications, and education.
- And as pointed out by Gleeson, researchers have begun to explore the ways in which social media support collaborative, online spaces.

Research about twitter's use

- Gleeson points out that research in education, have found that “the use of Twitter supports a number of educational outcomes, including increased engagement with the material, more peer interaction related to course content, and expanded discourse beyond the classroom walls” (p.969).
- This kind of information must be considered as faculty consider how to use social media as a teaching/educational tool including Twitter.

More on twitter

- Gleeson argues that the use of Twitter to facilitate communication, and to inform and mobilize masses of people in situations of social unrest, has been the topic of recent scholarly attention.
- He highlighted the analysis of social media discussion from Tunisia and Egypt and cited the work of Howards et al. (2011) where they argued that use of social media, including Twitter, informed political discourse and preceded revolutionary events on the ground.
- Gleeson also pointed out that researchers have argued that Twitter was an important platform during the protests in Egypt

How did we define social media?

- Media regarded as instruments of communication and
- Social media is to be seen as be a social instrument of communication
- With the examples such as radio, newspaper, web sites etc.

Examples of social Media websites

Social Bookmarking

Del.icio.us,
Blinklist,
Simpy

Interact by tagging websites
and searching through
websites bookmarked by
other people.

Examples of social Media websites

Social News.

Digg

Propeller

Reddit

Interact by voting for articles and commenting on them.

Examples of social Media websites

Social Networking

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/>

Hi5

Last.FM

Interact by adding friends,
commenting on profiles, joining
groups and having discussions.

Examples of social Media websites

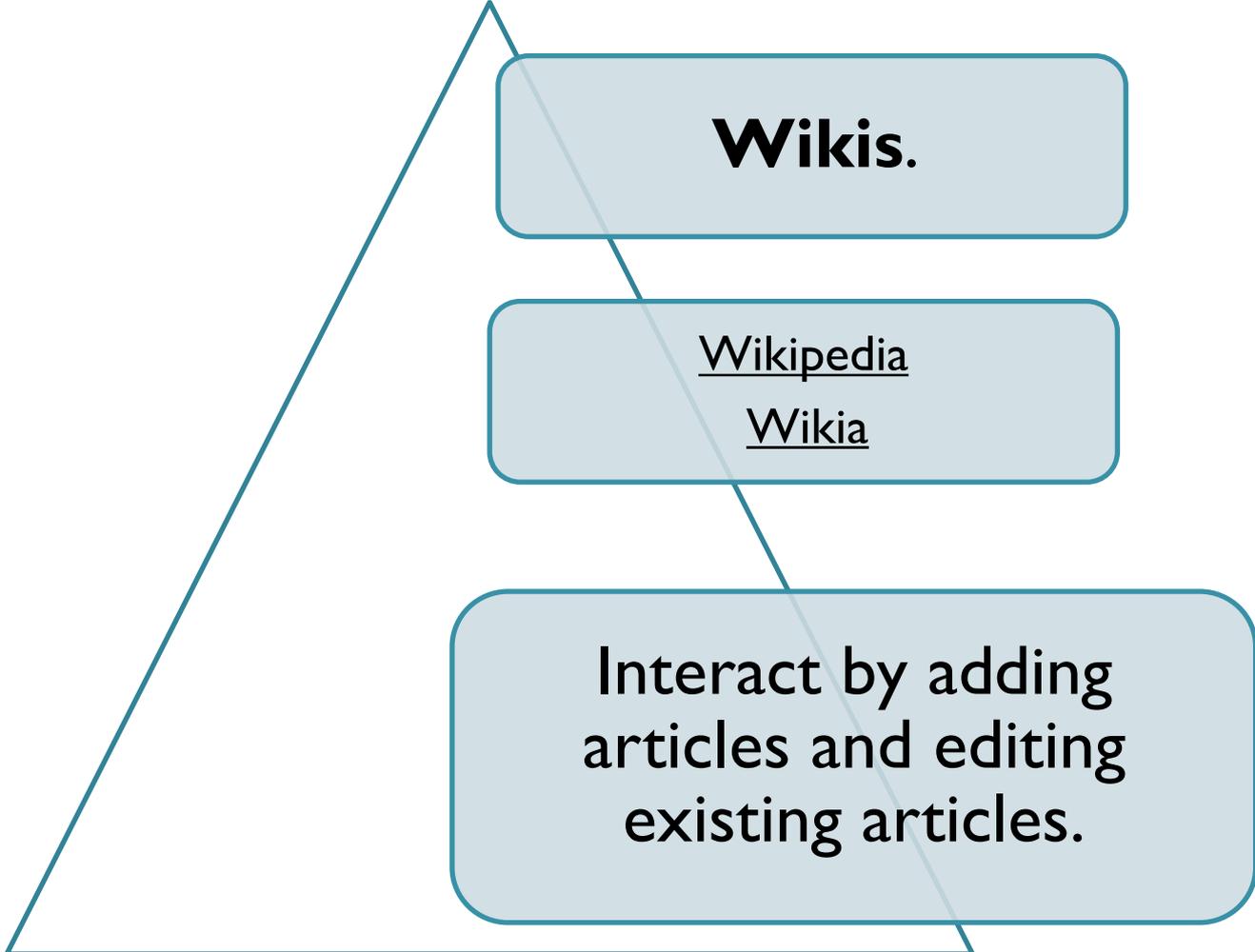
Social Photo and Video Sharing.

YouTube

Flickr

Interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions.

Examples of social Media websites

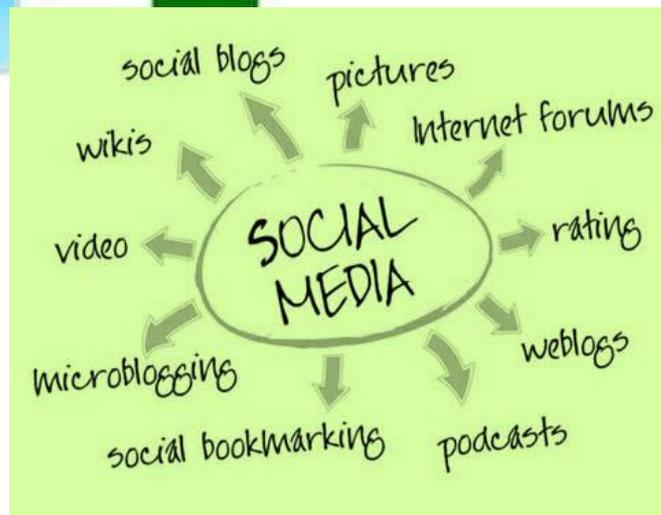
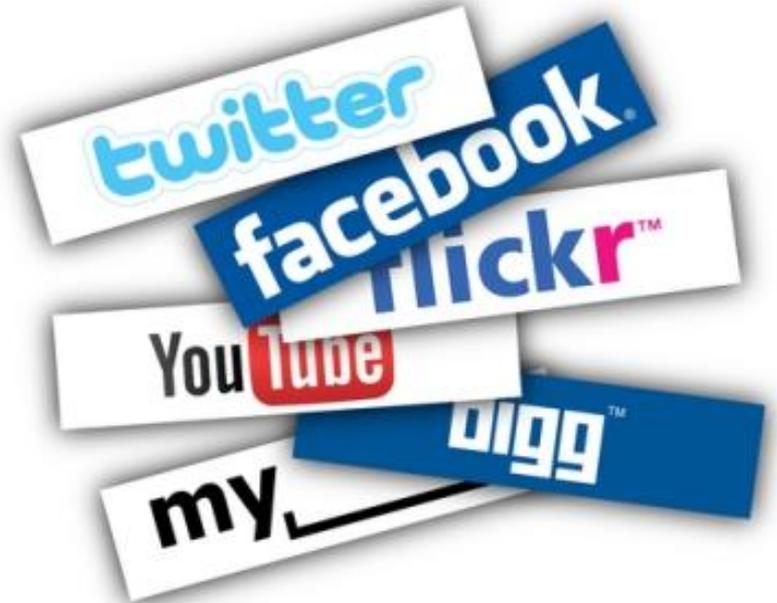


Wikis.

Wikipedia
Wikia

Interact by adding
articles and editing
existing articles.

What is social media do you use?



Thinking of social media



What can be done with social media



Some suggestions for using social media

- Five reasons Why Social Workers **should use** Social Media (Connecting Social Care and Social Media)
 - 1. Knowledge building –
 - 2. Making Connections –
 - 3. Building conversations
 - 4. Constructing and Reinforcing a Professional Identity
 - 5. Building Support and Resilience
- 5 Reasons Social Workers **Need to** Work with Social Media (Robert Neff at dreamgrow)
 - 1. Get Informed
 - 2. Reach Out and Touch Someone
 - 3. Develop a Professional Identity
 - 4. Create a Discussion
 - 5. Build and Support

Changes that have been identified

- The editorial board of the *British Journal of Educational Technology*, in writing about the issues of emerging technologies and changing learning/teaching practices identified some of the consequences “for the improvement of higher education pedagogy through the use of ETs” (p.532).
- The editorial identified:
 - ETs include the rise in personal learning environments
 - A decrease in reliance on institutionally regulated learning environments
 - The need for more integration of formal with informal learning
 - life-wide together with lifelong learning and
 - a demand from students to take more control of their learning

Cautions amidst the exuberance

- The same editorial pointed out that:
- While these are desirable educational outcomes, the realization of these outcomes requires careful design of learning tasks.
- Example provided included research that shows that:
- an increasing number of scholars have confirmed the pedagogical value of social networking, but this does not mean all educational uses of social networking is transformative and will enhance student learning.
- They identified the work of Johnston *et al.* (2013) report that current students spend most of their free time on the Internet, particularly on social network sites, and whereby creating an alternative “teaching space” for educators but pedagogical use of such students’ personal spaces requires careful learning designs.

Judd and Johnston (2012) highlights some of the ethical dilemmas facing students who use social network

- 1.0 Social Networking
- 2.0 Professional Presentation
- 3.0 Conflicts of Interest
- 4.0 Privacy and Confidentiality
- 5.0 Social Work Education



Other cautions

- The technology is here and the tide is moving. Sharples *et al*, (2012) talks about emerging technologies (ETs) and describe them as having become ubiquitous.
- They talk about the way many educators in higher education are trialing different ways of using these technologies to respond to varying teaching and learning challenges. They identify some of the challenges to include:
 - concerns about the quality and outcomes of teaching and learning in a climate of decreasing resources with a simultaneous increase in massification and
 - diversity of the student population.
 - The widening of participation to a diverse group of students thus brings with it contextual constraints and concerns about social inclusion that require addressing physical and epistemological access

Caution and awareness

- Sharples *et al* make the argument that although the construct emerging technologies (ETs) may not have a universally accepted meaning, there seems to be some degree of agreement that educators are appropriating ETs to effect teaching practice.
- We have argued somewhat for the utility of social media to be an integral part of the instructional activity of the pedagogue as well as the practitioner.

Caution and awareness Cont.

- However, some have argued (Siemens & Tittenberger, 2009; Veletsianos, 2010) that there remains a great deal of uncertainty and confusion about the actual meaning of ETs that are being used in these pedagogical practices.
- The editorial writers in a special issue of the *British Journal of Educational Technology* makes the critical point that :
- Often ETs are discussed in academic fora such as conferences and colloquia in taken-for-granted ways, without any in-depth discussion about common understandings of the concept.

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