

**BEING DIGITALLY AWARE:
IMPLICATIONS OF THE
DIGITAL AGE FOR
COUNSELLING PRACTICE**

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- **The digital age**
- **CCPA Code of Ethics**
- **Emailing**
- **Friending and following**
- **Googling**
- **Scenarios**
- **Tips for ethical online presence**

**OUTLINE
FOR OUR
TIME
TOGETHER
TODAY**

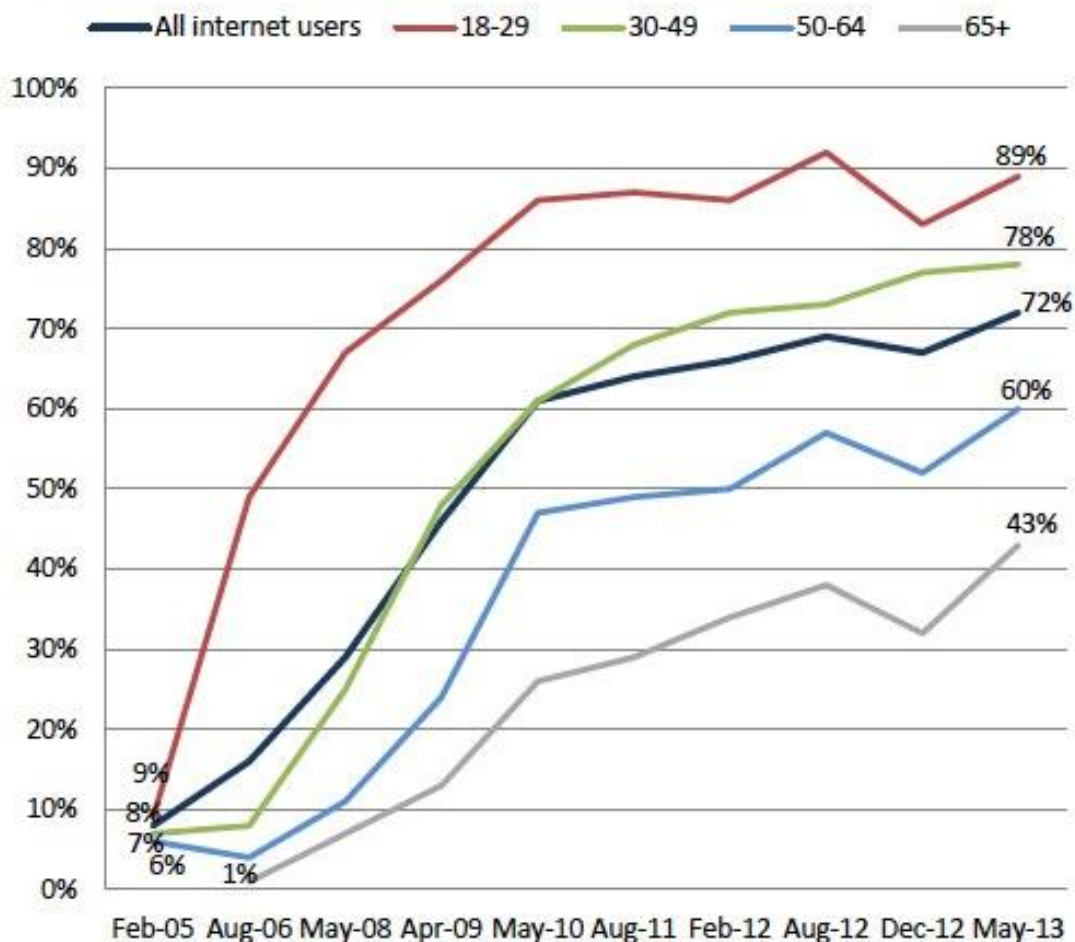
- Age range
- Social media/
networking sites
- Blogs
- Privacy settings

QUESTIONS FOR OUR AUDIENCE

Getting to know
you...getting to
know all about
you

Social networking site use by age group, 2005-2013

% of internet users in each age group who use social networking sites



Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project tracking surveys 2005-2013. Spring Tracking Survey, April 17 – May 19, 2013. N=1,895 adult internet users ages 18+. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. The margin of error for results based on all internet users is +/- 2.5 percentage points.

CCPA CODE OF ETHICS

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

- **Beneficence** - being proactive in promoting the client's best interests
- **Fidelity** - honouring commitments to clients and maintaining integrity in counselling relationship
- **Nonmaleficence** - not wilfully harming clients and refraining from actions that risk harm
- **Autonomy** - respecting the rights of clients to self-determination
- **Justice** - respecting the dignity and just treatment of all persons
- **Societal Interest** - respecting the need to be responsible to society

CCPA CODE OF ETHICS

- **A1. General Responsibility**
 - Counsellors maintain high standards of professional competence and ethical behaviour, and
- **A2. Respect for Rights**
 - Counsellors participate in only those practices which are respectful of the legal, civic, and moral rights of others, and act to safeguard the dignity and rights of their clients, students, and research participants.
- **A11. Extension of Ethical Responsibilities**
 - Counselling services and products provided by counsellors through classroom instruction, public lectures, demonstrations, publications, radio and television programs, computer technology and other media must meet the appropriate ethical standards consistent with this Code of Ethics.
- **B1. Primary Responsibility**
 - Counsellors have a primary responsibility to respect the integrity and promote the welfare of their clients.
- **B2. Confidentiality**
 - Counselling relationships and information resulting therefrom are kept confidential.



HOW DOES OUR CODE OF ETHICS APPLY TO..

Email
Facebook
Google+
LinkedIn
YouTube
Twitter
Pinterest
Instagram
Blogs
Yelp Reviews
And MORE!

**WHAT ARE THE
CHALLENGES OF USING
SOCIAL MEDIA?**

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN F2F & SOCIAL MEDIA

- Persistence
- Searchability
- Replicability
- Scalability

Online information is easy to find and possibly misinterpret

Boyd, 2007 & 2010 & Fang, et. al. 2014

‘Adapting to the new culture wisely will necessarily involve both **understanding the ethical principles** themselves as well as **developing competence in the technology** of the burgeoning digital culture.’

(Lannin & Scott, 2013)

EMAIL – THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

- How are we using email with clients?
 - Information
 - Psycho-education
 - Counselling
- What do we tell them about confidentiality in emails and is that enough?
- Where is it easy to get complacent about emailing clients?
- What we can do to be more intentional in our use of email?
- What about emails becoming part of the client record?

WHY CAN'T WE BE FRIENDS?

- Blurred boundaries between professional and personal lives
- Potential in breaching confidentiality
- Inappropriate posting behaviours
- Internet arguments
- The personal is public

SCENARIO #1

You have a Facebook page designed for your professional practice. You notice that one of the followers is a current client. They post many comments that identify themselves as your client. How would you handle this?

SCENARIO #2

On your blog, which is widely accessible, you share your love of birds. Shortly after a piece that you have written about mindfulness and bird watching, you receive a book on birds from a client. What do you do?

Questions to Ask Yourself Before Posting

- What are the costs and benefits of posting the information?
- Is there a high probability that clients will be significantly and negatively affected?
- How will the disclosure affect my relationship with my clients?
- Does the disclosure threaten my credibility or undermine the public's trust in the field of counseling?

**To Google or
Not to Google?**

SCENARIO #3

You have a new client who tells you a story about a traumatic event they experienced and that was in the news about 5 years ago. They don't tell you a lot of details and indicate that this is the issue they want to work on in therapy. Before the next session you are tempted to "Google" the news story to find out more details. What informs your decision and what do you decide to do? Give the pros and cons.

**WHAT IF YOU'RE THE
ONE BEING "GOOGLED"**

A PRAGMATIC FRAMEWORK FOR GOOGLING

- Why do I want to conduct this search?
- Would my search advance or compromise the treatment?
- Should I obtain informed consent from the client prior to searching?
- Should I share the results of the search with the client?
- Should I document the findings of my search in the client's record?
- How do I monitor my motivations and the ongoing risk-benefit profile of searching?

Clinton, et. al. 2010

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY STATEMENT EXAMPLE

- **SOCIAL NETWORKING AND INTERNET SEARCHES:** At times I may conduct a web search on clients before the beginning of therapy or during therapy. If you have concerns or questions regarding this practice, please discuss it with me. I do not accept friend requests from current or former clients on my psychotherapy related profiles on social networking sites due to the fact that these sites can compromise clients' confidentiality and privacy. For the same reason, I request that clients do not communicate with me via any interactive or social networking websites.

Taken from Zur Institute (2014)

TIPS FROM DR. KOLMES

- Keep your tweets/posts/etc. to matters like: psychoeducation, health news, or the work of your colleagues
- Avoid multiple roles – not connecting to your clients on social media can be a quick and easy way to avoid getting into a “sticky” multiple role situation
- Use a separate email address for your social media account(s) than the one you use to correspond with clients
- Do not ask clients for testimonials or reviews
- Make “Googling” an informed consent issue

THANK YOU!

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