

# Electronic Communications: Ramifications of Social Networking

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## A. What is Electronic Communications?

1. Email
2. Internet Access
3. Text Messages
4. Social Networking (Facebook, Twitter)
5. How to stay safe...

## 1. Email

- Great for Communication
- Employer owns system – they control it!
  - Access to your messages!
  - No right to Privacy (FOIL)/Monitoring
- Forwarding issues - privacy
- Remote Access – extends concern
- Handheld devices
  - iPhones
  - PDA's

## The Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA)/Stored Communications Act(SCA) 1986

- Grants employers broad rights, email is not private and the employer retains right to review them

## The Nature of the Message

### Never:

- Send or receive jokes on a work computer.
- Conduct "for profit" business on a work computer.
- Gossip about fellow personnel on a work computer.
- Never:
  - discuss student records over e-mail, especially those with IEP's.
  - engage in personal conversations with students over e-mail.

## Nature of the Message

### Avoid:

- Avoid:
  - in-depth conversations regarding pedagogical methods over e-mail.
- Never engage in critical or evaluative conversations with supervisors over e-mail.
- Don't give out your personal email address to students
- Don't use your school email for personal or union business

## Responding to Student/Parent Inquiries

- If a parent or patient e-mails with questions or comments, reply by acknowledging receipt of the message and indicate your availability for telephone and/or personal meetings.



## Responding to Student Inquiries

- Have a public written policy that administration supports regarding homework and project assistance over e-mail.
- Educational Setting: Never give assistance to one student in a manner that is not available to all of your students.

## Contact with Supervisors

- Use E-mail:
  - to schedule meetings.
  - to confirm deadlines.

\*When you receive critical comments, acknowledge receipt and schedule a meeting.

## Unions Should not use Work Computers...

- for discussing negotiations strategies.
- for discussing grievance matters.
- for any communication that is supposed to be confidential.

## Rule of Thumb: "Green Eggs & Ham Test"

- Consider before sending to multiple audiences:
  - Would you like it in the press?
  - Would you like it on a colleague's desk?
  - Would you like it in the Boss's hand?
  - Would you read it on the witness stand?
- If NO to any of these, then...
  - **DO NOT SEND IT, SAM I AM**

## 2. Internet Access

- Accessing your remote email (web mail)
- Visiting Websites
- Logging may be occurring
- Browser Cache
- Employer may know where you have been, what you have been doing.

### 3. Text messaging and IM's

- Texting is a fast and easy way to communicate.
- Seen as a very informal, personal medium
- IM's provide instant communication with parents, students, patients and colleagues.
- Not necessarily private - Texts can be subpoenaed and released by providers
- Law enforcement has access



### What to Remember about Text Messaging and IM's

- **Don't do it with students - EVER!!!**
- Remember that as a mandated reporter you should be alert and inform appropriate authorities if you are made aware of "sexting" by students.

### YouTube Examples

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1ZJ6TUrNHQ&feature=related>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgpH\\_24vSZ4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgpH_24vSZ4)

### 4. Social Networking

- Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, etc....
- Be careful
  - It's not only what you post, but what your network of friends posts
- Twitter
  - You may have followers you don't know
  - Flickr

### How are Online Social Networks different from face-to-face Networks?

1. Persistence – Recorded for posterity
2. Searchability – Find by who, what, etc.
3. Replicability – Cut and paste, duplicate
4. Invisible Audience – Don't know who is "eavesdropping"

**No such thing as 'private'**

### Schenectady City school board member XXXXXXXX allegedly drinks alcohol off an ice block



A photo on Facebook apparently shows XXXXXX, a XXXXX Elementary teacher and wife of Schenectady City School Board member XXXXXXXX, being lifted above a keg at a graduation party.



## Photos I did not post...



## Facebook Activities

- Share Photos/Tagging
- Write on your Wall – Everyone can see it
- Private Messaging
- Facebook Chat
- Joining Groups (Networks)
- Relationship Status
  
- Bottom Line - Being Social

## Professional Uses

- Building Professional Networks
- Collaborate with people in the same field
- Job searches
- Freelance job opportunities
- Communicate with Peers

## Students' Use

- Reinforcing pre-existing relationships
- 91% stay in touch with friends they see a lot
- 82% stay in touch with friends they rarely see in person
- Meeting new people
- 49% make new friends
- (more for boys, less for girls)
- 17% flirt
  - (mostly older boys – 29% of them say they use the sites to flirt vs 13% of older girls)

## Legal Issues

- Does your institution have a policy?
- FOIL!!! – Freedom of Information Law
- Law Enforcement has access
- Facebook, Twitter, texting all become part of disciplinary hearings.
- "A picture is worth a thousand questions"

## Do's

- Because the law on these issues is developing, here are some tips:
- Be familiar with any employee work rules or policies dealing with electronic communications.
- Set your social media page privacy settings so that only "friends" can view it and maximize all possible security settings.
- Be very mindful of who you accept "friend" requests from and to whom you send requests.
- Stop and think. If you're wondering, "Should I post this," it probably means that you shouldn't.
- Most importantly, assume that everything you post may be seen by everyone.

## Don'ts

- Many of the actions below may be completely innocent or explainable, but employees should use their discretion when engaging in the following. If you are a teacher, school-related professional or a professional in higher education, do not:
- Accept "friend" requests from, or send requests to, students.
- Post any comments about, or any pictures or videos of, students.
- Post comments that a school might find inappropriate if read by students or parents.
- Post photos of yourself engaging in any behavior that a school might find inappropriate if seen by students or parents.
- Think you can make comments "private" by sending them by direct or private message.
- You have no control over what the recipient will do with them.

## Technology Rules

- Never write or post any content that you would not want to see posted on the wall at work!
- Assume it will be made public
- Be aware of other rules/laws
  - Privacy, Confidentiality, HIPAA, FERPA
- Monitor your online information

## Questions/Demonstrations