



# The Perceived Role of Social Media Among Career Practitioners

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# Finnish Institute for Educational Research (FIER)

- National Center for LLG expertise
- National task force:
  - Targeted research for lifelong guidance practice and policy development
- Co-ordination of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) 2007-2012
- National and international conferences
  - 1<sup>st</sup> European Lifelong Guidance Policy Conference 2006
  - IAEVG 2009





# Previous Research/ literature

## Internet in guidance

- Information source, Interaction among clients and guidance professionals (Bimrose & Barnes, 2010; Harris-Bowlsbey & Sampson, 2005; Offer & Chiru, 2005; Watts 2002; Sampson 2008; Vuorinen, 2006)
- Material development (Barnes, La Gro & Watts, 2010; Vuorinen 2006), automated interaction, games and simulations (Hooley, Hutchinson & Watts 2010).
- Facilitation and management the overwhelming amount of information. (Sampson, Shy, Offer & Dozier 2010).



# Previous Research/ literature

## Guidance in Internet

- Delivery of information, material development, automated interaction or a channel for communication (Hooley, Hutchinson & Watts 2010; Vuorinen 2006, Sampson 2008; Watts & Offer 2006).
- Applications with or without automated interaction. Generic counselling processes to help clients make effective use of ICT in career guidance (Sampson 2008).
- “Careering” through the web (Hooley, Hutchinson & Watts 2010).

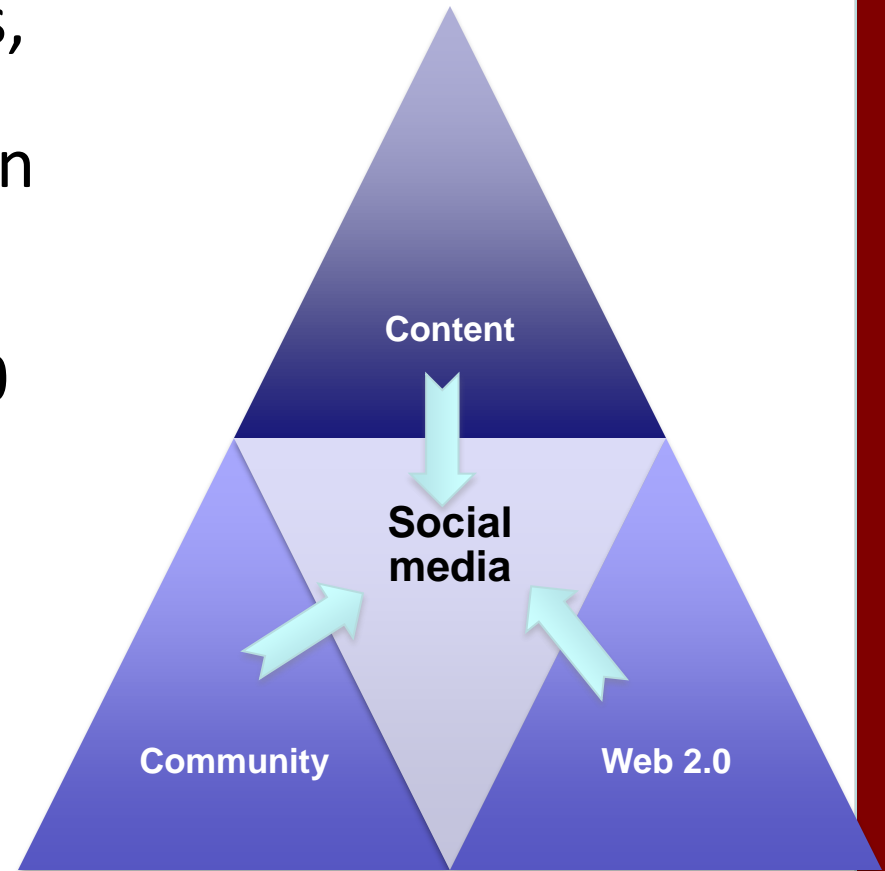


**Gap:** *Due to the novelty of use of social media in career services there has been little research describing the conceptions of career practitioners*

# Defining the social media

“Social media is a process, where individuals and groups build up a common understanding and meanings with contents, communities and web 2.0 technology.”

Sources: Kangas et al. (2007) and Ahlqvist et al (2010)





# Defining the social media

- “form of communication which makes use of information networks and information technology and deals with content created by users in an interactive way and in which interpersonal relationships are created and maintained”

Source: Finnish Terminology Center (2010)



## Aim of the study

- The main aim is to discover and describe the qualitatively different ways in which career practitioners conceptualize the target phenomenon
  
- The particular study questions were framed as follows:
  1. What are the career practitioners conceptions of social media?
  2. What are the *critical aspects* that differentiate *between* qualitatively *varying ways* of understanding the phenomenon?



## Method

- Phenomenographic research
- Investigates the qualitatively different ways in which people *at collective level* experience or conceptualize the target phenomenon (Marton and Booth, 1997; Marton and Pong, 2005; Åkerlind, 2005; 2012)
- The result is the identification of categories of description in which the different ways of conceiving the phenomenon are hierarchically and logically interrelated, and hence the establishment of a typology (Ashworth and Lucas, 1998).





## Data

- collected using focus group interview methodology
- 15 career practitioners (14 women, 1 man), who were experienced Internet users but novices on the social media
  - practitioners represented Finnish guidance community from lifelong guidance perspective (comprehensive, secondary and higher education as well Public Employment Services)
- analyzed using phenomenographical data analysis methods

# Results

## Career practitioners' conceptions of social media in career services

DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION	CATEGORIES				
	unnecessary	dispensable	possibility	desirable	indispensable
Attitude					
Setting					
Opportunities					
Perception					
Nature of interacton					
Guidance locus					
Guidance paradigm					
Role of practitioner					



# *Category 1: Social media in career services is unnecessary*

## **Attitude**

Negative;  
not relevant

## **Setting**

The everyday  
setting for  
young peoples  
live

## **Perception**

threat to the  
profession and  
to the practice

## **Opportunities**

not  
acknowledged

## **Guidance Locus**

supplier driven,  
time and space  
specific

## **Guidance Paradigm**

emphasizing  
the individual  
face to face  
career services

## **Role of practitioner**

expert role

## **Nature of interaction**

practitioner to  
individual



## ***Category 2: Social media in career services is dispensable***

### **Attitude**

sceptical;  
passing fad

### **Setting**

The setting for  
creating and  
sustaining  
connections

### **Perception**

challenge,  
difficult to  
comprehend

### **Opportunities**

information  
delivery

### **Guidance Locus**

supplier driven,  
time specific

### **Guidance paradigm**

Individual  
guidance

### **Role of practitioner**

advising role

### **Nature of interaction**

practitioner to  
individual



## *Category 3: Social media in career services is a possibility*

### **Attitude**

unsure;  
potentially  
useful means

### **Setting**

The setting for  
discussions

### **Perception**

creates a need  
to change the  
accustomed  
ways to do  
work

### **Opportunities**

initiate  
communication

### **Guidance Locus**

demand  
driven, time  
specific

### **Guidance paradigm**

Individual and  
group  
guidance

### **Role of practitioner**

supporting role

### **Nature of interaction**

practitioner  
with individual



## ***Category 4: Social media in career services is desirable***

### **Attitude**

positive;  
complementary  
tool

### **Setting**

the setting for  
reflective  
thought

### **Perception**

reality, not as a  
substitute but  
as a  
complement

### **Opportunities**

support gain  
from peers

### **Guidance Locus**

citizen/user-  
centred, time  
specific

### **Guidance paradigm**

Individual and  
group (with or  
without  
practitioner)

### **Role of practitioner**

reflexive role

### **Nature of interaction**

practitioner  
with individual  
  
individual with  
peers



## *Category 5: Social media in career services is indispensable*

### **Attitude**

positive/excited  
; way to extend  
service

### **Setting**

The setting for  
people  
processing on  
their life

### **Perception**

positive  
potential,  
increasingly  
important way  
to extend  
career services

### **Opportunities**

knowledge  
from peers and  
others

### **Guidance Locus**

citizen/user-  
centred

### **Guidance paradigm**

Self-help  
approach;  
group (without  
or with  
practitioner )

### **Role of practitioner**

one resource  
among others  
on individuals  
life

### **Nature of interaction**

individual with  
community  
members

individual to  
practitioner

Table 1. Career practitioners' conceptions of social media in career services



DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION	CATEGORIES				
	unnecessary	dispensable	possibility	desirable	indispensable
<b>Attitude</b>	negative; not relevant	skeptical; passing fad	unsure; potentially useful means	positive; complementary tool	positive/excited; way to extend service
<b>Setting</b>	The everyday setting for young peoples live	The setting for creating and sustaining connections	The setting for discussions	The setting for reflective thought	The setting for people processing on their life
<b>Opportunities</b>	not acknowledged	information delivery	initiate communication	support gain from peers	knowledge from peers and others
<b>Perception</b>	threat	challenge	change	reality	positive potential
<b>Nature of interaction</b>	practitioner → individual	practitioner → individual	practitioner ↔ individual	practitioner ↔ individual  individual ↔ peers	individual ↔ community members  individual → practitioner
<b>Guidance locus</b>	supplier driven, time and space specific	supplier driven, time specific	demand driven, time specific	citizen/user-centred, time specific	citizen/user-centred
<b>Guidance paradigm</b>	Individual face to face guidance	Individual guidance	Individual and group guidance	Individual and group (with or without practitioner)	Self-help approach  Group (without or with practitioner )
<b>Role of practitioner</b>	expert role	advising role	supporting role	reflexive role	one resource among others on individuals life





## Discussion

- In general, it was possible to see the expansion of collective awareness of critical aspects, especially in regarding the following aspects
  - *The attitude*: opening up from negative, not relevant to positive/excited and a way to extend service;
  - *The settings*: from everyday setting for young peoples live to a setting where people process their lives
  - *The opportunities*: opening up from `not acknowledged´ to not only `information delivery and communication channel, but also towards knowledge available from peers and others
  - *Perception*: from threat to a positive potential



## Discussion (continued)

- expansion of collective awareness of critical aspects:
  - *Guidance locus*: from supplier driven, time and space specific to citizen/user-centered
  - *Guidance paradigm*: from individual face to face guidance to groups (with or without practitioner) and self-help approach
  - *Role of practitioner*: from expert role to one resource among others on individuals life
  - *Nature of interaction*: from 'practitioner to individual' to interaction between all community members



## Key questions for consideration

- What are the implications for training, research and policy development?

# Future research



## Further information



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