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**Electronic Communication  
and Social Media -  
the New Frontiers**

**“There’s (Quite Probably) an App for That”  
... or a Professional Advisory**

Email

**Ontario  
College of  
Teachers  
CAPSLE 2011**

# The College – Who We Are and What We do

## Ontario College of Teachers:

- Established in 1997 to license, govern and regulate the profession of teaching in Ontario
- Powers and duties are contained in the *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, the regulations under the Act and its bylaws
- Largest self-regulatory body in Ontario and Canada with over 230,000 members
- Teachers in Ontario's publicly funded elementary and secondary schools must be members of the College

# College's Duty as a Self-Regulator

- As a regulator, the College:
  - sets education, practice and ethical standards for the profession
  - licenses applicants and discipline members
- Powers must be exercised in the interest of the public, not the profession
- Professional advisories

# Professional Advisories

- Soft law
- Response to a need for clarity or precision
- Advisories serve both the public and professionals' interests

# Professional Advisories (cont'd)

- Help the professional understand:
  - particular aspect of professional practice
  - regulator's adjudicative activities, such as tribunal hearing
- Respond to the public's need to understand what professionals are (or are not) expected and/or obliged to do.

# Social Media and E-communication

- What are they?
- Software, web sites, applications, e-mail
- Users interact, create and exchange information online

# Social Media and E-communication – The Weird

- All chicken, all the time – “poultry in motion”
- Religion on the go
- All karaoke, all the time

# Social Media and E-communication – The Weird (cont'd)

- If I could talk to the animals... and they could talk back

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fbT0S15p7k&feature=relmfu>



# Why *this* Advisory and Why *Now*?

- Social media and e-communication affect *every* aspect of society
- Even the most mundane of tasks ...

# Why *this* Advisory and Why *Now*? (cont'd)

- ...are technology-based



# Why *this* Advisory and Why *Now*? (cont'd)

- Foreseeable strengths and weaknesses of e-communication and social media
- User-friendly...with a learning curve
- ....with some unanticipated downsides

# Why *this* Advisory and Why *Now*? (cont'd)

- ... and the ones you don't expect are like ...



# Why *this* Advisory and Why *Now*? (cont'd)

- Teachers face particular challenges:
  - numbers
  - generational privacy divide
  - societal position of teachers

# Demographics and Stats

-  – more than 500 million users worldwide, worth \$59.4 billion
-  witter – 100 million users, 65 million daily tweets
- 94 per cent of Canadians 15-24 years of age online
- Online presence for two-year-olds

# The New Social Media World



# Social Media / E-communication – Upsides

- Nearly effortless, costless and immediate connection to:
  - friends, family



# Social Media / E-communication

## – Upsides (cont'd)

- You can also keep in contact with
  - particular groups of people
  - the rest of the world

# Social Media / E-communication

## – Upsides (cont'd)

- Level playing field so everyone can play
- Cheap entertainment



# Social Media / E-communication

## – Upsides (cont'd)

- Dave Carroll vs. United Airlines
- “United Breaks Guitars” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YGc4zOqozo>



# Social Media / E-communication

## – Upsides (cont'd)

- How much is a guitar worth?
- \$180 million and the world is your customer base

# Social Media / E-communication

## – Upsides (cont'd)

- Transparency
  - TTC
  - G-20

# Social Media / E-communication

## – Upsides (cont'd)

- Impact on journalism and how news is reported
- Immediacy
- Readership is the **WHOLE WORLD!**

# Social Media / E-communication

## – Downsides

- Newton's 3<sup>rd</sup> law of physics: “For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction”
- Immediate and nearly effortless, limitless and costless access...to *everything* social media has to offer

# Social Media / E-communication – Unexpected Downsides

- Environmentalists 1 – Chevy 0

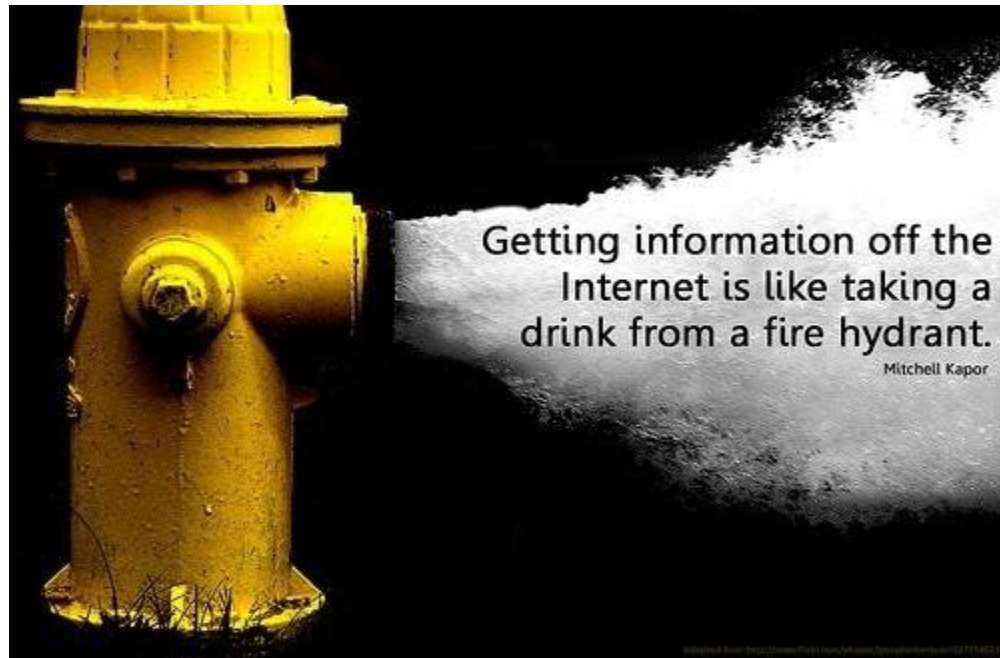
[http://news.cnet.com/1606-2\\_3-6056633.html?tag=mncol;txt](http://news.cnet.com/1606-2_3-6056633.html?tag=mncol;txt)

# The Bad – The “As”

- Accuracy – is David Beckham a Chinese goalkeeper in the 18<sup>th</sup> century?
- Addiction – help is only a click away
- Address – “Yo what up” – lingo and informality

# The Bad – More “As”

- Amount of information



# The Bad – More “As” (cont’d)

- Anonymity & anger –
  - \$#!&, my father says...

# Privacy Issues

- Is privacy “an analog concept in a digital age”?
- If we “chose” to share, have we relinquished privacy?

# Adults Online and Privacy

- What do we understand about privacy in a social media world?
  - OK as long as no financial information is posted?
  - Low risk outweighed by benefits?
  - Social media sites protect our information?

# Kids Online and Privacy



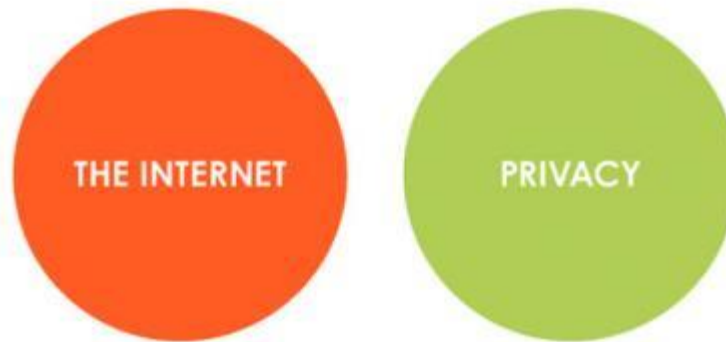
# Kids Online and Privacy

- the great generational divide
- reveal highly personal information
- more likely to disclose when there's an entry field and disclosure is tied to benefits
- influenced by site designs

# Privacy – Loss and Risks

- How is privacy lost?
  - Beware of “geeks bearing gifts” – data mining
  - Social media site telemarketing – the new normal

# Privacy – Risks and Loss (cont'd)



**A HELPFUL VENN DIAGRAM**

# Privacy – Risks and Loss (cont'd)

- Photos
  - GPS
  - Repurposing
  - Misappropriation

# Privacy – Loss and Risks (cont'd)

- Permanence - How do you get rid of that drunken photo or rant?
- Lost job, lost scholarship, lost...[fill in the blank]
- Civil actions, criminal charges

# Privacy Loss – The Dark Side

- Cyber-crime
  - Cyber-bullying
  - Cyber-stalking
  - Hate crimes
  - Child pornography

# Privacy Loss – The Dark Side (cont'd)

- Legislative responses
- Luring and the Supreme Court of Canada:  
*R v. Legare*

# Why *this* Advisory and Why *Now*? Teachers in Society

- Teachers' position in society relative to students
- Supreme Court of Canada teacher trilogy of cases
- Off-duty conduct matters

# Why *this* Advisory and Why *Now*?

## Teachers in Society (cont'd)

- Erosion of formality and casual tone
- Immediate and available 24/7
- Privacy and permanence
- “Come to room 218 after school to discuss...homework” vs. “C u 3.45 my room”

# Why *This* Advisory and Why *Now*?

- Increase in discipline complaints
- Serious professional consequences

# Professional Advice

- Exercise caution
- Important questions to ask yourself

# Professional Advice (cont'd)

- How does your online presence reflect your professionalism and your profession?
- Conduct yourself in social media as you would in person.

# Questions? [“?”s?”]

