Ethical Issues Associated with Information and Communication Technology in Guidance

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Organization of the Presentation

- Introduction

- Social Equity Issues

- Resource Issues

- Service Issues

- Professional Standards

- Conclusion

Introduction

- Evolution of ICT in guidance

  - Batch processing of career assessments by mainframe computers and minicomputers

  - Local delivery of career assessments, information, and instruction on personal computers

  - Distance delivery of career assessments, information, and instruction on the Internet, along with distance service delivery and social media via the Internet

- Evolution of ethical issues – stability & change

Social Equity Issues

- The Internet allows counseling and guidance to transcend geographic and physical barriers

- Increased Internet access from cheaper computers and mobile devices (smart phones & tablets)

- However, access is still not universal
  - With a global population in 2011 of almost 7 billion, this still means that 4,620,000,000 people in the world do not have ready access to the Internet

- Even in the most economically advanced countries there are still individuals with little to no access to the Internet – Public access points are inadequate

Social Equity Issues

- Equity of access to career interventions is a social justice issue

- Equity of access to the Internet is also a social justice issue

- The costs of computer hardware and access fees puts the Internet further out of reach of persons with limited financial resources

Resource Issues

- Quality of Assessments and Information Delivered on the Internet
- Availability of User Support when Needed

Quality of Assessments & Information

- Highly variable quality of assessments online with little evidence of validity

- Variable quality of test interpretations

- Career information has similar problems of variability and validity evidence
  - Some data inaccurate, biased, out-of-date
  - Some good data is poorly presented

- Individuals may be getting better access to inferior guidance resources

Quality of Assessments & Information

- Economics of publishing a factor
  - High costs of developing and distributing paper products created a disincentive for producing low quality resources
  - Lower costs for electronic publishing make it more economically viable to produce and distribute poor quality information
  - (Many responsible publishers remain who produce high quality resources)

Availability of User Support

- Successful use of resources dependent on readiness for career decision making
- Individuals with lower readiness need more assistance to make effective use of career resources
- Individuals with higher readiness need little or no support from a practitioner to use career resources

Availability of User Support

- Resources in the past were provided by a practitioner

- Resources now widely available on the Internet

- Many users unprepared for independent use of resources

- Web sites do not generally indicate circumstances where help is needed

Service Issues

- Confidentiality and User Privacy
- Distance Service Delivery
- Social Media

Confidentiality and User Privacy

- The expanded access to information increases the chances for violations of confidentiality

- Data security measures not uniformly followed by practitioners

- A Lack of auditory and visual privacy is also a problem, especially at public access Internet sites

Distance Service Delivery

- The Internet improves access due to problems of disability or geography
- Potential problems:
  - Inappropriate clients (mental health/literacy)
  - Unavailability of local emergency contacts
  - Limited awareness of local conditions
  - Limited awareness of diverse cultures
  - Confusion regarding practitioner credentials

Social Media

- Used to deliver and market services
- Potential problems:
  - Maintaining professional boundaries between practitioners and the individuals they serve
  - Reaching a mutual understanding with the client on the purpose and use of social media in service delivery

14

Professional Standards

- Ethical Standards

- Credentialing Standards

- Accreditation Standards

Ethical Standards

- Ethical codes created to educate professionals, as well as protecting the public

- Three approaches in developing ethical codes

    1. Incorporating elements of ICT use into relevant sections of a general code

    2. Creating specialized codes

    3. Including ethical issues related to guidance as one component of standards for the design and delivery of computer-based career resources

Ethical Standards

- Codes are being kept up-to-date, such as distance services and social media

- Changes in the way that individuals gain access to resources and services have not made issues that were originally identified thirty years ago any less relevant today

Credentialing Standards

- Credentialing standards were created, in part, as a conceptual basis for voluntary professional certification

- These standards function similar to ethical codes with ICT elements added to general credentialing standards or the creation of specialized standards

Accreditation Standards

- Accreditation standards are intended to ensure that students graduating from preparation programs have the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively practice

- Accreditation standards are more general than ethical or credentialing standards regarding ICT in service delivery

Conclusion

- Professional associations are working to keep standards up-to-date

- However, research is needed to guide the development of future standards and training resources

- The success of ICT in guidance depends on our ability to shape fast changing technology in organizations and professions that change more slowly

For more information

www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter