



Mindframe
National Media Initiative

**Mindframe advisory group meetings 2013: An overview of
the risks and opportunities surrounding social media**

Hunter Institute of Mental Health

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Introduction

This summary report provides a snapshot of some of the key themes from three separate *Mindframe* National Media Initiative advisory groups which discussed the use of social media. The findings will be used to help shape future work under *Mindframe*, as well as contribute to the ongoing work of the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre (YAW CRC) in social media use by young people. The YAW CRC is looking at the risks, challenges and opportunities presented by social media for mental health promotion and suicide prevention for young people. The outcomes from a national roundtable event on this topic can be found [here](#).

Following the YAW CRC Roundtable in February 2013, *Mindframe* hosted separate annual meetings with members from the:

- *Mindframe* Media Advisory Group (MMAG)
- *Mindframe* Journalism and Public Relations Education Advisory Group
- *Mindframe* Communication Managers' Group (with representatives from key mental health and suicide prevention organisations).

The meetings provided the opportunity for members to discuss the use of social media, which included:

- The challenges that the medium posed
- Organisational policies that regulate its use
- How *Mindframe* could better support the sectors in this area (i.e. targeted social media resources)
- Outcomes and actions

Comprehensive consultation reports describing the common themes from these discussions can be found on the *Mindframe* website [here](#).

A summary of combined outcomes

Shared views

- **Current use of social media across sectors**

In terms of social media usage, there was a general consensus among all respondents that social media use was both widespread and extensive. Social media was commonly reported to be used as a marketing tool and as a method of communicating and engaging with target audiences. While there was some evidence to suggest many diverse social media types were currently used, most attendees were of the opinion that for professional purposes, the social media platforms Facebook and Twitter were the most common.

- **Challenges of social media**

When considering social media use, it appeared that there were many consistent challenges across each of the professions. For instance, one of the most prominent concerns regarding social media was the perceived lack of control an individual or organisation had once information was posted on their social media channel. Many respondents from all professions asserted that they were very limited in their capacity to maintain control of any material posted once made available on a public forum.



The only feasible methods of control identified were:

- Staff being extra vigilant when considering posting content
- Moderating user-generated commentary on social media feeds.

All sectors shared similar difficulties regarding moderation of their social media space, such as the lack of guidance on how to moderate effectively, and the limited resources devoted to this need.

- **Legalities and regulation of social media use**

Many members from each group expressed concerns regarding the legalities of social media use. There appeared to be a general lack of awareness surrounding the laws regulating social media use, or the belief that the legal ramifications for violation of laws were insufficient to act as a deterrent. The lack of clarity in the laws surrounding social media made it particularly challenging for dealing with trolls, but also caused many members to question whether they were accountable for all inflammatory content posted on their organisational social media feeds.

- **Personal and professional social media accounts**

A final issue that was consistently observed throughout all advisory group meetings was the difficulties surrounding personal and professional social media accounts. Members from all groups discussed the challenge of enforcing guidance over material that was posted on employee personal social media profiles, particularly outside of work hours. This was perceived as a particularly pertinent challenge, as often individual names were closely affiliated with the organisations they represented, and there were concerns that information posted on employee personal accounts could indirectly impact on an organisation's brand.

Different views

While there were many similar opinions held by members of each of the advisory groups, it should be noted that a number of key differences were also observed. One of the major differences was the way that social media was used. Members of the media noted that one of the primary uses of social media was in the recruitment of individuals to participate in stories, which often involved posting direct requests on social media. In contrast, members from the mental health and suicide prevention sectors tended to use the medium more as a method to increase the reach of their health promotion messages, or in some instances as a new method of service delivery.

Members of the mental health and suicide prevention sectors also reflected on the inherent need to constantly monitor their social media feeds. To ensure that their social media space was effective, many respondents from the sector stated that it was critical to respond to questionable posts in a timely manner. This presented a particular challenge, as often comments requiring a response occurred outside of office hours.

To ensure a rapid response, many expressed that this type of service required moderating 24/7, which was particularly concerning as it created a strain on already strained resources.

Actions

For information on *Mindframe* actions and more information on the specific themes raised by each of the advisory groups, please refer to the consultation reports below which are available online [here](#).

- *Mindframe* Media Advisory Group Views on Social Media
- *Mindframe* Communication Managers' Meeting Views on Social Media
- *Mindframe* Journalism and Public Relations Education Advisory Group Views on Social Media

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