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Social Media as Employability Tools

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Overview

- Key Questions
- Telework
- Accommodations
- Social Media
- Employability
- Social Technology
- Preliminary Model
- Implementation Challenges
- Conclusion

Key Questions

- How have ICT and the Internet changed the nature of workplace accommodations?

Key Questions

- How might telework and social media be integrated into a new social technology architecture for people with disabilities?

Key Questions

- How might a social technology approach to workplace accommodations increase the employability of people with disabilities?

Telework

- Telework: remote work conducted using ICT for performing paid work at least one day a week
 - Typical occupations: claims adjusters, computer programmers, customer service representatives, sales representatives (West & Anderson, 2005)

Telework - Workform

Telework: "...a restructuring of tasks to be accomplished within the larger work setting that could result in work being done remotely or being shared by coworkers using information communication technologies." (Sanford & Milchus, 2006, p.332)

Telework - Workform

- The emphasis is on telework as a work arrangement, it is not commonly considered a social technology
- General decoupling of work as task performance and a social learning activity is particularly pervasive in telework
 - Concerns about loss of tacit and incidental learning in telework arrangements (Sharit, Czaja, Hernandez & Nair, 2009)

Telework – Social Networks

Cross-functional telework teams benefit from online communities of practice linking external colleagues to enhance performance of complex tasks through a process of ‘intercommunal negotiation’

(Sapsed, Bessant, Parington, Tranfield & Young, 2002).

Telework Statistics

- TW in some form .37-.55 (2005,2010); part-time telework (.26 -.34) (SHRM, 2010)
- 102K Fed Employees teleworked in 2009
 - .10 of eligible employees; .057 of total
 - 11,046 increase from 2008
 - .22 federal employees ad hoc teleworkers
 - Higher job satisfaction than non-teleworkers (.76 vs. .68) OPM (2010)

Telework Statistics

Dearth of disability-focused telework statistics

Table 1. Respondents' Current Experiences with Telework and Employees with disabilities N=1,168 Employers - 18 states	
Have employees with identified disabilities	78.9%
Have employees who telework	22.8%
Have employees with disabilities who telework	8.4%

West, Davis, Salnick & Runsa, 2007

Telework - Accommodation

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act (2009)
 - Work at home (telework) may be a reasonable accommodation (on site work impeded) when telework is an option for all employees and can be implemented without incurring significant difficulty or expense
 - www.eeoc.gov/facts/telework.html (Fact Sheet)

Accommodations

- “Basically defined, an accommodation is an adjustment to a job, the work environment or the way things are usually done. The goal of a job accommodation is to reduce or eliminate workplace barriers to enable a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities.”

(JAN Accommodation and Compliance Series,
2010, p.4)

Accommodations

- Workplace Accommodations: responds to functional capacity gaps attributable to the disability condition that interfere with performing the specific job requirements (Shartz, Hendricks & Blanck, 2006)
 - Direct accommodations, costs and benefits
 - Indirect accommodations, costs and benefits

Accommodations

- Workplace Accommodations: a social process based on the premise that relationships are a component of all accommodations (Gates, 2000)
 - Supervisor and other key workplace personnel play important roles
 - ‘Who’ rather than ‘what’
 - Disclosure is an important element

Employability

- Employability describes a developmental path from initial employment through job maintenance, transfer and promotion, as well as a metric by which to gauge the success of different vocational approaches.

Employability

- Reality: retention rather than promotion too often the focus
- 2004-2005 JAN study reported in Schartz et al (2006) of 890 employers
 - 82.4 % used accommodations to retain employees
 - 1.8% used accommodations for promotion

Social Media – Employability

“I see social networking as a way of increasing my employability. I like to get to know prospective employers...upload tutorials...By getting the knowledge out there I’m helping others, but when prospective employers ask ‘what can you do,’ also have something to point them at.”

(Darragh, BBC-Ouch!, 2011)

Social Media

- With social media, online platforms began to resemble offline communities with multiple links across boundaries, while also bearing the clustering and networked characteristics of social relations (Hampton, Sessions, & Her, 2011).

Social Media

- At-work social opportunities relatively common, and after-work opportunities rare (i.e., Fillary & Pernice, 2006)
- Web-based platforms for social interaction and networking, such as blogs have the potential to increase work-related social networks and relationships (Changsorn, 2008).

Social Media-Blog Sites

- BBC-ouch! (disability)
- Social Security Disability Blog
- Disability Happens
- Disability Blog Carnival
- JAN's blog: <http://askjan.org/blog>
 - Myspace, Facebook, Twitter, Delicious, Digg
(coming soon – Youtube and Second Life)

Social Media Sites - Federal

- USA.gov (FB)
- GovGab (blog)
- OpenGov (dialogue tool)
 - 175M touch-points in 2010 (Web, e-mail, phone, social media)
 - “...a way of maximizing and sharing the flow of information.” Martha Dorris, GSA, 2010
<http://archive.teleworkexchange.com/teleworker-12-10e.asp>

Social Media – Public & Private

- Facebook, Twitter (tweet ups), LinkedIn (informal contacts, information sharing)
- AbilityOnline.org, TheGutsyGeneration.ca, WeAre.Us, Disaboom.com (mutual support, disability-specific)
- Disability.gov (social media tools, Twitter feed, Really Simple Syndication feeds, blog, social bookmarking) federal resources plus learning, communication. Personalized news, updates, online discussions.

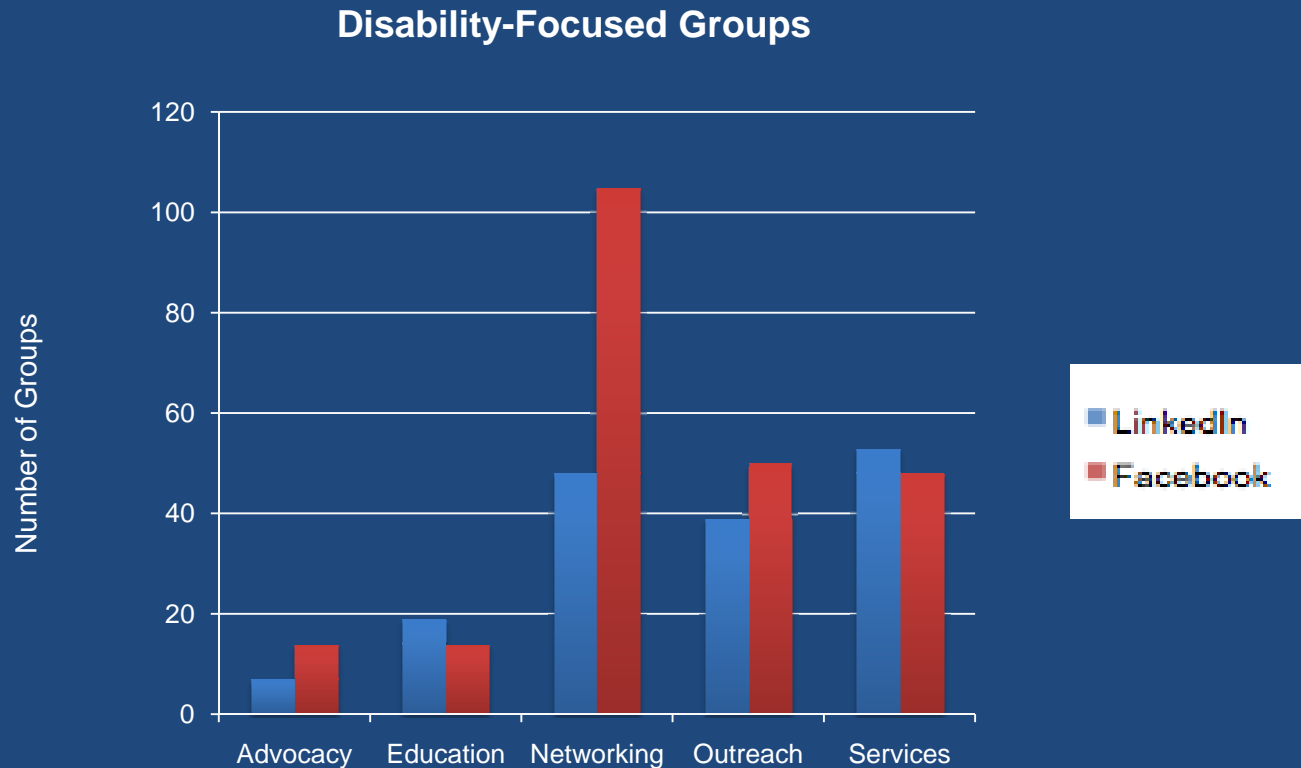
Social Media – Disability Groups

Facebook & LinkedIn Disability-focused Groups (Baker, Bricout, Coughlan, & Pater, 2010)

- **Social media platform:** Facebook & LinkedIn (for comparison) chosen based on user base/activity
- **Search criteria:** employment, aging, and disabled-focused online communities (groups)
 - keywords + >5 members
- English-language groups

Social Media – Disability Groups

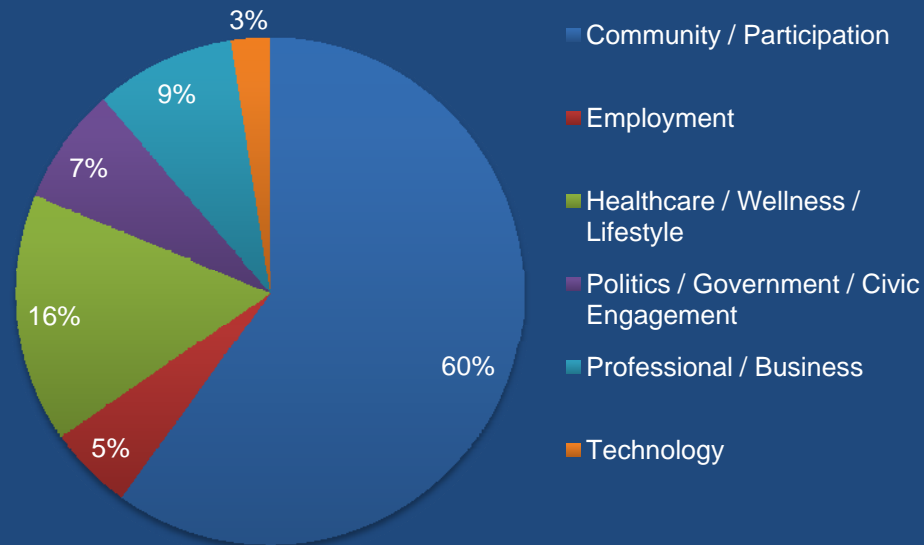
Figure 1



Social Media – Disability Groups

Figure 2

Disability Group Interest Breakdown



Social Media – Disability Groups

- Most focused on general tips/networking of jobseekers
 - Few focused on a specific sub-group, (people with Asperger's)
- Disability-focused Groups had lower participation
 - 98 members versus 267 members (Disability/general)
 - (0.027%) of LinkedIn (0.00004%) of **Facebook**
- Majority created in the last 24 months

Social Technology

- Social technologies link people with shared interests in sustained connections and conversations in the context of democratic social conventions
- *“If we view people as social actors then we should view the net as a social technology. Any technology combines artifacts and procedures to apply knowledge for practical ends.”* (Sproull & Faraj, 1997, p. 38)

Preliminary Model

- Three attributes of integrated telework and social media accommodations for leveraging employability

I. Permeability

II. Systemic Learning

III. Smart Niches

Preliminary Model

- Changed nature of workplace accommodations: 'Permeability'
 - Elided workplace boundaries
 - Shift towards environment and/or person-environment capacity gap

Preliminary Model

- New social technology architecture:
‘Systemic learning’
 - Develop a learning system
 - Online social networks
 - Online communities of practice (continuum from ad hoc to sustained)

Preliminary Model

- Social technology approach to employability: 'Smart niches'
 - Match learners(workers) with learning environments
 - Design for interoperability, comprehension and adaptability
 - Assistive technology, information technology, telework and social media in any combination

Preliminary Model -Assumptions

Telework positions are part- or full-time and high value

- Employers are motivated and resourced
- Independent contractors have negotiation latitude

Teleworkers are social technology competent

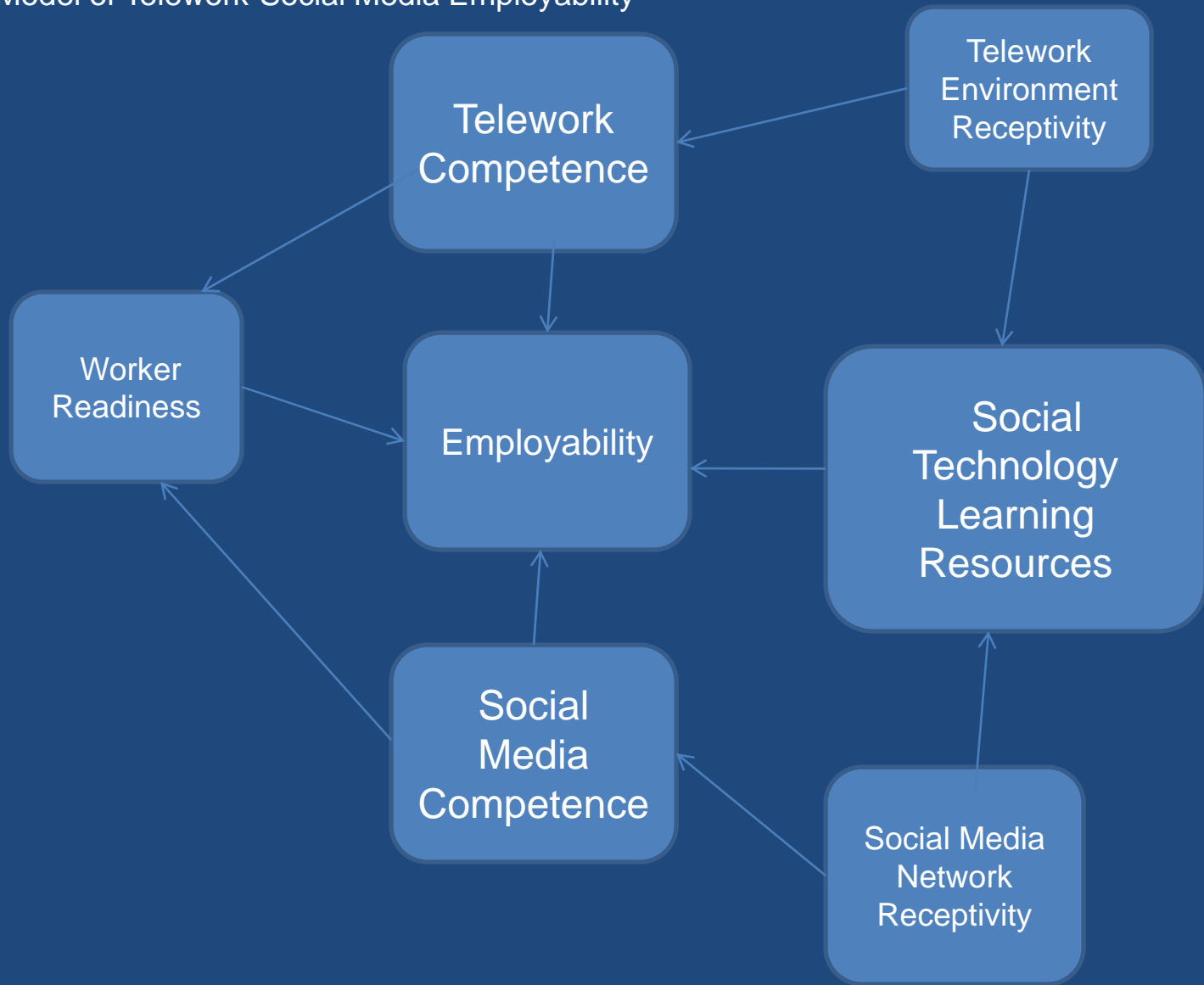
- Teleworkers have requisite attributes for telework
- Teleworkers are skilled and knowledgeable

The social technology environment is receptive

- Elements of the environment can 'talk' to each other
- The environment can adapt locally and systemically



An Integrated Model of Telework-Social Media Employability



Implementation Challenges

Limited buy-in for a systemic approach

- Metrics to establish cost-benefit lacking
- People with disabilities marginalized

Current climate of economic uncertainty

- Increasing divergence of workforces (skill/education)
- Prevalence of 'clock-driven' (efficient) approaches to social problems over synergistic (effective) approaches



Conclusion

- Reconciling the theory and realities of accommodations is an important next step
 - **In theory accommodations are adjustments, in practice they are often more akin to adaptations**
- The nature of work may be changing but how it is altering for people with disabilities is unclear
 - **Accessibility lags have readiness implications**
- Systemic change is a long-term proposition and defies the division of labor
 - **Interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaborations are required**



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Questions

