



THE Connection

Official Newsletter of the Georgia Association of Professional Private Investigators, Inc.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

2011 Spring Training
Will Be Held April 8
at the
Chattahoochee
Technical College
North Campus
5198 Ross Road
Acworth, GA 30102

Due to the Spring
Training, there will be
no meeting on April 12!

The Next
GAPPI Atlanta
Chapter Meeting
May 10, 2011
at Ryan's Restaurant
705 Jimmy Carter Blvd.
Norcross
(770) 840-9096

Networking and lunch
from
11:30 a.m.—12:00 noon
Meeting from
12:00 noon—1p.m.

The cost is \$15.00 for
GAPPI members

\$20 for non-members
(includes lunch and
beverage)

Students and potential
members are always
welcome.

"We look forward to
seeing you all there!"

Social Media Expert Offers Skip Tracing Tips for Private Investigators

Modern-day private investigators have more tools at their fingertips than ever before. Where they used to have to comb through phone books and interview neighbors, colleagues, ex-lovers, friends and family to track someone down, now they may need only log in to Facebook or Twitter.

They don't even have to be in the same city, state or country as the person they're tracking. A private investigator with a smart phone can theoretically run skip traces on subjects in Minnesota from a sunny beach in Hawaii.

"People have developed this habit of logging in and checking in with Facebook or Twitter or Yelp," said Lanie James, a social media specialist with Chesapeake Energy in Oklahoma. "They're leaving a trail of digital bread crumbs without even knowing it."

James spoke to a group of Oklahoma private investigators recently about how they can use and exploit social media in their businesses. She explained to the investigators how skip tracing via social media is happening all over and the tools are very effective. People have opened so much of their lives up to the general public that it's very hard for them to hide these days.

Police, lawyers and employers have all been using social media to dig into the history and character of subjects as well as to discover their whereabouts.

The Jackson Police Department in Jackson Hole, Wyo., used YouTube and Facebook to find two foreign bandits who stole the state and national flags while they were at half-staff to honor a local fallen soldier in 2009. They posted a video of the theft online, where it was distributed via Facebook, and the two men were identified. Then through Facebook messages, authorities got the flags returned from overseas with notes of apology.

James said she knows of investigators who have been able catch clients' spouses cheating by following their digital breadcrumbs. Many social media outlets now include geotracking software that allows members to sign in at different establishments such as bowling alleys, bars and restaurants. Letting friends know where you are via social media sites has become trendy and a lot of establishments offer incentives including prize drawings for doing it.

"It becomes so instinctual, such a habit for people to check in," she said, "that they don't even think about whether they're where they said they would be or not. People share just so unconsciously."

Because social media tools can be extraordinarily useful to private investigators, James emphasizes the importance of knowing how to use the tools. Her advice:

2011 Officers

President

Roy Wilkinson

Vice President

Pamela Griggs

Secretary

Ted Viator

Treasurer

Tracy Steele

Board Members:

Willis Craig

Michael Barker

John Roberson

Immediate Past President

Glenn Christian

1. Have a smart phone

“Having a smart phone is a must,” James said. “You can’t do this without the right equipment.”

A smart phone allows the private investigator to get immediate updates from subjects. If the investigator has a Twitter account, he or she can sign up to have the subject’s updates pop up instantly. People tend to tweet about what they’re doing or where they are, which makes following or finding a subject easier on the fly.

2. Understand the demographics social media sites attract

There are hundreds of thousands of social networking sites out there. Many are niche sites that only certain people will belong to, for example NASCAR fans or online gamers, James said. But those people are probably most likely to surface on those sites first. Then there is the mainstream. Members of Generation X are the most likely to be on Twitter, according to statistics, James said, though the younger Millennial Generation is starting to pick it up as well. Older people are very unlikely to be on MySpace, James said.

“But if you’re tracking Grandma,” she added, “you should know that Grandma is the single fastest-growing demographic on Facebook.”

Just as investigators have always had to judge their subjects and develop their tactics around that person’s character and habits, they will have to judge which social media outlets best suit their subjects.

3. Have your own accounts

While it’s not commonly allowed or accepted on the sites, it could be advised to open fake accounts, James said.

She said it goes against her values in most cases to create a fake online persona, but has proved useful and may be required in some cases. There is information on the social media sites that is only available to members. Once you have an account, you’ll have access to a lot of information, James said.

“People just don’t pay attention to their privacy settings,” she said.

And people tend to share a tremendous amount of personal information on their social media sites. A lot of people include their addresses, cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses on their unprotected information pages.

“For some people, they see there’s a field there and they think they have to fill it in,” she said.

4. Know how to use the technology

While the subjects investigators are tracing may not bother to familiarize themselves with privacy settings, the investigators should. They need to know how the technology works so they can find and exploit the loopholes in order to get information.

“They can really figure out how all of that works by spending some time with their own ac-

counts,” James said. “They just have to mess around with the different settings and take the time.”

5. Keep up with the times

James recommends that investigators follow blogs like Mashable.com to get the latest news about what’s happening in the social media world.

6. Use social media to promote your business

While Facebook, Yelp, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn are useful skip tracing tools, they are also powerful marketing tools. Once you log off of your stealth accounts, log into your business accounts and let the world know what you do and how well you do it. Share your business information and let clients “friend” you and vouch for your effectiveness, James said.

Social media has permeated James’ life. She said she’s careful about what she shares online and has been able to manipulate the content that pops up on Google searches when she types her name in so that she’s the one who shows up first and so that the most positive information is at the top.

She studies and writes and even tweets about social media and its many uses. “I’m just a nosey person by nature,” James said. “So, I’ve always been really fascinated by all the applications there are for this information.”

This article was written by the staff of PInow.com, which is a worldwide trusted network of private investigators. For more information, visit www.PInow.com.

Special Announcement

The Florida Association of Licensed Investigators (FALI) will be holding their 2011 Southeast Super Conference in Tampa, FL. June 9-11, 2011 at the InterContinental Tampa Hotel. This annual event is designed to provide you with a different perspective on your profession and give you the critical insight and learning that you need, right now, to successfully grow, manage and excel in your business. If you would like more information please go to the FALI website at www.fali.org.

CyForensics, LLC[®]
GA License #PDC002282
www.cyforensics.com
info@cyforensics.com

(478) 731-0752



Louis M. Schlesinger, MMIS, LPI
CCE, CIFI, CFC, ACE, WCSI
Member: ISFCE, IISFA, ACFEI, GAPPI, ISPAG
GA Lic. #PDE047590



Computer Forensics Investigations / Data Recovery
Password Recovery / Expert Testimony

Social Media: A Multi-Purpose Investigation and Profit-Making Tool

By Colleen Collins

“Tweeting’s for the birds,” a [private investigator](#) recently griped. “No way you’re gonna catch me on Twitter.”

If I told him Twitter, and other social networking sites, could attract new clients, aid finding people and evidence, as well as professionally brand his business, think he’d re-think his stance?

Attracting New Clients

There’s a new term, *social commerce*, that refers to online consumers learning and trying different business services based on trusted online referrals and recommendations. In a February 2011 article on TechCrunch, “Social Commerce And The New Rules For Local Businesses,” author Craig Donato says social commerce is “re-humanizing online commerce” due to its word-of-mouth marketing, which works best with businesses that are bound to relationships – in other words, service industries. His advice? Attract customers by being conversational and developing relationships.

Social commerce sounds a lot like what my dad did running a hardware store -- chatting with customers, developing friendships, selling hardware. But does social commerce in 2011 work for a private investigator? According to Skipp Porteous, co-author of *Into the Blast: The True Story of D.B. Cooper*, and president of New York-based Sherlock Investigations, Inc., the answer is yes. “I’m a big believer in social media to help small business,” says Porteous. “Last year I got three cases through Twitter alone. American private investigators are still mostly in the dark about social media, but they’ll catch up.”

Finding People and Evidence

Social media is a ripe area for researching and locating people. A few years ago, an attorney asked my investigations firm to find a woman who was on the run. She’d ditched her cell phone, wasn’t contacting friends or family, wasn’t driving her regular vehicle nor using any credit cards or other trackable items. We found her through a search of social media. She’d taken great care to cover her tracks, but she couldn’t stop posting on her MySpace account.

Another private investigator used Facebook to find a subject. “Facebook assisted in locating a missing individual in a probate search,” says Dave Smith, D P Investigations in West Sussex, UK. “He was from the UK, but had moved to live in Toronto, Canada. Messages through Facebook confirmed he was the person I was looking for.” Lawyers are mining social media for evidence, too. The January 2011 *ABA Journal* article titled “Tort Defense Lawyer Contends MySpace Smiley Faces Are Damning Evidence” reports that an increasing number of defense lawyers are seeking access to plaintiffs’ social media pages, searching for evidence of fakery and other activities. In a recent case, Facebook filed a motion arguing that defense lawyers should obtain account information directly from the member rather than subpoena Facebook. New York attorney James Gallagher is instead requesting a court order requiring the plaintiff to sign a consent form granting access to her Facebook account, which will be attached to a subpoena. “This is a wave that is going to explode all over plaintiffs’ law,” Gallagher says.

Searching Dozens of Social Media Sites at Once

You can easily search popular social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, and Friendster through their search facilities, using names, ZIP codes, email addresses, keywords and other indicators. Using these sites typically requires registration.

There’s also a growing number of social media search engines that let you conduct free searches on dozens of social networking sites by a person’s name, nickname, phone number, email address and more. Below are a few free multi-social-media search engines.

Kgbpeople.com: Results show in social networks, search engines, photo/video/audio sites, and personal references.

Kurrently.com: This real-time search engine instantly combines results from Twitter and Facebook in an easy-to

www.revealaudio.com/audioenhancement



Is your sound recording “at a loss for words?”

Audio enhancement, speech extraction, noise reduction
from video, microcassette, analog and digital sources.
Over seven years’ experience working with
PI’s, attorneys, individuals, and law enforcement agencies.

David Leonard

david@revealaudio.com

770.928.1955

-read format organized by date stamp.

SocialMention: Another free, real-time search engine that searches in over a hundred media properties, from blogs to comments to images. It also provides a social media analysis that shows associated information, such as top keywords, usernames and hashtags (inline tags prefaced with a hash mark, such as #PInow).

For more tips on using social media to find people, read the PInow.com article “[Private Investigators Powering Searches with Social Media.](#)”

Networking with Peers

By connecting with their peers through social media, private investigators learn about professional events, share tips and professional accomplishments, and advertise their services. Tamara Thompson, owner of Tamara Thompson Investigations in Oakland, California, says, “I’ve used social media to inform my readers about my investigative specialty – Internet and database research – while providing tools and resources they can apply in their businesses. I never sell myself, because that’s boring. I write about what interests me and always stick to work-related topics. Most of the benefits are indirect: connecting to a variety of professionals, enhancing my reputation, getting access to data or knowledge sources and keeping my name in circulation. It’s tricky because you have to make a commitment to participate and do it regularly but then you don’t want it to become a time-sucker.”

Summary

Successful PIs are good listeners. Cases have been solved just from listening to what people say about each other and themselves. When you funnel those words into digital gathering places, add indicators to locations and other information, and provide opportunities to promote and build clientele, the result is a multi-purpose investigation and profit-making social media tool for private investigators.

Maybe that investigator who thought tweeting was for the birds should try a test flight before grounding the idea altogether.

Colleen Collins wrote this article for PInow.com, a trusted network of private investigators. Collins is a professional private investigator who co-owns Highlands Investigations and Legal Services, Inc. (<http://www.highlandsinvestigations.com/>) based in Denver, Colorado. To learn more about PInow.com, visit www.PInow.com.

Learning Shop USA

Online Continuing Education Courses

Courses for 2 CEUs	\$40
Courses for 4 CEUs	\$65
Courses for 8 CEUs	\$125

Certificates sent in seconds

See Catalog at www.learningshopusa.com

Contact us at admin@learningshopusa.com

Advertise in The Connection!

Business Card—Approximate size: 3.5" x 2"
\$10 per issue or \$100 per year
(11 issues)

Quarter Page—Approximate size: 3.5" x 4.5"
\$25 per issue or \$250 per year
(11 issues)

Half Page—Approximate size: 7.5" x 4.5"
\$50 per issue or \$500 per year
(11 issues)

Full Page—Approximate size: 7.5" x 10"
\$100 per issue or \$1,000 per year
(11 issues)

For more information, contact us at:
vernon@ahqi.com / 404-766-1632

The Connection is published 11 times a year (monthly, Nov/Dec issue is combined) by the Georgia Association of Professional Private Investigators, Inc. (GAPPI). The staff of *The Connection* reserves the right to review and edit articles, advertisements, or other writings that are submitted for inclusion in this newsletter. The writer may contact *The Connection* Editor to request an exception to this policy. Articles printed in the newsletter may not necessarily reflect the views of GAPPI officers or members, and GAPPI does not necessarily endorse any product or service advertised in the newsletter. Contact GAPPI at Vernon@ahqi.com, 404-766-1632 for advertising information or notification of change of address, phone or e-mail.