

Social Networking After Post-Secondary Education in Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

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BACKGROUND

Why it's needed?

- Social connections ↔ Quality of Life
- Dissatisfaction
- How do we improve the quality of life and social integration of these individuals while minimizing the stress that comes from transitioning into a new phase of life?
- Research indicates that social networking and other forms of electronic communication have proven to be a tremendous benefit to perception of quality of life and social connections for young adults with and without disabilities.

Strengths

- Improved Quality of Life
- Social connectedness
- Development of Independent and Life Transition skills
- Focus on social skills, job readiness, transportation

Limitations

- Few internet-based tools with the intent to enhance to lives of young adults with disabilities
- Access to tools
- Opportunity to apply the skills learned

METHODS

What are we doing about it?

- **The aim:** To develop an online portal to address some of the various social needs of young adults with disabilities.
- Specifically focuses on improving some of the aspects in young adults' lives via popular social networking sites.
- Factors that will be addressed:
 - assisting in the identification of social interests
 - creating forums for local opportunities that align with those interests
 - linking individuals to resources that support their interests
 - providing guidelines for safe relationships

RESULTS

Video Guides

- Video walkthroughs provide visual guides
- Combination of video, audio, text
- Easily can pause, repeat, adjust speed, and move to specific places in the video
- Provides ADA compliant captions
- Can be utilized in in upcoming applications

Why YouTube ?

- Easily Accessible
- Easily Portable
- Most popular video sharing service
- Comments and questions for feedback
- Stability
- Cost



Figure 2. Services Offered
Which Services?

- Google
 - How to sign up for a Google account
- Facebook
 - How to setup a Facebook account
- Twitter
 - How to setup a Twitter account
- Instagram
 - How to setup an Instagram account
- Pinterest
 - How to setup a Pinterest account



Figure 1. Google Account Video with ADA captions

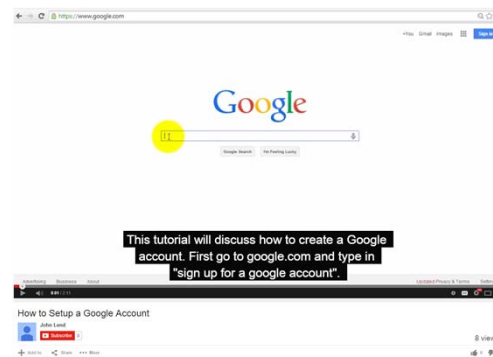


Figure 3. Safety Guidelines
Guidelines for Online Safety

Think Before You Post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make you feel uncomfortable. • Think before posting pictures of yourself or others online and don't post any pictures that are considered to be inappropriate (example: naked photos). • Don't post anything offensive, rude or threatening (example: Don't bully anyone's religion, race, gender, etc.).
Respect Others Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do be a good online citizen and not do anything that hurts other people or is against the law. • Don't send or forward images/information that might embarrass, hurt or harass someone.
Protect Yourself Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't give out your passwords or personal information such as your address and telephone number to anyone. • Do not someone tell you if you come across something that makes you feel uncomfortable. • Don't agree to meet with someone you "meet" online without first consulting the adults. If you agree to the meeting, be sure that it is in a public place and bring a friend along. • Do adjust privacy settings on your page if needed (See Below).
Have Fun!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do use social networking to have fun, make new friends, share your thoughts with others and learn things online.

CONCLUSIONS

- Our guides assist in the identification of social interests, creating forums for local opportunities that align with those interests, linking individuals to resources that support their interests, and providing guidelines for safe relationships.
- In regards to the numerous benefits of social networking including the overall improvement of quality of life in individuals with disabilities, research warrants that more applications promoting social connectedness, independent living and life transition skills be developed.
- The gap appears to lie not in **access** to learning the skills necessary to transition into adult life, but in **supplying young adults with opportunities** to use the skills they are learning.
- Particularly in the area of social connections there seems to be a lack of opportunities for young adults with disabilities to meet their counterparts.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Once you connect with friends, then what? Statewide information on social activities – segmented by geographical region
- Integrate with a larger website and database for a specific resource for the population
- Continued updating of resources will be required

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