Making connections between practitioner’s personal use of social media and social work practice

Conference or Workshop Item

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Making connections between practitioner’s personal use of social media and social work practice

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Introduction

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“Networked individualism”

- Wellman et al., (2006) – a move from long term loyalties based on co-located family and friends towards fluid and dispersed networks

“After a millennia as creatures who engage in social interaction face to face, the ability to communicate across distance at very high speeds disrupts social understandings that are burned deep into our collective conscience”. (Baym, 2010 p.10)
Key characteristics of social media

• Enables living between two places the online and offline world (Turkle, 2006)

• Multiple personas (Baym, 2010)
  - Devon County Council Social Media Guidance
  - BASW Social Media Policy

• Communication via social media enables ongoing connectedness to social networks of friends, family and acquaintances (Jamieson, 2013)

• Goffman (1963) impression management
Key characteristics of social media

• Synchronous and Asynchronous communication
  - positives e.g. always connected and minimal delay
  - negatives e.g. Facebook “Wall” (MacDonald, Sohn and Ellis, 2010)
    - online persona is essentially ‘coarser’ and therefore too easy to misinterpret (boyd, 2007 p.12)

• Does not tend to rely upon the age old visual and auditory cues

• Networked publics (boyd and Marwick, 2008, 2009, 2011 p.7) “an imagined community that emerges as a result of people, technology and practice”
Key characteristics of social media

• Networked publics
  - persistence
  - replicability
  - scalability
  - searchability

(boyd, 2007)
Social work and social media

“A self confessed social media addict” (Community Care, November 2010)
Social media and social work

The Masked AMPH

http://themaskedamph.blogspot.co.uk/
Social media and social work

Guerilla Policy

http://www.guerillapolicy.org/author/the-masked-amhp/
Social media and social work

“In guerilla policy, experience and expertise are valued above the elegance of an argument. Guerilla policy is non-partisan and non-ideological. People matter more than theories.”
Social media and social work
Broad issues for social work

- Conflict of interest
- Privacy
- Confidentiality
- Consent
Theoretical explanations

• Technological determinism i.e. technology acting as an external agent (Fischer, 1992)

• Social construction of technology i.e. identifies the individual in the use of technology (Baym, 2010)

• Social shaping of technology (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1985 and Williams and Edge, 1996)
Social work ethics and values

Learn about social media by resolving life like ethical social work dilemmas.

After a short break, Adrian tells the group about another issue one of his team sought advice about...

Sam has been working with a young service user called Lucy. Well Sam came to me with the following situation.

You know I’ve been trying to work with Lucy. It’s been difficult because she has a history of not engaging with workers. Well, I got a friend request from her to my personal social media account.

I hope Sam accepts my friend request. I told her I find it easier to talk this way.

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“viewed as through a kaleidoscope, paying heed to the varying configurations that manifest themselves” (Reamer, 2012 p.15).

This kaleidoscope encompasses critical issues such as commitment to service users, privacy, informed consent, confidentiality, as well as self-determinism and paternalism.
Closing remarks

• Domestication of technology (Baym, 2010)
References


