



**Information Technology
Options Committee
2011-2012 Report**



2011-2012 Committee Members:

Sarah Hendricks, Chair, University of Tennessee at Knoxville
Lisa East, University of Tennessee at Knoxville & SSSP Graduate Research Associate and Webmaster
James N. Maples, University of Tennessee at Martin
Shannon M. Monnat, University of Nevada Las Vegas (also the Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division Chair)

The Information Technology Options (ITO) Committee's goals this year, as stated in last year's report, were to evaluate the new accounts and social media set up last year (the redesigned website, SSSP Facebook page, SSSP Twitter account, and the graduate listserv) and to field any additional requests or recommendations.

The redesigned website has worked well overall, and we have not received any negative feedback. The SSSP Twitter Account has 125 followers, as of July 17, 2012. The SSSP Facebook page has received 193 "Likes" from individuals, and between 60 and 100 people view each Facebook post, and members who discuss our posts have a viral reach to their friends, multiplying the effect (see first appended item).

One concern last year was the amount of time that the website and social media accounts would require from the Administrative Office. The website has required moderate work, as there have been some minor glitches that needed working out. The Administrative Office hires a graphic designer when banner images need updating, so this requires little time and results are professional-quality. Lisa has also periodically done a search for sociology departments and related organizations to "like" on Facebook (currently at 135), and the posts on these organizations are included in our "News Feed" and vice versa. She also periodically finds others to "follow" on Twitter in order to increase our networking potential. The Graduate Student listserv was used twice this year, and continues to assist the Graduate Representatives on the Board of Directors reach SSSP Graduate Student members.

There were no additional requests or recommendations.

Beyond this, the Committee has discussed the best route to connect the work of SSSP Divisions and Committees with the technological tools that can assist with this work. This will continue to be one main focus of the ITO Committee in this upcoming year. We first officially established the SSSP's support of the decentralized use of social media accounts for the purpose of SSSP work, and we drafted some simple guidelines. We then sent out a memo to all Chairpersons in January to publicize and clearly support the use of new technological tools for the purpose of SSSP work (see second

appended item). Two Divisions now have a Twitter feed, and one committee has a Google Group, and one Division has a Facebook page.

The Chair has personally followed up directly with a couple of other Committees/Divisions that we learned were interested in exploring opportunities, but this hasn't gone anywhere yet. One barrier that some Division Chairs have is the challenges of simply communicating with Division members via e-mail. The Chair must ask for an updated e-mail list from the Administrative Office each time the Chair wants to communicate with the Division membership; there is no direct and easy way for the Chair to access this list directly. A second challenge of e-mail communication is due to various institutional limitations; in the recent words of one of the Division Chairs: "My impression is that each e-mail provider has different restrictions and different ways of handling mass e-mails, and these details are generally not transparent and generally not covered by user-friendly customer service resources. I would guess that many division chairs and/or newsletter editors have struggled with these issues and/or dealt with it by delegation. I've tried both, and neither has worked out particularly well, esp. compared to the ease of sending out regular e-mail to a small group or to a listserv." This issue is on the table for the Committee to look into further and explore possible solutions.

In order for the branches of the SSSP to more effectively use technology, the responsibility of keeping up with social media accounts needs to be explicitly added to the roles of individuals in various positions within the society. This will be a gradual process, but has already begun. The GRA is now also the Webmaster in the Administrative Office, and the Social Problems Forum Newsletter Editor is responsible for the Newsletter pages of the SSSP website. One recommendation to continue this process is for Division Chairs to delegate social media (Twitter and Facebook accounts) to the graduate student newsletter editor.

Another strategy we are using to better integrate technological use into Committee and Divisional work is to invite members of other committees and Divisions to also serve on the ITO Committee. The more integrated structurally that the ITO Committee is with the other parts of SSSP, then the more effective this committee will be. It has proved invaluable this year to have a Division Chair and the SSSP Webmaster as a part of the ITO Committee.

Continuing to foster the branching out of technology within SSSP will continue to be a focus of the ITO Committee in this upcoming year. A second focus will be to investigate additional ways SSSP as a whole can continue to improve its use of technology. Possible technologies to investigate include video interviews, webinars, and video footage of some key parts of the Annual meeting to then be able to post online. We have received Wendy Simonds and Hector Delgado's approval to videotape the Presidential Address this year, so we will have footage to work with following the Annual Meeting. Another idea was to sponsor a session at the Annual Meeting at some point that addresses the appropriate and effective use of professional social networking accounts and other technology.

Thus, for the 2012-2013 year, the ITO Committee is oriented toward two main goals next year: first, to pursue strategies to better integrate the effective use of technology through the various branches of

SSSP, and second, to investigate additional media strategies that will serve SSSP as a whole. A third and continuing role of the ITO Committee is to maintain a list of, and administrative access to, the varying social media accounts connected with the Society.

Shannon Monnat, James Maples, and Lisa East are willing to serve on this committee again for the 2012-2013 term. We are currently working on identifying two additional potential committee members to recommend to the Board to add to the committee.

Current SSSP Social Media Accounts

Facebook

SSSP Facebook Page

Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division Facebook Page

Twitter

SSSP Twitter Account

Health, Health Policy and Health Services Division Twitter Account

Youth, Aging, and the Life Course Division Twitter Account

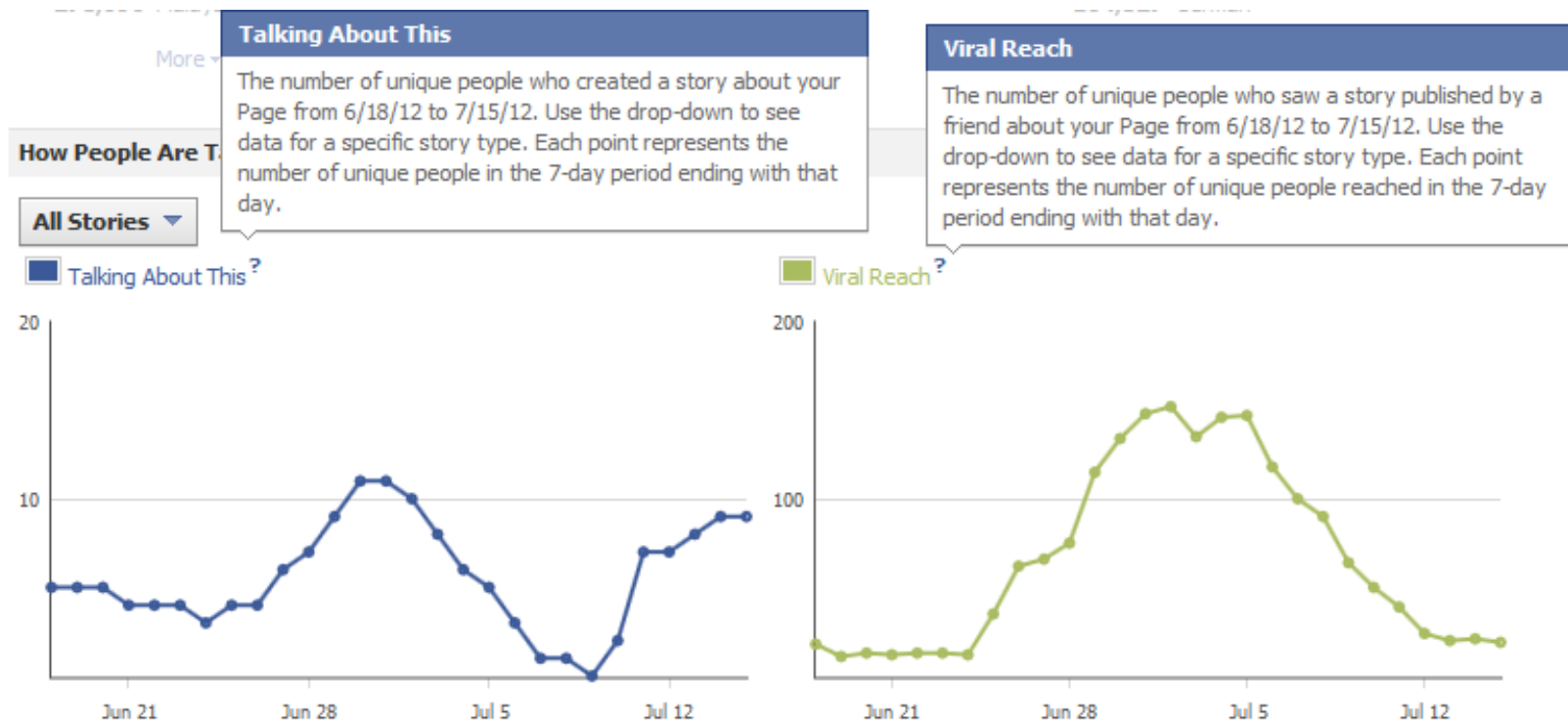
Other

ITO Committee Google Discussion group, internal

The SSSP Graduate Student listserv

Appendix I

This is one report available from Facebook. I thought the “Talking about this” and “Viral Reach” graphs are the most interesting examples of the multiplying benefits of using social media. Generally a handful of people create a post about our posts, but this then potentially reaches many of their friends. The report below is entitled “How People Are Talking About Your Page”.



Appendix II

From: Hendricks, Sarah Ellen (Sarah Hendricks)
Sent: Tuesday, January 10, 2012 11:50 AM
To: Hendricks, Sarah Ellen (Sarah Hendricks)
Subject: Social Media Options for SSSP work

To: SSSP Chairpersons
From: SSSP Information Technology Options Committee

You are invited to use social media in your SSSP work!

Social networking tools offer three main capabilities beyond those of e-mail lists. First, online discussion groups can help maintain institutional memory over the years, maintaining discussion archives and shared documents through the turnover of leadership. Second, it is possible to maintain an electronic presence beyond the official SSSP website. You have flexibility in what to post, how to organize content, whether to include interactive discussions. And, third, the more of an electronic presence that SSSP has, the more our announcements will be disseminated through the internet and reach a wider, broader audience.

How to Proceed

Social media options are listed below; feel free to choose which (if any) would meet your particular needs best, and you are not limited to the list below. Follow instructions provided by each of the social media options on their main webpages. If you would like to proceed, we do ask you to keep two items in mind.

First, as your term as Chairperson ends, make sure that the incoming Chairperson becomes an account administrator, with all the necessary information. If the incoming Chairperson does not desire to continue the account, then it is your responsibility to remove the account before signing off as an administrator.

Second, in the last resort, SSSP needs to be able to terminate inactive accounts. The ITO Committee therefore needs to share administrative access to any SSSP-related account. You may therefore either: (1) Create an e-mail address for your committee/division's business and share the log-in information with the ITO committee or (2) you may add a SSSP administrative e-mail address to the account (thesssp@gmail.com). SSSP will not regularly monitor these e-mails; this account will be used solely for administrative access in the unlikely event that it is needed.

Social Media Options

As a SSSP Chairperson, please feel free to start an account! Options include:

Twitter Account – Highlight and broadcast relevant research findings and other announcements through the Twitter world.

Example: The Health, Health Policy, and Health Services has a Twitter Account, @SSSPHealth

Facebook Page – create one specifically for your Division/Committee, in order to create public wall postings that are available for public comment and easily shared throughout the Facebook world. You may also identify which individuals have access to your posts (similar to Google +).
Example: SSSP has a public Facebook page. [Click here](#) to view.

Online Groups – Move e-mail discussions to a [Facebook](#) or [Google](#) group, keeping the discussion threads in one accessible location for all group members through time. Members may also receive notification of group messages in their e-mail inboxes. You (and any participants) must first have a Facebook or Google account.

Examples: Poverty, Class and Inequality Division has a Facebook group; the Information Options Technology Committee is using a Google Discussion Group for internal discussions.

Listserv– This is good for announcements or discussions distributed via e-mail, with a specific group of people. The moderator may add listserv members, and members may opt-out. There is a one-time start-up fee to establish a listserv; contact the SSSP Administrative Office (sssp@utk.edu) if you are interested.

Example: The SSSP Graduate Students have a listserv.

Google Plus – Enables you to choose which “circles,” or group, has access to every item you post. You may also have a video conference with up to ten people at a time.

As a reminder for Division Chairs, there is more information regarding setting up listservs and Division webpages in the [Roles and Responsibilities of Division Chairs](#) document. If you have any questions, please e-mail Sarah Hendricks, ITO Committee Chair, shendri4@utk.edu.

Sincerely,
SSSP Information Technology Options Committee

Sarah E. Hendricks, Chair
Lisa East
James N. Maples
Shannon M. Monnat