

## **Internet-Based Data Use in Forensic Evaluations: a survey and review**

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### **Abstract**

Forensic psychology and psychiatry are the practices of applying knowledge of mental health to non-clinical settings associated with the law, such as disability evaluations, fitness for duty, and violence risk assessments. The assessment and collection of additional sources of information, referred to as “collateral information,” is equally as important as the clinical interview when performing forensic evaluations. In our increasingly digital world, an individual’s online activity and personal identity are increasingly intertwined. There is currently little research or information on the practices of obtaining internet-based collateral information for use in forensic evaluations, and only broad and conflicting, ethical recommendations regarding viewing patient’s online profiles in clinical settings. We have developed a short survey to be distributed to practitioners performing forensic assessments to evaluate the current perceptions and use of internet-based data as collateral information, as well as ethical perceptions among evaluators regarding the use of this data in forensic assessments. This survey is now in the Institutional Review Board (IRB) submission process. Following IRB approval, the survey will be distributed, with plans to analyze the data to form opinions regarding the issues above and propose new avenues of research into this potentially practice-altering source of collateral information.