

Putting the **Social** in Social Services

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Everyone's Online These Days




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Most people access these apps via mobile devices



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Use of online platforms, apps varies – sometimes widely – by demographic group

% of U.S. adults in each demographic group who say they ever use ...

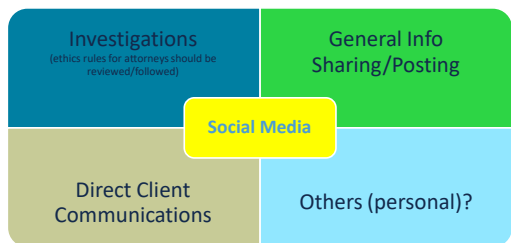


	YouTube	Facebook	Instagram	Pinterest	LinkedIn	Snapchat	Twitter	WhatsApp	TikTok	Reddit	Nextdoor
Total	81	69	40	31	28	26	23	23	21	18	13
Men	82	61	36	16	31	22	25	26	17	23	10
Women	80	77	44	47	26	28	22	21	24	12	16
White	79	67	35	34	29	23	22	18	18	17	15
Black	84	74	49	35	27	26	29	23	30	17	10
Hispanic	85	72	52	18	19	31	23	46	31	14	8
Age 18-29	95	70	71	32	30	65	42	24	43	36	9
30-49	91	77	48	34	36	24	27	30	22	22	17
50-64	83	73	29	38	33	12	18	33	14	10	16
65+	69	65	13	18	11	2	7	10	4	3	8
<\$10K	75	70	35	21	12	25	12	23	22	10	6
\$10K-\$19,999	83	76	45	33	21	27	20	20	28	17	11
\$20K-\$74,999	79	61	39	29	21	29	22	19	20	20	12
\$75K+	80	70	47	42	32	28	34	28	20	26	28
HS or less	70	64	30	22	10	21	14	20	21	9	4
Some college	86	71	44	36	28	32	26	16	24	20	12
College+	89	73	49	37	51	23	33	33	19	26	24
Urban	84	70	45	30	30	28	27	28	24	18	17
Suburban	81	70	41	32	33	26	23	23	20	23	14
Rural	74	67	25	34	15	18	18	9	16	10	2

Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/interactives/2023/04/02/social-media-use-in-2022/>

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Typical DSS Staff Uses of SM



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Starting Off Easy



- Most users set up personal accounts and then transact public business on those accounts
 - Better to use work email address and keep personal/professional separate
 - Recommend having more than one admin and copy of login/pw on file
- Work-related posts on personal accounts
 - Guidance needed from agency
- Friend/follow requests: Do I accept or not?
 - Guidance needed from agency
- "Lurking": Investigations? ([ABA Ethics Guidance](#))
 - Guidance needed on what is allowable, within "client care" or "best interest" vs. just being nosy
- Direct Messages (DMs):
 - Settings determine who can send messages to your account
 - Retention issues
 - Guidance needed from agency
- None of the messages are encrypted on these platforms

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On to the Challenging Ones: Secure Messaging Apps



WhatsApp Specifics Due to DSS Use



Pros:

- Easy to use
- Free download/use
- Cross-platform (iPhone, Android, Mac, Windows)
- WiFi based (does not require cellular)
- Works internationally
- End-to-end encryption (E2EE)**
- Phone number based (immediate sync w/all contacts)

Cons:

- WhatsApp automatically downloads all media shared to user device photo gallery
- Delete sent messages feature
- No required MFA (but is an option)
- Malware downloads & phishing attempts
- E2EE**
- WhatsApp owned by Meta (free=your user data is sold)

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TikTok Around the Clock



- Video sharing application
 - Short form videos
- Massive reach (1+ billion use daily)
- Content concerns:
 - Content filtering by parent company
 - Use of MSW+advice=Potential liability issues
- Privacy and security concerns (user data, etc)
- Direct messaging also present

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Snap Your Fingers, Snap A Chat



- Instant messaging, video, photo sharing app
- Self-destructing messages and other content concerns
- Set intended audience
 - Direct messages/group messages/public messages
- Screenshots are possible (and recording with secondary device)
- Widely used by 15-25 yr olds

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The Easy Button Leads to Complicated Situations



“Modern day technologies continue to challenge our profession to think critically about professional/personal boundaries, self-disclosure, dual and multiple relationships, privacy and conflicts of interest within an ethical framework.”

Johns, 2012



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NASW Guiding Topics



- Professional Conduct: review code of ethics/standards of practice
- Confidentiality and Privacy: refrain from sharing identifiable info; possible disciplinary action from licensing board/employer; possible civil action
- Professional Boundaries: blurring of professional and personal boundaries; mindful of content shared via social media
- Avoid Biases: potential use of offensive, discriminatory language, etc. on social media sites

[NASW Code of Ethics](#)
[NASW Standards for Using Technology in Social Work Practice](#)

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What Your IT Staff Want You To Know



Security/Privacy

- Serious concerns about data privacy/confidentiality re: these apps
- No control of apps within govt entity
 - Assume user data is being monetized
 - Security practices vary
- Data breaches abound
- No access to personally managed accounts (even if the employee leaves)



Records retention

- Can't retain what they don't know about
- Can't retain personally managed accounts

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Big Questions, Your Answers



1. Has your agency started using any of the social media applications we covered?
 - a. Any legal review performed?
2. Does your agency offer written social media guidance for all DSS staff?
 - a. Specific guidance for certain categories of staff, like direct client service providers?
 - b. Specific guidance re: investigations, esp. related to ethics rules?
3. **Are staff trained in retention of records they may be creating/receiving via social media?**
 - a. Remember, this is not an IT issue
4. Any other items/questions that need attention?

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