# Technology to Enhance Your Career Services

Edited by  Roberta Neault, PhD., CCC, RRP

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**ENET**
Education and Networking
for Rehabilitation and Career Practitioners

Communicate · Connect · Grow your Career

## Acknowledgements

## About the Editor

**Dr. Roberta Neault** served as Co-Executive Coordinator of ENET (2006 – 2009) and is President of Life Strategies Ltd., a company which specializes in psychometric assessment, training career management professionals, and providing coaching and professional development services for individuals and organizations. Both Life Strategies and ENET rely heavily on technology to connect effectively with members, clients, and colleagues; work efficiently and cost-effectively; and stay on top of trends within a rapidly changing global economy.

## About the Contributors

*Keith Keller* is the Founder and Principal Career Coach of Career Journeys Australia and a presenter of the weekly BLOG TALK RADIO show on Career Communique Radio. You can join Keith live every Monday morning (Melbourne time) at www.blogtalkradio.com/careercommunique. Keith holds a Graduate Certificate in Career Education and Development from RMIT University in Melbourne and is a professional member of the Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA). Focusing on Career Transition and Work/Life Balance, Keith has developed powerful strategies to encourage his clients to explore their hidden potential and to find more satisfying work.

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*Deirdre Pickerell* has close to 15 years experience as an educator, manager, and career management professional. She has made significant differences within the field of career development – locally, nationally, and internationally – through innovative program design, leading-edge education for career practitioners, inspiring facilitation and career coaching, and selfless leadership and mentoring throughout the sector. With a background in both career development and human resources management, Deirdre is working to create a stronger bridge between the career management and HR sectors. She is passionate about fully integrating career management principles within an organization's HR strategy. Effective recruitment, retention, and engagement are all linked to the same core principle – the importance of a good career fit – getting the right people into the right jobs at the right time. In recognition of her work, Deirdre was honoured with a 2006 Award of Excellence, presented by the BC Human Resources Management Association.

**Tina Strehlke** has more than 7 years of experience in the Career Management field. She has worked as a Career Practitioner and Program Manager and is currently the Communications Director for Training Innovations Inc. Tina recently completed a Master's in Professional Communications at Royal Roads University. The focus of her research was exploring how social network sites like Facebook and LinkedIn are changing the job search experience for individuals. As part of her studies she identified practical strategies to help practitioners update their counselling approach and engage clients in conversation about privacy issues, negotiating public/private boundaries on the Web, self-presentation, and applying networking best practices to social networking sites.

**Michael Yue** is a Project Coordinator at the Vancouver Community College and has 18 years of experience in adult education and career development. He has an M.Ed. from the University of British Columbia and a B.A. from the University of Toronto. Michael has presented at variety of conferences/workshops on the topics of Web 2.0 and career development. Further, he has assisted many career practitioners in using Web 2.0 tools in their work. Michael currently serves on the ENET Board as the Vice President of Education and Professional Development.

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## Introduction

In September 2008, ENET brought together Career Practitioners who work in diverse settings for a panel presentation on using technology to enhance career services. The presentation touched on the fears and risks which many have around the use of technology (e.g., privacy, confidentiality, and liability issues). It also discussed the numerous benefits to be had through safe and responsible use of technology (e.g., linking individuals/communities from around the world, reaching out to the younger generation, and providing fast/efficient service delivery).

The presentation was full of practical examples and strategies on how to incorporate technology into your services. Participants discovered the benefits of social networking sites like Facebook, were introduced to interactive media such as "wiki," learned how to blog with an interactive demonstration, and discussed the development of career identity in online spaces.

The goal of this journal is to break down the barriers and show readers just what technology can do for you, your clients, and your organizations.

# The Benefits of e-Learning
## Contributed by Deirdre Pickerell

*In the information society, lifelong learning has become the rule...*
*Better professional training would enhance worker employability and*
*upgrade the general skill level of the workforce…*
~Committee on Economic Affairs and Development

In this economy there is a pressing need for employees to keep their skills up to date through continuous learning. Even though most Canadians understand the value of lifelong learning for their career success, some concerns still exist.

- How can I fit learning into my busy schedule?
- What if the course/program I need isn't available nearby?
- How much does it cost?
- How long will it take to complete?

e-Learning is a viable option for learners, instructors, and employers to overcome some of these issues. It is a flexible alternative that opens up educational opportunities for anybody, anywhere, and at anytime. It is also an affordable choice as it promotes good stewardship of limited resources – it facilitates efficient scheduling of instructors, ease of class size expansion or collapse, and integration of learning within the learners' and instructors' schedules.

In the sections below, I'll present a summary of the e-learning discussions at the *ENET Technology to Your Enhance Career Services training day* held September 10th, 2008.

## What is e-Learning?

Electronic learning, or e-learning as it's more often referred to, is "the process of learning online, especially via the Internet and email" (Webster's New Millennium™ Dictionary of English[1]). It's a flexible educational option used in a variety of settings (e.g., universities, colleges, government, businesses). e-Learning is usually more than the direct transfer of face-to-face curriculum onto the Internet (i.e., curriculum should be specifically designed or revised to suit online delivery).

## How Could You Use It?

e-learning could be used to acquire knowledge and skills on almost any topic. From courses on how to use computers more effectively to Masters degrees, there is a plethora of learning available via the Internet.

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[1] http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/e-learning

**What Concerns Do You Have?**

*Many fear that electronic communication may be less rich in social cues
and, therefore, dehumanize organizations.*
~Gerardine DeSanctis

Even those who are open to using technology may still have some reservations about using e-learning due to its less "personable" nature. In face-to-face conversations, one has access to social cues from tone of voice, gestures, and mannerisms. It's been suggested that these cues may not be as readily available within online interactions. Additionally there is a worry that, as more and more interactions are taken online, face-to-face communications will become a thing of the past.

Addressing concerns about limitations of computer-based interactions, researchers from as early as 1995[2] have compared text-based media (e.g. email, computer conferences) to telephone and face-to-face conversations and confirmed that computer-mediated communication (CMC) users rated the text-based media "as rich or richer" than both telephone and face-to-face conversations. Considering how much more interactive computer-based communication is now than it was almost 15 years ago, it has become even richer during the intervening years.

At the September 10, 2008 ENET Training Day, however, participants identified current concerns over using an e-learning format including technology challenges, privacy, confidentiality, and creating norms in an online workshop.

Technology-related challenges such as computer errors, loss of power, and document incompatibility are all issues that can affect e-learning programs. Many challenges can be reduced by researching the system requirements each e-learning provider has in place (e.g., specific e-learning system being used and its compatibility with individual computers, security features, and document formats). Ask the education provider what technical support they provide both during and after office hours. At Life Strategies Ltd., we have compiled a lengthy list of potential problems and solutions as well as tips for moving around our e-learning system in a *Technical Tips and Tricks Guide* which is available to all students. We also have a tech support e-mail and discussion forum so that students have several venues to ask tech-related questions. Finally, we have a *LearnOnline Readiness Quiz* which gives prospective students a chance to see whether or not they are really ready for e-learning.

Issues related to loss of Internet service or power outages can't be avoided and will certainly affect a student's ability to participate in a particular moment in time. Loss of Internet or a server crash at the host location (i.e., education provider) is unlikely but can happen. These sites are monitored 24-hours a day, 7 days a

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[2] Walther, as cited by Wong-Wylie and Cleveland-Innes

week and any loss of access doesn't (and shouldn't) last long. Loss of access to the Internet can also happen at the student's location, both home and office. The benefit to e-learning is that a student can always log in after Internet access has been restored without really missing any class time; unlike face-to-face classes that may have to be rescheduled if, for some reason, the classroom became inaccessible.

Another concern that was raised concerned people who were new to online learning and how much support they will need (or additional time spent online) to get used to the program. Although there is a learning curve, as with anything, students are often surprised by how quickly they get used to the online learning environment when the appropriate supports are present; you definitely don't need to be a "techie" to learn online.

Participants in the ENET training day also raised concerns about privacy and confidentiality (i.e., What type of information will be available online? How secure is the information on the e-learning site? Who has access to the information posted online?). When researching educational providers students should be sure to identify how their information is stored and who has access to it. Look for e-learning providers that have a password protected system – only registered students can access the information being discussed. As with face-to-face discussions, a general rule is to not provide any information that you aren't comfortable sharing. No matter how a discussion happens there are truly no guarantees whether or not that information is repeated – use your common sense in determining what to share.

One last concern identified by training day participants was creating norms in the workshop. In face-to-face learning formants, the way students conduct themselves during live lectures and discussions is largely in response to the norms set up by the instructor and students. Creating norms within an e-learning class can be done through establishing guidelines for appropriate posts.

**What Benefits Does e-Learning Bring?**

When asked what benefits e-learning offers, here is what our training day attendees identified:
- Reach more people
- Easily accessible
- Easy to update content of workshop materials
- Data management
- Low cost
- Saves you time
- Allows for document and information sharing
- Eliminates some time spent on searching/researching and identifying sources.

Beyond these benefits, e-learning offers specific benefits to the learners, instructions, and employers.

*For Learners*
Regardless of student location or schedule, e-learning offer the opportunity to access high quality training, talented instructors, diverse co-learners, and specialized topics/certificates that may have otherwise been unavailable. Since e-learning allows students to spread their course participation throughout the day/week it is sensitive to issues such as role conflict and work-life balance.

e-Learners also have the opportunity to develop skills beyond the course content. e-Learning can assist in the development of *Essential Skills* (reading text, document use, writing, working with others, thinking skills, and computer use. This means that as you are learning about one topic (e.g., program evaluation) you are concurrently developing the foundational skills that every employer is looking for. To learn more about *Essential Skills* go to http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/home_e.shtml.

*For Instructors*
As an instructor, you may find it hard to fit all the classes you'd like to teach into your schedule. You may also be limited to teaching opportunities with educational institutions that are close by. With e-learning instructors are able to
- Teach multiple courses concurrently
- Guest lecture without leaving home
- Promote increased student diversity that can't be replicated with the face-to-face format (i.e., students from diverse geographical locations can work together within the same course)

*For Employers*
e-Learning is a great option for employers seeking to incorporate professional development into the workplace. It is an affordable option that allows employers to stretch their limited training dollars and overcome the need for designated training space. e-Learning also links students/facilitators from remote locations and allows employers to coordinate small groups from multi-worksite locations. Lastly, e-learning offers the flexibility to accommodate time zones and hectic travel schedules.

**What Supports Do You Need To Implement It?**

Having technical supports in place is essential to the functionality and success of e-learning programs. If the online learning site is not easy to use and too many issues arise, nobody is going to want to take the program. Dealing with any student issues promptly and accurately is paramount. Also, having students, staff, and instructors trained through online orientations or specific training courses will assist in the smooth running of the courses and/or program.

e-Learning programs also need to have the support of the organization providing the training. Those who are offering the service really need to believe in the program and the technology. Students also need to see the benefits of e-learning in order to buy into the program. Using student testimonials and simulations/trial runs of the courses may help stimulate organizational and student support.

**Resources and/or Tools**

- Benefits to on-line learning:
    - www.worldwidelearn.com/education-articles/benefits-of-online-learning.htm
    - www.worldwidelearn.com/elearning-essentials/elearning-benefits.htm
- E-learning Systems:
    - www.moodle.com
    - www.blackboard.com

**Example(s)**

- Career Management Professional Program (CMPP) of Life Strategies Ltd.
    - http://lifestrategies.ca/training.cfm
- Master of Education in Counselling Psychology (focus: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselling) of the University of British Columbia (UBC)
    - http://www.eplt.educ.ubc.ca/grad/mvrc.htm
- Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology – Athabasca University
    - http://www.gcap.ca/
- Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology of Yorkville University
    - http://www.yorkvilleu.ca/programs/faculty-of-behavioural-sciences/master-of-arts-in-counselling-psychology/

# Social Network Sites – What Career Practitioners Need to Know
**Contributed by Tina Strehlke**

In recent years, social network sites like MySpace, Facebook and LinkedIn have exploded in number and popularity. Social network sites (SNS) enable registered users to create and display personal connections within a bounded system on the Web. These services encourage users to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships online. Although many of these services make a distinction between social and professional networks, both have an impact on job seekers. This is because media use is socially constructed; it is defined and redefined according to its use (Haythornthwaite, 2002). For example, it has been reported that employers are using social network sites to recruit and evaluate candidates. Therefore, even if individuals choose not to use "social" network sites for career related purposes, it is possible that personal content available on the Web can lead to new employment or lost opportunities because of the employer's use.

Although most career development practitioners in Canada encourage networking as a job search strategy, the emergence of social network sites and their increasing popularity with users suggests that practitioners must update their knowledge and approach. Social network sites have attracted millions of users and are changing the way individuals establish and maintain their interpersonal relationships. Because of this, we must consider how technical connections and relationships factor into job search strategies. This article will highlight some of the ways that social network sites are impacting the job search reality clients, and will offer some strategies for integrating this knowledge into our practice.

## SNS Users – Who Are They?

As career practitioners, we might assume that the majority of SNS users are members of the tech-savvy Millennial generation. However a quick scan of user data suggests otherwise. Facebook currently boasts 117 million users worldwide (www.Facebook.com). In Canada, nearly 13 million people use Facebook, which represents 39.7 percent of the population (Elliss, 2008). Of those users, nearly one third are between the ages of 35 and 49. Another 18 percent are over the age of 50. Thus in Canada, nearly half of all Facebook users are over the age of 30. This suggests that the impact of SNS technology is something that concerns many of our clients. It also suggests that conversations about the use of social network sites should be integrated into everyday career services – not only with specialty services for youth clients.

## Online Visibility & Privacy Concerns

Social network sites have the potential to increase user visibility. This is because SNSs enable registered users to display personal information and relationship

connections on the Web. As career practitioners, we know that employers already use search engines like Google to research prospective candidates. However with the increased user visibility afforded by SNSs, employers and recruiters are starting to use social network sites to find and research potential candidates. From a career development perspective, this presents a problem. Participation in SNSs can offer job seekers new opportunities to promote themselves, establish contacts, and market their skills to other users. Yet, having personal information available on the Web raises concerns about privacy.

To help clients establish comfortable boundaries, career practitioners need to understand how social network sites blur the boundaries between public and private. Many users assume that their information is only viewed by their close contacts and that social network sites are a safe space for interaction (Barnes, 2006). While SNSs appear secure, much of the content posted by users is available to others through user connections and the site's search tools. This is due in part to the structure and functionality of the sites.

Most SNSs make no distinction between close relationships and casual acquaintances, and there is limited ability to segregate or categorize one's connections. In addition, connections are reciprocal, which means that information shared between two contacts is potentially visible to other members of their networks. Depending on the site, search tools can generate considerable information for other users. In part, this exposure can be managed with security settings. However the site's features and policies must also be considered. Default or opt-out privacy settings, in addition to the site's Terms of Use (which may include sharing information with third parties), also influence public exposure (Electronic Privacy Information Centre website, April 18, 2008).

One way that career practitioners can update their approach is by integrating questions about SNS participation into their counselling conversations with clients. By exploring an individual's participation on these sites, the practitioner can begin to assess the individual's awareness of employer use and privacy issues as they relate to SNSs and job search. Through conversation, the counsellor can play a role in identifying the client's perspective and assess the client's ability to establish a comfortable personal boundary between his or her online and offline worlds. The practitioner should also gain a better understanding of the individual's computer literacy. Some questions that could be used as part of the job search assessment and preparation process include:

- Are you an active user of social network sites? Have you used them in the past?
- What social network sites do you currently use? How often do you log on?
- Do you use privacy settings on your account? Why or why not?
- Have you heard of employers in your industry checking out applicants on SNSs?

- If a prospective employer were to take a look at your SNS profile – how would you feel? Do you think it would help or hinder your chances of being hired?
- Is there anything on your profile that you would prefer to keep private? Why or why not?
- How do you stay up to date on the features and tools of your SNS?

**Online Profiles & Self-Presentation**

As part of the registration process, social network site users create and publish a profile that may include: personal information (e.g., name, gender, age, and occupation), contact information, pictures, interests, activities, hobbies, preferences, skills, career goals, affiliations, and memberships. The visibility of a user's profile varies by site. Some offer privacy settings so that the user can choose whether they want their profile public or not. Others make profiles visible to anyone, and allow search engines to crawl their sites. Some sites allow only contacts in the user's network to see their profile.

For job seekers that want to integrate their use of social network sites as a job search tool, development of a personal profile is a key consideration. In many ways it is like developing a resume or career portfolio. Practitioners can help these clients by discussing online presentation and helping individuals identify strategies to manage their online image while looking for work. This might involve a strategy to "professionalize" the individual's profile and align it with his or her resume. Or it might involve using more restrictive privacy settings to reduce the individual's online exposure. These decisions will likely depend on other factors such as the client's comfort with online publicity, the type of information posted online, and the value of an online presence for the client's targeted occupation. Some questions that could be included as part of this process include:

- How often do you update your profile?
- Does your profile already include information about your skills, education, work experience, or career goals? Is the information consistent with your other job search tools (e.g., resume)?
- What are the benefits of "professionalizing" your portfolio? What are the disadvantages?
- What skills and accomplishments would you like to include in your profile? How can you present them effectively online?
- Is there anything in your profile or in your communication with others that could be misinterpreted by an employer? Do you see a way to minimize that risk?

**Conclusion**

Contemporary career research suggests that using personal contacts to enhance career opportunity is becoming more, not less important for an individual's

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success (Arthur, 1994). Globalization, economic policy changes, flexible labour practices, and advances in information technology have contributed to increased employment flexibility over the past 30 years. The result is a reduction in long-term employment and an increase in work that spans multiple employers, represents multi-directional career paths, and is more rooted in smaller firms or self-employment. This changing career context has been referred to as a "boundaryless" career and signifies "independence from, rather than dependence on, traditional organizational career principles" (Arthur, 1994, p. 296). In this changing career context individuals are responsible for their own career development and the ability to develop relationships and to network with others is a critical.

As social media continues to evolve, we can expect that individuals will increasingly use technology to initiate, establish, and maintain personal relationships. This creates new opportunities and challenges for job seekers and career practitioners. Career professionals need to stay current with technology changes so that they can continue to provide relevant information and support to their clients. In the same way that we have taught clients to make contact with others by "cold calling" – so too must we learn to help our clients reach out to potential employers and connections using social network sites. It is clear that the career impact of social network sites is still emerging. As job seekers and employers continue to adapt their use of social media, career practitioners will need to respond with new techniques and approaches. Our challenge will be to develop new expertise so that we can adapt traditional networking and job search methods to the brave new world of social media.

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# Knowledge Base 2.0 – Career Development Practitioners in Collaboration

**Contributed by Michael Yue**

Technology is only meaningful when we embrace the value behind it. I will talk about "wikis," but what is more important is the value of collaboration and sharing that wikis are all about. I want to drive the point that career practitioners have a lot to contribute to the collective knowledge base of our profession. Using collaborative technology should be a regular part of our work.

Thomas Friedman, in his book "The World is Flat," talks about a world in which knowledge is no longer monopolized, a world in which the playing field is levelled because knowledge is available to any nation and any individual, due to changes in business, industry, and most importantly, technology.

The 10 flatteners that Thomas Friedman refers to are mostly technologically based, all in the wider context of the World Wide Web. Friedman calls our era Globalization 3.0. This is the age in which individuals are able to collaborate using web-based tools, even if they are thousands of kilometres away from one another. We are moving from "vertical value creation" to "horizontal value creation."

Collaboration is a structured, recursive process where two or more people work together toward a common goal, typically an intellectual endeavour that is creative in nature, by sharing knowledge, learning, and building consensus.

For collaboration to happen, I think there are two crucial premises. First, we have to believe that we are in a position to contribute our knowledge. Second, we have to believe that in the process of knowledge sharing and consensus building, we are on equal terms. The end result is that we are engaged in an open process of equal exchange, leading towards a collective set of outcomes.

The idea and practice of open source began in the world of software development. The idea and practice have now been adopted by educators in making educational knowledge open to all. MIT, for example, has created Open Courseware to make the knowledge of the university available to those outside of the institution. Here in British Columbia, we also have our version of Open Courseware through Capilano University. Can we, as career practitioners, envision the same kind of development in our field?

MIT Open Courseware
http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/web/home/home/index.htm

Capilano University Open Courseware
http://ocw.capcollege.bc.ca/about

I want to encourage practitioners to step out of their boundaries and share their practice and knowledge with one another. But this sharing should go beyond the old way of just posting "finished products" of knowledge. Instead, we should engage collectively in the process of producing new knowledge. Taking this step will turn ourselves from "consumers of knowledge" into "producers of knowledge."

One of the most successful and well-known examples of a collaborative process of knowledge production is Wikipedia (http://www.wikipedia.org). Through a special platform, called wiki, that facilitates collaboration, hundreds of thousands of "experts" around the world are able to work together to improve on one another's contributions to a specific piece of knowledge.

View this YouTube video to get a basic understanding of how a wiki functions: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dnL00TdmLY. Essentially, a wiki is an open platform, designed to let its users contribute collectively to the final product, whether it be a website, book, article, report, plan, etc. To run wikis, one can use either web-based services hosted on external servers or install wiki applications on an internal server. For most users who don't want to deal with server issues, a web-based wiki service is the best option. However, for users who want to have secure ownership of their wikis, downloading and installing wiki applications in their own servers is the way to go.

Once wikis are created, the owners have access to functions which allow them to control who can make changes on the wikis. They can opt to keep the wikis fully open or, due to concerns with security or confidentiality, they may opt to install the applications in their own servers.

Wikispaces is a reputable web-based wiki service (http://www.wikispaces.com). With a free account, a Wikispaces user can create many wikis. Contributions to Wikispaces are licensed under a Creative Commons (CC) Attribution Share-Alike 2.0 License. A CC license of this level means that users are free to share (copy, distribute and transmit the work) and remix (adapt the work) under conditions stated in the license. CC licenses are designed to allow for open sharing and collaborative creation of knowledge.

Follow this link to learn more about CC licenses:
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0

There is more about CC on Wikipedia:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_Commons

Wikispaces has become very popular among educators, and many innovative educational projects have been implemented on Wikispaces. These projects were all based on collaboration between the users, whether they be students or teachers. A famous project is The Flat Classroom, which brings students from schools in different countries to learn collaboratively.

### How Do You Use Them?

Wikis can be used for any projects that are based on collaboration and sharing. Career practitioners can use wikis to get their clients to collaborate with one another. More crucially, practitioners can use wikis to collaborate with one another in mutual enhancement and collective knowledge development.

### What Concerns Do You Have?

Since wiki projects are collaborative in nature, active participation by all users is crucial. However, as much as wikis are designed to be as user-friendly as possible, there is still a learning curve for most users.

Many users are still sceptical of the value of wikis, maintaining the feeling that good knowledge is not likely coming from group efforts. They also fear that there may be sabotage of the process.

### What Benefits Do They Bring?

Organizations and practitioners who overcome the learning curve and scepticism, and successfully implement wiki projects will see a tremendous improvement in productivity, as staff members are now able to work more closely as a team and bring together everyone's strengths to result in higher-quality work.

### What Supports Do You Need To Implement Them?

For those who want to install a wiki application, you will need the right server setup and a good technician to support your operation. If you choose to have your wiki hosted by a web-based service, be prepared that you will receive varying degrees of technical support depending on what level of subscription you have.

A successful wiki project relies on the following key factors:

    (1) Buy-in by colleagues (especially management)
    (2) Time set aside for training and learning by staff (especially the key users)
    (3) Clear objectives and time frame for the project
    (4) Clear expectations and responsibilities of wiki users

### Resources and Tools

For a comparison of available wikis see **Wikipedia**
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_wiki_software

Here are a few reputable wikis for your consideration.

**(1) Web-based Wiki Services**
Wikispaces (http://www.wikispaces.com)
PBWiki (http://pbwiki.com)
**(2) Wiki Applications Installed in Servers**
MediaWiki (http://www.mediawiki.org)

**Examples**

I am still searching for good examples from our field, but here are a few from other fields.

Educational Wikis
http://educationalwikis.wikispaces.com

Wikis in Education
http://wikiineducation.wetpaint.com

Library Success
http://www.libsuccess.org

## Compiled by Peri Clark

**How has technology impacted your work as a practitioner (e.g. blogs, Facebook, 2nd Life or MSN/Skype video-conferencing)?**

There was a mixed response to this question. Some of the participants felt that applications such as Skype/MSN and video-conferencing were not only useful but invaluable and economical  for staying in contact with clients, co-workers and related agencies, while others felt that they were of no use at all . This being the case, the participants who acknowledged the usefulness of the said technology did indeed use them on a regular basis, while those who didn't find them of use, did not ever use them and did not understand the capacity in which they could be used.

**How is technology being utilized in other settings (e.g. education)?**

Staying in contact with students (online education and training), administering assessments, research, and maintaining records were some of the uses reported. Sometimes technology is abused and misused interrupting the curriculum and also hindering efficiency in performance.

**What are some fears and risks of using technology?**

The fears and risks seemed to revolve around understanding how to use the technology, feeling incompetent, lack of time, the feeling that work was duplicated online and with paper files, and the pressure to keep up with the constantly changing and emerging programs and devices. There was also mention of fear of lack of confidentiality (in the case of hackers, mis-addressing emails,  providing information etc.)

**What are some of the benefits of using technology?**

Benefits that were identified included:
- Increase in efficiency and time of correspondence.
- Wider scope of communication methods, and number of people that we are able to communicate with
- Access to research material and information

**Where are we now and where do we go from here?**

A point was also brought up concerning response time around emails, voice mails, etc. What was the norm for waiting to respond?  Some said that they were able to respond to emails on a daily basis – at the most 48 hours; others said they disliked responding by email and would prefer to speak directly via a phone call.  Almost all agreed that they had reached a saturation point in learning new

programs etc., and often employed the assistance of younger friends, children or more adept co-workers.

**How do we move to the next stage?**

The general consensus was that there was no way of avoiding the next stage. Rather we need to be prepared for an increased use of technology, set limitations and boundaries around it, and employ and/or access staff/family/co-workers who have the aptitude and time to deal with it, if we cannot handle it ourselves.

**What strategies and tools do we need?**

Besides the use of family/coworkers as stated above, there was recognition that most career practitioners would require more education in the use of technology. Additional suggestions to manage technology included:
- Providing clients with website links (instead of direct email addresses) to promote confidentiality
- Setting policy to guide response expectations
    - e.g., checking email within 24 hours; responding to non-urgent requests within 48 hours
    - Sending automatic response and receipt notifications (to inform recipients of expected waiting time, and to ensure that sent emails have been read)
    - Using encrypted emails such as "PrivacEmail" to avoid others being able to read confidential emails intended for specific recipients.

**How do we keep up with fast growth in technology, without losing track of the human nature of our service?**

Collectively, we can keep up with the constantly changing demands of technology, but our main objective in this field is client service. Most people want to have human contact, although it is not mandatory to provide all services in person.

Selective passion for levels of technology will affect our choices and expertise but it is important to realize that technology is here to stay. Staying informed, and keeping an open dialogue, is important to avoid losing the human aspect of our service

## Social Networking: What's all the Fuss About and What's in it for Career Practitioners?
## Contributed by Keith Keller[3]

Networking is not new; career practitioners have been doing it for years. As the experts will tell you, social networking is just the new spin, "old wine in new bottles" so to speak, with some new features that make it exciting and intoxicating – some would even say addictive!

While social networking will never completely replace a chat with a colleague over a cup of coffee (or a glass of wine) it can enable us to do our jobs better, create new links with fellow professionals, and tap into a far greater store of accumulated wisdom from the global career community.

**The Key Question Is: How Do We Respond?**

Do we completely ignore it as an insignificant time waster? (A common reaction.)
Do we become completely addicted and spend hours every day connecting with others in cyberspace? (Another common response, but not a very healthy one.)
Or do we do something in between, allowing some time each week to manage our social networking platforms? (A balanced response – possibly the most sensible option.)

There are so many social networking platforms now, but perhaps the best known are MySpace, Facebook, and LinkedIn. New ones are popping up all the time, including one that I found recently called Talent Bar, largely used by human resources professionals and recruiters.

So, which of these are worthy of further investigation and possibly joining?
The information in this article comes from my own personal adventure with social networking; I don't in any way claim to be an expert on the subject and I really want to encourage you to try the various sites for yourself.

I have met some fantastic colleagues in the global career community through my social networking experiments and have become so enthusiastic that I have now started what I now call the "Global Networking Project." This has been a wonderful social and educational experience for me, but most of all - it has been a lot of fun.

Of course, we can't spend all day chatting in cyberspace (as tempting as that may sound) so there is now a tendency to think about social networking as a

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[3] Keith Keller is a Career Coach from Australia who heard about this journal from an ENET member in Canada and graciously offered to contribute an article; an example of the global collaboration that is facilitated by technology!

business tool and increasingly we are taking the purely social component out of the process and trying to find ways to use it in our everyday work.

Robby White, owner of newly established Social Networking site **yworld.com.au** believes "*the most emerging trend from social networking is that it is losing the word social and becoming more business orientated… The future is about personalising your presence on the Internet and being accessible to your customers.*"

To begin exploring social networking sites, I would suggest that you first try the mega sites, namely Linked in and Facebook. Bill Gaffney, a Career Coach and networking aficionado from Dayton, Ohio, said in an article for his weekly job search column Ask Amaza,

*I am not saying LinkedIn is the greatest thing since sliced bread but it has become the default standard. I would also recommend being a member of Facebook. Even if you don't use it a lot it gives you "street cred."*

If you would like a complete copy of the article or have any other questions for Bill please email him at **wmgaffney@prodigy.net**.

To assist with your exploration, here are a few of the platforms that I use and the major differences between them. I have also listed my profiles so that you can take a look if you wish.

**LinkedIn**
This is far and away the most popular site for business networking. This prompted me to spend some time developing a basic profile, purely from the point of view of building an online presence. For those of you who work with professionals and executives, this is the site you will find them.
**www.linkedin.com**
**www.linkedin.com/in/keithkellercareercoach**

I have only my basic information here but if you would like to see a fully functioning profile I thoroughly recommend checking out the linkedin page of fellow career practitioner Annemarie Cross.
**www.linkedin.com/in/annemariecross**

**Facebook**
Facebook is now the preferred platform for general networking (especially amongst 25-34s) so I have set up a basic profile here. A lot of people that I know use Facebook exclusively or in combination with LinkedIn. This is a great place to start if your target audience is Gen Ys.
**www.facebook.com**
**http://www.facebook.com/people/Keith-Keller/680374491**

**Talent Bar**
This is one of the new kids on the block and my favourite hands down. It's fun, it's visual, it's quick, and it's easy to use. It is dedicated to the field of human resources and recruitment so I have been able to very quickly meet a lot of like-minded people.

I really recommend this site for career practitioners because there is a significant opportunity for resource sharing and strategic alliances both in Australia and internationally. For this reason I have now set up the *Global Career Coaching Alliance.*

**www.talentbar.com**
**www.talentbar.com/profile/KeithKeller**
**www.talentbar.com/group/globalcareercoachingalliance**

**MySpace**
This was one of the pioneers and I still have a soft spot for it. It probably has limited business application and is therefore not so popular. Bill Gaffney suggested recently that MySpace "got started as a social network primarily for teenagers; it has progressed some but really isn't the place people would do business networking."

That said, ComScore, a web measurement company, reported recently that MySpace had 114 million global visitors in July alone; Facebook by comparison had 52.2 million visitors.

I originally started my social networking adventure on MySpace because I had written a song called "Make a Difference Today" and someone suggested this would be a great platform for it. It all grew from there; I have met some great career coaches and like minds this way and I still connect with them from time to time

I now use MySpace purely as a networking tool and I have colleagues from all over the world, which for me is its own reward.
**www.myspace.com**
**www.myspace.com/careerjourneysaustralia**

**YAHOO! Groups – Career Coaches**
This is a version of social networking that is limited to a special interest group (SIG). There are well over 350 career coaches from all over the world in this network – USA, UK, Canada, Singapore, and of course Australia, just to name a few. I find it a wonderful source of inspiration and resources on a wide range of subjects.
**http://groups.yahoo.com/group/careercoaches**

If you are encouraged to dabble in any of the sites above, I'd love to hear your thoughts and feedback, please feel free to join me on any of my profiles, or contact me via the traditional methods if you prefer: **Phone 61 3 9772 1624,** or email **keith@careerjourneysaustralia.com.au**

**About the Author**

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Keith Keller is a Career Coach based in Melbourne specialising in Career Change and Work/Life Balance. In addition to contacting him on MySpace, Talent Bar, Linked In and Facebook you can also join Keith and co-host Annemarie Cross live each Monday morning on their internet radio show:
**www.blogtalkradio.com/careercommunique**

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