

The Social Web and Careers Work Careers 2009, Madison, Wisconsin Michael Larbaestier

What's your social web footprint?

Myspace	Meetup	43 things	You Tube
Gabcast	Facebook	Second Life	twitter
flickr	Classmates .com	Monster	EMBARK
digg	Del.icio.us	Wink people search	Yahoo Answers
Technorati	Bubble Timer	Dipity	unigo
Google Groups	Blogger	Yahoo Answers	Wikipedia

Look at the list of sites above. Score 1 if you've heard of a site and score 5 if you are a member. What's your total?

On the social web, people are: **Connecting** with other people, **Discovering** information and **Sharing** ideas and resources.

29% (40m) American broadband users over 13 now regularly contribute to social networking sites. 76% (105m) contribute to the social web. Only 24% (33m) don't contribute. (Source: Netpop Research 2008).

75% of 18-24 year olds use social networking, but other age groups are catching up: 57% of 25-34 year olds, 30% of 35-44 year olds, 19% of 45-54 year olds, 10% of 55-64 year olds and 7% of those 65+ use social networking. (Source: Pew Internet and American Life Project 2008).

Users are: Keeping in touch with friends and family; Sharing content; Making new contacts; Hanging out; Exploring their identity; Informal learning. (Source: www.nya.org.uk Youth Work and Social Networking Report 2008).

The Digital Youth project found users were: Mainly extending real world friendships; Connecting to share niche interests; Building online reputation; Sharing accomplishments more widely; Evidence of peer to peer learning; Role for adults facilitating interest driven use. (Source: Living and Learning with New Media - Digital Youth Project, University of Southern California and the University of California, Berkeley 2008).

Three main types of site: 1. Pure Social Networks - e.g. Facebook, Myspace, Bebo; 2. Those with Social networking features - e.g. Youtube, Flickr, Del.icio.us; and 3. Those which are Social web friendly, allowing you to link to their content using your preferred social web tools.



The anatomy of a social network: 5 parts – Profile, Contacts, Testimonials or Feedback, Updates and Affiliations.

Counselor concerns: Lack of staff confidence; Lost productivity (\$ millions a day); Identity theft and impersonation; Provider liabilities; Sexual predators; Cyber bullying – 70% have experienced; Reliability of information; Invading teenage space; Parental worries. (Source: Prospects Adviser Survey 2008).

Online Safety resources: www.chatdanger.com; www.childnet-int.org and www.thinkuknow.co.uk.

The social web is a growing part of what defines us: **Identity:** who are you? **Reputation:** what do people think you stand for? **Presence:** where are you? **Relationships:** who are you connected with? who do you trust? **Groups:** how do you organize your connections? **Conversations:** what do you discuss with others? **Sharing:** what content do you make available for others to interact with?

Management of online presence is becoming more important because: **Employers** see what staff do; **Staff** see what their colleagues do; **Recruiters** check people out online and targeting ads on social websites; **Teachers** and tutors have views on what students do, say and share online; **Customers** see what company staff do; **Authorities** see what people do and say.

The top ten social networking turn-offs for recruiters: 1. References to drug abuse; 2. Extreme or intolerant views, especially racism and sexism; 3. Criminal activity; 4. Evidence of excessive alcohol consumption; 5. Inappropriate pictures, including nudity; 6. Foul language; 7. Links to unsuitable websites; 8. Lewd jokes; 9. Silly e-mail addresses; 10. Membership of pointless or silly groups.

(Source: Joslin Rowe 2007).

Research by Recruitment Agency Joslin Rowe found 20% of employers had checked out applicants online.

Informal Career Counseling: Wider range of informal advisers now available; You can connect with an employee at a company you'd like to work for; Find out about an occupation from someone already doing it; Find out about a college from a student on the course you'd like to study; Get instant feedback on your plans from friends on your Facebook.

Networks influence career decisions, transition and progression. The size, type of network, and quality of what is shared impacts your career.

SOCIAL CAPITAL: The **value or advantage** that an individual derives from **social relationships**. In careers work such advantage might mean: Influencing my self-awareness; signposting me to opportunities; Help with my decisions and transition; Assisting me to achieve my goals.

An example of a social Capital development cycle:



For more information on social capital education see www.flowork.com, which offers tools, resources and training to help people use social networks more productively.

Careers work 2.0 examples: Join an online group of people interested in your chosen field (Facebook.com); Ask people in your chosen field for views on your career plans (answers.yahoo.com); Subscribe to blog feeds from people who work in the sector (Search at Technorati.com); Visit a firm's virtual headquarters (Secondlife.com); Share your goals and plan your time better (bubbltimer.com); Learn from students on the course you're considering

(embark.com and unigo.com); Get friends to notify you of vacancies (Monster.com); Write in your blog about what you find out in your research (Blogger.com); View a video clip from accountancy recruiters (Youtube.com); Get headhunted by building a positive online reputation (Linkedin.com); Create a career timeline from an informational interview (Dipity.com); Attend a virtual career counseling session (3dexplorer.com); Signpost people to where you are online (wink.com).

The answers people get from informal advisers are more personal, the language is less formal, and they are often instant. They can be quite subjective, they don't make assumptions, and they come from all over the globe. They can miss out important detail, they're often not objective, sometimes they are plain wrong, and they may not consider diversity issues.

For information about accessibility of social networking sites see the research of www.abilitynet.org.uk.

Two important features in effective career guidance: 1. giving clients access to networks, information and knowledge, enabling them to feel better informed and better able to progress; 2. Supporting positive outcomes for the client, specifically: exploring and challenging client perceptions together with giving direction and a new awareness of learning or employment opportunities; (Warwick Institute for Employment Research 2004).

We can help clients re-evaluate their web presence from a recruiter's perspective. Simple tips at <http://sa.uwrf.edu/sa/documents/frednet.facebook-example-profiles.pdf>

The social web is the new resume! Huge potential benefits – but also risks; Learners already using social web to support their career and education decision making; We need to: be aware and confident with the social web; know what's out there; promote and model safe, productive use; help learners make sense of the advice and opinions they obtain online; help clients shape their online brand.

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