Social Media and Personnel Selection:
The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Michael J. Zickar
Bowling Green State University
Cybervetting Example
“My data”
Don’t believe everything you see on the Internet!
Outline of Talk

1) Introduction
   - Define Terms
   - Describe State of Practice
   - Describe Research Base

2) Rough Theoretical model

3) Propositions derived from model

4) Implications based on the model
What is *cybervetting*?

*Cybervetting* is defined as a practice of reviewing various electronic sources to glean information about prospective job applicants (Mikkelson, 2010).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Site</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search engines</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking sites</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo and video sharing sites</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and business networking sites</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Web sites</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News sharing sites (e.g. Twitter)</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online forums and communities</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual world sites</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web sites that aggregate personal information</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online gaming sites</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional background checking services</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classifieds and auction sites</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is cybervetting used for?

**Screening**

- 79% of US human resource professionals use online information to evaluate job candidates
- 35% have rejected a job candidate based on the information found online
What is cybervetting used for? (cont’d)

Recruitment/Sourcing
• 73% of the responding HR professionals have successfully hired a candidate who was identified or introduced through SNWs

![Percentage of Successfully Hired Candidates](image-url)
What is cybervetting used for? (cont’d)

Recruitment/Sourcing

• 92% of employers use or plan to begin using Social Networking Websites to support their recruitment efforts

Growth of Cybervetting as an HR Tool

[Bar chart showing growth of cybervetting from 2010 to 2012]
Summary of the Current Research

Job Applicant Reactions:

• Job applicants generally have a negative attitude toward the practice of cybervetting (Stroughton, Thompson, Meade, & Wilson, 2012).
Summary of the Current Research

Personality:

• Web users who are low in Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability tend to post inappropriate info on their profiles (Karl, Peluchette, & Schlaegel, 2010).

• Extraverts tend to exhibit similar pattern of behavior in their offline and online lives (Tosun, & Lajunen, 2010)
Summary of the Current Research

Personality:

• Raters are able to draw semi-accurate conclusions about a SNW profile owner’s personality (Back et al. 2010; Gosling et al., 2008).

• But, comments or posts made by the third parties on one’s SNW profile may affect how observers rate the profile owner’s personality (Walther et al., 2009).
Summary of the Current Research

LinkedIn

• Relation between number of connections, positions held, recommendations given, employment gaps and competencies (Sinar, 2013)
Summary of the Current Research

Intelligence and Global Academic Performance:

• Raters are able to accurately differentiate between the SNW users who score high versus low on Wonderlic personnel test and those who have higher GPA versus lower GPA (Kluemper & Rose, 2009)
What we know

There is a

- modest correlation between self-ratings of personality and perceptions based on online-based data
- modest correlation between self-rated personality traits and specific online behaviors
- tendency for people to be influenced by irrelevant behavior
Where the research/thinking is lacking?

What are different types of online behavior?
  What should be focus on?
  What should we ignore?

Can we develop a theoretical model that will help guide research and practice?

Can we develop a set of procedures to help practitioners make better decisions?
Defining Online Behavior…

It is a host of activities in which web users engage in order to achieve various goals.

Types of online behavior:
1. Professional
2. Proactive
3. Deviant
4. Irrelevant
Professional Cyber-Behavior

Posting related to one’s area of expertise

  Job-related accomplishments

  Professional groups

Marketing one’s products or services

Advertising work experience and proficiencies

LinkedIn most popular source
HR Tests - Recruitment, assessment, and personnel selection
The science and practice of matching employer needs with individual talent.

Wednesday, January 10, 2007
Q&A #1: Dr. Dennis Dooverspike

Q: What do you think are the primary recruitment/assessment issues that employers are struggling with today?

DD: By the time I write this and it appears in print, I will probably change my mind as I have never been good at predicting present or future trends. However, I would argue for two issues:

1. How to mix science and technology in a practical, effective, and legal manner. In particular, how to make the best use of computer and Internet-based screening and recruitment while still complying with legal requirements. This is especially true in the area of unstructured Internet-based assessment.

2. How to balance the competing demands of recruitment and assessment (selection). We tend to go through cycles in which the emphasis is placed. For awhile it was almost 100% recruitment, and then we seemed to start shifting back to the assessment process, now the emphasis seems to be about 50%-50%. But the question or challenge remains, how can we recruit large numbers of highly qualified applicants, and how do we know they are really highly qualified.

RR: What is an example of an innovative or creative recruitment/assessment practice that you’ve seen recently?

DD: I will answer this question in three ways. First, devil’s advocate, I have not seen any innovative or creative approaches. We have a new technology, but the approaches themselves came out of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Many of our “innovative” approaches consist of the computerization of very old approaches. The one truly new advancement, Schmidt and Hunter’s utility and meta-analysis theories, has still not had much of an influence on practice, especially on legal guidelines.

Second, I guess this would be angel’s advocate, there has been a shift to 1) a greater concern with fairness and justice and the perceptions of the applicant 2) with seeing HRM as being an advocate for the employee. I see these trends as related in that they both reflect a great concern with human factors, especially the view of the applicant or future employee.
Proactive Cyber-Behavior

Behavior that relates to helping others and creating a positive atmosphere

- Participating in charities
- Helping others out
- Volunteerism
Hello and thank you for visiting my fundraising page for Coasting for Kids, benefiting Give Kids The World (GKTW) GKTW is a resort where kids who face life-threatening illnesses can enjoy vacation experiences in central Florida with their families. Since its founding in 1986, Give Kids The World has welcomed over 57,000 families from all 50 states and over 68 countries; last year alone, GKTW hosted more than 6,500 families. GKTW has also achieved a top rating from Charity Navigator. http://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=search.summary&orgid=3763

Give Kids The World has made a promise to never turn a child away. For 70% of the year however, the Village runs above 100% occupancy, meaning some families must lodge off property during their Wish Trip. For this reason, Give Kids The World Village is in the midst of the largest expansion project in its history. Your donation to my participation in Coasting for Kids will help them with this expansion effort.

As you may know, roller coasters and amusement parks have long been a passion of mine, and I am thrilled to be participating in Coasting for Kids for a second consecutive year. On June 9th, I'll be joining dozens of fellow coaster enthusiasts for a day of marathon coaster riding at Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio, to raise both
Deviant Cyber-Behavior

Behavior that demonstrates a negative disposition
- Taunting or harassing behavior
- Drug use
- Excessive internet use
- Legal issues
badgrl2:
I HATE U!!!!
>:((...
Akron Municipal Court

Search Result Error

The previous operation could not be completed. Please click on your browser Back button to return to the previous screen or click on the link to search a new case.

Could not find a match for this inquiry. Please try another case.

Back
Irrelevant Behavior

Online behavior that would not be related to online work behavior

  - Sports affiliations
  - Hobbies
  - Political activity
Dennis Doverspike
"fitnathouse"

Reviews
Top Reviewer Ranking: 69,682 (Learn More) - Total Helpful Votes: 290 of 329

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ Fancy Pants Soap Opera, March 24, 2013
I am going to guess I am not Downton Abbey’s target audience. Still, overall I find it to be an enjoyable series, although it seems to lose its way in Season 2. I guess the sophomore jinx. In particular, when you have a story line that features a returning relative who had amnesia for years and also suffered bad burns and has their face taped so they are unrecognizable, you could be watching any soap opera parody.

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ Agree with Silver almost 100%, March 24, 2013
In part, I have to admit I love this book because I agree with close to 95% of the points Silver makes. An excellent critique of the current media fascination with big data and predictive analytics. Also joins many others in criticizing the integrity of the scientific literature. There is much to recommend in this book. I only give it 4 stars rather than 5 because it could have used some editing. Signal and the Noise seems to repeat the same points over and over, so there’s a lot of redundancy. The book could have probably been reduced by half. It is probably difficult to make some of the arguments in the book interesting to the general public, but Silver does a good job of trying to...

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful
⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ Parachute 4, February 25, 2013
Given this is a 4th Edition, you know that there is demand for this book and that it fills a place in the market. I was probably the wrong audience for this book and was unable to read through it quickly. Not sure what it adds to previous edition. However, Richard Bolles clearly knows his topic and how to guide the user looking for career advice.
“I am going to guess I am not Downton Abbey's target audience. Still, overall I find it to be an enjoyable series, although it seems to lose its way in Season 2. I guess the sophomore jinx. In particular, when you have a story line that features a returning relative who had amnesia for years and also suffered bad burns and has their face taped so they are unrecognizable, you could be watching any soap opera parody.”
“Great game. Button mashing fun. Very realistic boxing. I guess the next improvement would be to make it easier to move. You still seem pretty limited in you foot movement; pretty much can move back and forth or around your opponent in a circle. A definite must have in your video collection whether you like boxing or not. Fun game to play with others.”
Propositions

1) Online behavior is rarely directly related to job performance and so we should be extremely careful about using it for hiring decisions

2) Many of the antecedents of online behavior are also predictive of job behavior

3) Focus on online behaviors that can be directly linked to work-relevant antecedents
Theoretical Model

Common Antecedents:
- Personality
- Intelligence
- KSAs

Online Behavior:
- Professional
- Positive
- Negative

Workplace Criteria:
- Task Performance
- OCB
- CWB

Irrelevant Cyber-Behavior
Professional Behavior

Common Antecedents:
- Job Knowledge
- Intelligence
- Conscientiousness
- Work Centrality

Online Behavior: Professional

Workplace Criteria: Task Performance
Proactive Behavior

Common Antecedents: Conscientiousness

Online Behavior: Proactive

Workplace Criteria: Org Citizenship Behavior
Deviant Behavior

Common Antecedents: Conscientiousness

Online Behavior: Deviant

Workplace Criteria: Interpersonal & Organizational Deviance
Research Propositions

1) Does professional online behavior predict task performance?
2) Does proactive online behavior predict OCB?
3) Does online deviant behavior predict interpersonal and organizational deviance?
Developing coding scheme for Professional Behavior

1) Discusses issues related to work
2) Marketing themselves
3) Membership in professional groups
4) Grammar
Challenges When Using Social Media in Practice

1) To what extent does irrelevant information influence judgments?
2) Training raters to effectively code online behavior
3) Training raters to ignore irrelevant cues
4) Control for volume of activity
5) How do we handle unstandardized data?
Conclusions and Implications

Cybervetting is going to occur even if we think it is bad practice. Therefore, we have an obligation to make the best out of a potentially dangerous practice or to empirically demonstrate its futility.

This practice raises issues of employer-personal boundaries

   Special laws apply to protect some privacy issues
LOONEY TUNES

"That's all Folks!"