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Digital Transformative Practice: Considerations for Preparing Jamaican Social Work Practitioners for Effective Technology Use

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ABSTRACT

The social work profession has steadily integrated information and communication technologies (ICT) into aspects of its practice and training curriculum. The COVID-19 pandemic increased social workers' use of ICT and intensified discussions about its applicability within the discipline, especially concerning client care services. In Jamaica, social workers primarily work with their clients face-to-face, complemented with technologies such as email and instant messaging. However, the social work curriculum within local tertiary education, and private organisations does not adequately develop social work-related technology competencies. This paper will briefly explore the benefits and challenges that a sample of Jamaican social work practitioners experienced with the increased use ICT in their client care services during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also discuss how incorporating digital literacy, ethics training focused on ICT, and digital professionalism can be meaningful additions to the social work curriculum. Recommendations for changes at the faculty and organisational levels to further integrate ICT into social work education and practice are also provided. It is important that Jamaican social workers have adequate competencies in digital practice. This will increase the tools that the practitioners will have to address the needs of their client systems.

Keywords: *social work education; information and communication technologies; curriculum development; digital literacy*

INTRODUCTION

Technology has impacted how social work operates in the digital age. Social work is primarily a face-to-face profession due to its people-centred orientation and, overtime, has integrated technology into multiple domains of its practice. However, not all social workers embrace this development, preferring to work face-to-face. Cosner Berzin et al. (2015) note that "compared to the business sector, social work has been slow to adopt technology. Limited resources, ethical and legal considerations, lack of training and social work's historical reliance on face-to-face communications have fuelled this lag" (p. 3). There have been intentional efforts to further integrate technology into social work practice by increasing the capacity of practitioners, such as including technology use within training curricula (e.g., Blakemore & Agllias, 2020; Zgoda & Shane, 2018) or providing opportunities for practitioners to hone their skills (e.g., LaRose & Detlor, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic increased social workers' use of information and communication technology (ICT) and intensified discussions about its applicability within the discipline, especially concerning client care services. ICT can be broadly defined as "technologies used to convey, manipulate, and store data by electronic means. This can include e-mail, SMS text messaging, video chat (e.g., Skype) and online social media (e.g., Facebook)" (Perron et al., 2010, p. 2). The rapid rate at which technology advances continuously raises new questions regarding social work best practices and, most importantly, ethical considerations in navigating software, hardware, and internet-enabled spaces.

Jamaica has been making steady strides in how it uses technology to provide social and health services to its population, such as the National Broadband Initiative to expand Internet access across the island (Linton, 2024), support to businesses to incorporate technology into daily

operations (Murphy, 2023), and the development of mobile applications for public service agencies, including Tax Administration Jamaica. Alongside this has been the proliferation and incorporation of technologies within daily life, especially regarding communication. There are approximately 2.4 million internet users, and 1.61 million social media user identities in Jamaica (Kemp, 2024). Therefore, local social work practitioners and social work education providers must commit to investing in the knowledge development and training, including changing the culture and mindset towards technology-inspired practice. This will equip them with the necessary skills to better meet the needs of people, and ensure that they are not left behind in local and global digital transformation. This paper will briefly describe a preliminary study that explored the benefits and challenges that Jamaican social work practitioners experienced in incorporating digital technology into their practice during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also share suggestions from a social work training institution on improving ICT integration into social work practice in Jamaica through enhanced training.

ICT INTEGRATION: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Within Jamaica, social workers primarily work with their clients face-to-face, supplemented by technologies such as email, texting, and/or social networking. There have been limited local workshops or formal opportunities to build competencies in digital technologies, particularly regarding areas like digital professionalism and hosting information sessions on live-streaming platforms such as Twitch. Guided primarily by the Jamaica Association of Social Workers (2012) Code of Ethics, National Association of Social Workers (2018) Code of Ethics, and Global Statement of Ethical Principles (International Federation of Social Workers, 2018), social workers were thrust into quickly adapting their services into an online environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. To further understand their experience, the authors of this study conducted a cross-sectional rapid study in 2022, which included semi-structured key informant interviews (n=3 social work managers/ directors) and an online survey (n=12 general social work practitioners) from two of the largest employers of social workers in Jamaica. The preliminary data provided insight into how agencies and individual practitioners adapted, as well as the main benefits and challenges. The practitioners had to incorporate ICT into their client-care practice as their primary mode through which to provide care or blended with face-to-face components. Agencies supported blended ICT integration by providing social workers with devices, such as tablets and laptops, and offering training sessions to assist them in navigating equipment, software, and ethical boundaries. Additionally, practitioners independently pursued further training, such as enrolling in online training programme.

Benefits

Appropriate ICT use in practice can have many benefits (Craig & Lorenzo, 2014; Cosner Berzin et al., 2015; Perron et al., 2010; Bullock & Colvin, 2015). It provides an alternative to home visits in challenging times, such as a flare-up of gun violence in a community. It can support practitioners' completion of their administrative tasks with the use of specialised software such as case management software; and executing client-care services such as rapid assessments (for example, completing an online screening form prior to the session) and interventions (for example, gaming and gamification (Craig & Lorenzo, 2014; Bullock & Colvin, 2015; Baker et al., 2018). Technology has the potential to transform the therapeutic relationship (Cosner Berzin et al., 2015). Social work practitioners within Cook & Zschomler's (2020) study stated that they felt closer to families in the online space due to having shorter and more frequent sessions as well as becoming "more familiar with their everyday lives" during their virtual engagements (p. 3). Consistent with the literature, Jamaican social workers stated that the main benefits of ICT integration included increased access to and reach of clients, especially when the country was under lockdown. They were able to maintain contact with some of their clients, and continue their case management, attend case conferences, and conduct parenting and individual counselling sessions.

Challenges

The main challenge that the respondents faced was that unstable internet connection made it difficult to interact with clients. There were also challenges in contacting and/or locating clients via telephone or online mediums. In some instances, and this was an occurrence prior to the pandemic, their clients did not have access to the internet or telephone signal due to their location. Literature has highlighted digital exclusion as a challenge in digital social work (Mishna et al., 2020; Mishna et al., 2022; Craig & Lorenzo, 2014). Digital exclusion occurs when clients who had no problem accessing face-to-face sessions pre COVID-19 but due to "fewer digital resources and digital literacy skills" (Mishna et al.,2020, p. 491), they now have new barriers to accessing services. Digital literacy and competency are important components of being an effective social worker within an online space. The speed at which the practitioners learn and understand how to use emerging technologies is dependent on factors such as perspectives towards technology, level of training, sociodemographic variables and overall technological experience (Creighton, 2018; Bullock & Colvin, 2015). Due to the low emphasis on ICT integration in social work training programmes and organizational practice, unfamiliarity with software applications and features was also raised as a challenge by Jamaican practitioners.

Other challenges highlighted in the literature included limitations in the applicability of certain technologies (Bullock & Colvin, 2015; Craig & Lorenzo, 2014). Jamaican social workers recognized and experienced that not all duties are transferable to technology, such as establishing rapport with new clients; forms of interventions, and aspects of home visits (Bullock & Colvin, 2015; Craig & Lorenzo, 2014; CRCF, 2020). Virtual engagement and home visits have additional limitations, including that the social worker may be unable to pick up key verbal and non-verbal cues, it is difficult to ensure confidentiality, or to identify hidden risks (CRCF, 2020). Some practitioners also reported feelings of de-professionalization and depersonalization when they used technology for certain duties where they feel that the human connection and ability to make professional decisions were decreased when this medium is used (Craig & Lorenzo, 2014; Laurent, 2008). Therefore, they continued home visits once it was safe to do so. Finally, ethical dilemmas such as maintaining/establishing professional boundaries, confidentiality, and privacy have also been highlighted as challenges by both the literature and some of the practitioners in the rapid study (Mishna et al., 2020; Mishna et al., 2021; Mishna et al., 2022; Craig & Lorenzo, 2014). Considering the various challenges highlighted, practitioners felt that they were not providing their clients with their best service.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted an area of opportunity for Jamaican social work education in developing practice-specific technology-related skills. Updating a curriculum is a lengthy process; however, it is unavoidable, especially if the aim is to prepare students for local and international contexts. Jamaica currently has 15 institutions comprising community colleges and universities, that provide training in social work, ranging from certificates to graduate degrees, most of which prioritise face-to-face practice skills. The Social Work Training and Research Centre, with 62 years of experience in training social workers, has suggestions for three core topic areas that should be considered in upgrading the social work curriculum. These topics are based on broader reflections on the impact of digital technology on social work practice and the necessary preparation for its effective utilisation.

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is a broad concept "that reflects the use of digital technology, communication tools and networks to access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create new knowledge to function effectively in this digital society" (Reddy et al., 2020, p. 3). Over time, the concept has evolved from

"an operational and technical focus on technology use towards knowledge-oriented cognitive, critical and responsible perspectives" (Spante et al., 2018, p. 15). It is an amalgamation of different literacies, such as media literacy, visual literacy, and communication literacy (Reddy et al., 2020; Spante et al., 2018). Researchers have recommended that social work educators integrate digital literacy into the core curriculum (Young et al., 2018; Zgoda & Shane, 2018; La Rose & Detlor, 2021). Digital literacy skills can provide the foundation for social workers to make informed decisions regarding the technology and software they employ (Young et al., 2018). The priority should be fusing social work values and ethics into digital literacy skills, ensuring that students understand when and how to use digital technology ethically and appropriately. While there are different literacy frameworks that can be utilised within the social curriculum, an example of one was created by Reddy et al. (2020); see Table 1 for components and definitions.

Table 1: *Digital Literacy Components as defined by Reddy et al. (2020)*

Literacy Type	**Definition**
Information Literacy	Using digital technology to find, locate, analyse and synthesise resources, evaluating the credibility of these resources appropriate citation techniques, abiding the legal and ethical issues surrounding the use of these resources and formulating research questions in an accurate, effective, and efficient manner
Computer Literacy	An understanding of how to use computers, digital technologies and their applications for practical use
Media Literacy	Having the ability to use digital technologies to access, analyse, evaluate and communicate information in a variety of digital platforms
Communication Literacy	Using digital technologies to communicate effectively as individuals and work collaboratively in groups, using publishing technologies, the internet and Web 2.0 tools and technologies
Visual Literacy	Having the ability to use digital technology to 'read,' interpret, and understand the information presented in pictorial or graphic images, communicate this information and convert the information into visual representations
Technological Literacy	Having the ability to use digital technology to improve learning, productivity and performance

Note. Adapted from "Measuring the digital competency of freshmen at a higher education institute," by P. Reddy, B. Sharma, & K. Chaudhary, 2020, *Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems*, 6, p. 5 (https://aisel.aisnet.org/pacis2020/6).

Due to the broad nature of digital literacy, covering all components within a specific course may not be feasible. Therefore, educators should choose specific competency/ competencies that align with the overall purpose of their course/training. This way, the students not only learn about using specific technology but how to use it within the social work context, especially as it relates to intervention and practice. For example, Zgoda & Shane (2018) focused on communication in their

course “Social Work 2.0: Classic and Contemporary Communication Skills.” They integrated digital literacy into their assignments, such as having students participate in discussion board posts, interacting over Twitter, and creating a social media campaign project. La Rose & Detlor (2021) engaged social work practitioners and students in digital storytelling training. Digital storytelling is defined as:

> “an approach to narrative research that challenges the limitations of traditional research and knowledge generation techniques and serves to broaden what might be understood as ‘knowledge’ within social work epistemological contexts” (p. 601).

This project focused on technological, computer, and communication literacy, as the participants had to create a digital story based on a theme and share the stories via YouTube. Participants learned about creating stories, hardware such as computer and digital cameras, and software like iMovie.

Further research will be needed to identify which digital literacy components would be useful for each level of social work training within the Jamaican context. However, at minimum, students and practitioners should have a foundational understanding and, if feasible, complementary hands-on experience to aid in their understanding. As illustrated by the above research, this could be as simple as modifying one aspect of a course to include a digital literacy component.

It is important to note that with the increase in the use of technology within education, digital literacy is developed implicitly as a person navigates the education system, such as using computers and appropriate software to create and submit their assignments, using the internet to gather information, and communicating over social media, emails, and blogs. Through their review of digital literacy within the university setting, Gutiérrez-Ángel et al. (2022) found that although university students demonstrated adequate competency in multiple digital literacy categories, such as communication and collaboration, there are areas that need to be improved, such as digital content creation. There are also differences due to gender, discipline, and age. As it relates to discipline, it was found that social science students had lower levels of digital literacy than those who studied in science or mathematics related fields. Therefore, depending on when the social worker obtained their degree and the type of degree, they may have general digital literacy skills, but may be unable to translate those skills into technology specific social work practice tasks.

Ethics

With increased technology integration within social work, policies and guidelines were created and professional social work associations’ Codes of Ethics were updated to account for ethical use of ICT within practice and education (Reamer, 2018; Pascoe, 2023). These documents, such as Model Regulatory Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice and Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice, cover ethical issues related to: (1) provision of information to the public; (2) designing and delivering of services; (3) gathering, managing, and storing information; and (4) collegial relationships (Reamer, 2018). However, ethics is a moving target as technology and its associated rules and policies can outpace the speed at which social work documents/policies can be updated (McInroy, 2019; Pascoe, 2023). For example, Pascoe (2023) reviewed nine professional Code of Ethics documents with dates of creation ranging from 2005 to 2019, and of the documents, only six included ethical principles related to technology use within social work practice. Within the six, there were varying levels of ethical guidance, for example, only four of the documents provided practical steps on how to navigate ethical issues related to cybersecurity and confidentiality. In the case of Jamaica, the Social Work Code of Ethics was last updated in 2011 and does not include any guidance regarding technology use in practice. Therefore, in alignment with Pascoe (2023) and Reamer (2018), it is recommended that social

workers consult multiple ethical and practice documents, such as the Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice, when making decisions regarding technology use in their practice.

These documents provide general guidance, but there will be nuances that practitioners will have to navigate as they engage in their work. Researchers have queried about the ethical use of artificial intelligence and big data in addressing their clients' problems and providing care, considering the underlying bias in the data used to train the intelligence (Gwadz & Ritchie, 2022; Hudgson et al., 2023); social media when it violates the rights of others (Ricciardelli et al., 2020); and artificial intelligence in social work education (Hodgson et al., 2022). Additionally, further complicating the issue is that students' and practitioners' personal engagement with technology, especially social media, can impact their ethical perception of engagement, making it challenging to differentiate between personal and professional use. For example, in reference to social media, Ricciardelli et al. (2020) found that social work students were inconsistent in how they viewed themselves using social media versus others. They were concerned about the percentage of students who accepted the use of social media by law enforcement and other authorities who violated the civil rights of minority groups as well as the passive consumption of news and information via social media. They also raised concerns how the social worker can be complicit in their use of social media which can perpetuate harmful practices, spread disinformation, and unethical use of private and public data. Therefore, it is important to educate upcoming social workers and current practitioners regarding ethical behaviour in technology use and expose them to situations that challenge their perception of ethics and its applicability to different types of technology. This will provide a foundation which would aid in navigating complex ethical decisions where guidance is not clear.

Online Professionalism

Digital professionalism refers to "the way you engage yourself online in relation to your profession, including your attitudes, actions and your adherence to relevant professional codes of conduct" (Sowton et al., 2016, para. 2). This has become increasingly important, as practitioners can unintentionally cause harm to themselves as well as their service-users and negatively impact the reputation of the profession (Guraya et al., 2019; McInroy, 2019). Most people engage with online spaces through social media accounts or web pages. It is not uncommon for health professionals and human service professionals to have their own online accounts through which they share information, book appointments, promote products, and engage with those who view their content. A cursory Google search will bring up numerous websites, social media profiles, and online accounts created and run by social workers. Additionally, some social workers use online spaces in their service delivery and interventions, such as hosting live chats, and online forums (Afrouz & Lucas, 2023; Chan & Holosko, 2016). However, with the rise of professionals using social media and, by extension, other online spaces, unprofessional conduct has also increased (Chretein & Tuck, 2015; Guraya et al., 2021). Unprofessional conduct includes the blurring of professional boundaries, violation of patient privacy, bullying and harassment (Chretein & Tuck, 2015; Guraya et al., 2021). Social workers have been perpetrators of unprofessional conduct, which in some instances, have harmed their clients. These acts include posting viewpoints or actions that are contrary to the founding principles of the social work profession, for example, posting inappropriate or offensive tweets in which the social worker uses expletives and derogatory language to describe an individual (Schraer, 2015); or sharing anti-gay marriage posts on social media (Stevenson, 2016). There is also conduct which can fall under the category of ethical mistakes, such as venting frustrations about a client on a personal account which can be publicly viewed (Reamer, 2023), and ethical misconduct such as using communication in a digital space to initiate a sexual relationship with a client (Reamer, 2023).

There is limited research on social work digital professionalism (Taylor, 2017). Miller (2015) explored first-year social work students' understanding of identity and professionalism in the context of social media use. In the findings, it was noted that the social work students did not

understand how to navigate the complex dynamics of ethical and professional online conduct. It is also important to note that even though practitioners may know how to engage with social media on their personal accounts, this does not necessarily translate into professionalism in practice (Miller, 2015). Therefore, students and practitioners need the opportunity to "explore various approaches to online [digital] professionalism that could suit their personal preferences and professional circumstances and critically reflect on the potential professional consequences (both positive and negative) of their current digital footprint and approach to online participation" (McInroy, 2019, pg. 3-4). This would also include the boundaries between personal and professional engagement within the online space.

There are practical steps that educators can take to integrate these technology themes into social work courses. For example, adapting courses to include relevant content and activities. A common course across social work programmes is ethics. The educators can incorporate case studies involving digital ethical dilemmas along with literature on technology and social work, to facilitate exposure to the issues and best practices. Within the "human skills" lab—a course where students practice social work skills within a controlled setting—topics related to digital professionalism can be explored. Students can create an online professional profile and have discussions centered on digital versus professional identity, boundaries, and professional conduct. Another option is to develop short courses, and electives tailored for social work and allied professionals, such as exploring the use of Artificial intelligence in behavioral change interventions. Social work faculty could also encourage students to enroll in technology-related electives or cross-disciplinary courses to strengthen their digital competencies. The overall aim of this integration is to intentionally connect technology use with social work practice.

It is encouraging to see that social work educators have already begun this process of integration. For instance, social media components, such as online advocacy assignments, have been incorporated into some social work courses. Institutions such as University of the Commonwealth Caribbean and various community colleges have also made technology a focus in the purpose of their programmes (University of the Commonwealth Caribbean, n.d.; The Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica, 2024, p.5). The University of the West Indies has created various courses and workshops related to technology use in teaching and learning, for example at SWTRC, we are in the process of developing a digital social work short course specifically for practitioners. The Social Work unit Mona campus is developing a course for students related to technology trends and application in helping professions.

INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY INTO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

While the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the gap in technological competencies, social workers have generally reverted to in-person practice since the reduction in physical restrictions. Therefore, research would be instrumental in identifying the ICT competencies that practitioners need. Currently, there is limited research on Jamaican social work practitioners' ICT use and integration into the social work curriculum. Practitioners and social work-related organisations can provide valuable data on the technological skills needed to assist the populations they service adequately. While not the focus of this paper, it should also be noted that alongside learning technology-related skills, social workers need to be aware of technology's social and psychological consequences on themselves and the general population. Increased use of technology has impacted issues related to privacy, safety, justice, equity, human capacity, and community. Levels of technology use can affect brain health with effects like increased attention-deficit symptoms, technology addiction, and disrupted sleep (Small et al., 2020). Other technology-driven psycho-social issues include cyberbullying (e.g., Bottino et al., 2015), technology-facilitated sexual violence (Patel & Roesch, 2020), and the consequences of misinformation and disinformation (Rocha et al., 2021). Even within the scope of work, technology can have negative effects on practitioners; for example,

Guraya et al. (2021) highlighted that social media notifications can cause distraction and stress, affect work efficiency and memory, and negatively impact emotional well-being (p. 9).

Two interrelated factors are considered when regarding faculty: using technology within the classroom setting and understanding its application within the professional context. This involves using technology to enhance teaching and incorporating it into lessons. Buy-in from lecturers is necessary for the successful incorporation and execution of curricula that include technology use (Njọkụ, 2015). Faculty should have positive beliefs and attitudes about the utility of technology use in practice and possess the necessary skills to deploy technology as part of their teaching process (Njọkụ, 2015). Also, it is important to ascertain their perspectives on incorporating technology and their barriers. Dintoe (2018) found that while faculty members were willing to incorporate ICT into their teaching, barriers such as the difficulty balancing university requirements hindered their ability to do so. However, recognising the broad nature of technology and its operation, faculty cannot cover all complexities related to modern technological advancements. Therefore, learning circles and collaboration with other departments or disciplines would be highly beneficial in sharing techniques, lessons learned, and best practices. For example, in the case of social media, faculty could collaborate with social media experts to understand the nuances of posting and communication, lawyers to understand policies and laws as they relate to the digital space, and experts in culture to understand the cultural nuances in technology and its users.

At the University level, the guidelines and policies related to social media and technology need to be updated taking into consideration the local context and digital realities. This collaborative review should include the voices of students, faculty, administrators, and practitioners. It would also help transition technology-related issues from abstract concepts, such as data protection, to concrete practices. There must be greater investment in technology and training, including advanced tools like e-learning platforms. Specialist learning tools, such as virtual reality, should also be applied in discipline-specific ways, such as a virtual practicum experience (Phillips et al., 2018) or simulation experiences using immersive technologies (Dodds et al., 2018). Improving basic infrastructure is essential, such as ensuring stable internet connectivity and providing appropriate hardware. Further support should be given to lecturers who are already incorporating aspects of technology into their courses, providing spaces to share and further learn, which would aid in making the practice more widespread. A tech monitor, such as a course coordinator dedicated to technology, would be beneficial in ensuring that the curriculum is regularly updated, and that technology is integrated practically and intentionally.

The actions mentioned above are a small component of the wide range of activities that should be implemented to facilitate the meaningful integration of technology into social work education. As these actions are implemented, the SWTRC remains cognizant of the barriers local social work practitioners face in accessing the necessary training. These barriers include financial constraints, a lack of professional incentive, as licensure is not required for practice, and a substantial caseload that impedes their ability to attend the courses. Additionally, there are significant costs associated with procuring the necessary ICT equipment to ensure high-quality training. The unit has engaged students living with disabilities or those who have limited access to appropriate equipment or insufficient computer skills. Therefore, accommodations must be made to address the diverse needs and skill levels present across various courses. The main aim is to ensure that the students can engage in activities that are reflective, diverse in experience, and will allow for critical thinking and skills that will transfer across technology platforms and context.

CONCLUSION

ICT will continue to transform social work practice, and the findings from this brief report indicate that Jamaican social workers' experiences might not have been starkly different to those of their global counterparts. It is imperative that despite the technological landscape of Jamaica, social

workers are not left behind in the global and local transformation process. There are approximately 3,000 social workers in Jamaica (Wilson-Harris, 2019), stationed across the island in hospitals, community clinics, schools, and social service organisations, who are vital in delivering key services. It is important that they have adequate competences in both face-to-face and digital practice.

Failure to include ICT competencies within social work education has a range of implications. Professional standards could become misaligned with the demands of a digital society. As technology becomes increasingly embedded within our society at all levels, social workers who lack the competencies and knowledge to critically assess technology may struggle to meet professional competencies. Without adequate training, practitioners may breach ethical codes by unintentionally violating privacy laws, misuse digital platforms, or fail to protect sensitive client information. Finally, the inability to use technologies appropriately limits the social worker's capacity to serve vulnerable populations. In summary, inaction could hinder the profession's growth, reputation and impact.

Further research is needed in this area. The use of ICT in social work practice is complex and is influenced by many factors that affect how practitioners learn and understand its use, and its applicability to the profession. Research exploring these complexities, particularly within Jamaica and the Caribbean, is lacking. Such research would be valuable in making informed decisions about what is needed to effectively integrate ICT content into social work education. Finally, there is a need for the profession to implement licensing requirements to ensure that practitioners and educational institutions stay abreast of the necessary skills and competencies, and hold practitioners accountable for their digital actions.

Changes will increase the tools available to practitioners to address the diverse needs of their service users, and, hopefully, lead to culturally relevant innovations such as virtual reality therapy. Most importantly, practitioners can become actively involved in policy-level discussions related to the use of technology in public services and advocate for vulnerable populations, especially as it relates to how these systems affect their lives. Cosner Berzin et al. (2015) states "social work has an important role to play in not only harnessing the power of ICT to improve practice, but in ensuring that ICT is developed to support social good" (p. 4). Therefore, as Jamaican social work practitioners and educators move forward with advancing the profession, "decisions to adopt technology should be deliberate, well-informed and conscious acts, and the social work profession must remain critical and reflective to ensure safe and ethical practice" (Pascoe, 2023, p. 299).

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