

Using the Web and Social Media to Monitor Schools

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Goals and Objectives of the Session

- To orient state regulators to the various types of web-based tools available for use
- To orient state regulators to the various types of social media available
- To discuss the uses and possible abuses of social media by proprietary schools
- Provide state regulators with low- or no-cost tools and strategies to improve investigation and monitoring

Introduction to Social Media

- ▶ What is it?
- ▶ Why should we become familiar with it?
- ▶ Examples:
 - Corporate schools
 - www.kaplan.com
 - <http://www.facebook.com/Kaplan>
 - Sole Proprietors
 - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Message-Institute-of-Cape-Cod/>

Top Ten Social Media Sites of 2011

Top 10 and what they are used for

- 1) Facebook
 - 2) YouTube
 - 3) Twitter
 - 4) LinkedIn
 - 5) Flickr
 - 6) PhotoBucket
 - 7) My____, (aka MySpace)
 - 8) Google +
 - 9) Tagged
 - 10) Hi5
- ▶ Social media usage: <http://mashable.com/2012/03/09/social-media-demographics/>

Social Media and School Advertising

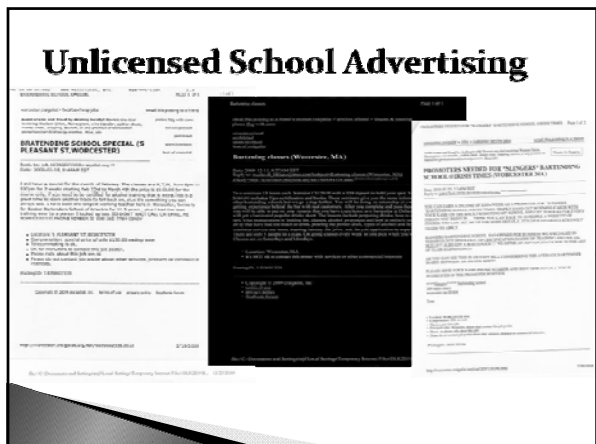
- ▶ Uses and abuses
- ▶ Schools need a policy for staff and students re: social media uses, restrictions if any, disclaimers, etc.
- ▶ States need policies on schools' use of social media
 - Does the state have restrictions on the use of social media by schools?
 - Does the state prohibit use of certain types of social media (e.g. Groupon)?
 - Does the state consider social media a form of advertising and monitor it as such?

Monitoring Schools Via Social Media

Creating an account to monitor schools

How to set up an account

- Groupon
 - <http://www.groupon.com/>
- Craig's List
 - <http://craigslist.org/>
- News Groups
 - <http://www.giganews.com/>
- Chat rooms
 - <http://messenger.yahoo.com/features/chatrooms>



Working with Social Media Companies

- ▶ What can they do to assist w/violations
- ▶ Sample – template letter/email

Groupon Advertisement

- ▶ <http://www.groupon.com/deals/boston-bartenders-school>

Sample Letter/Email

School did not accurately represent the cost of the program and the savings as a result of the Groupon discount. We also informed Groupon and the school that if students no longer wanted to partake in the promotion, by law, those individuals will need to be issued a refund of their money.

We discussed with Groupon and the school and agreed on the following clarification, which was sent to all 262 individuals that registered for the Groupon:

“The Massachusetts Department of Education has asked us to clarify the price points for this deal that you purchased. We mistakenly stated that the value of the program was \$495. While the total cost of the program is \$495, the actual promotional discount/savings with this promotion is \$345 since you are required to pay \$150 to purchase it (\$495/program cost - \$345/discount = \$150). We apologize for this oversight and any confusion it may have caused. You are still welcome to use this Groupon for the exact same program that was initially advertised. You do not have to do anything special because of this announcement. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at support@groupon.com.”

Who is Behind a School and/or Website

Searching for the owner of a website

- › Who Is
- › DNS (Domain Name System)
- › Google

Working With Domain Hosts and Website Providers

- › Notifying hosts of misuse
- › Contacting providers
- › Getting websites removed
- › Samples - Template letter/email

Why Will Domain Hosts Help?

Users must comply with Host's Terms of Agreement, which may include standards of

- Ethics
- Content and conduct
 - Using site for illegal/fraudulent purposes
- Permissions for use (a/k/a Acceptable Use Policy)

Failure to adhere to the host's standards may result in removal of content, close/disable account, bar from future use

Sample Letter

RE: Notice of Unlicensed School Website - Boston Bartending School of Worcester

To Whom It May Concern:

Massachusetts General Laws, chapter 75D, section 2, authorizes the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) to license private business schools operating within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. On February 26, 2009 the Department sent [name], owner of Boston Bartending School of Worcester, a Cease and Desist letter, via E-mail, First Class mail, and Certified mail, notifying her that she must be licensed by the Department in order to operate a private business school. On March 11, 2009 the Department sent a Second Notice of Cease and Desist to [name] via E-mail, First Class mail, and Certified mail. Copies of our correspondence are enclosed for your records. Despite the Department's efforts, [name], have continued to operate in Massachusetts without a license from the Department and are currently advertising, via your Domain servers, that Boston Bartending School of Worcester is holding bartending classes at 5 Pleasant Street in Worcester, MA.

Since the operation of an unlicensed private business school is prohibited by law, the Department is concerned that the continued operation of Boston Bartending School of Worcester's website is deceptive, misleading and in violation of [domain]'s Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). Therefore the Department respectfully requests that your organization, as the domain host for Boston Bartending School of Worcester, remove their website from operation to ensure that Boston Bartending School of Worcester does not enroll prospective students or collect any money for tuition via the telephone number posted on their website.

Sample Letter

Yahoo
Network Abuse
701 First Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94089

Via First Class Mail and
Email: networkabuse@cc.yahoo-inc.com

RE: Notice of Unlicensed School Website - Angelbare.com

To Whom It May Concern:

Massachusetts General Laws, chapter 75D, section 2, authorizes the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) to license private business schools operating within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. On February 25th, March 5th, and May 13th, 2009 the Department notified Angelbare Institute of Permanent Cosmetics (Angelbare) that it was operating without a license and it must immediately cease operations. Copies of the correspondences are enclosed for your records.

Since the operation of an unlicensed private business school is prohibited by law, the Department is concerned that the continued operation of Angelbare's website is deceptive and misleading. Therefore, the Department respectfully requests that your organization, as the domain registrar for Angelbare, remove the training section of Angelbare's website from operation to ensure that Angelbare does not enroll prospective students or collect any money for tuition via its on-line registration process.

How Regulators Can Use Social Media to Keep Schools Informed

- ▶ RSS Feed (Really Simple Syndication)
 - For formal announcements (e.g. changes in statutes or regulations), which also serves as a public announcement
- ▶ Google Groups
 - To disseminate immediate notice on new forms, policies, technical assistance handouts, etc.
- ▶ YouTube
 - Provide instructional videos for forms and FAQ

Wrap Up

- ▶ Other resources?
- ▶ Resources are constantly changing. States must keep links up to date and revisit their policies frequently
