

Understanding Social Work Leadership in Hamilton through Digital Storytelling

Tara La Rose, PhD
Assistant Professor
McMaster School of Social Work

Brian Detlor, PhD
Professor
DeGroote School of Business

Summary

Contemporary scholarship suggests social workers are resistant to the use of new technologies, as a result, they lack digital literacy. The culture of social work practice, where technology is frequently used to promote managerialism or engage in surveillance and where limited funding means available technology is antiquated, further exacerbates social workers limited skills. To encourage social workers to enhance their digital literacy, free digital storytelling workshops offered opportunities to learn new skills and develop greater familiarity with new technology. Exploration of leadership through digital stories simultaneously creates knowledge in an area of much needed scholarship. By conducting workshops at the Hamilton Public Library MakerSpace social workers' knowledge of resources available to both social workers and the people they serve is also enhanced.

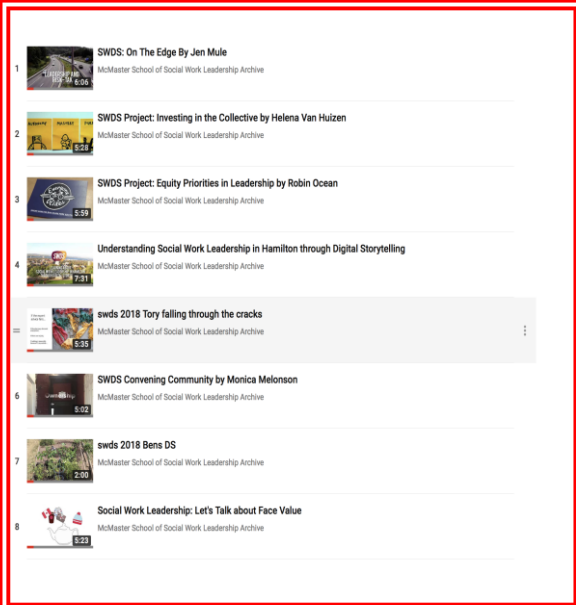


Project Goals



- Increase social workers' digital literacy (comfort, skill and knowledge to use digital technology)
- Explicate social workers' subjugated leadership knowledge
- Enhance awareness of the technological and training resources available through the Hamilton Public Library MakerSpace
- Create access to social workers' leadership experiences and knowledge produced through critical reflection
- Raise awareness of services and social welfare activities in Hamilton, Ontario

Digital Stories Available Online



Process

Recruitment from:

- MSW Critical Leadership students
- McMaster School of Social Work field instructors
- School of Social Work alumnae
- Social workers in the Hamilton community

Skill development:

- Social workers received an individual one-to-one orientation to digital storytelling
- A learners manual supports preparation for workshop participation
- Cameras and other technology is available for loan to facilitate participants' capacity to create photos or video prior to the workshops
- Participants attended digital storytelling workshops at HPL MakerSpace (all-day or evening sessions)
- Completed stories are uploaded to [The McMaster Social Work Digital Leadership Archive](#) and will be shared via [Love You City Share Your Story](#) database (ongoing)
- Multimodal and narrative analysis will be undertaken

- Pre and post participation surveys complement the narratives



Future Possibilities

The McMaster Social Work Digital Leadership Archive enhances access to subjugated social work knowledge through the sharing of social workers' digital stories focused on experiences and understandings of leadership.

- Expansion of the project to include social workers beyond Hamilton, Ontario
- Comparison of the digital stories created through the SWDS project with materials created through the [Rediscovering Social Work Leadership](#) project would expand the availability of social work leadership knowledge – a much needed scholarship
- Development of other digital storytelling projects that consider specialized or marginalized areas of social work practice



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