

Programs for Teen Social Media Management

By Tess Grynch

In her 2014 interview with Nora Young, danah boyd, author of *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*, provides an example of an Ivy League school who approached her after receiving an amazing entrance essay about a teen who had broken away from gang culture and violence. The school was confused when they searched the teen's name online and found his MySpace page full of gang insignia. Although danah boyd tries to explain the different contexts teens are faced with and the context collapse experienced within social media environments, many schools and employers do not see a difference and teens are at risk of being barred from employment and educational opportunities due to their Facebook profile, Twitter feed, or Pinterest boards.

Horror stories abound similar to the story above but social media can also have positive effects. Social media is an excellent way for teens to promote themselves, especially creative aspects such as writing, musical skills, film, and photography. Many teens are primarily media consumers. By building skills in audio and visual media, teens are empowered to create media of

their own to share the messages that are important to them. Here are a few program ideas to help teens put their best foot forward on the web.

Social Media Management for College, University, and Job Applicants

Although a teen may not feel at risk of being found on the web by an employer or university/college recruitment office, it is better to start considering the content of their social media sites earlier when they do not have as much material as they may have when they are applying for jobs after graduating from college and university. Teens should consider what they want recruiters and potential employers to find about them. By managing their social media, teens can help make the right impression; something which is different for every industry.



For this program, teens will need access to computers with internet capabilities and can be held in person or posted on the web.

Step 1: Have the teens look up their name using their preferred search engine to see what comes up in their search. The search will help determine what an employer or

recruiter would see if they were trying to find them. If the teen has a common name, ask them to add extra information like school or hometown. It is amazing what information is out there from sports teams to school achievements.

Step 2: The search also helps prioritize which social media sites need to be edited first: the social media site that is highest in the search results then working down.

Step 3: Not all personal social media needs to stay private but the decision should be for the individual teen. Perhaps taking a moment to evaluate the pros and cons of the information that is displayed will help teens make informed decisions. Follow up by showing teens how to adjust privacy settings of the various social media sites and give an explanation of what setting means if necessary. On Facebook, there is a privacy shortcut icon in the top right hand corner and has a link to more settings. On Twitter, the privacy settings are under profile settings. It is important to be familiar with other popular social media sites in order to assist teens.

Step 4: As an extra privacy step, teens may want to consider changing the name that appears on their account especially for teens considering an education career path so their future students can not find them.

Step 5: Now that teens have their preferred privacy settings established, it is time to consider content. This includes deleting inappropriate pictures and posts but also establishing positive content to share such as accomplishments and creative work such as art, music, videos, and writing. Teens should keep in mind that it is a small world and employers can also be a friend of a friend and find you on social media.

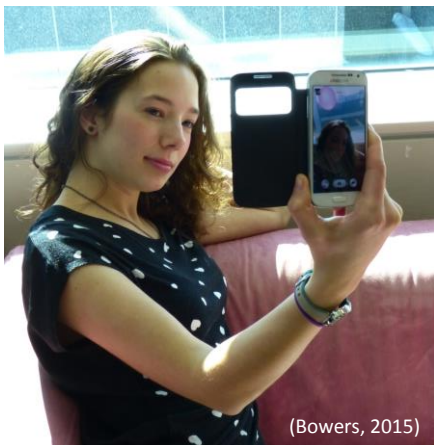
Step 6: Teens may want to consider creating a “professional” social media presence. Teens could adapt a current Twitter account or create a new account to promote creative talents and have employers and recruiters find their best material. A new account needs just as much attention as any other social media site to make it appear first on a results list.

Just as much as employers and recruiters can use social media to find out about teens, teens can also use social media to find out about potential employers and industries of interest by following them on Twitter, checking out the company Facebook page or LinkedIn page. Maybe the teen will find someone they know that is already doing the job of their dreams.

Selfie Day

This program can be held on its own or included as part of a movie award screening night, prom programming, or close to #LibraryShelfie Day (when individuals and libraries are encouraged to take selfies with their collection and share with the tag #LibraryShelfie).

Supplies: List of selfie tips, Cameras (iPads or other mobile devices can be used), Props, Lighting (standing lights, reflectors, clean window), Backdrop (fabric or picture frames), Mirrors



Selfie Tips:

- Practice expressions and poses in the mirror to get your best side
- Play around with the various filters on the device
- Accentuate a single feature: new hair style, favourite earring, or winning smile
- Smile! Practice different grins to see which one fits for you

Who's Watching You?

- Have ample lighting whether it means going outside, standing by a window, positioning individual lights, or using reflectors
- Use props or highlight the background
- Keep in mind the Rule of Thirds: When the photograph is divided into thirds horizontally and vertically, the four points where the lines intersect are the focus points where the main object should be located for maximum visual effect

For more selfie tips, I recommend

<http://www.wikihow.com/Take-Good-Selfies>

which also has some great illustrations.

Do It Yourself Reflectors:

- Mirrors
- White Sheet
- Silver aluminum foil
- Gold aluminum foil
- Circular backing: hoola hoop, cardboard, container lid

Mirrors are a simple way to reflect light but other materials such as cloth can help diffuse light or give that little bit extra light to capture the perfect shot. Gold and aluminum foil will provide different lighting to accentuate colours. To help stabilize flimsy material, attach it to a solid backing with a circular shape to allow for easy handling.

Camera shy teens:

Ask if they want to be the photographer and selfies can turn into portraits. If the teen is disgruntled about the whole selfie phenomenon, ask if they want to write about it. Write the World recently held a writing competition (ended March 2015) that asked young writers to write an opinion piece regarding selfies with the prompt: "Is the selfie a cry for attention? Or is it just another self-portrait?" The site, writetheworld.com, is also great for teens who are looking for more creative writing ideas or prompts. Librarians and educators can use the teen web page, social media page(s), or announcement board to keep their community's young writers informed about the various writing competitions that the site holds which allow writers to test their mettle and get feedback.

References

- Write the World. (2015). Selfie-reflection. Retrieved April 1, 2015, from <http://writetheworld.com/groups/1/assignments/130/shared>
- Young, N. (2014, February 16). "Networked Teens" [Interview with danah boyd]. *Spark*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/spark/spark-241-1.2848125/networked-teens-1.2848126>

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