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## Technology-Savvy Career Counseling

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Tech-Savvy Career Counseling

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### **Abstract**

Career counseling professionals help clients make career decisions and develop an job search. Technology, in the form of websites, social media, and apps, has expanded the resources available to today's counselors. This paper explores multiple technological tools that may accompany each step of the career decision-making and job search process.

*Keywords:* technology, career counseling, social media, apps, telepsychology

## **Introduction**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/tus/charts/>), Americans spend the majority of an average day (8.8 hours) working (sleeping came in second at 7.7 hours). Similarly, Canadians spend an average of 36.6 hours at work each week (<http://www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/.3ndic.1t.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=19>). With the majority of our waking time being spent at work, it is no wonder that career-related issues will be woven into conversations with mental health practitioners, even when the presenting concern is not career-related. Thus, having knowledge and skills to help clients with their career issues is essential.

Today's advances in technology have moved beyond websites to social media tools such as blogs, apps, and social networking tools that offer new ways of assessment and providing information. These same tools also create opportunities for psychologists to connect with clients outside of the traditional office setting, and to enhance service delivery. As with any new technique, the availability and incorporation of technology into counseling raises several ethical concerns and dilemmas that must be considered to ensure best practices. In the sections that follow, we aim to review literature and present technologies relevant to career decision-making and job search, provide ideas of how technology can be used to enhance and extend the service delivery of psychologists, and to identify and address some of the challenges in using technology in counseling. But first, we turn our attention to career issues commonly experienced by clients.

### **Career Issues Commonly Experienced by Clients**

A recent review of articles published in career development journals in 2013 (Sampson et al., in press) found that 53% of articles focused on personal characteristics and states of being, such as interests, values, decision-making self-efficacy and career satisfaction. Other themes

included delivery of career interventions (21%), external factors influencing the individual (12%), theory (11%), and occupational, educational or employment options (3%). The National Career Development Association identifies six key areas that individuals typically address during career counseling, including; learning about self, obtaining occupational and educational information, enhancing decision-making and career planning, conducting a job search, applying for training and further education, and coping with career challenges and transition issues (NCDA, 2009, ¶ Why Seek Career Counseling). Thus, career concerns of clients can be loosely grouped into two main areas, i.e., career decision-making and job searching.

### **Career Decision-Making**

Most career theories attempt to identify the components and complexities involved with making a career choice. For example, Holland's RIASEC theory (1997) emphasizes the level of congruence between interests and occupational environments, while Social Cognitive Career theory (Lent & Brown, 2008) explores how personal skills, self-efficacy and outcome expectancies impact career choices. One theory in particular, i.e., Cognitive Information Processing Theory (Peterson, Sampson, Lenz, & Reardon, 2002), identifies three domains comprised of four components of career decision-making, arranged in the form of a pyramid. The foundational level, also known as the knowledge domain, contains the components of self-knowledge and options knowledge. The middle domain focuses on decision-making and the apex of the pyramid is known as the executive processing domain and focuses on metacognitive processes such as monitoring and controlling dysfunctional career thinking. For more on Cognitive Information Processing theory, the reader is referred to a website dedicated to the theory ([http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/designing\\_career\\_services/index.html](http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/designing_career_services/index.html)). Because of

the straightforward dimensions of career choice outlined by CIP theory, it will be used as an organizational schema when examining technologies related to career decision-making.

### **Technologies to Enhance Self-Knowledge**

According to the Cognitive Information Processing (CIP theory; Peterson, Sampson, Lenz, & Reardon, 2002), self-knowledge is made up of values, interests, skills, and related personal characteristics, and through clarification, clients can identify specific positions that will optimize career satisfaction. Technologies that help facilitate self-exploration are presented next.

#### **Online Assessments**

Online assessments come in two main forms: (1) traditional pencil and paper assessments that have been converted into electronic assessments and (2) Computer Assisted Career Guidance (CACG) Programs. Two traditional assessments that have been converted into computerized assessments and are particularly useful for self-knowledge exploration are the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Self Directed Search (SDS). The publishers of the SDS recently implemented an online system, PARiConnect, which allows on-site administration of assessments, and the option to send e-mail invitations to clients to take the assessment at a later time (How it Works, 2014). Online CACG programs, such as Choices and SIGI, allow clients to access information and career assessments from any computer with their own personalized login information (What it Does?, 2014). Through various modules, clients explore their values, interests, personality, and skills. Although both online assessments and CACGs can provide clients with valuable information regarding their self-knowledge, Gati and Asulin-Peretz (2011) stress the importance for counselors to provide clients with interpretive feedback and recommendations for next steps to build off the findings of that particular assessment.

#### **Websites and Social Media**

In addition to online career assessments, websites can help enhance self-knowledge exploration. For example, Wordle generates a “word cloud” from inputted text (such as a career autobiography), making the more prominent words larger and the words less often used smaller (About Wordle, 2014). Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest can provide a lens into the client’s values, interests, and skills or create a virtual portfolio.

#### Smart Phone Applications and Other Technologies

Much like online assessments and websites, smart phone applications and other online technologies can also be used to encourage self-knowledge exploration and enhancement. Smart phone applications, such as journaling apps encourage clients to monitor their daily activities, and can be helpful for self-knowledge enhancement. Programs such as QuickTime, Ging, Prezi, YouTube and Present Me can each provide clients an outlet to who they are in creative ways.

#### **Technologies to Enhance Knowledge of Options**

According to Peterson, Sampson, Lenz, & Reardon (2002), knowledge about options includes knowledge about occupations, knowledge about types of jobs within specific industries or fields, and knowledge about specific employers and positions within different types of organizations. Today, various technologies make it easy for clients to access up-to-date and accurate information to help them gain more knowledge regarding their options.

#### Information Gathering Websites

The Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) is maintained by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and provides 334 occupational profiles, which cover 84 percent of all jobs in our current economy (OOH FAQs, 2014). Each occupational profile describes: occupational duties, work environment, typical education/training, median pay, and the job outlook for the next 10 years. Much like the OOH, The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) is the nation’s

primary source of occupational knowledge with information on over 970 occupations. O\*NET, sponsored by the US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (About O\*NET, 2014), provides information on tasks, tools and technology, knowledge, skills, abilities, work activities, work context, job zone, education, interests, work styles, work values, related occupations, wages and employment, job openings, and other additional information.

### **Technologies to Enhance Decision Making**

Technology has been useful in helping individuals with the career decision-making process (Gati, & Asulin-Peretz, 2011; Osborn, Dikel, & Sampson, 2011). For example, clients reported the use of computer-assisted career guidance systems (CACGs) as helping to increase self-knowledge, number of career options, and amount of occupational knowledge (Osborn, Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 2000). The Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (Gati & Osipow, n.d., [cddq.org](http://cddq.org)) is a well-researched online tool that helps the user to understand the difficulties unique to them that may be acting as barriers to effective decision-making when choosing a career or college major (Gati & Osipow, n.d.).

Many clients have access to tablets, smartphones, computers, and the like through personal devices or those at public institutions like libraries, schools, or universities. This hardware allows them to access websites, career information sites, apps and social media – all potentially powerful tools that can enhance and inform the career decision-making process. When considering which apps might be most useful, a practitioner may need to think divergently and consider broad uses for applications that may not seem directly relevant to the career decision making process. For instance, the app iThoughts creates “decision trees” and could be used to outline various options, resources and strategies for the client's career decision(s). Unstuck ® is another decision-making app designed to help individuals who feel “stuck” make



progress in their decision-making. The user is guided through a series of questions designed to help define the pieces of a problem: who's involved, feelings about the decision, the type of the decision, and so forth. This could be used either in or between career counseling sessions.

Applications such as Decide Now! or "Decision Maker" can provide a fun and engaging way for clients to consider alternative outcomes., by inviting users to label sections of a wheel with options and then spin the wheel to obtain an answer. Additionally for Android, "Sheepadvisor Decision Maker" helps the user create decision trees and asks questions relevant to the decision before providing a percentile breakdown of the best options. While it should be noted that an effective decision cannot be made by a smartphone application, using this kind of tool can facilitate rich discussion about level of satisfaction with options as well as outcomes. When used within the context of face-to-face career counseling, the career practitioner might ask process questions such as "How do you feel about the option the wheel selected for you?" or "What are your reservations about that option?" Knowing what an individual does not like about an option may be just as important and reveal more knowledge about oneself than knowing what one does like.

On another note, career practitioners may have worksheets that they find particularly useful. Using TinyURL.com or goo.gl.com, practitioners can create short, easy to remember URL's that will quickly steer clients towards other digital resources that can aid in the decision making process. For example, one career decision-making model is a handout for a decision making guide called the CASVE cycle. The URL is too long to easily tell someone how to access it:

<http://www.career.fsu.edu/documents/cognitive%20information%20processing/What's%20Involved%20in%20Career%20Choice.html>. Using tinyURL (as an example), career practitioners can

easily navigate clients to the CASVE cycle information using a shortened website address as [tinyurl.com/CASVEcycle](http://tinyurl.com/CASVEcycle). These tools allow practitioners to upload handouts such as decision-making guides or activities to their websites and use URL-shorteners to create simple links.

### **Technologies to Enhance Metacognitive Processing**

Metacognitions are thoughts that “control the selection and sequencing of cognitive strategies used to solve a career problem through self-talk, self-awareness, and monitoring and control” (Sampson, Reardon, Peterson & Lenz, 2002, p. 24). This can often be a place where counseling interventions meet career interventions as these negative emotions and interfering thoughts can slow progress in a career decision. Technology has been used to assist both career decisions and combat metacognitions shown by the following examples. Online Internet interventions have been used to combat a range of emotions: depression (Saulsberry et al., 2013; Manzoni et al., 2008), complicated grief (Botella, Osma, Garcia Palacios, Guillen, & Banos, 2008), stress, and negative emotions (Manzoni, et al., 2008).

With this in mind, today’s technology offers many options for cognitive restructuring, meditation, stress management, and anxiety in the career decision-making process. As an example, a handheld technology device was suggested to alleviate symptoms of social phobia and Generalized Anxiety Disorder via cognitive restructuring (Przeworski & Newman, 2004). Berry and Lai (2014) found that technological approaches to cognitive restructuring are steadily growing in the literature and suggest that technology enables services to be offered to a wider variety of clients who may otherwise be unable to seek services. Additionally, Gati and Asulin-Peretz (2011) suggested that it is important for career practitioners to increase the use of technology in the career counseling process.

Meditation and mindfulness apps may be helpful to some clients in combatting negative metacognitions such as stress, anxiety, and depression that may act as barriers to career decisions (Evans et al., 2008; Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000). Jacobs and Blustein (2008) suggested that mindfulness may offer a way for career practitioners to remove a key element of overall stress in clients' careers. Headspace is a mindfulness app that offers guided meditations that are secular in nature and range from 10-20 minutes in length.

Additionally, journaling between sessions may offer clients a way to more readily share their career problems with practitioners by writing things down or performing journaling exercises between sessions (Greenberg & Padesky, 1995; McKay, Wood, & Brantley, 2007). Journaling apps such as DayOne Journaling can facilitate this process. To help stop negative career thoughts, an app such as FlipHead Thought-Stopping (offered for both Android and Apple devices) not only offers the user information about the impact of negative thoughts, but provides thought-replacement techniques to help clients change the language of their thoughts to more positive affirmations and encouraging words. Applications such as MoodKit – Mood Improvement Tools make changing one's thoughts and moods more likely by checking in several times a day and recording patterns, which can become part of the discussion in helping overcome career barriers. Along these lines, SAM, or Self-Help for Anxiety Management is an app for those prone to anxiety, a common concern with indecisive career counseling clients (Peterson, Sampson, Reardon, & Lenz, 2002). SAM provides information and activities such as painting the color into an image as a way to soothe anxiety being experienced in the moment.

### **Job Searching**

Job search techniques are either formal (e.g., using want ads) or informal (e.g, using networks; Sagan, Dallam, & Laverty, 1999). Elements of job search include writing a resumé,

interviewing, networking, and creating a strategy to identify both the overt and hidden job markets (Mau & Kopischke, 2001). Today's interview skills include having an "elevator speech" and the ability to answer behavioral interview questions (Behrens, 2009). Today's job search also includes using professional social networking websites as well as online job boards.

### **Technologies to Enhance Job Search**

According to Osborn, Sampson, & Dikel (2010), the prolific growth and use of the Internet has offered a much more wide-reaching network of opportunities for job seekers when compared to traditional methods of the job search campaign. A survey conducted by the National Association for Colleges and Employers (NACE; 2009) found that over 35,000 college students use online resources in the job search, further explaining that 96% of students reported to have visited company websites and 91% of students endorsed using the company job posting site to review available positions. Furthermore, Van Rooy, Alonoso & Fairchild (2003) posit that the Internet also serves as an effective recruitment method, giving employers the opportunity to display available positions while showcasing a myriad of options for the job seeker. Job searching websites such as CareerShift allows job seekers to systematically and effectively gather information regarding positions and organizations. CareerShift, named "The Best Job Search Tool on The Internet," was created to help job seekers successfully navigate the published and hidden job market to find employment opportunities by searching and saving favorite jobs, contacts, companies, uploading personal documents, and maintaining a personal calendar (About CareerShift, 2014). Social media and apps have expanded job searching beyond the traditional career websites, and will be explored in the sections below.

### **Using Social Media in the Job Search**

The number of users on social media sites is astounding (Kluemper and Rosen, 2009). Various “About Us” sections of social media sites reveal millions of individuals engaging in social media. Facebook accounts for the largest population of online users, reporting over 1 billion active users (About Facebook, 2014). Twitter described 255 million registered users, with more than 500 million tweets sent per day (About Twitter, 2014). Finally, YouTube (About YouTube, 2014) maintains 1 billion unique visits each month while LinkedIn boasts over 300 million members (About Us, 2014). In the recent past, technology has removed a human element in the job search process. For example, with online job boards, job seekers are no longer required to physically visit a place of employment to submit application materials. Instead, job seekers submit a resume online whereby the receipt of a non-computer generated feedback may or may not occur. This process may feel very isolating for job seekers, however, social media has the ability to incorporate the human element back in the job search process.

As Stollak, Vandenberg, Felhofer, & Sutherland (2014) reported, over the past eight years, social media has continuously grown into a major aspect of life. A recent survey released by Jobvite showed that 94% of employers use or plan to use social media for hiring (Quigley, 2013). The burgeoning impact of social media on the job search process is apparent when examining the ways in which it has influenced the behaviors of today’s job seeker and the ways in which employers source candidates and make hiring decisions. As such, counselors well versed in tech savvy counseling and job searching can to serve their clients in a more robust manner. Social media allows job seekers to find and be found, meaning that job seekers can both search for job opportunities and can also be found by professionals to fill available opportunities.

Twitter in the Job Search

Using Twitter, job seekers can search and follow companies, notable individuals, or professional associations. Companies often use Twitter to promote their mission, vision, values and organizational culture, with their Twitter accounts linking back to company websites, career pages, news reports, and more. Therefore, job seekers who follow Twitter accounts of organizations are provided a wealth of information regarding employing organizations or industries. Additionally, Twitter serves as an informal aggregate job board for available positions in countless industries. For example, an individual interested in employment within psychology or mental health might use Twitter to follow @PsychologyJobs to determine options for a potential employment. Or, an individual interested in the same field might search employing organizations for jobs in mental health, such as Nationwide Children's Hospital Careers account, @NCHCareers. Hashtags provide job seekers with the ability to search for various occupational titles and available positions, such as #softwareengineer or #logistics. Many employer Twitter profiles provide external links to additional information, such as instructions for applying and organizational websites. Finally, job seekers can actively engage with Twitter and other Twitter users by joining in chats, sometimes called a "tweetchat" or "tweetup," which are organized events with specific topics moderated by an individual or organization. For example, Lockheed Martin recently hosted a tweetchat using the hashtag #Eweekchat14. By searching that specific hashtag at the given time and including it in tweets, users can learn more about a profession or employing organization while developing an increasingly visible presence in the conversation.

### LinkedIn in the Job Search

LinkedIn is a robust website created to "connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful" (About Us, 2014). Job boards, company pages, and professional interest groups are resources available to job seekers and provide information on available

positions, industry happenings, and organizational culture. Within the job board section of LinkedIn, users can search open opportunities by job title, keyword, company name, location, and more. Like Twitter, LinkedIn provides a myriad of additional information beyond the job description. For instance, a LinkedIn user who searches for “Washington, D.C.” and “accounting” is able to view open positions and any personal connections with people who live in Washington, D.C. and are employed within the accounting industry. A powerful networking tool, LinkedIn allows users to easily view personal connections with various industries or employing organizations. Company pages provide a wealth of information and are created and maintained by individuals who work for the company. Most pages offer an overview of the company’s mission and services, describe available positions within the company, provide a listing of recent promotions, and even a section to explore existing professional connections in the organization. Additionally, the URL <http://www.LinkedIn.com/alumni> is a powerful networking tool that allows users to sort through information regarding all registered LinkedIn accounts from alumni at a particular college or university, such as geographical location, place of employment, job title, educational background, and more. Job seekers can view how they may be connected with other users and can send a personalized note along with a connection request.

In regards to creating and maintaining user profiles, job seekers should be encouraged to complete their profile with thoroughness, providing detailed information on current and past experiences, certifications, accolades, education and skills. Furthermore, by adding in specific keywords (such as “Certified Addictions Specialist”) in the headline, summary, and profile, job seekers are much more likely to appear in the results of a search by a recruiter or other individual. LinkedIn groups provide another channel for creating connections, whereby job seekers join relevant groups to strengthen their online presence while connecting with other

professionals. Through these groups, job seekers can follow group postings, read relevant industry news, connect with other professionals, and contribute to discussion boards or conversations. More importantly, users have the opportunity to create new postings within groups which align with their job search, for example, posting a new conversation such as: “New college graduate seeking museum curator internship in Boston, MA.”

#### Facebook in the Job Search

Facebook is undisputedly the most prolific social media site. While its traditional purpose has been centered on facilitating social connections, companies and recruiters are now using Facebook as a platform to further company image, advertise services, and promote company brand. Companies use FacebookAds as a function to disseminate organizational information and publicize available employment opportunities. By following company pages, job seekers are exposed to corporation events and news which can be beneficial when preparing for a networking event or interview. Moreover, job seekers can use Facebook to determine what existing connections are present in their network to a company for which they wish to work. Facebook groups may connect job seekers to their industry preferences, experiences, or interests. However, as with LinkedIn, job seekers who join Facebook groups should be encouraged to be active contributors to that online community by sharing professional information, resources and more. Finally, apps such as BeKnown or BranchOut can be used to view established Facebook connections and access job listings aggregated from sites like Monster.com.

When used properly, social media is a powerful tool to use while engaging in a job campaign. For a social media job search strategy to be most fruitful, counselors should encourage clients to be specific in search terms, for example, not just “job in Florida”, but “mid-level position in electrical engineering in San Francisco.” Most importantly, job seekers must



disclose the desired outcome for a job campaign to their current connections. The purpose of using social media in a job search is two fold: to find and be found. In order for this approach to be successful, job seekers must have a presence online to (1) find opportunities and, (2) increase the likelihood of being found by employing organizations. Clients must be encouraged to remain active in connecting with people, friends, companies, and associations.

### **Blogging**

Web logs, or blogs, are popular outlets that provide an electronic venue to disseminate information in a journal-like format. While blogs may have originated as more personal accounts, the scope of today's blog topics span topics such as travel, finance, personal, food & cooking, healthcare and more. Blogs have also become a popular medium for individuals to share professional information, establish authority on a specific focus, and connect with other bloggers about pertinent material.

To begin a blog, a blogger desiring to showcase professional skills for the job search might want to begin by accessing sites such as Wordpress or Tumblr; two popular blogging platforms which provide free templates for blogs. Bloggers are prompted to design creative and specific titles for their blog and can customize its layout, color, and style. Once the basic framework for the blog has been created, bloggers can develop specific professional topics to discuss (e.g., experience at an internship, information gleaned during a webinar, resources for a particular field, etc). Because the purpose of using a blog in the job search process is to be found, bloggers may consider including professional keywords in the blog title/profile, web address, and blogs posts, increasing the chance that the blog will rank higher in search results.

Once the basic format of the blog has been finalized, bloggers possess a unique opportunity to share information on a particular topic. A job seeker interested in becoming an

elementary school educator may post samples of lessons plans, write about an experience working in a classroom, or discuss a recent interaction with a teacher whereby new information was discovered. Through blogging, job seekers are provided an opportunity to establish a sense of authority on a particular topic. This can be showcased through the posting of class assignments, displaying links to resources or news stories, providing a prompt on a professional topic and more. In order to build an online presence using a blog, users are encouraged to follow other professionals and professional blogs, building connections by commenting on other blogs, “liking” posts, or linking to a particular blog. Users can connect any blog activity to other forms of social media that will provide more visibility and a consistent message sent from one person across various technological medium.

Many employers use blogs to disseminate available positions and promote company culture. Employee blogs from companies like Microsoft, PepsiCo, and Target offer job seekers insider insight into what it is like to work at that company, specific job tasks, and open positions. Job seekers can use this information to determine if a company is a good fit, as well as tactics to strengthen a job application. Blogs can be accessed from company websites or from job blogs, such as Women for Hire, Indeed Job Blog, and Brazen Life.

A few thoughts are offered in regards to blogging. First, users should post on a regular basis to keep the interests of followers but remember to avoid over posting as to overwhelm followers. Second, users should actively follow other bloggers, leaving comments or inquiries to engage in further discussion. Following industry-specific blogs would provide two helpful outcomes: connecting a job seeker to an informative resource about a professional industry and connecting a job seeker to a group of professionals currently involved in an industry. Finally, bloggers should always keep in mind the golden rule of blogging, “post unto others as you would

wish others to post unto you, ” the professional nature of their online presence, being kind and fair in posting, and avoiding being critical when responding to other bloggers.

### **Video resumes**

With the advent of the Internet and improvements in computer video recording, video resumes have gained in popularity in the past decade. Gone are the days of bulky VHS tapes and expensive production time; today’s video resume can be created using home equipment with free applications found online. Video resumes are a creative and engaging way to showcase job seekers’ communication skills, personality, and more. Used as a supplement to a traditional resume, a video resume should be concise, professional and relevant, about one to two minutes long, and focus on education, skills, experience, and other information such as community involvement or personal interests. Sites like Mayomann.com, Resumebook.tv, and Interviewclip.com offer both free and paid account services to create and upload video resumes.

Video resumes offer a potential employer further insight into various facets of a job seeker than a traditional resume would, it is advisable for job seekers to go beyond simply recounting the contents of their resume. Job seekers can focus on expanding on experiences or skills listed on their resume, or discuss achievements or accolades acquired in past experiences. The ways in which colleagues, managers, or clients describe the job seeker would be a unique portrayal of one’s personality or work style to include in a video resume. Finally, a job seeker may incorporate future professional goals or objectives related to the position or industry, and the steps the job seeker will seek out to achieve such goals. When creating a video resume, it is recommended to be creative but professional. Candidates should dress professionally and ensure the technicalities of recording (lighting, video, audio, recording environment) are of proper quality and free of distractions. The rate and content of speech should be clear and consistent,

achievable by using a script or outline of main talking points. Finally, allowing friends or family to review the video provides important feedback prior to disseminating the video resume link on a resume or LinkedIn profile. One final note about video resumes is that while multimedia in the job search is a unique way to showcase one's personality and skill set, not all employers are receptive to viewing video resumes due to discrimination laws. In this instance, job seekers should not be discouraged but understand the particular nuances of the employment process and the ways in which it varies from company to company.

### **Virtual Career Fairs**

As the cost for travel rises, employing organizations and job seekers must be judicious in attending career fairs. Virtual career fairs offer a wonderful alternative to traditional career fairs, as they are typically less expensive and more easily accessible. A recent search of virtual career fairs indicates a diverse array of industries hosting virtual career fairs, including retail, sciences, education, government, and business. In addition, certain virtual career fairs focus on specific populations, such as college students or veterans, or may focus on a particular geographic location. The concept behind a virtual career fair is similar to a traditional career fair: to facilitate a connection between employers and job seekers. However, virtually, this appears very differently than it would in person. For example, an employer might host a chat room discussion to relay information to job seekers about the company. Participants are able to view questions and responses and follow a thread of informative topics. If an employer or student wishes to chat one-on-one, some virtual career fairs have the capability to offer "side" conversations, whereby job seekers and recruiters can chat individually. Job seekers also use technology to engage in the virtual career fair. Candidates upload resumes and other pertinent information, such as e-portfolios or other multimedia electronic resources, to showcase relevant skills, and can browse

the list of participating companies and join chat rooms or “e-booths” to directly connect with recruiters. Typically, agencies such as community workforce agencies, local chambers of commerce, and institutions of higher education organize and host virtual career fairs. Job seekers interested in finding virtual career fairs should contact these agencies for more information.

Virtual career fairs do share some similarities with traditional fairs. For example, as with a traditional career fair, virtual career fairs have limited time duration with a start time and end time. Job seekers should expect to learn about a company through this process, as would be expected visiting a traditional career fair. The tactics in which job seekers interact with employers for virtual career fairs are also comparable to those of traditional career fairs. For example, job seekers should research employing organizations and develop a priority list of employers with whom to interact. It may be advantageous for a job seeker to review application materials or resumes and monitoring social media presence. Finally, as with traditional career fairs, job seekers should be prepared, professional, confident, and always follow up afterwards.

***Job Searching: There’s an app for that***

Multiple applications for iPhone, iPad, Android, and Blackberry exist that address topics such as interviewing, job hunting, and networking. Interview Pro and Interview Prep Questions are two apps which provide interview tips, insights on interviewing, and practice questions with sample responses using a “flash card” approach. Apps like JobMo are helpful for job seekers who find themselves spending a significant amount of time on sites like Monster, Indeed, and Simply Hired. JobMo serves as an aggregator of major job search sites whereby users can search for jobs from one intuitive application. For those job seekers who prefer to search via employer websites as opposed to job boards, LinkUp allows searches for jobs on company websites using keyword filters. HiddenJobs is a unique app that scours news articles, company press releases,

and online media to identify companies that have announced expansions or new locations. In this manner, job seekers gain an insider view of companies and get a head start on applications.

Additionally, the Glassdoor app provides a comprehensive view of company information such as work culture, salary reports, interview process, and employee reviews of work experiences.

An interesting component of app usage in the job search is the unique way in which apps access the GPS function of personal devices to identify open positions. For example, JobCompass uses the GPS feature to provide up-to-date information on open positions in a 5, 10, 25, 50, or 100-mile radius. Along the same line, Now Hiring is an app that allows users to search international job sites, useful for the job seeker interested in positions in the U.S., Canada, U.K., Germany, France, Spain, and India. For users who are interested in using apps to give their resumes a creative make-over, Visualize.me and ResumUP are examples of apps that transform a traditional text resume to an infographic document. These apps use graphs, timelines, barcharts, and word clouds to highlight an individual's skills, position titles, and achievements and are an attention-grabbing alternative to a conventional resume. Many of the resources and websites listed in this article have created apps to use in conjunction with traditional computer usage. For example, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Monster, Career Builder, Indeed, and Simply Hired all have apps to aid users in their job search. This is not an exhaustive list and is meant to serve as an example of the many uses for applications in the job search.

### **Technology and managing the job search campaign**

Another major component of the job search process is keeping account of various employers to which a job seeker has applied, dates of application, follow up processes, communication with the employer, etc. In addition, technology adds another layer to today's job search process, with tracking connections made through LinkedIn, associations joined on

Facebook, connecting to blog followers all while building a personal brand - this can be an overwhelmingly complex organizational process. Apps such as Marketing Calendar provide an option to track a job campaign using a color-coded calendar. JibberJobber, Good Job, and Becomed are examples of online job campaign management tools where users can monitor where resumes have been sent, jobs applied for, identify personal connections (and connect on LinkedIn), and note what next steps should be taken in the job search.

### **Practice and ethical considerations**

According to the National Association for Colleges and Employers, legal considerations regarding technology and social media in the job search are still cloudy. According to Frauenheim (as cited in Kluemper and Rosen, 2009), employers who use social media websites such as Facebook run the risk of inadvertently learning about candidate age, race, religion, or marital status – subjects avoided in interviews due to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws. If a candidate is not hired, the employer then runs the risk of being sued for discrimination.

Another consideration for counselors who integrate technology into their practice is client comfort and skill level with computer processes. In a study investigating technology use in the job search process, Van Rooy, Alonoso & Fairchild (2003) found that applicants with limited computer knowledge fare just as well in the Internet job search as those with more advanced computer knowledge. However, a counselor must evaluate the level of support needed by a client and their ability to engage with technology in an appropriate manner. If a client displays a lower level of comfort or skill with technology, the counselor and client might explore ways a client could build computer skills, such as a computer-training course. The use of technology in the job search has created a new social contract between job seeker and employer. It is important to recall the benefits and drawbacks of technology in the job search process when considering

implications for practice. When used judiciously, technology can be an incredibly powerful tool for both job seeker and employer to discover career opportunities.

### **Technologies to Expand and Enhance Service Delivery**

Technology has done more than just provide tools for helping with career decision-making and the job search. It has also opened the door for counselors and psychologists to extend and enhance their service delivery. Social media, chat software and website tools allow practitioners to push past geographical and time barriers. Specifically, practitioners can use these tools as a way to market their services, offer an alternative venue for providing services, and supplement their services. The most popular social media sites allow individuals to like, follow, and join, which gives the practitioner the opportunity to provide information about services and include information of interest, such as a link to a relevant article, or a brief video presentation about a specific technique or tool (such as progressive relaxation or how to handle difficult interview questions). Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Linked In were found to be the most commonly used sites by university career centers (Osborn & LoFrisco, 2012), with the main intents to connect with students, promote events, and to provide information.

Workshops can be pre-recorded and loaded to a YouTube channel or iTunes U free or at a minimal charge. Other tools, such as Tweetchat, Skype, Elluminate, Stinto, iMeet, webex, and so forth allow real time presentations, group meetings, and workshops. Counselors and psychologists could provide brief workshops on pertinent topics (e.g., managing stress, improving communication skills, job search strategies) as a way of providing a service to the community, but also as a marketing tool to enable individuals to get a feel for the practitioner's personality and a taste of what working with that person would be like. This might also open the



doors for consultation opportunities. Many libraries and commercial sites offer immediate online help through either text or live chat. Practitioners might consider offering a virtual office hour.

Multi-user virtual environments (MUVES) such as Second Life opens another door for practitioners to interact with individuals through avatars. While this may cause some to recoil, considering the millions of users in Second Life, who may never feel comfortable approaching a psychologist in “the real world,” and yet could benefit from mental health help, this becomes an opportunity to reach people where they are. Ethical concerns such as confidentiality and privacy exist with each of these venues; this will be addressed in the next section.

In addition to connecting with current and potential clients, technological hardware and software allows practitioners to enhance their service delivery. Document sharing and collaboration sites such as Dropbox or Google drive can allow client and counselor to share information such as treatment plans, journal entries, worksheets, and job search materials. Most tablets and laptops have video capability, which provides numerous options, including recording for supervision purposes, roleplaying interactions and then playing it back and analyzing with the client, or practicing a technique which can later be sent or downloaded for the client to use outside of session. An example of this might be having the client look into the camera and record cognitive reframes. The previous sections highlighted how different apps might also be used to enhance the counseling process. The next section will identify challenges related to using technology in counseling and to suggest possible solutions.

### **Challenges and Possible Solutions**

The challenges of integrating technology into counseling service delivery can be categorized as follows: ethical, technological, access, training, client readiness, and time. The American Psychological Association has outlined several guidelines for the practice of

telepsychology (2013), which focus on two main areas: the psychologist's competence in using the technology and the client's understanding of security and confidentiality risks. Other concerns include the quality of online assessments (Barak, 2003); appropriateness of client for receiving online services, clarity of the client contract, and what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable counselor behaviors (ACA, 2014 ¶2014 ACA Code of Ethics; APA, 2013 ¶Guidelines, NCDA, 1997 ¶NCDA Guidelines); client readiness to use online services, as well as access/social equity concerns (Osborn, Dikel, & Sampson, 2011). Confidentiality and privacy should always be of utmost concern, as well as client safety. Another ethical concern is the amount of time a practitioner should spend training a client on a specific technological tool during the clinical hour, as well as the ethics involved with encouraging a client to purchase or download even a free tool on their technological device. A major consideration for any practitioner who is licensed is the dilemma and liability concerns of crossing state lines when providing services. Finally, with the multitude of new technological tools expanding on the market daily, practitioners are faced with the dilemma of what technologies to try, which ones to introduce to clients, and when using social media sites, how often to update, blog and tweet.

While many challenges exist to integrating technology into counseling, we must not hide behind those challenges and dilemmas, but instead seek reasonable solutions. The first solution is to stay abreast of current ethical standards and conversations among psychology professionals about the integration of technology into counseling. This would require reviewing ethical codes, but also joining groups that are having these conversations. For example, within Linked In are groups such as "Career Counselor Technology Forum," "Coalition for Technology in Behavioral Sciences," and other groups dedicated to exploring these issues. Other strategies include exploring one's own attitudes and each client's attitudes towards integrating technology. The

responsibility for providing a confidential environment lies with the practitioner, who should know the quality of security measures of each tool they plan to use in counseling. In all cases, verifying who is receiving services and having emergency contact numbers is critical. For licensed practitioners, knowing the state regulations for providing services is a necessary protective step. For managing time, practitioners need to be strategic and selective when choosing and using technological tools. How does this tool fit into the overall plan for service delivery? Does the benefits of using the tool outweigh the costs? Evaluate regularly, and be willing to let a tool go that is not performing as hoped. Finally, especially when using synchronous tools such as chatting online to deliver services, have a backup plan in case the technology fails.

### **Conclusion**

The main aim of this article was to expand the knowledge base of practitioners with respect to technological tools that may be useful for clients who have career concerns. Many ethical concerns exist but so do strategies for addressing them. Finally, we sought to explore how today's technological tools might be used to enhance and extend career services for all.

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