

Maryland Career Development Association



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September 2008

President's Message

From Pamela M. Allen

It is an honor and privilege to be writing to you as the 2008-2009 Maryland Career Development Association (MCDA) president. I welcome this opportunity to use my leadership experience, commitment, and energy to serve MCDA - as prior presidents have with distinction. My goal is to support and lead this vital organization, an organization which is critically needed in the current economic climate and throughout the 21st century. I promise to uphold MCDA's mission, advocate for our continued recognition, and support career professionals throughout the state of Maryland who are in various career development and services roles. Thanks to MCDA and the members, I continue to prosper in the profession I passionately believe in and love.

MCDA began its new year with the welcome reception for National Career Development Association (NCDA) Conference in Washington, DC this past July. Co-hosted with the Virginia Career Development Association (VCDA) and the Mid-Atlantic Career Counseling Association (MACCA), the event, held the evening prior to the conference opening, was successful and showcased the importance of MCDA in this geographic area. As president, I was pleased the event attracted new members and renewed participation from current members. Additionally, NCDA executive leaders acknowledged MCDA and those members from MCDA that contributed special time and expertise to the annual conference.

As president, my goal is to support members by providing valuable career information and practices, providing opportunities for professional development through MCDA events and services, and assisting with professional advancement. The MCDA mission, to promote and advocate for awareness of lifelong career development, will be actively supported by all of us on the MCDA board.

MCDA, as in the past, will provide continuing education through workshops and conferences offering CEU credits. Our newsletter will continue to be distributed to members, and our website will provide links to helpful resources and vital information.

I look forward to meeting you at the upcoming MCDA kickoff workshop, **Counseling Diverse Clients on Career Issues**. Presented by Kim R. Wells, immediate Past-President of MCDA and newly appointed Director of Howard University, School of Business, Graduate and MBA Program, the workshop will take place Saturday, September 6, at Loyola Graduate School in Columbia. See our website for registration information and this newsletter for more information.

As an exciting first for MCDA, we are sponsoring the Career Development Facilitator (CDF) program taught by our own Karol Taylor and Janet Wall (see more information in the newsletter and on our website). This is a program endorsed by the National Career Development Association and the Center for Credentialing and Education. Take advantage of the reduced tuition to improve your skills and energize your career. It's time to invest in yourself!!

Mark your calendars now. Preparations are underway for the 2009 MCDA Annual Conference, entitled **Transforming Career Jitters into Career CONFIDENCE in a Challenging Economy** to be held on Friday, January 23, 2009 at Loyola College Graduate Center in Columbia, MD. Be on the lookout for more information forthcoming.

As President of MCDA, I ask for your support and active participation in our organization. For me, the more I became involved in this organization, the more I

received support, mentoring, professional development, and networking opportunities. This will happen for you whether you a new career professional, practicing career expert, or a retired career development professional. Membership is only \$20.00! This gives you the benefit of discounts to workshops and access to select website information. Invite your colleagues to become members and attend the MCDA events

Get involved by contacting me or another board member if you want to volunteer for committees or participate more actively in this association. I thank you in advance for your new or renewed membership, your attendance at our workshops, and for your future volunteer assistance. If you have recommendations, questions, or concerns, I will listen, to the good and the bad. Contact me at pmcareer@yahoo.com or 301-792-2452.

Again, it is my honor and commitment to serve you as the 2008-2009 Maryland Career Development Association President.

NCTA Conference Impressions



Comments on the NCDA Conference

The 2008 National Career Development Association (NCDA) Conference, Finding Our Voice and Making it Heard, took place at the Capitol Hyatt July 9-11, 2008. As one would expect, the theme of the conference established a precedent for the type of information shared there.

A two-day pre-Conference Public Policy Symposium was the first theme-related event, with others following. Dr. Edwin L. Herr, a featured speaker at the Symposium, was the Kick-Off Keynote speaker for the general Conference. A number of Professional Development Institutes addressed the public policy theme, as did many of the breakout sessions, and the second Key Note speaker. The annual NCDA teleconference dealt with Public Policy issues, and an NCDA Legislative Agenda was approved during the general membership meeting.

The Conference ended with a Legislative Luncheon where Maryland's own Senator Barbara Mikulski received the 2008 NCDA Legislative Award. Senator Mikulski was recognized for all that she does to support our nation's workers.

NCDA provided a myriad of choices of events to attend. There were roundtables that lasted about 20 minutes each, career workshops, a creativity room, an exhibit room, sharing tables with extra workshop handouts, an International table, and the Cyber Café to check our emails. A first-timers session was offered, time was set aside for NCDA Committee Meetings, a CDF Master Trainers Session was held, as was the NCDA Leadership Institute for those who had been accepted. So many choices; so little time!

Another exciting option was the National Employment Counseling Association's (NECA) Workforce Development Institute held concurrently during the NCDA pre-Conference. NECA Institute speakers included Gay Gilbert, Administrator of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Workforce Investment, who shared about initiatives sponsored by her office.

As you may know, the Maryland Career Development Association; Virginia Career Development Association; and the Middle Atlantic Career Counseling Association co-sponsored a pre-Conference reception in the NCDA Presidents' suite. The reception was well-received (lots of food!) – participants raved about it days later. MCDA attracted a number of potential new members, and we deepened our relationship with co-sponsors, and with NCDA.

At the reception MCDA members could be recognized by their unique and well-received tee-shirts.

The tee-shirts had the MCDA logo on the front. Members could be seen wearing them throughout the conference, and the tee-shirts attracted much interest and conversation. Members were free to attend any workshop they chose, yet we kept running into each other because of our common interests and goals. Could it also have been the mutuality of the tee-shirts that drew us together?

A number of MCDA members, including myself, spent time volunteering to help at the Conference. Volunteering has two benefits: 1) the Conference fee was reduced, and 2) we were able to meet NCDA members who we might not have connected with otherwise. Interestingly I kept "running into" a woman from Vancouver, Canada who turned out to be a good friend of one of our local members, Marcia Ewing.

There were a number of workshop presenters from Maryland, most of who were MCDA members. Diana Bailey and Audrey Guinn addressed career development services for incarcerated individuals. Lisa Heiser co-led a roundtable discussion on long-term professional support groups. Bridget Brown led a public policy symposium and presented at the teleconference. Michael Frank shared about Millennials in the workplace. David Reile and Barbara Suddarth shared about life planning with diverse clients. Vicky Sawyer and Elda Schwartz led a roundtable discussion on the long route to adulthood.

Janet Wall gave two presentations, the first on changing world opinion, and the second on adding tools to your career counselor toolkit.

My first annual NCDA Conference in Orlando in 2005 inspired my return each subsequent year. I have continued to be amazed at the commitment of 1) NCDA's Administrative staff; 2) the NCDA Board; and 3) the high profile career professionals who donate much of their time offering workshops and making themselves available to network with participants. To me the annual NCDA Conference represents the career counseling field at its finest.

Next year the NCDA Conference will be held in St. Louis, MO July 1-3. The Conference theme will be *Inspiring Career Development Practitioners*. If you would like to present, your proposal must be submitted by September 30, 2008 (www.ncda.org). Anyone interested in career counseling-related issues will want to make NCDA's annual Conference a priority. I plan to be there for the fifth consecutive year, I hope you will consider joining me.

---- Submitted by Karol Taylor



NEDA President, Darrell Luzzo wears his MCDA t-shirt along with Janet Wall, MCDA Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. Two of Janet's CDF students, Pat Small and Carol Hoffman, attend the MCDA, VCDA, and MACCA joint reception in order to network with association members.



Pamel M. Allen, MCDA President, and Lorene Goins celebrate with attendees at the joint reception.

More Comments

Having the National Career Development Association conference in DC offered a wonderful opportunity to create relationships between local career counseling associations and to hear the best thinkers in our field talk about the cutting edge of career development.

The Maryland Career Development Association helped to provide a warm welcome by co-hosting a party with Virginia CDA and Mid-Atlantic CCA. Unfortunately, the party was held early, when many local people had not yet arrived, but the foreign guests and Professional Development Institute attendees enjoyed the party.

Presentations included both theory-based workshops and practitioner tips. Many of the presenters had years of experience serving specific client groups. Those with an interest in influencing legislation found lots of good advice. Keynote speaker Stephanie Vance of Advocacy Associates provided an especially engaging and lively presentation on the art of being heard by legislators. Carol Dahir and Zelda Rogers demonstrated how to draft an accountability action plan to get schools moving in the right direction. Presenters from Penn State explained how to use PowerPoint to help elementary students develop a personal electronic portfolio, which can morph into a resume at a later age. David Blustein and co-presenters demonstrated socially-sensitive interventions with at-risk youth. Rich Feller facilitated a presentation by NASA of their career development aids. With so many exciting presentations, it was impossible to catch even a sampling of them.

Luckily, MCDA has arranged for some of the best presenters to attend our annual conference in January and give us another opportunity to attend some of the best workshops.

--- Submitted by Marilyn Maze

Even More Comments

I just had to send a few lines. I was only able to attend the reception, but this was one of the best networking fun times I have had in a while. The food was to die for, but the people I met were outstanding. Since this was my first one, I just want to say, "More, more, more." I will try to make as many of the MCDA/NCDA functions that I can.

--- Submitted by De Jackson

SAVE THE DATE

2009 MCDA Conference

Transforming Career Jitters to Career CONFIDENCE in a Challenging Economy

Friday, January 23, 2008

10 am- 4 pm

**The Loyola College
Graduate Center
Columbia Campus
Columbia, MD**

**You will hear national and
regional experts and seasoned
practitioners share methods and
techniques through workshops
and panel discussions.**

Registration Costs

Prior to 15 January

Members -- \$95

Student/Retiree Members -- \$45

Non-Members -- \$115

Student/Retiree Non Members -- \$55

After 15 January

Members -- \$115

Student/Retiree Members -- \$55

Non-Members -- \$125

Student/Retiree Non-Members -- \$65



CDF Student, Dana Van Abbema, of St. Mary's College in Maryland highlights her CDF work at a technology workshop led by Debbie Osborn at the recent NCDA meeting.

Link to the Links

Ted: 8 words, 3 minutes What factors make you successful.

http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/richard_st_john_s_8_secrets_of_success.html

Forbes Magazine: Find out which college major are most lucrative.

http://www.forbes.com/2008/06/18/college-majors-lucrative-lead-cx_kb_0618majors.html

NCDA (National Career Development Association) Receives Press in the Wall Street Journal

The renowned Career Journal includes a link to NCDA and comments from former NCDA president, Janet Lenz (2004-05). Read "[Grad Tidings: Can a Test Steer You to the Ideal Career](#)" by Sue Shellenbarger.



Penny Cummings, Baltimore MEPS ASVAB representative and a GCDF certificate holder and MCDA Legislative Chair, hosts the ASVAB booth at the NCDA conference. Penny says her GCDF certificate has a better frame than her university degree! Her boss, Ted Haggart, far right is also a GCDF holder.

YOUR ACTION ITEMS!

Membership Renewal Time

Membership in the Maryland Career Development Association is a great bargain at only \$20 for professionals and \$10 for retired or student members. The MCDA membership years begins on July 1, so it is time to renew your membership now.

Whether you want to renew or initiate membership, go to:

<http://mcda.career-nsite.com/html/membership.html> and enter the information requested to register. It is a fast and easy process. If you can't remember how to log on to your account, just choose "Register online as a new user." If you need assistance, email MCDA.Membership@gmail.com.

If you need to print the membership form and mail it to us, you can find the paper form on our website at

http://mcda.career-nsite.com/html/MCDA_application.doc

We are looking forward to having you with us in the coming year, and we hope you will support MCDA by joining now.

Counseling Diverse Clients on Career Issues

Date & Time: Saturday, September 6, 2008, 9:30am – 12pm

Location: Loyola Graduate Center, 8890 McGaw Road, Columbia, MD

Presenter: Kim R. Wells, Howard University, School of Business, Consultant, and Popular Freelance Writer, Immediate Past President of MCDA

Wherever we practice career development services in the state of Maryland our clients are reflective of the growing diversity in our state and in the nation. Who are these diverse clients? Are their career goals really different from other clients? What do they need and expect from you as a career advisor? In this workshop, Counseling Diverse Clients on Career Issues, Mr. Wells, with a background of more than 20 years in career development and human resource services working in both higher education and private industry, will address these questions and more. Participants will:

- Gain valuable information about who are diverse clients
- Learn practices and methods to assist diverse clients
- Hear success stories which benefited the diverse client and the employer

Career Development Facilitator Program

Sponsored by
Maryland Career Development Association

Value of the GCDF Program to You

National Portable Certification – take it with you wherever you go. It is a recognized certification across the country. Certification is through the Center for Credentialing in Education.

Personal Branding – Set yourself apart from others in your job search and promotion opportunities with the certification.

Professional Recognition – Use the certification to announce your credentials

Improve the Quality of Your Services – What you learn is multiplied times over for your students and clients with the new skills you have learned.

Update Your Knowledge – Reenergize your background with the current and cutting edge resources you will receive.

What You Will Gain

Career resources	Ideas for promoting your program
The latest labor market information	Case management and referral skills
Career planning processes and procedures	Ethical considerations of career development
Basic helping and facilitating skills	Using technology in career development
Assessment techniques and selection criteria	Employability considerations and techniques
Needs of special populations	Career center considerations and offerings
Diversity considerations	Program evaluation

Start Investing in Yourself and In Your Future

A new program will start in *October 2008 at Loyola College in Columbia*. It will be a 120-hour+ hybrid program using face-to-face classroom sessions, discussions, activities, field trips, interviews, and various e-learning techniques.

Payment: Checks can be sent to Janet Wall at 300 King Farm Blvd. #102, Rockville, MD 20850. **DEADLINE:** 30 September 2008. For persons wishing to register by credit card, contact Janet directly for the form to use.

DATES: Subject to student availability, but proposed to be 11 October, 15 November, 17 January, 21 February, and 14 March (if needed to make up for a snow day). Save those dates.

COST: \$1300

Please contact us to express your interest in receiving more information about the program.

Dr. Janet E. Wall
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Taylor Your Career
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Send me your comments and articles for the next newsletter!!

Janet E. Wall, MACD Treasurer and Newsletter Editor

sagesolutions@earthlink.net



**NCDA Award's Chair,
Deb Crapes, presents
NCDA's Legislative Award
to Senator Mikulski's
Assistant, Robin Juliano.**



Maryland continued its AWARD-winning streak at this year's recent National Career Development Association (NCDA) 2008 Global Conference in Washington, DC. (At last year's NCDA conference in Seattle, Washington, MCDA won the Southern Region award.) The theme for the '08 conference was **Public Policy & Advocacy: Finding Our Voice and Making It Heard**. At the conference's culminating event, the Legislative Luncheon in the Cannon House Office Building, Maryland's senator, Barbara Mikulski, won NCDA's Legislative award. The award recognizes individuals who have made significant impact on policy or legislation related to the career development profession or to its recipients at the local, state or national level. One of Senator Barbara Mikulski's nominator's wrote "I nominated Senator Mikulski because of her consistent commitment to fighting for our nation's workers. For more than two decades in the senate, Senator Mikulski has demonstrated time and again that she not only listens to our nation's workers, but that she pro-actively anticipates worker needs through her legislative efforts." Another letter of recommendation stated "I can think of no one more deserving. [Senator Mikulski's] work for causes related to labor, education and health are well known in Maryland and in the nation." MCDA is very proud of the multitude and variety of legislation Senator Mikulski introduced to support our nation's workers across her congressional tenure.

Senator Cardin believes that career counselors can help Marylanders of all ages match their interests with an opportunity to develop needed skills that will prepare them for our changing global marketplace. Career counselors help Marylanders realize their individual potential, but they also help Maryland realize its economic potential. MCDA is delighted to toast two such wonderful senators!



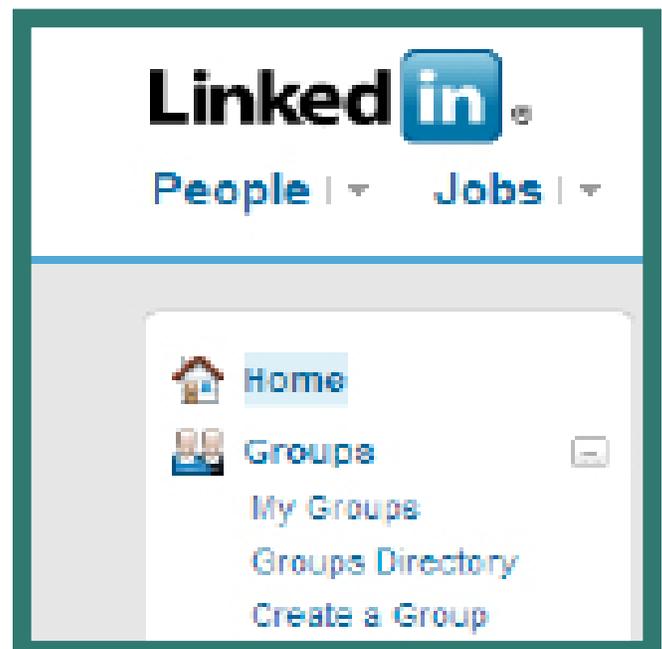
Sarah Greenberger of Senator Benjamin Cardin's staff. Ms. Greenberger is pictured with ACA president elect (and former Maryland Association of Counseling and Development (MACD) president), Lynn Linde, and NCDA Southern Trustee (and former MCDA and MACD president), Natalie Kauffman.



The National Career Development Association awarded the Maryland Career Development Association this plaque in appreciation of its assistance in hosting the 2008 NCD A Conference in Washington, DC. MCDA co-sponsored a party for attendees on the evening before the opening ceremonies and provided logistical assistance for the conference.

NCD A will be auditing CDFs next year. Do you need recertification contact hours for your GCDF? Want professional development in the comfort of your own home? Visit <http://careerfacilitator.pbwiki.com>. Hidden Gems might be just for you! Contact Janet Wall for more information.

Are you a member of the Maryland Career Development Association LinkedIn Group? If not, go to linkedin.com, join and then search for the Maryland Career Development Association in the groups section. See the article on the benefits of joining LinkedIn on the next page of this newsletter.



10 Ways to Use LinkedIn to Boost Your Career

By Logan Kugler

As far as I'm concerned, LinkedIn is the single greatest networking tool in the world - ever. The problem is, not everyone knows how to use it to their advantage. Of all the people I've talked to about LinkedIn, most acknowledge that they're a member but only a handful are actually getting value out of the networking website. Most signed up because a friend sent them an invite and haven't really given it a second thought since.

The reality is, with more than 20 million business professionals on LinkedIn, you're missing out on countless business opportunities and the chance to build long-lasting relationships. Here are ten ways to get the ball rolling.

1. Your LinkedIn Profile = Your Resume

Instead of having a dedicated website with your resume, use LinkedIn to double as your online resume. Not only does it offer a world of more information that puts you ahead in the minds of employers, but it also boosts confidence in your credibility and can act like a qualified reference all by itself. Understand though that you need to put a reasonable amount of effort into creating an effective profile. Here Guy Kawasaki offers a primer on what it takes: http://blog.guykawasaki.com/2007/01/linkedin_profil.html

2. Increase Your Visibility

Every minute LinkedIn is used a resource to find qualified people to hire or do business with. By adding the right keywords in your profile (such as the words someone would probably use to search for someone with your expertise) you're much more likely to appear at the top of search results. My LinkedIn profile is a good example of this (note all of the references to the areas of writing I specialize in): <http://www.linkedin.com/in/logankugler>

3. Grow Your Network Fast

Expanding the size of your network is a snap. Aside from being able to easily import your entire address book from most email clients and automatically view who is a LinkedIn member, you can search for other members by companies you used to work for, people you used to work with, and people who went to school with you. In order to use LinkedIn to its full potential, you should have at least 50 first degree connections.

4. Ask For Advice

Recently, LinkedIn added a feature called LinkedIn Answers and it's phenomenally useful. It allows you to ask virtually any business-related question across the collective knowledge of both your network and the greater LinkedIn network. For example, here are some questions that were recently answered:

- What should a presentation about a major acquisition include?
- How do I set a retainer fee for my consulting business?
- Which slogan do you like most?
- What should we pay a Chief Strategy Officer?

Its uses are infinite from anything to starting your own business to getting help with a marketing proposal to finding a mentor.

5. Migrate Into a New Job

When starting a new job, you're often treading into unknown territory. To help familiarize yourself with the company and your new co-workers, you can use LinkedIn to study their profiles and get to know them better, maybe even send them a quick note letting them know that you're looking forward to working with them.

6. Fill-in Your Business Trip

Have a business trip scheduled for Atlanta and Chicago next week but have some time in-between meetings? Using LinkedIn, you can search your network for connections local to your destination(s) and then reach out to those people to meet for a power lunch or quick meeting to put faces to name, suggests Eric Butow, CEO of Butow Communications Group and author of the upcoming book *How to Succeed in Business Using LinkedIn* (September 2008; \$19.95).

7. Learn More About New Contacts

Say you have a meeting scheduled with John Smith tomorrow morning but don't know anything about him besides that's he's the VP of business development for XYZ Corporation. Using LinkedIn, you might find out that you went to the same school or share similar interests, giving you a number of creative ways to break the ice.

8. Accelerate Sales Delivery

When a client drops a large project on your plate that requires skills beyond the scope of your team's abilities, LinkedIn is a great resource for finding top subcontractors to outsource parts of the project to. "With LinkedIn, you can find partners who have the skills you need to deliver a complete solution for a client," says Butow.

9. Research a Potential Employer

If you're thinking about working at a particular company, LinkedIn offers some unique statistics. By clicking on the company name in someone's profile, you're brought to a page that will show you a list of all of the employees working for that company on LinkedIn, LinkedIn members that were newly hired by the company, recent promotions, and key info like the size of the company, when it was founded, and the average age of employees. Uniquely, it will also show the common career path of where former employees ventured to next and which companies current employees are most connected to. You can also learn who previously held the position you're currently applying for. Here is TechCareer's parent company Beyond.com's company page: <http://www.linkedin.com/companies/5259/Beyond.com>

10. Farm References

Everyone wants testimonials, but sometimes they can be difficult to obtain. Not only does LinkedIn make it much easier to ask a former co-worker or boss for a "recommendation," but it's also a whole lot easier for whoever you're asking to give you one because assuming they enjoyed working with you, writing a testimonial on LinkedIn only takes a few minutes. Moreover, it has an even greater impact than one just stuck in your resume because it's visible to the world and it's interchangeable so you can copy and paste your LinkedIn recommendations into your resume as well.

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Public School Graduates and Dropouts from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2005–06

Across the 48 reporting states, a total of 2,649,001 public school students received a high school diploma in 2005–06, resulting in an averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR) of 73.4. This rate ranged from 55.8 percent in Nevada to 87.5 percent in Wisconsin. Fourteen states had rates of 80.0 percent or higher—Arkansas, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Ten states had rates below 70.0 percent—Alabama, Alaska, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, and New York. Across all reporting states, the AFGR was highest for Asian/Pacific Islander students (89.6 percent) (table 2). The rates for other groups of students were 80.6 percent for White, non-Hispanic students, 61.8 percent for American Indian/Alaska Native students, 61.4 percent for Hispanic students, and 59.1 percent for Black, non-Hispanic students.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008353.pdf>

Keeping Kids Out of High-Tech Trouble

By Russell A. Sabella, Ph.D.

In the real world, we as adults can set up physical boundaries to help us contain our children to spaces we deem safe. When we take them to the park, we make sure our kids stay inside the fence. When we visit a video store, we stick with the children's section and we don't let them venture into the back room toward the adult videos. Schools have hallways, some have fences, and they all have procedures for making sure that kids get from one place to the other while being supervised and monitored. At home, we activate our alarm systems at night to ward off intruders. Other boundaries in the form of rules exist. We don't allow our children to play beyond a certain perimeter in our neighborhoods or communities. We wouldn't take them with us to a night club where adult activities take place. There are laws in place so that our children cannot simply go to a convenience store and purchase alcohol, tobacco, or adult magazines. If an underage child or minor takes a flight, an attendant escorts him the entire way and checks for identification when delivering the child to his destination.

Technology has at least blurred if not eliminated these real world boundaries. The Internet and other high-tech gadgets have essentially introduced a high-speed interstate upon which we all travel yet a driver's license is not

necessarily required. Road signs are unclear or non-existent. The small number of “rules of the road” are not typically enforced and the “strip joints” are right next door to the ice cream shops. Very few people verify a “driver’s” age and traffic occurs at all hours of the day and night. The Internet connected computer in particular has become a potential “back door” for children (and others) to enter or exit our homes as they please.

I believe that parenting has always been a tough job although I think you would agree (even the elders I talk too agree) that it is tougher now than ever before. The world is truly getting smaller and moving faster, in large part due to technology that has bridged great divides and has afforded the power of large companies to the individual. The world is changing and its changing fast. As parents we want to help our children take advantage of these tools in a way that best advances their development. There are more “bases” to cover in the course of supervision. There are many more options for us to consider when making decisions about how our children achieve. More now than ever before, we need to stay focused and goal oriented in a world that is chaotic and uncertain. We need to realize that “*Just because you can, doesn’t mean you should.*” Just because you *can* watch 300 channels of television, doesn’t mean you *should* increase the amount of time you watch television. Just because you *can* share your information with the rest of the world in the blink of an eye doesn’t mean that you *should*. Just because you *can* receive a call from anywhere and at any time doesn’t mean you *should* answer it.

In many households, children are more technologically literate than their parents or guardians. This makes sense. Children are growing up in this high-tech world. They have been immersed in rapid technological developments and have grown quite accustomed to change. In contrast, their parents and other care takers grew up in a different world and have been forced to adapt. For many adults, adapting to the amazing changes brought on by technology has come with fear, avoidance, and certainly stress. This has created an imbalance between kids who are “in the know” and their parents/care takers whom are “in the dark.” And because technological literacy in our current information age translates into power, kids are in some ways more powerful than their parents. This is not good. Parents are entrusted to provide appropriate structure, guidance, supervision, and much more in the course of caring for their children. Yet, a lack of understanding about technology has compromised their ability to do just that.

My latest book, *GuardingKids.com: A Practical Guide to Keeping Kids Out of High-Tech Trouble*, is designed to empower parents, educators, and other care takers by better understanding the technology terrain. Readers will be better able to help children safely and securely navigate a minefield of inappropriate and risky situations. From podcasts to porn, cyberbullying to cell phones, this new book helps readers to understand the risks that emerge when high-tech tools, uninformed parents, and exuberant youth collide. For instance, did you know:

- Pornography is not just for computers anymore. One can now also download porn via gadgets such as Play Station Portables (PSP), iPods, and even cell phones. Children can also trade or share an array of inappropriate media via their gadgets via wireless, bluetooth, or cell phone connections.
- Cyberbullying is a relatively new problem that is facing our computer savvy students which involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging (IM), defamatory personal web sites, and defamatory online personal polling web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others. Cyberbullying is a very serious problem that can have fatal consequences (e.g., see <http://www.jaredstory.com/> or <http://www.jeffreyjohnston.org/>).
- Some children are using the photo and video features of their cell phones to record and send inappropriate (and perhaps illegal) content. These include photos and/or videos of girls’ underwear (i.e., upskirting), sexual activity, nudity, or pages from a school exam or other protected materials. These files can easily be posted on websites and shared among many friends.
- Some children are showing signs of technology based addictions such as with gaming, shopping, social networking, gambling, auctions, and simple surfing.
- Parents are being held liable for pirating of music and software, especially using P2P networks such as BearShare, LimeWire, Morpheus, Kazaa, eMule, and Grokster (to name a very few).
- When children disclose personal information or voice their (sometimes exuberant) opinions, they may also jeopardize themselves or others in yet another way. You see, most everything posted on any website today may possibly, and will probably be accessible for all of time. Information shared with others via listserv, websites, IM, blogs, and other media is typically stored in massive databases, indexed, and easily retrievable for future reference. Also, once something is sent or posted to someone else, it essentially becomes public domain. That is, the content can be copied, download, and passed on to others without permission of the original owner, right or wrong, whether the owner likes it or not. You or your child may believe that what you communicate today is “no big deal” although, tomorrow, the same information could be considered ammunition by others to use against you or your loved ones.

- I think we all know that content on the World Wide Web meets with very little censorship. In the United States and some other countries, no other communication medium compares to the Internet for how rigorously people have exercised their right to freedom of speech. However, I'm not sure you appreciate the extent to which this is true. On the web, anyone can easily and quickly access content that promotes and supports activities such as suicide, eating disorders, self-injury, violence and racism.

- Podcasting, in its basic form, involves creating audio files (most commonly in MP3 format) and making them available online in a way that allows users to automatically download the files for listening at their convenience (i.e., subscribing to the podcast). After subscribing to the podcast, future "broadcasts" automatically download to your computer, which can then be transferred easily to a handheld such as a Palm OS Handheld, a Pocket PC, cell phone, or an iPod - hence, the name Podcast. In essence, anyone with a computer, Internet access, free software, and a microphone can turn their computer into a personal studio and produce their very own radio show/program. Pornographers, bigots, bullies, and others have also discovered podcasts as a powerful method for disseminating information. This information is mostly audio although video podcasts or V-casts are quickly picking up momentum. Anyone who has the knowledge, including children, can easily access (and/or produce) a wide range of smut or obscene matter.

Also included in the book, *GuardingKids.com*, are two full chapters that describe various solutions that we can take to reduce high-tech risks among our children. For example:

- First and foremost, develop an ongoing relationship with your child that supports collaborative exploration and learning about technology. Also, help your child to trust you and communicate potentially problematic activity by not "flipping out." That is, stay calm and rational when dealing with technology related problems. Be curious instead of confrontational.
- Support your child's school in teaching the skills, knowledge, and attitudes included in technology/media literacy. You can download a basic child-parent agreement at <http://www.schoolcounselor.com/pdf/student-contract.pdf>
- Keep your home computer in a location that is easily viewable.
- Turn on the Safe Filtering mode on your search engines. In addition, use other filtering/blocking software such as Cybersitter (which I use and highly recommend). Another option to consider is to investigate and choose a "Family Friendly" Internet Service Provider (ISP) (read more by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/f2zxd>).
- If you choose to give your child a cell phone, purchase one that is "child friendly." That is, users of this phone can only send and receive calls from others approved by parents.
- Gain personal and practical experience of various technologies so you can listen and talk with your children with authority. That is, become more technologically literate yourself. For example, set up your own MySpace.com account and learn how it is used.
- Visit www.GuardingKids.com/links for helpful resources and materials.

In essence, technology provides us with tools to help us accomplish our work more effectively and efficiently beyond what we can do without it. Computers, cell phones, gaming devices, iPods, and other gadgets help us to stay connected, have fun, and better learn. Such power, however, comes with great responsibility and sometimes at a premium price. We must all make certain that we are using high-tech tools responsibly for ourselves and our society. We must ensure that our children understand how to embrace the tools of the 21st century in a manner that is safe and secure. Technological literacy for adults and children alike will help us to make decisions that are right and realistic. It is important that we each make a personal commitment and take the time to evaluate the use and impact of technology in the lives of our families. Then, with great care, it is critical that we appropriately learn, teach, monitor, and supervise so that we may appropriately guard our kids from high-tech trouble.

With technology, we can do many things. However, just because we can, doesn't mean we should.

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