

Technology, Perhaps the Biggest Change Driver!

By Stephanie Carter

When scanning your professional environment, perhaps the biggest emerging trend or "change driver" is technology. Here the increasingly popular phrase "social media" is described, examples provided, and suggestions offered about how it might be helpful to play therapists.

Today, technology - from cell phones to the internet, from PDAs to GPS systems - impacts everything we do. Often referred to as "social media", these internet tools are used to share and discuss information and experiences with others. They assume many different forms, including text, images, audio, and video, and typically use technology such as blogs, message boards, and podcasts. A few of the more popular tools are described here but you are encouraged to visit each site listed to learn more about them:

- **Facebook (www.facebook.com) and Myspace (www.myspace.com).** These tools connect you with friends, family, co-workers, etc. These websites allow you to upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and post events and blogs. You can connect with other play therapists, mental health panels, and subscribing parents to promote your interests and practices. For examples, search each of these sites for "play therapy".
- **LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) and YouTube (www.youtube.com).** Similar to Facebook and Myspace, LinkedIn is an online network of more than 25 million experienced professionals.

By creating a personal profile, you can find and be found by current and former colleagues, clients, and partners. The more people you add to your network, the more links (or connections) you have to thousands of qualified professionals. YouTube is the leader in online video and the premiere destination to watch and share videos. Within ethical constraints, you can post a video and show what play therapy "looks like" to millions of viewers.

- **Blogger (www.blogger.com).** Blogger is a publishing tool for sharing text, photos, and video. A blog is an online journal that provides commentary of news on a particular subject. A popular mental health blog, for example, is PsychCentral (www.psychcentral.com/blog) that addresses a wide range of topics. Start a play therapy blog and be available to millions of individuals seeking more information on related mental health topics.

These social media tools will continue to evolve. New networking sites are added daily, each offering a new way to communicate with those who may not know about play therapy. With millions of people now accessing the internet from many countries for information and discussions, you or a staff member might invest some quality time to become a recognized authority within these spaces to promote the value of play, play therapy, and play therapists - and to promote your practices, credentials, and availability!



Stephanie Carter

Carter, a recent Fresno State University graduate, has been the Media Coordinator for the Association for *Play Therapy* since April 2008. Like other members of the Millennium generation, she uses various social media in her daily life. For questions or assistance, contact Stephanie, (559) 294-2128 ext 3.
scarter@a4pt.org