

TWEETING SAFETY: LIKES, POSTS AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

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The millennial generation is the most technically advanced age segment to join the workforce. Statistically, since younger workers are more at risk of accidents and workplace injuries, they are also the age group at greatest risk in occupational safety and health (OSH) terms. Given this, millennials struggle to take seriously the low-tech, top-heavy communication channels used by OSH professionals. Used to immediate responses, 140 character communications, shares, likes and visual imagery, this group of workers does not take time to read the ubiquitous safety notices on a pin board behind greying glass. This paper suggests that the Facebook and Twitter social media community rapidly building around 'safety fails' offers a novel channel for engaging this audience. The challenge is to harness a popular culture of compromised safety values to build a cohesive and inclusive conversation around ways to keep young people safe at work.

Biography

Kelly Jaunzems is a PhD candidate in Edith Cowan's School of Arts and Humanities. Following an extensive career in hospitality, food and beverage management, in Britain and Australia, she confirmed her desire to engage in in-depth research via a Masters in Occupational Health and Safety. This two years of intensive study, drew her attention to the fact that OHS communication practices have generally advanced little over the past quarter century. Her PhD research explores the reasons why this might be and constructs a framework through which conservative practitioners within the OHS profession might feel empowered to use social media.

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