SOCIAL WORK AND ICT-SOME ETHICAL ISSUES

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ABSTRACT: There is a tendency to see a new development in the field of ICT-s, and possibly taking advantages of this new technology can be brought to social work. Social work faces a critical need to incorporate ICTs into training social workers, delivering social work services, and the conduct of social work research. The increasing use of ICTs in social work raises some new questions in relation with confidentiality, privacy and data security. Regardless of the level of practice, ICTs will continue influencing the careers of social workers and the clients they serve. Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships but in the same time social workers need to have an understanding of the roles that such ICTs may play in the lives of their clients. This paper also identifies potential pitfalls and challenges with respect to the adoption of ICT, with recommendations for advancing their use in practice, education. Social workers also need ICT competencies in order to effectively lead different types of social change initiatives or collaborate with professionals of other disciplines who are using ICTs as part of existing strategies.

Key words: ICT, social work, practice, ethic

INTRODUCTION

The term technology refers to the practical application of scientific knowledge, defined as "any electronically mediated activity" used by social workers in the administration and evaluation of social services. We already noted that the ICT has multiple policy objectives, including: increasing accountability, transparency, delivering better management and standardization of good practice. This paper aims to represent how technology can be used in social work practice and the ethical issues. Furthermore, the objective of this study is to identify how these issues can be exceed and the service be effective and secure.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Every aspect of human life today is affected by information and communication technology (ICT) and the future even promises more transformations (Tregeagle &Darcy, 2008; Lahlou, 2008). Technology has played and continue to play a significant role in social work. practice.
Taylor describes four other uses of computers:

- Billing systems – including billing third-party payers and figuring the payroll
- Word processing –including storing progress notes and printing personalised fund raising letters

- Decision support – forecasting future services or budget needs and
- Specialized uses –e.g. scoring personality tests, conducting client assessment interviews.

The council of Social Work in Education 2008 recognise the importance of technology to social work practice and education. Many social services agencies now use computers to increase the efficiency and utility of their information systems Management –information systems for social service organizations are basic to good evaluation. A good management information system should make a sense to the social worker, administrator and the researcher.

Without technology, social work practice today would be ineffective. According to European perspective there are identified a number of challenges in the context of restructuring of public social services and Ict will be an effective instrument for these modern services.

Social work educators need to be capable with ICT in order to design activities, projects that reflect the real-world use of ICT. Beyond higher education, continuing education opportunities respond to recent technology advances which are also necessary in order to help social workers to stay in current with the most relevant and useful technologies. Other disciplines have recognized the importance of ICT and consider it to be important for professional development. One of the dangers of a technology-led approach is that social work need to be understood primarily in the light of the aims of ICT developers, and evaluated in their terms.
Darcy (2008) acknowledge the importance of technology in social work; , about the deployment of ICT in modern welfare practice serves the interests of social work managers and administrators more than the mission of the profession, especially and more importantly the interests of service users.

The most important, is that they should always refer to the NASW Code of Ethics and the NASW/ASWB Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice for guidance in the deployment of technology in practice. Ethical considerations for ICT related issues first appeared under the topic ''Information ethics'' in the Annual Review of Information Science and Technology in 1992. Individuals and organisations therefore be aware for the emergency need to be ethically sensitive as they deploy ICT on their operations. This new development of on line services, offers a lot of advantages to service user in the same time various ethical dilemmas become apparent as we try to define the limits of confidentiality in social work. One of the most important is the right of service users to privacy means that securing the confidentiality of personal records.

THE IMPACT OF ICT IN THE RELATION SERVICE USER –SOCIAL WORKER

Such interactions or Internet services may be question-and-answer chats, emails about appointments, which may be very helpful to home-bound clients with debilitating illnesses, elderly, women's with babies etc. We know that social work is an imperative work that has a significant emotional content working face to face with service users who may be distressed, angry or otherwise disturbing in their presentation. There is a evidence whom ICT has affected the relation between social workers and services users. Parton (2008), opinion is that technology has made social work more "informational" and less "social" (p. 253), applying technology to practice is good, but one should remember that technology does not care for people, technology is just a tool one utilizes to facilitate care or service delivery.

In some studies are tracked patterns of communication within online groups, and have found that many of the processes used are the same as those used in face-to-face self-help groups (Finn, 1999; Perron, 2002; Salem, Bogat, & Reid, 1997). Given the prevalence of online relationships, social workers and other human service professionals must be aware of the positive (e.g., social support, see Perron, 2002), and negative effects (e.g., cyber-bullying, see Hinduja & Patchin, 2008)

Currently, the social work curricula emphasize the importance and development of in-person relationships, while little attention was for the role of online relationships and computer-mediated relationships. The relation with the social worker is human they can see directly with each other but with computer isn't the same. To remain relevant social work needs to continue to influence systems for the benefit of society while reviewing and updating theories and models to reflect current lifestyles, modes and patterns of communication.

SUPERVISION and CONTINOUS ICT EDUCATION

Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.

Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice, they should remain in current with the news in research. The reality is that the majority of research findings are disseminated and accessed electronically via the Internet.

CHALLENGES OF ICT and SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Despite the continued growth and expansion of technologies, a lot of disadvantaged persons still do not have access to ICT.

The social worker using technologies must consider the advantages and disadvantages of online services (Car & Sheikh, 2004). Without proper training, social workers in practice are at risk of delivering poor quality services or facing legal or ethical issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the theoretical, empirical findings and on conclusions derived, it is necessary to consider certain recommendations:

Regard to the use of new technologies social worker has to do with client privacy, competence in the specific technology is important, they need to understand how to properly use computerized client information and know the risks involved.

Social work supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development and advocate for adequate resources to meet clients' needs. Supervision is very necessary for implementation of technology especially in developing countries whare ICT is relatively new field especially in social work.

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