Obituary

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Obituary: SOCWORK was disconnected from the internet on December 24, 2020. In the early days of the internet, SOCWORK was the first and extraordinarily popular method of internet transmission among social work practitioners and educators. It was a very exciting time. After sitting essentially dormant with only two or three transmissions in the last 2 years, it was decided to let the list go dark.

Final Call Of SocWork

Following is an excerpt from Marson (1997):

> SOCWORK started as an idea for introducing students at the School of Social Work, University of Toronto, to computer communication technology. Bellamy (1987) and Bellamy and Mielniczuk (1988) offer historical details of how and why the list became operational on February 3, 1988. It began with 11 students and four faculty and staff. Within four months there were 20 members. By May 1989 there were approximately 75 members and a new management under the watchful eye of Harry Chaiklin and his graduate student, Ogden Rogers at the University of Maryland. It was about this time that I discovered SOCWORK and joined the list when there were fewer than 80 subscribers.

During Harry's tenure, two major developments occurred. First, after much prodding among various members of the listserv, the Council on Social Work Education [CSWE] subscribed to SOCWORK. Second, staff from the National Association of Social Workers NASW] subscribed. Participation by our two major professional organizations established an aura of legitimacy and personal subscriptions to SOCWORK surged. Later, when the subscribers grew to approximately 700 in the spring of 1995, Cindy Jones from the University of Arkansas inherited SOCWORK. Soon SOCWORK had over 1,000 subscribers and many thought the listserv was out of control. As a result, in the fall of 1996, Ogden Rogers from the University of Wisconsin at River Falls became the new manager. The number of subscribers shrank over the years to less than 300, but SOCWORK became more manageable. Listservs are now flourishing and are being systematically evaluated for their contribution to the profession. Berman (1996) provides an excellent example of such research in his analysis of two listservs [SOCWORK and ABUSE-L].

SOCWORK spawned a host of other social work listservs. One of the first to follow SOCWORK was BPD [The Association of Baccalaureate Program Directors]. Other listservs

include: Computer Use in Social Services (CUSSN) Feminist Social Work Field Education Human Services Information Technology Association International Social Work Philosophy and Science of Social Work Rural Social Work Student Social Work List. Noticing the congressional proposals to decentralize social services, the Consortium of State SOCWORK Listservs was founded in 1993 by Steve Marson at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. With decentralization, each state has gained greater control over social service resources. The direction of the services may greatly depend on the ability of state social workers to spread knowledge to grassroot organizations and to lobby the state house in a favorable direction. State social work listservs should prove to be vital for the speedy dissemination of needed information.

References

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