

Quality and Ethics in Web-Based Guidance: Coping With Change and Stability

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Organization of the Presentation

- Evolution of ICT in Guidance
- Participants in Web-Based Guidance
- Participants' Potential Contributions to Quality
 - Funding Agents
 - Policy Makers
 - Developers
 - Practitioners
 - Users
 - Researchers and Evaluators
- Participants' Potential Contributions to Ethical Practice
- Conclusion

Evolution of ICT in Guidance

- Since 1985 some things have changed (e.g., technology) and some things have stayed the same (e.g., the need to explore options)
- Web-based guidance applications – provide unprecedented access to assessment and information
- How can we make appropriate use of this new technology to meet existing needs?

Defining Quality and Ethics

- Quality - the demonstrated achievement of standards adopted by our profession for the creation of resources and delivery of services.
- Ethics - principles that guide the behavior of developers and practitioners that help ensure no harm occurs to the people they serve as a result of their actions or their failure to act.

Web-Based Guidance Applications

- Stand-alone applications offer a single guidance function, e.g., assessment, information, resume/CV preparation, or job banking.
- Integrated applications combine two or more guidance functions, making it easy to share data among applications.
- Stand-alone systems - similar to mini systems
- Integrated systems - similar to maxi systems

Participants in Web-Based Guidance

- Funding agents
- Policy makers
- Developers
- Practitioners
- Users, and
- Researchers and evaluators

Participants' Potential Contributions to Quality Web-Based Guidance

Funding Agents

- Provide adequate funding that allows developers to meet professional standards
 - Under funding a common problem – making it difficult to meet professional standards
 - Better to fund fewer projects that meet standards, than to fund many mediocre projects
 - Importance of funding Web-based applications – public perception Internet resources should be free of charge even though resource development and maintenance is expensive

Funding Agents

- Provide systematic funding that allows attention to implementation
 - Too much attention to development – too little attention to implementation
 - Development funding should include implementation resources for practitioners
 - Service delivery funding should include staff time, training, and evaluation costs, as well as counseling for those who need it
 - Funding could be contingent upon completion of an implementation plan

Funding Agents

- Provide funding for innovation in the use of ICT in guidance
 - A portion of funding needs to be reserved for innovation

Policy Makers

- Develop and refine standards for the career development of individuals
 - Outcomes of guidance
 - Foundation for other standards
 - Context for software development and service delivery

Policy Makers

- Develop and refine software standards
 - There has been a proliferation of developers and applications as a result of the Internet
 - Most Web sites provide no data on the quality of assessments or information
 - Without software standards, developers can not be held accountable for their systems
 - Standards need to be economically realistic, yet strive toward increased quality over time

Policy Makers

- Develop and refine standards of practice
 - Quality software, badly used, can result in poor guidance outcomes
 - Standards of practice help practitioners to make the best use of available software
- Develop and refine standards for practitioner training
 - Generic standards plus exposure to above professional standards

Developers

- Use standards of practice created by policy makers in developing Web-based guidance applications
 - Problems exist in the quality of assessments, information, and external links of existing sites
 - Standards should be incorporated into site design
 - Costs for standards compliance should be estimated and priorities set
 - Plan established for increasing standards compliance over time

Developers

- Document adherence to professional standards to aid users and practitioners in selecting applications
 - Poor documentation of existing standards compliance
 - Untrained developers unaware of standards importance
 - Too little development time and funds available
 - Practitioners perceived as disinterested in standards
 - One solution is to require standards compliance in order to receive funds
 - Another solution is to train practitioners not to purchase or use undocumented software

Developers

- Create practitioner-training resources as an element of system development
 - Creation of training resources is a key element of success
 - Changes in training should mirror software changes
 - Training content should include the system itself and the implementation of the system in practice
 - Best practices can be encouraged with examples
 - Developer Web sites can be used to deliver training and promote interaction among practitioners

Practitioners

- Recommend Web-based guidance applications that are appropriate for user needs
 - An overwhelming number of guidance applications are available for users
 - Practitioner knowledge of Web sites and user needs can be used in making informed recommendations
 - Establishing a collaborative working relationship increases user motivation to follow through with recommendations

Practitioners

- Provide counseling and guidance for those individuals who need support to make effective use of applications
 - While high-readiness individuals tend to need little assistance, low-readiness individuals need assistance in order to benefit from applications
 - 3 steps: screening, orientation, and follow-up
 - Another opportunity is the “teachable moment” when users access telephone or videoconference support while using an application
 - Work with users “in the moment” as learning occurs

Practitioners

- Create organizational Web sites to facilitate practitioner-supported and self-help use of Web-based guidance applications
 - Help users locate resources that meet their needs by incorporating staff expertise in linking typical user needs with available resources (“need-based” approach)
 - Increases the likelihood that users will locate appropriate resources without being overwhelmed
 - Viewing potential needs helps inform users about needs that can be addressed in the future

Practitioners

- Successfully implement Web-based guidance applications within their organization
 - Practitioners can guide the implementation process
 - The steps in the implementation process include: program evaluation, software selection, software integration, staff training, trial use, operation, and evaluation

Users

- Select self-help Web-based guidance applications that have evidence of quality
 - Need to choose wisely from available applications
 - Individuals must be responsible for their choices
 - The use of gateway sites with applications selected on the basis of quality helps
 - Promote consumer education through career education programs in schools and higher education (Offer & Watts, 1997)

Users

- Follow-through with practitioner recommendations for selecting Web-based guidance applications
 - Obligation to follow recommendations to use quality applications and avoid being distracted by surfing the Web
- Follow-through with the counseling support available for using Web-based guidance applications
 - Obligation to follow through with collaborative decision to complete counseling

Researchers and Evaluators

- Provide policy makers, developers, and practitioners with feedback on the functioning of applications
 - Evaluation is standards in action - Without documentation, assertions of quality are meaningless
 - User and practitioner **surveys**, **focus groups** of users and practitioners, participant **observations**, usage **tracking**, and **outcome measures** can lead to improvements in the software and the strategies used for implementing the software
 - Clearinghouses and developer Web sites can disseminate what has been learned

Researchers and Evaluators

- Provide accountability for funds expended for Web-based guidance applications
 - Provides evidence of return on investment
 - Funding agents can make more informed judgments about allocating scarce resources
 - Also may lead to improved specifications for system development and use, ultimately leading to improved quality

Participants' Potential Contributions to Ethical Practice in Web-Based Guidance

Ethical Issues

- Invalid assessments and information
- Confidentiality of data stored on remote servers
- Insecure data transmitted over the Internet
- Services provided by unqualified practitioners
- Lack of practitioner intervention for low readiness individuals when guidance is needed

Ethical Issues

- Lack of awareness of location-specific information by remote practitioners
- Limited access to the Internet due to limited financial resources (The digital divide)
- Limited visual and auditory privacy for counseling in remote locations

Contributions to Ethical Practice

- **Funding agents**
 - Require that developers and practitioners show how relevant ethical issues are to be dealt with in order to receive funding
- **Policy makers**
 - Ensure that software standards and standards of practice reflect relevant ethical issues

Contributions to Ethical Practice

- **Developers**
 - Ensure that their designs do not create any ethical problems
 - Create practitioner training resources that show how ethical problems can be minimized in practice
- **Practitioners**
 - Complete ethics-related training offered by developers and other providers
 - Develop resources and service delivery procedures that minimize ethical concerns

Contributions to Ethical Practice

- **Users**
 - Be informed consumers, reporting potentially unethical practice to appropriate authorities
- **Researchers and Evaluators**
 - include ethics as one of the elements of research and evaluations

Conclusion

- ICT in guidance - change and stability
 - Technology changing, while fundamental career development needs constant
- Synergy among guidance participants – best way to cope with change & stability
- Working individually and working together, participants can achieve the synergy necessary to delivery quality services in an ethically responsible manner

For Additional Information

www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/

Thank You

